



City Council Candidate Questionnaire

(Please feel free to attach your answers on a separate piece of paper)

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1). Road and Infrastructure funding is the top priority for the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. Our Board of Directors made it their top priority because the construction of new roads is a critical component to our community's health and long-term prosperity. Today, minimal property or sales tax revenue is used to fund infrastructure in Lincoln. This lack of support results in large, multi-million dollar gaps in funding and seriously constricts our ability to grow our economy.

How do you plan to address the need for stable general fund funding for road construction during your term?

The need for rigorous, forward-looking approach to infrastructure development has never been more apparent. Infrastructure investment is a key component of expanded employment. There is abundant historical evidence that intelligent investment in basic infrastructure constitutes the best means to secure a future congruent with the City of Lincoln values.

The funding sources that need to be explored and expanded are the following:

- **Gas Tax Dollars – Work with the State of Nebraska to return a larger portion of the gas tax dollars paid by Lincoln residents.**
- **Stimulus Money – Use the 9.4 million dollars to resurface and pave new roads in the City of Lincoln. The projects completed are then removed from our CIP and save the City general fund dollars.**
- **Urban Growth Districts – LB 85 – Support the use of bonds funded by the estimated sales tax dollars from the growth district, for the construction of infrastructure. The theory being that the investment in infrastructure will encourage development which will then grow the tax base.**

- **Improvement Districts** – The bonding of improvements in a development that is controlled by a small number of land owners. The bonds would be paid by the property owners over a period of years. The bonds would be guaranteed by general revenue funds.
- **Tax Increment Financing** – Find more flexibility in using TIF funds in districts, to allow the construction of infrastructure in areas not adjacent to the TIF development.
- **Community Block Grants** – The federal government will be expanding CBDG in the coming years. The city can use these funds to help pay for certain infrastructure costs associated with housing development.

2). Lancaster County property owners currently face a tax levy of \$2.01-per-\$100 of valuation. Of that, approx. 28-cents or 14% goes into the city.

Do you believe the current overall levy is too high, too low, or where it should be?

[AND]

Do you believe the City's current levy rate is adequate to support Lincoln's future?

During these severe economic times the property tax level should stay at today's numbers. Any increase would hurt both small businesses and all the property owners struggling in this economy.

The current rate, with declining property tax valuations and decreasing Sales Tax revenues will not be adequate to support Lincoln's future. That is why the need to expand the tax base is so important to the city's future.

3). What is your personal view on the use of TIF as an economic development tool?

The use of TIF is really the only economic tool the City of Lincoln has available. I would work to expand its use in as many ways as possible.

4). The City of Lincoln partners with the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce to operate the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. As of today, the City's contribution for marketing Lincoln, retaining and expanding our current businesses and actively recruiting new businesses to our area is \$500,000. This money leverages a matching contribution of \$500,000 from private businesses and Individuals.

Do you believe this is an appropriate level of economic development effort for the city of Lincoln?

I believe and support the level funded by the City of Lincoln. LPED is a very important marketing function for the City. As the economy improves, I believe the

funding should be increased to the necessary levels to attract business to the City of Lincoln.

5). Impact Fees were put in place to provide part of the solution to our growing infrastructure gap. Recently, the Mayor formed an Impact Fee task force to study their affect and to explore how Lincoln can better fund infrastructure.

Do you support Impact Fees?

Yes, I do support Impact Fees and with freezing increases of the fees at this time.

[AND]

If you do support the use of Impact Fees, is the current system adequate, appropriate, and efficient?

Yes I support the use of Impact Fees and no, the system is not adequate, appropriate or efficient. I support the Mayor's Impact Fee Task Force recommendations concerning the modification's to Impact Fee's.

6). A legal opinion from the City Attorney's office has allowed the Lincoln City Council to declare excess monies in the City's Special Assessment Revolving Fund as surplus. These surplus funds can then be used for other means. At current levels, the ruling produced an \$8 million windfall.

How should the Special Assessment Revolving Fund money be allocated?

I would reserve a majority of the funds as an emergency fund. This fund should be used for creating New Jobs, New Employer Developments and some types of Infrastructure Construction.

7). The City of Lincoln is exploring building a new arena in the West Haymarket. As the organization contracted to run the Lincoln/Lancaster County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the organization tasked with growing our city, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce firmly supports the arena concept.

Do you support building a new arena in Lincoln?

Yes, I do support the building of a new arena in Lincoln.

[AND]

How should it be financed?

First, approval of the arena should come from the voters, no matter what the financing arrangements.

As to the arena, the City must find a private funding source that will pay for the construction of the arena. The City should work together with the University of Nebraska and private developers to find funding solutions.

The City will need to fund the cost of improvements around the arena. However, these improvements will lead to private investment and jobs, which leads to an increase in the tax base.

8). The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce is committed to helping businesses expand their footprint and retain their presence in Lincoln. Part of that commitment is our efforts to streamline the development process at city hall. The mayor's office has offered a Development Service Center concept as a solution. The DSC would co-locate all of the needed departments in one office at city hall with the goal of better customer interaction and tracking.

Do you support this concept and support creating a Development Services Center?

Yes, I support the creation of the Development Services Center. As a member of the Development and Permitting Review Committee, I was a strong advocate to establish the DSC.

[AND]

What other ideas do you have for improving the development process?

While creating new offices and assembling staff is a good first step, there are more important aspects to the DSC. The staff must be empowered to say yes. What this means is, to often city departments do not agree on different aspects of a development. So, some departments say yes, some say no and some change their mind the next day. This leads to confusion, delays and higher costs, which in the end "Time is Money".

So the empowerment of staff to meet with developers, negotiate terms and make final decisions is paramount for success. This will improve the working relationship between the city and developers and reduce development costs in the long run.

9). There are several boards and committees that make recommendations to the city. Last year, the City's Charter Revision Committee recommended amending Lincoln's Charter so that it would ban City Council members who are business owners from holding contracts with the city. The recommendation eventually failed to make it onto the ballot.

Would you support or oppose such legislation and why?

I feel that the conflict of interest statement that was approved by the City Council is sufficient. The State of Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure covers this area completely and the Council should just follow their guidelines.

10). What is your vision for Lincoln in the next 10 years and how do we get there?

I really believe as a person closely involved in the updating of the city's Comprehensive Plan, that the plan is my vision. The growth of the city should be balanced and well planned. The success of the city depends on the involvement of all stakeholders in the community. This means that it is up to City government to lead and engage the citizens to achieve the goals set forth in the Comp plan.

To succeed the City must have strong leadership both at the Mayor's and City Council levels. That is why I am running for the City Council. The experience and education that I have will benefit me in Moving the City forward.