

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?

These issues do have a negative impact on our downtown. During the recent budget discussions I initiated and made the motion to continue funding downtown patrolling with City reserves until a more permanent funding source could be established. Unfortunately, patrolling, citations and arrests will not resolve the problem alone. I also support the DVO's proactive "Hand up, not Hand out" approach.

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

Yes, it is an important funding source for the continued enhancement of the downtown. Security, maintenance and promotion/marketing have been identified as the priority for the PBID. This provides the city and downtown with many opportunities for partnering to support the growth and quality of economic and social activity in our city's "center."

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?

Yes, I have made this statement at numerous Council meetings during CIP and RDA discussions. I also identified potential funding sources such as the sale of some of the city's surplus property to fund a potential project.

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

I support enforcement of all laws. As we look to several questions it is evident funding is an issue with many of the programs that support downtown and many of the areas of our city. Downtown is an important economic generator for our city and we need to make it a priority. Public safety is also an identified city priority. As I stated above, I led the effort to use reserves as a temporary funding source. I support the sales tax measure to provide a more permanent source and stimulating economic growth as the long-term solution.

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

As a member of the Council's subcommittee on the 10-year strategy, I worked for the program approved by Council. It does not provide the ability for individuals to sleep in cars anywhere in the city and it still provides the police with the flexibility to approach and address potentially dangerous situations. It does allow for a private organization to apply to administer a private program on private property under supervision. It also identified and directed staff to work with the city's Social Services Task Force to move to a more permanent solution.

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?

I would respond to this question with the same points as questions 1 and 4.

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

The city has already approved 4 new projects in the downtown area. I sponsored a Policy Consideration that requested the city to seek new funding programs to help with funding the affordability component of these projects and help bridge funding needs, especially in this current economic downturn. As we identified at the Economic Summit, enhancement of the development process including city-wide coding, an efficient application process and inclusion of public input earlier in the process will encourage quality development throughout the community. We are also working on a business ombudsmen and customer service standard to improve the business experience in working with the city.

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?

I worked to establish many of these programs, both as a volunteer and through the City's Cultural Affairs Commission. They are very important to our community, generating economic activity and enhancing quality of life. In the position of a Council member who has been faced with making over \$18 million in budget cuts over the past two years, I need to weigh these program with public safety, infrastructures such as water and sewer services, street and public property maintenance. I encouraged the staff and community to work to find creative ways and partnerships to continue these events. I have been very impressed with the discussions I've seen to date.

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

The Council is still exploring the depth and length of the state's potential programs. If we can establish the state can only re-direct funds in an emergency for one year and legally needs to repay the money, I support the use of reserves that can be replenished. In the event the "taking" is longer than anticipated, it would require the postponement or re-prioritizing of current capital improvement projects in the current plan.

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

This question requires and deserves a lot more community dialogue. Securing the capital for the purchase would not be the primary consideration. Knowing that a new owner would be subject to the same deed restrictions under the original grant, we need to explore if the city would benefit or could afford to be a operator or landlord of another recreational facility. At a time when we are asking our community to approve a sales tax measure to provide "basic" services, would our community support a fairgrounds? Although our golf courses are run with enterprise funds and are self supporting, we still see numerous letters to the editor complaining about the city operating a golf course while cutting public safety. I am definitely interested in the topic; I do see a need to move slowly, carefully and with full community discussion.

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

I do not support the limitation of all big boxes as proposed in Measure C. I see attraction of big box stores such as an IKEA or other furniture stores and retailers such as Target as important elements to the long-term economic strategy as well as providing retail services to members of the community. I do support that the city has a responsibility through land-use planning to determine the best locations for these facilities in relation to traffic, compatibility, and accessibility. I took the lead through the Council Economic Development Committee to push for the extension of Olivas Park Drive to move the development of potential large retail projects forward and have met with retailers such as Target as they looked at potential sites on the east end of the city.

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

I sponsored the approved Council Policy Consideration as well as took the lead in making the motion as an action item from the Economic Summit specifically to improve the planning process. Specific items were noted in question #7. The key element to a streamlined planning process is clarity, clear standards and better communication. In addition to the points above, I have pushed for a City-wide Historic Resources survey. Better information and codes provide for more clarity and efficiency.

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

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