

Suzy Ageton

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

I definitely support the renewal of the .15 sales & use tax. In fact, I have been encouraging voters at every forum to support this item.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

I do support how this money has historically been used. However, in a time of declining revenues and expanding needs, I would expect the City manager and the Council to determine the best uses for these funds. I would not expect a significant change since they support essential general fund services such as police, fire, library, parks and human services.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

- Emergency housing, food and other services for families, youth and adults in crisis and transition, or simply impacted by the economic recession
- Senior support services to allow this growing demographic to “age in place” and have other needs met
- Affordable, quality child care for low income and working families
- Affordable housing

Matthew Appelbaum

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

I strongly support the renewal of the .15 sales tax as it is a critical component of our city revenues. While we need to examine ways to better stabilize and diversify city revenues, our current base of sales tax revenue provides most of the funding for our basic, general fund services, including public safety, human services, the library, and recreation. Should this tax fail to pass, the city would need to make significant and painful cuts to most city services, including many that are essential to our residents and that support Boulder's high quality of life.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes, in general, although as you know the revenues will not be earmarked for any specific purposes. I don't think the issue is how the revenue from any specific, general fund sales tax will be allocated, but rather how general fund programs will be supported. Fully funding human services is a priority of mine, and successive city councils have ensured that human services funding is maintained even through severe economic and revenue downturns. The next council,

with recommendations from BRC II, will, I hope, take a comprehensive look at city expenditures and revenues, with a goal of fashioning a more sustainable budget that reflects the changing economic picture, demographics, and community needs. Human services must remain a top priority as they are a key component of social sustainability, and we must ensure that long-term funding is sufficient.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

Given the economic situation, I would suggest that the most pressing needs, at least in the near-term, include providing basic services to those most in need of community support due to lost jobs, low incomes, poor health, etc. These services include provision of food via food banks and other suppliers, emergency, transitional, and long-term shelter, and health care – both basic health services and mental health services. The city provides support in all of these areas and must continue to do so. I have been a strong supporter of affordable housing and believe that we need to update our affordable housing program and its funding sources, better protect existing housing such as mobile home parks, and strengthen our partnerships with non-profit agencies working in this key area. Longer term, even with an economic recovery these will still remain among our most critical needs, but I think we also must focus on helping people become more self-sufficient by providing a coordinated suite of services and training.

Seth Brigham

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

I am not a big fan of sales taxes, as they are regressive form of taxation.

But, I would support the continuation of this sales tax, only because at this time the City Council and City of Boulder have not come up with another way to generate revenue. During this economic downturn, it is necessary to try and breach the difference between revenue and expenditures.

But, I would rather have this continued tax "dedicated" towards basic human services, such as social services, Center for People with Disabilities, Boulder Day Nurseries and other programs for the most vulnerable of our population.

In my book, the most essential services are needed for the poor, disabled, elderly, children and the homeless.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes.

Originally, it was to pay of bonds on recreational improvement and facilities. But, funds not used for this application would go towards basic human services.

Unfortunately, this revenue will go into the general fund, where council will decide how to spend the money. And most probably the funds will go towards what they consider "essential services," like police, fire protection and basic services for the general population.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

Obviously, we want to provide people with housing, food and a sense of safety (which might be considered within the home setting, as the stress of poverty increases the likelihood of domestic violence.)

We want to protect the most vulnerable of our population. That would include the disabled, elderly and children.

If I had to choose what is a most pressing need then I would focus on the welfare of children, especially in the early years. Over the long haul, how children develop effects a broad range of social policy areas.

How children fare today, especially those with the greatest needs, will be felt in schools, the economy, health, welfare and the criminal justice system.

We should focus on four key areas: early childhood care and education, welfare and poverty, child welfare and youth programs and the family unit.

Child welfare should be the highest priority and includes protecting children from abuse and neglect, and ensuring that children have safe, stable and permanent living situations.

Macon Cowles

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

Yes, I do.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes, I do.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

Homes First. I believe that failure to provide housing, from homeless shelter beds through transitional to permanently affordable housing is at the root of many other expensive problems that we try to address through human services.

George Karakehian

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

Yes I support the renewal of this tax.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes, I support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

I think our most pressing needs are for affordable housing, the homeless shelter, affordable child care and community safety net programs. In these difficult economic times, it is important that we protect the most vulnerable in our community. Efficient and well run programs that specifically target these needs have my support.

Tim Plass

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

Yes, yes, yes! The renewal of the tax is essential to fund programs that are of critical importance to the city.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes. The distribution of the tax to support fire, police, libraries, parks and human services should be continued in the future. In particular, with regard to the human services portion of the monies, I support continued funding of programs that aid with shelter and basic needs, physical health and mental health. These programs are of vital importance to helping the least fortunate among us and providing a safety net.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

The safety net programs that provide for the least fortunate in our community are critical.

Whether it's helping the homeless, providing medical care for those who would otherwise have none, or offering mental health services to those who are often silently struggling with their problems, I don't think any of these groups can be left behind. As an affluent community, we have an obligation to help those who need assistance and lack the means to afford it.

Jyotsna Raj

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

I do support the renewal of the 0.15% Sales and Use Tax.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

I do support how this funding mechanism has been used, for funding essential services and human services.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

While I realize that all expenditures have been carefully considered and allocated, after studying the numbers in the Human Services Fund I would look to enhance funding for:

(i) All services impacting the homeless. I believe on any given day about 500 people seek shelter under bridges and underpasses in Boulder. One of the most basic human need is for shelter. We should look to provide that first, and then work to move this population out of temporary shelter into permanent homes and jobs.

(ii) We should increase day care opportunities for young women, to allow them to pursue and education, or train to find a job, or go to work with the assurance that their children are being well looked after.

(iii) In this economy, people who are looking for job need access to a computer, and help with acquiring computer skills. The Boulder Public Library does provide both, but this kind of service needs to be greatly expanded. I would look to find a location and equipment and skilled people to create a space where people could acquire the computer skills that are now essential to finding and keeping a job.

Barry Siff

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

Yes, I support this ballot measure. Especially in these economically challenging times, I think the voters will want to ensure meaningful support for those who need it most. I certainly do.

The extension of this use of sales tax into the future seems to me as a very good investment toward strengthening Boulder's ability to have all its residents live productive, fulfilling lives and contribute to the positive character of our community. In supporting this measure, I hope that many people served by these funds and the organizations that provide essential services will succeed in their quest for self-sufficiency and independence. And at the same time I realize that Boulder will always have some residence who, for one reason or another, will need a helping hand outstretched to them, and I want to ensure our ability to reach out when that time comes.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes, I very much support how this funding mechanism as been used and allocated. The Technical Review Committee volunteers are knowledgeable and talented and have made excellent recommendations to the City Manager on fund allocation. HHS staff I believe to be thoughtful, intelligent, strategically gifted and very well informed. The network of non-profit organizations and public agencies that receive HHS funds likewise represents a strong safety net for those in our community who need a bit of assistance to pursue their path toward productive, meaningful contributions as citizens of our city. Having volunteered with the Youth Services Initiative and in the past with Meals on Wheels and other community service groups, I have gained an appreciation for what these organizations do and how vital they are to the fabric of our community.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

These are hard times for many of our neighbors. We need to ensure that we meet basic needs for those in trouble. Many seniors at this time quite literally do not have enough to eat, and are isolated and struggling. Food, shelter and companionship are as basic human needs as there are, and I would like to see the Master Plan focus on meeting those needs. Many of our neighbors, through economic struggles and all their ramifications, are suffering emotionally. We need to ensure that we have a strong network of mental health providers to help one another navigate through their present challenges. And we need to place special emphasis on Boulder's youth, as a strong measure of attending to the future. I want to see every child, regardless of social or economic status, feel like a first-class citizen of Boulder, participate freely in the healthy activities of their choice and feel as though they quite fully belong here. By focusing on inclusiveness of youth, I hope we can engage their entire families, and the family systems that they interact with, and produce the next generation of Boulder residents who will carry on and do better than their predecessors.

Rob Smoke

1. Do you support the renewal of the .15 Sales & Use Tax, the subject of Ballot Question 2A?

Probably no.

2. Do you support how this funding mechanism has historically been used/allocated?

Yes. The city has been acting irresponsibly in ways unrelated to its funding of housing and human services, so I strongly hesitate to support tax extensions that effectively allow it to continue to act irresponsibly. I do want to see greater funding for human services needs.

3. The city's Human Services Master Plan will be studied and revised next year. What do you see as our community's most pressing human/social service needs?

I want to see direct involvement with homelessness issues and a more realistic, down-to-earth approach to 'affordable housing' issues. I'm very concerned about current conditions, where we have an overflow at the shelter, people sleeping in cars, an influx of Denver's homeless, and so on. My perception, having regularly attended council meetings over many years, is that the city is doing all it can to avoid offending its business community by even engaging in a serious discussion about issues related to homelessness.

The city's 'economic vitality' funding is a canard -- diverting resources to a wealthy segment of the population, with very little in terms of results that can be validated. As an aside, my recommendations that the funds at least be used for cooperative early childhood care programs have also been rejected.

I recently wrote an op-ed piece for the Daily Camera in which I listed 'homelessness in Boulder' as the number one hidden agenda item in this year's council race. The piece did not list my accomplishments, but the editors wrote back to me with a rejection, informing me they would not publish campaign material. Meanwhile, the week before, another candidate, incumbent Macon Cowles, had a piece published which was more or less a campaign flier covering his accomplishments on council. I believe Macon is sensitive to human services issues -- my complaint was not about him. When our media fails to give appropriate coverage to dissenting views from candidates during an election, people should ask questions. Recently I submitted a letter to the Daily Camera giving a more in-brief discussion -- they would not print this either -- certainly, this all reflects badly on them, even if the attention to it is minor.

I have spent considerable time and effort during my years in Boulder as someone ready to go toe-to-toe for human services funding. I can document that. I remain committed to that.