

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.

The city council’s role is to establish local public policy and maintain the safety and welfare of the citizens. I am seeking the council seat because I want to ensure that the wishes and desires of the residents of Eagle are represented in the policy decisions and I want to protect what we all love about Eagle.

The City of Eagle *chooses* its area of impact. Because of this it has an obligation to protect and serve both its citizens and those residents who live in the city’s 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?

The city has made improvements in the areas of transparency. I am encouraged that some city council members openly ask for public testimony on issues that are affecting the city. Others appear to be too quick in closing public testimony and demanding a vote. I continue to be discouraged by the ongoing concerns about our city’s financial well-being. For the second year in a row we heard “it’s too late to do that this year” when it came time to cutting expenses in some areas. The budget process should begin much earlier, with more realistic revenue projections and a more determined effort to preserve the services that are important to the people of Eagle. I also have concerns about some of the city council member’s disregard for adequate public facilities and managed growth which are evidenced by the approval of developments such as Terra View on Beacon Light Road.

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

Our city will continue to have budget concerns over the next four years. I believe these can be resolved with better planning, realistic revenue projections and a decrease in overhead. We can not continue with our current level of city staff and facilities; those which were hired to serve a population and development projects much greater than what we have now. With a city council focused on returning Eagle to financial stability and ensuring that growth does not have a negative effect on current residents, in ten years we would not have the problems that Eagle is facing today. In ten years it is my hope that the budget problems of 2009 and the growth

problems of 2007 are replaced with a city unified and working together to promote the businesses and opportunities that are emerging from our viticulture opportunities and technology corridor. With adequate public facilities, schools, water, transportation corridors, and infrastructure; basically a plan for growth, Eagle will be able to accommodate new developments.

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 believe our comprehensive plan needs to be changed back to reflect lower densities in the areas north of Floating Feather road. Eagle was unique because it had planned for larger lots and open space in the northwestern part of the city. It was ideal because it had areas of the city that were appropriate to varying life styles. Not so with the current plan. If we continue on with our current plan, Eagle is going to look like every other city in Idaho with one massive development after another differentiated only by the ornate signs and water features at their entrances. In the future I would like a more rigid adherence to our comprehensive plan and I would not be agreeable to changing it at every request.

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.

The current sources of revenue for the city include property taxes, sales taxes, building permits, fines, and franchise fees. All of these are variable and a city needs to be able to adjust to variances in the economy. Eagle has long been criticized as a city funded on building permits, and now with the permit revenue drastically reduced, the city has been struggling to keep up its level of services and pay its expenses. While Eagle was proudly proclaiming itself as a “bedroom” community, it was overlooking a sustainable source of income, that which comes from businesses. I have been encouraged by the current efforts to attract businesses to our city.

In addition, there are additional sources of funds for the projects that we need. Take schools, for instance. Two years ago I mentioned a program called “Safe Routes to School” in which the federal government provides grants to help cities provide safer routes for our children to walk or bike to school. Recently ACHD installed lighted

crosswalks with funds provided from this program. There are many other grant opportunities to be explored. Creative ideas that other cities are using include adding a coffee bar to the library to supplement operations in the library, selling naming rights to pavilions in parks and offering sponsorships of city benches and playgrounds.

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

I do not support an increase in the levy rate.

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):

___ Library (We have already cut this to the minimum)

___ Police (We have already cut this to the minimum)

___ Planning

5 Reductions in City staff (specify department(s)) **Planning and Zoning**

6 Across-the-board reductions in hours worked by all City staff (v. layoffs)

4 Reductions in pay and benefits for City staff

___ Parks maintenance/improvement (We have already cut this to the minimum)

2 City Hall building

1 Mayor's compensation (It was poor leadership for the Mayor to demand a pay cut of the staff, yet only volunteered a 2.5% cut in his own salary.)

___ Council Members' compensation (With a 50% decrease in pay, we have already cut this to the minimum)

3 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.

Eagle is a city with an almost overwhelming amount of potential. We have an exciting viticulture industry and an entire corridor earmarked to attract businesses to relocate here. I support the groups working on these projects. Ensuring Eagle is financially stable, and making positive headlines is the way to start. My "Ten in 2010" is an idea to bring ten businesses to Eagle in the next year. This would be a joint effort with the city, the chamber and the Urban Renewal Agency. The goal is to encourage small business owners to rehabilitate existing homes in our downtown and open up retail shops on Idaho, Eagle, 1st and 2nd Streets, sparking our downtown revitalization. The headlines for this promotion will highlight a proactive community dedicated to bringing in businesses and revitalizing downtown. This in turn may potentially attract larger companies to consider opening up offices and headquarters along State street.

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?

Each development needs to be evaluated on its own merits and should not be approved unless there are adequate public facilities to serve it, as highlighted in Eagle's comprehensive plan. Future development should not be approved unless there are assurances that they will not negatively affect the city or its residents.

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?

The priority of the city should be on its existing residents, including the area of impact, and protecting the water resources for them.

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 ___ support or ___ not support these plans?

I support the the three policies that emerged from the ACHD Northwest Foothills transportation study:

1) Developers may be limited on their density of development if planned concepts materially change, assumptions in plans materially change, the BLM does not allow easements for

road connections or State facility improvements do not materialize in the project area, due to lack of funding or other reasons.

2) Consideration of design elements for pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian and wildlife will be included as roadway developments are submitted and specific alignments are considered.

3) ACHD will proceed to consider an extraordinary impact fee district for the study area and identify projects for inclusion.

It is still unclear whether ITD understands Eagle's plans and whether ITD is in synch with Eagle's plans. At the September Idaho Consortium Meeting, between the mayors of area cities, ITD, ACHD, COMPASS it was revealed that the city of Eagle's plans to increase density in the downtown core and along the corridors to encourage potential future transit options were at odds with ITD's plans for Hwy 44. Dave Jones from ITD stated Eagle's plans were "diametrically opposed to what ITD has planned for that roadway.

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?

I believe the traffic for foothills development needs to be routed on the highways, 55 and 16, and not through the smaller roads that go through our neighborhoods; Linder, Eagle, and Willow Creek

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):

 1 Rights of property owners. **(People have a right to use their land. They do not have an absolute right to change the use of their land or use their land in a way that negatively affects others.)**

 7 Adherence to the adopted foothills comprehensive plan and the community vision. **(I am rating this lower only because I believe the currently adopted foothills plan does not reflect the community vision.)**

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

 4 Preservation of wildlife habitat and restoration of native plant species

 5 Creation of an interconnected trails network for non-motorized recreation

6 Avoidance of development in steep and visually sensitive areas

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

2. Do you support or _x_ 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 would support this project at a later date, when the city had funds to dedicate to park maintenance. It is not appropriate to take on responsibility for a new park when our city is struggling to maintain the parks we already have. We have no immediate sources of funding to pay for the required improvements to the park that would be mandated by BLM in this agreement.**

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):

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

x 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)

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 _x_ favor or oppose (or unsure) the creation of a CID?

I support a CID, but only if it is limited to new developments in the foothills where residents have a choice whether they are included in the 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 city does not have the money for any of these projects at this time. However I believe they are all worthy of consideration as notable future projects. I would encourage groups to work on fund-raising efforts as I think the equestrian arena and amphitheater would be able to partially self-fund the projects.

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

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

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

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

4 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)

5 500-seat seasonal amphitheater located off Linder Road (\$1.26 million construction for facility, parking and infrastructure; p.a. o&m not yet determined)