



denver STREETS PARTNERSHIP

## 2023 Denver City Council Candidate Questionnaire

**Sarah Parady**

### **What are your top priorities related to transportation as a candidate? How do you expect to address them if elected?**

When it comes to transportation as an At-Large City Council candidate, I hope to bring people together from across the city toward a multimodal future that doesn't leave people behind, and puts equity and working class needs first. Some of my top priorities are a city-wide network of protected bike lanes - and while we build that, a network of shared streets - a recommitment to Vision Zero that actually follows through on building life-saving infrastructure, working with regional partners like RTD and CDOT on bus rapid transit, and addressing the transportation inequities faced by underserved communities and people with disabilities.

### **Since Denver leaders made a commitment in 2017 to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious bodily injuries by 2030 (an initiative known as Vision Zero) over 460 people have been killed in preventable traffic crashes on Denver's streets. Fatalities have increased every year except 2020, when traffic volumes were significantly reduced during the pandemic. Meanwhile, other cities in the U.S. and across the world have succeeded in substantially reducing traffic fatalities. What actions do you think the City should take to ensure we reverse the current trend and actually make meaningful progress toward the goal of zero traffic fatalities here in Denver?**

Council specifically should take these steps:

1. Make road safety, rather than "level of service," the fundamental metric for road design.
2. Push for funding for DOTI to do the following and pass any needed ordinances:
  - 2a. Implement road diets on the high injury network
  - 2b. Redesign intersections for better sight lines and with non-car modes in mind (e.g. Hoboken) - starting with the HIN, then moving to things like daylighting for feeder streets and less dangerous intersections
  - 2c. Continue improving signal prioritization algorithms
  - 2d. Continue improving lighting
  - 2e. Use speed cameras, but with enforcement within DOTI (not police) and with thought put into equity concerns about where cameras are placed.
3. At the council level, consider banning right-on-red and continuing to lower speed limits.
4. As council is making decisions about fee levels under Denver Deserves Sidewalks, the two considerations that should drive where and how we build out sidewalks should be decreasing car usage (by making other modes easier to access) and keeping pedestrians safe.

As an overarching matter, Denver won't reach Vision Zero unless we get serious about deprioritizing cars. Improving bus and lightrail service (BRT, shuttles and connectors within neighborhoods) are also key pieces of the puzzle. I'm willing to explore congestion pricing for downtown, closing some streets to cars, or other ways to reduce cars downtown.

**Recently, Denver has started making some limited investments in infrastructure to improve bus service, such as dedicated bus lanes, traffic signals that prioritize buses, and enhanced bus stops. The build out of this infrastructure has been slow, however, and the City has not proactively partnered with RTD to increase service frequency along these routes. What role do you think the City should play in ensuring that Denverites have access to enough frequent, reliable public transit service to make transit a practical option for daily trips and reduce our dependence on driving?**

The city should thoughtfully augment RTD services with shuttles (on routes with stops) or connectors (on-call vehicles), lobby the state for more RTD funding, considering purchasing greater frequency of service from RTD, and crucially, work with RTD to conduct a survey of land owned by RTD, CDOT, and the city where transit-proximate housing could be built, perhaps originally as workforce housing for transit workers to recruit and fill vacancies. As the question suggests, the city should also provide the infrastructure needed for buses to move efficiently, for BRT corridors to come online, and for people to be safe and comfortable while waiting for the bus.

Denver was able to move relatively quickly on the expansion of Pena Blvd. The city can move quickly when the political will is there, and I commit to working through both bureaucratic hurdles and jurisdictional challenges to get these delays and service problems addressed, and not falling back on finger pointing while transit riders are left in the lurch. We should also be actively incentivizing transit usage, and use our position on Council to push for a full time fare-free model for RTD.

**Parking issues inevitably come up in any discussion about modifying our streets to better accommodate people walking, biking, and accessing transit, and can often be a stumbling block that prevents much-needed street safety projects from moving forward. What changes, if any, would you make to how the City manages parking to ensure we are using our limited street space in the best way possible to achieve our community's goals for providing healthy, safe, and affordable transportation options for everyone?**

Less cars and less parking is the direction that every major American city is moving in, and Denver is no different. We can start by eliminating parking minimums in new developments, and build across Denver with a multimodal future in mind. For existing streets and proposing changes, we should be thoughtful, equitable, and engage with the community about how we can achieve safety, density, and multimodal goals without putting strain on working families. As mentioned above, closing some streets to all but local traffic, closing some downtown streets, and exploring congestion pricing downtown should be on the table.

**Denver Streets Partnership sponsored the Denver Deserves Sidewalks ballot measure, which passed in November 2022 with 56% of voter support. How will you ensure that this new sidewalk program is successfully implemented in a timely manner?**

Thank you to DSP for sponsoring the Denver Deserves Sidewalks measure, the sidewalks across Denver are notoriously bad (I have experienced them as a stroller-pushing parent and disability advocate), and our community is in a better position to address it because of your work. As for implementation, I'm curious about opportunities to create economies of scale and create long-term contracts with unions so that the workforce carrying out Denver's Sidewalks programs are well-paid and well-trained. We also need urgency on implementation, and I commit to working with different branches of city government to address bottlenecks that often arise on these projects. As mentioned above, we should prioritize building where doing so would allow people to access other transit or would make risky areas for pedestrians safer.

**While funding over time for biking, walking, transit, and Vision Zero has generally increased over the last five years, including the recently established Transportation and Mobility Fund, the City is still well short of what's needed to build and maintain safe, accessible infrastructure citywide. How would you expand funding for these needs?**

Denver Voters have frequently approved new funds for worthy projects, including the Denver Deserves Sidewalks measure. E-bikes are incredibly popular, based on the pace of rebate uptake and web traffic

when they become available. I believe in the people of this city, and their willingness to approve new funding streams for a sustainable transportation future. It's incumbent on council to present choices on funding sources to those voters, and to find equitable streams where working families aren't overly burdened by the change.

I believe Council's most important role in transforming Denver is securing revenue to do so, whether by sending measures to the ballot, lobbying the state or federal governments, or legislating more creative measures.

**District**

City Council At Large