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Page 1: 2017 Candidate Questionnaire

Q1 What is your name?

Jill Adler Grano

Q2 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 am running for City Council because engaging with my community and finding solutions to challenges that face us all is my passion. Now - more than ever - Boulder needs passionate, experienced, diverse leaders to help lead the way on housing, our energy future, transportation, open space, social justice issues, and business support.

I am the mother of two young boys, Ryder and Treker, both of whom help inform my vision for the future of our community. I moved to Boulder 11 years ago after completing my degree in Political Science at The College of William & Mary. I quickly fell in love with Boulder's natural beauty, creative spirit and commitment to the environment. My first year here I taught civics at The Watershed School where I engaged with my students in community issues and volunteered with Meals on Wheels. Later, I joined the Board of New Era Colorado where I served for five years. Through New Era I helped launch a campaign to reduce disposable bags. That campaign resulted in our bag fee ordinance, which has prevented thousands of bags from entering our landfill.

I am currently the Vice Chair of the City of Boulder Board of Zoning Adjustments and serve on the board of Thistle Communities, a nonprofit dedicated to bringing more affordable housing to Boulder. For the last few years I have worked as an advocate for our mobile home communities, helping save dozens of families from eviction, and ultimately working with state legislators to help pass a bill to save mobile homes from tax lien investors.

I participated in the Chamber of Commerce leadership program, have served on multiple housing working groups, and have been named one of the top "40 under Forty young professionals who are shaping the future of the Boulder Valley" by BizWest.

In addition to the passion, commitment, and leadership that I bring to the table, I ask that you consider the following:

* I am openly gay. Boulder has not had an openly LGBTQ City Councilperson in more than four decades. With the rise on anti-LGBTQ sentiment across the country, representation for this community is more significant than ever.

*I have young children. A large portion of Boulder residents are families and it is important to represent their voices on Council.

*I am 36 years old. More than 50% of Boulder residents are between the ages of 25 and 43, and we do not have a single council member representing that demographic.

*I am a real estate professional. With housing and development as two of our most important issues to tackle in the coming years, it is important to have someone on council who understands these issues from a first hand perspective.

My top two priorities as a Councilwoman will be: 1. Work to achieve more affordable and accessible housing; 2. Continue to work on our energy future to reduce carbon emissions as quickly as possible. Additionally, I am passionate about tackling homelessness, food insecurity, and other social justice issues that face our community.

Q3 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.

I support our current structure of at large elections rather than breaking Boulder up into districts for elections. I am currently weighing our Mayoral structure and will be able to speak to this more clearly if I have the opportunity to serve on council. Reasons to move to publicly elected Mayor: The Mayor is an important figurehead for the City and a spokesperson for the community in times of disaster, distress, or when speaking in solidarity with other cities, states, or even countries. People look to the Mayor for guidance and assurance, therefore (s)he should be someone the majority of the community resonates with. Reason to keep current structure: The Mayor also serves as the head of council and has an important role in managing meetings & promoting respectful conversation. As the leader of the council, it makes sense that (s)he would be appointed by colleagues.

Q4 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 feel strongly that City Council should be a paid position in order to encourage younger generations, minorities, and those with families to run for office. This will have a trickle down effect of board participation because many understand that experience on a board is helpful in order to run for Council. I know first hand what it is like to be a full time working mother who wants to run for City Council. I have supported my family for more than a decade and I have never had a trust fund - or even a savings account until recently. I have worked very hard to be in a position where running for City Council is a possibility for me and I feel so grateful to now be in that position. I recognize that my path is not available to everyone which is why this needs to be a paid position.

Q5 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.

I support our blue line, our height limit, and preserving our open space (not building into it). Within those constraints, I see opportunity to densify in a few key areas (discussed below) in order to create more affordable & accessible housing. My top priorities to address housing are: 1. Incentivize affordable housing through expedited review processes, reduced development fees, and staff level approval for select "by right" variances for affordable units. 2. Relax regulations on RL-1 neighborhoods to allow homeowners to have more options on their own land. (ie. Allow homeowners opportunity to build OAU's & ADU's; duplexes & triplexes & tiny homes on larger lots; etc. 3. Seek opportunities for zoning overlays in industrial & commercial areas so as to allow housing units on top of existing spaces without a net loss of the industrial or commercial space. I would also like to explore community land trusts & other mechanisms to separate land & improvements.

Q6 Are there areas of Boulder that could support increased residential density, and if so where?

The primary locations that could support increased residential density are on top of underutilized commercial and industrial zones (without losing commercial and industrial space). Consider Wilderness Place, for example. This commercial/industrial area is already home to fabulous businesses, breweries, and art studios, plus is located near major bike and car transit ways. Another location to gently increase density is in our RL-1 zones. We can achieve this without changing neighborhood character through relaxing regulations around OAU's and ADU's and allow duplexes and triplexes on larger lots. Finally, we should look towards density bonuses for affordable housing, especially along transit corridors.

Q7 What is your current position on municipalization of Boulder's electrical service? Has your opinion changed since municipalization was first debated seven years ago?

I support Boulder's effort to municipalize. While our current provider is making strides towards increasing renewables, being in control of our energy future provides the best opportunity to meet our climate energy goals. Xcel is moving more quickly than ever to decarbonize (which is great), but it is the opportunity of a generation to also democratize & decentralize our grid. Being in control of our energy future will provide an opportunity for the business community to form partnerships with the City as we incentivize rooftops solar, micro-grids, battery storage, more efficient monitoring & distribution technologies, and as we move towards electrification of our homes & cars. While the effort has taken longer than hoped, I feel the \$13.4m that we voluntarily taxed ourselves (plus the less than .005% from the general fund that we pulled over the last 6 years) has been worth the progress we have made

Q8 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 support the occupation tax extension and am personally happy to forgo a few cups of coffee over the next 3 year in order to move forward towards condemnation court & FERC to know the true costs of municipalization. I would not support pulling from the general fund to move forward; if the voters do not pass this extension, I will look to the 2018 state elections. It is important to remember that the occupation tax is not coming at the expense of another tax. Voters are not choosing between capital improvements or municipalization. Also, we are not losing all of this great work Xcel is doing to reduce statewide emissions. We will be moving in parallel with them. We should also continue and even increase our citywide work on local carbon reduction projects in parallel with Xcel and our municipalization efforts.

Q9 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.

I am a mixture of A and B. I think it is always important to emphasize conservation first. In the locations where biologists deem appropriate for recreation, I support people playing in nature because connection to nature leads to conservationists & environmental activists in the future. I believe that we have the knowledge and ability to build trails that are appropriate for various user groups (hikers, bikers, children) and that through thoughtful trail design, we can minimize conflict between these groups. Given the success of our open space program - and particularly the heavy use by people throughout the entire region - I think it important that where environmentally possible we provide additional trail options for users in order to spread use and the related impacts. Moving forward, it is also important that we emphasize maintenance of our trails and better education on how to use and protect trails.

Q10 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 cannot see myself supporting a cap on open space use.

Q11 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?

Nearly 50,000 in-commuters has been a problem for Boulder for decades. The most viable solution that I see to chip away at the in-commuting pressure is to increase housing options for in-commuters. I do not believe that the solution to this problem is to stifle job growth. In addition to increasing housing opportunities, I support enhancing multi-modal transportation options, higher parking costs to disincentivize driving, and a community wide eco pass. In order to protect open space, I think that we should increase parking fees for out of town users, work with new technology to educate users on trail etiquette, and spread use where environmentally possible. I would love to see our surrounding communities continue to enhance their open space acquisitions and access.

Q12 Do you have any ideas for how to expand the City government's relationship with Boulder's entrepreneurial economy?

In talking with numerous entrepreneurs in Boulder, affordable space and grant money is what comes up most. Few entrepreneurs start off well funded and many of Boulder's biggest success stories began in garages, basements, and by scraping together money from friends and family. I would like to explore opportunities to create affordable office space in Boulder - this could come in the form of a community benefit, public-private partnerships, a building requirements, or more. Partnering with and supporting some of the umbrella organizations in town that train and support entrepreneurs could go a long way as well.

Q13 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?

I like a lot of the new homelessness strategy that was recently presented to City Council. It is imperative that we seek to better understand who among our homeless population are intentionally traveling & who are trying to transition out of being homeless, receive mental health care, find jobs etc. My concern if we continue to provide resources to both groups equally is that we will miss out on caring for battered women, children, & homeless families. With better intake we can allocate resources properly. I would like to beef up our partnerships with non-profits as well. Many groups, including Bridge House & Attention Homes use the Housing First model, something we should encourage as a city. Bridge House's ready to work program is excellent as well. Whether Bridge House, EFAA, Attention Homes, or many more, our non-profits are on the front line of addressing homelessness & we should support them in any way possible.

Q14 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?

The in-commuter issue must be looked at in conjunction with housing. We have ample data from the Comp Plan surveys to show that people who commute in would live here if there was available housing. As for internal traffic, in an ideal world we would establish a community wide Ecopass and we should embrace all modes of transportation without apology. I support continuing to "right size" streets, however I would like to be more sensitive about the locations we start with, the timing at which we implement it, and the communication to the public. On roads that have been studied and identified as correct locations for "right-sizing," we can begin to ease drivers into the coming changes by first adopting different stoplight patterns, adding stop signs and lights, etc. As we "right-size" I would like to create true cycleways where possible.

Q15 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?

Yes. I do agree with this policy. As a country we have embraced and accommodated the vehicle for generations. It's time to embrace all modes of transportation. It's also important to look towards the future when planning. A good deal of data shows that we will not be using personal vehicles as much in the future. As a working mother of two young children who go to school, play soccer, and take swim lessons throughout Boulder, I find it challenging not to drive sometimes. I recognize, however, that I am using up more roadway, resources, and emitting more carbon than my peers who have committed not to drive. This is not a vendetta against the car for me. It is a balancing of the true costs of driving v. alternative modes.
