JAMIE GIELLS
Mayor

“I have spent a career helping to empower people and neighborhoods to forge partnerships with each other and local government to address complicated urban issues affecting the character and stability of their communities. Part community organizer, part strategic planning, my work has been focused on using policy and planning to help ease the impacts of growth that have come with the return of people to cities – here in Denver, across the country and around the world. I started my career in Iowa, running the downtown Cedar Rapids BID and helping to transform the city's structure of municipal government. I was a 6-year board member of the International Downtown Associations. I have worked with BIDs and downtown organizations of all sizes for the last 16 years. I started my own business helping cities, states and countries develop new tools to work with community. This work is both my job and passion, and I can’t wait to further it in the Mayor’s office. I’m ready, I’m prepared, I’m passionate. And I thank you for your consideration to support me.”

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INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS

Jamie Giellis is running for Mayor with the goal and intention of creating a greater sense of connection between citizens and their government and ensuring that all Denverites get experience the best of our growing city. Jamie stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in government; prioritizing funding for transit; and finding housing solutions that prioritize affordability and serving those experiencing homelessness. She believes that the Mayor's role is to be collaborative, engaging and communicative- setting a large table with a setting for everyone.

TRANSPORTATION

“Our city’s streets have to serve to balance many modes today, but unfortunately cars sill rule the day. A key part of strengthening use of alternate modes is linked to transit, and the need for a connected network for transit that moves people around Denver. The city and the surrounding region have a strong spine in FasTracks but we do not have a strong intra-city transit system that moves people where they want to go.

As mayor I will:
Return Denver to a streetcar network that worked for the people of this city: Until 1950, Denver had one of the largest streetcar networks in the country (before that, cable cars ruled the road here!), and it’s time to reconnect Denver’s neighborhoods using the streetcar model and network of the past with modern technology to propel us forward for 21st century needs. So many other cities – from Portland, to Oklahoma City, and El Paso to Las Vegas – are making this forward-thinking investment. I will find a way to build intra-city transit that provides a real option to getting cars off roads, leveraging FasTracks. All great cities have two tiers of transit - regional and local. We have built out much of the regional framework, now Denver must invest in getting people where they need to go within the City. We can fund transit improvements with innovative tools including exploring ideas such as adding a small fee on every rideshare ride and tools that capture and invest a portion of the increased value along new transit corridors. Additionally, we will commit to integrating technology and signage to make use of both local and regional transit networks easy for all.

Throughtfully integrate transit into land use planning: Good urban planning around Smart Growth policies tie together land use planning and added density to transit, green space and the need for neighborhood supporting businesses, among other things. I will commit to this approach, planning appropriate density in development along transit corridors and not haphazardly throughout historic neighborhoods, and I will commit to providing wide sidewalks and bike lanes with plenty of green space so that people enjoy their walk or bike ride to a streetcar or bus line.

Give access to transit to all: Great cities provide basic opportunities and services to their residents – ALL their residents. My commitment is to build a transit network that works, that ALL can afford to use. I will build on and improve RTD’s subsidy program to ensure we can deliver reduced or free transit.”
PARKS, PUBLIC SPACES & AN OUTDOOR DOWNTOWN

“We will to be creative and thoughtful. Pop-up parks can be a tool to test opportunities for more permanent spaces. While serving as president of the RiNo Art District, I worked with the community to activate a pop-up park at Blake and Broadway, inspired by the 21st Street Pop-Up Park. These types of activated spaces in the urban core create connectivity and community, and can also active underutilized areas while inspiring future opportunities.

In addition to this, we of course have to be diligent about maximizing open and green space opportunities as part of development – both public and private.

As mayor I will:
  ▪ Work with developers to include green space and gardens as part of their development. It increases property values and enriches the community;
  ▪ Look at opportunities for city owned land to build pop-up parks and gardens;
  ▪ Revitalize the green space around the river. This is an amazing but underutilized asset. Cleaning up the river and creating a safe environment for residents and tourists will be a key focus of my administration.”

BUILDING A STRONG DOWNTOWN

“As I’ve been all over the city, residents recognize that the downtown is the heart of our community, and wish to see an even more improved city center. But their neighborhoods are also struggling after years of disinvestment. In SW Denver last week, my neighborhood tour arrived at a rec center on a Saturday afternoon, only to find the doors locked. The center’s weekend hours got shut off during the recession, and in 2019 had never been ramped back up. In Park Hill last week, we found the rec center and library closed on the weekend. The Congress Park pool is closing for at least a few years. Elyria-Swansea and Globeville still don’t have sidewalks or crosswalks by the school. The entire city needs quality of life investments. So while downtown is a critical heart of who Denver is, healthy neighborhoods also make for a healthy city. Balance will be required, so that all ships – when they rise – rise together.”

GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

“Denver is again at a tipping point. A modern, urban Denver growing at an unprecedented rate requires bold leadership that includes and listens to residents who have called Denver their life-long home as well as new residents who have moved here looking to build a family or a business. I believe a true World Class City for All works through our shared value system that must address quality of life, economic sustainability, inclusivity and ethical, transparent leadership. Still, the city-wide growth has gone beyond the focus of the plan, and while we have benefited economically as a municipality, the pain points that have come with growth – increasing costs, congestion, impacts to the environment – will be the biggest charge and challenge of a future administration. The mayor’s role is to set the vision for how growth will be managed – smartly. Growth on the whole is a positive, but our biggest challenge is to ensure we all get the best of it, and that the city is putting into place the holistic infrastructure to accommodate it. I believe in this way, we have not done our best by our residents. The City Council’s role is to ensure the needs of their constituents are best represented, and I feel that the mayor and council need to be partners and collaborators in this task.”

INITIATIVE 300: OPPOSED

“Homelessness is one of Denver’s most urgent issues facing our city. While I respect the people who have put forward this issue and understand their frustration in the current policies around homelessness, I believe this policy will not be effective in solving our homeless crisis. I have spoken at length to people on both sides of the issue and believe the City can find solutions that get people off the streets while allowing them to maintain their dignity. Initiative 300 is not the right solution for Denver. The City should be a leader in building a coalition of residents, business and non-profits to find realistic, long-term solutions. I will address homelessness in the first 100 days of my administration working with homeless advocates, the business community and residents. I will develop a plan that includes a housing first policy that gets our unhoused neighbors off the streets and into a safe place. Denver has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on “homeless sweeps” and yet the numbers of people living on our streets is rising.”