

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?

Enforcement of current state law and city ordinance covering drinking in public, being intoxicated in public, panhandling, sleeping in vehicles, assault, and others are a start. Some communities have adopted other specific ordinances to address specific behaviors. All enforcement is conditioned upon available police or other enforcement resources. This could be funded by a variety of sources including the existing general fund, parking fines (meters), PBID, TOT, and the tax proposed by Measure A.

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

Absolutely yes. The downtown is the heart of our community which offers jobs, shopping, dining, entertainment as well as a significant

role in tourism. The PBID was long over due and it is only fair and ethical that the City pay its share as a downtown property owner.

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?

Absolutely. We have many studies that indicate just how far one would walk to get to their destination and we also know that people walk even further if it appears clean and safe and there is something of interest to see along the way. One possible area would be in general area planned at Santa Clara and Palm; however, we should have a plan for providing parking behind Main Street on other blocks as well. This time we should consider the viability of retail and a community service center on the first floor.

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

Our police department should aggressively enforce drug laws in our community, particularly in the highly visible downtown corridor. This doesn't strike me as an issue that requires special funding.

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

This issue was poorly handled by the council, and the result was a major public outcry. If the specifics of a program had been revealed at the onset—the location, the rules, who was eligible to participate, how it would be supervised, what the evaluation criteria would be, how it would be funded, how the private entity would be selected—we probably would not be discussing it today. I am adamantly opposed to totally rescinding the ordinance regulating "living in vehicles".

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?

We need more police presence in the downtown. Foot patrols and bike patrols are strategies the police department might employ. A significant amount of our tourism as well as the enjoyment of our residents depends on the ability to safely partake in activities in our downtown and on the beachfront. We need to insure that we create a safe environment by having my eyes on the street, more pride shown in our neighborhoods, better maintenance of our infrastructure that shows we are a City that cares. A visible uniformed presence clearly deters crime and creates a feeling of safety. The TOT, PBID, or

Measure A funds might be reasonable ways to increased police presence in the downtown.

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

Look at the housing allocation process to insure that downtown residential development is not held up due to lack of allocations. In addition, I would ensure that the process is well understood with predictable outcomes, timeframes and costs. As for attraction businesses, we should first start by investigating where the 50% of our workforce goes when they commute each day out of our City and then entice those businesses to move closer to their workforce.

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?

We need to look at the entire benefit of these activities not just the profit and loss. Much of the benefit of these events includes providing for public enjoyment, advertising our community and its businesses as well as its talented and creative citizens. Other organizations such as the tourism bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, perhaps even our City's service clubs might have an interest in partnering in these programs.

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?

The financial condition that the State of California finds itself in makes this a very difficult situation to address. What was "untouchable" a few months ago is clearly on the table now and in the future as the State grapples with a very tough financial picture.

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

My understanding is that there are some deed restrictions on the Fairgrounds property that might preclude a transfer of ownership and change of use. I do believe that the Fairgrounds has the potential for a higher use.

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

No.

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

Allow staff to make decisions in their departments, identify and clearly communicate process and timeframes and be accountable, use other successful projects such as the WAV project as an example of how every project can go through our system and become a reality.

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

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