

Matt Salka

Restore the Balance Candidate Questionnaire

1. Why are you running for La Plata County Commissioner? What qualifications do you bring, and how are you preparing to serve if elected?

I am running for reelection as La Plata County Commissioner to continue the progress we've made in critical areas like broadband connectivity, which is vital for our community's growth and development. With over 25 years of residency in La Plata County and a decade of experience as an elected official—serving as a town trustee, town mayor, and currently as county commissioner—I bring a deep understanding of our community's needs. My role as the chair of the commissioners and as the sole county commissioner in Colorado on the Advanced Consult Group, where I receive firsthand information on funding opportunities, positions me uniquely to advocate effectively for La Plata County. My ongoing work in these areas, combined with my commitment to listening to and engaging with constituents, ensures that I am well-prepared to serve the community if reelected.

2. Do you agree with the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Colorado? If you do not agree with one or more of these principles, please identify and explain why.

Yes, I fully agree with the seven principles that Restore the Balance advocates for. These principles resonate deeply with my own beliefs about public service and political conduct. I believe that while it's important to vigorously debate and defend values, principles, and ideas, it's equally crucial to find common ground to solve problems and pass legislation that benefits our community. Facts, supported by evidence, should always guide our actions, and the public interest must come before party interests. I also agree that communication, good faith negotiations, and the protection of personal freedoms—while maintaining personal responsibilities to the community—are essential to a healthy democracy. Extremism, in any form, undermines our ability to address real issues, and it's important to ensure that citizens can participate in the political process without fear of harassment. These principles align with the way I have always conducted myself in office and will continue to guide me if reelected.

3. Do you believe Colorado's current election laws and procedures provide for secure elections and encourage voter participation? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Yes, I believe Colorado's election laws and procedures are among the most secure and accessible in the nation. Our state has a robust mail-in voting system, which has been proven to increase voter participation while maintaining security. The transparency in our voting process and the continuous improvements made to our election infrastructure give me confidence that we are fostering both secure and inclusive elections.

4. If elected, what actions will you take to help find common ground with your fellow elected officials on both sides of the aisle?

Bipartisan collaboration is essential to serving the diverse needs of our community. In 2023 and 2024, I submitted two bills at the state legislature, both of which were backed by all county commissioners across Colorado—demonstrating my ability to bring people together from different political

backgrounds. I am currently working on a third bill proposal that will also have bipartisan support, underscoring my commitment to finding common ground. If reelected, I will continue to prioritize communication, collaboration, and good faith negotiations to ensure that we are working for the benefit of all Coloradans, regardless of party affiliation.

5. If elected, how will you listen to and represent the concerns of constituents who don't agree with you?

Listening to all constituents, especially those who may not agree with me, is critical to representing the entire community. I will continue to hold public events, where people can meet with me directly and voice their concerns. I'm committed to being accessible and approachable, ensuring that every voice is heard. By engaging in these conversations, I can better understand different perspectives and work towards solutions that reflect the diverse needs of our community.

6. What are the top three issues facing La Plata County and briefly how do you plan to address these issues if elected?

The top three issues facing La Plata County include broadband connectivity, affordable housing, and sustainable economic development.

Broadband Connectivity: I have been the most influential elected official in the region in moving this work forward, and I will continue to push for expanded broadband access, which is crucial for education, business, and overall quality of life in our county.

Affordable Housing: Addressing the housing crisis requires a multifaceted approach. I will work on expanding partnerships with developers, securing funding, and updating land use regulations to facilitate the creation of affordable housing.

Sustainable Economic Development: Supporting local businesses and fostering sustainable growth is key. I will advocate for policies that encourage economic diversity, protect our natural resources, and ensure that development benefits the entire community.

These are complex issues, but with the experience and commitment I bring, I am confident we can make significant progress.