

## View results

Respondent

7

Anonymous

79:58

Time to complete

### 1. Name & office you are seeking \*

Sam Kulla, City Council Ward 3

### 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 shortage of affordable housing is a complex issue with no one-size-fits-all solution, and that it will require a multifaceted approach to address it effectively. Some of the policies and attitudes that I would pursue include:

Encourage the private sector to invest in affordable housing development. I plan to work to incentivize affordable housing projects through measures such as tax credits, expedited permitting processes, and streamlined regulations.

We also need to work closely with community partners, including nonprofit organizations, state and local authorities, and developers to ensure that we are leveraging all available resources to address the critical shortage. By building strong partnerships, practicing mutual empathy at every level, and engaging in transparent communication, we can make meaningful progress towards our shared goals.

We must support a diverse range of housing options in Missoula, from single-family homes to multi-family apartment buildings. I will work to promote responsible development that takes into account the unique needs of our community and provides housing options for individuals and families at all income levels.

These policies, along with other targeted efforts to address the housing shortage in Missoula, should help to create a more affordable, inclusive, and vibrant community for all residents.

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

One solid way to address the shortage of affordable housing in Missoula is to craft policies that support an increase in the density of housing in our neighborhoods. While this can be a delicate process, as it will invariably have effects on the character of our neighborhoods, it has to be done as more people move in. By allowing for more duplexes, triplexes, and other multi-unit housing options, we can create more affordable housing opportunities for residents.

Second, mixed-use development (which as you no doubt already know combines residential and commercial uses in a single building or development) can also be a powerful tool for creating more affordable housing options while also supporting local businesses and economic growth. Mixed-use development projects that benefit both our economy and our community have tons of additional / secondary benefits such as creating more all-in-one neighborhoods, reducing commutes, and adding character and opportunity to neighborhoods currently lacking in dining / shopping / entertainment options.

Third, as we work to address the housing crisis in Missoula, it is important that we prioritize sustainable development practices that protect our natural resources and support the long-term health and well-being of our community and interconnected global ecosystems at large. This means promoting energy-efficient building standards, reducing sprawl, and prioritizing transportation options that reduce our reliance on cars and promote active transportation such as biking and walking.

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 first key to encouraging people to live within the city is to create more affordable housing options so they don't move to lower cost areas out of town. We need to work together to address the shortage of housing in attainable price ranges, and ensure that Missoula remains an attractive and affordable place to live for all residents. This includes measures such as offering tax incentives for developers who build affordable housing units, streamlining the development process to reduce permitting and other costs, and exploring innovative financing options for affordable housing projects, as well as focused study of similar cities in the West that may be a few years ahead of our own development curve, and seeing how selected policies are playing out in reality before diving in.

At the same time, attracting residents to the city is about more than just affordable housing. We also need to invest in our community, making Missoula a more vibrant and livable place for all residents. This includes investing in infrastructure, promoting local businesses, and creating public spaces and amenities that encourage community engagement. This approach will not only help to retain and attract residents, but also boost economic development and generate more property tax revenue for the city as people find it more fun and comfortable to live in the city rather than far out in other towns or rural areas.

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? \*

TIF can be a powerful tool for promoting economic growth and revitalizing blighted areas, but it is also important to ensure that it is used in a way that is transparent and equitable for all stakeholders. As a City Council member, I will work to strike a balance between promoting economic development and ensuring that our schools and local government organizations are adequately funded.

To respond to citizen concerns, I believe that it is important to review and update our TIF statutes on a regular basis to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our community. This review process should involve input from all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, schools, and local interest groups. This process could be lengthy and even contentious, but if done with care, we can pull it off.

If elected, I will work to prioritize policies that promote affordable housing and support economic growth while also ensuring that our amazing schools and local governments are adequately funded. I believe that by working collaboratively and transparently with all members of our community, we can create policies that benefit everyone and ensure that Missoula remains a vibrant and inclusive community for generations to come.

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

Absolutely! Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE, deserves access to housing and should not face discrimination based on their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected class. Reasonable access to appealing housing options is a human right we have the ability to pursue as a community. From a core principle of radical inclusivity, I will work to ensure that the anti-discrimination ordinance is enforced and that our city remains welcoming to all.

In terms of promoting Fair Housing, I believe that it is important to address the root causes of the housing affordability crisis, such as the shortage of attainable housing and the barriers to new development and increased density / infill (which has the added benefit of decreasing sprawl). We must work to incentivize the development of more affordable housing options for all residents, including first-time homebuyers, families, and seniors.

Additionally, we must also work to support policies that promote economic development and job growth in Missoula, which will help boost incomes and provide more opportunities for Missoulians to become homeowners. These policies can include measures to attract new businesses and industries to our community, as well as supporting local entrepreneurship and small business development.

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? \*

I totally understand the important role that property taxes play in funding critical city services, such as community safety, infrastructure maintenance, etc. However, I also recognize that rising property tax rates can put a strain on homeowners and renters alike, particularly in the context of increasing home prices and stagnant incomes.

To address this, we need to take a comprehensive and transparent approach to managing the city's budget, prioritizing investments that promote both economic development and affordable housing, and making reasonable cuts to services that are shown to be ineffective or inefficient.

As has been well established, Missoula is facing a housing crisis, with a shortage of affordable options for many residents. To address this challenge, I would prioritize policies that incentivize the development of affordable housing, such as tax breaks or subsidies for developers who build affordable units.

Small and local businesses are the backbone of our economy here, and they play a critical role in creating jobs and driving economic growth. As a City Council member, I would prioritize investments in small business development and support, such as low-interest loans or grants for small business owners, among other techniques.

It is important that we maintain a fiscally responsible approach to city budgeting, ensuring that we are using taxpayer dollars effectively and efficiently. This may mean making difficult choices about which services to prioritize or finding innovative ways to deliver services more efficiently.

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

Any tax proposal must be carefully considered before committing, since it's pretty hard to go backwards once they are put in place. The potential impact on residents, businesses, and the overall economy must be evaluated and shown through research to have promise. That being said, I am committed to exploring all viable options for increasing funding for affordable housing and economic development, as well as city services, community safety, and sustainability issues.

An option to consider would be a local sales tax, possibly with the potential of a lower rate or exemption for people who present an ID with a local address. This type of tax could generate additional revenue to fund affordable housing initiatives while spreading the burden of taxation more evenly across the community. However, such a proposal must be thoughtfully crafted and vetted with input from residents, businesses, and community leaders to ensure that it is the right solution for our community in order to ensure it doesn't have adverse effects (such as negatively impacting tourism, for example).

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

Housing, sustainable development, and community safety. I understand that affordable housing is a critical issue for your organization and I am committed to working with all stakeholders to address this challenge since it affects literally everybody. At the same time, I also recognize the importance of sustainable municipal development and community safety, which are also key issues that impact all Missoulians. As a City Council member, I will work to find solutions that benefit our community as a whole while also addressing the unique concerns of different stakeholders. I hope to make Missoula an even better place to live, work, and raise a family, and furthermore into an exemplary city in the nation that other communities can learn from and emulate.

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

In addition to working closely with Common Good Missoula, I will be relying on a variety of resources, including but not limited to (in no particular order): Input from Community Stakeholders - I will prioritize engaging with and listening to community members, including realtors, developers, and other stakeholders, to better understand their perspectives and concerns. I believe that community input is essential to making informed decisions that reflect the needs and priorities of Missoula residents. Data and Analysis - I will rely on data and analysis to inform my decisions, including studies and reports on housing affordability, economic development, and other salient topics. By reviewing the latest data and research, I can ensure that my policy proposals are evidence-based and supported by sound research. Collaboration with Local Experts - Finally, I believe that it is important to collaborate with local experts, including city staff, housing advocates, and economic development professionals, to ensure that we are taking a comprehensive and holistic approach to policy development.

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

Sam Kulla (self), PO BOX 8932, Missoula MT 59807, (406) 531-3559

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.