



City Council Election November 2007  
Written Questions

1. Affordable housing is a concern that city government and nonprofit groups have sought to address. As a City Councilor, what specific actions would you initiate and/or support to address increase the availability of affordable housing in our community?

First, following receipt of the housing study, I would support a conversation among council members, housing providers, and the community with the objective to determine our community's affordable housing goals and determine who is responsible for meeting these goals.

As we know, affordable housing has multiple components—rental, owner-occupied housing for citizens who make below 30% of median income, owner occupied housing for those whose income is 30%-80% of median range, and workforce housing—which typically involves citizens who make 80%-120% of area median income. No one approach will work with all components of this issue, and until we determine our goals, it difficult to say what the best, most appropriate methods are to provide affordable housing.

I am eager to look at developing public/private partnerships to address some of the affordable housing needs in our community. I am also willing to discuss mandates and incentives around this issue. It's my intention that the discussion about creating more affordable housing involves both new construction and the rehabilitation of current housing stock. I am also interested in exploring the use of land trusts and other innovative approaches to address the issue. I would support examining our abilities to do lead mitigation and rehab our older housing stock in the more centrally located neighborhoods.

We have had some information on what other communities around the country are doing—we have to continue to look for those models. Additionally, we must acknowledge that this is not an isolated challenge—it is related to issues of poverty, education, and economic development. Ensuring that we have a vibrant area economy with businesses that pay living wages and provide health benefits, and providing access to training and educational programs that enable individuals to acquire skills to improve their personal financial conditions should be components of addressing this issue as well.

2. Describe in detail your vision for land use and zoning in Iowa City. What specific types of development are needed? What specific actions would you initiate to foster that development?

Given the current property tax structure, we need more commercial/industrial development in Iowa City (but not in the retail sector). We need to work more closely with the Iowa City Area Development (ICAD) group to recruit, retain, and grow area businesses in Iowa City. We need to be more proactive to bring commercial and industrial development to Iowa City by approaching potential

businesses, by ensuring that we have land that is zoned appropriately for commercial and industrial uses, and holding firm when residential developers express interest in having land rezoned.

Regarding residential development, we need to find ways to slow the growth outward toward the edges of our community, and grow in a way that allows more density. Growing outward puts a strain on our ability to provide services and maintain infrastructure. Providing more residential opportunities in the core of our city enables us to more efficiently provide services.

Regarding commercial and industrial development, I will continue my leadership in economic development. I will support more densely designed residential development, and continue to rigorously scrutinize our rezoning agreements to ensure that as developers receive rezoning agreements, that the development is moving ahead in ways that are in the City's best interests.

3. Most building and expansion projects of significant size are requesting a TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) from Iowa City. Describe in detail the type of project, if any, that deserves a TIF. What conditions, if any, should the city place on TIFs? How specifically would you address the problems that Iowa City TIFs cause for county and school budgets?

When looking at applications for TIF, I look for projects that provide substantial economic benefit to the City, that have qualities that reflect community values, and that incorporate other community benefits into the project (energy efficiency, design standards, creating public space, etc.). I also bear in mind that TIFs are deferred gratification in receiving additional tax revenue, so shorter TIFs are optimal. Because I believe that these arrangements must include a high degree of accountability, tax rebates are my preferred approach for TIF agreements. This means that the developer pays all taxes on the property and must verify their compliance with the TIF agreement to receive the tax rebate.

Every project is different, but when working on the economic development committee and in talking with the developer, I approach the negotiation with these things in mind.

In consideration of the concerns for the county and school budgets, note that TIF rebates are levied lower the taxes collected to protect the debt levies of the city, county, and school. This doesn't address the breadth of this concern, but weighing this in combination with shorter TIF agreements and the opportunity for an increased tax base is part of my decision making process when looking at TIF agreements.

4. Describe in detail what activities you would undertake on the City Council to build a more cohesive public transportation system in and around Iowa City. Include discussion of pedestrian, bicycle, bus and car transportation.

Fundamentally, my approach to transportation is that our job is to move people, not necessarily vehicles. Therefore, when I look at road projects, this is the lens I use.

I worked hard to ensure that Iowa City's Complete Streets policy was inline with those supported by the Thunderhead Alliance National Campaign for Complete Streets in that it included senior level review for exceptions to the policy (our original policy did not include this). I will continue this type of advocacy, as well as continuing my support to examine the feasibility of a regional transit authority, and exploring light rail opportunities. I will also be a strong advocate for adherence to our Complete Streets policy and will look for support from area groups and organizations as we look at road projects to ensure that the needs of all users are adequately considered.

Often our trail discussions focus more on leisure use than commuter use. It's important to bring bike commuter considerations into all of our trail and road discussions. Not building a trail out Dubuque Street when we improved the intersection at Foster Road is an example of how we overlooked bike commuter considerations in this particular project.

I will continue to support looking at our transit routes, schedules, and our growing/changing transit needs and will continue to support transit as an important part of our City's budget.

5. Please list your top five priorities for action by the City Council and your reasoning for each.
  - Increased economic development, but in ways that reflect community values  
The quality of our life in Iowa City depends upon a vibrant local economy that provides a tax base that supports City services. We also need to ensure that our citizens have access to good jobs that pay living wages and benefits.
  - Increased examination and pursuit of regional initiatives and projects that enable us to provide better services to our citizens  
We need to be innovative in our approach to provision of services to citizens and there may be opportunities for cooperation and collaboration that will enable us to provide better services. We are affected by what happens in our region; therefore, we need to look at the ways that we can work in a regional manner.
  - Greater public participation in local government—including participation on boards and commissions as well as increased public participation regarding council decisions  
We need more people willing to provide leadership to our community through boards and commissions and other formal and informal opportunities.
  - Getting through our 'to do' list: hiring a city manager; moving forward with the recommendations in our housing study; and moving forward with the recommendations from the downtown market mix study.
  
6. Public Measure C on the November election ballot authorizes only persons 21 years or older to be present in establishments with a liquor license after 10:00 pm. What do you believe are the major problems created by alcohol consumption in the community?

What impact would approval of the referendum have on these problems? Describe alternative or additional approaches that you would support as part of a comprehensive plan for addressing alcohol consumption.

Irresponsible drinking—by people of any age—causes a multitude of problems in our community. Among these are physical and sexual violence, vandalism and property damage, disruption of neighborhoods, and the ensuing individual and personal problems that may result from alcohol consumption.

I believe that the passage of Public Measure C will have little affect on these problems, because it will not affect the issue of irresponsible drinking so much as it will affect where people of particular ages will/may be drinking.

I would support exploring the following approaches to irresponsible drinking:

In our neighborhoods

- Community policing approach when necessary
- Citations for under-aged drinking and public intoxication, rather than just warnings for noise. We have a rigorous nuisance ordinance for our neighborhoods that cannot be accessed when there are only repeated warnings at house parties, rather than citations as appropriate.

In our downtown

- Explore zoning regulations that would address what many call a proliferation of bars in our downtown cultural district.

In our drinking establishments

- Enforce capacity restrictions—we have an ordinance.
- Capacity at establishments must be checked regularly and capacity limitations must be enforced.
- Drinking establishments—should continue Training for Intervention Procedures or TIPS training and certification for bartenders and servers.
- I think that all drinking establishments should have ID scanning machines.

7. Public Measure D on the November election ballot authorizes a permanent Police Citizen's Review Board that would make recommendations regarding the policies, practices and procedures of the police department, investigate citizen claims of police misconduct and have the authority to subpoena witnesses. Explain your personal position on this issue and describe alternative or additional approaches that you would support as part of a comprehensive solution to overseeing police department functioning.

I am supportive of this measure. It's important to keep in mind that Council does not directly oversee the police department. Therefore, we must put systems in place that enable Council to be familiar with the issues and functions of the police department and allow us to provide clear direction to the City Manager, who oversees the Department, about our expectations and standards for the police behavior, conduct, and policies.