

TOMORROW BOULDER

5541 Central Avenue, Suite 145 Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: 303-449-0228 Fax: 303-558-4228

www.BoulderTomorrow.com

Boulder City Council Candidate Questionnaire

The following questions were posed to 13 City Council Candidates.

The responses are listed by candidate in alphabetical order.

1. Do you support an employment (or “head”) tax?

Suzy Ageton

In general I am leery of a “head” tax because of the possible impacts of this tax on Boulder’s economy. A study a few years ago by the LEEDS School of Business suggested that this form of taxation would reduce Boulder’s competitiveness within the regional market as most nearby communities do not impose such a tax. Given that most nearby communities still do not impose this tax and we are still in an economic downturn, it does not make sense to me to pursue this type of tax.

I would also note the LEEDS study findings indicated that a head tax could reduce our labor supply in a normal market. Depending upon the portion of this tax carried by employees, Boulder may have trouble attracting the work force it needs. And finally, I think there is a question of basic equity with this type of tax. Low to middle-income employees will have to pay this tax while many others such as the self-employed and possibly state and federal employees may be exempt.

As we seek to strengthen and diversify our economy, we need to be mindful of the impact of any actions we take on our overall business climate. I would favor working to expand our economic base before considering new taxes.

Matt Appelbaum

I served on BRC I and am well aware of the “structural” budgetary problems Boulder – and all cities in Colorado – are facing. We need a comprehensive budget and revenue plan based on this new information and changing economic and demographic conditions. This will no doubt include reductions in expenditures in some areas, as well as increases in fees so that some services are more fully paid for by users. But it is also essential, as stressed by BRC I, that we diversify and stabilize our revenues.

Given the dependency on sales taxes by all Colorado cities (Boulder is actually less dependent than most), and the very limited available approaches to moving toward this goal of diversification/stabilization, I think we need to examine all of the legal possibilities (and try to legalize at least one currently illegal approach, the imposition of a real-estate transfer tax, although that will require a statewide vote). Local options include increasing property taxes (something long seen as most difficult to get voters to support), working to have local sales taxes imposed on Internet/mail-order sales, making our development excise taxes/fees more accurately and equitably reflect the costs of growth, and examining new approaches like a transportation maintenance fee, a “head” tax, and a tax on services (which would need to be implemented regionally). Note that while it would of course be helpful if some combination of these efforts resulted in additional revenues, the essential goal is diversification.

Regarding the head tax specifically, it is in use in several metro-area cities, and in many cities nationwide. It obviously can have negative effects on the business community and job creation if not handled carefully, but the actual costs to businesses can be kept quite low. I’ve suggested, for example, that we might assess a fairly small head tax of perhaps \$4/month, largely if not entirely on the employee instead of the employer. Providing

services to businesses and employees, particularly in the realm of transportation, is expensive, and unfortunately Boulder no longer gets the huge sales tax benefits from employees that we once did. But a head tax is just one option, and it needs considerably more thought. Any changes to our budget and revenue structures will impact our citizens, employees, visitors, and businesses, but we must recognize that significant changes will be needed.

KC Becker

No, I do not support a head tax.

Macon Cowles

This is one of the revenue measures suggested for further study by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Revenue Stabilization. I am aware that the Chamber and Boulder Tomorrow are against this tax, but I think it needs to be studied. I would not want to impose such a tax without being fully informed of the implications of it.

George Karakehian

It all goes back to priorities. This Council has used resources on things that fall out of the range of government's basic responsibility. On Council, I will focus on cutting costs without raising taxes or fees. I will also support measures that grow City revenues by promoting increased tourism. I do not support a "head" tax. It is counterproductive and very regressive. Boulder needs to attract and retain prosperous companies. I promote green economy innovators. Pursuing real problems with practical solutions while encouraging smart economic growth – this will be the most effective way to deal with our budget problems.

Fenno Hoffman

No. Our current sales taxes address employee impacts. Regional economic competition is fierce. Most of Boulder's employees are in-commuters who were driven out of Boulder years ago by other policies adopted by the City. Taxing *them* seems particularly unfair.

Tim Plass

As the Blue Ribbon Commission has reported, there is a structural gap between city revenues and city operating costs. Our revenues will not keep up with our expenses. The BRC has identified additional revenue sources and strategies that may be helpful in bridging the gap. The first is a fully de-Bruiced property tax. The second is regional revenue sharing. This would consider taking sales taxes on a regional level and apportioning them amongst local governments. Implementation may be a long shot, however. (Though, it might work with new big box stores.) Another place to consider finding additional monies is with the accommodations tax. I would want to make sure that we continue to earmark for the Convention and Visitor Bureau from this source. A transportation maintenance fee could help us with the "funding pothole" that the city faces in its transportation budget. This would be a fee assessed on residences and businesses according to their demands on the transportation infrastructure. The BRC also identified a Development Excise Tax as a way to have new development pay for its impacts on the city's infrastructure.

A head tax, or occupational privilege tax, would be assessed on people who work in Boulder. Such a tax is now in place in Denver. While a head tax would provide a more reliable income stream than sales tax, there are particular concerns in Boulder, including the large number of people employed by the government who would not be affected and the impact on non-profits. I need more information to know when I would opt for a head tax versus the other options, but I would certainly consider it if the city had to cut essential services including police and fire protection.

Jyotsna Raj

This is something that I would need to discuss with Boulder’s business community. I believe Denver had had a “head” tax for many years and it seems to work for them. Certainly we feel the impact of thousands of people coming into Boulder to work everyday and perhaps a head–tax will help us deal with the costs to City infrastructure and services.

Barry Siff

I am not in favor of an employment tax at this time. City Council has already increased a few taxes just in the past few months; and, with pay increases for employees hard to come by these days, I just don’t think it would be appropriate to further burden these folks. Also, to potentially tax the businesses would further put them at a competitive disadvantage in the immediate area. Ultimately, too, who ends up paying these taxes – they are passed on to the consumer in many cases; and, again, all of this leads to a competitive disadvantage for our City’s employers vs. others in the area.

We must stand up and recognize that we need to generate revenue by being a strong business community, and a strong partner with our greatest asset – the University of Colorado. We should not rely on continuing to pass on our problems, our lack of efficiencies, and our lack of forging effective partnerships and business development to the easy way out – increase taxes.

Rob Smoke

Yes – linked to transit and transportation costs caused by workers commuting by car. I would additionally be in favor of finding exemptions for workers who have less impactful commuting; by bus, for instance, or bicycle.

- 2. The city of Boulder has recently raised the impact fees on most commercial development and placed a tax increase proposal on the November ballot that would place the burden of funding the city’s affordable housing program on new commercial development. This change would increase the housing excise tax by a range of 500-1300 percent. Do you feel the aggregate current taxes and fees on commercial development are appropriate?**

Suzy Ageton

While I think it is appropriate that commercial development pay its fair share for the impact on City services that it produces, I am uncomfortable with the ballot proposal to shift the entire housing excise tax (HET) onto the commercial sector. I understand the equity argument that individual homeowners pay both through the inclusionary zoning requirement and the HET and therefore should be relieved from this double hit. However, it seems equally unfair to ask one sector to bear the entire burden especially when the methodology employed to assign the tax does not apportion it by the amount of affordable housing the particular type of commercial development is generating.

Matt Appelbaum

Regarding the ballot issue, I supported putting the increase to the commercial/industrial housing excise tax on the ballot, and hope that it is passed by our voters. The current HET is quite inequitable, especially for residential construction, which pays both the HET and the much larger inclusionary zoning assessment (and the residential HET would be terminated by the ballot issue).

It seems clear that additional C/I space results in the need for additional affordable housing for workers, and that different types of C/I uses employ varying numbers of workers needing such assistance. Calculating a fair and equitable C/I HET isn’t easy, but the city was provided a thorough analysis and careful recommendation by a nationally respected consultant. I felt that this recommendation, although well-justified, raised the C/I HET too much, and created too many categories of uses, and so helped lead council to simplify the rules and lower the rates. Council also was very clear that any increases in C/I HET would be phased in over at least a five-year period, with each year’s increase carefully considered in light of economic conditions.

Council was also very concerned about the aggregate taxes and fees on C/I development, and is looking at ways to significantly reduce that burden. We will be considering a potentially large reduction in the stormwater PIF based on a new analysis of the effects of detention ponds. Assuming this type of modification is approved, Boulder's total C/I development fees will generally be quite consistent with those of our neighboring cities, and thus less as a percentage of total development costs (which is typically higher in Boulder). While any such taxes and fees are of course disliked by those paying them, growth clearly results in significant infrastructure costs to the city, and those costs should, as much and as equitably as possible, be borne by the new construction.

KC Becker

Boulder's development related fees and taxes are either near or at the top end of costs among Front Range communities. This is true even though many of Boulder's commercial spaces are in desperate need of updating. While I understand and agree with the need to have "development pays its own way," it sounds like this tax goes beyond that. Boulder must compete with cheaper commercial spaces in nearby communities who don't pay the same in taxes or have as long or complicated of an entitlement process. I'd like to hear from the business community about how the city can help to improve Boulder's ability to be competitive. There may be opportunities that help both commercial developers and the city.

Macon Cowles

The assertion in the question that "the tax proposal on the November ballot would place the burden of funding the city's Affordable Housing Program on new commercial development" is not true. The proposed Housing Excise Tax (HET) would tax new commercial development in order to contribute to meeting the demand for affordable housing that is created by the new development. But even if the HET passes, it will still be true that largest support for the affordable housing program comes from inclusionary zoning, which is a burden carried by new residential development.

George Karakehian

The link between commercial development and the need for Affordable Housing has always been tenuous, at best. The lack of Affordable Housing in this community is created by a compact urban boundary coupled with a height limit, in a very desirable location. So I have trouble agreeing with this increased HET on commercial development especially at these dramatic levels. I don't want to do anything that disincentivizes the development of new retail or restaurant uses, and these taxes might do that.

I'm more interested in a dialogue that starts with the assumption that every taxpayer in the City sees some benefit from our healthy real estate market that is driven by scarcity, and that same taxpayer sees some value in a diverse population who can live here. Therefore we should all support a sales tax increment that supports the development of affordable housing, and we don't put the burden on one economic sector or another.

Fenno Hoffman

Current aggregate taxes and fees are appropriate. This kind of burden shifting from residential to commercial may be politically expedient, and another example of Boulder's often hostile to business attitude, but it indirectly taxes our workers, through their employers, which further burdens people we should be welcoming into our community. Instead, we should be testing the policies that help create our affordable housing problems in the first place – looking at the root cause of expensive housing - and fixing that by changing the policies that today constrain potential market solutions.

Tim Plass

While the Housing Excise Tax would help to fund the affordable housing program, residential development would still continue to contribute monies, as well. This would occur through the city's inclusionary zoning program, which requires that 20 per cent of all units be permanently affordable, or that a cash-in-lieu payment be made instead. Thus, both residential and commercial development will continue to fund the affordable housing program. Boulder has identified affordable housing to be a priority in the city as it impacts all three legs

of our community sustainability goals. First, in terms of social sustainability, we need to offer opportunities for lower income families to live in the city. Second, from an environmental perspective, having workers live in the city rather than having to commute long distances, helps us to reduce our carbon footprint. And, finally, having a pool of workers for our businesses here in Boulder promotes economic vitality. It is appropriate that commercial development helps to pay for affordable housing since the creation of this type of project increases employment in the city and consequently the need for workers and a place to house them. The previous HET, assessed on both commercial and residential projects brought in revenues of between \$100,000 and \$400,000 per year over the last ten years. Under the current proposal the residential portion would disappear and increase on commercial properties. These increases are in line with the reasoning presented in the TischlerBise report. The timing of the increase in the HET, however, is unfortunate, given the difficult economic times we are having, and the particular stresses being felt in the development community.

Jyotsna Raj

At some point growth must pay for itself. New commercial development will bring in new employees and they must be housed somewhere, so it is equitable to make sure that developers bear some of the cost. I cannot answer with such precision whether the current taxes and fees on commercial development are appropriate without knowing more than I do now about this issue.

Barry Siff

The timing of the increases is horrible. With commercial development in a downturn period as it is; with the soon-to-be-passed compatible development ordinance adversely affecting construction jobs; and, with the image of Boulder as not friendly to business ... it is time to recognize the aggregate effect of all of this; and, either stop or reduce the extent; or, provide incentives or other relief to help with some offsets.

I, personally, sat in on all of the Council's discussions this summer regarding the shift of the residential tax to the commercial sector, and was extremely surprised to see such little opposition from the business community, besides Dan Powers of the Chamber. Having watched Council full-time now for 6 months, I have learned many things; but, one – for sure – is activism counts; and, quite honestly, the business community was less than active on this issue. Some of the percentage increases are incredible (as noted). To be clear, the double taxation on residential needed to be changed; however, we cannot continue to further disincentivize business development in Boulder.

Rob Smoke

I support raising fees; however, I think the city has poor spending policies generally, and I'd like to take a comprehensive look at that in relationship to things like planning department staffing, as an example. The city has to find ways of cutting its costs without cutting services; the impact fees should be mainly about covering increased service costs. I'm in favor of fairness; I prefer decisions that are not made in airless back rooms in the municipal building. The impact fees should not be a tool to gentrify the city and box out young families. I do prefer higher percentage fees for large scale developments that fail to meet the criteria of supporting a sustainable urban environment. I would like to see disincentive for developers who choose to diminish the quality of a project by demanding every possible square foot of space they can create on a given site.

- 3. The city council has an established goal of making ten percent of all Boulder’s housing stock permanently affordable. But people who qualify for subsidized housing in Boulder have to drive to other communities in order to shop at large format, discount retailers. Should lower income families have discount shopping choices within Boulder? If so, what are you as a council member willing to do to encourage those retail opportunities in town?**

Suzy Ageton

Having access to large format, discount retailers within Boulder is a special concern for lower income families but it also impacts middle-income residents. The loss of such stores as JC Penney’s, Sears and Mervyns has led residents to drive to find these retail options, thereby creating more traffic congestion, an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and a loss of local revenues.

Convention wisdom is that Boulderites oppose ‘big boxes’ yet we know that a significant number of us shop in them in surrounding communities (e.g., a substantial proportion of COSTCO’s annual sales are to Boulder residents). I would like to see the Council take a hard look, once more, at Diagonal Plaza and other sites around 29th Street to see if we can address this retail need. Though infill development presents its own challenges, expanding our retail choices within the core of our City leverages our existing infrastructure of roads, sidewalks and transit.

Matt Appelbaum

I agree this is an important issue, although it must be noted that there are, in fact, a number of retailers in Boulder who serve the needs of our lower income residents. It was very unfortunate that Kmart left, and it will be difficult to replace that type of big-box discount retailer, although I agree that the city should encourage more discount shopping choices. However, such retailers – particularly the large ones – expect (“demand” would be more accurate) very cheap land/development costs, often heavily subsidized by the city and/or others in their shopping center area.

Given Boulder’s extremely limited supply of developable land (something that is simply not going to change) and the extremely high cost of land (also not likely to change), and the fact that it is hard to imagine any sort of tax-increment financing scheme that would work, the city’s tools for luring such retailers here are quite limited. That said, I’d very much like to see the city work to facilitate the redevelopment of Diagonal Plaza, for example, with an eye toward encouraging a discount retailer to locate there – but as we know this will be a difficult task. Finally, since you may be thinking about this specifically, I am not ready to use the Planning Reserve for this purpose. While I have long fought for keeping the Planning Reserve as a future development site, I think any proposals for that site need to demonstrate extraordinary community benefit, and a big box, with its huge traffic impacts, just doesn’t do that at this time.

KC Becker

While I understand the need for affordable shopping in Boulder, I usually don’t like the format, urban design, and impact of big box stores. If Boulder is going to allow such development, I do think it’s appropriate for the project to provide some “community benefit”. Community benefit can be provided in a variety of ways: a design that better integrates into a neighborhood or is green; a commitment to providing living wages or bus passes for workers. Nothing about “big box” stores is inherently bad. But the design and impact needs to evolve.

Macon Cowles

I do favor discount shopping choices in the community, and would be glad to see the current choices expanded. I note that there currently are empty stores that would make a good location for such shopping choices, including the now vacant PetsMart store at 30th & Iris. I tend not to favor big box stores, but would be glad to see more mid-size stores.

The priority responsibilities of government are to create public goods that are not provided by the private sector. These include fire and police, roads, bike/ped facilities, transit, libraries, open space, rec centers, affordable housing, water, sewer and human services. By emphasizing the quality and sufficiency of these public goods, we maintain a healthy, sustainable community. That is what I would do to encourage the retail opportunities you are talking about.

George Karakehian

All families should have discount shopping choices in Boulder. On any given day, one can go out to Superior/Louisville/Broomfield and find Boulderites of all socio-economic stripes shopping at discount stores. Boulder has done a disservice to its citizens in terms of both shopping options and forgone sales tax revenues. Pushing these types of stores “over the Mesa” has also forced us to travel more miles in our cars. On Council I will champion causes that promote a healthy economic environment.

Fenno Hoffman

A recent study showed that more than 50% of the credit card sales at the Costco store in Superior were made by City of Boulder residents. The environmental and social costs directly attributable to Boulder’s short-sighted policies with respect to large format merchandisers are significant. This cannibalization of Boulder’s retail sales tax revenues contributes to our current budget difficulties. The economic and environmental harm of exporting our workers and our discount shopping is lousy planning.

I would encourage discount retail in Boulder, but also encourage local businesses that can thrive at smaller scales, if the surrounding areas have a critical mass of customers. Activating local retail, in the face of large format retail has transitional challenges that face our entire retail sector. I have more than 600 words on this one. Basically, concentrating people & their destinations along our busiest streets, will encourage several retail formats and address regional competition, simultaneously.

Tim Plass

Having affordable housing in Boulder is an important aspect of meeting our goal of social sustainability. And, it is certainly advantageous to have those people who live in affordable housing stay in Boulder to do their shopping. Staying in Boulder means that those people are frequenting businesses here and adding to the city’s sales tax base. It also means they are not traveling as far to do their shopping; this reduction in vehicle miles traveled helps us to meet our environmental goal of reducing greenhouse gases.

I am willing to consider having larger format discount stores in Boulder. What we need to make sure of, however, is that with the introduction of this type of store in Boulder that we don’t simply cannibalize business from the existing smaller, and often local, businesses where people now shop. I think it’s also important, in terms of urban design, that the larger stores fit appropriately into Boulder’s built environment. This might mean they need an exterior wrap of smaller commercial stores.

As for incentives to encourage larger discount stores, I’d need to know more about how much sales tax revenue the business would be likely to generate and how favoring a certain type of business would potentially negatively affect other businesses. While regional revenue sharing is probably a long way off (if ever), one area where such a concept might work is with new larger scale discount stores. This type of revenue sharing could reduce the need for the city to “give away the store” in order to attract these significant sales tax generators.

Jyotsna Raj

Yes, we should have discount shopping choices within Boulder. It was unfortunate that K-Mart closed. I believe that the area between 26th and 30th Street, between Arapahoe and Pearl, where the proposed Boulder Valley Regional Center will be located is an appropriate place for such a store. As a Council Member I will try to see that more middle of the road stores, somewhere between Target and Macy's (which is all that we have now) do locate in Boulder.

Barry Siff

As I note below, there is no doubt that we must do what we can to minimize retail sales dollars leaving our City. We must support the business community, make it easier to do business in Boulder, and help "educate" our citizens as to how important this is, so as to gain better understanding and support.

Having said that, I also am realistic, and feel we are a long way from having a WalMart in Boulder. However, with Best Buy, Home Depot, Target, and even Barnes & Noble, perhaps, here ... maybe there is some room for open and candid discussion as to how to lure further retail sales opportunities back to our City. I am troubled by our 29th Street venture. I am not sure what the answer is (or answers are); but, I do feel we need to address what's happening there now ... before we face Crossroads II.

As a City Council Member, I will be an intelligent, experienced business person who can help represent the City when opportunities arise to meet with potential businesses coming to Boulder. I will work closely with the Chamber and our Economic Vitality Program in brainstorming, being proactive, and aggressively marketing the Boulder Brand. I have a sense for business, and know I can bring value to the table when it comes helping Boulder become a more positive business community.

And, specifically to "discount shopping choices" for lower income families, statistics from the Costco in Superior show that shopping there is in no way limited to lower income families, with a huge percentage of their sales dollars from Boulder residents.

Rob Smoke

People should be very disappointed with the 29th Street project; I fought to make it better and lost.

The city is acting in its own worst interests with many of its decisions. For instance, the owner of the Flatirons Theater should have every right to make that a great venue for the local student population. It'd be a nice thing for all of the Hill businesses, without question. Unfortunately, political forces are stopping the project; and with no basis. As another example, consider the Boulder reservoir. It should be a shining example of a contemporary aquatic facility for people to enjoy peacefully—with all types of water sports; swimming, sailing, kayaking, etc.. As things stand, people who participate in those types of activities are sent away by the unpleasant ambience created by motorized water craft, which pollute, create wakes and add a steady, droning background noise. The better approach would be to secure local bond and "goco" funds to remake the res-- install a white sand beach, a complete year-round locker/clubhouse/restaurant facility; a swimmer's dock; a steady and comprehensive approach to keeping the water clean; shuttle service from downtown Boulder and the Millenium hotel; and so on.

The development of this narrow culture of motorized craft users is not only bad for the environment, it's a negative for our image as a city. We can do better. A reservoir that would serve visitors as a remarkable place to visit would be a nice shot in the arm for our hotel and retail industries during the summer months when the student population is typically lower. We've discarded something of enormous value, and because certain organizations in town maintain a bias towards "crusaders for the wealthy" as council members, these very organizations work to defeat their own best interests.

- 4. The University of Colorado is the city's largest employer with an annual payroll exceeding \$600 million, internationally renowned research in energy technology and they graduate about 5300 Bachelors Degrees and 1500 Graduate and Professional Degrees each year, placing top talent into Boulder's labor pool. What do you think Boulder City Council could do to improve the relationship with this crucial entity?**

Suzy Ageton

First, during my tenure on Council (i.e., past 4+ years), the classic "town/gown" relations have improved substantially. For example, the City and University have worked well together on the CU-City Oversight Committee to address ongoing issues around alcohol abuse, student housing and other such concerns. The University involved the city manager and council in its Flagship 2030 strategic planning process and the Council and key CU staff and administration continue to meet on a fairly regular basis. Yes there have been bumps such as the missed communication around the Grandview site project but overall, the relationship is much more collaborative than it has historically been.

I would like to see regular meetings between the Council and CU regents both to develop relationships but more importantly, to share plans and think strategically about our opportunities to partner for the benefit of the entire community. Better relations at this level could also help in anticipating and addressing potential conflicts.

Matt Appelbaum

Actually, I think relations between CU and the city are rather good, and certainly better than they have been in the past. A certain amount of tension is inevitable, as evidenced in virtually every university town. And CU's very poor handling and judgment regarding their new building on Grandview Terrace was quite unfortunate. But we continue to work very closely and effectively with CU on a wide range of issues, including transportation/transit/bikes, alcohol abuse, issues on the Hill and possible redevelopment of Hill properties, construction of new student/faculty housing, build-out of the East Campus (which I think has enormous potential), and examination of a joint CU/city conference facility (which is on hold due to financial and logistical issues, but which I think is a great concept still very much worth pursuing). CU is the cornerstone of Boulder's social and economic vitality, and while there will always be some level of disagreement, cooperation is critical for both institutions.

KC Becker

The city of Boulder needs to make a strong, concerted effort to repair and advance a positive relationship with CU. There are 3 specific projects that we can use as an opportunity to improve our relationship.

First, CU is growing, and that means Boulder is growing. CU's expansion of its east research campus is an opportunity for Boulder to engage the University in a productive discussion about how their growth can work hand-in-hand with Boulder's goals of a mixed-use.

Second, the city has an opportunity to partner with a conference center. This conference center could be a tremendous opportunity for the community given all the programming. It would also, of course, be a real boost to our economy.

Third, the city, business owners, residents, and the University should work toward the productive redevelopment of University Hill.

Macon Cowles

CU is a hugely important part of the city of Boulder, and we need to continue to cultivate a good working relationship with them on matters of common interest. We need to cooperate with CU on planning issues, so that their needs can be accommodated, while respecting the core values of the community that are expressed in

the Comprehensive Plan. We need to work with them on the development of a conference center, that can serve their needs as well as our own.

We must continue to work with the university on the substance abuse problems in the student population. And we must work closely with CU in connection with the redevelopment of The Hill, one of the three important commercial zones in our City.

George Karakehian

CU is the bedrock institution of this community and it is sad that relations between it and the City are at a 30-year low. We need to work together to make Boulder as good as it can be. I'm a very strong supporter of the University and have excellent relationships with the senior leaders. As a member of the Council I will work tirelessly to repair the damage to the relationship and bring both parties together. I would support the joint effort to address alcohol related issues to reduce friction in the Hill neighborhoods.

Further, I would join with CU to promote high quality redevelopment of the University Hill commercial district.

Fenno Hoffman

First, recognize CU as the Gold mine it is. CU has built a thriving, sustainable, beautiful, walkable, energy efficient campus that breaks every rule in our book. Why do we antagonize them over building heights and also constrain the surrounding neighborhoods with zoning that prohibits the construction of affordable student and mixed-income housing? It's nuts! I'm working with an emerging team that includes CU, developing long range plans for the next century. The city today would hamstring that process with hopeless delays. That has got to change. Our entire community should embrace CU and study the clues their campus provides for dealing with concentrated populations. There are problems at the edges that we struggle with everyday – but these are also opportunities to develop cooperative teams, and we do that. Again, our zoning around CU fails. We could partner with the university, the city and the private sector to do transit corridor development that would help create transitional areas between student concentrations and families. Working on mutually beneficial projects, side by side, is the very best way to improve any relationship.

Tim Plass

There is no doubt that the University of Colorado is hugely important to Boulder—without CU we wouldn't be the unique community that we are. The students add a youthful vitality to the community and sales tax dollars to the city coffers (Yes, the students create problems, too). The faculty shares its talents in the arts to make our cultural opportunities first rate and those in the sciences bolster the connection to the Federal Labs in the city. And, the physical presence of the campus, with its Tuscan style buildings and beautiful layout, add to Boulder's sense of place. While the city and CU have cooperated on many fronts, including behavioral issues on UniHill and alcohol problems, both parties need to realize that there is a symbiotic relationship. Continued outreach and communication are key.

The contentiousness with the plans for the Behavioral Sciences Building on Grandview was unfortunate. I am very hopeful that with Frank Bruno at CU, and his excellent understanding of the city from his time as city manager, that we will be able to avoid this type of very public disagreement in the future. We need to realize that the incident with the Behavioral Sciences Building represents only a small part of the city's interaction with the university. On a more particular note, we have a real opportunity to work with CU on the redevelopment of the East Campus to help meet some of our Comprehensive Plan goals. For instance, the redevelopment might include residences for CU faculty and help the city with some of its housing challenges.

Jyotsna Raj

Boulder City Council should engage on an ongoing basis with the University of Colorado which is indeed the City's largest employer. We could initiate a program with student interns working in City Government. When studies of specific issues need to be done we should work with Professors and Students to conduct them. This would bring about greater interaction and create more ease between the City and the University. Also greater clarity between the City and the University at the initiation of a University building project would prevent hard feelings later on.

Barry Siff

I believe I have already taken steps in this regard, as it hails as one of my absolute top priorities. I have proactively met with several Regents (and have the formal endorsements of two), Frank Bruno and others very close to the University, and have discussed the history of the CU-City relationship, and the current state-of-affairs. There is enormous opportunity here.

My business background, which focused heavily in the area of labor relations, taught me the importance of collaboration. I learned early on to "seek first to understand, then be understood" (Steven Covey). My successful business career was based upon this, and I firmly believe, and am committed to leading the charge of forging an extremely strong partnership with CU, when elected to Council. Opportunities such as a joint conference center and hotel, revitalizing The Hill, and sharing facilities between the City and CU are examples of what can – and should – be done.

Just this week, I attended the Regents meeting, and purposefully sat at lunch with the CU-Colorado Springs leadership team. I had heard they share a tremendous relationship with their city ... and it's true! We can learn from them, and from other college towns around the U.S. who are all thriving. "Communiversities" is a term that needs to take on meaning in Boulder!

Rob Smoke

I have no idea. I mean...in ten-thousand years I can't imagine our relationship being any better than it is now, so how could someone like me, who isn't the highest paid state official--receiving that check to supervise his son's football career--how could someone like me have an idea as to how to improve things? It's not improveable – it's perfect; like the face of Marilyn Monroe or Alicia Keys' voice. Any questions?

- 5. Boulder Tomorrow has encouraged a doubling of the funding for the Economic Vitality Program. Do you support doubling the funding for the City's Economic Vitality program? What is your opinion of the current Business Incentive Program?**

Suzy Ageton

I am a strong supporter of the Economic Vitality program and would like to see the funding increased. I don't know if doubling the funds is the right amount especially given the downturn in City revenues. However, I will be looking for ways to expand this program.

I generally think the incentive program is fine as far as it goes, but I would like it to be a bit more flexible and more robust. For example, I think the rebates are most attractive to capital-intensive businesses or ones making extensive improvements to their facilities. Small businesses may not see enough advantage to go through all the paperwork. I would like to find ways to incentivize smaller businesses' needs so that the program is as applicable to them as to larger companies.

Matt Appelbaum

Our economic vitality program is an excellent investment that should be continued. I would not cut its budget – and most essentially not its staff – although I don't know if increasing the funding would be particularly

effective either. I don't see this program solely in terms of monetary return on investment, but equally for its intangible benefits to our business community, workers, desirability of Boulder, and stability of our economy.

We cannot compete monetarily with other communities, nor should we. This program succeeds, in my view, because it clearly indicates our support for local companies and provides very direct and specific assistance. And it is one component of a more comprehensive approach toward economic vitality, which includes, I believe, strong support for CU and the federal labs, maintaining a high level of city services including Open Space, trying our best to sustain socio-economic diversity, and staying on the cutting edge of numerous environmental and social policies – all of which attracts the creative and entrepreneurial people who have made Boulder thrive.

KC Becker

I do think that the Economic Vitality Program needs to be better funded. Economic sustainability is the neglected leg of our three-legged sustainability stool. Boulder's housing and commercial buildings are aging at the same time that other communities are working hard to lure businesses. Boulder needs to get more aggressive about providing reasons for business to move here or stay located here. There are a variety of programs and ideas, but just having a business liaison who facilitates redevelopment provides real benefit to business and to the city.

Macon Cowles

I support the Economic Vitality Program (EVP). Right now the key to its success is the choice of which business receive money from the program. Money invested in companies doing a project that is going to generate significant development related fees or use taxes will generate a high ROI from the investment made by the EVP. So too will the expansion or retention of companies with a lot of employees who live in the City of Boulder. The staff that is administering the EVP is unusually talented in the investment of the program's money, finding the right balance between helping smaller companies get established and grow, and supporting larger companies that make investments to upgrade and expand their facilities in order to remain in Boulder. But the staff has not requested the additional funds that are the basis of this question. I believe the current level of funding is adequate, and would be unlikely to support doubling the cost of the program at this time.

George Karakehian

I believe that we need to get our priorities in order to address the problems facing Boulder. Smart economic growth and disciplined spending is the way to close the budget gap. To get there, we must provide an environment for a vibrant economy. I was a member of the City's first Economic Vitality group and I applaud what they have done thus far. I support increasing funding to the Economic Vitality programs. The current Business Incentive Programs have been very successful. Their greatest value has been in helping to fight the perception that Boulder is not business friendly. Communicating that our community is welcoming to innovative companies that provide high quality jobs is critical in allowing Boulder to fund the amenities it provides.

Fenno Hoffman

I'm not sure whether the right number is a "doubling" of the token amount we spend now on economic vitality. We should evaluate what it takes to be effective in the areas of business development focus recent studies have identified, and then set the funding number. It may require more than a doubling.

Tim Plass

I think that the Economic Vitality Program is a valuable tool for the city to promote businesses. I favor keeping the funding level at what's proposed for the 2010 budget. The budget for the program is \$580,000, with \$350,000 going to the Business Incentive Program and \$230,000 for program expenses and contracts (Boulder Economic Council, Boulder Innovation Center). While ideally the city would have more money to put into this effort, the current budget reflects

a balancing between priorities.

In terms of metrics, one way of looking at the success is in the number of businesses that take advantage of the program, whether it be micro loans, discounted Parks&Rec employee passes or incentives to primary employers. Other metrics, including the value of the investments put into the Innovation Center or the Economic Council, may be harder gauge. However, it is important for the city to try to build good will and reach out to the business community.

Jyotsna Raj

At this time of fiscal constraints I cannot justify doubling the funding for the Economic Vitality Program. I believe that this program has had some success, such as with the Naturally Boulder program. Similar initiatives should be encouraged and we hope to see a more vibrant business climate in Boulder as a result.

Barry Siff

I absolutely appreciate and support the need for a strong Economic Vitality Program in Boulder. Our City has not had a positive image when it comes to doing business here; and, many current business owners certainly feel and perpetuate that image. Further, having a City Council void of any business acumen or experience speaks to the lack of understanding and focus on this critical sector of our City. I will bring an experienced business voice and understanding to the City, and help further – or try to establish – Boulder as a business-friendly community.

When I see businesses like LaFuma leave and go to nearby communities, I am disheartened. We must retain what we have, and grow from there. We must engage our business community in clear and open dialogue with the City, and end this feeling of disrespect and appreciation. We must turn it around, such that Boulder gets to known as a great city to do business in! It does not help when our city headlines of going after contractors for back taxes of over \$5M makes national news (www.enr.com). I will also add the huge opportunity to tie CU into our program, when it comes to incubator and creative new businesses.

As for the current program and its funding, I am just not close or aware enough of its level of effectiveness; but, rest assured, when elected, I will be!

Rob Smoke

No. I'm the guy responsible for creating the funding in the first place. I could go over the documents and you would have to admit this. In 1998, the then city attorney and some members of council were pushing for a subsidy for the new mall equal in method to the one employed in Broomfield. I organized a group to say 'no' – I wrote op-ed pieces – I visited council members and got their attention with a variety of documents. Thus there was a share of taxes coming out of 29th Street that had been spent on a 1979 bond issue, and then BURA's budget, which now had no home. Council gave those funds a home with the EVP. Should we double it? No. Should we continue it? No. Well, actually I'm in favor of altering the use towards community-supportive employer-based programs. I could see a wide variety of programs from child care to employee training; I greatly disfavor giving out checks to start-up or other businesses which have no specific use attached, whether they are rebates or what have you. By the way, when people read that someone got a check for \$30k or \$50k, most people probably aren't angry, but do just look at that and know in their hearts it's wrong, expecting government to spend its available funds in a more prudent manner. By the way, Marilyn Monroe had acting talent as well as looks.

6. Which of the following regional issues do you believe are most important for Boulder City Council to address?

- **While over 50,000 employees commute into Boulder every weekday, Boulder's strict and expensive development guidelines result in alternative retail shopping options luring Boulder residents out of town.**
- **The Fastracks Northwest commuter rail option intended to service Boulder is facing huge cost increases.**
- **The City's open space department has even purchased property outside the city's borders.**

Suzy Ageton

I'm not sure I understand the question but let me describe one very important regional issue which I think the City Council needs to continue to address. US36 is the lifeline for Boulder, it is our primary access to the greater Denver area including the airport and major business and cultural facilities. Importantly, it is also the main commuting route for workers and others coming to Boulder. At present, it is extremely congested, outdated and without modern transit and other multi-modal options.

Boulder has been an active participant in the US36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition to improve the multi-modal capacity of this corridor and especially the bus rapid transit. With our corridor partners and the support of CDOT and RTD, we have submitted a grant to the US Dept. Of Transportation to secure funding to move forward the vision of a managed lane in each direction from Boulder to Westminster. This lane would give priority to BRT thereby decreasing travel time along the corridor and given the growing demand for better bus service, would surely increase transit ridership. Such an improvement would enhance the flow of traffic along the corridor, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move us toward more sustainable travel options.

If re-elected (or not), I will continue to advocate for this important regional project.

Matt Appelbaum

I agree that we lack some key retail facilities, but I question your premise. It seems to me it was inevitable, based on location and the availability of cheap, greenfields land, that the major regional shopping centers would move elsewhere as the north and northwest metro area developed. As I discussed in question 1 regarding discount retail, there are many inherent reasons – which are not caused by development guidelines – that land costs are high and development is difficult. I would support, and try to encourage, the redevelopment of several shopping centers that are clearly underperforming. And I would note that it is quite likely that a significant percentage of Boulder's retail leakage is due to Internet/mail-order sales; this is a national issue that must be addressed by requiring that Internet sales pay state and local sales taxes so that local merchants aren't unfairly disadvantaged.

The critical FasTracks issue for Boulder is getting the US 36 BRT project completed. I have been working quite hard on this issue as a member of the US 36 Mayor and Commissioners Coalition and the Metro Mayors Caucus. We have been successful in getting support and funding from CDOT and RTD for our application for a Federal TIGER grant, but much more will need to be done to get all the money needed. Completion of all FasTracks corridors is critical for the metro area, even though construction costs have increased considerably while RTD sales tax revenues have decreased. The NW rail project, while less important in the near- and mid-term for Boulder, will be critical in the long run as rail, I believe, becomes a much more important mode of transportation. Cities and metro areas that provide high levels of mobility will be able to compete more effectively in the years to come, so we must find a way to complete our regional transit network.

I strongly supported those purchases – although I believe that funding should also have come from Boulder County and the other cities in our county since they will all benefit from our efforts. There are many things which make Boulder special and attract the people and businesses we depend on, and there is no doubt that our Open Space system is one of them. The destruction – and that is the correct term – of the open lands just to our

south, with the views of the mountain backdrop, would have very significantly harmed our Open Space and the context in which it sits. It is very unfortunate that Jefferson County chose not to protect these lands (even though they claim to support the protection of the mountain backdrop), and unfortunate that Boulder needed to purchase these properties outright. But it is an investment that will prove to be both wise and well-justified. I would add that my support of these purchases does not mean that all lands should be purchased as Open Space; while there are critical parcels left to acquire, our system is largely complete and when the two sales taxes that provide revenue for land acquisition expire I think they should be redirected to other purposes and needs.

KC Becker

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Macon Cowles

It is the limitation on available land that makes development expensive in Boulder. I think that strict development guidelines on the whole benefit the community. They were deemed to be essential to keep development pressures from degrading the urban environment. However, I favor rewriting the land use regulations so that they become simpler, easier and less expensive to use. There is too much needless regulation, and I favor addressing in order to improve the quality of the buildings that we get.

It is facing huge cost increases which, if the line is to be built, can only be met by increasing the RTD sales tax. FasTracks passed by a large majority in Boulder, and I believe that people still want a rail connection to Boulder, even though I have strong reservations about the level of per passenger subsidy required for Boulder

County riders during the early years of service. But in the era of peak oil, this rail connection and others are going to be essential to our transportation future. Nearly all of the City's Open Space purchases are outside of the City's borders. I think that is OK.

George Karakehian

None of these three questions strike me as having paramount importance for the Council. What is obvious though, is that we need strong relationships with our nearby municipal and County entities because we share transportation networks, sales tax dollars, recreational facilities, scientific and cultural funding resources, dislocated workforce populations, and differently valued housing markets. We shop in Superior, ride the RTD express to DIA, manufacture in Longmont, ride our bikes in Lyons, train firefighters in the County, and send our trash somewhere else. Others can pollute our air, and we can pollute their water. We are connected to each other and compete with each other for market share, and we have to work together. It's the Modern World, and I embrace that.

On one specific item, I don't intend to vote to spend any Open Space dollars outside of Boulder County. Most of the Open space is already outside the City's borders.

Fenno Hoffman

The commuting issue is most important, by a landslide. Our development "guidelines" (what a polite way to put it) have so many unmeasured, indirect, burden shifted, confusing and exported impacts, that addressing them is of immediate concern. The root cause of almost every problem Boulder faces, can be directly traced back to some aspect of our land use regulations. Directly addressing these rules is, for me, very exciting because even small changes could be incredibly productive.

FasTracks should focus on BRT and follow the market demand and the efficiency of that technology. City's open space should weigh in on the regional impacts of the sprawl we have already exported to our neighbors, before they weigh in on what else the neighbors should do. We have no business telling our neighbors a thing, until we put our own house in order (in a nutshell.)

Tim Plass

I think all of the issues identified above are important. Open Space purchases that have formed our greenbelt are one of the defining characteristics of the city, leading to a compact urban form surrounded by undeveloped land. Much, if not a majority, of our open space lands are outside the city's borders. I think this is entirely appropriate. Some of our purchases have even been outside of Boulder County. I think that we need to be quite selective when we look beyond the borders of Boulder County. However, there are times when purchasing this type of property is appropriate. The example that comes to mind immediately is the acquisition of the land in Jefferson County that prevented the development of the "Jefferson Center." That purchase accomplished the goal of maintaining separation between the cities in our region and preventing sprawl.

The City should also welcome commuter rail to Boulder. The arrival of rail, along with the US36 Bus Rapid Transit improvements, will help Boulder reach its goals under the Transportation Master Plan and reduce our greenhouse gases. The arrival of the rail will also animate the Transit Village at 30th and Pearl. Promoting rail will lead to significant new development opportunities on the site. We should welcome this type of transit-oriented development in Boulder. If the city backs an tax increase at the polls, we need to be assured that the northwest corridor will not be overlooked. RTD Board member John Tayer has suggested a "Regional Equity Compact" ensuring that the needs of the Boulder area will be addressed. This is an idea that is worth pursuing.

Boulder also needs to address the issue of 50,000 people in-commuting into Boulder each day. I believe that one of the keys to solving this issue is to promote more affordable housing in the city. While I think it is important to consider shopping alternatives for Boulder residents, we need to also assure that the sense of place and a quality built environment remain high priorities for our community. To the extent that the city can streamline and ease the development process by reducing red tape and delays, we should do so.

Jyotsna Raj

I think we should strive to bring stores to Boulder that allow us to shop for basics like socks and underwear. The boutique shops on Pearl Street are more attractive to tourists and the 29th Street Mall does not have a healthy mix of retail opportunities. Ideally, people should be able to live, work and shop in Boulder.

Barry Siff

As I noted in an earlier answer, there is no doubt that we must do what we can to minimize retail sales dollars leaving our City. We must support the business community, make it easier to do business in Boulder, and help “educate” our citizens as to how important this is.

Having said that, I also am realistic, and feel we are a long way from having a WalMart in Boulder. However, with Best Buy, Home Depot, Target, and even Barnes & Noble, perhaps, here ... maybe there is some room for open and candid discussion as to how to lure further retail sales opportunities back to our City.

I am troubled by our 29th Street venture. I am not sure what the answer is (or answers are); but, I do feel we need to address what’s happening there now ... before we face Crossroads II.

As for FasTracks, I will quote my response to the Sierra Club on this: The FasTracks project has continued to fall short of any expectations and projections we could have desired. Given the situation of the FasTracks cost and revenue projections, I would like to see more emphasis on buses than rail. The heavy rail lines are not available during vitally important times of the day, and I am encouraged by the emerging gains in fuel efficient buses. Buses are inherently more flexible than rail; and, although rail is in some ways more elegant than buses, I believe that an HOV lane on US36 for fast, fuel efficient buses might be a preferable solution than rail (as well as maybe a bike lane).

Rob Smoke

Fast Tracks NW rail line is on life-support. I would not support the implementation of something of dubious value and strength as antidote to sprawl and overtaxed transit needs. There are better solutions; ranging from the BRT that will be installed to solar car-share fleets – to expansive TDM policy-- you name it, there’s better solutions coming along. ...Marilyn Monroe in “Bus Stop” was brilliant.

- 7. What do you believe are the first responsibilities of city government? What will you do as a council member to ensure those activities and services are fully funded in the city’s annual budget?**

Suzy Ageton

The basic responsibilities of city government are public safety, public works such as basic transportation, provision of utilities such as water and wastewater treatment, and other legal and contractual obligations such as meeting state and federal requirements. Our City Charter also identifies libraries, parks & recreational services and programs and open space as required city functions. Further, Boulder has made a strong commitment to human services by creating a department of Housing & Human Services, a function that many municipalities do not undertake.

During my entire tenure on Council, I have advocated for meeting our basic obligations especially public safety and public utilities, before we take on other matters. My votes have reflected this, e.g., I voted against diverting facilities maintenance funds to provide a budget for the local public access TV station. I also championed the fire training center including placing a new tax on the ballot in 2006 for one year to insure adequate funding for this critical facility. I will continue to be a strong voice for meeting our fundamental obligations first.

Matt Appelbaum

It's rather too simple to list public safety, water utilities, local road maintenance and the like as priorities of any city government. Boulder's citizens have long supported a very high level of city services, including libraries, recreation centers, human services, housing, Open Space, and many others, and they too have become priorities, and essential components of the high quality of life we enjoy. As times and needs/desires change, we must reevaluate all services; severe revenue reductions over the past seven years have forced much reevaluation and numerous services have suffered significant budget cuts.

The goal isn't simply "full funding" but appropriate funding. We need to fashion a comprehensive, long-term budget and revenue plan, and I am eager to get the recommendations of BRC II, which is focusing on how to delineate essential and desirable services, whether there are services/programs that could be better delivered by the private sector, and how to make our service delivery more efficient.

I also support our continuing efforts to un-earmark taxes as they come up for renewal, which can add considerable flexibility and thus efficiency to our budgets. And I fully support the city manager's efforts to reduce employee expenses by selecting a single health provider, eliminating across-the-board salary increases, and reevaluating how to best do full-cost salary comparisons.

On the revenue side, please see my response to your first question regarding the head tax. I would add that I have been an outspoken supporter of ensuring that most of the new revenue being obtained from the voters' recent support of de-Brucing our property tax goes, as promised, to funding our "critical deficiencies," which are components of essential services like fire protection.

It is my hope that, while we must continue to find ways to lower the costs and improve the efficiencies of city programs, our citizens will continue to support a higher level of city services than are perhaps typical, as well as the innovative and model programs and policies that set Boulder apart.

KC Becker

City government is responsible for protecting people, property and environment.

The city needs to look for opportunities for greater efficiency in its city programs, including eliminating programs that are not traditionally performed by a city or those which are duplicated among offices. In order to make sure our priority programs are fully funded, the city can un-earmark dedicated sales taxes and removing sunsets from un-earmarked taxes. It can also look for opportunities to streamline city government by eliminating duplicative or redundant city services.

Macon Cowles

As I said in response to question 3, the first and priority responsibilities of government are to create public goods that are not provided by the private sector. These include fire and police, roads, bike/ped facilities, transit, libraries, open space, rec centers, affordable housing, water, sewer and human services.

What I will do to ensure that those services are adequately funded is to support strategic cuts in expenditures by the City Manager. Her elimination of 26 FTE's for fiscal 2010 while maintaining a high level of services has ruffled some feathers within the city staff. But I support the cuts that she has made, which have eliminated waste and have resulted in more efficiencies by the city bureaucracy in performing and delivering services.

George Karakehian

Government's basic responsibility is to provide for safety, security and basic infrastructure. Council must have its priorities based on this premise. As a member of Council, I will make sure that we fund first things first like fire, police, courts and streets. Boulder families make real life decisions about their budget priorities between necessities and "nice to haves" – they put food on the table before traveling on vacation. On Council, I will take this same approach in spending taxpayer dollars – fund first things first. Once these items are addressed, I would then prioritize spending on what things provide the most benefit for the most people.

Fenno Hoffman

The top priorities are public safety, public utilities, streets and critical social services, followed by those secondary programs with the highest return on public investment and the greatest citizen participation. I support the BRC ongoing identification of structural issues that create operational inefficiencies and mission overlap. I am exploring the design of our city budget now and discovering what I think is an excessive number of dedicated and restricted funds, each with significant cash reserves. I understand the importance of contingency cash, the political pressures around cash management and how budgets can be manipulated to political ends. Beyond that general observation, our dedicated funding structure should be changed to allow more flexible and responsive budgeting decisions. We face a rapidly changing world.

Many questions in this survey point to regional and market conditions (large format retail, sprawl, transit development, CU...) that suggest new opportunities for public-private engagement are necessary. We must be able to pursue these projects, if we want to become locally and regionally sustainable and fund our budgets, long term. My focus on Council will be on the long term financial health of our city and region and making sure that our policy directives support that in every way. "Fully funding" a budget is important, but so is designing the structure and problem set, so that the budget is "fully efficient."

Tim Plass

The primary responsibility of city government is to assure the health, safety and welfare of its residents. Obviously, this means having a well-trained and staffed police and fire department. But, the responsibility is broader than that, of course. To make sure that our city continues to be a viable place, we need to be concerned with our future sustainability. This includes the city's economic, social and environmental well-being. In terms of economy, we need to make Boulder a place that businesses want to be and can thrive. In terms of social sustainability, we need to be a place that welcomes diversity and values inclusiveness. In particular, we need to strive to have housing that is affordable to lower (and middle) income people. On the environmental front, we need to work hard to meet the goals of the Climate Action Plan and make Boulder a "greener" place.

There are no easy answers when it comes to reducing or eliminating city services. I believe that the approach that the city has taken recently is the right one. Input from the public and input from the city staff have helped to shape the difficult cutbacks that our reduced revenues require. The principles that the city is following are sound ones: to maintain public safety and other core services, minimize service reductions for those residents who need the most assistance, and find more efficient ways to deliver services. For the 2010 budget, 26 positions will be eliminated and 16 left vacant—most in sales tax supported positions. However, the safety net services remain funded, and no reduction in police officer or firefighter positions is foreseen. I support this approach. I also support keeping the all library facilities open, though on a reduced schedule, and making sure that all recreational facilities remain open, looking for additional parks efficiencies, with a high priority on parks maintenance.

Jyotsna Raj

The first responsibility of City Government is to maintain public safety through the police and fire departments. We must also maintain the services like our excellent library system (which provides internet access and literacy programs to disadvantaged communities), our Senior Services and Recreation Centers and Parks Departments which truly give us the great quality of life we enjoy in Boulder. The only way to ensure that these services retain adequate funding is to grow our economy and increase the revenues coming into the City.

Barry Siff

The first responsibilities of any city government are to protect people, property, and the environment. In looking at budget constraints, it is imperative to not sacrifice our most critical services of police and fire protection; and, secondly, the physical and social environment priorities that the citizens of Boulder have long voiced support for.

To ensure those activities and services are fully funded, we must work toward strengthening our revenue stream. Of course, first, we must look closely at all departments and activities from a cost-benefit standpoint --- what programs at the rec centers cost more than the revenue produced? What overlaps exist in departments, where combining functions may make sense, for example. However, ultimately, we must recognize the people of Boulder expect – and demand – a high level of city services. These must be paid for; and, thus, we need to generate revenue.

The “Boulder Brand” is potentially explosive; but, I think of it as an amazing product that we just can’t send to market yet, for one reason or another. I believe one reason is the lack of meeting space. Again, a new conference center and hotel, built with CU, would attract meetings and conferences that would allow dollars to flow into the City, with people visiting ... and, then, leaving. The Boulder Chamber and CU estimate that the Boulder Boulder’s economic impact to our City approaches \$10 million annually. My successful career as a Race Director leads me to believe we could support 1 or 2 more major events, like Boulder Boulder, and I have solid ideas in that regard.

Rob Smoke

I have no idea. Is this a real question? Okay...seriously – shrink the gap between the highest paid and lowest paid city workers through comprehensive job reallocation, with a goal of saving the maximum amount of dollars and saving necessary services, not high-cost FTE's, but services. This would mean a graduated system of pay cuts. The highest paid workers might lose 22 percent of their pay; the lowest paid workers would lose maybe two percent, if that. This would impact city services the least, keep the maximum number of qualified employees who want to continue, and responsibly manage the city’s fiscal relationship with its operating staff. Fine tuning this, I would apply the same policies to the police and fire budgets, but with various degrees of exemptions for professional positions. This method of budget cutting has worked successfully in Oregon and other states.

**TOMORROW
BOULDER**

5541 Central Avenue, Suite 145 Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: 303-449-0228 Fax: 303-558-4228

www.BoulderTomorrow.com