

Open Boulder 2017 Candidate Questionnaire

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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 am running for the Boulder City Council because I love this place! I love Boulder for all of its outdoor and cultural assets, for its interesting and accomplished residents, and for all of its unique quirks. I also know that Boulder is facing a variety of challenges that we need to address to make it an even better and more welcoming community. We need to make our streets and civic spaces safer, we need innovative transportation solutions to move people more efficiently from Point A to Point B, and we need to sustain the vitality of our economy while retaining our sense of community.

My key priorities as a City Councilmember reflect the above values. Specifically, I will bring a progressive voice to Council to make our neighborhood streets and civic spaces safer, to promote innovative transportation solutions with wider accessibility so we can reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions, and advance our economy through smart growth and middle-income housing strategies. As demonstrated through my professional career and volunteer public service roles, I have the experience, creativity and commitment to achieve these goals and the passion to make Boulder an even better place.

Please visit my website at www.BillForBoulder.com to learn more about my background and my campaign's priorities on Safety, Mobility, and Vitality.

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.

I believe Boulder still benefits from a broad, community-wide perspective that considers the best interests of the entire community. In the last two years, Boulder's Council has made great strides engaging the entire community on a more pro-active basis, and has increasingly moved away from narrowly or pre-determined interests and toward a progressive view of good governance – we need to sustain this forward momentum. I am very open to exploring optional city governance models, including direct mayoral elections. The direct election of our mayor would serve as a barometer on the direction our community is taking and signal to the full City Council on the priority actions they should address.

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?

We must address this disconnect by electing more members to the City Council who are younger, in similar financial and housing situations, and are more representative of our community. And, we have to make public service cool again and more accessible!

Strategies that would support these goals include greater use of social media, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and iMessage, and make our work more visible by holding more public meetings in more venues around town at times that can accommodate working professionals. And, we can professionalize and improve our abilities to communicate and engage our neighbors. This includes actively recruiting and appointing individuals to boards and commissions who are more reflective of our demographics, as well as encouraging a greater diversity of applicants. I have taken my own steps in this area as a member of the Transportation Advisory Board, and have worked closely with staff to expand its outreach tools beyond standard government press releases and formal public hearings. I’ve personally co-authored op-eds in my TAB Chair role as an additional communication channel and used my social media channels to share information about TAB activities.

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.

Housing affordability is one of the most important issues we face today, and as someone who rents, this is a critically important issue for me. I want Council to actively explore options, in addition to our current strides in housing for our lowest income earners, to address the shortage in market-rate middle income housing so that more young professionals and families can afford to live here.

Boulder can more successfully create mixed-use neighborhoods that offer convenient and affordable access to restaurants and bars, transportation, shopping, and other amenities. As a resident in the Uptown Broadway neighborhood, I believe these 15-minute-type neighborhoods offer viable solutions to Boulder’s needs around housing, reducing traffic congestion, and building community.

As Boulder’s economy continues to grow and attract more businesses and better paying jobs, it will become increasingly important to offset rising home prices with a diversity of housing options that ensure that residents are not squeezed or pushed outside of Boulder for housing needs, which will only compound our traffic headaches. Working with neighborhood groups, we need to identify areas in our community that will

accommodate new and affordable housing, including some of our commercial and industrial-zoned lands.

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

As a resident in the Uptown Broadway neighborhood in North Boulder, I love living in a close-knit community that has access to shopping, great restaurants and bars, mass transit, and Open Space. East Boulder, in particular, seems to be a likely candidate for increased density. One step I think will help in this area is a focus on housing incentives for some of our commercial zones in those areas. This includes density bonuses that make it feasible to develop a more affordable mix of units. I also think we can explore the purchase of our existing housing stock to avoid expensive remodels that only add the price of single-family homes. Another option is to expand the opportunity to add alternative dwelling units (ADUs), otherwise known as “granny-flats,” to existing single family residents. At the same time, we need to be sensitive to neighborhood concerns about higher density uses. It starts with planning processes that are transparent and collaborative with a focus on comprehensive sub-community planning that considers both neighborhood interests and wider community goals.

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?

I moved to Boulder to work for Al Gore on climate issues, and I strongly support Boulder’s 100% renewable power goal. Boulder’s leadership has already encouraged communities around the country toward similar goals, and likely played a role in Xcel’s recent announcement to close several coal-powered plants. While I have strongly supported muni in the past, I no longer support our municipalization effort because I do not believe that it still represents the most cost-effective or efficient course given the urgency of the climate crisis.

I will closely scrutinize the forthcoming final written PUC decision, and encourage everyone to do so, so that we can have open conversations about the best way forward. In this, I will work to fully engage our community to understand perspectives and concerns so that we can take meaningful and impactful actions to address the climate crisis.

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 am grateful that Council will receive guidance from the citizens of Boulder on muni in the November election. My position on the Utility Occupation Tax will in large part

depend on the forthcoming written decision by the PUC. At this point in time, however, I am not inclined to support the tax.

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.

My favorite John Muir quote is “Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt.” I am a near-daily user of our Open Spaces, and I hike, trail run, and mountain bike. Open Space access is both a public good and a right, and we must balance its benefits with the preservation and protection of animal and plant species. The upcoming Master Plan process should include broad, participatory, and transparent processes that fully engage the community, while promoting on-trail compliance, caring capacity, trail maintenance, and volunteerism. To answer this question directly, though, my views are closest to (b).

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 use our Open Spaces almost every single day for hiking, trail running, and mountain biking. I do not support any caps or restrictions on the number of people, although I believe we have an obligation to have open conversations about usage levels and appropriate levels of maintenance. One of the greatest threats to our Open Space is the failure to provide sufficient maintenance resources. To the extent that we fail to maintain trails and proper access facilities, we risk increased damage to our lands as people and animals move off-trail.

As I have learned through my own experiences with Open Space, I believe that facilitating responsible usage encourages greater preservation, and that we have an obligation as a community to discuss usage levels and appropriate levels of maintenance. As pressures from outside visitors grow, I believe we must take into account mass transportation and parking policies that support our goals for Open Space, as we did for Chautauqua and the pilot program to provide free busing. We might also consider additional parking charges for visitors from outside of Boulder County.

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?

Boulder's innovation economy provides jobs and makes important contributions to our civic revenue base. We need to address the consequences of this strong economy through more workforce housing and improved regional transportation connections.

I believe we must thoughtfully encourage smart growth that meets our environmental, affordable housing, and livability goals. At the same time, I believe we need to promote architecture that encourages creativity and attractive design to retain our unique vibe. And, we need to have a mix of uses that are active and lively and meet the needs and cultural and entertainment goals of our community.

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

As a member of the Boulder Chamber's Community Affairs Council, I work closely with more than three dozen civic and business leaders to thoughtfully address issues that impact our economic health, ranging from topics as diverse as community development, energy, environment, and the workforce. In this work, I recognize the need to actively engage our entrepreneurial community, especially when these relations are predicated on common cause to address housing and transportation issues. Through creative initiatives, partnerships, cross-industry mentoring, and other formats that can leverage some of Boulder's best and brightest minds, I believe there are numerous ways to foster greater trust and improved working relations. A key component of this effort will be enlisting the support of the business community to successfully move forward with strategies to increase community engagement, workforce housing, and regional transit options, so that the relationship is mutually reinforcing. For example, can we partner with the tech community to update our digital and social media interfaces with the community? Can we create a pilot with Google to create more electric-powered transit options?

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?

Despite our relative wealth, Boulder encounters many challenges that other cities face, including homelessness, addiction, and mental illness. On issues related to homeless and human services, I believe that City Council should provide clear direction and appropriate funding so that the City's Human Services division is empowered with the resources and support they need to implement the City's Homeless Service Work Plan. This plan improves the day-to-day experience of homeless individuals and families, mandates enhanced coordination between funders and key stakeholders, and emphasizes the creation of housing-based solutions to move people off the streets.

Boulder has been a leader in providing and funding human services since the 1960s. We have a long history of making these services available for at-risk populations, and we need to continue this. The City should continue to partner with subject-matter experts like Bridge House because they are best suited to provide recommendations and are most knowledgeable on best practices. And, I believe the City of Boulder can play a valuable role in facilitating efficient service delivery, and can bring nonprofits together with the goal of streamlining services and creating effective public-private partnerships.

Finally, I note that many of my friends were included in the evacuation zone caused by the Sunshine Canyon fire. The risks posed to our homes and Open Spaces by errant fires, started by illegal homeless camps, is something that we must pursue with diligence and enhanced enforcement.

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?

When I moved to Boulder, it was the first time in 20 years that I had owned a car. While I would much rather take the bus or bike if I can, I understand that this isn't always practical for families or our elderly, and I will prioritize the creation of more transportation options, with wider accessibility, to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

I favor investments that expand multi-modal transportation options, such as community-wide EcoPass-type programs, additional bus-rapid-transit corridors, electric vehicles and charging stations, and first- and final-mile connections to incentivize mass transit that facilitate biking and pedestrian travel without creating additional pain for drivers.

And just a word about RTD: I have seen firsthand through my role as TAB Chair how difficult it is to work with them to improve our transportation services. I am very interested in partnering with other towns in the region on commuting solutions beyond our reliance on RTD.

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?

Through my experience on the Transportation Advisory Board, I have worked closely with different neighborhood associations, individual citizens, members of the Downtown Business Partnership, and City Staff to better understand and address the impact of the City's parking policies. I support policies that encourage and incentivize

the use of safe and convenient transportation options downtown, as well as surge pricing for parking downtown during peak hours.

An innovative approach to parking issues downtown was created through a public-private partnership to provide Boulder residents the opportunity to travel to and from downtown using free door-to-door mobility services at a price that was competitive with driving and parking their personal vehicles. The program resulted in more than 2500 trips downtown, thereby substantially freeing up parking spaces, with each trip of these trips generating an average of \$85 in spending at our downtown restaurants and shops. Innovative market-based approaches to parking such as this deserve greater support on Council.