

Sam Fuqua:

Why are you running for City Council or Mayor?

I'm running out of gratitude. Boulder gave my family the opportunities to raise our kids and build a good life here, and affordable housing made that possible. Without it, we wouldn't be here. It's at the top of my list, because I want young families today and tomorrow to have the same chance my family did. I want us to meet our goal of 15% permanently affordable housing by 2035 and to use all tools available to create significantly more middle-income homes. I want to bring my personal experience of the pros and cons of both market rate affordable housing (seven year resident of a mobile home community) and affordable ownership housing (community land trust resident since 1999). My almost two decades of board and commission service, including eight years as an elected member of the BVSD school board, will be an asset for both the governance and public transparency roles of council.

Council-Manager Form of Government

City Council candidates often campaign on changes they would like to make, but accomplishing those goals requires working within Boulder's Council-Manager form of government. How do you understand the respective roles of Council, the Mayor, the City Manager, and City staff? Using one of your priorities as an example, walk us through how you would work within that structure to move it forward, build support, and ultimately get it implemented.

For Mayoral candidates, please answer accordingly.

The mayor gets the same one vote as any other council member. But they do have a significant role in agenda-setting and meeting management (as well as representing the city on various boards and at public events). The city council hires and supervises three employees: the city manager, city attorney and municipal judge. The city manager directs staff.

One of my priorities is housing. Let's take the middle-income housing piece:

After the election but before the council retreat, I would prioritize conversations with my fellow council members, the city manager, key staff and partners around initiatives already underway and gaps in our progress toward creating more middle income housing. I'd make it clear that this is a priority for me and gather perspectives and information.

At the council retreat, within discussion of housing affordability that will inevitably occur, I would advocate for and dialogue with my fellow councilmembers around key policies that can advance the creation of middle-income housing including:

- the Title 9 land use code review/revision*
 - changes to Floor Area Ratios to make it more economically feasible to build duplexes and triplexes on single lots*
 - partnering with developers to build a mix of various middle-income affordable ownership housing products on city-owned parcels*
- Build consensus to move all these forward as part of a broader "missing middle" program as a council priority for the next two years.*

Council's Role in the Budget

How do you see Council's responsibility in setting and reviewing the budget? Are there changes in the budget process or in budget allocations that you would actively pursue if elected? Why?

Working with our city manager to set the budget and review it on an on-going basis is a fundamental responsibility of the city council. The move to tie the budget to outcomes makes sense, as does the city's Long-Term Financial Strategy. A fiscally-constrained budget means hard trade-offs—I don't have any specific allocations to recommend at this time. But I do support the Transportation Maintenance Fee as a way to bolster basic street maintenance functions like pothole repair and snow removal.

For Ordinance 8758, please explain your position. For incumbents who voted to place Ordinance 8758 on the ballot: Has your position changed since that vote? Why or why not?

Although I'm not happy about how we got here, I will vote for 8758 because the cost of waiting will only increase. We will need strong oversight and attention to opportunities to value engineer savings. If voters reject 8758, the problems remain, we go back with a smaller ask next year, and end up paying higher costs for less work.

Ordinance 8762 / Debt Limit

Approximately what do you believe is the dollar value of the 3% of assessed valuation limit on City of Boulder indebtedness currently in effect (e.g., what is the current Charter limit on the amount of GO debt the city can issue)?

I'm not an expert but if the assessed valuation is \$5 billion, 3% of that is \$150 million

Approximately what do you believe is the dollar value of the 3% of actual valuation limit on City of Boulder indebtedness that is proposed in Ord 8762 (e.g., what is the proposed Charter limit on the amount of GO debt the city can issue)?

That appears to be ten times greater than the assessed value: \$51 billion. 3% = \$1.5 billion

This comes from the Boulder County Assessor's Certification of Valuation dated 12/2/2025

Please explain your position, including your understanding of how changing the debt limit from 3% of assessed valuation to 3% of actual valuation would affect the City's borrowing capacity.

This would greatly increase the city's borrowing capacity and allow the borrowing for 8758 if it passes. My understanding is that some larger cities in Colorado use actual, others use assessed. I'm not against having more unused debt capacity. IF the city is going to ask the voters about taking on more debt, we need thorough and inclusive processes to develop any proposal and strong oversight if voters approve.

Alpine-Balsam / Project Oversight

Have you followed the costs associated with Alpine-Balsam? When the cost of a major city project significantly exceeds its budget, what role should Council play in understanding the causes, overseeing the response, and determining whether changes in management or process are warranted? Are there changes you would make to the way Council oversees major capital projects, or to its oversight of Alpine-Balsam in particular?

Council has a direct role to play in understanding the costs, progress, delays and outcomes for any project, including Alpine-Balsam. The public information has improved recently with updates to the FAQ section for Alpine-Balsam on the city's website. I will advocate for more frequent council briefings on major capital projects and, if 8758 passes, for the creation of a bond oversight committee reporting directly to council. Also, a community forum to update residents on Alpine-Balsam and answer questions about the project makes sense to me.

Administrative Costs Charged to Dedicated Taxes

Boulder voters have approved dedicated taxes for purposes such as Open Space, Transportation, and the Arts. A portion of these revenues may be used to cover shared administrative costs such as HR, legal, and accounting. Do you believe these funds are being used effectively and consistently with the purposes voters approved them for? Why or why not? Please provide an example. What, if anything, would you change to strengthen accountability and public confidence in how these funds are used?

In general, the dedicated funds are being used for their intended purposes. But the arts tax provides an example of where the proportion going to administration may be problematic. My understanding is that only a slim majority of those funds went to arts programs and artists. I will work to ensure that more money gets to programs and artists. We need clear reporting showing direct community investments, program administration, and citywide overhead and reserves. And we need periodic independent review. That would help residents see not only that the money is going to what they voted for but also understand how much legitimate overhead is involved.

Wildfire

Given Boulder's wildfire risk and limited resources, what two or three wildfire mitigation or preparedness measures should Council prioritize? What role should the City play, and how should those priorities be funded?

- 1. Mandate the Detailed Home Assessment for every property in the Class 1 WUI. We will need to staff up to do this quickly.*
- 2. Mandate that all properties in the red zones of Class 1 bring their properties into compliance on a rapid timeline. Fund equitable assistance for residents who qualify.*

The city should have a primary coordination and oversight role. Funding should be a combination of the wildfire resilience funds in the city Climate Tax, county defensible space funds, mitigation grants and rebate program, and state grant funds. Additionally, there may be an important role for organized volunteer efforts to help with some of the lighter on-going mitigation work for homeowners in need. The city could play a role in outreach to service organizations, student groups, faith communities, etc..

Downtown

Council recently rejected the formation of a Downtown Development Authority. What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing downtown Boulder, and what actions, efforts or initiatives would you suggest to address them?

High rents remain a significant challenge to downtown Boulder businesses. Vacancies, especially office vacancies, are connected to high rents but also to changing work patterns. Fewer downtown workers means fewer customers and lower sales tax revenue. As far as opportunities, I suggest building more affordable housing in the downtown area. More people living downtown—including the workers who keep downtown going—means more potential customers for downtown businesses.

City promotion and facilitation of events, festivals and pop-up shops should be a priority. As should making it easier to re-configure retail and office spaces for other uses.

Commercial land trusts may also offer a partial solution. For example, the Denver nonprofit Urban Land Conservancy uses land banking and land trusts to develop and maintain permanently affordable residential and commercial real estate. Could we identify one or two downtown

buildings and work with the right partners to create a commercial land trust offering below market office and retail?

Performance Auditor

An Open Boulder-affiliated committee has proposed that the City establish a Performance Auditor (different from a financial auditor), supported by a small office reporting to City Council and a resident-based Audit Committee, beginning in the 2027 budget. Do you support or oppose this proposal? Please explain why or why not?

I support the idea of an independent performance auditor reporting directly to council. The idea of this kind of position, as I understand it, makes sense: independently identifying both what's working and where cost savings, customer service and program outcomes and how we measure outcomes could be improved. I'm not sure whether restructuring existing audit functions and adding staff or starting from scratch makes more sense. I am wary of politicizing this office and need to educate myself about the most objective way to determine what programs get audited and when.