



**DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, October 8, 2024
(In Office and Remote)**

A G E N D A

Time*

9:30 a.m.

**EPIC Assessment of Childcare Expansion in Douglas
County**

Water Commission Referral Process

Agenda Item

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

THROUGH: DOUGLAS J. DEBORD, COUNTY MANAGER

FROM: TERENCE T. QUINN, AICP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TQ
MICHAEL HILL, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

CC: JENNIFER L. EBY, AICP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
DIANE SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL

SUBJECT: EPIC ASSESSMENT OF CHILDCARE EXPANSION IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

SUMMARY

Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) conducted an exploration of intergenerational engagement opportunities and an assessment of childcare expansion in Douglas County. EPIC has completed the assessment and has key findings and recommendations for the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) consideration.

BACKGROUND

In a work session on December 11, 2023, the BCC approved funding EPIC to complete an assessment of childcare including exploration of intergenerational engagement opportunities in Douglas County. From March to July 2024, EPIC conducted this study which included a review of local and national intergenerational models and the current supply and future need for childcare in Douglas County. The focus for this study centered around identifying opportunities that promote economic growth, improve quality of life across generations, are cost effective and have long-term sustainability.

Douglas County formed a leadership group to coordinate with EPIC on this assessment which included staff from the departments of Public Health, Human Services and Community Development. Through this assessment EPIC conducted stakeholder interviews of key employers and economic development organizations, childcare providers and model programs, and county staff. A survey of childcare providers was conducted to understand the current start of childcare in the County.

DISCUSSION

The assessment found that there is a significant shortage of childcare options in Douglas County for infants and toddlers. Current licensed slots can accommodate 17% of infants (0-18 months) and 38% of toddlers (18-36 months). This shortage is accompanied by the considerable financial burden of paying about \$1,700 per month, or 20-28% of take-home

pay, for one infant or toddler slot. The availability of childcare workers is also limited. Programs reported they are unable to hire qualified staff which limits how many children they can serve. The limitations and expense of childcare are key factors restricting parents' decisions to return to the workforce.

The following short-term recommendations were proposed for the BCC's consideration to address these concerns while meeting the focus areas of the assessment. Additional long-term opportunities to expand childcare supply may include prospective new development opportunities and corporate partnerships.

- **Early Childhood Service Corps (ECSC) \$40,774**: Identifies older adult residents who desire meaningful engagement and provides them a comprehensive training and certification program. Upon completion, older adults will be hired or can volunteer with partnering Douglas County childcare programs. ECSC is currently offering this curriculum and connections throughout the Denver Metro area. This amount, proposed as part of the Older Adult Initiative 2025 budget request, would include 48 hours of recruitment and site supervision and background checks, and required coursework for 16 Douglas County older adult students.
- **Property Tax Incentive Program**: The County could create a program using the authority granted by Senate Bill 24-002 to reduce the tax burden for Douglas County childcare providers. Such an incentive could reduce the providers overall costs of business that could be passed on in savings to families or increase pay for childcare workers.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is prepared to discuss the findings and recommendations provided from the EPIC assessment with the BCC to determine next steps.

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FROM: TERENCE T. QUINN, AICP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CC: DJ BECKWITH, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
LAUREN PULVER, PLANNING SUPERVISOR
KATI CARTER, AICP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PLANNING RESOURCES
STEVEN E. KOSTER, AICP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PLANNING SERVICES
ZEKE LYNCH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING
JANET HERMAN, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING
CHRIS PRATT, MANAGING COUNTY ATTORNEY

SUBJECT: WATER COMMISSION REFERRAL PROCESS

SUMMARY

Based on direction from the Board of County Commissioners (Board), staff has developed a proposed process for the Water Commission (Commission) to act as an advisory referral agency for land use and engineering projects that relate to water. The process and projects identified by staff applicable for review by the Water Commission are described below.

REFERRAL PROCESS

The Commission has been added to the County's land use referral agency database. In advance of each Commission meeting, staff will provide the members with a list of projects with links to project files to be reviewed in advance of the meeting. Members can notify staff if there are projects on the list that they would like brought up for discussion at the upcoming Commission meeting. This project list will be added to the Commission's meeting agenda as a consent agenda item.

The current timing of monthly Commission meetings may impact the ability to comment on every project during the standard referral timeline and may require comments to be submitted outside of this process or additional meetings of the Commission to be convened.

REFERRAL PROJECTS FOR WATER COMMISSION

Land Use

In an effort to identify all land use projects that impact water, as directed by the Board, staff proposes that all land use projects that are sent on referral will be sent to the Commission. Administrative projects in which a determination of water adequacy has already been made will not be provided to the Commission for review. However, administrative projects that trigger a review pursuant to the Water Supply Standards in Douglas County Zoning Resolution (DCZR) Section 18A will be provided to the Commission. For a sense of the scope of this work, during August 4 land use projects would have met the proposed criteria to be provided to the Commission.

Land use projects that do not require a referral process will not be provided to the Commission given that there is no advisory role for review unless there is some special provision for such additional review. Although, DCZR Section 18A includes processes that do not prescribe a referral process but allow for review “by the County’s water consultant and any other referral agencies deemed relevant by staff.” These would likely also be provided to the Water Commission for review.

Public Works Engineering

Through the above land use referral process, the Commission will have the opportunity to review many of the projects that the Public Works Engineering Department reviews with impacts to water. Final plats typically require submittal of drainage reports and construction plans for water quality ponds or channel stabilization improvements.

Public Works Engineering projects outside of the land use review process are not typically set up in a system for public access to project information and supporting documentation. This may require additional staff resources to prepare materials for the Commission to review each month. These items may include Capital Improvement Projects that impact stormwater.

DISCUSSION

Given the volume of projects that will be sent to the Commission for possible discussion each month, the Board may want to consider narrowing the scope of the Commission’s project review to only items that will go before the Board for a decision.

Public Works Engineering projects typically must adhere to other regulatory requirements, such as Federal standards, or are referred to other water quality authorities for review and compliance. It is not clear how Commission comments may impact a project’s ability to move forward if it meets all other necessary regulatory criteria.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is prepared to discuss this with the Board and begin implementing this process at the September 23 Water Commission meeting.