

**Colorado People's Action (CPA)
Endorsement Questionnaire
Aurora City Council 2019**

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

a. Why did you decide to run for office and what will your top 3 priorities be if elected to council? I decided to run for city council because I believe that our city should work for working-class people and not the special interests that fund their campaigns.

My top three priorities are affordable spaces (housing and commercial spaces), public enterprises (municipal broadband and municipal banking), and comprehensive governmental reform (campaign finance, electoral, and ethics).

2. What is your strategy to win?

Our strategy is to out-work our opposition on doors like we did in 2017. On top of knocking doors, on track to raise enough money to send out three mailers, a post card, and a personal letter to voters so that the people of Ward 4 know what's at stake this year. Our message is already resonating people on doors and we are growing our volunteer base as a steady clip.

3. The US ranks as a country with one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world and the poorest, most marginalized and people of color disproportionately represent jail and prison populations. What would you do to push the city to address systemic racial bias within the criminal justice system?

First, I would bring in professionals to conduct **mandatory** systems of oppression training with **all** APD staff. Bias and sensitivity trainings are not enough; each officer should know the impact that our institutions and economic structure have on people of color so that there can be no excuse for bad behavior.

Second, I would champion major reforms to our municipal code to decriminalize victimless crimes, especially around possession of controlled substances. People of color are disproportionately charged with these kinds of crimes despite comparable rates of use among white populations and too many lives have been ruined because of

the “war on drugs”. I would redirect funds saved by no longer incarcerating and prosecuting people for these victimless crimes into rehabilitation and other social services instead.

Third, I would make sure that we reverse the legacy of redlining and divestment from both the public and private sector for historically marginalized areas by directing city resources with the intent of building community and providing economic opportunity for the people that already live there rather than allowing these areas to become gentrified.

4. Aurora is the most diverse city in the entire state, with a large number of immigrants within our community.

a. What is your opinion about the humanitarian crisis happening inside the GEO Immigration Detention Facility and what actions will you take, if any?

This is unconscionable and infuriating. I will pursue all avenues available to the city to get this facility out of our community, and should Federal law prevent us from doing so, I would pursue every avenue possible to ensure that the health, safety, and dignity of the people housed in this facility are prioritized and protected while lobbying our Federal partners aggressively to abolish this cruel and inhumane institution. **b. Yes or No - Do you support closing all private prisons?**

Yes, emphatically. **c. Will you work to move Aurora to become a “Sanctuary City” and establish**

a Legal Defense Fund? Why and explain your definition of “sanctuary city”. Yes, and yes. A “Sanctuary City” to me is a city that does not use its police force as an appendage of ICE and doesn’t otherwise inquire about the citizenship status of its residents. All Aurorans should feel safe and welcome in their community, regardless of documentation status. I also believe that we must do what our Federal government will not to make up for the legacy of U.S. sanctions, coups, and invasions in the global south by welcoming those who are fleeing conditions we are partially responsible for creating.

5. Would you drop citizenship requirements for all boards and commissions? Why?

Yes. Much of Aurora’s immigrant and refugee community are not citizens and I do not want to exclude them from serving their community. I believe that their perspective and life experience are valuable to ensuring our city is welcoming and inclusive to all.

6. We’re seeing localities across country moving toward 100% renewable energy. Do you support transitioning Aurora to a 100% renewable energy economy? If so, by when? How will you ensure that communities of color, low-income communities, workers and transit dependent community members are not left

behind? I do, but I am not comfortable setting a limit without access to staff and a study conducted on how aggressively we can make this transition. I hope it will suffice to say that I want to get this done as soon as possible because we must become a self-sustaining city with regards to energy and water use in order to prepare for the worst of the coming climate crisis.

I want to ensure that our communities of color have access to the proper training and resources to prepare themselves for the greening of our economy by partnering with APS, CPS, and our local labor organizations to bring trades training to our high schools, and that when the procurement process for this transition begins that we prioritize local workers and local organizations rather than those from outside Aurora.

7. The oil and gas industry in Colorado is edging closer and closer to residential districts, do you have a plan to protect Aurora residents from health and environmental hazards associated with their operations? Do you support a full ban on fracking? Yes. The simplest solution to protect the health and safety of Aurorans is to opt into the powers afforded to us by SB-181 and craft the most protective set of rules for our residents permissible under that law. I plan on partnering with local environmental activists and environmentalist organizations to make this happen.

I do support a full ban on fracking coupled with a just transition for workers impacted by said ban.

8. Where do you stand on workers ability to collectively bargain, and would you support a resolution for the workers in the city of Aurora to do so? I believe every worker needs a union, and that includes workers for the city of Aurora. I would support a resolution for our municipal employees to unionize.

9. Aurora now has the power to increase its wages, will you support and fight for Aurora to increase its minimum wage at a higher level than that of the state? What amount do you think that should be? Yes. I would take the point where the minimum wage had the highest historical purchasing power, adjust that to inflation for 2019, and peg it to future inflation growth, weighing the cost of housing more heavily to help offset rent-seeking. That should come out to somewhere around \$22/hr. for the Denver-Aurora region.

10. We are facing an affordability crisis and many in our community specifically

communities of color and low-income folks are being pushed out. What will you do to address affordability issues? Raising the minimum wage will pressure other wages up relative to the floor, but that alone won't prevent the speculation-driven spike in housing costs that we've seen since the Great Recession.

We need to reevaluate how we view and use land and housing in Aurora. We've allowed land and housing (whether it be rental or purchasable) to be used for their exchange value rather than use value, and this must stop.

I would champion the creation of a vacancy study to take stock of all the available commercial, residential, and undeveloped non-agricultural use land in the city. Once that data is gathered, I would champion the creation of vacancy fees based on this information to strongly discourage speculation and holding housing off the market to create artificial scarcity as a justification to raise prices and encourage the full utilization of our existing housing stock at a price point that more Aurorans can afford.

I would also champion the use of metro districts to create high-quality, modern, and affordable social housing modeled after what the city of Vienna has done for nearly a century. This will create a stock of affordable, not-for-profit housing that will allow Aurora's working families to become stable.

11. If elected, what is your plan for working with community and your vision for changing politics as usual? I hope to pass several reforms to make our city community-driven and accessible, from rules on how to testify at city council meetings, amplifying the influence of our boards and commissions, to how we develop as a city.

I want to have city staff go to where our communities are at—truly at—meaning their workplaces, their homes, their churches, etc., and gather feedback on what they want to see in their city. From there, the city should create a master plan that brings the community's vision to life and seek out developers who are willing to make it happen, rather than allowing developers to dictate to us what our city will look like.

12. Will you commit to meeting with COPA quarterly?

Absolutely.

13. Aurora occupies three counties, what is your plan to reconcile them and

advance community-centered policy across Aurora as a whole? I would be interested in revisiting the feasibility of Aurora becoming its own city and county like Broomfield and Denver. Barring that, I have a good relationship with members of the Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners and some staff members and would do the same with Douglas and Adams county to ensure we are able to serve our community as effectively as possible.

14. What are your thoughts on accountability, are you open to be held accountable by groups and community and are you willing to hold others accountable to a vision for a better Aurora?

Accountability to me means being open to criticism and suggestions from my community and taking that feedback into account. If there is disagreement, I feel that the community would be owed an explanation without any defensiveness or excuses. I fully expect the relationship between myself and my community to be one of mutual support, which includes accolades and critique when appropriate, so that we can all do better as time passes.

I have been holding our city council accountable for over three years, and that will certainly not change because I am on the other end of the dais.