Dr. Parth Melpakam District 6

1. What motivated you to run for a City Council seat, and what is your vision for serving the public if elected?

I am a husband, father, long-time resident, community leader, an engineer with a Doctorate in Chemical & Petroleum Engineering and over 25 years of experience working in the oil and gas industry.
The worrisome state of public education led me to run for the School District 11 Board of Education in 2019, and for re-election in 2023. I've served as the D11 Board President for the past four years, focused on improving student outcomes and district performance. To deliver excellence in education, it required dedication to a simple principle: Putting Students First. It is with a similar commitment that I will approach City Council: Colorado Springs First. My decisions will be guided by the best interest of our families and the economic vitality of our city.
As a father and husband, I will prioritize safe neighborhoods and "kitchen table" issues. As an engineer, my decisions will be driven by factual data. As a limited government proponent, I will advocate against costly fees and regulations to secure cost savings. It is the vision of building a safe, vibrant, and economically thriving city that will be home for current families and future generations that is driving me to run for City Council.

2. Nationally, government has been focused on finding waste and fraud in government through DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency. Would you be in favor of a similar effort within the City of Colorado Springs? Where do you think efficiencies could be found within city departments?

Serving on the D11 School Board, I advocated for eliminating central administrative inefficiencies, moving money closest to students in the classrooms which helped increase starting teacher salaries by over 20%. Last year, the D11 School Board was able to tighten the central administrative budget to the tune of $4.5 million. I will bring the same fiscal stewardship to City Council by ensuring the city budget prioritize providing core municipal services - public safety, emergency management, road maintenance, utilities, parks, transportation etc., while eliminating bureaucratic inefficiencies. Recruiting, retaining, and supporting our law enforcement with competitive compensation is vital for ensuring public safety. Fixing and maintaining roads, to include prompt snow removal, will be a primary area of my budget focus.

3. Are there any new taxes, fees, or TABOR retention ballot issues you'd like to see put before voters? Please, explain.

Before any new taxes, fees, or TABOR retention ballot issues are put before voters, the City has to ensure the current budget is properly being prioritized on providing core municipal services (roads, infrastructure, public safety, parks, utilities) and aligns with the community needs. As a fiscal conservative and a limited government proponent, I believe in lower taxes and lesser fees. Transparency and accountability to the public is critical in the expenditure of taxpayer dollar.

4. What does responsible city growth and development look like to you? Do you have any issues with how City Council has handled development, annexation, etc. in the recent past?

Colorado Springs has nearly doubled its population in the past 30 years, thereby bringing a market demand for housing. Sensible growth should occur within the framework of established city policies and plans while preserving the identity of established neighborhoods. A combination of infill and annexations can be effectively used to support responsible growth and development.
Every project should be carefully reviewed and thoroughly vetted to determine overall impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Strategic planning will help ensure that new developments do not overburden the city's current resources and infrastructure, especially our limited water supply. Sequential annexation closer to city limits helps ensure efficient access to utilities and infrastructure.
It is critical to balance the sensible growth that drives the economic vitality of our city with the desire to preserve the history, character and identity of our community. Every decision that city council considers should be viewed with this balance in mind. Transparent community engagement is critical to alleviate concerns of existing residents and generate solutions which maintain the "small town" feel of our city.

5. Should non-profit entities receive taxpayer funds to provide services to certain sectors of the public? Would you advocate for those non-profits to provide detailed reports to city council on how taxpayer money is spent?

Every non-profit request should be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on what services they provide for the public. It is essential to be accountable to the citizens by establishing clear guardrails for the expenditure of such taxpayer funds. Entities such as Springs Rescue Mission receive money from the general budget to provide food and shelter for the homeless, thereby ensuring our streets and parks are not inundated with homeless camps as they are in other major cities. Accurate, detailed, and timely reports to are necessary to keep the city funding.

6. In 2024, the current city council members voted in favor of a resolution stating that Colorado Springs is not a sanctuary city. Do you agree or disagree with that vote and why?

Illegal immigration undermines the rule of law and puts undue strains on community resources, including local law enforcement and city budget. As such, I am supportive of the resolution that Colorado Springs is not a sanctuary city.
Seeking the American dream, I came to this country through the proper legal channels to pursue higher education with less than $100 in my pockets. My life journey is testimony that all legal immigrants to this country can be successful and prosperous through hard work, determination, and effort.

7. What is your view on the current illegal immigration problem in our city?

I addressed this in my answer to the earlier question. Elaborating on that answer, I believe in the Constitution of the United States, the freedoms and rights that it provides all citizens

while codifying the rule of law that everyone must follow. Illegal immigration undermines that rule of law and puts undue strains on community resources, including local law enforcement and city budget. As an elected public official, I take with seriousness my obligation to represent the best interests of the residents of Colorado Springs and the laws that I am sworn to protect. As such, I believe that the city should fully cooperate with federal government in the implementation of current immigration laws. The federal government should take all appropriate measures to stop illegal immigration and keep our borders safe.

8. Taxpayer funds are used to provide services to homeless people. Do you think this money is well spent (or not) and should more funds be (or not be) committed to homeless programs?

Homelessness is a complex issue that places an increased burden on community resources, thereby straining the local economy. Solutions should address root causes such as economic hardships, substance abuse disorders, and mental health issues. Working with community partners like the Springs Rescue Mission, emphasis should be placed on job training, housing assistance, life skills development, and access to rehabilitation supports. The goal should always be to provide a hand-up to the impacted individuals so that they can get back on their feet and become self-sufficient rather than growing dependent on handouts.
To ensure safe access to downtown businesses and public buildings, I am supportive of the "Sit-Lie" ordinance. While it is important to be compassionate, public safety and clean neighborhoods should always be the primary focus of city government.

9. Housing affordability has been a hot topic in recent years. What's your solution to the problem? Should taxpayer funds be used to address this issue?

To help make residential development cost-effective, it is necessary to limit governmental overreach and costly regulatory hurdles. The cost of impact fees, construction permits, and additional taxes should be minimized, so the savings can be passed on to the residents. At the state level, the construction defect laws must be addressed to benefit both homeowners and builders. Unfunded energy mandates from the state add to the costs and should be addressed by working collaboratively with our legislators. The goal is to remove unnecessary barriers, delays, and fees, so housing can be affordable and attainable for homebuyers and renters.

10. Red light cameras and speed cameras have been approved by city council members. What are your opinions about red light cameras and speed cameras?

As a limited government proponent, I am for lower taxes and less fees. In the case of red light or speed cameras, I will depend on objective and factual data to guide my decision making. Does data show that these measures help save lives and change driving behavior? As a parent and school board member, I take the safety of our students with utmost seriousness. Two years back, a Doherty High School student was killed by a speeding driver

at a traffic intersection, with the driver running a red light. Doherty High School was designated as a school zone after I advocated the city to keep our students safe. Talking to grieving parents after they have lost a child is one of the hardest things I had ever had to do during my time serving on the school board.

11. Is there anything additional you'd like to share about yourself with voters?

The voters can find additional information about me at https://parth4cos.com
I have a broad coalition of support and endorsements from several respected members in the community. My list of endorsements is available at the above website. Voters can reach out to me with additional questions or concerns. I have a proven track record of listening respectfully, collaborating thoughtfully, weighing multiple perspectives objectively before making balanced, informed decisions. I will bring the same data driven approach to city council.