

# The Denver Streets Partnership

## 2023 ELECTION POLICY PLATFORM



*denver* STREETS PARTNERSHIP.org

Dear 2023 Denver Municipal Candidates,

Thank you for your dedication to public service and improving our community. Running for office is no small undertaking, but it sure is an important one.

At the Denver Streets Partnership, we're excited to get to know you and learn about your values and vision for Denver. We're also excited to share our vision and values, and invite you to engage with our Steering Committee members and supporters in the months leading up to the April 2023 election. The following document serves as our policy platform—our roadmap for realizing our vision for Denver—which we hope is the first of many opportunities to engage with you on issues related to transportation, human dignity, and public space.

We know that one of the most challenging parts of running for office can be becoming well-versed on every issue facing our City, so we did some of the work for you! We invite you to explore what we've put forth here, ask us questions, and consider adopting some of these policies and actions into your own platform.

Consider this an open invitation to discuss the issues we work on!

For a better Denver,



Molly McKinley  
Policy Director, Denver Streets Partnership

P.S. For the sake of full transparency, we want you to know that as a non-partisan organization, the Denver Streets Partnership will not be making endorsements in the election. We look forward to working with all of you who get elected to office in this important election.





## WHO WE ARE

The Denver Streets Partnership is a coalition of community-based organizations advocating for people-friendly streets in Denver.

We believe in an equitable and vibrant Denver that guarantees our public spaces are designed for people. We believe that human dignity should be the guiding principle for the design of our transportation system so that everyone can thrive and connect to what matters most.



*To make that Denver a reality, these are our policy recommendations for municipal leaders. Denver must work with regional and state leaders to move these forward.*



# Multimodal Transportation for All

*We need to build a transportation system that works to meet local and state goals to equitably reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, save lives, increase affordability, and expand access.*

*We can transform our transportation system by building out our public transit, walking, and biking networks in the next 15 years.*

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

- More than 70 percent of Denver residents live within convenient walking access to transit—meaning a quarter-mile walk to a bus stop or a half-mile walk to a light-rail station—but only 36 percent have convenient access to all-day frequent service—meaning transit that runs at least every 15 minutes.



Denver must make investments that improve the frequency and reliability of transit so that the majority of residents have access to frequent transit service.

- Denver should work with CDOT, DRCOG, and RTD to fund and build out the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network and increase service by 70 percent, including increasing transit service frequency to every 15 minutes in urban areas.
- RTD and transit agencies around the country are struggling with a workforce shortage. Denver must explore opportunities in the near term to meet transit needs of its residents and support RTD's efforts to recruit and maintain its workforce.

# Multimodal Transportation for All

## BIKING, WALKING, AND SAFE STREETS

- Right now, 40 percent of sidewalks in Denver are either missing or not wide enough for someone using a wheelchair. All Denver streets should have connected, accessible, well-maintained sidewalks.
- All Denverites should live within a quarter-mile of a high comfort bikeway.
- The City should continually evaluate and upgrade bike facilities as needed to ensure they are truly considered high comfort by people of all ages and abilities.
- Implementation of high comfort bike facilities should be considered during annual street resurfacing.
- Neighborhood parking management plans should be implemented in conjunction with the buildout of bike facilities. Too often decisions favor preserving street parking over safe facilities, but it doesn't have to be this way. The City should proactively take a holistic approach to curb management to determine the best use of curb space without compromising on safety.
- Implement designs from Denver's Complete Streets Design Guidelines, including traffic calming measures that have been absent in Denver but widely used elsewhere.



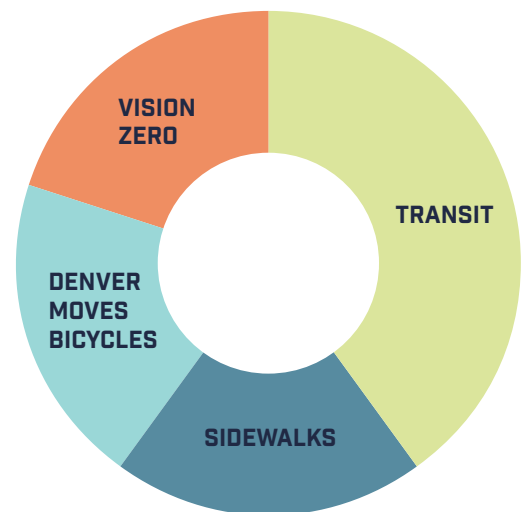
# Multimodal Transportation for All

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- The Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) must have the level of staffing required to plan, design, and deliver projects in a timely manner.
- DOTI staff must also be supported on project implementation by City leadership. Too often, leaders agree to bold, broad plans, like Blueprint Denver, but support waivers when it comes to individual projects because change within the community is difficult. Our City's values must hold up on a project-by-project basis as much as they do in broad plans.
- The City should act more quickly to implement projects that are consistent with citywide goals, followed up with immediate evaluation and iterative improvements to ensure projects are achieving intended outcomes.

## TO FUND THE ABOVE, DENVER SHOULD...

- Continue the distribution of the Transportation and Mobility Fund revenues established in the 2022 Annual Budget, with 40 percent for transit, 20 percent for sidewalks, 20 percent for Denver Moves Bicycles implementation, and 20 percent for Vision Zero implementation.
- Protect and expand upon the current funding levels for active and public transportation in the Denver budget.
- Look beyond the annual budget and proactively partner with CDOT and RTD to aggressively pursue the additional state and federal funding that is required to fully achieve Denver's goals.
- Create a dedicated fee for the buildout and maintenance of Denver's complete sidewalk network.
- Work with RTD to invest in more frequent public transit service within Denver, while continuing to invest in capital improvements, like dedicated bus lanes and bus shelters.



# Public Spaces for People

*No community members are more deserving of our public spaces than others—not public parks, public libraries, nor public transit stations.*

*We need leadership to approach complex societal issues with compassion and dignity to find solutions that benefit all members of the community and create a truly safe and comfortable Denver.*

- Reallocate public street space to put people first, and prioritize safety and multimodal options over vehicular throughput and parking by implementing parking management plans citywide.
- Ensure streets are safe and comfortable for people to use by funding street trees and greenscapes, shade and benches at bus stops, public restrooms, and water fountains.
- Fund Denver’s STAR and SOS programs to a level commensurate with the need in the community.
- Work with community-based organizations and other government agencies to make decisions founded in compassion and dignity as you address public safety issues, support unhoused individuals, and address the root causes of homelessness.



# Wider Highways Aren't Right for Denver



*Doubling down on highway projects will only make life worse for residents of the Denver metro region, especially for poor communities and communities of color, which are most heavily impacted by air pollution, burdensome household transportation costs, and increased greenhouse gas emissions.*

*It's long past time that transportation funding in our region supports projects that align with our commitments to address climate change, air quality, and equity.*

- Reject proposals at the state, regional, and local levels to widen roads and highways within Denver.
- Support opportunities to reconnect communities divided by highway projects, like those that can be funded through federal grant programs, and consider opportunities to repurpose highway infrastructure to better serve multimodal transportation options.



# Vision Zero

*The alarming rate of fatal and preventable traffic crashes on our streets demands urgent action—a record 84 people were killed on Denver streets in 2022. To achieve this necessary and beneficial transformation of Denver’s transportation system, all levels of government must do their part and work together—and the City must lead.*



- Recommit Denver to the Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by the year 2030, backed up by street safety improvements focused on the High Injury Network and in Equity Index Areas.
- Use low-cost interim design treatments to make rapid safety improvements throughout Denver followed by more permanent improvements in a timely manner.
- Expand use of automated enforcement (red light and speed cameras), a proven technique used worldwide to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities, which when deployed effectively actually results in fewer citations as safer driving behaviors become the norm.

## HIGH INJURY NETWORK

The streets in Denver with the highest number of fatal and serious injury crashes. According to the Denver Vision Zero Action Plan, the High Injury Network (HIN) accounts for 5 percent of streets in Denver, but 50 percent of traffic deaths.

## EQUITY INDEX AREA

Denver neighborhoods are where residents face the highest hurdles to leading healthy lives. Indicators that the City uses to identify Equity Index Areas include educational attainment, poverty, access to food and parks, access to healthcare, morbidity, and mortality.

# Vision Zero

- Work with CDOT, DRCOG, and RTD to prevent more unnecessary loss of lives by making bold investments in bus infrastructure and service. Focusing these investments on priority corridors will generate high ridership levels, reduce our dependence on individual car ownership and, most importantly, save lives.
- Pursue low-cost policy changes that will make our streets safer:
  - **Ban turns on red downtown and on the High Injury Network.** Permitting rights on red increases pedestrian crashes by 60 percent and bike crashes by 100 percent, because right-turning drivers look left for a gap in traffic and don't see people walking or biking approaching from the right side.
  - **Eliminate pedestrian “beg buttons” on the High Injury Network.** At many traffic signals, people walking must push a button to receive a pedestrian WALK signal, while automated signals provide more timely pedestrian indications and ensure pedestrians always have enough time to safely cross the street.
  - **Aggressively pursue a state legislative strategy expanding the use of photo speed radar and red light cameras.** These are proven techniques used worldwide to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities. Current state law severely restricts where and how these forms of automated enforcement can be used, effectively prohibiting their use on most of Denver’s High Injury Network.
  - **Fully fund planned Vision Zero projects.** Denver must prioritize identifying new revenue sources to build out the complete transportation networks and services that will make walking, biking, and transit safe and practical ways to get around and reduce our dependence on driving. At the current funding levels, this buildout will take hundreds of years.



# Equity and Racial Justice

*Transportation policy has been used to harm communities of color, traffic violence disproportionately impacts communities of color, and communities of color have seen a lack of investment in safe infrastructure.*

*Leaders in Denver must recognize these truths and adopt policies and make investments that use our transportation system to improve people's lives, rather than to harm them.*

- Adopt the following policy recommendations from the Task Force to Reimagine Policing and Public Safety:
  - **Decriminalize traffic offenses often used for pretextual stops**, like jaywalking.
  - **Prohibit Denver Police from conducting searches** in relation to petty offenses or traffic violations.
  - **Remove police officers from routine traffic stops and crash reporting** and explore non-police alternatives that incentivize behavior change to eliminate traffic fatalities.
  - **Eliminate the need for traffic enforcement** by auditing and investing in the built environment to promote safe travel behavior.



# Housing, Parking Management, and Transit-Oriented Development

*People-friendly streets result not only from street designs that support walking, rolling, biking, and transit—intentional land use and development patterns make these transportation modes accessible and practical ways for people to reach daily destinations.*

*Two of the most significant household expenses are housing and transportation. Density and a diversity of development types allows people to live close to their daily destinations.*

*High-frequency transit makes using transit, walking, and biking realistic options for getting from place to place, rather than forcing people to live so far away that driving is the only practical option for getting where they need to go.*

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- Coordinate housing and transportation policies and investments to maximize the number of people who can rely on affordable transportation options, and prevent the displacement of low-income residents who stand to benefit the most from improved transportation options.
  - Dedicate more federal and state funding for affordable housing to match local dedicated revenues.
  - Eliminate single-family zoning and allow duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes to be constructed by-right across the city.
  - Legalize Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) citywide.
  - Eliminate parking minimums citywide and implement parking maximums to reduce the amount of unused parking in the city.

# Housing, Parking Management, and Transit-Oriented Development

- Allow for mixed-use density in downtown areas and near high-frequency transit stations, with specific requirements for affordable housing.
- Expand commercial zoning within residential neighborhoods to allow for a better mix of housing, jobs, retail, and other building types in our communities and create 15-minute walkable neighborhoods.
- At key Transit Oriented Development (TOD) sites, such as those within a block of train stations or bus transfer facilities, Denver should encourage developers to provide space for publicly accessible commercial activities such as coffee shops, convenience / grocery stores and restaurants which support the transit environment and can provide comfortable options to wait for transit.



# Thank you!

## POINT OF CONTACT

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## RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Denver Streets Partnership: [Groups urge Denver and RTD to make decisions about Denver Union Station founded in compassion and dignity](#)
- Denver Streets Partnership: [CDOT, RTD, local partners must come together for better public transit](#)
- [Blueprint Denver](#)
- [Denver Vision Zero Action Plan](#)
- [Denver Moves Bikes Plan](#)
- [Denver Moves Pedestrians and Trails Plan](#)
- [Denver Moves Transit Plan](#)
- [Denver Complete Streets Design Guidelines](#)
- Denver Streets Partnership: [Groups call for expanded transit, not expanded highways](#)
- Denver Streets Partnership: [The Way to Zero Traffic Deaths is on the Bus: 2022 Vision Zero Call to Action](#)

