

Bozeman City for CEDAW 2025 Voter Guide on Themes of Fairness, Equity, and Human Rights

Mayoral Candidates

John Meyer
Douglas Fischer
Brendan O'Connor

City Commission Candidates (2 Seats)

Eli Anselmi
Roger Blank
Emma Bode
Trevor Nameniuk
Alison Sweeney
Emily Talago

Welcome to the Bozeman City for CEDAW Task Force to advance the status and safety of all women, girls, and those most underrepresented in our community. We are pleased to share issues we believe are essential for the Candidates to address and the community to consider when voting by mail before November 4th. For more information on the Bozeman City for CEDAW Task Force, visit our FB page: www.facebook.com/bozemanforcedaw

Details and deadlines on Voting by Mail can be found at [the Gallatin County Elections Department](#)

Learn more about Candidates' views on the issues covered in this Voter Guide at our non-partisan 2025 Bozeman Candidates Forum on Tuesday, September 30th @ 6-8 pm, with partner Forward Montana's "Spicy" theme at the Gallatin Labor Temple, 422 E. Mendenhall, Bozeman, 59715!

Candidates will discuss their thinking and plans on a range of Questions that revolve around the focus on women's and girls' human rights and the promotion of fairness, equity, and inclusion to close the gender, race, income, and other disparity gaps in our community. The Candidate Forum is open to the public and all Candidates were invited.

Our 2025 Bozeman Candidate Forum Event on September 30th is being recorded only and will be posted afterwards on the website of our community radio partner KGVM 95.9 FM: www.kgvm.org.

More on the Voter Guide:

All Mayoral and Commission Candidates were asked to respond to Voter Guide questions and participate in the Forum. We received responses from 6 out of the 9 total Candidates. See their Responses below. For ease of reading, the Candidates' responses are separated into 2 headings for the 2 positions the 2025 Elections are being held for. These include:

- Mayor – 4-year term – Vote for 1 candidate
- City Commissioner – 4-year term – Vote for 2 candidates

Our Voter Guide Questions and Answers begin on the next page!

Lastly, there is an urgent need to protect and expand the human rights of all women and girls by addressing discrimination in education, political, economic, and cultural areas. With the adoption of the Bozeman City for CEDAW Resolution [5384](#) in April 2022, based on the principles of CEDAW (UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) to effectively monitor and end both subtle and substantial forms of intersectional gender-based discrimination in areas of safety, health, and economic security, the City of Bozeman will continue the Montana tradition of history-making decisions that support the diversity of and equity for women's and girls' advancement and empowerment.

To learn more about the Bozeman City for CEDAW Task Force, read our [CEDAW Report and Recommendations on Women and Girls - 2019](#), review the [Bozeman City for CEDAW Resolution 5384, Establishing the City of Bozeman as a City for CEDAW \(The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women\)](#), and you can contact us at: bozeman4cedaw@gmail.com

2025 VOTER GUIDE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS~

Women's Lives and Safety:

1a. Gender-based Violence affects a large number of women and girls in the Bozeman area and has been increasing dramatically since COVID, as demonstrated in HAVEN's latest Annual Report: [Haven_2023-4 AR_v5](#). How will you lead and work with others to both advance women's and girls' safety by eliminating gender-based violence? And remove legal, economic, and social barriers to ensure that the required physical, mental, and recovery support is available for the diversity of women, girls, and others who are underrepresented in our community?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

John Meyer: No response submitted.

Doug Fischer: As mayor, my responsibility is to ensure every resident feels respected and safe in public life, able to thrive in our community. Gender-based violence is unacceptable, and HAVEN's report reminds us that this is a pressing public safety issue. My focus as mayor is on the tools we control – housing, childcare, and safe community spaces – because economic stability and strong community ties are the best protections against violence. I'll work with local partners to break down barriers like cost, transportation, and isolation that keep people from getting help, so every resident can live with dignity and security.

Brendan O'Connor: I would partner with HAVEN, law enforcement and health care professionals to improve crisis response, shelter space, and counseling. As mayor I would look at how we can use city funding to achieve these goals.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

Emma Bode: Haven is an incredible resource to this community and providing this support is their mission. The best way the City can move these goals forward is to support those already doing the work. During the annual budget negotiations, I would continue to vote to allocate some of the Commission's budget to Haven, HRDC, and Family Promise. I've heard that Haven is developing a legal services arm to support women with legal issues. I strongly support this effort and would be an ally in their efforts to secure funding for it.

Trevor Nameniuk: I believe that the first step in overcoming most any issue is to start by listening and understanding. That means sitting down and having real conversations with those affected first-hand. And then, from there, determining the best route forward in terms of what resources can be utilized to thoughtfully and effectively provide the support that is needed - whether that be direct support or helping to facilitate such support.

Alison Sweeney: Having grown up in Bozeman, myself and members of my family have personally used the services of BridgerCare, Haven, HRDC, Bozeman Health, and the County Health Department for physical/mental health needs and economic assistance. Looking back, there are times when I was a kid that I wish an organization like Family Promise had existed. I know first hand how important these partners are to the health, safety, and empowerment of all residents regardless of age, sex, race, or identity. I would be proud to work with them on a municipal level to make sure they can continue their efforts.

Emily Talago: Gender-based violence requires coordination and compassion. I will work with HAVEN, healthcare providers, schools, and law enforcement to strengthen recovery

supports and remove barriers to access. I believe in listening to survivors and underrepresented voices to guide effective policy. My leadership will focus on building partnerships, streamlining city processes, and ensuring recovery services are accessible, inclusive, and respectful of individual needs. This is about creating a community where survivors are supported in healing and rebuilding their lives with safety and dignity.

1b. What would you do to advance the safety of women and those most underrepresented in our community to prevent as well as reduce the risk of all forms of gender-based violence?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Doug Fischer: Public safety isn't just police and fire – it includes mental health. Expanding mobile crisis response is one of the best ways we can prevent violence and help people before crises escalate. As mayor, I'll support those efforts, while keeping focus on housing, childcare access, and community spaces that reduce isolation. I'll work with HAVEN, schools, and health providers so survivors have paths to recovery and support. Our policies must reflect the realities people face every day – because only then can we reduce risk and build a stronger, safer Bozeman for everyone.

Brendan O'Connor: I would work to further public education efforts in the community to build awareness and prevention skills. I would prioritize better outdoor lighting and surveillance measures where appropriate. These steps, combined with community groups, would create a safer environment.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

Emma Bode: I will implement the following Belonging in Bozeman plan goals:

- Provide an annual Governing for Racial Equity training for staff, elected officials, and advisory board members.
- Promote the exchange of knowledge between staff, Bozeman PD, and local community leaders on topics such as: De-escalation, implicit bias, and bystander intervention; Mental Health First Aid; LGBTQ+ Everyday Allies; Know Your Rights; Disability awareness and etiquette training for first responders.
- Develop procedures to ensure timely communications and response to incidents of hate in the community.

- Develop an Equity Impacts decision-making tool and train elected officials, advisory board members, and staff in its use.

Trevor Nameniuk: As a City Commissioner, one of my top priorities will always be the safety of Bozeman residents. A safe community is a great community, and that includes all of its members, especially the ones who are at higher risk of potential violence. The city has a duty to provide the necessary support required by police, fire, and EMS to ensure such safety.

Alison Sweeney: Attending the Citizen's Police Academy in the spring of 2025, gave me a greater understanding of the challenges our men and women in law enforcement face in combating violence against women and girls. Bozeman's growth has brought an increase in youth of all genders trading sexual services for drugs, which puts them directly at risk of physical violence beyond the exploitation itself. If elected, I commit to properly funding our law enforcement including the School Resource Officers who are vital in preventing violence against youth. Collaboration with MSU will also be a critical part of my efforts to address violence.

Emily Talago: Prevention means tackling root causes and creating a culture of safety. I will lead by collaborating with schools, nonprofits, and healthcare providers to support education and awareness programs that reduce risk. As commissioner, I'll ensure city planning and safety efforts consider vulnerable populations, from well-lit streets to responsive public safety policies. My approach is to name hard issues, listen to those most impacted, and create practical, community-driven solutions that advance dignity, accountability, and prevention of all forms of gender-based violence in Bozeman.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

2. In 2024, Gallatin County was identified as one of the MT Department of Labor and Industry's Child Care "Deserts" for families requiring these services and one of the lowest-paid professions in an occupation mainly employing women ([Montana Department of Labor Economy at a Glance](#)). How will you help lead this crucial economic human right that impacts women and families in our community?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Brendan O'Conner: I would push for public-private partnerships to expand affordable child care, making it easier for private sector providers to sustain operations. I would advocate fair wages for child care staff to ensure high-quality care. Child care is not just a family issue, it is also an economic issue, which is why this is highly important.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

Doug Fischer: Access to affordable childcare is essential for families and our economy. Bozeman must pro-actively remove barriers: One childcare center recently faced \$30,000 in impact fees to open. That's unacceptable. Childcare must be central to all our housing and economic development conversations. As mayor, I'll encourage public-private partnerships to expand capacity and streamline efforts to bring safe, affordable childcare to neighborhoods. Strong childcare strengthens families, reduces barriers to work, and builds the kind of resilient community where everyone – parents, children, and employers – can succeed together.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Emma Bode: As a Commissioner I would advocate to implement the Belonging In Bozeman goals to reduce barriers to out-of-school opportunities and programs for underserved children by:

- Addressing barriers including transportation and cost.
- Establishing and continuing partnerships with governmental and non-profit organizations for free use of space access, subsidies, and other mechanisms to support youth programming within Gallatin Valley.
- Perform an equity impact analysis of the city's enrollment processes, level of subsidy, and scholarships for recreation programs and youth camps.
- Lobby for additional local, state, and federal funding/subsidy of quality childcare.

Trevor Nameniuk: Child care is undoubtedly an essential service for many working families, and it is concerning to see Gallatin County identified as a "child care desert." While government involvement is important, I believe that we need to approach this issue by balancing both market-based solutions and targeted support, rather than simply expanding government-run programs. And we can do this by encouraging the growth of private sector solutions. By offering incentives such as tax breaks or grants for small businesses and child care providers, we can foster an environment where child care services become more accessible and affordable. This allows for innovation and competition, which can improve quality and lower costs without requiring a heavy hand from the city.

Alison Sweeney: I'm a huge fan of Bozeman Reads Early Literacy Project! This all-day pre-k program helped my sister return to part time work which has been economically helpful for their family. The program is also fostering an early love of learning for my nephew. Her return to the workforce empowers my sister (and countless women like her) with a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment that work outside the home can sometimes have. Teachers in this program are paid better than child care workers in the private sector. I would love to see this program expanded, along with others in our community.

Emily Talago: Childcare access is an urgent need and critical to family stability and our economy. Provider wages should reflect the economic gains made possible by their profession. I will support reducing barriers for providers, encouraging partnerships, and exploring creative solutions that expand options now. At the same time, I believe we must not lose sight of the bigger picture: families should not feel forced into one model just to stay afloat. A healthy community is one where parents can choose the path that best fits their household, whether that means affordable childcare or the ability for one parent to stay home, without fear of falling behind. My goal is to address today's shortage while building a future where families truly have choices.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

3. In 2024, Montana voters (by 58-42%) enacted CI-128, a Constitutional Amendment known as “Montanans Securing Reproductive Rights” ([Montana CI-128, Right to Abortion Initiative \(2024\) - Ballotpedia](#)), now part of the MT Constitution and our right to privacy. How should the Bozeman City Commission consider, evaluate, and support policies that uphold women's and pregnant people's Montana Constitutional right to all reproductive health care services?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

John Meyer: No response submitted.

Doug Fischer: Montanans spoke clearly in 2024, and reproductive rights are now protected in our state constitution. The City Commission doesn't set health policy, but we do shape whether residents can access services without barriers or stigma. As mayor, I'll ensure our zoning, licensing, and public safety policies don't create obstacles to constitutionally protected care. I'll oppose efforts to discriminate against providers or patients, and I'll keep our focus on what we can influence: safe, welcoming public spaces, equitable city services, and respect for every resident's rights under Montana law.

Brendan O'Conner: The voters of Montana spoke clearly with CI-128. The Bozeman City Commission must respect and align with this mandate. This includes fair zoning, permitting, and public education.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

Emma Bode: Abortion and other reproductive health choices are personal - the City must protect employee's privacy concerning these matters. We also need to institutionalize protections for pregnant people who work at the City to make sure they can work while pregnant in ways that don't put them or their pregnancy at risk. I'm proud that the City of Bozeman has a robust health insurance benefit and family leave policy that applies regardless of gender. The City also has a bereavement policy that includes miscarriages after 12 weeks and ample sick leave for those recovering from abortion or miscarriage.

Trevor Nameniuk: It is my personal belief that the government's role is to provide public safety and facilitate commerce. Not to tell people what they can or cannot do with their bodies. One way the commission could support such policies is to advocate and even lobby to uphold that aforementioned sentiment.

Alison Sweeney: I celebrated the passage of CI-128 as the brightest ray of hope in the entire election of 2024! I've personally used the services of BridgerCare for 30 years! They provide vital education, outreach, and healthcare services to those struggling in our community. I'll do everything I can to make sure they are there for future generations. Our local healthcare providers are best poised to tell us what support they need on a municipal level. CI-128 is law, and if elected, I'll stand with providers to make sure they face no barriers in serving their patients.

Emily Talago: If elected as a commissioner, I will take an oath to support, protect, and defend the U.S. Constitution, the Montana Constitution, and the Bozeman City Charter. Montanans have now clearly affirmed reproductive rights in our state constitution, and local government must respect and uphold that protection. While the City does not regulate healthcare, it can ensure its policies never obstruct access. I believe leadership requires being fearless in naming sensitive issues and standing firm in protecting rights.

4. In addition to gathering data to implement policies and programs in the City of Bozeman's [Belonging in Bozeman](#) plan, how will you commit to leading the City to advance and protect women's and all human rights and promote equity and justice in our community?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Doug Fischer: My philosophy on equity is simple: All means all. As mayor, I'll keep my focus on building a community where everyone feels safe, respected, and able to thrive. Local government works best when people trust the process and know their voices matter. I'll ensure city services are accessible, remove barriers to participation, and listen to residents

too often overlooked. Equity and justice aren't abstract – they show up in affordable housing, safe public spaces, fair treatment in city services, and opportunities for economic security. I'll lead with transparency and compassion so Bozeman works for everyone.

Brendan O'Conner: I would treat the Belonging in Bozeman plan as a foundation of data. I would target investment in lighting, transit, and affordable housing.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

Emma Bode: The Belonging in Bozeman plan is a thorough document that I fully support and will champion. All of its goals address facets of this complex issue. At its core - advancing and protecting women and girl's human rights is about empowerment and giving them agency over their lives. Glenn Martin's famous quote goes, "People closest to the problem are closest to the solution, but furthest from power & resources." We must work to get more women in positions of leadership. If elected, I will mentor and support other women throughout my term and work to create opportunities for other women to lead.

Trevor Nameniuk: The best way to advance and protect women's and all human rights is to judge everyone equally, and the easiest way to do so is based on merit.

Alison Sweeney: Bozeman's Human Resources staff have done an exemplary job in this area, and while I do resist the hiring of a Belonging in Bozeman Coordinator because of budgetary concerns, I take the work seriously. Our law enforcement officers have continuously shown up for ALL of our citizens. Their presence and support during Bozeman Pride events and their quick action to keep the public safe and uphold freedom of expression at the No Kings Protest are something our entire community can be proud of. I support law enforcement and staff in their work to protect human rights and justice in Bozeman.

Emily Talago: Equity must be woven into everyday city decisions. The Belonging in Bozeman plan provides valuable data and direction, but leadership must make that actionable. I will ensure city policies are informed by this data, while continuing to listen directly to all voices. My approach is collaborative and practical: remove barriers, elevate community input, and integrate equity into budgeting, planning, and services. I believe advancing human rights means leading with a heart of service, accountability, and inclusion—so that Bozeman is a place where everyone belongs and thrives.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

5. The Bozeman City for CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and Girls) Resolution (S.5384) has not received the resources necessary to implement since its unanimous adoption by the City Commission in April, 2022. Are CEDAW's human rights principles a priority for you? Why or why not? How would you ensure CEDAW is a priority in current and future City of Bozeman work plans?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Brendan O'Conner: I would ensure CEDAW is implemented by tying it to the city's core responsibilities: safety, prosperity, and transparent governance. That means supporting HAVEN and similar partners, improving public safety infrastructure like lighting and transit, and removing barriers that prevent residents from accessing housing or city services. I will make sure CEDAW isn't left as a symbolic resolution but is reflected in how the city improves quality of life for all residents.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

Doug Fischer: The unanimous adoption of CEDAW in 2022 showed our city's commitment to equity. As mayor, I believe those values must be woven into everything we do – affordable housing policy, public safety priorities, community engagement – not separated into stand-alone efforts. I'll ensure CEDAW's goals are reflected in our strategic plan, that departments are held accountable for measuring progress, and that we listen to residents whose voices are too often overlooked. Embedding equity into the city's everyday work is how we make the resolution real, not just words on paper, and how we build trust that Bozeman works for everyone.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Emma Bode: I am currently the City Commission liaison to the Economic Vitality Board. I will facilitate the process to bring Resolution 5384 back before the EV board and the City Commission as an ordinance to codify it and ensure its implementation. If elected, I will continue to support the development and implementation of the ordinance.

Trevor Nameniuk: By treating it as such. There is a limited amount of discretionary budget available, so determining where that budget goes is imperative. If there are inefficiencies in the existing budget, tackle that and then re-evaluate. If that's not possible, look into partnerships with local organizations, non-profits, and businesses should be encouraged to

help implement the resolution. The private sector can be a powerful tool in promoting equal opportunities for women and girls. Especially in areas like economic empowerment, education, and health care.

Alison Sweeney: The Economic Vitality Board did valuable work on this resolution. I would like to strengthen all advisory board's influence on policy in the city generally. As we move forward with updates to different city plans, I'd like this board to evaluate how plan updates further the goals of the CEDAW resolution. Many plans have not been updated since the passage of the resolution. Allocation of funds for this will need to be weighed against all the demands on our budget in the coming years and changing regulations at the state level are creating shifting sands that we must adapt to.

Emily Talago: CEDAW is a commitment that deserves meaningful follow-through. To be effective, city efforts must have a clear scope, defined budget, and measurable outcomes. I will advocate for weaving CEDAW principles into existing work to avoid duplication and ensure accountability. My focus will be on aligning daily decisions like budgeting, planning, and hiring with equity goals and tracking progress in a transparent way. I believe commitments matter most when paired with clear action and measurable results.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

6. The Bozeman City for CEDAW Ordinance is proposed for adoption to strengthen commitment to and enforcement of our 2022 CEDAW Resolution by the City Commission. How will you lead the implementation of the adopted Ordinance?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Doug Fischer: Resolutions and ordinances matter, but what counts is how we lead. The CEDAW ordinance becomes meaningful as it's woven into everyday city work. That requires effective leadership that sets clear goals: Ensuring affordable housing policies don't create unintended barriers, keeping public spaces safe and welcoming for all residents, and building community trust through fair access to city services. As mayor, I'll hold departments accountable so equity isn't an afterthought but part of the results people can see and trust in their daily lives.

Brendan O'Conner: If the CEDAW Ordinance is adopted, I will make sure it is implemented in a practical and transparent way. That means assigning clear responsibilities to staff, tracking progress through public reporting, and ensuring the goals are integrated into the city's existing work on safety, housing, and services. My focus will be on action, not

bureaucracy. I would make sure the Ordinance strengthens what the city is already doing to improve quality of life and ensure every resident of Bozeman feels safe and supported.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Trevor Nameniuk: Simply put, the goal should be to enhance existing systems and policies rather than create burdensome new regulations that may unintentionally stifle growth or place unnecessary pressure on local businesses or organizations. We should focus on clear, actionable outcomes that can be measured and adjusted over time to ensure real, tangible progress.

Alison Sweeney: I'm not sure this is an issue that I will "lead" on. However, if elected, I am happy to dive in and support the work of advisory boards, staff, and fellow commissioners when I think it's appropriate.

Emily Talago: I have not yet reviewed the proposed CEDAW ordinance language, and any adoption will require thoughtful consideration and transparent public dialogue. If adopted, I would focus on ensuring its principles are practical, measurable, and embedded into existing city work. Clear accountability and public reporting are essential for meaningful impact. I will approach this ordinance with openness, diligence, and a commitment to turning principles into real progress.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

Emma Bode: As City Commissioner liaison to the Economic Vitality Board, if elected I will hold the Board accountable for developing the 3-5 year Equity & Inclusion Action Plan described in Resolution 5384 as well as preparing the annual report on the progress of its implementation.

7. We know that family separation is a big issue in our community, with immigrant women taking on undue burden. We also know that immigrants contribute significantly to our community ([montana workforce issues and immigrant contibutions pdf.pdf](#)). How can the City of Bozeman ensure families are not separated and make Bozeman a more welcoming city for immigrants?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Brendan O’Conner: Bozeman must remain a place where families feel safe and welcome. I will support partnerships with nonprofits and faith groups that help legal immigrant families access housing, legal resources, and child care so they are not forced apart by economic pressure.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

Doug Fischer: Immigration policy is set at the federal level, but how we treat our neighbors is up to us. I’ve seen firsthand the incredible work our School District does to support immigrant children and families – providing language access, meals, counseling, and a sense of belonging. The City can help by ensuring our services are accessible in multiple languages, building safe community spaces where families feel welcome, and working with schools and nonprofits to reduce barriers to housing and transportation. When every resident feels included and secure, Bozeman is stronger, safer, and more resilient as a community.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Alison Sweeney: Admittedly this is an area that I need more information on before suggesting specific policy. At the Citizen’s Police Academy we did learn that labor trafficking is a significant concern of local law enforcement. Workers are lured here, sometimes under false pretenses, and spend months away from families living elsewhere. The circumstances enabling labor trafficking in our community could be an appropriate area of concern to focus on. Bozeman is making progress in offering services to people for whom English is their second language, and I see that as valuable in making Bozeman welcoming for families.

Emily Talago: Immigrant families strengthen Bozeman, and the City must ensure they feel safe and welcome. While immigration law is federal, we can reduce local barriers by supporting language access and building trust in public safety. My leadership will focus on listening to immigrant women, understanding the issues they face, and learning what authority exists on the local level to help keep families together.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

Emma Bode: We cannot ensure families are not separated when ICE detains them. However, we have instructed Bozeman Law Enforcement personnel to not ask for information about nationality or immigration status during routine law enforcement activities. I support and will defend this policy.

We can continue to welcome immigrants by implementing key actions in the Belonging in Bozeman Plan:

- Translate printed and on-line resources, focusing on disaster preparedness materials first.
- Support the Montana Compact on Immigration.
- Partner with local financial institutions to provide access to banking and lending opportunities for Hispanic + Latino workers.
- Recruit multilingual and multicultural staff for recreational programming.

Trevor Nameniuk: Family separation is a very sad and unfortunate reality that many Bozeman residents face. I believe that keeping families together (quite frankly, regardless of immigration status) is a value we should all share. That being said, we need to ensure that our local efforts respect federal immigration laws while focusing on what we can do at the city level to strengthen families, support lawful immigrants, and maintain community safety.

8. The City of Bozeman has a housing affordability problem. Does the [Bozeman Water Adequacy Ballot Initiative](#) (WARD) specifically address challenges and provide opportunities for women and girls? If not, what must we do to ensure the diversity of women, girls, and families who are the most disadvantaged have adequate access to housing?

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Doug Fischer: WARD doesn't solve our housing crisis – it makes it worse. By adding new costs, delays, and lawsuits, it pushes homes further out of reach for the very families already struggling: single mothers, working parents, young people trying to stay in Bozeman. If we want women, girls, and disadvantaged families to have stable housing, we need the opposite approach: more affordable starter homes, more “missing middle” options, and partnerships with community land trusts. Real progress means using every tool we have to expand opportunity, not shutting down the few solutions already in motion.

Brendan O'Conner: The WARD initiative does not address affordability, it risks slowing

housing construction and raising costs, which would hit disadvantaged families hardest. To ensure women, girls, and families have access to housing, Bozeman must instead pursue incentive-based solutions. That includes requiring real affordability benchmarks in TIF projects, expanding zoning flexibility for family-sized units, and supporting nonprofit and private partnerships that deliver mixed-income housing. We must not add mandates that push opportunity out of reach.

John Meyer: No response submitted.

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Emily Talago: I fully support citizens' right to bring initiatives forward and will implement voter decisions responsibly. That said, I do not support WARD as written: it risks misallocating units through a lottery, could inflate market-rate rents to cover "affordable" units, and lacks clear legal review or transparent data. True housing solutions require targeted, measurable approaches that serve those most in need. As commissioner, I will focus on land use, planning, and partnerships to expand access, ensure equity, and implement solutions grounded in evidence and practical results.

Emma Bode: I believe WARD will create challenges and remove opportunities for women and girls by reducing the supply of new housing in Bozeman and driving up the cost of existing housing. We can improve access to housing for women, girls, and disadvantaged people by: 1) passing a pro-housing building code that removes barriers to building affordable housing, 2) establishing a robust transitional housing program to move unhoused people into stable housing, 3) fortifying tenant rights by passing a right to council program to keep people in homes they can afford, and 4) exploring ways to support de-commodified housing and co-ownership models.

Trevor Nameniuk: No, it does not. If the WARD initiative passes, it will effectively detriment housing affordability for all Bozeman residents due to the fact that housing supply will likely decrease because of the burdensome requirements that this initiative puts forward. My platform is about logic and practicality. Doing what's best for the amazing people that call Bozeman home. And the WARD initiative is not conducive to those sentiments.

Alison Sweeney: I do not see any way in which WARD affects specifically the needs of women and girls. Housing affordability affects nearly every sector of society regardless of race, age, sex, or identity. Bozeman is proof that the neo-liberal embrace of market urbanism has been a mistake. Communities that manage to prevent the cost of housing rising above a level working class people can afford have a healthy margin of non-market housing. What keeps me up at night is the question of whether we can build enough non-market housing in Bozeman before we run out of water.

Eli Anselmi: No response submitted.

Roger Blank: No response submitted.

9. [Mystery Question Live at Forum 9/29] We have identified and discussed several pressing issues that address fairness, equity, and making Bozeman a more welcoming and inclusive community. What is your vision for Bozeman, say ten years down the road, and what are the two or three priority actions you would promote and focus on once in office?