Responses to 2009 Woodinville City Council Primary Candidates from Concerned Neighbors of Wellington from

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1. What is your position on rezoning in Woodinville's residential areas?

I am opposed to rezoning in Woodinville’s residential areas.

Our population growth should be limited and concentrated in the downtown area. We can grow our business base by revitalizing our existing industrial and commercial areas without the need to increase density.

I am against up zoning in neighborhoods where the environmental impact clearly demonstrates that more housing would destroy salmon habitat, neighborhood character or where adequate vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic cannot be accommodated today.

I want to protect the lifestyle and environment that makes Woodinville what it is. I want to encourage responsible, low impact businesses and industries that fit our image, for example wine themed businesses, banking, and agribusiness.

2. What have you done to show support for this position?

I am an active advocate for securing a better quality of life for those of us who chose to live in this great city of Woodinville. I am the Vice President and serve on the Board of Concerned Neighbors of Wellington, a neighborhood group that was formed 5 years ago to protect the woodland character and sustainability of our environment. I have also served as the vice-chair for the City of Woodinville’s Parks and Recreation Commission and continue as a Commissioner today.

My vision for Woodinville includes a village atmosphere with a more vibrant downtown, with more varied restaurants, small businesses, shopping, and family-oriented activities. We need to preserve the character of our neighborhoods and the quality of life we all enjoy.
Woodinville, however, will be facing serious growth pressures and a greatly limited budget to deal with its needs.

3. How would you accommodate population growth in Woodinville?

We can grow the population of Woodinville responsibly by adding housing to areas that are well-served by public transportation, walking paths, bike paths, and are in close proximity to shopping and other services, specifically the downtown area. By doing so, we can also preserve the natural tree canopy, cold water reservoirs, and aquifers that sustain the wildlife and salmon who depend on them for survival.

Recent legislation demonstrates the city’s right to self-determination. We are meeting our GMA growth requirements now and with proper cooperation from the Planning Department, city staff and City Council, we can continue to meet the GMA requirement, without losing the appeal of nature and the open spaces for which Woodinville is so well known.

By continuing to invest in the Sustainable Development program that was started by the City of Woodinville, we can grow our population base carefully, without destroying the environment. (see http://www.ci.woodinville.wa.us/News/SustainableDevelopment.asp to read more on this topic.)

4. How would you preserve the character and natural environment of Woodinville’s neighborhoods?

As I mentioned above, directing city staff to continue to invest in the completion of all Phases of the Sustainable Development study is one way to ensure the natural environment of Woodinville is preserved. In addition, by continuing the Citizen’s Advisory Panel (CAP), we ensure transparency in government by encouraging our citizens to participate in forming the policies that will preserve Woodinville’s open spaces for our children and their children, too.

To be clear, I am not against development or building new homes. But, I am interested in preserving salmon streams, wildlife corridors, and buffer zones in the process of planning for future growth.
5. What residential zoning compromises would you accept, such as R-2?

Zoning ought to be determined based on the areas ability to sustain growth. This is the reason that the Sustainable Development project is so important—it puts growth where growth can be accommodated without destroying neighborhood character, water recharge areas, or nature. And it ensures that the residents can be adequately served by public transportation, schools, sidewalks, and emergency fire and police services.

Planned growth does not simply “add houses” because the land is vacant. It only adds housing where the city’s 20-year Capital Improvement Plan supports that growth by upgrading or widening roads and working with adjacent communities to ensure public transportation is available. Planned growth also ensures that Critical Areas (where the environment is especially fragile due to landslide hazard, erosion potential, inadequate fresh water recharge, etc.) is not disturbed.

Only when best-available-science supports an up zone should an up zone be approved by the City.

6. The City has a number of transportation, parks, safety, and public works projects pending, and now has reduced funding. Please rank your spending priorities for the city.

In the bigger picture, the city has to live within its means. We need to focus on essential infrastructure projects instead of appealing, but non-essential, projects. I think a public works facility and pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to downtown should be top priorities.

Large parts of our current city budget have been diverted to special interest projects that do not benefit all taxpayers. Road projects have been put on hold as less important projects have been the priority of several members of our current city council, jeopardizing our public safety and the city of Woodinville’s capital budget.

I want to balance spending so that traffic, infrastructure, and bike lanes are included in the 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan and the 20-year Capital Improvement Plan.
I’d like to work proactively with the City of Redmond, Snohomish County, and King County in order to ensure that our efforts and priorities are well understood in order to achieve maximum synergy together. After all, many of our Woodinville residents work in Redmond, Bellevue, or Kirkland and use roads that are governed by multiple agencies twice a day in the course of going to and returning from work.

7. What are your legislative and policy priorities for the city?

Long-term planning should provide the infrastructure and services our citizens have asked for, such as connectivity throughout the city for bicycle and pedestrian travel, and traffic improvements. The key long-term issue is to maintain the woodland character of Woodinville, despite the many development pressures facing the city.

I also want to support our local business community and help ensure they thrive and grow. As a small business owner for 30 years, I uniquely understand and share the concerns of our business community. We should promote the revitalization of our aging commercial and industrial areas into a business campus environment that will attract new technology-based companies. We can grow our business base without the need to increase housing density.