



# Awards for Excellence

IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE

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Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Awards for Excellence in Government Finance recognize innovative programs and contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.



## 2018 Winner for Exceptionally Well Implemented GFOA Best Practice:

### CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

#### 2017 GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROCESS: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC OUTREACH

The City and County of Denver periodically authorizes general obligation bonds to restore, replace, and expand infrastructure and capital assets across the city. Under the mayor's leadership, the City and County of Denver initiated a complex planning process to identify, evaluate, and recommend to voters a series of infrastructure investments to help continue to make Denver a world class city. The project was implemented solely by city staff with minimal resources and the involvement of over 100 staff citywide to provide subject matter expertise, evaluate project ideas, and staff community events.

The public engagement phase of the process, the most robust in the city's history, resulted in over 4,000 comments and ideas from the community. The foundational emphasis for the planning process was to be inclusive, equitable, and designate up to half of the investment for transportation and mobility improvements. Stakeholder engagement occurred at all levels of the organization, the community, and with elected officials and also throughout the process at every milestone.

This planning process was a turning point for the city to address deferred capital maintenance and address population growth by fixing and repairing existing assets and constructing new ones. The robust public outreach process helped Denver residents feel engaged, informed, and represented, ultimately leading to strong approval of a \$937 million bond package for 460 projects.

The proposed bond package was designed to retain current tax rates, while saving taxpayer dollars by repairing infrastructure before it deteriorates and providing new facilities for the growth of the city.



#### GFOA BEST PRACTICE: Communicating Capital Improvement Strategies

GFOA recommends that organizations develop a communications plan for public participation focused on explaining capital needs, options, and strategies and facilitating feedback in advance of any major capital program. Capital programs gain from the support of the community both to ensure that capital projects will deliver expected and desired outcomes as well as to ensure there is adequate support for the investment.

See <http://www.gfoa.org/communicating-capital-improvement-strategies> for more information on this best practice.