



Mirabai Nagle

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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?

I'm running for Council because I care deeply about Boulder – the place where I was born and raised. I've lived 32 of my 34 years here. I'm running because I believe better solutions need to be crafted, that can bring the community together rather than pushing it apart.

I represent a fresh perspective – as a younger candidate, a businesswoman, a Boulder native, a Gunbarrel (City of Boulder portion) resident, and a volunteer firefighter who deeply understands our emergency professionals who daily put their lives on the line for us. I'm also an affordable housing alumnus, who saved enough to eventually buy a home.

I straddle many worlds that don't often intersect. This puts me in an excellent position to facilitate the elusive solutions Boulder really needs now. Rather than settling for winners and losers, our city can do better by working together. If elected, I'll work tirelessly to create win-wins.

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?

- Boulder is experiencing pressure from the weight of its own success. Boulder has become so popular – for businesses, people living here, visitors, in-commuters, etc. – that effective ways of managing that popularity will be critical.
- People from other Colorado towns have told me that they don't like coming to Boulder any longer because of the traffic. That's one example.
- So, effectively addressing our transportation challenges will be key.
- In addition to affordable housing, we also need to pay attention to affordable community- and neighborhood-serving retail. We're increasingly experiencing losses of iconic, long-time local retail businesses.
- We don't want to end up with Boulder residents having to

drive to nearby communities for goods and services, thereby worsening our traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

- We need to support our local small business community.
- Boulder should pay close attention to the jobs/population balance, and make sure that we're managing it in the best way.

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

- Affordable housing. If we don't address this, Boulder will become an increasingly homogenous, wealthy community and we'll lose the critical vitality of a diverse community. People are struggling to stay in Boulder.
- Expanded senior services, because more people are living longer. We must make sure that we're addressing the needs of this fastest-growing segment of our population.
- Early child care and education, because studies are showing that this is one of the single most important aspects of ensuring future success and opportunities for youths. Particular focus should be given to low income families.
- Community engagement of our immigrant and Latin populations, because there are currently many impediments ranging from language to societal barriers. A diverse city is a better one, so we should help these communities feel comfortable in engaging.
- At-risk youth, of middle-school and high-school age. Kids can start to lose their way at this age. Early intervention is critical.

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?

- I believe the City of Boulder should have a very large role in addressing human service needs.
- I believe that an advanced civilization – any civilization, really – is only as advanced as its ability to care for its least fortunate members. I believe this is as worthy an evaluation as any for judging a society – and quite possibly, the best evaluation.
- Therefore, I'd like to see Boulder be an exemplary city of success in this area.
- I believe the City has a very important role in addressing human services, but also has an important partnering role with the many fine human service non-profits in our community.
- It takes a real team effort, and I would advocate such an approach.

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?

- Yes, this project should be accelerated.
- I believe this site, and the former Pollard Motors site at 30th and Pearl, should be used for high density, affordable housing.
- Specifically, an appropriate mix of housing for lower income and middle income residents.
- To me, these two sites make much more sense for the

- off-sited affordable housing requirements that developers of new rental housing pay cash-in-lieu for, in order to not build on the site of their new developments.
- These two sites are:
 - a) located in Boulder's center, within easy walking, biking, and transit distance of goods, services, and jobs.
 - b) surrounded by commercial zoning on three to four sides, such that concerns about neighborhood-specific siting are minimized.
- It makes much more sense to place off-sited affordable housing in these locations, where potential conflicts with neighborhoods are as minimal as we'll find.

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?

- I support the goal, as part of an integrated transportation strategy. We should:
 - Pursue community-wide Eco-Passes.
 - Ensure that all buses have easy on/easy off bike racks, so that bus commuters can switch to bicycles, once in their general destination area.
 - Increase bike share programs and the placement of bicycles-for-loan at workplaces, so that workers can use handy bicycles for mid-day errands, lunch, in-town meetings, etc.
 - Continue to work on expanding the connectivity of our bicycle routes.
 - For safety:
 - Expand the number of off-road, auto-free bike paths, such as those off Broadway, along the CU campus.
 - Construct bicycle and pedestrian underpasses where needed.
 - Expand education on safety practices and "share the road" principles.
 - Increased enforcement of crosswalk and other violations by motorists and cyclists alike.

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

- I agree that these three elements are integrally linked.
- I believe our biggest land use need at this point is housing. Therefore, I support re-zoning certain commercial and industrial zoned lands, to residential and mixed use.
- As stated earlier, I believe we should maximally utilize rare opportunities as we get them (such as Alpine-Balsam and the Pollard Motors site) for affordable workforce housing. I honestly believe that affordable housing is the highest and best use for these sites. And an advantage of these sites is that even if they're re-developed as 100% housing, they'd be virtually "mixed use" developments – already being located next door to commercial and retail.
- We should ensure that all housing units developed on land an-

nexed into the City are permanently affordable – with a 50/50 split of low and middle income affordable housing.

- We should preserve our existing affordable housing stock.

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?

- First, let me generally say that I believe Councilmembers should be representatives of the people. There should be a balance that recognizes this principle, alongside whatever vision individual Councilmembers or candidates have.
- To that end, I feel that the Open Space Master Plan update is an ideal place to apply the recommendations of the Public Participation Working Group. I'm keenly interested to know the public's vision.
- That said, I feel our Open Space is one of the core aspects that define Boulder. So I place high value on ensuring that our Open Space be well managed, in perpetuity, to ensure appropriate maintenance, upkeep, and visitor services.
- The question of recreation or protection has more to do with the specific property than an a priori approach before knowing anything about the property.
- That said, I believe recreation and protection can co-exist.
- Re: huge visitation: I support higher user fees for non-residents.

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 support a Boulder municipal electric utility – if rates, reliability and renewables are equal to or better than Xcel.
- Reducing emissions and the effects of climate change are personal to me, as a firefighter.
- Currently, Boulder collectively pays Xcel \$35 million a year, every year. Discussions of expenditures should be kept in proper perspective.
- If the Utility Occupation Tax (UOT) doesn't pass, and the funds aren't there to carry the muni onto the next step – which, provided we get a good PUC ruling, would go to the Federal Energy Regularity Commission (FERC) – I'd recommend we:
 - pause the muni,
 - not sign an Xcel franchise agreement,
 - and pursue State Legislative remedies to make forming municipal utilities easier and fairer.
 - Senator Fenberg is assembling a coalition to do exactly this.
- I'd also examine the City's Climate Commitment goals and prioritize those we can fast track.

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?

- Transportation management requires integrated, multi-pronged solutions. Therefore, I'd favor the combination solutions outlined above.
- There's much we can and should do to increase the viability and safety of cycling and walking. See my Question #5 answers.
- Re: disincentives, I tend to favor more "carrot" and less "stick."
- I believe people want to do the right thing, but things are backwards: It costs a non-Eco-Pass holder \$4.50 round trip to travel downtown on the SKIP. If we want more people to use buses, we've got to make it easier and cheaper, not punish them if they can't afford it. Therefore, I support community-wide Eco-Passes.
- I support higher non-resident parking fees for Open Space. And I fully support ideas like the Chautauqua Park shuttle.
- I support impact fees on new commercial development (with exceptions for small businesses), to fund transportation capital improvements they create the need for.

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?

- Boulder residents are actually driving less and increasingly making transportation modal shifts.
- But our per-capita carbon footprint is higher, due in part to high in-commuting and a significantly higher daytime population.
- We can lower our carbon footprint by actively addressing the three pillars of carbon emissions:
 - Buildings – we should reducing emissions from residential and commercial buildings.
 - Transportation – we should reduce emissions from transportation.
 - Utilities – we should reduce emissions in the way we generate electricity.
- With regard to buildings, we should work to enact policies requiring new buildings to be net zero energy use.
- In new commercial office buildings, we should incorporate electric vehicle recharging stations running off roof top solar, and preferred parking for EV's.
- We should promote and enable solar gardens.
- Regarding transportation, see my earlier comments addressing this subject.
- Regarding the greening of utilities, see my earlier comments addressing this.

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?

- I greatly support Boulder's inclusionary housing requirement.
- In fact, I support increasing it significantly – with the caveat that it's built onsite at new housing developments, rather than off-site.
- The original legislative intent of inclusionary housing was that society benefits when people of multiple socio-economic backgrounds live next to each other. I fully agree.
- Why then, do developers get a "free pass" when it comes to their onsite mix of housing? We're seeing 100% homogenous, market-rate developments onsite – the opposite of inclusionary housing's intent.
- Yes, I believe the requirements should include permanently affordable middle income housing, to avoid a hollowing out of Boulder's middle class, and a "barbell-shaped curve" of income distribution in Boulder.
- I'd like to see greater emphasis placed on ownership units. There are the obvious hurdles of down payments. I'd explore ways to loan would-be home buyers money for their down-payments, so their up-front costs aren't as formidable.

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?

- I believe ADU's can represent an affordable housing option.
- However, one-size-fits-all approaches often backfire.
- Certain Boulder neighborhoods are chronically under greater stress, impact, and rate of change than others.
- It's always important to seek good fit, engage residents, and ascertain areas that can accommodate more change.
- An excellent way to do this is with neighborhood plans, written in large part by neighborhood residents – who best understand the on-the-ground conditions in their neighborhoods – with broad community goals in mind.
- I'm an optimist. I don't believe neighborhoods will say no to any and all change. I know many residents, in many neighborhoods. Boulder residents are progressive. Nearly all understand that their neighborhoods need to address community wide issues.
- They just want to be part of the planning. People are more accepting of change when they are part of the process, rather than having decisions handed down to them from "on high."

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

- First, I believe in facing reality. We are approaching build-out.
- Environmental science holds that every bioregion on earth has a certain carrying capacity.
- Boulder exists in a semi-arid climate, which may become more so under climate change. Availability of water is one of our principle natural limits.
- Exceeding carrying capacity carries with it myriad risks.
- Abiding within carrying capacity doesn't equal stagnation, or zero change. Communities constantly change, and so will a Boulder that exists within its limits. Progress on all fronts can and should continue, toward:
 - Greater affordability
 - Greater inclusivity and diversity
 - Greater social justice
- But as we approach build-out, I believe the growth and development we have should serve the people – the residents of Boulder – in areas such as community benefit, affordable housing, local shopping and services, public art, community commons and gathering spaces, etc.

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?

- I'm extremely committed to collaboration, consensus building and joint problem solving. I'm eager to enact the Public Participation Working Group recommendations.
- Many recent City decisions and policies have created winners and losers, contributing to polarization.
- As a Boulder native, it wounds me to see rifts in our community. We can do better.
- I'm well situated to facilitate collaboration, given the worlds I straddle as a:
 - Boulder native
 - 34-year old candidate
 - Alumnus of affordable housing who saved enough to buy a home
 - Part of the nurses-teachers-firefighter community that's of great concern to Boulder
 - Resident of the City portion of Gunbarrel
 - Businesswoman and small business owner.
- I have profound faith in Boulder's incredibly skilled, educated, creative residents. Surely we can affect win-win solutions and model this for other communities. Let's exemplify a community that eschews winner-and-loser outcomes, and instead, goes the extra distance to create win-wins.

As a Boulder City Council member what kind of legacy will you look to leave?

My campaign slogan is "A New Generation of Commitment to Boulder's Legacy of Stewardship."

It's not my legacy. I hope to continue Boulder's legacy of stewardship, that has made Boulder the wonderful place it is.

Places like Boulder don't happen by accident. They happen as a direct result of specific, concerted, intentional actions by forward-thinking citizens. Over the years, Boulder residents have had a vision for a wonderful community nestled against the foothills. Specifically, a shining example to the world of a community that chose greenbelts over sprawl, and guiding documents of carefully managed growth – like our Comprehensive Plan – over the chaotic, random, and undesirable ways in which some communities evolve.

As a community, Boulder has also celebrated and respected diversity of thought, race, religion, national origin, income, and sexual identity. Amidst national regression into divisive, hurtful rhetoric... we choose the opposite.

This is the legacy I hope to continue.