

D O W N T O W N V E N T U R A P A R T N E R S

2009 VENTURA CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your interest in our city council candidate forum. The issues and topics below are of great importance to downtown's residents, property and business owners. We appreciate you supplying thoughtful answers to these questions. **Please return your completed questionnaire via e-mail by noon on September 3** to Rob Edwards. Your answers will be posted on our website for our stakeholders to review. Our candidate forum will be held on the evening of September 8th; further details and a formal invitation will follow.*

And thank you for your willingness to serve our city!

Please respond below each question. Be as specific as possible.

1. Aggressive panhandling and vagrancy have profoundly detrimental affects on downtown Ventura's economic vitality, safety and quality of life. What specific steps will you propose to ensure laws regarding these behaviors are enforced, and how would you fund it?

<Answer here> While panhandling is not against the law aggressive panhandling with verbal abuse and a pack of dogs most certainly goes beyond the line. We need to ramp up the successful program of making visitor aware that there are programs for people who really need help instead of giving to people who choose a lifestyle that the panhandling supports by enabling them to live in the river bottom and abuse drugs and alcohol.

Also we have talked in the past about a permit for a fee for solicitation and panhandling which I think we need to explore while we can't necessarily outlaw panhandling we can certainly do a better job regulating it.

Now all that is just talk unless we can find a revenue stream to support the oversight and I would suggest that the funds from the merchant backed parking program downtown be dedicated to police enforcement of this ongoing problem.

2. Will you support the city's continued participation in the downtown Property-based Business Improvement District? Why or why not?

<answer here>

Yes I proudly voted for the City's participation in the program the first time and will continue to do so as long as the BID stays committed to the principals, values and strategies that led to its inception in the first place.

3. Are you in favor of building other parking structures in downtown? And if so, where would you suggest they be located and how would you fund?

<answer here>

Another parking structure is imperative to the ongoing success of the downtown. While property negotiations and the marketplace will dictate the exact location, my first choice would be the corner of Santa Clara and Palm. This would act as a bookend to our present structure and would really help activate the surrounding properties.

As for the funding aspect, as the bond market improves we could look at that option with service to the bond being paid for by a combined revenue stream both from the structure and a portion of a development fee from future property improvements. We can also build out the ground floor or top floor for retail or office use thereby creating a revenue flow also.

4. What's your position on the enforcement of laws prohibiting drug dealing in our downtown? And how would you fund enhanced enforcement?

<answer here>

My position is that all laws will be enforced throughout our City and to do so we need to keep our police department trained, staffed and vigilant. To this end I will be voting yes on Measure A the temporary sales tax increase. I am in agreement with the 4-year sunset and the oversight committee that will be put in place by this measure to insure the validity of all expenditures directed by this measure. This would allow for dedicated "beat officers" for the downtown day in and day out thereby creating a much safer environment for our citizens and visitors alike.

5. What is your position on the "sleeping in cars" pilot program?

<answer here>

The City's 10 Year Plan to Prevent Homelessness includes many strategies and the safety net provided by this pilot program is being welcomed throughout our city by both our citizens and the faith based community alike. This is not an unregulated program where people will be sleeping in their cars anywhere in the City but instead it will be is a pilot program on a supervised and daily monitored site provided by members of the faith based community. Again, I proudly voted for this pilot program because all the aforementioned safeguards will be in place.

6. Would you support the funding of police foot and bike patrols in downtown and on the promenade? And if so, how would you fund them?

<answer here>

Yes I do support foot, bike and the new 3-wheel electric scooter patrols for our downtown and beach areas. As Chair of the APCD I was able to facilitate the purchase of the scooters at no cost to the City and look forward to their active deployment in the aforementioned areas.

My answer for funding is the same one I mentioned for answer # 4:

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7. What specific actions would you propose to encourage new residential development as well as the relocation of new businesses to downtown?

<answer here>

We have presently entitled well over 600 units of residential for the downtown area and we need the private sector marketplace to improve before anything will start to be built. The WAV project is nearing completion and I believe that is acting as a catalyst for a few other projects to consider development. The new form based codes and the historical survey have already been completed so this will facilitate permitted projects getting out of the ground much faster in the Downtown.

8. Do you think large-scale events previously fully funded by the City, such as ArtWalk and the holiday street fair, should be restored? And if so, how would you fund them?

<answer here>

I think all events can benefit from being evaluated from time to time and if the community as a whole deems them still relevant and viable then they should continue if they can be self-supporting and sustainable. I think the ART Walk is a signature event that can be sustainable and look forward to the Downtown Association taking the ball and running with it.

9. With the state raiding municipal coffers, how will it impact downtown operations that are currently funded by redevelopment agency? What will you do to fund those operations once our local funding is depleted?

<answer here>

We will need to be extremely creative and look for partnerships for some of the tasks presently being provided by the Redevelopment Agency. We can look at loaning money out of reserves like we have done in the past to jump start the downtown renaissance with payback at a later date. We have some great minds in and outside city government and we should take advantage of that great brain trust to come up with a sustainable solution to funding our Community Treasure, our Historic Downtown.

10. Would you support the City or the County purchasing the Fairgrounds from the state? And if so, how could it be done?

<answer here>

While the reality of the Fairgrounds ever coming available for sale is slim to none I would be in favor of its purchase through a bond measure if it ever did come up for sale.

11. Are you in favor of limiting "big box" stores (like Wal-Mart, IKEA, etc) throughout the city, per the ballot measure?

Yes, I support Measure C

<answer here>

12. What specific actions would you recommend to streamline the planning process?

<answer here>

Finishing the form based codes, specific plans and historical surveys would give certainty to the planning and development process and allow the development community to build the right thing in the right place for the first time in Ventura's history.

*** Completing this questionnaire is a prerequisite for an invitation to participate in our September 8th community forum.**

Downtown Ventura Partners

Rob Edwards, CEO

A 501(c)(6) Non-profit Business Improvement District

PO Box 1414

Ventura, CA 93002

info@DowntownVentura.org