



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?

I supported commissioning the study/assessment of issues surrounding and actual affordable units available. I have supported our Tenant to Ownership program and the low interest loan program to help with maintenance issues of our community's existing affordable units. I support the City's participation in the Section 8 program, the Resident Opportunity Self-Sufficiency Program, and the Affordable Dream Homeownership Program. Not every council member is supportive of our participation in these programs. I continue to receive calls from some segments of our community that also do not support the City providing housing assistance. I work to try and convince people that don't support the City's involvement that this is not only matter of workforce housing being available to people working in our community, but that having a place to live is important to the fabric and security of our town. I have supported changes to our building and zoning code that are consistent with these principles. I am and have been willing to work in partnership with the private sector to achieve the needed level of affordable units, however, if the study shows that the market is not responding to the need, I am willing to consider techniques to either achieve that goal through incentive or possibly mandates.

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?

I think implementing the Comprehensive Plan, which is a consensus document that incorporates our District Plans is the basic plan to start with. We need to allow for mixed neighborhoods and more compact developments to occur. In conjunction with that, we must be willing to accept some of the more compact/higher density building complexes in order for the plans to be effective and provide coordinated growth.

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?

The city has a variety of economic development tools available to use in order to grow the tax base, recruit jobs that are at a livable wage, bring a certain type of industry to the community, develop certain technologies, and/or spur examples of certain types of practices (like environmental features) to be used. For example, development loans, forgivable grants, capitol funds, property tax relief, tax increment financing, and public improvement projects. I think these are all acceptable to consider when a business or developer is asking for financial assistance from the city. It is important to maintain flexibility in the type and

different type of requirements we put in to allow for creativity in concessions from the company requesting financial assistance.

In most TIF cases, we have used the form of a rebate, where the developer must meet certain conditions, before the rebate is given, for example, the property tax value must increase by a certain figure or percentage, like at the Sycamore Mall redevelopment. Also, taxes are paid and they receive a rebate on the increment only (the increased value). At the end of the period (which have been short for Iowa City, relative to other communities) the county and the school benefit from the new dollars coming in. At last count that I recall, for every \$1 that was TIF'ed, we received \$5 in return, real money.

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.

We recently adopted a Complete Streets Policy, where all forms of transportation must be addressed if the project is of a certain size. I supported our addition of two new routes in Iowa City and the grant program to use taxicabs as part of the late night and weekend coverage to get people to and from work. In addition, I was part of a slim majority to keep the Free Shuttle in the near downtown area "free". There has been long term disagreement in the cycling community between trail vs. bike lanes, commuter vs. recreational rider. We need to move beyond that and be supportive of both in order to create a climate in this community that the bicycle is mainstream and to be respected. In order to receive that respect, then cyclist must follow the traffic rules too if we want car drivers to give respect and consider cyclist safety. We have been willing to consider consolidation of our system with others in order to maximize the service, but we can use community support and influence to persuade the other operators to consider working with us on this issue.

5. Please list your top five priorities for action by the City Council and your reasoning for each.

- ⇒ Hiring the next city manager. Our community deserves a highly qualified and professional person who is committed to our town. Our staff deserve it and our citizens expect it. I have committed to and have been working with council to ensure it is a participatory process to assist in the City Council's new hire.
- ⇒ Building and staffing a fourth fire station to improve response time, but we have to be willing to either increase the tax rate (we have held the city's portion of your property tax bill flat for the last 2-3 years) or as a community be willing to do without other services, since the community is unwilling to consider local option sales tax for municipal services. We will consider decreasing the amount of our reserve funding held, but that is not a long term solution. I am working with the Mayors of the top 10 Iowa Metropolitan Areas to address some of the municipal financing/property tax concerns with the state legislature.
- ⇒ Investing in services and projects that maintain a high quality of life and visibility for Iowa City. We have been recognized nationally for our business

climate, Senior Living, education system, arts & entertainment. Jobs bring people to the area, but it's what's available to allow us to stretch our minds, culture, and recreation that keeps people in the area and make it a special place to live.

- ⇒ Work with community to address workforce housing issues. Examine the results and recommendations of the affordable housing study and work to implement feasible recommendations.

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.

State law says that 21 is the legal age to consume alcohol. Approval of the referendum will allow law enforcement to more adequately monitor state liquor licenses and provide a more equitable distribution of officers throughout the community, rather than concentrated downtown where illegal drinking, vandalism, fights, and other problems occur and are amplified due to the ease of access to alcohol well into the night by those not of legal age. House parties occur now, pre-down town and after hours parties. If there were an increase in house parties, our neighborhood nuisance ordinance will allow law enforcement to handle those situations. Approving the legal age language in the ordinance is just one part of the community's response to addressing problems associated with underage and excessive drinking. Our substance abuse treatment and prevention professionals agree that adopting this ordinance will help in their efforts at treatment and prevention. I have spent most of the Summer and part of the Fall directly observing the problems described by the Stepping Up Coalition in the downtown area, even up until closing time in the bars. The problems and negative activities happening downtown are real, not made up. Finally, it may give the nonalcoholic alternative activities that the University and private business owners have tried over the years a chance to work.

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.

Currently, none of our board or commissions are part of our home rule charter. Only the authority for the council to create them is in the charter. The status of having the PCRFB listed in the charter doesn't make it permanent, because the charter can be amended, so permanence is a relative state. More importantly, the best example of a commission that has stood the test of time and has not been in the charter itself is our Human Rights Commission. We have had a commission all the way back to the 1960's due to concerns

about Fair Housing. We have had an active commission doing investigations and community education. The Human Rights Commission has the same net effect of permanence, while not being part of the charter.

There are several issues related to the power of subpoena. The commission wouldn't be empowered to compel any officer or individual to testify. There are Constitutional Fifth Amendment Rights that would be claimed by officers. So, the power to subpoena by a citizen commission wouldn't shed light on problem resolution.