

Growing need pushes Castle Pines toward new city hall



Castle Pines city government operates partially out of the Douglas County branch library. | Photo by City of Castle Pines

 By Mike McKibbin / NewsBreak Denver / Nov. 22, 2022

[CASTLE PINES, COLO.] — Colorado's youngest city may be ready to grow into its first city hall.

The Castle Pines city government has shared space with the Douglas County Library District for the last six years.

But it has land designated for a city hall. With the town's population projected to grow from more than 14,000 residents to 34,000 by 2040, the city council may decide it needs more space, according to a city council member and one of its first employees.

Leased space not meeting needs

Voters incorporated Castle Pines in 2007. It is the youngest municipality in Colorado. A [page on the city website](#) includes historical information about Castle Pines city government.

Economic Development Director Sam Bishop has been with the city since it formed. He said leased office space housed the first four city workers.

Bishop also worked for two other newly-formed municipalities: Centennial in Colorado and one in the Atlanta, Ga., area. Both used leased space as their initial city halls, he said.

Lone Tree — tied for the state's third youngest municipality — was incorporated in 1995 and moved into its current city hall in 2007, according to city spokesman Nate Jones.

"We hold our council meetings in the back side of the library; that's where municipal court hearings are held and our building department is there, too," Castle Pines Councilmember Kevin Rants said. "I have no space to meet constituents, so I have to use my home or a community center. Our meeting schedule is often dictated by room availability. We're just not as agile as we'd like to be."

"It's not ideal in terms of customer service," Bishop said of the library building. "We sometimes operate under different hours so the building is closed sometimes and open at other times. But we're a tenant to the library."

The Douglas County Sheriff's deputies who patrol Castle Pines don't have room to write reports and conduct other administrative duties, Rants added.

Those "artificial limits" would be avoided if the city had its own building, he said.

Then

- Planning & Zoning
- Public Safety
- Building Services
- Accounting
- Public Works

Now

- Planning & Zoning
- Public Safety
- Finance
- City Clerk Services
- Municipal Court
- Communications
- Building Services
- Code Enforcement
- Events
- Public Works
Streets, Sidewalks, Stormwater,
Snow Removal, Street Sweeping

A graphic presentation of how the City of Castle Pines has grown in terms of city services since it was incorporated in 2008. | Photo by City of Castle Pines

City helps new library

To ensure a public library would meet the needs of the growing community, the city purchased a site near the office building in 2014 and donated it to the library district.

Bishop said the donation included a \$1-a-month 10-year lease — plus the city's share of utilities and expenses — on a little over 2,000 square feet for interim city offices.

In 2016, the library building opened. Bishop said eight city employees occupy about 1,700 square feet of the building.

Contracted workers provide many city services, he added. Local metropolitan districts handle water and wastewater services.

Bishop noted the city also leases 1,600 square feet of office space in their earlier location for 11 public works and building staff. That costs the city \$3,000 a month.

Council could sell city hall lot

Rants was elected to the city council in 2019, the same year discussions started about building a recreation center and city hall. The following year, the city negotiated an

agreement with a developer to donate land for a civic center.

The city also discussed selling some land to pay for building a city hall on a LaGae Family Trust lot it owns. It is designated for a city administration building.

Rants — the council's project sponsor for a city hall building — said using proceeds from the sale of city land makes sense.

"We would not have to issue bonds, we have no debt and we don't want any debt," Rants stated.

However, the city council recently held two closed sessions to discuss the possible sale of the city hall lot. Rants called the LaGae parcel the city's first option for a city hall.

"But it is in the city's business district, so if we build there, we lose the option of having a restaurant or other business that would be a benefit to the city and our citizens," Rant stated. "We have to try to balance what's best in the long term."

The city recently returned another LaGae lot to the area's developers because the city had no immediate plans to build a recreation center at that site. The developers donated the land with the requirement the city would build such a center within five years.

2023 important year

Rants noted the library space lease will expire in 2026. He hoped the city would start making definite plans to build a city hall next year.

"It would take about two budget years to execute something that big," Rants said. "So 2023 is a pivotal year."

City officials estimated some 12,000 square feet will be needed for current and future needs.

"We have to figure out what's the best use for the land," he added. "We do think the city hall should remain on the west side of the city (I-25 is the dividing line) and the city does have a lot of land conveyed to us on the east side. So we need to take a good look at things."

