

North Ada County Foothills Association (NACFA)
City Council Election Candidate Survey
October 2009

For “check a block” questions, please feel free to add narrative in any/all cases to fully and accurately characterize your philosophy, approach or opinion.

A. Philosophy and Approach

1. Describe the role of an Eagle City Council member as you see it. What motivated you to seek a Council seat? Please discuss your views on the interests of Area of Impact (AOI) and foothills residents and the Council’s role in responding to them.

It is the role of an Eagle City Council member to develop and direct legislation and policy that relate to the design, development and maintenance of city land use and building structure. City government is also responsible for providing services that protect and provide for the public welfare: police, fire, libraries, parks and recreation, water, waste management, etc.

I was motivated to run for city council because I have been disappointed in how our city leaders have responded to Eagle’s fiscal crisis. The lack of supporting evidence and poor communication about important decisions have made the budget cuts and changes in city departments, programs and services seem haphazard and careless. I can offer a more strategic budgeting process that focuses on real outcomes based on priorities defined by the citizens of Eagle, clearer communication with our partners and citizens, and decisions based on evidence rather than good intentions.

There are a lot of reasons families choose to live in the foothills. Those residents have a vested interest in promoting the unique character of their property and community. Their input should be heard and fully considered by the City Council when decisions are made about development and possible changes within the Area of Impact.

2. What do you think the City is currently doing well that you would continue to support? What does the City need to change...and why?

I like the initiatives and direction Eagle has been moving toward the past few years. I support the City’s efforts to promote Eagle’s arts community and the revitalization of our historic downtown. I appreciate initiatives to develop our wine industry and position Eagle as an important point along the technology corridor. All provide great opportunities for improving the vitality of the city by creating unique partnerships with surrounding communities, developing new industries and attracting visitors.

I do not think the City has done a good job managing the impacts of the economic downturn. A lack of supporting evidence and poor communication about important decisions has caused budget cuts and changes made to city departments, programs and services appear haphazard and careless. Citizens trust elected officials to do the right thing but without open communication and honest facts to explain their decisions, it is impossible to know if that is happening.

3. What are major issues facing the City in the next four years? Ten years? How would you approach each?

As the economy improves, it will be a challenge to remember what I hope we've learned in these tighter times. City leaders must develop a clear vision and make sound decisions based on where we want to be in the years to come rather than only looking to short-term improvements.

It's important to carefully scrutinize spending to ensure we are funding only what is necessary and what will move our community in the right direction. Every dollar we spend should directly support an established goal or outcome.

If we determine the need is greater than the available resources, we should look for new sources of revenue like grants and private contributions – sources that don't further burden taxpayers. Once our immediate needs and goals are addressed, then we must look to the future and plan for our long-term goals. Saving now for those future projects will make the process much simpler in the long run.

4. The current comprehensive plan was adopted after a great deal of citizen input and is based on the community vision of Eagle's future. The City has generally welcomed developer requests for semi-annual changes to the adopted comprehensive plan—an approach that has been highly controversial and contentious. Describe how you would balance citizen priorities v. those of the development community. Articulate those circumstances you regard as valid causes for changes to or departures from the adopted comprehensive plan.

I think we should take time during this temporary economic slowdown to evaluate how well we have adhered to our vision for Eagle over the past few years of rapid growth and development. Members of our community have put a lot of time and effort into developing a comprehensive plan, downtown plan, architecture and style guidelines and various other strategies for balancing growth, private property rights, environmental concerns and our community's needs. Have we applied these strategies well? Have they accomplished what we expected them to? Do our fees align with city priorities? Are any city codes insufficient to support our community initiatives? What can we do better?

There was a time of explosive growth in Eagle and I fear our decision-makers felt overwhelmed and rushed to action in many cases. I believe we should rarely allow changes to our comprehensive plan, and only if they are minor with little noticeable impact. Requests for change would also be more palatable if accompanied by the support of a majority of residents, business owners and other stakeholders who would be affected. If we take pause now, re-evaluate our community priorities and assess our past performance, we can strengthen our future decision-making.

B. Financial Management and Budget

Troubled economic times have created budget problems for most cities, including Eagle—where development and growth fees historically contributed heavily to revenue. Recent budget discussions demonstrated differing philosophies from City officials, with some

members stressing cost savings and others more focused on finding revenue to continue current City operations and levels of service.

1. Describe additional revenue sources you would like Eagle to explore and develop in order to create a more stable resource base—one less reliant on growth and less vulnerable to economic downturns.

We should develop new revenue sources through partnerships and grants. Eagle has established many new commissions, community partnerships and initiatives in years past, especially in the creative arts, which are great mechanisms for spurring economic growth. Additionally, the federal Recovery Act has provided numerous grant opportunities, many of which may continue into the future. I have many years of experience successfully writing and managing large grants and can help the City do the same.

2. Would you be ___ willing or X unwilling to support an increase in the levy rate?

Limited funding for a growing number of responsibilities makes every budget decision more difficult and more critical. We must balance spending on essential services and citizen priorities, ensure city departments and programs are efficient and effective, and seek new sources of revenue for non-essential initiatives or improvements. Tax increases should only be a last resort and I have not seen evidence from our city leaders that it is necessary to increase our levy rate at this time.

3. Please characterize how you would approach reducing City expenses, should that continue to be necessary, by ranking the following elements, from 1 (first source of cuts) to 11 (12, if you list under “Other”) (last source of cuts):

I would implement a simpler, more logical budgeting process for the City based on informed decision-making. The first step would be to make sure we understand the priorities of Eagle citizens – What is most important to you? How do you expect to see your tax dollars spent? Our budget should reflect the priorities we have set as a community – not my personal set of beliefs. If additional budget cuts are needed, we should conduct a public opinion survey and ask where citizens would like the city to dedicate their limited tax dollars.

We also need to establish, track and report key workload and performance measures for city departments and programs to accurately and objectively determine their efficiency and effectiveness. Before we can determine if an area or program needs more or less financial support, we must first know how well they are currently performing. Balancing citizen priorities, government essentials and performance will lead to decisions based on facts and also to greater accountability.

___ Library

___ Police

___ Planning

- Reductions in City staff (specify department(s))
- Across-the-board reductions in hours worked by all City staff (v. layoffs)
- Reductions in pay and benefits for City staff
- Parks maintenance/improvement
- City Hall building
- Mayor's compensation
- Council Members' compensation
- Contributions to regional entities (COMPASS, Blue Print, Valley Ride, etc.)
- Other (please describe)

4. Describe the emphasis you would/would not place on expanding the City's commercial base and, if appropriate, how you would achieve that expansion.

I have been saddened by the failure of many Eagle businesses during this economic crisis because of a lack of support and financial stability. I would like to partner with the Eagle Chamber of Commerce and other experts in the business community to develop a plan for expanding the City's commercial base and revitalizing our historic downtown. I appreciate efforts to promote Eagle's arts community, develop the wine industry and position Eagle as an important point along the technology corridor. All provide great opportunities for improving the vitality of the city by creating unique partnerships with surrounding communities, developing new industries and attracting visitors.

5. Describe how the development entitlements for 10,000+ new as yet un-built housing units granted over the last several years will or will not influence your position on future development applications and the City's ability to provide services to new residents. How do you see the absorption of these un-built developments being handled by the City?

Any future developments would need to be viewed in light of the ones already approved. We need to assume these developments will move forward and start planning now for expansion of our essential services, transportation, infrastructure and other needs. If the City of Eagle can not provide essential services to residents, we should not approve new developments.

C. Infrastructure

1. What role, if any, do you see for the City in ensuring the protection of regionally-shared water resources for all area residents, including those currently reliant on private wells in the City, the AOI and the foothills?

Water will be a limited resource in arid and semi-arid regions of the West in the near future. I think the City should do what it can to ensure the protection of regionally-shared water resources and to promote water conservation. It would be great if the City developed a reserve fund to purchase water resources if they became available. I thought the option to purchase the Eagle Water Company was a fantastic opportunity last year, but a lack of revenue and reasonable funding mechanism did not make this a viable option for the City. Tack onto that poor communication with residents and the entire deal looked bad. However, a reserve fund would allow us greater flexibility if a future opportunity should arise.

2. ACHD (<http://www.achd.ada.id.us/Projects/ProjectsPast.aspx>) and ITD (SHs 16, 44 and 55, Three Cities crossing) have transportation planning efforts underway for Eagle and the North Foothills, largely in anticipation of growth in both the City and the North Foothills.

a. Do you X support or ___ not support these plans?

b. Do you X agree or ___ not agree that development should proceed based only on contemporaneous construction of new roadways, including upgrades to existing roadways outside the development, and/or other means of transportation to provide for the impact of that development?

c. Are there specific transportation plans in place that you would like to see changed?

The Northwest Foothills Transportation Study was a well- managed strategic planning process with participation from experts and the community. Their proposed options do a good job of balancing competing interests of numerous stakeholders. I'm sure these plans will evolve as development progresses and new information is brought to light.

D. Foothills vision, open space and rural character, public recreation opportunities

1. Describe your vision of the foothills as a part of the community and/or the priority you would assign to the following by ranking from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important):

Again, I think a vision for the foothills should come from the community – not my personal set of beliefs. If I believe we should adhere to our community vision, then my rankings on the other choices are moot. On another note, I am a strong supporter of private property rights. Some of the best conservation areas in the U.S. are on private lands, and I have had great experiences partnering with private landowners when I managed cooperative restoration programs for Trout Unlimited.

2 Rights of property owners

1 Adherence to the adopted foothills comprehensive plan and the community vision

Location of density adjacent to existing and planned major highways, with preservation of central open space

Preservation of wildlife habitat and restoration of native plant species

Creation of an interconnected trails network for non-motorized recreation

Avoidance of development in steep and visually sensitive areas

Preservation and enhancement of Eagle's unique rural and equestrian lifestyles

2. Do you support or oppose (or unsure) the City's plans to lease and ultimately acquire 1900+ acres of BLM land north of Beacon Light Road (proceeding east from SH16 to Willow Creek Road) for development of a regional park for non-motorized recreation?

I support development of a regional park for non-motorized recreation but I am unsure if funding for its purchase, development and maintenance are viable options for the city.

3. The City has identified the following possible sources for funding regional park development, operations and maintenance. Indicate by a mark in the space provided those you support (leaving blank those you do not support):

Impact fees generated by new development (limited to park development and construction; not available for operations and maintenance);

Possibly, although I think transportation and other infrastructure needs might be a better use for impact fees than park development. I believe in informed decision-making, so I would want to see a detailed cost-benefit analysis of impact fees versus other funding options before deciding what fees, if any, are best for Eagle.

General fund (available only on a fiscal year basis);

User fees/passes for "nonresident" users (assessed via passes for those not City residents; operations and maintenance revenue)

Foothills levy approved by and applied to City residents (available for development, operations and maintenance; requires voter approval of 50% + 1 votes majority; must be renewed every two years)

I support a VOTE on a foothills levy that would let citizens decide if they prioritize this project highly enough to accept a temporary tax increase.

X Volunteer labor and donations

4. Discussion by the Planning and Zoning Commission at recent hearings considering annexation of this BLM land has raised the possibility of creating a Community Improvement District to supplement impact fee revenues.

Do you ___ favor or ___ oppose (or X unsure) the creation of a CID?

5. Describe your vision of the regional park and/or the priority you would assign to the following elements of the City's preliminary plan (City cost estimates provided) for park development by ranking the following from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important), leaving blank any elements you do not support (in which case priority assigned to least important will be the same as the number of elements you support):

The priorities of the community should trump my own, but I like to hike so I personally would like to see the trails first.

3 Linder Road trailhead (\$436,600 construction; \$8,000 p.a. operations and maintenance)

3 Hartley Lane Trailhead (\$193,100 construction; \$1,200 p.a. o&m)

5 Hartley Lane Restrooms (\$80,000 construction)

1 10 miles of 2-3 foot earthen multi-purpose trail (equestrian, hikers, cyclists— \$18,000/ mile construction; \$4,000/ mile p.a. o&m)

1 8 miles of 10-12 foot earthen multi-purpose trail through Little Gulch (\$60,000/mile construction; \$4,000/mile p.a. o&m)

7 Riding and rodeo arena—8 to 10 acres (construction funded by user groups with City providing land and infrastructure; p.a. o&m not yet determined)

6 500-seat seasonal amphitheater located off Linder Road (\$1.26 million construction for facility, parking and infrastructure; p.a. o&m not yet determined)

Thank you for your participation.