



denver STREETS PARTNERSHIP

Denver City Council At-Large Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name

Jeff Walker

Candidate Website

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What are your top mobility-related priorities as a candidate? How do you expect to implement them if elected?

Traffic safety is the top priority. Vision Zero is achievable. My budget priorities will reflect this. Registered neighborhood organizations, Denver School Board, the Regional Transportation District, healthcare professionals, banks, and housing advocates need to be involved in moving the mayor, council, and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to install traffic calming measures quickly and realize financial savings from fewer and less severe crashes, and, most importantly, eliminate the emotional costs from loss of life.

Do you support the city's Vision Zero commitment of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030?

Yes

If yes, what actions should City officials take to reverse the current traffic-fatality trend and make meaningful progress toward Denver's Vision Zero commitment?

I support eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries starting tomorrow. City officials can quickly develop a policy of calming traffic in the most dangerous road segments through the use of flex posts, jersey barriers, road striping, signals designed to slow traffic, additional time for walk signal, and enforcement against persons exhibiting dangerous driving behavior with severely increased fines.

Do you think public transit (bus and train service) can play a role in helping Denver achieve its Vision Zero goals?

Yes

If yes, explain how.

According to the National Safety Council, the passenger vehicle death rate per 100,000,000 miles was over 20 times higher than passenger trains and over 70 times higher than buses since 2022. Public transit vehicle operators receive annual training in defensive driving, de-escalation, and other observational skills to help them avoid crashes. Drivers of passenger vehicles are not required to receive any training beyond what is required to obtain a driver's license.

Do you think the City should play a role in ensuring that Denverites have access to enough frequent, reliable public-transit service to make transit a practical option for daily trips?

Yes

If yes, how should the City partner with RTD to improve transit service?

Denver can partner with RTD in two very substantial ways: 1) Directing commercial and residential development to established transit corridors, and 2) Improving infrastructure to facilitate accessing transit stops. An example is on southbound Colorado Blvd. south of East 1st Avenue where there is an uneven dirt path that leads to the bus stop. This is embarrassing.

Are you willing to champion projects that prioritize street safety and multimodal access over driver convenience?

Yes

Please explain why you answered the way you did.

Safe streets are inexpensive streets. Less repair is needed because fewer crashes occur. It's that simple.

How would you deal with local pushback to projects that experts agree would significantly improve street safety?

I would focus on three items, in no particular order: 1) Improved safety reduces travel delay, 2) Improved safety reduces costs to the city 3) Improved safety improves retail sales.

Would you work to expand funding for Denver's transportation/mobility needs?

Yes

If yes, please explain how.

Expanding funding can be done through tax increases, although very specific projects and timelines need to be identified for a successful ballot initiative. New development is required to improve the adjoining sidewalk if it is substandard. Tax increment financing can be used to build out the infrastructure in large-scale developments. General Improvement Districts are being used more often for neighborhoods to develop safe streets and other pedestrian amenities.

Do you think the City should plan, design, and deliver transportation projects in a more timely and efficient manner?

Yes

If yes, what actions should City officials take to make this happen?

Many projects can be implemented without years of study and planning. Especially projects where the goal is to save lives. The span from concept to implementation can be cut to weeks from years on the High Injury Network by using flex posts, retiming traffic signals for slower speeds, and improving visibility through clearing obstacles and improving lighting in sight triangles.

Our streets make up our largest public space, and for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, "streets are not a means to get home but are home itself." What policies would you pursue to ensure that everyone feels safe and welcome in Denver's public spaces?

I will support increasing funding for congregate shelters, housing affordability programs, and street outreach partners. It's true that streets are home to some, but unsheltered living is not a safe long-term or short-term situation. Denver needs to provide shelter AND services to homeless persons. The cost per person to provide housing and services is approximately one third as expensive as involving someone in the legal system.

Do you think Denver should encourage higher densities and mixed-use development patterns to support transit-rich, walkable, and bikeable communities?

Yes

If yes, what actions should City officials take to achieve those outcomes?

Denver is already taking steps to increase density through elimination of parking minimum requirements, allowing accessory dwelling units in one and two-unit zone districts, and rolling out Unlocking Housing Choices. Expanding Housing Affordability should also help with the effort to create density and more economic and housing opportunities. Improved sidewalks through the Denver Deserves Sidewalks initiative will help in both commercial and pre-war residential areas, as an example of the potential span of that program.

Have you ever been a frequent public transportation user?

Yes

Have you ever been a frequent bike commuter?

Yes

How do you usually move around Denver? Please tell us more about your personal mobility experience.

I have walked to work for the last year. I was a daily transit user when I worked downtown for 20 years. I have exclusively used public transit to get to the airport since the A Line began service in 2016.

I often ride my bicycle to the grocery store 1/2 mile from my house if I have to buy only a few items.

Before I started this campaign, I drove about 10 miles per week.

Do you think Denver should transform our streets to prioritize children’s safe and independent mobility?

Yes

Do you think Denver should transform our streets to prioritize the safe and independent mobility of people who cannot drive a car due to a disability?

Yes

If you answered yes to one or both of the questions above, what actions should City officials take to achieve or make progress toward this transformation?

Denver should reduce the speed limit to no more than 25 mph on every arterial in the city. Lanes should be narrowed to nine feet and sidewalk width increased on arterials. Traffic signals need to be timed to slow traffic flow. Level of Service C should be the acceptable condition on freeways and arterials.

Do you support the rapid implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network in Denver?

Yes

Please explain why you do or don't support the rapid implementation of a BRT network in Denver.

The bus segment of RTD's transit system carries the lion share of transit users, even though light rail gets more attention. Buses on heavily traveled corridors, like Colorado Blvd., Federal Blvd., and Sheridan Blvd. are slowed by general traffic. Slow trip times reduce ridership. Exclusive bus lanes, signal priority, and rapid boarding options improve trip times and - when more people return to the office - will provide a better user experience.

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

This process is exciting.

I served on the 2007 and 2017 transportation subcommittees for the bond issuances. I'm seeing some of those projects, like the Jewell Avenue bike bridge and the Alameda underpass improvements, finally going vertical. I was on Denver's Planning Board when the city was rezoned in 2010 and served on Blueprint Denver Task Force when we adjusted the land use plan to provide better protections for the city's most vulnerable residents in 2019.

I served on RTD's board during the construction of FasTracks and emphasized how jurisdictions rezone areas around stations to accommodate more housing and employment choices and focus less on cars and more on pedestrians. I presented to a south metro chamber of commerce in 2017 and mentioned how the car-centric Englewood civic center was struggling to fill retail space, but the much more walkable Broadway was seeing new development because of its accessibility.

I was hit by a left-turning car while I was in the crosswalk on Broadway at Iowa this past February. The driver slowed afterward but did not stop. The intersection has horrible sight lines. I don't even know if the person knew they hit me. My guess is they were distracted by oncoming traffic. I was lucky to get myself off the ground and walk away without even a scratch. I want everyone to be able to avoid anything worse. Budgeting and public demands can make that happen.

Last item: I worked at CDOT in 2002. I had a project north of Ft. Collins re-evaluated because it did not account for impacts on the low-income households adjacent to the project area. The highway had no pedestrian infrastructure. Mothers pushed their children in strollers on the shoulder of the road. Because of my efforts (and I do take credit for this) the final project included a sidewalk, curb, and gutter, and drainage improvements. The speed limit was still too high in my opinion, but I'm proud that I was able to make a typical road widening include pedestrian improvements.

Thank you for your consideration. Best wishes on your decision.