

**Candidate Forums 2005**

Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce

**MAYORIAL WRITTEN RESPONSES TO YES/NOT VOTES**

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

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<b>72%</b>	<b>20%</b>

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote: YES and NO**

This is a yes and no answer that is dependent on circumstances. First, the City does not have property like the County did and I would be totally against the City getting into the real-estate business. Second, there are several areas around the city that provide good opportunities for ED and there will be several around the Airport. I prefer to stay flexible but am open to suggestions if someone has a specific proposal.

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote: NO**

No. Sound community planning provides for any kinds of uses, including those which foster and permit economic development such as light industrial, commercial, etc. Completing sound community plan and sticking with it is where we have to do our best work. If this question is asking whether the City should literally purchase and “set aside an economic development area for Missoula” I would say that it is better to let the market settle that issue. If my understanding of the question is correct, I believe there are more pressing public issues demanding public resources.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote: YES**

If it can be shown that a development area would benefit our business sector then I would support this creation. For the last nine years I have supported the work of the Missoula Redevelopment Authority in the downtown in every regard. I work downtown and want it to stay vital and vibrant. I am looking forward to improvements in our newer urban renewal districts as well.

**John Dorazi** **Vote: YES**

No written additional comments

**John Engen** **Vote:**

If an economic-development entity, such as the Missoula Economic Development Corporation or Montana Community Development Corporation, approached the city with a feasible proposal to create an economic-development zone, I think the city certainly ought to consider such an opportunity. Any random reservation of land by the city probably wouldn't meet the general goals of sustainable economic development.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote: YES**

No written additional comments

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

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<b>27%</b>	<b>44%</b>

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote: YES**

The current Y/M plan as currently proposed has an abundance of space for business and industrial development. It is one of several areas I think can be a economic Development area. I have been interested in assuring that neighborhood business areas be identified so neighborhood residences do not have t drive several miles for everyday needs.

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote:** NO

I will confess I haven't mastered the details of the Wye/Mullan plan. I would be inclined to err on the side of the need for more business opportunities than less. There is a great temptation to make areas like Wye/Mullan predominantly residential or "bedroom communities." I believe that is a mistake because it leaves the commercial services in the City of Missoula, which adds traffic congestion, etc. to the community. A residential community the size contemplated at the Wye/Mullan area will need to be supported by its own commercial services. Business adds to community vitality and should not be excluded from growing areas.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote:** YES

Almost one quarter of the acreage in the Wye Mullan plan is recommended for business development. The designations represent a wide range of possibilities from highway heavy commercial to industrial, business and neighborhood commercial and agricultural. I like having the mixture of designations, so that as the WYE area develops, opportunities are open for a wide variety of businesses to exist.

**John Dorazi** **Vote:** \_\_\_\_\_

I have not had time enough to look at these issues. I know that on #7, the fees are in place. I don't know if they are adequate. I am new at this "political" field; I am experienced in "LIFE". # 2 has no answers, from what I've heard.

**John Engen** **Vote:** \_\_\_\_\_

Because the plan has not yet been adopted by the city, many land-use questions are still in flux. Generally speaking, a number of land-use designations in the plan provide for commercial and industrial development. Ultimately, the plan's a guide; subsequent zoning will determine actual use and that zoning is often a product of the property-owners preferences.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote:** YES

No written additional comments

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

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b> <b>NO</b>
	<b>86%</b> <b>11%</b>

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote:** YES

I also prefer a location west of the airport. I do not want to create another "reserve street" that divides a cohesive neighborhood.

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote:** NO

Without more information about what is exactly meant by that, I don't know how anyone could honestly support it. **I DO support investigating the concept**, however, and developing the information to allow citizens and elected officials to judge whether such a corridor is needed, what its costs are, what its benefits are, how it would be financed, whose homes or businesses would be affected by it, etc. The Montana Department of Transportation planners have known for decades that some sort of north/south transportation project west of Missoula was in our future, but its planning was little more than lines on maps. It may make intuitive sense to develop such a corridor, but something that momentous needs to be backed by hard-nosed analysis

and thoughtful community discussion to avoid becoming the sort of boondoggle we, as a community, would regret our elected officials ever supported.

We simply cannot underestimate the outcomes of our transportation planning and development decisions. The cost is too high. As Mayor, I would be keenly interested in considering this issue with the people of Missoula as well as the State and Missoula County.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote: YES**

Projections indicate that we could have 25,000 cars a day coming up from the Bitterroot within five years. I believe it is important that we seriously consider this idea through a feasibility study. This would allow us to look at funding opportunities, possible locations and mitigation of impacts

**John Dorazi** **Vote: YES**

No written additional comments

**John Engen** **Vote:**

I support a grid road system that allows for traffic to flow north and south west of Reserve, but I'm not a big fan of creating a road that diverts folks away from Missoula and our business districts.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote: YES**

No written additional comments

Question #4: Do you feel the existing Sign Ordinance appropriately promotes business?

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b> 24%	<b>NO</b> 75%
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**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote: NO**

No written additional comments

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote: NO**

To appropriately promote business, any ordinance needs to be fair on its face and consistently applied to the greatest extent possible. The ordinances have to reflect community values and our hopes for what living in this place means to all of us. There are communities which have much more restrictive sign ordinances than Missoula does and business is doing just fine there. Why? Because enforcement is consistent and predictable. Everyone plays by the same rules, make it so businesses are free to compete with one another on a level playing field. If the enforcement cracks, however, or if one business gets an advantage – no matter how slight – other feels, perhaps rightly, that they deserve the same consideration. In that event, the Sign Ordinance cannot appropriately promote business.

In the 1980's I served on a committee with several members of the Chamber of Commerce and City staff to hammer out elements of a new, improved Sign Ordinance. The product was an Ordinance that was not exactly what everyone wanted, but what everyone accepted. Since then, enforcement has not been consistent, perhaps, or too many exceptions have been made. That Ordinance probably no longer suits our community.

To my knowledge, however, no one is stepping up to volunteer to go through the hard work we did twenty years ago to craft an acceptable Sign Ordinance.

As Mayor, I would welcome anyone who felt the Sign Ordinance was unfair or inappropriate to point out those flaws and give specific suggestions on how we could write a better Sign Ordinance.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote: YES**

The sign ordinance promotes a certain look and feel for Missoula by having standards for the construction, illumination and placement of signs. That look and feel is what makes Missoula unique. The last thing we want to be is like everywhere else. Our uniqueness is what draws business, homebuyers and tourists.

**John Dorazi** **Vote:** **NO**  
No written additional comments

**John Engen** **Vote:**  
The role of our sign ordinance should be to balance the interests of businesses with a legitimate need to promote themselves and the public's interest in tempering the visual impacts of too many signs, too-large signs and inappropriate signs. We can do better for all parties.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote:** **NO**  
No written additional comments

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

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	<b>16%</b>	<b>76%</b>

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote:** **NO**  
No written additional comments

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote:** **NO**

The people served at the Office of Planning and Grants are not customers; they are citizens. Customers have a choice where to go for services, citizens don't. Citizens deserve to be treated with respect, helpfulness, courtesy, etc., just as they hope they are treated when they buy something, but the transactions are fundamentally different.

The staff at OPG is often criticized – sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly – for delay, insistence on enforcement of regulations, lack of helpfulness, etc. They administer a good portion of the complex rules we live under but do not face the same pressures, risks and other circumstances of the people whose lives they regulate. Their knowledge is specialized and often subject to interpretation. If ever there was a formula for citizen dissatisfaction with bureaucracy, it's probably reflected here.

The degree that OPG or any government office is citizen oriented (as opposed to "customer oriented") is a function of leadership, good policy-making by elected officials and support when things are done right, as well as correction when things aren't done right.

As the Director of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency for eighteen years, I insisted that our staff be focused on public service and the respectful performance of the public's business. At the same time, any MRA employee who tried his or her best to perform their duties in a competent, courteous manner would enjoy my loyalty and protection from undue public criticism. As Mayor, I would provide leadership that would carry this value to all City employees.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote:** **NO**

There has been a general feeling that the office could improve its customer service. I believe there has been an attempt to do that. The office is open and available through the lunch hour, planners and key people have individual extensions so they can be reached more easily and they are trying to bring a more positive tone to the office. However, with regular employee turnover, the department struggles with its ability to be consistent in its delivery of information. I have stated that I would implement a "walk in my shoes" day on a regular basis to visit city departments to view first hand the workings of each department. A communications audit may be appropriate as well to get down to more specific improvements. My goal is to bring efficiency and satisfaction for both customer and city employee.

**John Dorazi** **Vote:** **NO**  
No written additional comments

**John Engen** **Vote:**

There's room for improved customer service in the Office of Planning Grants, much like there's room for improvement in most service-based public and private enterprises. I believe that most of

the folks who have customer contact in OPG are sincerely interested in serving the public. Our regulations complicate our ability to deliver top-notch service, though, and need revision.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote:** NO

No written additional comments

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

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	31%	60%

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote:** NO

No written additional comments

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote:** NO

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The degree that OPG or any government office is citizen oriented (as opposed to “customer oriented”) is a function of leadership, good policy-making by elected officials and support when things are done right, as well as correction when things aren't done right. As the Director of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency for eighteen years, I insisted that our staff be focused on public service and the respectful performance of the public's business. At the same time, any MRA employee who tried his or her best to perform their duties in a competent, courteous manner would enjoy my loyalty and protection from undue public criticism. As Mayor, I would provide leadership that would carry this value to all City employees.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote:** YES

I am not aware that there are problems with customer service in the Health Department. I am willing to listen to any complaints and consider taking action.

**John Dorazi** **Vote:** NO

No written additional comments

**John Engen** **Vote:** \_\_\_\_\_

There's room for improved customer service in the Office of Planning Grants, much like there's room for improvement in most service-based public and private enterprises. I believe that most of the folks who have customer contact in OPG are sincerely interested in serving the public. Our regulations complicate our ability to deliver top-notch service, though, and need revision.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote:** NO

No written additional comments

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

<b>Missoula Chamber of Commerce members Vote:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	42%	55%

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -** **Vote:** **NO**

I do not support impact fees or local option taxes. New development by its nature pays more taxed for the same service as old development and new subdivisions provide for their own streets, sewer, water and park development.

**Geoff Badenoch -** **Vote:** **YES**

Just as there is no such thing as a free lunch, there is no such thing as free infrastructure development. Roads, streets, sewers, etc. all have significant costs associated with them and somehow, if they are needed, we must find a way to finance them.

Federal funding for infrastructure development cannot be relied on with certainty. And the City's Capital Improvements Program funded through the General Fund cannot be expected to meet all the infrastructure needs which are likely to arise in the current growth environment.

SID's are the customary way of financing such improvements, because the assessments fall on the beneficiaries. Similarly, Impact Fees could be used and added to the upfront cost of the developments, thereby financing the infrastructure improvements through the purchaser and ultimate beneficiary. It may be possible to put together a combination of funding sources so that no one entity is unduly burdened, but I think each commitment of funding for infrastructure development comes with its own set of unique circumstances that dictate what is fair and equitable. Missoula does not yet have the authority to levy Local Option Taxes, and even if we did, I am not sure how that mechanism would be equitably used to support new infrastructure development. Priorities would need to be set by the City Council in that event.

**Lou Ann Crowley** **Vote:** **YES**

Right now we are in a transition period, working with this new revenue stream that covers the cost of services like fire, police and courts and amenities like parks. These fees help us cover costs that would otherwise result in new taxes on current property owners. In the long term, we do need a reliable and equitable way to fund new infrastructure like arterials and intersections. Getting to that point will involve a public process, open to debate.

**John Dorazi** **Vote:** \_\_\_\_\_

I have not had time enough to look at these issues. I know that on #7 the fees are in place, I don't know if they are adequate.

**John Engen** **Vote:** \_\_\_\_\_

The impact fees the city employs are based on a study that helped the council set equitable fees based on impacts on infrastructure. I think the fees are fair and should remain relatively stable. The Montana Legislature rejected local-option taxes for infrastructure development and are not an option.

**Clayton Floyd** **Vote:** **NO**

No written additional comments

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

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -**

Managing growth in a common sense, orderly manner with adequate infrastructure and protection of existing livability.

Protecting the character of core neighborhoods and provide long term homeowners with predictability.

Annexation of new areas in a manner that does not overextend police and fire services and that does not jeopardize emergency response to existing city residences.

### **Geoff Badenoch -**

- A. Growth. This is the pivot point around which other issues such as sprawl, housing affordability, traffic congestion, pressures on neighborhoods, etc. all turn. Growth itself is neither bad nor good – its how it's done that determines its affect on the community.
- B. Lack of confidence in Local Government. This is the level of government closest to the people. If Local Government fails to inspire confidence, civility, respect and appreciation of the people, we are in serious trouble.
- C. Lack of preparation for the future. Our community, like the world, is undergoing change at a seemingly uncontrollable rate. These changes are creating problems and opportunities we can barely imagine. Preparing ourselves as a community to energetically respond to these changes will be essential if we are to remain a community worth living in.

### **Lou Ann Crowley**

- i. Maintain and enhance our quality of life: Missoula's quality of life is what drives our economy – it is the basis for our growth and sustainability. It is under threat from loss of open space through growth, lack of affordable housing, low wages, closure of neighborhood public schools, and traffic congestion, as well as other pressures like increased crime.
- ii. Planning for growth: Growth may be inevitable but we need to make it our own. We need to act as a community to plan in a way that allows for growth that reflects Missoula's values.
- iii. Engagement: To find a vision that we can support, we need to engage the community by bringing representatives from neighborhoods, business, the University, College of Technology, the school district, the city, county and others to the table to talk about where we are now and where we want to be in ten years. This will encourage collaboration and lead to action.

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

### **John Dorazi**

Traffic, Growth, and Economy. Very large field here. Traffic issues are huge! They will take some time and various departments' cooperation to overcome. Growth is a broad term, it entails infill, development, open space, etc. ALL are important issues. The economy is in trouble. There are some answers, some efforts that local government could contribute to hindering natural progress is not one of them.

### **John Engen**

- Acquisition and long-term preservation of open space.
- An adequate supply of housing.
- Revision of our regulations and consistent enforcement of those regulations.

### **Clayton Floyd**

Meeting our legal obligation for basic services to include police protection, fire protection, sewer service, streets (maintenance, replacement, snow removal).

Planning and managing growth requirements within Missoula Valley.

Encourage economic development through jobs training, development of high speed infrastructure, and outreach to business to locate here.

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

**(Jerrell) Jerry Ballas -**

Getting good business people appointed to boards or in elected positions. The appointment of Mike Peissig as an interim council person is a huge achievement.

**Geoff Badenoch -**

Transformation in markets. With the ability to “shop on line,” with the presence of deep discount retailers and “big box stores,” consumers are getting more and more competitive choices about where to spend their dollars. Many small businesses are going to have to transform themselves to remain competitive – the free market demands that. Will that come at the expense of the local small businessmen and women who build and support our community? Will Missoula lose that part of the community fabric? What will replace that? The City can do its part in making Missoula a good place to do business by keeping the community attractive, regulations predictable and taxes fair and reasonable.

**Lou Ann Crowley**

Infrastructure: This includes the basics of well-maintained streets, sidewalks and sewer, as well as schools, hospitals, internet and cell phone communication capability, air travel connections, Chamber and business groups, access to financial services – especially for women and minorities, parks, recreational and cultural opportunities. The more sophisticated the infrastructure, the broader the base of businesses our city can attract and support. I would look forward to working with the business community to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Missoula’s infrastructure. From that assessment, we can create an action plan with an annual evaluation to show our progress.

**John Dorazi**

Government not trying to strangle small business with hoops to jump through or re-routing traffic, not letting businesses know ahead of time on certain “projects.” Business friendly rules and regulations, keep it simple!

**John Engen**

The need for revision of our regulations and consistent enforcement of those regulations.

**Clayton Floyd**

Proper infrastructure.