

## **Nomination for the Program Excellence Award for Outstanding Partnerships – Intergovernmental Cooperation**

Within the Denver metropolitan area in Colorado, the City of Westminster has served as a principled leader, greatly contributing to strong, representative, local government and intergovernmental cooperation. The City recognizes that intergovernmental cooperation is a critical component to responsible local government management and views intergovernmental cooperation as fundamentally essential to the quality of life in the Denver metropolitan area and the provision of exceptional services. Whether the topic is growth management, transportation improvements, air quality, water quality protection, or storm drainage improvements, Westminster believes greater achievements and continuous improvement to services can be reached through the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation. The City's Staff is continuously challenged to provide exceptional services by "thinking outside of the box" when addressing service improvement or other issues, whether specific to Westminster or multi-jurisdictional. This philosophy to challenge, be creative, and continuously improve services is reflected in the large number of intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) the City of Westminster is party to, many of which are complex requiring special patience and diligence. Illustrations of the City's ongoing commitment to exceptional services and intergovernmental cooperation include:

**The Interstate 25 Corridor IGAs** – In 1986, the Cities of Westminster and Thornton negotiated an historic (first of its kind in the state) IGA to proactively address the issues associated with the development of the Interstate 25 (I-25) corridor north of 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In the negotiation of the IGA, the Cities made a commitment to planned and orderly growth; to regulating the location of activities and development that may result in increased demands for services; to providing for the orderly development and extension of governmental services; to simplifying governmental structure where possible; to accomplishing quality development; to reducing and avoiding, where possible, friction between the two cities; to promoting the economic viability of each respective community; and to raising revenues sufficient to meet the needs of the citizens. The agreement specifically addressed the preparation of a joint land use plan, establishment of annexation and service extension areas and revenue sharing.

In 1997, the Cities of Westminster, Thornton and Broomfield entered into an IGA to prepare a feasibility study for the construction of an interchange or interchanges on I-25 within the corridor. As a result of the study, Westminster and Thornton entered into a second IGA to design an interchange at 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 1999. In 2000, Westminster and Thornton entered into yet another IGA for the joint preparation of the land use plan that allows for planned growth in this corridor. Also in 2000, the boundaries of the original 1986 IGA were amended to include the properties within the corridor that have been annexed by the Cities since 1986. In November 2004, the I-25 corridor growth area IGA was

again amended modifying the original agreements method of revenue sharing by simplifying language and eliminating property tax from revenue sharing and the construction of a second interchange at 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 2005.

**Clear Creek Watershed Protections** – In 1980s, two significant watershed agreements were initiated: the Cosmic Agreement (signed 1988) and Clear Creek Watershed Management Agreement (signed 1994). The Clear Creek Water Quality Agreement has been nicknamed the “Cosmic Agreement” due to the wide berth of issues and conflicts over water rights and water quality on Clear Creek between its signatories the Cities of Westminster, Thornton and Golden and the Coors Brewing Company. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Coors and Golden were pursuing a concept to acquire additional water from Clear Creek that involved taking water that belonged to downstream water users in Westminster and Thornton and replacing it with treated wastewater treatment plant effluent. Westminster and Thornton fought this concept very strenuously in a number of forums, including the Water Quality Control Commission and the State Water Courts. The parties decided to sit down and negotiate an innovative settlement to this problem that involved the joint funding of a physical solution to the problem that gave Coors and Golden additional water supplies from Clear Creek while preserving the quality of Westminster’s and Thornton’s water supply. The parties also put to rest over 30 separate legal disputes.

The Clear Creek Watershed Management Agreement commenced in 1980 due to several major taste and odor events which caused the Cities of Westminster and Thornton to be concerned about the quality of their raw water supply – Standley Lake. By 1985, the City of Northglenn joined in on the monitoring program that included sampling the canal headgates on Clear Creek, the inflows to Standley Lake and the lake itself. In the early 1990s, a cooperative effort was initiated between the Cities of Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster and other stakeholders who were part of the watershed above Standley Lake. In 1994, 23 parties signed the agreement and affirmed the commitment to cooperate on watershed monitoring activities. Besides the signers of this water quality agreement, there are cities, counties, government entities, private interests, and others involved in ancillary efforts through groups like the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the EPA. The monitoring program amounts to a yearly effort of over \$100,000; approximately 95% of this program is contributed as in-kind services.

**Standley Lake Regional Park** – In 1998, Jefferson County committed \$2.9 million in Open Space funds to purchase 185 acres of land from Farmers Reservoir and Irrigation Company (FRICO). FRICO maintains Standley Lake as a water storage facility, providing drinking water for the Cities of Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster. In all,

Jefferson County conveyed almost 1,800 acres of land surrounding the lake as well as the water recreation rights to 1,110 surface acres of the lake to the City of Westminster.

The first phase of Standley Lake improvements (\$2.5 million) was funded by Jefferson County. Work was completed in 2000, including the new street access, new internal roads and trails, boat ramps, fish cleaning stations, and campground and restroom areas. The conceptual 20-year master plan calls for long-range, phased development around the entire lake with group picnic facilities, additional trail links, and improved campgrounds.

Standley Lake impacts the region by providing year-round hiking and fishing and with seasonal boating, water skiing, camping, sailing, windsurfing, and nature viewing opportunities. Standley Lake is home to one of the few pairs of nesting bald eagles in the region. Through joint efforts of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Colorado Bird Observatory, Jefferson County Open Space and the City of Westminster, the portion of the lake and lands used by the eagles has been permanently restricted as a wildlife habitat area. In 1997, a permanent viewing blind was constructed.

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Libraries' primary focus in the operation of Standley Lake is to protect the lake's water quality, ensure the safety and health of the visitors using the recreation area, and achieve a self-sustaining operation. The development of Standley Lake Regional Park has been the result of these multiple agencies working together to achieve these goals.

**Westminster/Hyland Hills Cooperative Agreement** – The City of Westminster and Hyland Hills Park and Recreation District first entered into an Agreement for Cooperation in 1983. Prior to the agreement, Westminster had provided park and recreation services and facilities for 11 years and the District for 28 years to an area within both jurisdictions. The Agreement included obligations necessary for expanding the existing Hyland Hills Golf Course by nine holes and the joint use of facilities and programs by residents in the District and the City. Residency was extended to Westminster residents and District residents, who lived outside the overlap area for the use of the golf course, ice arena, and racquetball courts located at the golf course. Additionally, the City and the District agreed to pursue cooperative agreement on recreation programming on a case-by-case approach.

In 1990, the City and Hyland Hills entered into a joint lease agreement for the purpose of providing a Senior Center in the vacated Adams County School District 50 School Orchard Court. Both entities agreed to jointly manage the facility and reciprocal residency privileges were extended to include facility and program use. In 1990, an updated intergovernmental agreement was agreed to, allowing Hyland Hills and the City of Westminster reciprocal use of all District and City facilities and programs. This included Water World, Adventure Golf, the Ice Arena, and Golf Course,

and Westminster's Swim and Fitness Center, City Park Recreation Center, Countryside Recreation Center and any new parks or facilities.

In 1992, City Council entered into a new agreement with Hyland Hills pertaining to the renovation of an old grocery store building to jointly participate in design and construction. Day-to-day operations are conducted by the City and revenues and expenses are shared equally by the entities. An advisory committee provides advice on operation and management of the Senior Center. Over \$1.2 million was invested in acquisition and redevelopment of the facility.

In 1998, Council authorized the Mayor and other appropriate City Officials to sign the Intergovernmental Agreement between the City and Hyland Hills Park and Recreation District for the financing, construction, ongoing operations and maintenance of the proposed "Ice Centre at the Promenade" ice arena project. In 1999, the City and the District entered into a joint operating agreement for the \$14 million Sun Microsystems Ice Centre<sup>SM</sup> (Sun Microsystems purchased the naming rights for \$1.5 million), which was dedicated as a three-rink arena, one of the largest ice facilities in North America. The 143,000 square foot facility includes three NHL regulation size ice sheets for public skating, hockey, figure skating, and NHL visiting team training; seating for 1,600 spectators; state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems; a pro shop; Jackson's All-American Sports Grill; locker rooms; and space for several retail shops. The facility is owned by the City of Westminster and managed by Hyland Hills.

**College Hill Library/Front Range Community College** – In 1995, Council approved the IGA with the State of Colorado for the joint construction and operation of a library facility at the Front Range Community College. The City and College agreed to jointly develop, build, furnish, staff, operate and maintain a joint library and media center on the college campus. In 1998, the 76,173 s.f. College Hill Library opened with approximately 44,000 s.f. on the upper level dedicated to the College and 32,000 s.f. on the lower level dedicated to public library needs. A \$9.6 million construction budget included \$5.8 million from the College and \$3.8 million from the City. A joint collection of over 150,000 books, magazines, audio books, videos, many electronic databases, free public internet access, microform titles, and other media are featured at the facility. Both operations are managed and staffed separately by the two entities.

These intergovernmental agreements are a few examples of the City of Westminster's commitment to exceptional services achieved via an emphasis and dedication to intergovernmental cooperation. The extensive cooperation beyond governmental boundaries has resulted in a significant improvement to the quality of products and services that are provided to the community.