



City Manager's Office – Management & Budget Office | 9500 Civic Center Dr. | Thornton, CO 80229

City of Thornton 2024 Annual Accomplishments Report



Government Finance Officers Association

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Financial Reporting

Presented to

**City of Thornton
Colorado**

For its Annual Financial Report
For the Fiscal Year Ended

December 31, 2023

Christopher P. Morrell

Executive Director/CEO



Table of Contents

Meet our 2024 City Council.....	4
About This Report	5
Letter from the City Manager.....	5
2024 Highlights	6
Who is Thornton?	6
Growth	6
Employers.....	6
Awards.....	6
Grants.....	7
Ensure Outstanding Public Safety.....	8
Fire Department.....	8
Police Department	8
Infrastructure: Water, Roads, and Services.....	10
Plan for our Future & Economic Growth.....	11
City Development	11
Economic Development.....	11
Engaging Parks and Recreation	12
Financial Data	13
Major Revenue Streams	13
Core Services	14
Conclusion	15



Meet our 2024 City Council

Thornton is a home rule city operating under the Council–Manager form of government. The City Council consists of the Mayor, elected at large, and eight Council members, two elected from each of the City's four wards.

CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR



Jan Kulmann

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ward 1



Justin Martinez

Ward 2



Roberta Ayala

Ward 3



David Acunto

Ward 4



Chris Russell



Kathy Henson



Jessica Sandgren



Tony Unrein



Karen Bigelow,
Mayor Pro Tem



About This Report

The purpose of this report is to cover the accomplishments of the 2024 fiscal year and an overview of the City's general government financial position, which includes the City's General Fund and Governmental Capital Fund. The financial information presented is unaudited and in a summarized and condensed form and does not substitute for the City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), which is prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). The ACFR can be found at www.thorntonco.gov/government/finance/.

Letter from the City Manager

Residents of Thornton,

I am pleased to share with you the City of Thornton's 2024 Annual Accomplishments Report, a comprehensive look at the progress we've made together over the past year. This report highlights the significant strides we've achieved across various departments and initiatives. Within these pages, you'll also find a high-level overview of our financial performance, demonstrating our commitment to sound fiscal management and transparency.

I invite you to read the full Annual Accomplishments Report, available online at <https://www.thorntonco.gov/city-manager> and in print at City Hall. It provides detailed information on these achievements and many more.

Thank you for making Thornton an incredible place to live, work, and thrive.

Sincerely,

Tansy Hayward

City Manager





2024 Highlights

Who is Thornton?

Thornton is a diverse community with a strong commitment to quality of life. The community's location provides an ideal environment for business and recreation. Located in the North Denver metropolitan area, Thornton shares boundaries with Westminster, Broomfield, Northglenn, Federal Heights, and Commerce City. The community's natural setting of ridgelines, wildlife, waterways, rolling hills, and undeveloped land provide Thornton residents with amenities that contribute to a unique quality of life.

Growth

Thornton's population has grown steadily since the city was first incorporated in 1956, continuing through the 1970s and 1980s. Over the past 60+ years, Thornton has blossomed from a fledgling, residential development on the Denver outskirts, into a full-service community that is forecasted to reach a population of over 190,000 by 2040.

Thornton is the sixth largest city in Colorado with a population over 154,000 across 38 square miles. Over the last decade, Thornton's population has grown by 25%. The median age of Thornton residents is 34, and median household income is \$100,985. There are over 55,200 residential housing units in Thornton.

Employers

Business services, retail, manufacturing, health care services, and construction comprise the largest share of employment locally, with major employers including Google, Murphy Company, Amazon, Intrex Aerospace, Allegro Coffee, and Rocksol Consulting Group, Inc.

The top 10 employers include: Adams 12 Five Star Schools, Amazon, American Furniture Warehouse, Appliance Factory Outlet, City of Thornton, North Suburban Medical Center, King Soopers, Main Event, Topgolf, and Walmart Stores.

Awards

Thornton was awarded the Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance from the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA). The Gold Award recognizes water systems that exhibit high levels of performance in the areas of product quality, customer satisfaction, employee and leadership development, operational optimization, financial viability, community sustainability, enterprise resiliency, infrastructure strategy and performance, stakeholder understanding and support, and water resource sustainability.

The Code Compliance Assistance Program (CodeCAP), which assists income-eligible homeowners in fixing city code violations in their yards, received the Metro Vision Award recognizing excellence, innovation, collaboration and leadership in problem-solving among the community and their partners. Honorees include programs, projects, and plans that bring business leaders, elected officials, community advocates, and residents together to accomplish more than any partner could achieve alone.



The Thornton PD School Resource Officer (SRO) program received the 2024 National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Model Agency of the Year Award.

The National Association of Government Web Professionals recognized Thornton's new website with the Pinnacle Award, the top award given for government websites.

Grants

In 2024, staff applied for 50 grants totaling almost \$49.3 million, and Thornton was awarded 27 grants totaling over \$35.1 million. We received \$28 million more in grants in 2024 as compared to 2023; much of this growth (\$25 million) is credited to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant. This funding will be used for the 104th Avenue (SH-44) Corridor Improvements Project which will allow for the complete construction of the project between the Grandview Ponds Open Space and the west side of the South Platte River Bridge. The project scope will include widening to four travel lanes, a multiuse path, and improvements for ADA, pedestrians, and at intersections. It will address the regional issues of traffic congestion, lack of multimodal connectivity, air quality, traffic safety, and pavement fatigue.

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Programs Department was awarded nearly \$6.5M in Adams County Open Space grants for various projects, including playground improvements, reimbursement for the design of the new Thornton Community Center, the implementation of the Grange Hall Creek Trail Underpass project, and the installation of new pickleball courts.

The Police Department also pursued and received several grants: \$170,000 from the Department of Local Affairs Peace Officer Mental Health grant, which provides funding for the Police Department staff psychologist; \$83,000 from the Colorado Department of Transportation Traffic Safety Grant for traffic enforcement operations including officer overtime, e-ticket machines and speed radars; and, \$30,634 through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) for improved and more efficient operations in the Criminal Investigation Division by purchasing several pieces of forensic equipment.

The Fire Department received three grants in 2024; this included a Fire Prevention and Safety Grant for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. We also received a Colorado Firefighter Safety and Disease Prevention Grant for thermal imagers and a grant from Adams County to support our Community Paramedic program.



Ensure Outstanding Public Safety

Fire Department



Thornton's Fire Department supports the public safety needs of the community by providing fire and emergency medical services quickly, competently, and compassionately.

Police Department

The mission of the Police Department, led by Chief Baird, is to serve and protect our community. The department does this through a tradition of providing high-quality police services, deterring crime by engaging in effective partnerships, collaborative problem solving, and mentoring youth.



Notable Accomplishments

The Police and Fire Departments continued to make public safety a priority through both capital projects and community engagement. The City completed the design of Fire Station #8, with construction starting in January 2025. In addition, the shooting range at the Police Training Facility became operational in 2024. This shooting range is a state-of-the-art facility that provides an optimal training environment for both cadets and sworn officers.

The Fire Department deployed personnel and apparatus to wildland fires around the country and rescue operations following Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton. Fire also engaged students by educating 539 third graders across eight elementary schools about fire and life safety concepts and 23 high school students in the Hook and Ladder Academy, with hands-on experience to understand a future career in the fire service in partnership with North Metro Fire.

The Police Department received full approval to be a Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)

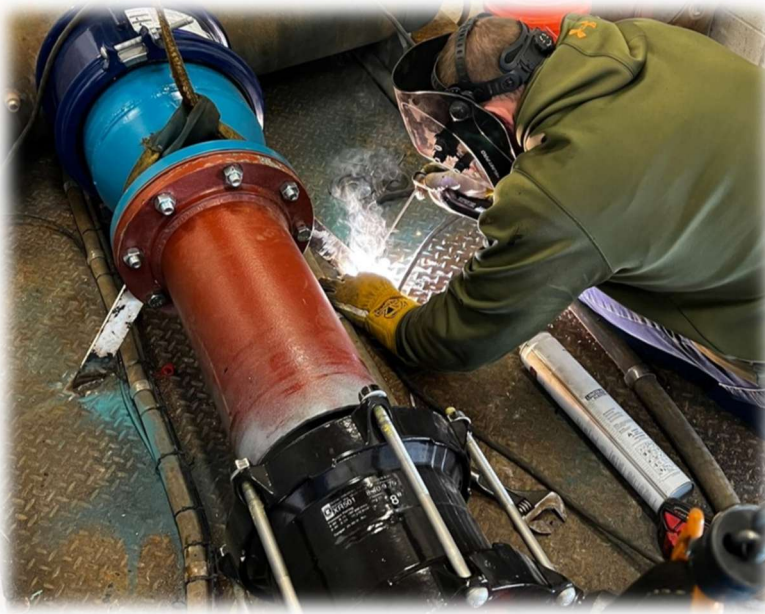


certified training facility in 2024, which allows us to start the first POST training class in 2025. The Police Department completed the “One Mind” pledge, a national effort to ensure that agencies implement best practices for responding to people with mental health challenges, including establishing partnerships with community health organizations, developing policies, training 108 officers and select professional staff in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), and implementing a co-responder program.

The Thornton Police Department conducted multiple traffic-related campaigns in August focused on deterring street racing, DUIs, speeding, expired license plates, and school zone speeding.



Infrastructure: Water, Roads, and Services



Thornton's Infrastructure department includes the 4th largest water utility in the state, in addition to a variety of public works services such as street maintenance, solid waste collection and recycling, separate sewer and stormwater collection, traffic mobility, and engineering services. These services allow all residents the opportunity to enjoy safe and reliable drinking water, well-maintained streets, transportation mobility throughout the city, cost-effective trash and recycle collection, reduced flooding risk, and a reliable wastewater collection system.

Notable Accomplishments

In 2024, we established a goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2040 through the adoption of the Thornton Vision Zero Action Plan. This plan is a bold step towards eliminating fatal and serious injury traffic crashes on the city's streets. It includes projects and actions recommended for the City to implement to create a safe transportation system for all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and vehicle users. The goal is for residents and visitors to travel around the city safely.

The Thornton Northern Properties Stewardship Plan (NPSP) was also adopted in 2024. The objective is to align land use objectives with land use decisions for the 18,751 acres of Thornton-owned farmland in Larimer and Weld Counties. This effort was partially funded by grants from various federal and state agencies.

The Larimer County Board of Commissioners approved the final major permit required to construct the Thornton Water Project. This was the culmination of almost a decade's work. The Thornton Water Project is on schedule to be completed in 2028 and provides water for the city to grow to full buildout.

Five years ahead of the EPA requiring maximum thresholds for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), Thornton has been proactively complying with the rule to reduce PFAS levels in our water. Staff are on a permanent PFAS removal treatment system and received over \$2.3M in grant funding through various agencies.



Plan for our Future & Economic Growth

City Development

The City Development Department is responsible for guiding the current and future growth, including promoting quality development that creates a safe, balanced community for living, working, and playing. Staff manage the development processes, work with developers in the city, and enforce compliance with codes and ordinances.

Economic Development

Economic Development services support local businesses, job growth, and primary businesses. Staff also foster capital investment for new retail development and redevelopment of older areas of the city, as well as supporting small businesses through the Alliance Business Center.

Notable Accomplishments

Over the past decade, Thornton has seen substantial growth, adding over five million square feet of commercial space. Thornton gained over 500 new primary jobs through 13 new or expanded employers in 2024. Thornton also became home to numerous eateries, including KPOT Korean BBQ & Hot Pot, Chubby Fish Sushi, Bengal Tiger Restaurant and Bar, Churreria Dulce Luna, Donut House, Tikka & Grill, and Yonsei Sushi. Thornton's retail sector witnessed new development including the Picklr at Thornton Town Center and Snobahn at the Grove.

We worked on many development projects, including Eastcreek Farms and Parterre, which pulled their first building permit after decades of work, as well as Talon Pointe and 164th/York, which both broke ground in 2024. Redevelopment is also a major focus for the city and 2024 saw the demolition of the Thornton Shopping Center. We engaged over 250 residents during the process and redevelopment proposals will be issued in 2025.

For longer range planning efforts in 2024, Thornton adopted a Transit Plan, completed a Historic Preservation Plan, and advanced substantive portions of the Development Code Update, which shapes the character and form of the city.

Staff worked on many permitting process improvements, including creating the Active Development Webapp that provides a status of the development from start to finish and links to the project pages. We also implemented a callback service for building inspections, provided real time code compliance data, and updated new development signage to promote transparency.



Engaging Parks and Recreation

Thornton Parks, Recreation & Community Programs provide a wide array of activities and programs to meet the parks and recreation demand in the community. We also offer Active Adult Services, Arts and Culture, and Community Connections.

The Active Adult Center added a variety of programming to meet the interests and desires of the community, such as Senior Health and Fitness Day Challenge, Coin Collecting Club, Cardio Drumming, Italian Classes, Sip & Paint/Script, Puzzle Club, expanded culinary program offerings, and the Earth Week Series. The Trail Winds Active Adult Wing also has seen a 77% increase in scheduled drop-in program participation.

Notable Accomplishments



The city continued to expand opportunities for residents to recreate by opening the newly constructed Thornton Community Center, in conjunction with Anythink Libraries. This 40,000 sq. ft. center opened to the public in October 2024. It features a 10,000 sq. ft. full library experience, Maker Space, teen space, room rentals, walking track, boxing space (home to the Thornton Boxing Club), and other recreational spaces. The exterior features a meditation garden, terrace, and amphitheater. This exciting addition allows our community to recreate in even more ways.



We also expanded outdoor recreation in 2024. The Grange Creek Park redevelopment was completed and includes a new playground, pickleball court, basketball court, internal soft-surface trails, pavilions, concrete trail sections, and pollinator gardens. In addition, the Niver Open Space Enhancements project, which is partially grant funded, was also completed in 2024 and features a trailhead parking lot, playground, nature play area, interpretive signage, pavilion, revegetation, and site furniture.

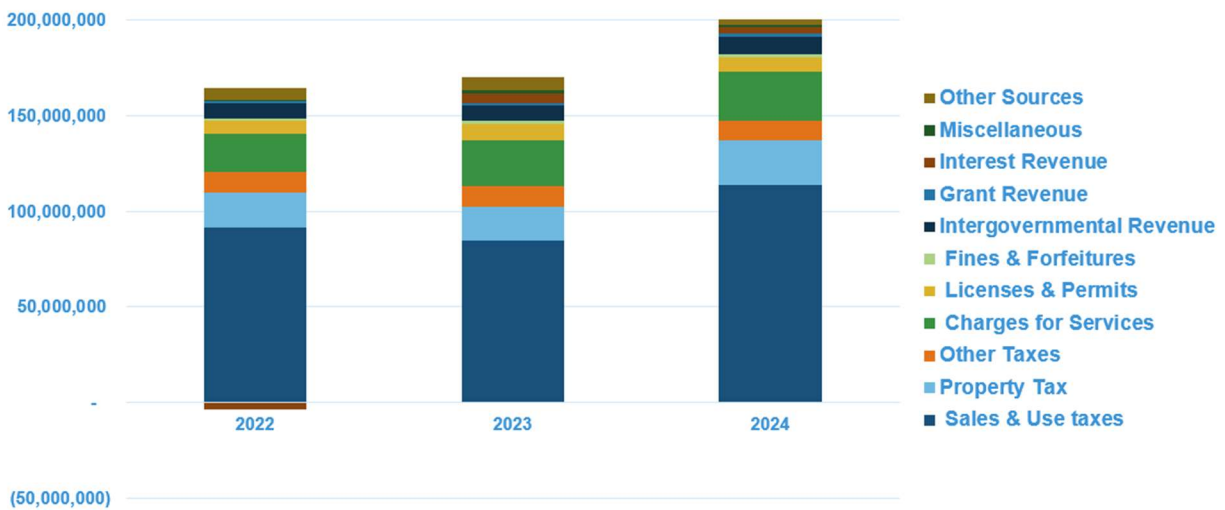
The community also gave 17,400 volunteer hours to the City's volunteer program, which grew significantly in 2024. A variety of volunteer-led programs began in 2024, such as a weekly puzzle club, a plant education series, technology education, and a themed craft series.



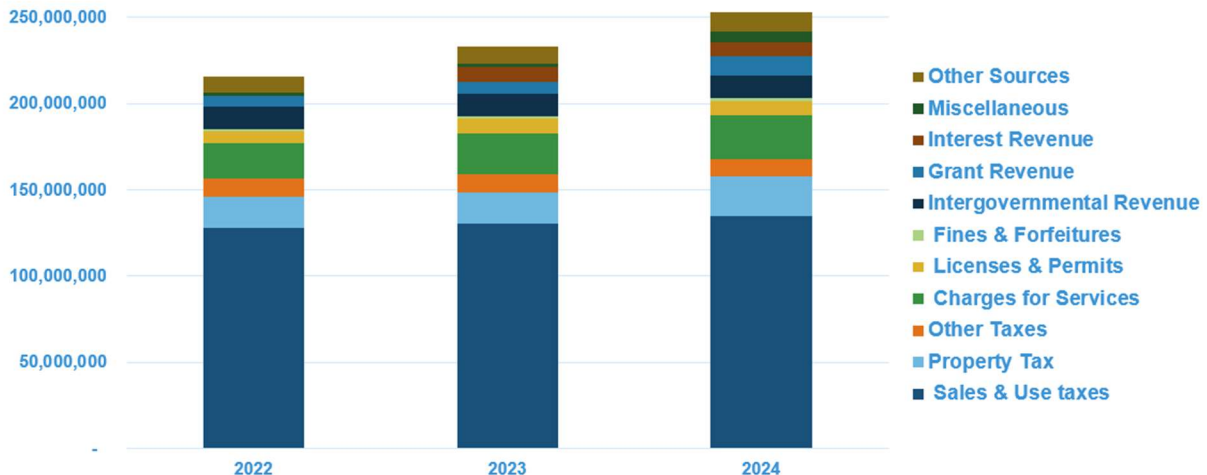
Financial Data

Major Revenue Streams

The chart below shows General Fund revenues by source, which increased 21.1% from 2023. The general government sales and use taxes are split to fund general operations in the General Fund and capital projects in the Governmental Capital Fund. In 2024, 85% of the general government sales and use tax went to the General Fund (included in the chart below) and 25% went to the Governmental Capital Fund. This is a significant change from the allocation of sales and use tax revenue compared to the 2023 and 2022 allocations. This allocation is evaluated annually to ensure adequate funding for general operations and capital projects.



This next chart represents the combined revenues by source for the General Fund and Governmental Capital fund. These two funds act in concert to provide general city services, including both operating and capital expenditures.

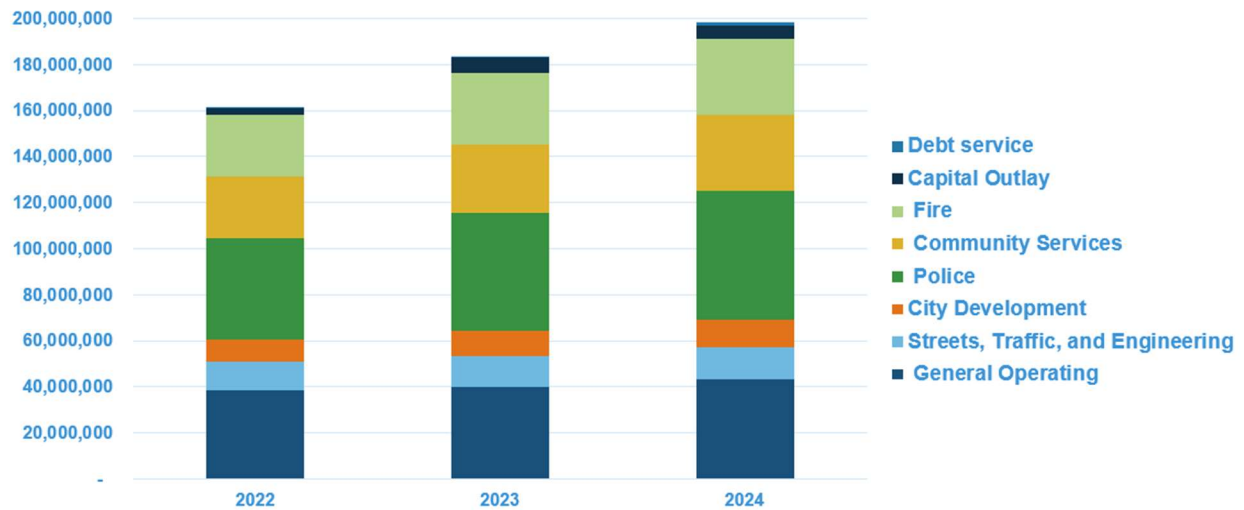




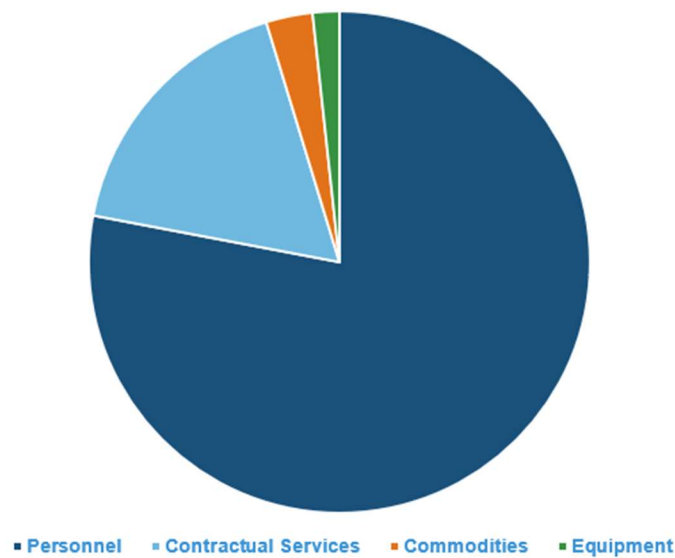
Core Services

Every year, the City Manager recommends a budget for Council's adoption. The proposed budget must be balanced, where ongoing revenues must meet or exceed ongoing expenditures. This budget takes into account feedback from the community as well as goals and policy direction from Council, while remaining fiscally responsible.

The bar graph below breaks down the cost of core general governmental services the City provides annually, excluding capital expansion and capital maintenance.



The pie chart below breaks down the general operating budget, which is important for modeling the city's finances into the future as certain types of costs are more flexible or increase at different rates over the years. As an example, the cost of supplies will generally rise with inflation, whereas the cost of labor rises with the labor market.





Conclusion

As we reflect on 2024, the City of Thornton takes great pride in the meaningful progress we've made together. From infrastructure improvements to community-focused programs, each accomplishment reflects our commitment to serving residents and shaping a thriving, inclusive city. These achievements are a testament to the hard work of our staff, leadership, and engaged community members. As we look ahead, we are energized by the opportunities before us and remain dedicated to building a bright and resilient future for all who call Thornton home.