

## View results

Respondent

2

Anonymous

61:10

Time to complete

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

Mike Nugent - Candidate for Mayor of the City of Missoula

## 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 Mayor, what specific policies would you pursue to address the community's housing shortage? \*

We have to make it easier to build housing in Missoula. First and foremost, we have to acknowledge that our review and approval process is a factor in this shortage and take steps to address the problem. Focusing inward, we need to evaluate our process and remove barriers to the efficient development of housing.

- I would take steps to improve efficiencies in both our subdivision and land use approval processes and our permitting processes. Rather than seeing projects submitted and sent back multiple times, I would look to change the process to set up a work session with the applicant and the city after the initial review that has all relevant parties in one place and get to the final requirements and conditions right away rather than going back and forth and having new items addresses with each subsequent review. This will involve the city giving up some control over projects, but there is a clear link between micromanagement and development costs, which are always passed on to future buyers or renters.
- Next, I would look to modernize our zoning and codes by assuring the ongoing code reform project creates true opportunities for our builders to follow what our growth plan has called for. Currently, our zoning does not match the growth plan adopted over five years ago, leading to double hearings for projects that must first ask for zoning changes before they can start the actual development.
- Current efforts to comprehensively update the Missoula building and zoning code present our largest opportunity to improve the lives of Missoulians. Code reform can improve outcomes and reduce wait times and unnecessary regulatory barriers that frustrate our staff and anger residents. This process must end with an updated zoning map to match our growth plan.
- I will advocate for administrative review whenever possible, with the council serving more as an appeal of staff decisions rather than a requirement when not necessary. Currently, many things come before boards or commissions that have little room for decision space and create frustration all around, from neighbors and public commenters to staff and applicants. We should remove all unnecessary stops along the way so long as projects comply with our growth policy and stated development regulations.
- I would also push for the early adoption of simple code changes similar to my push for the emergency ordinance around conditional uses because waiting until 2025 is too long.
- I would address parking requirements on infill projects and those with three units or less to recognize we are asking for creativity and parking can derail this when often the neighborhood can absorb it.

Sometimes the simplest answer can be the correct answer. We need solutions at every level, from publicly subsidized housing developments to affordable homeownership opportunities to a healthy and well-functioning market-rate housing environment. Housing is our biggest answer. We need to understand our growth and create enough housing to meet the moment. We need to live up to the Montana values we preach.

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

-Evaluate all review stops not required by state law and determine if they are truly for public benefit or desire to control.  
 -Create flexibility towards a more form-based code that allows for creativity. Things like internal ADUs and Mansion apartments that have multiple units but appear as single-family homes should be allowable in most areas of town. Mixed-use and corner stores make for great neighborhoods as well. In short, modernize zoning to allow the creation of neighborhoods that serve everyone, like old Missoula.  
 -Revamp our parking regulations to encourage creativity and allow for project flexibility, especially for infill and small-scale lot developments while recognizing cars are a part of Missoula's future.  
 -Bonus change: allow for permit and plan review by certified planners and engineers that may not be employed by the city but are certified in our code review. If necessary, advocate for changes to state statutes to accommodate this approach.

## 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 Mayor what would you do to encourage people to live within the City? \*

Get out of the way and let all those helping us solve our problems, non-profit and market-rate housing developers, do what they do best. The city does not have the financial ability to develop housing, so we need to create the best environment for our partners to do what they do best in the manner we set forth in our growth policy.

## 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? \*

Before advocating for state statute changes, I would advocate for a change in the approach to how we approve projects in Missoula. Not all projects approved in Missoula have the same impact on property taxes, which is the very idea of TIF. For example, I own a business on Brooks and can contrast two projects. The redevelopment of the old KMart space has absolutely helped our business, and in turn, raised our property value and created more TIF to fund the district. The pedestrian bridge over Reserve Street is harder to draw those direct correlations to and I think these are examples to consider moving forward. In the '21 session, the legislature added the term "workforce housing" to the statute but did not define it. We are on the cusp of being able to use TIF for housing development in ways never before possible. I have also been active in Missoula long enough to remember when TIF was the only economic development tool we had. For these reasons, I don't want to advocate for statutory changes but am open to updating Missoula's policies on this front

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

I was and am proud that Missoula led the way with our anti-discrimination ordinance, the role my family had in that conversation, and the ways it has impacted us since. As it relates to the city, Fair Housing equals equitable access to housing. I would like to see the city support a partner non-profit that can advocate for fair housing practices, provide counseling if there are concerns, and provide education to landlords of all sizes on our collective responsibility to provide a fair chance at housing for all.

## 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 worry Missoula is trying to be too many things to too many people. Everything that is in the city's budget was a good idea at the time it was implemented, however, my time on the council has shown me that we do not attach any meaningful ways to determine and evaluate success in most new endeavors. I would like to assess public priorities and then put an emphasis on meeting those through our budgeting process. We need to do the basics very well, then go from there. Police, Fire, Roads, Building and Permitting, Parks, and so on. I would like to evaluate decisions through the lens of how it impacts the cost of living for the everyday Missoulian. This is a mix of Priority Based Budgeting and a cycle of Zero-based budgeting to assure that we are not simply taking last year's budget and adding new costs to it but rather routinely evaluating all non-routine expenditures. Additionally, we have to be judicious in what bonds we place on the ballot as those are a big driver in increasing taxes, and while we solve many problems this way, the costs do add up.

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

I am open to a conversation around a tourist tax but cannot commit to supporting something without seeing the details. This would also need to include an offset to property taxes. I would like to see current taxes, such as the end tax, help address tourist impacts on our communities as well as currently the excess ends up in the state general fund.

9. As Mayor what do you believe should be the top three priorities for the City? \*

Housing  
Infrastructure and Public Safety  
Customer/Constituent Service

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

I like to gather information from a diverse group of resources to be informed on all potential outcomes. This will include public groups such as the League of Cities and Town, Industry groups such as Builders, Planners, Realtors, and the Montana Housing Coalition, and Think Tanks such as Strong Towns and other Municipal Planning organizations.

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

Tyler Gernant - 202.494.2431

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.