

Candidate Forums 2005
Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce
CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES FOR WARDS 4, 5 & 6
WRITTEN RESPONSES TO YES/NO VOTES

Question #1: Should the City set aside an economic development area for Missoula?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:	YES 72%	NO 20%
---	-------------------	------------------

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely - **Vote: none given**
No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins - **Vote: Yes**
No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines - **Vote: Probably**
However, there are many questions that would need to be answered before I would support such an undertaking. Who would own the land until it is sold? If it is to be the city, how would the city acquire the land? Who owns the land now? Would the land be sold at a price that would pay back the city investment or would it be sold at a loss? Could or would the land remain in city ownership? Would this operation require more city staff? What other costs would the city experience in this type of operation? Where would such an area be located, given that space in the Missoula valley comes at a premium? How much land would be involved or needs to be involved? Could existing buildings be involved? Would all parts of the area be contiguous or could various parcels around the area be utilized? Would the area have to be in the city limits or could part or all be outside city limits?

Mark Fitzgerald **Vote: Yes**
No additional comments

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson **Vote: Unsure**
Are we talking about property owned by the city or individuals? I think that if we impose new zoning rules, the people who currently own the property and currently have the right to develop it, should be

grandfathered in as those were the rules for when they purchased the land and paid taxes on it for years. We should never force our ideals onto others

Marilyn Marler

Vote: none given

I support economic development for Missoula, and I think that urban renewal districts and neighborhood revitalization projects are good approaches. Ward 6, which I hope to represent on city council, includes portions of Urban Renewal District 3, and I am excited about future business opportunities in this area.

Question #2: Do you feel that the Wye/Mullan plan allows enough space for business development within the specifics of the plan?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:

YES

NO

27%

44%

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

Vote: none given

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

Vote: No

No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

Vote: Don't Know

I don't know. I would like to know how much input to the plan has come from the business community and what part of or who from the business community has been involved. Are comments or suggestions from the business community incorporated in the plan as it now exists? From my casual review of the plan, I don't think business has been considered to the extent it should be. The same can be said of private property rights and infrastructure.

Mark Fitzgerald

Vote: Yes

No additional comments

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

Vote: Unsure

I regret that I am not currently up to speed on the plan, but I support a bypass around Missoula for Hwy 93. So much; fuel, time, money, emotions is wasted by people just wanting to get around Missoula. As well as they cause such a traffic problem wasting more fuel, time of locals. Consumers from out of town are choosing to pay more for goods in smaller towns than fight traffic here. This is why I feel a Wye, Mullan, Blue Mountain bypass is so essential to Missoula. I want to promote good paying industrial and manufacturing jobs to sustain Missoula's economic future and the wye/mullan area is an ideal location for industrial growth.

Marilyn Marler

Vote: none given

I'm not familiar with the details of the Wye/Mullan plan, but I understand that the plan has not yet been adopted. It is important that the final plan accommodate business development as well as residential development.

Question #3: Do you support the development of a North/South Corridor west of Reserve Street?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:

YES	NO
86%	11%

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

Vote: none given

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

Vote: Yes

No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

Vote: Absolutely!

It will never be cheaper to build than it is today and there will never be fewer people that need to use such a corridor than there are today. To not develop such a corridor is to ignore reality. As a Legislator, I convinced the State DOT to undertake two studies involving US 93 from the Lolo area to I-90. The first was a study of the threat to the personal safety of drivers trying to get off or on US 93 between Lolo and Missoula and what could be done to eliminate that threat. This study is underway and there has been one public meeting in Lolo to date. The objective of the second study was to determine the feasibility of various routes around Missoula from the Lolo area to I-90. This study is just beginning, as I believe a contractor has been selected to do the work for DOT. The problem in this case is that the study cannot include potential routes

through Missoula without the permission of the committee that includes the City, County and State. This is something I would work for if I am on City Council.

Mark Fitzgerald

Vote: Yes

I support some kind of roadway to give some relief to traffic on Reserve. I feel if it doesn't get fixed soon, the viability of that retail area would decrease.

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

Vote: Yes

No additional comments

Marilyn Marler

Vote: none given

It's clear that we have terrible traffic issues on Reserve Street. I live near Reserve Street (in Ward 6 near the Good Food Store) and am painfully aware of the problems people have driving home to developments on West Mullan and beyond, and the difficulty of reaching shopping areas on Reserve Street. However, I think it is premature for me to endorse North/South Corridor west of Reserve Street. This is a complex situation, and this approach would need to be considered in the context of long term traffic planning.

Question #4: Do you feel the existing sign ordinance appropriately promotes business?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:

YES

NO

24%

75%

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

Vote: none given

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

Vote: No

No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

Vote: No

Considering all the negative comments I have heard personally and what has been in the press the last few months, I have to conclude the answer

to the question in no. It seems to me that the sign ordinance needs to be reviewed and rewritten by a group of stake holders. The result would be a proposal for an ordinance that would allow the promotion of business but with good aesthetic standards that could be understood by all. This would probably be a contentious issue for the segment of Missoula that doesn't want any signs or is happy with the way things are now.

Mark Fitzgerald

Vote: No

No additional comments

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

Vote: No

No additional comments

Marilyn Marler

Vote: none given

I know that there is some dissatisfaction at the moment with the sign ordinance. I think that it is important to have a sign ordinance that balances the needs of business owners their potential customers against the need for our community to maintain an uncluttered and haphazard skyline full of random signage. I think that our sign ordinance includes a good appeals process, but at the same time, it is important for the sign ordinance to be applied consistently. We need to balance flexibility and fairness with this ordinance.

Question #5: Do you feel the Office of Planning and Grants is sufficiently customer oriented?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:	YES	NO
	16%	76%

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

Vote: none given

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

Vote: No

No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

Vote: No

Most of the negative complaints I have listened to specifically refer to the OPG and the way that the organization works with the business community. I also question the number of employees in the OPG. As I understand it, the Missoula organization is roughly twice as big as Billings? Why?

Mark Fitzgerald

Vote: Yes

No additional comments

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

Vote: No

No additional comments

Marilyn Marler

Vote: none given

As a homeowner, I've gone into OPG for a building permit, and I felt that I was treated professionally and efficiently. I cannot speak to the experiences of large developers. Missoula is growing at a rapid pace, and not surprisingly, the planning department is under extreme scrutiny. I support maintaining a joint City-County planning department, but there is a lot of room for improvement within OPG.

Question #6: Do you feel the Health Department is sufficiently customer oriented?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:

YES	NO
31%	60%

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

Vote: none given

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

Vote: No

No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

Vote: None given

I haven't heard as many complaints about this department as I have heard about OPG but then I haven't heard any positive comments either.

Mark Fitzgerald

Vote: Yes

No additional comments

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

Vote: None given

I feel that many government offices lack customer orientation as they have no competition for tax payers to go to. I do not have a lot of experience with the Missoula County Health Department being a used

car dealer now, (I do have previous experience in the restaurant and hotel business) but from what I have heard from the recent articles and editorials regarding the Paws Up Ranch it appears that they may not be.

Marilyn Marler **Vote: none given**

My personal experiences with the Health Department (obtaining vaccinations) have been favorable.

Question #7: Should revenues such as Impact Fees and Local Option Taxes be increased to support infrastructure development?

Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:	YES	NO
	42%	55%

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely - **Vote: none given**

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins - **Vote: No**

No additional comments

WARD 5

Dick Haines - **Vote: None given**

I am against local option taxes. Increased fees could be looked at but the review must be done very carefully as many in the current city administration see impact fees as a potential “cash flow”. Impact fees can have a very negative impact on business even if they are necessary.

Mark Fitzgerald **Vote: Yes**

Impact fees or local option taxes are one way to fund and develop the infrastructure we are going to need to support the growth curve that this city will see for quite some time. But they shouldn't be the only way, making sure we are getting our fair share of federal grants/programs is important.

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson **Vote: None given**

Tax someone to build a structure that will be subject to taxes? Does that make any sense? We should promote growth not inhibit it or capitalize it. What are our city property taxes for if anytime you need something from the city, (or I should say required by the city to get), you are forced to pay a user tax (fee)? Get rid of city property tax and then I would support

user taxes. When did the voters authorize these new taxes? They didn't!! The city has figured out a loop hole to get more money to spend. When property tax money gets wasted, someone always try's to raise taxes instead of finding out where the money is going.

Marilyn Marler

Vote: none given

I support Impact Fees because I think that new development in our community should pay its way, as opposed to putting the entire financial burden on existing property owners. I think that there needs to flexibility and fairness in the assessment of Impact Fees, but I would not say that they need to be increased at this time. I'm interpreting "Local Option Taxes" to mean a local sales tax, and I think that we need to remain open minded that this might be necessary in the future, although I don't think that we need to implement this immediately.

Question #8: What do you see as the three (3) most important issues in Missoula?

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

Growth, Traffic, and O.P.G

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

- A. The recognition, in city and county planning efforts, of the need for high volume traffic corridors in, around and through Missoula.
- B. OPG, its authorities and operating procedures and relations with the business community.
- C. How to manage infill proposals

Mark Fitzgerald

- 1. Attracting more good paying jobs that allow our resident to enjoy home ownership and the quality of life that brought them here.
- 2. Managing the transportation infrastructure better.

3. Keeping Crime rate low

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

1. Promoting industrial and manufacturing jobs to sustain Missoula's economic future.
2. More efficient traffic solutions so we can all spend less time in traffic and more time working or enjoying life.
3. Reform city budget and spending; prevent wasting of the money that is extorted from taxpayers.

Marilyn Marler

- Increased civility among city officials and the public, with an increased emphasis on productive work instead of in-fighting
- Conservation and stewardship of open space in the Missoula Valley
- Responsible growth in core neighborhoods of Missoula, including quality infill housing and economic development within neighborhoods to provide shopping and services within neighborhoods

Question #9: What is the SINGLE MOST important business issue?

WARD 4

Timothy Lovely -

No survey submitted

Jon Wilkins -

The rules need to be more define on what business can do.

WARD 5

Dick Haines -

The negative attitude toward business in Missoula City government is, I believe, the single most important business issue.

Mark Fitzgerald

Continuing to enhance the 3 primary retail areas in the city (downtown, Southgate mall/Brooks St. and N. Reserve) so that each continues to remain viable and growing.

WARD 6

Jeffrey-James Halvorson

Protecting our fellow Americans rights to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness, not taxed into slavery, not striped of there property rights, not forced to close their business so they can't provide for their families well being.

Marilyn Marler

I think that Missoula needs to attract more high-paying, clean industry based jobs that will provide a stronger economic base than our current situation which relies heavily on low paying retail and service industries. I think that Missoula's greatest assets are our natural environment and quality of life, and I know that we can develop business opportunities here that do not degrade these tremendous assets.