



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

Profile of the City:

The City of Golden is situated in central Jefferson County on the west edge of the Denver Metropolitan area at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Golden is located along Interstate 70, U.S. Highways 6 and 40, and state highways 93 and 470, providing good highway access to the entire region, including Denver to the east, Boulder to the north and the mountains to the west. Its location, accessibility, views of the mountains and mesas, and small town feel combine to make Golden a desirable location to visit, live, work and play.

The City has a rich history as part of the “Old West”. Golden was a mining town established in 1859, and served as the Colorado Territorial Capital from 1862-67. Golden incorporated in 1871 and became a home rule city in 1967. As of 2016, Golden has an estimated population of 20,167 and a land area of 9.7 square miles.

The City operates under the council-manager form of government. Policy-making and legislative authority are vested in the City Council, consisting of the Mayor and six other members. The Council is elected on a non-partisan basis for four-year staggered terms, with elections every two years. The City Council is primarily responsible for passing ordinances and resolutions, adopting the budget, appointing committees, and hiring the City Manager, City Attorney and the Municipal Judge. The City Manager is responsible for carrying out the policies and direction of the Council, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the City, and appointing the heads of the various departments.

The City provides a full range of services including public safety (police and fire), streets, water, wastewater, drainage, public improvements, parks and recreation, planning and development, and general administrative services. The Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Police Departments are all nationally accredited. The City is the seventh agency in the nation to achieve accreditation in all three departments. These distinctions are an indication of the quality of the City’s employees, operations, and services provided.

Population Changes:

The City’s population increase from 2013 to 2016 was approximately 6.9 percent, or 1300 residents, based on data derived from the American Community Survey Census by the City Planning department. This would appear to be in harmony with a voter approved one percent annual growth rate limitation. Within that limited growth, the City’s demographics have remained fairly consistent.

Golden is home to the Colorado School of Mines. The August to May school year increases population by approximately 5,800 students [2016-2017 degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students].



We are the county seat for Jefferson County. With the justice system and county government headquartered in Golden, we have the workweek influx of those persons needing to conduct related business.

Seasonal Impacts:

The city and the surrounding area offer a variety of outdoor opportunities for: hiking, paragliding, hang gliding, mountain climbing, tubing, kayaking, bicycling, walking, motorcycle riding and special events in our historic downtown.

This makes the city a popular venue for events from various groups with few weeks in the summer months going by without a special event. This include bicycle races, runs, kayak competitions, vintage car shows, a massive July 4th festival, and Buffalo Bill Days, which is a three day event celebrating the old west, to highlight a few. We have upwards of 100 citywide events annually, including neighborhood block parties. Many of these have an impact on city parks, streets and other facilities.

For example, the July 4th festival has become an all hands on deck affair where officers are required to work throughout the weekend. Upwards of 5,000-10,000 visitors arrive to enjoy the festivities. Another example is the monthly Supercruise event in the summer months that occurs along a long stretch of South Golden Road and in the downtown area. Hundreds of car enthusiast bring their classic cars and line the streets for thousands of spectators to enjoy. It is not uncommon to have 5,000 spectators at this event. An ad hoc committee was created by the department to address neighborhood concerns associated with this event that was positively received by the community.

During the summer months May to September, the City sees a significant tourist influx. MillerCoors Brewing Company alone generates an average of 300,000 visitors per year.

Among the popular spots for events: Clear Creek Whitewater Park, a nationally renowned kayak course; burial place for William "Buffalo Bill" Cody; Colorado Railroad Museum; American Mountaineering Center [American Alpine Club, Colorado Mountain Club, Outward Bound West]; Astor House and Clear Creek Museums & history parks among other attractions and businesses.

The Clear Creek corridor itself has been a major area of concern for citizens of Golden and our department. In recent years, the creek has seen a large influx of visitors from all parts of the Denver Metro area. On any given summer day, there is often a hundred or more tubers in the creek. The popularity of the creek required the department to add 4 seasonal park ranger positions and 2 full time park ranger position. These rangers are authorized to issue administrative citations dealing with smoking, which is prohibited in many parts of the city, open containers, animals at large, and parking enforcement. They have also had to act as first responders for water rescues on hundreds of occasions. Rangers carry equipment with rescue throw-bags for water emergencies. In one weekend



in 2015 alone, rangers estimated at least 40 deployments with approximately 15 of them to help people that were in serious distress.

The hundreds of contacts rangers make on the weekends have also increased calls for service for patrol. There are countless examples of contacts ending in a sworn officer responding to make a warrant arrest or protection order violation arrest. This can often stretch the patrol section thin.

Golden includes the junction of US Hwy 6, CSH 93 and CSH 58. This is the primary travel route via US Hwy 6 and scenic Clear Creek Canyon to the historical mining towns of Black Hawk and Central City, which are limited stakes gaming venues.

The Lariat Loop Scenic and Historic Byway also begins in Golden and traverses through a residential community. This byway is extremely popular in summer months with motorcycles, sports cars, families, and bicyclists due to the hairpin turns, steep climb, and spectacular views the route offers. The heavy vehicle traffic has been a major concern for residents of the community. There are safety concerns because of drivers that often ignore rules of the road, and noise complaints, which are often due to motorcycles that find the byway particularly attractive. Dispatch often receives noise complaints during daytime and nighttime hours. Once again, patrol can be stretched thin trying to handle these calls for service during busy summer days. This is another issue where an ad hoc committee was created in cooperation with the City Manager's response. This committee has addressed community concerns through various measures, and it continues to look for a long-term solution.

Golden is also traversed by portions of US Hwy 40, I-70 and C-470. Interstate 70 is the primary travel route for snow skiing and other summer/winter sports for Front Range residents. The route takes one from an elevation range of 5,000 feet to 10,000+ and under the continental divide through a 1.5-mile tunnel. Traffic congestion, especially return traffic on Sunday afternoons, is legendary. Traffic volume can be such that it takes an hour for every 20-30 miles.

Our city is at the base of the foothills and I-70 route. This is where eastbound traffic is actually "out of the hills" and can split into three different routes to continue east.

Crime and Criminality:

Our crime has historically been "outer ring suburb", similar to many U.S. metropolitan areas. Patterns are predominately property and persons related, including, burglary, criminal trespass and criminal mischief. We had one homicide in 12 years prior to 2011 and only three during the current assessment period with two occurring in 2014 and one in 2016. In the past several years, thefts have ranged from 309-411. Our crimes against persons have remained consistent over the last five years. Most of these are family-related crimes. A couple prominent crimes occurred in 2016. A family in our community experienced a home invasion burglary with a serious injury to the husband. This was a



well-publicized crime and all four suspects involved pled guilty to numerous charges. Our department also handled a sex assault case between a father and his daughter that ultimately led to three of our detectives becoming involved in a shoot-out when attempting to arrest the suspect. This was a rare occurrence where a Golden Officer needed to discharge his weapon in the line of duty.

We have criminal justice system components not typically found in suburbs. In addition to the county detention facility, we are home to the "Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center" a commitment-only facility for high-risk juvenile males from throughout the state. County services for parole / probation, adult diversion, mediation, and others are within the city. This can affect our calls for service and arrest rates versus similarly sized communities in this state.

Environment features or aspects of land use that present problems:

The City sits in a valley. We are bordered by mountains to the west and much of the east. Consequently, there is not a lot of level ground. We are physically separated from most of the Denver metropolitan area by North and South Tabletop Mountains. The topography tends to produce fast moving water runoff during storms

Clear Creek runs through the city from west to east. The creek is also our primary conduit for fresh water supplies.

The City is home to a large electrical power distribution control center for the western part of the US, an electronic banking transfer station for a national bank system, and the USGS National Seismology Center among others.

Budgetary or legislative concerns:

Compared to most of the nation, the City has experienced a quicker and stronger recovery from the recession of 2008-2009. The City maintains a good mix of retail, commercial, and industrial businesses, which makes for a very strong and diversified employment base. The City also has a wide variety of commercial, manufacturing and industrial businesses, especially in areas of energy and technology. Economic development efforts continue to strengthen the City's revenue base.

The housing market in the Denver Metropolitan area has experienced a massive boom. The current median sale price of a home in Denver is \$350,000 compared to \$230,000 in 2013. Golden's market is even stronger with the current median sale price of a home being \$478,000 compared to \$335,000 in 2013. Double-digit housing market gains have become the norm over the last several years.

The department itself has been successful in receiving grant funds for multiple projects. Colorado POST granted over \$22,000 for fiscal year 2017 for training courses and equipment. The state has provided over \$20,000 annually for gaming DUI enforcement



and high visibility enforcement along the major corridors. In conjunction with the Wheat Ridge Police Department, our department submitted and received a grant from the Federal government for Body Worn Cameras to be implemented in 2018 for \$66,000.

New Technology:

Our department continues to embrace new technological efforts. In 2016, we implemented Brazos e-citation through Tyler Technologies and equipped three vehicles with License Plate Readers. We also started a joint project with six Jefferson County law enforcement agencies to implement a new Record Management System (RMS) through NICHE Technology. Grant funds were awarded for body worn cameras to be required throughout the department and policy development is ongoing in preparation. Finally, the department decided to adopt a single gun platform with all officers required to carry a Glock model 34 or 17 by January 1, 2019.

Each of these has carried their own developmental challenges but have strengthened our department through various means. The Brazos e-citation was adopted in conjunction with the courts to have an integrated e-citation system. There were several challenges related to this change including convincing officers the move from paper to e-citation was in their best interest, addressing officer safety concerns due to looking up when writing a paper summons vs looking down to input the e-citation, and technological issues with the equipment itself.

License Plate Readers have allowed our department to better address the parking challenges the downtown area faces, but we have also been looking to use this technology as another way to fight crime. Our department was part of a task force that was able to identify and apprehend a man that committed sex assaults throughout the Denver metropolitan area and in other states in large part due to a License Plate Reader being utilized on a suspicious incident call. This case sparked a lot of interest from the department in acquiring the technology. We were able to leverage existing proposals from other Denver Metro agencies to streamline the acquisition process. The challenge has been ensuring department personnel are thoroughly trained to use the equipment to its fullest capabilities.

In October 2015, six Jefferson County law enforcement agencies signed a contract to implement the NICHE RMS system. The biggest factors in moving toward this agreement was the ability to have a consortium for information sharing. There was also a strong desire to create standardized documents throughout the county, so the District Attorney and other agencies receives the same form with the same information from each agency. NICHE itself was chosen since their product is specifically developed by law enforcement officers for law enforcement agencies. The software offers us one point of entry, and the data can then be exported to any document that we upload into the program. Our department pulled a Sergeant off the streets and assigned her full time to the project to ensure its success. The development and implementation is ongoing with the final product expected to be made available in late 2017 or early 2018.



Body worn cameras are quickly becoming a required piece of gear that officers wear to not only protect themselves but also citizens they contact. Our department has a strong desire to lead the way in making them standard issued gear for police departments nationwide.

The single gun platform was approved in 2016 and the purchasing of the guns began in January 2017 based on a comprehensive cost benefits analysis of the single gun platform in law enforcement. A Glock 9mm handgun was selected as the best weapon system based on the 9mm being a superior round, with less gunfire recoil, and a wider range of gun selections to fit officers hand size and grip. Ultimately, it was determined the move to a single gun platform will strengthen the organizations firearms training program improving skills, mechanics, and overall performance. Maintenance will be streamlined, and the cost of replacement parts is less expensive. Cost savings will also be realized by only needing to purchase 9mm ammunition for training and duty use. Finally, a psychological benefit is realized by being able to immediately reissue a firearm to an officer involved in a shooting, thereby making them in a sense whole again, and reducing the impact to that employee's overall health and well-being.

Future Challenges and Opportunities:

In 2014, Jefferson County law enforcement agencies began to research the impact of consolidating each agencies' communication centers. Based on the research, each agency believed that this move would save each department a substantial sum annually, improve service delivery by ensuring a well-staffed center with a standardized training program that also reduced the need to transfer calls that were routed to the wrong PSAP, and improve inter-agency coordination and cooperation. In 2016, an inter-governmental agreement was signed by all police and fire departments within Jefferson County, to include the county sheriff's office, to create a regional communications center that will be located in the city of Lakewood. This is an ongoing project with the expectation that consolidation will begin in January 2018.

For Golden, the consolidated communications center is another step towards our efforts to take part in regionalization efforts that we believe benefit our agency and the citizens we serve. The other regionalization programs we participate in are the Jefferson County Critical Incident Response Team, a regional crime lab, the county SWAT team, and the West Metro Drug Task Force.

In 2016, City Council adopted a paid permit parking system for the downtown area that our department must enforce. Our part-time parking enforcement officer was not enough to handle the increased workload this created, so the department is currently in the process of hiring one full-time parking enforcement officer. The enforcement of the new law continues to be a challenge for our department. Many citizens are upset about the cost for the permit itself, and numerous complaints are received each week from the



actual enforcement of the law. We expect this to be a contentious issue well into the future.

In February 2017, the department paid the International Association of Chiefs of Police to conduct a staff study. This was a major financial and time commitment for the department to undertake. However, we believe the study will show that our department needs to hire another command level officer. This officer would then be able to relieve Patrol Sergeants of the administrative workload they currently carry. This will then free the Patrol Sergeants to be able to serve the community even further.

Finally, our state continues to be progressive in the development of laws surrounding recreational marijuana. The city and county of Denver voted in November to approve marijuana consumption zones at private businesses that obtain permits. In the wake of Denver's new law, the state senate is scheduled to hear a measure that would give local governments the authority to allow private clubs with indoor smoking and consumption of bring-your-own marijuana. There is also a measure to allow the delivery of medical marijuana to approved patients. Each of these laws will certainly be a challenge for both the City and our department to address should the legislation be approved. Moving forward, we are likely to see even more legislation surrounding recreational and medical marijuana that our department will have to address at the enforcement level.