

Open Boulder 2017 Candidate Questionnaire

2017 Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire. The answers you provide to the questions below will help inform Open Boulder as it makes its endorsement decisions. They will also be provided to the public, verbatim. Please note that unless noted otherwise, your responses will be cut off after about 150 words, per response, when we post them publicly. Short and clear responses are best!

***THINK ABOUT THE PROBLEM AS THOUGHTFUL, WITH A LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND REALISM LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS**

As this is an all-electronic questionnaire, links to related discussion on your website are fine (as long as the link works!). We will delete links to other websites besides your own.

Good luck!

1. What is your name?

Eric Budd

2. Why are you running for City Council and what are your top three priorities for the coming term? How are you qualified to represent the residents of Boulder? (500 word limit, links to your website(s) encouraged)

I'm running for Boulder City Council because I believe we need bold, progressive leadership to fight climate change, to honestly face our critical housing and transportation demands, and to become a more welcoming community with broader participation in local decisions.

With Boulder's high housing prices, many of my peers have made the hard choice to purchase homes and start families elsewhere. But Boulder is my community, and I plan to stay here to help lead us through these challenges. I want to be known as someone who worked on all these challenges — made strong progress on climate change, while growing the economy, and making sure we're meeting the housing and transportation needs of our community.

Over the last seven years I have become more and more involved in our community:

- I'm an economist and have worked as a project and product manager for technology companies in the Boulder area
- I helped create a connected toy startup helped kids learn engineering
- analyzed B-cycle bike sharing system usage to understand how a system of bikes help people get around Boulder
- delivered an Ignite Boulder talk on creative housing options in the city
- completed the 2015 Ironman Boulder
- served on committees for Community Cycles and Better Boulder, worked with the Boulder Community Housing Association
- President of Newland Court Condo Association to successfully lead homeowners through a difficult restoration
- I currently chair the City of Boulder Landmarks Board.

<https://www.electericbudd.org/>

3. Currently, the Boulder City Council is composed of nine members, elected at large, in most cases for a four year term and term limited after three terms. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem are chosen by the Council from among Council members (i.e., not directly by voters). Given this structure, what changes, if any, would you like to see? Please be specific and explain why you favor these changes.

First I would pursue a districting solution as it's most closely tied to improving representation. While I'm open to many possible implementations, I think a mixed system of several districts and at-large council members would increase geographical representation as well as bringing demographic shifts in representation. Increased representation can also help drive engagement for underrepresented demographics — including younger people and residents living in South Boulder, East Boulder, and Gunbarrel. One potential method could be to form 3 districts, with 2 members elected from each district and 3 at large members. Additional solutions I would seek are direct election of mayor, as well as looking at professional council members allow more people to be able to participate in the system who are currently excluded for work or family reasons. I'd also consider ranked choice voting or some other improved forms of voting systems.

4. How would you make our City government – whether serving on Boards or Council, or participating in the City organization's outreach - of greater interest to younger generations, minorities, families and others that currently find it hard to engage in City affairs?

I've personally used social networks and news delivery tools to help get information out in the community — and I've found that people take more of an interest if they learn and know about information that affects them. We need to update the city web site, communications, and boards to make information more accessible, digestible, and shareable in order to inform a broader set of people. We can expand use of mobile applications to allow people to “opt in” to alerts and issues rather than having to seek out information about what the city's working on. The city uses social media well and I think they can continue to expand the ways to make it easier to be informed.

5. What is your opinion on the current state of density in Boulder and the concerns of many residents regarding the cost of housing? Please include your views on government vs. private sector approaches to address these concerns.

Government subsidized affordable housing is important for our lowest income members, but is not a mass-market solution for the middle class. Many of our lowest-paying jobs in the city will simply not pay enough for these employees to find adequate housing and we need to ensure a diversity of incomes and people in Boulder. As the income scale increases into middle-income categories, we need to look at market solutions to help address our housing needs to avoid subsidizing a significant percentage of our housing and save subsidies for people that need it most. We need to focus on adding housing options that provide compact, livable places to serve middle class people and families. Generally, our city has used strictly government approaches to achieve affordable housing; we need to look at density and market solutions to add to that mix of options to improve affordability.

6. Are there areas of Boulder that could support increased residential density, and if so where?

The city needs to enable and encourage redevelopment of lower-intensity areas to mixed-use housing and retail services that are served well by transportation (i.e. Diagonal Plaza, 29th Street Mall, 55th and Arapahoe). Additionally, our transit corridors can be a place with higher residential density which can help us expand our transit service and access throughout the city. In neighborhoods, pursuing granny flats and small increases in occupancy in single-family homes will be the easiest places to start. Sensitive infill that attempts to address parking and traffic impacts by expanding transportation options as well as using a more broad parking district program. I'm also interested to explore duplexes and townhomes to determine how and on what conditions we can allow these by-right.

7. What is your current position on municipalization of Boulder's electrical service? Has your opinion changed since municipalization was first debated seven years ago?

Like many in our community, I've supported moving to municipalize our energy system. I voted for the measure in 2011 and have supported continuing the effort as a current candidate for city council. But two major outcomes last week have changed my thinking — the partial rejection of Boulder's application to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission and Xcel's proposal to move to 55% renewable energy by 2026. Given Colorado's regulatory burdens for Boulder to municipalize, the economic benefits of municipalization have fallen to the extent that I no longer believe funding municipalization is in the best interest of the city. We need to move forward with a strong local strategy to meet our climate goals and focus on reducing the city's carbon footprint as outlined in Boulder's Climate Commitment to reduce all emissions 80% by 2050.

8. The tax on City electric bills that funds the City's municipalization efforts is due to expire the end of 2017. What is your position on renewing the tax in this election year?

I do not support renewing the tax. See answer above or read my full statement at <https://www.electericbudd.org/muni-statement>

9. Which is closer to your view and why: (a) It is the primary goal of the Open Space program to preserve and protect lands under its authority, and public access should be allowed mainly when it can be done with minimal or no impact; or (b) Public access is a good in its own right, and therefore access and preservation should be considered equally balanced goals.

B is closer to my view — we need to determine guidelines for how much recreation we can permit and how to manage regional demand for the city’s open space system. We should build on the success of Boulder’s open space program by making our trails sustainable and by making new purchases strategically to preserve vulnerable land, improve connections between existing open space and through the region. Our new purchases should lean toward prioritizing recreational uses and we should consider trails on new land to disperse impacts of recreation on our current system which faces increased pressure from population growth in the Front Range.

10. Can you see yourself supporting a cap, in some form, of the number of people using a specific Open Space resource? What sorts of considerations would justify that type of policy?

I support using the least-restrictive alternatives to open space management. A few criteria I would look are—determining trail construction limitations compared to the amount of users, measuring any habitat loss of the environment or limiting use based on the effect of the presence of humans or dogs for the wildlife in the area. We should also look for opportunities to balance the load on our system or build more sustainable paths for heavily-used trails (the recent improvements at Chautauqua is a good example of a trail built for very use). Any night closures must be targeted, need strong justification, and be minimally restrictive (i.e. limited to overnight hours).

11. The recent success of the City's economy has created jobs and vibrancy throughout the City, as well as increased tax receipts, but can also be seen a different way, as creating stress on limited resources available to our residents – traffic, demand for open space, and some would say a reduced quality of life. How do you see it, and how would you seek to address these stressors on our community?

A lot of our conversation has been framed through the lens of “jobs / population balance,” which I don’t think is the correct framing. Not only do jobs in the city and region create increased tax receipts, Boulder also tends to create productive, high-income jobs that bring benefits to the local economy and the world. As a city, I think we need to invest (or use the market) to further to address some of the impacts on quality of life — making sure that housing is accessible to a range of income levels by building more on transit corridors and providing infill options in neighborhoods, invest in transportation options that focus on moving more people, and to look for additional open space acquisitions as ways to reduce the burden of recreation from our open space system.

12. Do you have any ideas for how to expand the City government's relationship with Boulder's entrepreneurial economy?

I would like to see the city work with the entrepreneurial community to develop and adopt guidelines for diverse hiring practices. It's important that as companies grow here in Boulder, we work with the entrepreneurial community to have shared goals and support systems around diversity. The city could also look at small “accelerator” or “hackathon” type programs that offered limited amounts of seed money to promote innovative solutions around some of our tough problems (a good model to follow is Go Code Colorado). We have a wealth of talent from entrepreneurs, the university, and national labs that could have better intersections into our city government.

13. It is undisputed that Boulder has a growing problem with homelessness and transiency. What are your thoughts on how the City should address these two distinct populations? Do you support increased funding to address these issues, and, if so, how would you propose to use such funds?

The city's goal needs to focus on exit strategies from homelessness and transitions to stable housing—the solution to homelessness is a home. We constantly make tradeoffs from serving the most people to serving fewer people well, and should focus on solutions that all lead to people becoming housed. Success should be measured by how many new housing opportunities we can create, reducing recidivism and addressing mental health issues often tied to chronic homelessness. We should consider expanding our housing voucher program which is the fastest way to get people housed. For longer-term solutions, the city needs to seriously consider opportunities to construct housing that will help address chronic demand in the city. For our more transient population, we need incentives to make it easier for people not to stay on public land. A time-restricted, limited camping option may be an incentive that also helps keep people out of the court system

14. Each working day, tens of thousands of commuters pour into Boulder from elsewhere on the Front Range, causing traffic jams, high carbon emissions, and burdens on City services, but also adding customers for our retail businesses and therefore benefitting the economy. Would you strive to accommodate that traffic, reduce it, or channel it to other modes? Whatever your answer, why?

We need to push forward on our best options to move more people instead of just focusing on moving cars. We need to make continued investments to shift our traffic into other modes of transportation. The strongest steps Boulder can take are to adopt a city-wide EcoPass including residents and employees, to develop a map for a city-wide bike network with a plan to reduce gaps in our system, and to use more parking districts to give a nudge to reduce the incentive to drive. Because Boulder is and will continue to be a job center, we need to embrace in-commuting as necessary — while continuing to make investments to ensure we reduce the impacts. Our transportation improvements can benefit existing residents while also reducing friction in our future ability to grow the economy.

15. The City has a policy of limiting parking spaces, especially downtown, to encourage the use of alternate modes of travel for residents and employees. Do you agree with continuing this policy? Why or why not?

The strongest steps Boulder can take are to adopt a city-wide ecopass including residents and employees, to develop a map for a city-wide bike network with a plan to reduce gaps in our system, and to use more parking districts. For new investment in the

city, we need to prioritize funding other transportation options, including buses, bike infrastructure, and ride-sharing. Higher parking costs for employees should be bundled with a parking cash-out model so that changing transportation modes can bring a financial benefit. The city should consider a transportation maintenance fee to fund transportation projects as the city as a whole benefits from these investments. To plan for the longer term, we need to change our land-use patterns to reduce parking minimums while investing in alternative transportation options and planning for a future that includes more ride-sharing and autonomous vehicles.