

A Brief Summary Description of Denver Mayoral Speeches

The date of the election of the mayor and his term of office is set by law – the Territory or the State or the City.

1. Provisional / informal election was held on December 19, 1859.
Provisional / informal election was held first Monday of October 1860 and it approved the Denver (City) Constitution which provided for semi-annual election of Mayor in April and October.¹

The proposed Territory of Jefferson Laws said that upon “the incorporation of such town, the County Court shall appoint a day for the holding an election... (the mayor) shall hold his office until the first Monday of the following March” (1860). Thus future mayors would serve for 1 year. **THIS DOCUMENT WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY THE US GOVT.**²

2. In 1861 the Colorado Territory was created. The State Legislature established and controlled the rules for all city and county elections. These laws were reflected in the Denver City Charter.
The Denver City Charter of 1861 set the first election to be the third Monday of November 1861. It set the date of the future election to be each year on the first Monday of April (a term 1 year--except for 1874-1876 which was a two-year term).¹
3. The 1876 Colorado State First Legislature changed the election of city officers from April to be the same time as the State General Election: First Tuesday of October 1877, 1878, and 1879 and the Tuesday following the first Monday of November 1880.¹⁺⁷
4. The State Legislature 1881 changed the election from November back to April (covering Nov 1882-April 1883 terms)¹ [First Tuesday of April]⁸
5. The State Legislature 1885 changed the term from 1 year to 2 years¹
6. The Home Rule Charter was approved April 1904. It provided that all administrative matters were removed from the State Legislature and transferred to the City. It provided for elections to be held in 3rd Tuesday of May with the terms to be for 4 years and to begin in 1st Secular day of June.³
7. February 14, 1913, Charter was changed from direct election of the mayor to the election of five Commissioners (City Council) who then selected one of themselves to serve as mayor.¹
8. May 9, 1916, Charter was changed to return to the direct election of the Mayor and that Mayor Speer would be installed immediately (May 17). Future election days remained the 3rd Tuesday in May and the term to begin the 1st Secular Day of June.⁴
9. Nov 4, 1952, Charter was changed so the mayor’s term begins the first secular day of July and extended the current (1951) mayor’s term to that date⁵. If no mayoral candidate has majority, then a runoff election will be held third Tuesday of June with the winner to be the one with the greatest number of votes.
10. August 11, 1992, Charter changed the election to be the first Tuesday of May, the date of the date of the runoff election to the first Tuesday of June, and the mayor’s term to begin the third Monday of July. Term remained 4 years⁶.

Generally, the Mayor made an Inaugural Address upon being sworn into office. However, not all did so (or at least their message has not been found). The length of the Address varied from just two sentences to multiple pages of typed text. The Address shifted from the City Council's meeting to separate public outdoor events.

The "State of the City" address (which was first called that in 1984), actual began earlier when the term of office was extended to two years. The address outlined accomplishments and challenges for the various departments.

Occasionally the outgoing Mayor would make a farewell speech at the inaugural summarizing his accomplishments and or issues still to be addressed. These have been included since they served the same purpose as the State of the City address.

Sources

- 1 "A History of Denver's Municipal Government, 1858-1930 [Chapter: Growth]", City and County of Denver – Department of Planning, C978.883 D43595hi 1951, Denver Public Library.
- 2 "Provisional Laws and Joint Resolutions Passed at the First and Called Sessions of the General Assembly of Jefferson Territory, held at Denver City, J. T., November and December, 1859 and January, 1860, C978.008 W525 reel 288 no.2868 (microfilm – Western American 1550-1900) or C345.22 J359prc, Denver Public Library.
- 3 "Charter of the City and County of Denver: Framed by the Second Charter Convention, February 6, 1904, by authority of Article XX of the Constitution. To be voted on March 29, 1904", C352.0788 D437dec 1904, Denver Public Library.
- 4 "Charters of the City and County of Denver adopted by vote of the people March 29, 1904. With all amendments thereof, to and including May 17, 1916...", C352.0788 D437ch 1916
- 5 "Charter of City and County of Denver", C352.0788 D437dec 1953, Denver Public Library
- 6 [Denver City Ordinances], Denver Board of Councilmen, C352.078883 D437mu Ordinances 1992 v.1, Denver Public Library
- 7 "Colorado Election Law", C342.788075 E3811co 1877, Denver Public Library
- 8 "Amended Charter of the City of Denver, approved February 13, 1883", C352.0788 d437dec 1883, Denver Public Library.