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## City Manager's Message

Dear Evans Residents,

It is hard to believe we are halfway through 2024, yet during the first six months of the year, your local government has taken on complex challenges to transform Evans into the Community of Choice in Northern Colorado. As City Manager, I am responsible for implementing City Council policies to meet community goals established by the Council. Since my arrival in January 2023, the City Council's primary objective has been enhanced economic development through community beautification and infrastructure management. We have made substantial strides in enhancing our City's infrastructure and services, ensuring that our residents enjoy an improved quality of life; however, continuous process improvement always makes room for improvement. Here are some highlights of projects initiated during the first six months of the year:



### **Infrastructure Improvements**

**Street Improvements.** The 37<sup>th</sup> Street Widening Project is under construction between Sienna Avenue and Stampede Drive. Part of the Freedom Parkway, this project will widen the street to four lanes to accommodate our growing region, relocate existing utilities, add curbs and gutters for improved safety and stormwater management, and construct sidewalks for improved pedestrian traffic. Weather permitting, the project is tentatively scheduled to be completed in August. Next year, the 37<sup>th</sup> Street project will jump to 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue due to external funding requirements to reconstruct the intersection to four lanes. In 2026, the project will continue reconstructing 37<sup>th</sup> Street from Stampede Drive east toward 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The finished product will add the needed capacity to improve traffic flow in Evans safely and efficiently.

Outside of the 37<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, street rehabilitation and reconstruction are underway in other areas of the community. We are reconstructing 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 36<sup>th</sup> Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Street, adjacent to Centennial Elementary School. A critical funding source for our street improvements is the 1% sales tax approved by Evans voters in 2020. The availability of funds generated by the sales tax means critical street maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction projects are being funded not exclusively by Evans residents but rather by everybody who comes into our community and makes a retail purchase. The 1% Street Sales Tax indeed does pave the way for *The Road Ahead* in Evans. To provide better transparency on the use of sales tax funds, citizens will see *The Road Ahead* signage displayed at projects funded in whole or in part by revenue generated by the sales tax.

**Drainage Improvements.** We are currently working to improve stormwater drainage in our park system to improve our parks' usability and the quality of life for our citizens. Although Driftwood Park has been cordoned off by a temporary orange fence for the past couple of months, the City's contractor is working to remove silt and overgrowth that impedes drainage and sometimes renders the park unusable. Once excess water is drained from the park, the contractor will construct

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concrete drainage pans to provide better stormwater conveyance. Similar work will occur in Dante Park and Prairie View Park, with all work completed this summer. The park drainage projects are funded using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the City received from the federal government during the COVID pandemic. Therefore, no General Fund tax dollars are required to make these improvements.

Along with drainage improvements in our parks, a project is underway to rehabilitate Chappelow Pond at 34<sup>th</sup> Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This project will remove excessive vegetation, trees, and overgrowth from the interior of the pond, reshape the interior for improved drainage, and remove debris from the primary inlet and pre-sedimentation basin that has accumulated from years of deferred maintenance. Similar to the park drainage projects, rehabilitation work at Chappelow Pond is funded using ARPA funds, which eliminates a substantial impact on the General Fund.

### ***Park Improvement Projects***

Along with needed improvements to city infrastructure, several park maintenance and rehabilitation projects are underway to improve the quality of life for our residents. Major park projects noted below are being funded by either the Park Impact Fund or the Conservation Trust Fund rather than General Fund tax dollars. The **Park Impact Fund** is a city fund administered for the acquisition, development, and improvement of the City's park system, trail system, and miscellaneous park amenities utilizing impact fees collected from building permits for new construction of residential dwellings. The **Conservation Trust Fund** is a city fund comprised of funds distributed quarterly from the Colorado State Lottery. Funds are utilized for developing and maintaining new conservation sites, capital improvements, or maintenance for recreation purposes on public sites per state law.

**DaVinci Park.** A new park, DaVinci Park, is nearing completion and is located at Florence Avenue and Palermo Avenue in the Tuscany subdivision. DaVinci Park will include a variety of amenities, including hard- and soft-surface trails, benches, a picnic pavilion, and a pump track for bicycles and scooters. We anticipate the picnic pavilion, table, and benches to be delivered and installed in the coming weeks, with a grand park opening tentatively scheduled for August 2024. The City will share additional details when they are final. When completed, the construction of DaVinci Park will cost the City of Evans approximately \$570,750. The Park Impact Fund is funding the project and will not require using General Fund tax dollars.

**Ridge Park.** In The Ridge at Prairie View subdivision, Ridge Park will be transformed into a dynamic park in the coming months. The project will involve upgrading the existing older and smaller park equipment with a custom playground structure consisting of five slides, multiple towers, elevated and enclosed bridges, new swings, and an assortment of ground-level play amenities for children of all ages. The project will replace the existing play surface with a brand-new pour-in-place soft surface featuring the City's river logo. Initially funded at \$350,000 using the Conservation Trust Fund, the project has blossomed into a \$700,000 public-private partnership due to a generous financial donation from Chevron Energy. Because the reconstruction of Ridge Park is being funded partly by

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the Conservation Trust Fund and partly by Chevron Energy, this project will not require the use of General Fund tax dollars.

**Hunter's Reserve Park.** Hunter's Reserve Park will be a new park on 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south of 37<sup>th</sup> Street. The project is currently in the design phase, which will last the next several months. During design, the City will host a public input meeting in which the public can share ideas for desired amenities in the park. The design and construction of the park are expected to cost \$732,000 and will be funded by the Park Impact Fund. As such, this project will not require General Fund tax dollars.

**The Next Six Months (and beyond)**

Outside of the projects currently in work, we will soon begin the design process for North Point Park, located near North Point Drive and Spring Cove Drive in the North Point subdivision. Later this fall, we will also advertise the construction of Arrowhead Trail, located at the southwest corner of 37<sup>th</sup> Street and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Beginning in Spring 2025, we will revamp the street sales tax-funded projects to get a bigger bang for your sales tax dollars; however, I will share more information on that project in a future *City Manager's Message*. Our Economic Development Team is working hard to build critical relationships with our existing businesses while bringing new opportunities to Evans. Redevelopment work will continue to focus on the Highway 85 corridor and other prime commercial corridors, such as 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Lastly, our Public Works Team is in the final phase of implementing a new municipal street sign shop that will replace and maintain all our traffic signs throughout the community with federally compliant street signs that meet or exceed standards for nighttime visibility. Not only will this improve the aesthetics of our community, but it will also improve safety by making our streets navigable at night.

As your City Manager, it is both an honor and a privilege to serve our wonderful community. Looking ahead, I am excited about our future as we continue to work to enhance our community's infrastructure, improve quality of life, promote economic vitality, and better position us to be *the* Community of Choice in Northern Colorado. If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact your City Council representatives, which can be found on the City's website at <https://www.evanscolorado.gov/council>.

Onward!

Cody R. Sims, ICMA-CM, MPA, CPM

Evans City Manager