



Sabrina D'Agosta
for Denver City Council District 1
303-437-6671 • sabrina@sabrinafornwdenver.com
SabrinaForNWDenver.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

D'Agosta Announces Real Solutions for Smart Growth

DENVER — Tuesday, April 23, 2019 — Amidst a sea of citywide contenders vying for City Council offices this election, District 1 candidate Sabrina D'Agosta today announced a package of real solutions for addressing the city's struggles with growth and development.

Candidates have talked a lot about how our city's lack of leadership has led to irresponsible growth in our neighborhoods, changing the character of the place we call home, and pushing out long-time residents and businesses, making rent unaffordable and homeownership unobtainable for our working families. And yet, one of the District 1 candidates has taken more developer money than all six other candidates combined.

"I'm not taking money from developers to fund my campaign because it sends the wrong message," said D'Agosta. "I want to maintain my objectivity and ability to ask tough questions, think critically, and push for smart growth that protects our neighborhoods' character and gets the infrastructure investments we deserve."

D'Agosta said we have to move beyond acknowledging the obvious problems with growth and bring forward real solutions. She proposed a package of specific policies she said will lead to more responsible, smart growth in Denver, preserving and protecting neighborhood character and prioritizing affordability:

- **More infrastructure dollars for neighborhoods with more growth** — Growth in Denver has disproportionately affected Northwest Denver, and the city's DenveRight plans show that trend will continue. D'Agosta argues that neighborhoods that have seen the biggest increases in density, like Northwest Denver, should be seeing more of the city's dollars for investments in infrastructure to support the increased population — like improvements to sidewalks, roads, bike lanes and parks.

- **A tax on vacant luxury apartments** — Today, more than 60,000 Denver residents cannot find any housing they can afford; and yet, 20,000 luxury apartments sit vacant. We must do a better job of matching available housing stock to incomes — ensuring that our teachers, firefighters and service workers can afford to live here, too. By taxing luxury apartments that sit vacant, we can incentivize developers to create more moderate income units.
- **A demolition tax** — According to a *Denver Post* analysis, Northwest Denver's Jefferson Park and Sunnyside neighborhoods alone have each absorbed 700 additional residential units. This increase in density has often come as a result of scrape offs and demolition of entire city blocks, dramatically changing our neighborhoods. A demolition tax would help incentivize developers to repurpose existing structures, which is typically cheaper than new construction and better preserves the character of existing neighborhoods.
- **End deals with developers and expedite affordable project approvals** — City Council has been far too ready to jump to make deals with developers, allowing variances on height restrictions, setbacks, parking and other zoning requirements often for a handful of affordable housing units. The market shows us that developers will have to curb their prices if they don't want the luxury units they are building to sit vacant, so we should stop making deals that sell our neighborhoods short. We can encourage more affordability by expediting the review process for affordable projects.
- **Expedite neighborhood planning** — Most of our neighborhoods do not have plans or overlays that help guide and regulate developers. The city's planning department has said it will take 10 years to complete plans for all of our neighborhoods. But with development happening at such a rapid pace, we don't have that long. D'Agosta proposes hiring a planner using the District 1 City Council office budget to more quickly engage residents in this important visioning process, better manage growth, and preserve and protect our neighborhoods' character.

D'Agosta said the only substantive policy any of the other candidates has identified for addressing growth is adding carriage houses (Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs), which she says is just one small piece of the puzzle to improving affordability.

D'Agosta has worked 20 years in government policy and communications, including in Mayor John Hickenlooper's administration, hand-in-hand with City Council, city departments and the community to address some of Denver's most complex problems. From the zoning code to homelessness to sustainability, D'Agosta has brought people together to get results for the people of Denver.

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