



Candidate Name: **Michael B. Hancock**

Phone number:     (303) 307-9891 (office)     Email address: [info@hancockfordenver.com](mailto:info@hancockfordenver.com) (general)

## **Sustainability Questionnaire for Denver Mayoral Candidates**

Please return to [brian@coloradoconservationvoters.org](mailto:brian@coloradoconservationvoters.org) by Monday, April 4th at 8am.

**1) Sustainability:** What does sustainability mean to you? What is the top sustainability issue you will focus on as mayor?

To me, sustainability means making progress without jeopardizing our children's future. It means a balanced approach to the environment, social equity and finances. It means being responsible with energy, waste, water, transportation, land use, revenues and spending, and economic development.

As Mayor, I will bring a sustainable approach and sustainable strategies to all aspects of the job:

- First, I will establish Denver as a national and international sustainability leader by attracting clean-tech companies, creating clean-energy clusters around existing companies like SMA Solar Technology in Stapleton, and by growing a highly-skilled green-job workforce.
- Second, I will strengthen Greenprint Denver to bolster efforts to make city government itself more energy and natural-resource diverse and efficient. I will establish a partnership between Greenprint Denver and the Denver Office of Economic Development to concentrate on sustainable business and job growth.
- Third, I will launch Denver Seeds, a new network of urban farms that will grow a local fresh food economy. This innovative strategy will support small businesses, create jobs and shift food production toward local growers and away from large out-of-state industrial operations. Denver Seeds will increase the availability of fresh produce in all of our neighborhoods while using less resources and putting millions of dollars back into the Denver economy. A Denver city farm will provide a physical location for on-the-job training in business planning, hydroponics and green technologies, while also serving as a hub for a system of smaller satellite farms.

**2) Climate Change:** Do you agree or disagree that global climate change is occurring and caused mainly by human activities? If yes, how important do you feel this issue is and what priority would you place on addressing it? What specifically will you do as mayor to address the issue?

I believe global climate change is occurring and is being exacerbated by human activities. This is one of the most important issues facing the entire planet. I will place a high priority on addressing it by:

- Taking a leading role in finishing FasTracks, expanding commuter options for bicyclists, offering preferred parking for energy efficient vehicles, better synchronizing the city's traffic lights, and implementing other multi-modal choices to reduce transportation-related greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Establishing the Denver Seeds urban food network. Energy consumption in America's industrial farming system is a massive consumer of energy and contributor to climate change. Changing the way we produce and provide food will help reduce carbon emissions.
- Advancing the use of cleaner energy and fuel sources, and increasing conservation measures in city government. This will include directing city agencies within my first 100 days in office to adopt "performance contracting" strategies to reduce energy consumption through energy efficient renovations and construction.
- Establishing Greenprint Denver as a permanent office of the Mayor, providing more capacity to better coordinate with other city agencies on sustainability and energy efficiency.
- Expanding pilot projects with multi-family residences for recycling and energy efficiency, and working with Denver Water to improve efficiencies around water consumption.
- Piloting a "Green Index" report for Denver to advise on the progress of sustainable practices of local businesses and service providers.
- Reviewing and analyzing the city's building code to remove obstacles, identify potential incentives for green building, and fast-track LEED-registered construction through the city review process.
- Encouraging homeowners and businesses to install small wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal pumps and energy efficient appliances and systems by cutting red tape, eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and finding appropriate incentives and financing options.

**3) Water:** Water is a precious resource here in the West. Denver Water plays a leading role in water conservation and efficiency, not just in Denver but also throughout the state. What will you do as mayor to encourage further water conservation and efficiency efforts in Denver? What type of person would you look to appoint to the Denver Water board?

I believe water is our most precious natural resource and is critical to our future economic health and overall quality of life. We need to continue to be cutting edge when it comes to conservation strategies and build on what is working.

Denver pioneered the concept of xeriscaping over three decades ago; the “Use Only What You Need” ad campaign has had great success in recent years; and Greenprint Denver has a Watts to Water program that is helping to reduce energy and water consumption in large commercial buildings in Denver. I will continue to strengthen these programs and continue to find ways to educate and inspire the public on issues of water conservation – as consumers get more educated, they become better at conservation. I will ensure that the City will lead by example with continued water efficiency practices in City buildings and in all new projects the City builds.

Appointees to the Denver Water Board should strongly promote conservation efforts and collaborate with all stakeholders statewide in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Furthermore, I will look for individuals that understand regional cooperation is paramount in managing and conserving existing water resources and addressing socio-economic, recreation and environmental impacts of future water development.

**4) Transit:** Transit is critical to Denver’s future development. Transit promotes smarter land use policies, reduces traffic congestion and the number of vehicle miles traveled, decreases household transportation costs, and is an economic driver. Do you support an increase in the RTD FasTracks tax and what level do you believe the tax should be? What year would you propose RTD goes back to the voters for approval? Please describe your role and profile in the campaign for an increase of the tax.

FasTracks has the potential to be one of this region’s greatest economic drivers for decades to come. The project must be finished in the most efficient and timely manner possible to elevate Denver as a world-class city, to attract new businesses, connect communities and enhance our overall quality of life. I will adamantly support an effective and fiscally responsible completion of FasTracks, working cooperatively with our public and private partners across the metro area. I can support a tax increase as long as RTD asks voters for only what is absolutely necessary to successfully and quickly complete FasTracks.

**5) Greenprint Denver:** Greenprint Denver was created in 2005 to integrate sustainability into city programs and policies and to address the urgent issue of climate change. Since then, Greenprint Denver has implemented programs to promote energy and water efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and preserve natural resources, while saving Denver residents money. Tell us about your plans for Greenprint Denver. If elected, will you continue the program? How will you fund the initiative and programs? What changes, if any, will you make?

As Mayor, I will strengthen Greenprint Denver, elevating it as a permanent office of the Mayor, giving it a greater ability to support private-sector job growth, coordinate with other city agencies and set benchmarks and goals in seven key areas: energy, water, land, transportation, waste, community, air and emissions. Greenprint Denver will coordinate with the Office of Economic Development on clean-energy job creation while also tracking efficiencies, effectiveness and cost-savings with other city offices and departments such as Community Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Health and Safety. A stronger Greenprint Denver will allow for more coordination and communication between city agencies so that the best ideas are implemented efficiently and effectively with a focus on outcomes, including a reduction of agency overlap.

For example, I will direct Greenprint Denver to work with the Office of Strategic Partnerships and local green nonprofits to identify and eliminate potential redundancies, collaborate on large-scale sustainable projects, and pursue foundation and grant funding in a coordinated fashion. Greenprint Denver also will increase public awareness campaigns and social networking strategies to better inform citizens about local green providers, sustainable living tips, and pending electricity rate changes. I will take energy education to our schools and at-risk youth programs in combination with job training programs.

**6) Land Use & Growth:** Denver and the surrounding Metro region continue to grow quickly with another million people anticipated to move here within the next two decades. A more compact, less sprawling land use pattern will result in decreased traffic and driving, reduced water use, and lower costs for infrastructure and services, while promoting more livable, transit-reachable communities and neighborhoods. As mayor, how would you promote a compact land use pattern and combat urban sprawl? What land use and zoning policies would you pursue to ensure that Denver neighborhoods are vibrant, livable and walkable?

As the Councilman who represents Stapleton, one of the most walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods in the city, promoting viable multi-modal areas is a priority for me. With increasing gas prices, the aging baby boomers and the Gen Y population, the market demand for more compact, walkable neighborhoods is increasing. Beyond the simple convenience of walkable neighborhoods, large numbers of young urban workers are opting not to own a car at all. As mayor, I will promote transit-oriented development (TOD) by applying the appropriate zoning and I will market these areas to our development community as priority places for new development and investment. I will also identify other tools for these places such as TIF, improvement districts and federal funding to help catalyze these areas for infill development. My key appointees, including those in Community Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation and Public Works, will all prioritize these areas in their departments.

We should finish FasTracks as quickly and efficiently as possible and take advantage of Union Station as our transportation hub. I believe transportation affects our quality of life and connects our community. It is a driving force for future economic development and I want it to be one of Denver's strongest assets when attracting new businesses and jobs. I will strategically direct city resources to maximize our existing infrastructure through innovation and efficiency and be proactive rather than reactive to allow for Denver's growth and prosperity. Public transportation, bike paths, walkable streets, and better wastewater management and streetscaping create healthy living alternatives that bring added-value to FasTracks and other major projects through matching funds and other partnerships.

We also need a careful examination of how to remove barriers to high-density housing, particularly in central and downtown Denver as the city's population continues to rise. More specifically, the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, in its current form, tends to discourage density and makes financing of complex projects next to impossible in this tough economy. We must re-examine policies like the IHO so they don't discourage high-density and mixed-use development.

**7) Waste Management:** Waste reduction and recycling reduces natural resource use, waste disposal costs, and greenhouse gas emissions from landfills. Denver is consistently ranked among the top U.S. cities in most aspects of sustainability, but is admittedly weak on solid waste management. This is in part because, unlike a growing number of communities around the state and country, Denver does not directly charge residents for trash removal, which creates an incentive and revenue stream for waste reduction, recycling and composting. As mayor, what will you do to encourage greater recycling, composting and waste reduction in Denver? Would you support implementing a “pay as you throw” program in Denver? If so, what would your first step entail?

We need to treat the Denver landfill facility as a city asset just like any other. In order to preserve this asset, we need to look into more innovative ways to divert waste and increase recycling and increase the life of the facility. We need to change our practices so we incentivize throwing waste in the recycling bin instead of the trash container. As Mayor, I will encourage increased recycling and composting and will support “pay as you throw” if the public and City Council determine it to be in the best interest of the city.

Furthermore, I will work with the Colorado Apartment Association to make recycling more accessible to residents of multi-family dwellings. I will encourage more commercial food waste composting in the city. And I will direct the city Parks and Recreation Department to increase composting of organic materials so the city can reuse the material while increasing cost efficiencies.

**8) Bicycle, Pedestrian & Other Human-Powered Transportation Opportunities:** In April 2010, Denver launched the first, citywide bike sharing program in the United States – Denver B-cycle. In its first season, this program provided nearly 103,000 individual rides for a total of 211,111 miles traveled. Do you think B-cycle is an important program to provide more transportation options in Denver and, if so, what would you do as mayor to increase its success and effectiveness? What changes, if any, would you make to Denver’s transportation system and policies to facilitate the increased use and safety of bicycling, walking and other human-powered transportation?

As mayor, I will provide clear leadership to ensure we have multi-modal transportation plans in place. The B-cycle program has been an enormous success and shows there is demand for these types of programs. In order to ensure its long-term success, we need to honor the Strategic Transportation Plan (STP) and continue to find creative ways to fund multi-modal projects. As chair of the Better Denver Bond program, I was able to ensure that key projects from the STP are funded. I worked with the City and Bike Denver to open a new bike lane on Martin Luther King Boulevard and increase awareness of the benefits of alternative modes of transportation in NE Denver. We need to continue to develop projects like these to promote viable multi-modal options in the city. As mayor, I will continue to build these partnerships across the city because I believe this promotes a better standard of living and environmental sustainability and makes us more competitive to draw new development and business.

**9) Energy Efficiency:** Reducing the amount of energy we use is the cheapest and easiest source of new energy. As mayor, what would you do generate greater energy efficiency in Denver? How would you build on existing efforts to make the City's operations, buildings and fleets more efficient? What efforts would you undertake to help Denver residents improve their energy use?

An important step toward diversifying our energy supply and living more within our natural-resource means is to use renewable energy sources that are produced right at our homes, businesses and schools. As I mentioned, I will establish policies at the city level that promote the use of renewable sources and I will actively promote installation of renewable energy systems in city buildings. I will also work with Xcel Energy to help consumers achieve greater energy efficiencies and better opportunities for rebates and affordable installations.

As Mayor, I will investigate participation in property tax financing programs to give home- and business-owners affordable and fiscally responsible options to help pay for the installation of clean energy systems. I am particularly interested into encouraging the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) that produces a score of how energy efficient a home is based on testing and will look into an ordinance that requires HERS scores be listed on all home sales - giving the buyer an opportunity to understand how energy efficient a home is before buying. This would give consumers a more complete picture of what they are buying and better information on how to reduce their own carbon footprint. I will also partner with third-party financing companies to bring these opportunities to Denver residents and businesses

**10) Policy Leadership:** The mayor of Colorado's capital and largest city has a bully pulpit to promote policies and practices beyond those for which he/she has direct jurisdiction and oversight. As mayor, do you plan to use this opportunity to influence important policy debates? What, if any, sustainability issues would you ask Colorado's state or federal elected leaders to take action on?

As Mayor, I will champion key sustainability issues that have far-reaching implications:

- **Denver Seeds.** This will be a nationally leading, innovative urban food network that will drive a fresh food economy and reduce carbon emissions associated with food production. By partnering with the U.S. and Colorado Departments of Agriculture, we will establish Denver and the state as a sustainability model for future food production.
- **Jobs.** Denver is well-positioned to become a national hub for clean-tech jobs and innovations. As Mayor, I will push state and national officials to achieve economic sustainability through environmental and energy sustainability.
- **Water.** I will work collaboratively with leaders around the state, the West and the country to chart a sustainable water future for generations to come.
- **Energy efficiency and energy diversity.** Particularly in the built environment, energy efficiency and diversification are two areas where Denver must serve as a statewide and national leader.