PLAN-Boulder 2026 Candidate Questionnaire

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Open Space

1. This fall, Boulder citizens are being asked to approve a $400 million bond issue to pay for backlogged maintenance on rec centers and fire/police facilities. Unaccounted for in this funding source is about a $30 million backlog of deferred maintenance of Open Space and Mountain Park trails. What priority would you place on addressing this backlog and where should the funds come from? Are there policies that should be passed to prevent future trail maintenance backlogs?

In notes from a recent OSBT packet, OSMP staff indicate that they are making progress against the backlog, albeit slowly. OSMP counts over six million visitors each year, more than Rocky Mountain National Park and is Boulder's backyard. OSMP is a treasured asset for residents and serves as a key economic driver bringing visitors to Boulder who then generate economic activity in town.

Ignoring trail maintenance can see small issues become big issues when the next heavy rainstorm comes. My remarks at the candidate forum on Sept 2, 2026 mirror those from a recent OSMP report.

> *Community partnerships, volunteers, and external funding have significantly expanded program capacity. Grants and relationships with local organizations have enabled projects that would otherwise be deferred or completed at a much higher cost. Strategically using CIP funds for large, contractor supported projects while relying on staff, volunteers' community partners for high-priority maintenance and repairs helps address aging infrastructure before deferred maintenance becomes significantly more expensive.*

OSMP will likely see increasing pressure on its budget for wildfire mitigation as well. There are two ways to reduce the backlog that I would advocate for:

1) Seek funding for OSMP 2019 Master Plan focus on "take care of what we have". This should be part of a larger commitment to the "Maintain Well" target allocation of 2% of replacement value per year that was adopted in 2021 and has only seen limited funding.
2) Develop a "Friends of OSMP" trail-work program that is similar to the adopt-a-road program that Boulder County began in 1990. Their program is supported by 80 groups, circa 1,000 volunteers with 138 miles of roadway cleaned twice per year. Implementing best practices from BMA's

partnership with Boulder County may be useful. Lastly, let's make full use of the Ready to Work and Boulder County inmate work programs is they are cost effective.

2. What level of wildfire mitigation funding should be the responsibility of Open Space and Mountain Parks?

OSMP owns and manages the land where wildfire fuels management will occur, though the protection produces citywide benefits—life safety, property protection, water/infrastructure protection, etc. A strong case could be made to allocate from other budgets to OSMP for this benefit. Instead, projections show that OSMP will see an increase in its shared allocation from 8.5% of its budget today to 14% by 2031, effectively acting like a $2 million budget cut over that time frame. This sits on top of OSMP's increased budget allocation from 75% to 90% for the wildland firefighter budget.

No wonder that residents are upset when it looks like the city is rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic instead of addressing the core issue, spending increases that are outstripping revenue growth. Boulder needs a solid dose of pragmatic common sense to prioritize its spending, implementing ways to increase revenues and deliver the best results for the city.

Wildfire Mitigation

3. Given our high risk from wildfires and limited resources, what 2 or 3 measures should Council prioritize in the city's code, staffing and financial resources, and the council bully pulpit? Who should be responsible and where should the money come from?

WHAT SHOULD GET DONE

A combination of home hardening utilizing IBHS Essential (the old Base) standards, starting with the highest risk homes that are in WUI Class 1 properties and fuel mitigation on adjacent Open Space/public lands. Wildfire mitigation can't take a patchwork approach, where every other home is hardened, you need full compliance. Additional properties in each successive risk tranche should then be completed. The recommended distance for grassland treatment is 300' from the properties and for timber and shrub, it is 1,500'. Along the western edge, the city manages 70% of the land (2,383 acres/almost 4 square miles) of city owned property, NIST and NCAR make up about 15%, while the remaining 15% is owned privately and will require cooperation.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

OSMP is the logical partner for adjacent public lands, while Fire & Rescue is the best placed department for home hardening. OSMP has good cooperation with NIST and NCAR, so that covers 85% of the acres.

Fire-Rescue is best positioned for structure mitigation. 70% of parels in the WUI have received a Detailed or Curbside Home Assessment in the last three years per notes in the 2027 budget. Staffing shortages and GIS issues have slowed the rate of completion.

WHO PAYS FOR IT

This is always the hardest part. From a 30,000' level, I remain concerned that we fail to compare expenditures for different programs against their benefits. Without taking away flood control benefits from the CU South project, city published data states that we will protect 1,100 homes benefiting 2,600 residents. At a current budget of $77.6 million, this is over $70,500 per house based on the current budget. This project is funded through Flood/Stormwater fees which has risen over 13% per year compounded over the past 13 years. In terms of allocating funds from the general budget, difficult choices must be made as overall revenue is growing slower than forecast expenses.

With estimates between $5,000 and $20,000 in costs per house to achieve IBHS Essential status, what portion, if any, should the city cover. Should it come from the Climate Tax?

Boulder failed to apply for grant where Jefferson County was of two nearby counties awarded about $9.5 million each. This should never happen again. Using $9,000 as an estimate per home, this grant alone could have funded home hardening for 500 homes and allocated about $5.0 million for fuel mitigation on adjacent lands. It is important that the cost burden does not fall disproportionately on lower-income owners.

Environment and Climate Change

4. What is your understanding of the reliability of Boulder's long term water supply? Do you view it as prudent to carefully match the demand for more development with the ability to provide water into the future? What concerns, if any, do you have about this?

Water, infrastructure and transportation are three of my favorite areas. Boulder's water supply is diversified from a supply perspective. It is supplied by Boulder Creek & Middle Boulder Creek west of Boulder (east side of Continental divide) and the upper Colorado River through Northern Water. Roughly 2/3rds of our water comes from Boulder & Middle Creeks with about 1/3rd from Northern Waters Colorado-Big Thompson ("CBT") and Windy Gap ("WG") projects.

Unlike downstream users that control a set amount of acre-feet, Boulder's water varies based on its availability through snowmelt and rain from the east side of the divide and Northern Water's system of

delivering a certain amount of water per share per year. Our water rights on the east side of the divide are very senior. CBT, at full allocation, delivers 21,015 acre feet ("AF") while WG 3,700 AF. WG's rights are junior rights and due to other complexities deliver much less than the nameplate capacity. Our CBT water rights are worth over $1.2 billion as recent valuations are almost $60,000 per unit. Water delivery from CBT has been between 70% and 80% of nameplate amount (1 unit = 1 AF) (meaning that each share gets 0.7 to 0.8 AF per share) since 2015.

Why the wonky details on our supply? My conclusion is that while our supply is robust, the impact of a multi-year drought would be significant as we are a first user of water and do not draw it from longer term storage.

I believe the impact of new development must be matched to water supply as well as the rest of the built environment and increasingly be based on multi-year and even multi-decade drought scenarios that are becoming the norm and not the exception. Broadly speaking, water is the gating item for development in a large part of the west. In the September 5, 2026 Vail Daily, the Eagle River Water & Sanitation District asked Eagle County to conduct detailed parcel by parcel analysis of water availability before increasing density for portions of unincorporated Eagle County, citing a concern that sufficient water supply and service capacity may not be available. Boulder should be asking the same questions as it considers new development, especially for Area III.

I am also concerned about the unchecked increase in residents' water bills. The base bill for a 1,000 gallon per month user has grown at over 13% per year compounded for the last 13 years from $24.22/month to $83.10 per month. This has a direct bearing on housing affordability.

Governance

5. How do you see your responsibility as a council member versus the responsibilities of the City Manager and city staff?

City residents are the customer – everybody works for and reports to them. Sometimes that feels forgotten. In short: Council governs, the City Manager manages, and staff delivers services

I see the Council's role as governing: representing Boulder residents, setting the city's policy direction, adopting the budget, making major decisions, and holding the City Manager accountable for results.

As a council member, I would focus on listening to the community, weighing evidence and tradeoffs, and working with the full Council to establish clear priorities. Council should set measurable goals, make transparent decisions, and review whether the city is delivering on the commitments it makes/has made.

The City Manager's role is to run the organization and implement the direction Council adopts. The City Manager oversees departments, prepares budgets and policy options, manages day-to-day operations, and advises Council about the results. I would expect candid professional advice, especially when a high profile/high $ project is not advancing on time and on budget. Once Council makes a decision, the City Manager is responsible for carrying it out effectively.

City staff provides professional expertise and does operational work: maintaining infrastructure, administering programs, responding to residents, managing projects, and analyzing policy alternatives. Staff should provide objective information and practical recommendations; Council makes the final policy choices.

The key boundary is simple: Council directs the City Manager, and the City Manager directs staff. That does not mean Council should be passive. Good oversight means asking detailed questions, reviewing performance measures, seeking public input, monitoring budgets, and correcting course when outcomes fall short.

6. As a council member, what basic considerations will you apply to your appointments to city Boards and Commissions? And what value would you place on advice to the council from those boards and commissions?

As a five+ time applicant to the Transportation Advisory Board ("TAB") and once to Open Space (appointed many times, never selected), I was shocked to see how much of an insider game it is. This left me deeply disappointed, though I continued to run as I was confident that my addition to TAB/Open Space would be additive and not a duplicative presence.

Council should select the best person for the role. It is a role that should be free from politics. The reality is when one ideology holds a majority on council for many years, and this gets reflected in the make-up on boards and commissions, the diversity of views is diminished, and the results likely suffer.

I would seek to appoint boards where their thoughtful input would be a contributing factor in shaping policy, otherwise we are wasting the time and energy of the volunteers who sit on the boards.

City Finances

7. How do you see the Council's responsibility in setting and reviewing the budget? What changes in process or budget allocations you would actively pursue if you were elected and explain why?

When fiscal times are challenging, like they are now, tough choices need to be made. I understand the goal of outcome-based budgeting; however, it all needs to get run through a financial lens. I would advocate for Priority-Based Budgeting ("PBB") as a final way to deliver the greatest good within the given budget.

The recent headline that the Spruce Pool is slated to close after the 2027 season is a perfect example of where our current process has run off the tracks. Zero transparency, zero explanation from the city equals zero trust from the residents in how their tax dollars are budgeted and spent. The city should explain that facilities such as Spruce Pool are required to pay their own way through user fees. They should provide a list of all programs in the Parks department, what level of revenue they are required to generate, etc. so that residents can understand the choices that the city has made in which facilities/programs to cut and which to keep.

It is critical that we look across the budget and assess if programs are working? There is no KPI dashboard that shows results in a dollar weighted calculation, such as cost per capita to deliver various services. How are we measuring effectiveness of various programs? How are these results reflected in the budget process? We should strive to be in the top quartile (aspirational) and at a minimum, top half when compared to peer cities. The existing KPI's are so nuanced that the average reader has a hard time determining whether the goal is useful as there is limited metrics that a lay person can use to analyze the data.

PBB asks four basic questions for each line item:

- Which services provide the greatest value for residents
- Which programs are legally required or otherwise essential
- How well a service aligns with strategic priorities (in this case, city council)
- Whether process, staffing, purchasing, technology, or delivery changes could lower costs before eliminating or reducing a public service

Using a process that requires tough decisions and provides transparency to residents is what I am in favor of. Building back trust from residents is critical and if done well, would dramatically increase the chances to win voter approval for a bond or similar revenue increase.

8. A citizen group has developed a proposal for the city to hire a Performance Auditor (different than a financial auditor) plus a small supporting staff and an Audit Committee that would report to City Council, with funding in the 2027 budget? Do you support this proposal? Would you make it a high priority for 2027?

Yes and yes.

I support establishing a Performance Auditor, provided the office is carefully designed to be independent, nonpartisan, appropriately scoped, and focused on improving results.

I would expect the savings to be highly accretive against the nominal costs. I would make this a high priority. The ability for a resident of Boulder to understand where/how their money is spent is difficult at best.

9. Do you support the $400 million tax measure and associated bond issuance that will total $650 million, known as the Recreation and Safety Bond, to address deferred maintenance of seven city buildings that will be on the ballot in November? Why or why not? For incumbents. Has your position changed, and how?

I support maintaining safe, functional public facilities and addressing legitimate deferred maintenance. However, I do not support the Recreation and Safety Bond in its current form because it would authorize up to $400 million in new debt, with repayment potentially reaching $650 million, before the city provided sufficient project-level scope, cost certainty, prioritization, and accountability protections.

The facilities at issue are important. But before asking residents to assume this level of long-term debt, Council should provide a transparent, independently reviewed project list that distinguishes urgent life-safety needs from desirable improvements; identifies the full cost of each project, including financing and future operating costs; compares renovation, replacement, phased construction, and lower-cost alternatives; and makes clear what work would be deferred if the bond does not pass.

In addition, how would land where old buildings stand be repurposed? Provide a comprehensive full life cycle view before asking for the largest property tax increase in Boulder.

Public Safety

10. How do you view the city's current state of public safety? What 2 or 3 specific things do you think council needs to change?

Overall, Boulder is comparatively safe, and the lack of headlines/discourse indicates that major issues are not front and center with residents.

Items of Note:

1) City Council unanimously approved the *Reimagine Policing Plan* on September 7, 2023. The struggle has been converting that adopted vision into a durable operating model. Staffing and retention continue to

be a major issue as the 2023 plan requires staffing up by 16 FTE's, something the department has not been able to do.

2) Surveillance/Flock. There is substantial backlash against surveillance, especially if it is run by companies like Flock. Residents are concerned about the depth, breadth and safety about data collected on them, regardless of the stated protection of their privacy. Providing a dashboard on benefits provided by the Flock system that is easy to navigate would go a long way in building a higher level of trust from residents. Items such as how many stolen cars were recovered with Flock. Boulder claims a 34.5% reduction in car theft with zero back-up information. There is a "transparency" Portal on the Flock website dedicated to Boulder, though the stats are limited at best.
3) Infrastructure – If the $400MM bond issue fails to win approval, which appears likely, how will critical public safety infrastructure be built? If there are substantial delays, how will this impact service levels and staffing? Council should explore how else this could be paid for in conjunction with asking, how can these facilities be built with fewer dollars.

Business

11. What is your view of the issues facing downtown and what would you advocate to address these issues?

Downtown Boulder is a major civic and economic asset, but it faces interrelated challenges: high occupancy costs, vacant storefronts, changing visitor and spending patterns, permitting complexity, competition from other destinations and online commerce, and concerns about cleanliness, lighting, and public safety. The city should focus first on practical actions that improve conditions without creating a new layer of government.

I would advocate reducing avoidable permitting complexity and delays; making regulations more predictable for small businesses; improving cleanliness, lighting, and public safety; supporting appropriate downtown housing; and working with property owners and businesses to address high occupancy costs and long-term vacancies.

Boulder should also determine what mix of retail, services, food, culture, and events residents and visitors will patronize, rather than assuming past patterns will return unchanged. Sales tax revenue for the entire Downtown catchment area has been falling while the Pearl Street Mall catchment area has remained flat/slight increase. Is this due to locals not spending money in this area? Are they shifting it to their local neighborhood or online? Sales tax from online sales continues to rise, so either we need existing residents to spend more money, commuters to spend more in Boulder and increase the number of visitors and their spending in Boulder.

The Affordable Commercial Grant Pilot deserves a clear evaluation: did it produce durable benefits? If so, Council should consider a sustainable funding approach rather than assuming a one-time program is enough. Boulder could also explore practical small-business support such as commercial-lease assistance, potentially using trained volunteers or partnerships to help new businesses understand lease terms, build-out requirements, and permitting.

Transportation

12. What would you advocate for to address the huge number of in-commuters driving in to Boulder to access their jobs?

We should start by getting a better understanding of the in-commuters, why they are making SOV trips into Boulder and what incentive/point of pain would get them to switch to another means of transportation. What is the mix of office workers, CU and BVSD students and tradespeople for instance?

Research has shown that the best results have been achieved by eliminating subsidized single occupancy vehicle ("SOV)" parking combined with a commensurately valuable non-SOV benefit.

Combining this with transit service (including private) along key corridors, such as US 36 and the Diagonal to core employment centers in Boulder. As the office like amenities in cars increase, getting people to switch out of their cars grows harder.

I commuted to Denver from 2000 to 2008 and was a frequent bus rider. The trip on the bus, including biking to the bus and biking to my office from Market Street Station took about 10 to 15 minutes longer. This was offset by the time I had to read; money saved on gas, reduced wear and tear on my car and overall lower stress level by not driving. My employer provided either a parking spot or funds to buy a transit pass. In 2021, I commuted to downtown Denver once again and found that the elimination of FF2 route (now partially restored) made my trip closer to 25 minutes longer. Based on this and other factors such as the low operating cost of my EV, I drove 90% of the time.

Each person calculates the opportunity cost differently and we need to explore what mix of incentives would cost efficiently reduce the amount of in-commuters SOV trips.

Questions for Mayoral Candidates

13. What is your view of the role of Mayor versus the role of the council members? What changes would you propose to improve the role of the Mayor without going beyond the limitations in the Charter?

14. What is your view of the relationship between the City Manager and the Mayor?