



denver STREETS PARTNERSHIP

2023 Denver City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Shannon Hoffman

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

I approach transportation from the lens of putting people and the planet first. I am specifically committed to improving safety, making transit more comfortable and reliable, and improving multimodal transportation options so community members make less trips by car. To me, strengthening agency partnerships is the critical path to achieving this vision. I will advocate for transformational partnerships between DOTI, RTD, and CDOT to advance Bus Rapid Transit implementation on Colfax and Colorado; improve bus stops throughout the City, continue Denver Connector “microtransit” shuttles that connect community members to the larger RTD bus and light rail system; and improve safety through high quality traffic calming improvements, new protected bike lanes, and sidewalk enhancements.

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?

We need a comprehensive investigation of traffic-related deaths and serious injuries to understand the most prevalent causes of fatalities, why current improvements are not working, and what needs to be changed to meet the Vision Zero commitment. In addition to thorough data analysis, the City needs to speak with cities that have succeeded in reducing fatalities to understand their best practices. We know Denver has a history of implementing safety improvements that get removed when some community members express opposition. We also know Denver often implements inferior safety improvement methods given cost concerns or lack of political will. Changes to our infrastructure that prioritize walking, rolling, and riding instead of driving will take some adjustment from all community members, but these changes are necessary to decrease the number of deaths and to protect our planet. Changes like this can induce fear in some people and while city leaders don’t have to placate these fears, sometimes they can be quelled with needed information about how to navigate these changes to their streets and sidewalks in their neighborhoods.

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?

In order to achieve the transformational mobility, safety, and climate changes we need, Denver must partner with RTD to improve transit service. I do not think Denver should start a competing transit network. I think Denver should leverage its resources to support RTD. I would like to explore adding additional service routes as has been done in Boulder with the Hop, Skip, and Jump lines. Another large barrier to RTD providing more frequent or reliable service right now is the operator shortage. Denver can partner with RTD to advance ways of improving operators' compensation and working conditions. Specifically, Denver can identify new funding opportunities to: boost operator pay, attract and retain new operators, provide childcare and counseling for RTD employees, and build new driver relief stations throughout the city. Denver can set aside housing for RTD operators in city-financed affordable housing, middle income housing, and social housing buildings. Additionally, Denver can provide driver relief stations in city buildings. Lastly, we know many operators leave RTD because of stressful interactions with members of the public using drugs, experiencing homelessness, or having mental health crises. Like SEPTA's Hub of Hope in Philadelphia, Denver can partner with RTD to develop "hubs of hopes" at or near high frequency transit stations so community members avoid congregating on transit and get access to needed services.

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?

The City has traditionally evaluated parking through smaller subarea plans and neighborhood-level transportation management plans rather than through a citywide transportation demand management approach. Rather than siloing parking analysis and management to the neighborhood level, the City should develop a comprehensive city-wide approach. Additionally, the City should explore creative strategies for shared parking. Numerous businesses and high-rises have surplus parking capacity, especially during evenings. The City should explore opportunities for community members to use this existent surplus parking so that limited street space can be put toward higher uses. Additionally, the City should increase its investment and marketing of car sharing programs so Denverites can transition to being car free or car-lite while having access to vehicles when they need them, like for occasional trips to the mountains.

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?

I was a strong supporter of the Denver Deserves Sidewalks ballot measure. In 2015, Denver's Office of the Auditor completed a performance audit of the implementation of Denver Moves: Making Bicycle and Multi-Use Connections. This evaluation determined that Denver had failed to sufficiently fund and implement the multimodal transportation improvements identified in the 2011 plan. Since the Auditor's report, the City has made significant progress increasing the quantity of bike lanes throughout Denver – in fact 113 new miles of bikeways have been installed in since summer 2018. I strongly support City audits as a tool to evaluate program progress and foster compliance. Additionally, I would be supportive of council working closely with Denver Streets Partnership to ensure that the measure is implemented as intended and does not get watered down as it moves through the implementation process.

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?

I would begin with a comprehensive review of existing funding streams and resource allocation. After

understanding how current funding is used, I would identify ways we can best reallocate current funding. For example, we know the City spends \$5-20,000 on each sweep on our unhoused neighbors and that much of this money flows through the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure for “encumbrance removal”. This is money that could be better used to build and maintain safe and accessible infrastructure. After determining ways to better allocate existing funding, we need to determine which crucial projects exist that aren’t funded. Denver voters are historically very supportive of bond initiatives – this is a strong method for raising new revenue.

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10