

# THE DENVER POST

## The Denver Post

2023 Denver Candidate Questionnaire

### Entry Details

#### Race Information

OFFICE

City Council At-Large

#### Biographical Information

NAME

Travis Leiker

PROFESSION

Senior Director of Development, University of Colorado

EDUCATION

Master Degree in Public Administration; Bachelor Degree in Political Science

EXPERIENCE

20 years experience in management, public policy, and higher education. Public sector leader, who has specialized in building long-term organizational sustainability and programmatic success.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

<https://travisleiker.com>

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## Questions

**BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE SINGLE MOST URGENT ISSUE FACING THE CITY OF DENVER AND HOW IT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED.**

Since launching my campaign in March 2022, one theme is ringing loudly and clearly—**Denver needs a turnaround and leaders who can get it moving quickly**. Within that broader context however, I have identified four, **not just one**, immediate tasks before the next council and mayor: housing; homelessness; safety; and services. In brief, here's how I will address these four pressing topics: Smart zoning/land use, transit-oriented development and density, and improved city review processes, will help mitigate Denver's near- and long-term housing needs. Homelessness is a regional issue that requires a coordinated response informed by data, best practice, and better implementation. We can address crime through smart policing strategies, training, staffing, and restoring community trust. Better city service can be achieved by cutting red tape and investing more in the city's workforce.

**WHAT SHOULD DENVER LEADERS DO TO ADDRESS THE CITY'S LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING?**

If elected, I would work with colleagues and stakeholders to take the following steps to onboard more affordable housing: (1) strengthen the Affordable Housing Review Team to ensure that exclusively affordable housing developments receive expedited city review; (2) facilitate speedier approval for projects aimed at delivering housing; (3) work closely with the executive branch to provide legislative support that will improve customer service and refine internal processes across city agencies; (4) preserve existing affordable housing units that will lose their affordability over the next 5-10 years; (5) add to Denver's land bank and utilize investment strategies like land trusts to bring down costs of land; and (6)

waive sales and use tax to build 100% affordable housing developments.

**DO YOU SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT AT THE PARK HILL GOLF COURSE PROPERTY? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

I have been very intentional to **not** politicize this very volatile topic through my campaign and immersing my team in what has become an unfortunate, seemingly chaotic wedge issue and arbitrary litmus test. So no, if Denver voters choose to keep the conservation easement in place, I will work with the owners/developers to chart next steps for the property--preserving it as an activated open space for Denverites to enjoy. Only if the easement is lifted by voters/the courts, will development proceed. Then, I will play the role of accountability watchdog. It's important to level set with Denver Post readers. The **current council** made this decision—approving the area plans and referring the measure to Denver voters. Further, the development agreement(s) were approved by **this current council**. I remain unequivocally committed to parks and open spaces, affordable housing, and wise urban planning. Furthermore, I want to be in the best negotiating position and unencumbered by less-than-nuanced answers via this questionnaire. While it may not be the answer some seek, **this is my answer and I am sticking to it.**

**WHAT SHOULD DENVER LEADERS DO TO REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN DENVER?**

I have developed a multi-pronged strategy to address the issues facing Downtown: (1) Work collaboratively with regional partners to build more housing with wrap-around services for the homeless; (2) Invest in creative, near term strategies to shelter those in unsanctioned encampments and to beautify/revitalize all corridors; (3) Dedicate resources to effective policing strategies like boosting the number of police along commercial corridors (e.g. 16th Street Mall); (4) Ensure successful completion of downtown related projects like the Convention Center, National Western Center, DIA, and CPAC; (5) Stop creating red tape policies that thwart economic activity Downtown (e.g. long permitting processes for

businesses and housing); (6) Activate more housing in the Downtown through new builds and adaptive reuse; and (7) Recruit new business to Downtown Denver.

**WHAT IS DENVER'S GREATEST PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERN AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT?**

Crime, including theft, violence, and the like. But, the successful delivery of public safety that is community-centered and an inclusive personnel is paramount. I have proposed a multi-layered approach to address this: (1) A new centralized training facilities for first responders including police, firefighters, 911 ops, etc.; (2) Fund a nationwide recruitment plan to ensure sufficient staffing gaps are filled; (3) Prioritize more education and training across law enforcement leadership; institute more training in the areas of implicit bias and anti-discrimination; (4) Initiate new and proven crime prevention measures such as community policing, neighborhood engagement, and expand focused deterrence; (5) Dedicate more time and resources within the public and private sectors to promote crime prevention through environmental design (e.g. well lighted streets, enforcing urban camping ban, etc.).

**SHOULD NEIGHBORHOODS HELP ABSORB POPULATION GROWTH THROUGH PERMISSIVE ZONING, OR DO YOU FAVOR PROTECTIONS FOR SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS?**

I support single family zoning and would oppose efforts to eliminate it; furthermore, I support increased density in areas/neighborhoods where it makes the most sense or where existing, up-to-date neighborhood plans support such efforts. More holistically though, and in alignment with my governing philosophy, I am focused on smart growth policies--where culture, businesses, and community connections are interwoven within the fabric of the neighborhood in question. In some Denver neighborhoods, additional neighborhood-focused amenities and services including parks, playgrounds, and mobility are a must. Small businesses and entrepreneurs should be able to thrive, with the city providing support (and not obstacles) to their operations. Consistent with Blueprint Denver, I am pro-"complete neighborhoods". My platform aligns with this plan.

**SHOULD THE CITY'S POLICY OF SWEEPING HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS CONTINUE UNCHANGED? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

No, this policy cannot go unchanged. Unsanctioned encampments cannot continue; the urban camping ban **should not** be overturned by the next council. Further sweeps should be used as a last resort. That's why, I have called for the Built for Zero approach. We need better data about the homeless population and where shelter capacity exists. I want to improve coordination among service providers. Expanding city contracts to other providers is important. We need to establish clear benchmarks for the city, providers, and recipients of services. I want to invest more in novel approaches to get people housed. Finally, we need to set expectations for individuals to be on the path to self-sufficiency. Accountability and support should be bi-directional.

**SHOULD DENVER CHANGE ITS SNOW PLOWING POLICY? WHY OR WHY NOT.**

Yes. I want to ensure that the successful deployment of core services is front and center under the next council and mayoral administration. The status quo cannot continue.

**WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR DENVER IN 20 YEARS, AND WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO HELP THE CITY GET THERE?**

Denver is at an inflection point. Housing is unattainable, homelessness is on the rise, and many neighborhoods feel unsafe. Forty years ago, we were called to imagine a great city. With urgency, we must restore it. A person's zip code is a key determinant of their destiny; not all Denver zip codes are treated equitably. Let's ensure access to parks, libraries, transit, walkability, and safety. We must create a city that fosters innovation and supports small businesses. I envision a city where housing is attainable and shelter is readily available for those in need. We can break down silos and forge new partnerships to get big projects done. The city's economy is growing, and we must invest in underrepresented groups. I am prepared to deliver clear vision and decisive leadership on day one.

**HOW BETTER CAN CITY OFFICIALS PROTECT DENVER'S ENVIRONMENT -- AIR QUALITY, WATER SUPPLY, GROUND CONTAMINATION? AND SHOULD THE CITY TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN TRANSIT?**

We can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint through smart, sustainable, and equitable investments in neighborhoods—for example, making it easier for the adaptive reuse of older properties. Clean air and water are vital to our city's future. Enhancing Denver's tree canopy through climate appropriate strategies will help reduce heat in communities and promote clean air quality. We must be able to move around freely and easily, an essential part of what makes a good quality of life in a growing city. We need to make biking, walking, and micro-modal transportation easier for everyone including broad and unobstructed sidewalks, clearly Work to expand car sharing programs, public transit systems, and adopt a curated, Denver-specific bus route system in partnership with RTD.

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## Add a Photo

ATTACH A HEAD SHOT OF YOURSELF

Travis Leiker\_DCCAL\_Denver Post.jpg

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## How Can We Contact You?

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