



Ed Byrne

Website: byrneforcouncil.com

Besides being in love with Boulder, tell us who you are and what the most compelling reason is for why you're running for City Council?

Boulder must continue to evolve. We need to crowd source our wisdom, which will require new outreach methods – insisting upon attendance at public hearings will not suffice. Council members should be approachable and they should have well-established relationships with a diverse mix of community members, through extensive and varied types of community service. <http://byrneforcouncil.com/bio/>

What we need in a Council member: Relevant experience and expertise - assistant city attorney [municipal prosecutor, zoning, planning, OS/RE], Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA) [environmental and resort town challenges]; co-chair, North Boulder Subcommunity Steering Committee [principles of Neighborhood primary self-sufficiency], Chamber CAC Chair, DBP Public Policy Committee Chair, Foothill SIT Chair

What City Council should be: A policy-making board of directors, not a management team immersed in day-to-day operations. Council's highest priorities should be:
-Fiscal accountability
-Neighborhood and Regional outreach
-foster more hope, less fear re: Boulder's future
-public/private partnerships
-civil discourse

What do you see as the vital components to the future of Boulder's economic vitality and what specific strategies would you support as a City Councilmember to maintain a vibrant economy?

Good jobs are essential to our quality of life. They enable workers to compete in the housing market and great employers support civic culture and many Boulder amenities. Limiting job growth, without making meaningful distinctions, can diminish Boulder's overall quality of life.

Our tax receipts fund most of the community benefits we all appreciate. We must carefully balance the risks and rewards associated with any specific potential employer, or any proposed expansion of existing ones.

Taking a more regional view, Boulder can become more of a "point guard," distributing opportunities among our regional neighbors that don't work for us.

What do you believe are the most pressing human service needs in the City of Boulder and why?

- Workforce housing - our community's long term environmental sustainability and economic resiliency depends upon ready access to skilled, creative and motivated employees.
- Homelessness – our support for our motivated homeless, trying to recover from devastating life changes should be a community priority.
- Affordable health care – unfortunately, Boulder can only impact this at the margins.
- Transportation infrastructure – people need to be able to get where they need to go effectively, efficiently, and without undue delays

What do you believe is the appropriate role for the City of Boulder in addressing human service needs (e.g. housing, food, health care) for low income/marginalized people in our community?

As a compassionate community, Boulder has developed, supported and implemented excellent services for the motivated homeless. I support the Letter of Intent from Bridge House that was accepted by the City on 5/25/2017 and look forward to implementation of the Bridge to Home service strategy they have proposed.

EFAA and Community Food Share should continue to receive strong support from the City. Boulder may make principled distinctions in the level and continuity of services provided to our homeless verses transients traveling through Boulder. Emergency shelter must be provided year-round to deter camping in unsanitary conditions.

Health Care will require flexibility and adaptability as we wait to see what happens to the ACA and Colorado's Exchange. We need to plan for the worst (ACA is repealed and the CHE fails for want of federal funding) and hope for the best.

The City has spent a considerable amount of money on buying the Boulder Community Hospital site. The site currently sits vacant and debt service accrues. Should this project be accelerated and how should it be developed?

The BCH site should be developed sooner than later. It provides us with an opportunity to create a diverse mix of affordable and mixed income housing, plus offices that should include City and County departments with aligned responsibilities and expertise. Boulder's need to address daunting challenges (housing, transportation, human services, recreational access, etc.) on a more regional basis will only increase.

The BCH site will allow co-locating of the in-house expertise of both government organizations in ways that will encourage cooperation and innovation.

Consultation with the neighborhood is very important, but with the ongoing carrying costs, we need to develop the general parameters needed to prepare an RFP, and then use the RFP award process to fine-tune the project. Until we have a sense for what the private sector, in partnership with the City (and County) can finance and build, we're spinning our wheels.

Do you support the Transportation Master Plan's goal of increasing the mode share of bicycles from 10% to 30% by 2035 to achieve the community's environmental and livability goals? If so, what concrete steps do you propose to achieve this and how do you anticipate doing that while maintaining safety for cyclists and motorists alike?

Bicycling is pretty well supported by Boulder's transportation infrastructure today, and many of our VMTs are created by in-commuters, so I'm skeptical we can attain a 30% mode share. If our streets become parking lots, we may become like Barcelona where motor scooters swarm like red blood cells in clogged arteries. We will have widespread revolts before that level of congestion is acceptable.

At-grade separations can be tried on streets wide enough to be reduced from 4 lanes to three lanes with a shared turning lane, but not on streets with existing concrete, landscaped medians. We tried that on Folsom between Spruce and Arapahoe and it failed.

Public education, incentives, and recognition, coupled with market-priced parking may move the needle, but people will need to embrace cycling for its many health and quality of life benefits to hit 30%.

What strategies do you support regarding land use, housing and transportation policies and programs to address the impacts of our in-commuting workforce?

Boulder does not need to build any new housing units that do not appeal directly to our in-commuters. They are in our workplaces, so we should ask them what types of dwelling units, with which amenities, they would rent or purchase to move back to Boulder and stop commuting. Then we should build them.

Our single use zone districts need to be re-mixed to form more complete neighborhoods. This will require close coordination with existing residential and non-residential neighborhood representatives. We can't mandate outcomes; consensus about land use changes to reduce vehicle trips can only be achieved because the neighborhoods want the changes to occur.

In-commuting will only become more frustrating. The opportunity to imagine, develop and approve strategically located mixed use density to offer people a viable alternative to in-commuting requires curb appeal and voluntary buy-in, not punishment.

Tell us your vision for open space moving forward, including specifically the challenges regarding the success of huge visitation. Would you prioritize either protection or recreation on a hypothetical new property?

Public access is a good in its own right, leading to greater support of the City's efforts and expenditures on Open Space lands, so it should be equally balanced with preservation.

We should shift more of our Open Space tax revenues towards operations and management of the recreational opportunities available to everyone who contributes to them.

Siting, design, approval and development of attractive new trails will relieve some of the pressure on our existing world-class trail options.

Do you support Boulder's drive to municipalize its electric utility? If so, what are the limits on taxpayer dollars and time you are prepared to spend to achieve that goal and, if not, how do you propose to achieve Boulder's renewable energy goals?

I am concerned that we will never be able to afford the price we may be required to pay Xcel to purchase their aging, increasingly irrelevant infrastructure. It would help if we had won a few of our lawsuits along the way. The costs to date, coupled with the delays, which seem to stretch well beyond the horizon, make it increasingly unlikely that buying out Xcel will be fiscally responsible.

In any event, Boulder's voters must be given an opportunity to vote up or down on municipalization when all the facts are known.

I will wait to see what Council decides to put on the ballot before taking positions, but my sense is that Boulder's citizens are becoming more interested in pulling the plug on this endeavor, even while they resent Xcel's our way or the highway approach to development of more creative, energy-saving, carbon-footprint-reducing innovations.

What transportation solutions would you suggest to ease congestion, especially resulting from 49,000 in-commuters, specifically those that drive alone? Would you favor solutions to improve roads and parking; bus or other transportation; cycling and walking, or some combination thereof? How would you fund transportation improvements? Do you favor higher parking costs and other disincentives to driving?

I've seen in-commuter estimates ranging from 49,000 to 65,000. We first need to agree on the magnitude of the challenge.

In my response to Q#6, I suggested several ways to address the last mile challenge that keeps people driving SOVs into Boulder every day to work. The RTD routes established decades ago do not meet the current trip patterns of our residents and workforce, but changing them is very difficult.

I support a county-wide EcoPass funded by a property tax, but it is not clear Boulder County voters will pass it. Everyone wants the other guy to take the bus, so they can drive where they want to go. Increasing the cost of parking and use of other driving disincentives feeds frustration and can harm the economy – we should be careful to provide better solutions before increasing people's pain.

Despite Boulder's reputation as a "green" community, our per-capita carbon footprint is pretty high. How can we shape our built environment and transportation systems for lower impact?

As noted above in Q#6 and Q#9, the most important change we can make in our built environment is creation of more "complete" residential and non-residential neighborhoods. Village and sub-community centers that create walkable, primarily self-sufficient neighborhoods are the best way to reverse the auto-dependent sprawl it has taken us 60 years to create.

When we can work, shop and play closer to where we sleep, we will reduce our carbon footprint and become a more environmentally sustainable and economically resilient community.

New technologies (home offices, dark fiber, Uber, Lyft, self-driving vehicles, solar on every south-facing rooftop, better batteries, etc.) may help reduce our footprint. Finally, we need to capture incoming vehicles at the edge of town by offering nimbler, less expensive mobility options within Boulder.

Do you support Boulder's inclusionary housing ordinance requirements to produce permanently affordable housing? Should the requirements include permanently affordable middle income housing? And, what do you think is the appropriate mix of permanently affordable rental versus ownership units?

Our current inclusionary housing residential and non-residential requirements and cash-in-lieu (CIL) fees are close to what Boulder's current real estate market can bear. CIL works because it benefits from a multiplier effect created by the state and federal housing subsidies and tax incentives they attract.

Where such subsidies and incentives fall short is with the development of middle-income housing, Boulder's greatest housing challenge today. With state law prohibiting mandated local rent control, only city-owned rental units can reasonably be expected to remain "permanently" affordable.

However, 50% of our housing stock in Boulder is rental today. Home ownership is the most important wealth-building option for most people. This must be taken into account.

For this and other reasons, regional transportation/ housing solutions must urgently be explored. Boulder cannot meet this challenge alone.

Accessory dwelling units – otherwise known as “granny flats” – have been considered as one option for expanding affordable housing options in established neighborhoods. Please explain your position on whether or not ADUs are an appropriate affordable housing tool for our community?

ADUs should be permitted more widely. Some of Boulder’s most underutilized assets are our existing empty bedrooms. I have proposed the following revisions to Boulder’s existing ADU regulations:

- allow creations of ADUs in detached accessory structures in the RL-1 and RL-2 zone districts
- incorporate the City’s OAU provisions into the ADU regulations, eliminating the need for separate rules
- eliminate the two-person ADU occupancy limit (zone district and building code occupancy rules will apply)
- eliminate the neighborhood area restriction and waiting list rules
- eliminate the “one off-street parking space” requirement or modify the variance standards

We will then have one set of rules that permit accessory units to be located within a principal structure or an accessory structure (including tiny homes) in all of Boulder’s residential zone districts, while preserving the size, setback, parking and design rules that currently apply to ADUs and OAUs.

What’s your vision for Boulders growth and development over the next 20 years?

My hope and belief is that Boulder will continue to evolve in surprising and delightful ways, encouraging more of our in-commuters to move back to carefully designed, higher density, village and subcommunity centers that will enhance our quality of life. The total number of residents will increase, but not beyond the number of current residents and employees who already occupy Boulder every workday.

Transportation and energy innovation, coupled with cooperative regional planning, will reduce the carbon-footprint of our existing commuter-shed. Reconfiguration of our single-use land use enclaves into more complete neighborhoods will gradually unwind our failed 60-year auto-dependent sprawl experiment.

Entrepreneurial innovation will continue and Boulder will be a better place to work, live and raise a family than it has ever been.

What are your specific strategies for promoting civil public discourse around growth and development? Please indicate what level of commitment you would have in regards to collaboration, consensus building and joint problem solving to address this issue?

Our democracy cannot survive in an environment suffused with tirade-driven, bumper-sticker logic. Uncivil discourse scorches the podium and drives reasonable –often younger, diverse and family – voices from the room. Social media can help, but it is no panacea. Responsible decision-makers must acknowledge those who attend hearings, and those whose community DNA is not represented in the room.

The recommendations in the Public Policy Working Group’s report hold some promise, but right-sizing process to specifically suit the issues being addressed will be critical. There is nothing more likely to discourage participation than process for its own sake.

As a trained mediator and co-founder of the Boulder County Bar Association’s first Alternate Dispute Resolution committee (1986), I hope to help improve the tenor and substance of our public hearings, so that more people will be satisfied with the outcomes, even when they don’t agree with them.