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Respondent

15

Anonymous

13:52

Time to complete

1. Name & office you are seeking *

Bob Campbell, Missoula City Council Ward 5

2. New development activity has an impact on home cost, access and ultimately affordability. In 2019 the City of Missoula Office of Housing and Community Development presented a city housing policy outlining several private and public sector regulatory reform and development incentives. As a Council Member, what specific policies would you pursue to address the community's housing shortage? *

The City's Housing Policy (2019) contains several strategies / policies relating to residential development. I will divide my answer into two groups: development standards and housing affordability.

With regard to development standards, first and foremost: development review, including infrastructure requirements, must be streamlined, standardized, and predictable. Reviews lasting over a year, and the "goalposts" moved by added conditions / requirements during the review process are unacceptable, especially in these times, where building materials / lumber prices are soaring and interest rates make holding costs a greater concern. Where possible, an expedited administrative review of housing projects should be considered when they meet certain parameters (standard conditions of approval, no variances / zone changes, etc). I support the reduction of minimum lot sizes / setback requirements where feasible, and reduction of parking requirements where on-street parking is available. Personally, I reside in and raised my family of six in a townhome situated in the lower south hills neighborhood. As such, I would generally be favorable towards TED's, and would work to increase the maximum units that can receive "by-right" approval. Let's work to regain the trust of the development sector!

On housing affordability: My emphasis would be towards private-sector / lending programs, such as CDFI's and related products, and organizations like NeighborWorks Montana, to assist those looking for entry-level, attainable housing. I support relaxation of ADU policies and the incentivization of condominium development, being mindful of encouraging (though not requiring) owner occupancy. I support all of the Community Awareness and Access to Services Recommendations as outlined on pp 41-42 of the housing policy. I generally support the LIHTC program though I would scrutinize projects on a case-by-case basis.

3. Missoula is currently undergoing zoning "code reform"; what three changes would you propose for the update? *

First, let's ensure there's a range of housing options within zones of higher density housing within the City. I believe recently enacted legislation from the State (Senate bills 382 and 323) will help move this forward.

Second, we have to give CDPI flexibility in making common-sense decisions internally that get projects moving, particularly for smaller developments. Seeing projects go thru review lasting a year or more and having to repeatedly waste time making minor changes increases holding costs, and create a climate where developers are more hesitant to commit funds to new projects.

Third – Let's have a code that realizes that parking requirements are not one size fits all, or always based on a "magic" ratio. Examples include relaxation of standards for some ADU's, residential development within useful distance of public transportation nodes, residential development as part of an integrated mixed-use plan.

4. A quarter of Missoula's workforce lives outside Missoula County. It is estimated that the lost property tax from commuters is in excess of \$6.6 million per year. As a member of the City Council what would you do to encourage people to live within the City? *

The Housing Affordability Index (HAI) has been trending downward for several years now as wages fail to keep pace with the cost of housing, due mainly to inadequate housing supply. On the City Council I would make infrastructure investments from the private sector a priority. Transportation, water, sewer, power (including renewable), as well as improving our tech infrastructure (fiber-optic), are what will lay the foundation for growth in high-tech, manufacturing, and commercial enterprise, and gravitate such development into the City and County.

Secondly, the aforementioned enterprises will need a highly-skilled workforce. I will advocate and support programs for job training and apprenticeship programs to help get men and women connected to higher-paying jobs. As explained elsewhere in this questionnaire, increasing housing supply and types of housing is critical for attainability by the workforce.

My commitment to work for improvements in infrastructure, job training, and housing supply, I believe, will make the City and County a more desirable and attainable place to reside.

5. State Law provides for tax increment financing (TIF) and urban renewal districts. TIF is used within urban renewal districts to combat blight and promote economic development. However, critics of TIF say that these urban renewal districts can be in place for many years, and TIF diverts property tax revenue away from schools and local governments. What changes to TIF statutes would you recommend, if any, to respond to citizen concerns? *

The net position for the MRA in 2022 was (-\$30M). TIF Revenue bonds payable were over \$38M. Property taxes deferred to TIF / MRA are over \$13M. This information is from the MRA's own financial report. This is money that otherwise could go to schools, roads, and emergency services, but now is locked away for 25 years or more – and money that also comes with interest due. On the City Council, I will scrutinize the use of TIF to ensure what's proposed is truly addressing blight that otherwise isn't practical for the private sector to address alone, primarily with respect to rehabilitation or construction of housing within URD's. While TIF is a useful tool that can incentivize development (often times financing on-site utility work, sidewalks and the like), often times it has been used well-beyond its intended scope- a cash cow for wealthy developers, be it Southgate Mall Partners or Marriott International (since sold). TIF has also been used for projects of questionable benefit (Reserve St pedestrian bridge, Missoula Water properties on W. Broadway, Sleepy Inn, to name a few) . As such, any projects taking advantage of TIF must demonstrate long-term viability and benefit to the City in a way that enhances the surrounding community and promotes economic growth.

6. Do you support the City's anti-discrimination ordinance? How would you support Fair Housing for all in Missoula? *

I support the City's current non-discrimination ordinance as-is, as well as its positions on housing non-discrimination. These are essential for keeping Missoula a welcoming place to live and work for all. Though the ordinance does require it's posting, for educational reasons, within relevant businesses for employees, it might be helpful to create a brochure (perhaps thru a consortium of realtors, appraisers and lenders) that can be given to home-buying customers so they're aware of their rights in this regard.

7. Property taxes are the primary source of funding for Montana cities. The City of Missoula's property tax rate has steadily increased over the last decade, putting additional financial pressure on the cost of housing. Given limited funding opportunities how would you prioritize city services? *

Year after year Missoula residents and businesses become more and more burdened with rising taxes. Year after year, the City Council works hard to find new and creative ways to spend the people's money as if it were their own, be it TIF abuse, expanding enterprise operations (utilities, aquatics and other civic facilities), or special districts for roads and parks that have increased their taxpayer-funded allocations over 1600% in the last twelve years. Care must also be taken to ensure expenditures are being used for intended purposes, and are achieving desired outcomes (meeting performance benchmarks, sticking to project timelines, etc).

As MOR members know, the rise in taxes hurts business, and strains the budgets of homeowners trying to live here, particularly those on a fixed income, such as our elderly or disabled population. Young families are also often locked out of home ownership. Landlords often need to pass on increases to their property taxes to their renters.

On the City Council, "needs" must be at the forefront: infrastructure, emergency services, housing. Homelessness is a crisis that must be addressed and temporary shelters and their funding is a part of that. Allocating money for this isn't popular, but the cost in terms of money and manpower for emergency services (police, fire, Hospital ER) to continually deal with the unhoused population in mental health crisis is even higher. Having just retired from the Missoula Police Department last year, I can tell you with certainty not adequately addressing unhoused populations tax police services, and reduce time available for proactive law enforcement.

Now is NOT the time, particularly in this uncertain economy, to be spending money for "wants" such as community centers (latest estimates above \$40M), or new recreational areas. Yes, there's park bond money available for the purchase of Marshall Mountain, but how will ongoing costs for things like maintenance, emergency services and utilities for the park be paid for over the long term?

8. What, if any, local option tax(es) would you support? *

I've heard a common refrain about a "tourist tax" of sorts that would be used to offset property taxes. Such a tax would need to be crafted in a way that genuinely targets tourist dollars (for the week or so they visit), while not burdening local residents with such a tax all year long (i.e. -gasoline tax). Such a tax must target its revenue to a specific need or program. I'm concerned that the "lowering property taxes" part will, over time, necessitate their rise once again, be it to cover unforeseen shortfalls, declared "emergencies" by the Mayor, new special districts, some of the "wants" mentioned in question 7, etc. In that event, we now have property tax effective rates as high as they once were – only now with an added tourist tax. Bottom line – I would have to see the specific language of any tax proposal before making a decision.

9. As a member of the City Council what do you believe should be the top three priorities for the City? *

Housing attainability – Increase market supply of housing of all types.

Emergency services – adequate funding for our police and fire services, to include the MFD mobile support teams. This includes the equipment and training needed to ensure high-levels of service to our community.

Infrastructure – both in terms of utility / horizontal construction to allow vertical development to occur, and high-tech infrastructure for businesses and manufacturing to prosper and foster a higher-paid workforce.

10. Given the upcoming zoning code reform project, what are the two to three resources that you will use to make informed decisions? *

Internally I would like to keep in close contact with CDPI staff as the growth policy comes together. Prior to my career in law enforcement I was a City and County land use planner for five years. Thus, I would enjoy the interaction. Externally I would look to organizations such as MOR, MBIA and various business organizations for their perspectives on the growth policy. Of course, I'd also be listening to my constituents - to be cognizant of their desires, ideas, or apprehensions with the program.

11. Treasurer's Name, Address and Phone Number *

Bob Campbell, PO Box 1266, Missoula MT 59806 Phone (406)214-5967

12. Will you accept REALTOR® Political Action Committee campaign contributions? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.