

Candidate Discussion Information

Agenda

6:00 - 6:05 Candidate intros

6:05 - 6:25 Diversity, Inclusivity, Racial and Economic Segregation

6:25 - 7:00 Housing

7:00 - 7:15 Transportation

7:15 - 7:30 Sexual Assault

7:30 - 8:00 Community Questions

8:00 - 9:00 Candidates are encouraged to mingle, but we want you to feel free to go home and join your family when you need to!

Questions will be discussion-style, with different amounts of time allotted to each question. We will ask candidates to raise their hand and will address candidates in the order in which their hands are raised. If you have already answered a question, you may respond to another candidate, but we ask that you allow for the candidates whose voice has not yet been heard respond first. Please review the following background information for the general topics.

Intros

We will give each candidate up to thirty seconds to answer the following: Why are you running for city council? What is the issue that you care the most about?

Diversity, Inclusivity, Racial and Economic Segregation

This is a complex and interrelated issue. Although this is a topic by itself, the topics below also address these issues; reading the following sections will provide educational information for diversity, inclusivity, racial and economic segregation. Below are some statistics about poverty:

According to the United States Census Bureau, 21.4% of the people in the city of Boulder are below the poverty line. Other statistics show a 14.1% poverty rate for Boulder County. This is more than 40,000 people living below the poverty level in Boulder County, including about 8,000 children. The median Boulder County income (\$68,637) is 24% higher than the national median. While the 2011 federal poverty rate for a family of four[i] was \$22,350, the 2011 Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of four in Boulder County, which estimates how much families need to make ends meet without public or private assistance, was \$67,924. This figure impacts not only how we understand our median income, but how we comprehend what it means to be poor. To paraphrase, a large percentage of Boulder is below the federally-recognized poverty line, while a family of four requires three times the recognized poverty level to be self-sufficient.

In addition, wealth and poverty are not distributed evenly across demographics. While the overall Boulder County poverty rate is 14.1% for individuals, the rate jumps to 31.8% for Latino/Hispanic county residents, a growing demographic representing nearly 14% of the county's population. In other words, our Latino/Hispanic families are struggling disproportionately in Boulder County. Another telling statistic in regards to the inclusivity of Boulder is that while 14% of Boulder County residents are Hispanic, 8% of Boulder city residents are Hispanic.

There are many more examples of segregation in Boulder, such as a high achievement gap, hate crimes, and the issues presented below. These issues should be addressed especially in a city where many citizens are focused on social awareness.

[i] Specifically, a family of four by this measure includes two adults, one preschool-aged child and one school-age child.

Sources: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/08/0807850.html>
<http://www.commfund.org/content/poverty-updates-boulder-county>

Housing

According to the United States Census Bureau, 49.5% of Boulder homes are owner-occupied. This means that over half of Boulder residents rent their homes. Many of these rental units are over occupied. Contrary to popular opinion, "over occupied" dwellings are not (just) filled with drunken college students. In the 1980s occupancy limits may have impacted mainly CU students, but the combination of increasing rent, declining wages, and irregular or only partial employment, especially amongst younger workers, means that these limits now impact a wide swath of our community. Why? Because living together is more affordable than living alone. Over occupied dwellings today are home to single mothers, non-profit workers, and people who provide vital, yet low-paid community services like daycare. Without living in over occupied dwellings, many of these Boulder citizens would be unable to afford living in desirable, accessible parts of the city, and would either move to the periphery, commute from outlying communities, or be forced to leave Boulder entirely. The majority of these dwellings house good neighbors, but there are a relatively small proportion of college party houses. The bad reputation of University Hill has poisoned homeowners against relaxing our occupancy limits -- they want to retain the right to evict their renting neighbors on demand, rather than using existing ordinances that prohibit excessive noise and unkempt yards to directly address the quality of life concerns that a few bad actors present.

Additionally, census data shows that the traditional single-family nuclear household has been giving way to a much more diverse and inclusive concept of families and households, including single parents, shared parenting arrangements, unmarried co-habiting couples, same-sex couples, young people delaying marriage and children but not wanting to live alone, etc.

Citizens who live in over occupied dwellings functionally lose many of their rights as tenants, because they can be evicted at any time on a complaint basis by their neighbors or landlords. They also sometimes express a fear of civic and neighborhood engagement -- including worrying about whether registering to vote at their place of residence will put them at risk of eviction.

Limiting more than three unrelated people to live together directly counteracts the city's Climate Action Plan and sustainability goals. The Boulder Housing Coalition found that the current BHC co-op residents use only one-third the energy of a typical person living in the region and have one-third to one-fourth as many automobiles. These represent some of a multitude of reasons why having higher density living is more sustainable and decreases the per person ecological footprint. It is clear that the current policies such as occupancy limits, height limits, minimum lot size, lot line setbacks, and generally low density zoning is in direct contradiction to the city's much venerated Climate Action Plan.

Transportation

Almost everyone in Boulder likes to bash the 60,000 people who commute into town, and almost nobody wants to admit that our policies are largely responsible for creating them. In Boulder, economical, practical

access to our transit and bikeway system is determined both by a person's location (how convenient the system is to use) and by whether or not that person has access to an Eco Pass. Both of those variables are biased against our lower income population in the following ways:

- Many of our more affordable neighborhoods tend to be at the periphery of town, not in the core or along the main transit corridors. This increased distance also discourages bicycling, as does our failure to complete the greenway system in North Boulder.
- Because of the way it's structured, the Neighborhood Eco Pass program is much more likely to be utilized by homeowners than renters.
- The employers that offer Eco Passes tend to be those with more highly paid employees, or those located in areas with managed parking districts (like downtown).

As a consequence, many lower paid employees have little choice but to live outside of Boulder, and commute in. If we had more equitable access to transit and bike facilities within town, a significant fraction of that population could choose instead to live within Boulder, spending more of their income on housing, and less on transportation -- perhaps by reducing the number of motor vehicles in their household (each of which on average, according to AAA, costs \$9000/year to own and operate).

More equitable access to the entire menu of transportation options can be enabled by better mixing our affordable housing throughout the city, rather than allowing it to be so concentrated at the edges of the city (and especially far north Boulder), as well as by offering a community-wide Eco Pass. We can also do a better job of combating the socioeconomic stigma against bicycling as a form of transportation, which (ironically) can be especially strong in the less affluent parts of our community.

These measures could, in combination, reduce in-commuting, reduce transportation related greenhouse gas emissions, reduce racial and socioeconomic segregation in the city, and keep more of Boulder's economy within Boulder.

Sexual Assault

Boulder is thought of as an extremely safe place, with violent crime rates considerably lower than the national average. However, reported "forcible rape" rates are well above the national average. This statistic from the Federal Bureau of Investigation supports the idea that Boulder's rape culture is unproportionally rampant. We, your constituents, know that city council does not have complete power over this culture, but we do think you are in a position to help change culture in Boulder.

Boulder county law enforcement responds to around 1600 cases of domestic violence every year. Although research shows that women abuse men in heterosexual relationships 2% of the time, Boulder police officers arrest women for domestic violence 25% of the time they are called to the scene. This disproportionate arrest rate is blatantly sexist.

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN) has many programs to change our culture to one of consent and social justice. There are also programs in other cities to discourage rape or street harassment, such as HollabackPHILLY and Make Your Move Missoula. We would like to see city council support for such programs.

See:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0AteZ5rZ9onJBdENGZFk5VjVTSIJRa0dpUEE3WnYtaVE&usp=sharing>

<https://www.facebook.com/MakeYourMoveMissoula/info>

<http://philly.ihollaback.org/>

<http://www.safehousealliance.org/>

Sources: fbi.gov, [SPAN](#)