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Page 1: Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation Parks and Rec Committee Survey

**Q1** What is your name please?

Lisa Calderón

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**Q2** What Office are you running for? **Mayor**

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Page 2: Further questions

**Q3** Which council district are you running for? **Respondent skipped this question**

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**Q4** Regardless of the office you are running for, if you were appointing the Executive Director of Parks and Recreation Department, what education and previous experience would you expect the person to have?

Education and training: Master's degree (preferred) in land conservation, environmental resource management, landscape architecture, urban planning, parks & recreation planning, biology/ecology, land use law, civil engineering

Certifications: ASLA, AIA, AICP, LEED-AP

Previous experience: 3-5 years of previous management experience or major projects management/implementation including oversight of multi-disciplinary teams, executive leadership or senior management in a Parks & Recreation department of a municipal government, executive leadership or senior management of a land trust or organizations like Project for Public Spaces, Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Trust for Public Land, etc.

I would look for an individual who has a passion for ensuring parks are accessible to all communities, regardless of income or zip code. I would also want them to support my belief that we must prioritize walkable and village communities where more people can walk to what they need, including stores and parks.

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## INC PARC 2019 Candidate Survey

**Q5** Will you support an ordinance moving OS-A zoning from the Ex. Director of Parks back to City Council? If not, why?

Yes, the City Council's primary function is oversight of zoning. The Director of Parks and Recreation is part of the administrative branch of government, not the legislative. The Director of Parks & Recreation and the Parks Advisory Board should have an advisory role in zoning decisions, but major decisions about regulatory oversight of parks should involve decisions makers who are directly accountable to the taxpayers.

The city charter requires a vote of the people to alter the boundaries of a dedicated park. I would seek the dedication of more parkland so that decisions about the disposition of parks are made directly by a vote of the people. I will also seek to broaden the scope of activities in parks that require a vote of the people. For example, I would add retrofitting a park for stormwater management to the list of activities that require a vote of the people. It is one thing to plan for a park to handle stormwater when the park is conceived, but entirely another thing to disturb a mature park for such purposes.

My position on this issue stems from the I70 widening controversy, since that decision resulted in the destruction of mature trees, demolition of a recently constructed taxpayer funded clubhouse, public health threats, and the transfer of fiscal responsibility for a project of regional and federal significance to local rate payers. Voters should have a voice in decisions of that magnitude. However, the incumbent administration and CDOT made those decisions without public input regarding the local environmental and fiscal impacts of their unilateral decisions. By uncoupling the funding for the I70's stormwater management from the federal project, Mayor Hancock and CDOT placed the financial burden of that aspect of the project solely on the shoulders of Denver residents through the tripling of our stormwater fees. Doing so also allowed CDOT to skirt environmental analysis of the drainage, potentially exposing residents to public health threats from the disturbance of contaminated soils during construction. Furthermore, Denver ratepayers are now subsidizing a project of regional and national significance, as local projects go unfunded due to the diversion of local resources. The implications of these actions should have been revealed to citizens in order to secure their consent to proceed. By giving citizens a stronger voice in such decisions, I will protect our rights to social, environmental, and fiscal responsibility from our government.

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**Q6** What would you consider is adequate green space for high density development, for example Elitch's. What steps would you take to ensure the zoning requirement for green space is adequate?

I would direct my administration to use standards set by the National Parks and Recreation Association as a baseline, with the goal of increasing our parkland to 10 acres per 1,000 people, and require parkland dedication be consistent with that metric. We need a new generation of aspirational parks expansion planning and adaptive reuse of urban land to that end, especially near our transit station areas that we have targeted for significant population growth. We must give more consideration to parks and public gathering ahead of redevelopment discussions. I would also create administrative incentives for landscaped areas, such as green roofs, vegetated walls, and pocket parks and playgrounds by increasing the required areas of open space in all three dimensions.

With the Elitch's site, one way we might plan for parks or park-like accommodation would be to consider alternative configuration and use of roadway infrastructure. We could pursue a strategy like Barcelona's super blocks, where cars are restricted and right of way is reserved/prioritized for walking, biking and community gathering. Such a strategy employs a multipurpose approach to land use, breaks our dependence on private autos, reduces urban heat island effect and promotes cost-effective above ground green infrastructure to better management stormwater and water quality.

**Q7** The use of recycled water in Denver parks appears to be causing the premature loss of many mature evergreens. Is that an acceptable trade-off for accommodating more population growth or should the city spend money to untie remediation measures to save those legacy trees? Please explain your answer.

The interaction between salt in recycled water and Colorado's clay soils exacerbates salt stress. We must practice clay-busting soil amendment techniques around our legacy trees to give them the best chance at survival and consider periodic flushing of soils around legacy trees with potable water. However, the chances of success with this strategy are not guaranteed and must be weighed in priority against water conservation. We must begin planning to replace our legacy trees with more salt-tolerant species when they die.

This is a tough, heartbreaking decision borne of the increasingly difficult choices we must make in the face of climate change, population growth, and increasing pressures on our limited resources. Using recycled water is a sustainable practice and one we should continue. Given our high desert climate, we have no other choice but to reuse water wherever possible and vigorously protect our precious water resources from waste. We must also pursue alternative de-icing strategies for roads and sidewalks in winter to reduce salt run off into our water supplies and promote green infrastructure citywide to manage runoff and improve water quality.

These considerations are part of my vision for sustainability in Denver in the face of climate change. The next ten years are critical to the sustainability of our communities and our planet. I believe that it's time to treat climate change as the urgent threat that it is. My approach to environmental policy is holistic, and will link community health, the environment, and the economy. As part of this commitment, I will make sustainability foundational to all planning, projects, and decision-making.

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**Q8** What would you do to protect and enhance waterways going through Denver?

I would look for ways to implement the full suite of strategies outlined in the Water Quality Master Plan prepared by Wenk Associates, a local landscape architecture firm, and integrate water quality best management practices in our planning and development practices. The daylighting of Westerly Creek, and the "urban lungs" and water quality treatment design of the drainage near Northfield are excellent examples of how to thoughtfully and strategically combine water quality BMPs with stormwater management and parks planning.

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## INC PARC 2019 Candidate Survey

### Q9 What aspect(s) of INC Parks and Rec Urban Platform do you support?

The three pillars of my campaign are fairness, equity and justice. Our legacy as a city in a park speaks to these values. Our parks are accessible places to all residents, in them we are one people. Ensuring that all corners of Denver, regardless of income and zip code, have fair and equitable access to high-quality parks space is not only just, but it ensures a sustainable and resilient future for our city. My platform aligns with all aspects of the INC parks platform, and I will work with INC and all of Denver's registered neighborhood associations to implement this well-reasoned approach.

Urban Parkland Needed: I absolutely agree with this platform. With an increase of 100,000 new residents over the last 10 years, Denver has not kept up by adding new park space. Dedicating existing open space as parkland is a good thing, but it's not the same as adding additional green space to Denver's neighborhoods. We need parks that are useable for all and more accessible to all communities.

Community-Based Park Policy Required: I agree that all park policy should be driven by the community, neighborhoods, and people living nearby and who are most affected by the conditions of our parks. This is why I support moving oversight back to the city council. Protecting and increasing access to parks and open spaces, particularly for low-income communities or communities of color, are issues of justice and public health. As mayor, I would seek to design healthy community ecosystems that enable all of us to lead healthier lives. We must apply a holistic approach to environmental sustainability that encompasses the natural environment, mental and physical well-being, and addresses the health inequity gap. As such, it is only fair that the people, along with their City Council representatives, decide what happens to and in our parks.

Festival Site Should be Established: I share community concerns about admission-based events in our City Beautiful parks. It violates the basic tenet of equal access for all Denver citizens. Furthermore, our original parks were designed for passive recreation, not to handle the intensive use of multi-day festivals and dog parks. By the same token, There is a longstanding need for a festival park that could adequately host events like the People's Fair or concerts series, like those held at the Botanic Gardens. I do support the need to acquire new park land that can be outfitted with sufficient infrastructure and amenities such as turf cells, public toilets, concessionaire amenities, and dog wash stations to handle intensive uses. In such places admission fees may be a justified fiscal tool that could offset acquisition costs and infrastructure/amenities required by the user demand for the facilities. Finally, we must generate a sustainable fund for park expansion, new acquisition, and ongoing maintenance.

Dedicated and Stable Funding for Parks Must Be Sought: I agree that more funds should be allocated to Parks & Recreation from property taxes and cannabis tax revenues. In 2017, Denver voters approved the "Elevate Denver" Bond intended to upgrade and improve more than 50 parks and 21 recreation centers, but that does little to purchase new parks, much less maintain what we already have dedicated. The intention of the bond money was not to cut down 250+ trees for a highway drainage plan, or to build a luxury \$20+million Golf Club House at Denver's Historic City Park Golf Course. We must change priorities so that the funds are used more effectively for the benefit of the people in all of Denver's neighborhoods.

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