

Ellie Sciarra: What price happiness?

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So a recent National Geographic article [names Boulder the happiest city in America](#), one in which the author, Dan Buttner, states that a major source of that happiness is that "Cities like Boulder question the unquestioned virtues of development."

Boulder has been doing that for 50 years. That is how we ended up with the Blue Line, building height restrictions that are imbedded in our charter and almost 80 square miles of open space, bought and paid for with what was then a precedent-setting decision to tax ourselves to provide the resources to acquire and maintain it.

You would think that having the happiest city in America would give one pause before dramatically changing such a wonderful environment. But you would be wrong. Many of the candidates running for City Council this year want what they describe as new, modern thinking, to convert Boulder into a much denser city. They look to places like Amsterdam and Portland for inspiration, rather than appreciating the unique qualities of what we have. They want the private sector to fund new affordable housing, which means that we build 80 or more expensive, luxury apartments in order to obtain a small handful of affordable units. They want new, large commercial developments (how is that monstrosity on Canyon and 28th working out?) without asking developers to pay for the impacts of their projects.

I am for thoughtful growth that keeps in mind the legacy that has been passed down to us; I am for keeping Boulder the happiest city in America. That is why my candidates are Sam Weaver, Mary Young, John Gerstle, Cindy Carlisle and Mirabai Nagel. They understand growth that will benefit our community. The whole community, not just the real estate community.

Ellie Sciarra

Boulder

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