



2019 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

The Missoula Organization of REALTORS® is the voice of the Missoula real estate industry. Our more than 700 members would like to know your thoughts on important issues that affect them. We thank you for completing the survey.

MOR has endorsed candidates in past elections and may do so in these elections. If we consider an endorsement in your race, we may ask you and your opponent(s) to each meet with us for candidate interviews. Endorsement decisions are made by the MOR Board of Directors.

Please return the questionnaire by **Friday, July 26** to Dwight Easton at deaston@missoularealestate.com.

BACKGROUND

Name: Dakota Hileman

Office You Are Seeking: City Council Seat, Ward 3

Mailing Address: 456 Jesse Hall

City & Zip Code: Missoula, 59801

Phone: (406) 303-1546

Email: hileman4missoula@gmail.com

CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION

Treasurer's Name, Address and Phone Number: Nadine Smith, 1123 Denway Place Billings, MT, 59105.

Will you accept PAC contributions? Yes, but it depends if the organization matches both my political platform and my Progressive political values.

ISSUES

- 1) Between 2014 and 2018 the median home price in the Missoula urban area increased 28.9% from \$225,000 to \$290,000. Over that same period, the median income for a four-person household in Missoula increased 8.6%, from \$64,800 to \$70,400; however, the affordability index declined from 122 to 93. As a result, homeownership is increasingly out of reach for many Missoula families. This rapid increase in home prices is primarily because of a shortage of homes in affordable price ranges. This shortage is due in part to increasing costs of land, lot development, infrastructure, and building costs. The City of Missoula Office of Housing and Community Development recently

presented a city housing policy. The policy outlines several private and public sector regulatory reform and development incentives. **As a member of the City Council which specific policy changes would you support?**

I think one of the fundamental contributing factors to rising home prices is due to the city spending way too much subsidizing out-of-state private corporations that want to locate in Missoula and build expensive buildings, therefore gentrifying what used to be semi-affordable housing into an unaffordable area. Therefore, if I am elected, I will support new infrastructure and buildings that can benefit our city, but not at the cost of allowing for the poor to no longer be able to live in their houses. We need to be very tactful on where we build more expensive projects. Furthermore, I will be a strong advocate for building more affordable housing in the city, and this can be feasible by prohibiting more expensive building projects that raise the prices of everything around it in affordable housing areas, because I think that gentrification is truly the fundamental reason that housing costs are skyrocketing. I am also very supportive of the amendment within the housing policy that allows for a trust fund to be implemented so that we can have a more equitable city for the lower-income economic class. And lastly, I am an advocate for completely capping our taxes on the property owners at this time, because they are simply being taxed out of their homes and I see that as simply unacceptable. In capping the current tax rate that we have on our property owners, we should also be making greater strides towards diversifying our tax base to create different venues of revenue so that we are being considerate of our property owners and what they can and can't afford.

- 2) Inclusionary zoning (IZ) is a controversial policy tool some local governments have used to try to increase the supply of affordable housing. Essentially, a jurisdiction changes its zoning to require that a certain percentage of housing units within a proposed development be offered at below market price for lower income consumers. In some cases, the developer may be granted a density bonus or other regulatory incentives in return. Proponents argue that market-based incentives are not effective in creating affordable housing units and cities must mandate IZ to increase stocks. Critics say that while IZ may create affordable housing units for a few, the cost of these affordable units is transferred to consumers of market rate housing. Consequently, in the eyes of its critics, IZ may not help or may even worsen the housing affordability issue it was designed to address. **What is your opinion of inclusionary zoning and is it an appropriate policy tool for addressing Missoula's lack of housing affordability?**

Yes, I am a proponent of inclusionary zoning, because I believe that it will help the working class and those in poverty, because it is mandating that new projects create housing for the less financially-fortunate when there is a profound shortage of affordable housing currently. Ultimately, this will increase the number of affordable housing, and therefore house more Missoulians. Moreover, I think this is also a win for developers because of the subsidies the city could hypothetically provide them, and I believe these subsidies would encourage them to continue investing in our city and thus boosting our economy.

- 3) Physical and regulatory constraints on developable land including flood hazards, the Airport Influence Area, slopes greater than 25%, farmland of importance, public land,

land under conservation easement, managed land, and developed land, leaves approximately 6% of land in and around the city that is suitable and capable for residential development. Providing over 60,000 jobs, Missoula is an employment anchor in western Montana, but a quarter of Missoula's workforce lives outside Missoula County. Having a large percentage of Missoula's workforce that commutes causes monetary and social costs. These costs include fuel and vehicle maintenance, road maintenance and replacement, congestion, pollution, long commute times, quality of life and community character, health and environmental concerns, and worker productivity. Further, it is estimated that the lost property tax from commuters who live outside of the county is approximately \$6.6 million per year. **As a member of the City Council, which specific policy changes, if any, would you support to increase development in Missoula?**

One of the main objectives I have on my campaign platform is to achieve 100% clean-energy in Missoula by 2025 (instead of 2030), and as radical as that seems, it is what we need. As you know, climate change is quickly encroaching on us all, and we have to deal with it immediately and vigorously. I think that going after a huge goal like this is going to stimulate the city's economy profoundly. Within eco-innovation, building more free transportation, transitioning all city-owned vehicles to primarily electric, building solar panels, wind turbines and hydro-power, are all going to create economic stimulation that will fundamentally help grow this city immensely. Not only is it going to create jobs internally for people in the Missoula area, but it's also going to attract people from across the nation to live in an eco-friendly city. All of this will inherently also help develop more businesses and housing markets. Also, the other super cool thing about this climate action plan is that Missoula will be the climate action leader in the state of Montana!

- 4) Property taxes are the primary source of funding for Montana cities. The City of Missoula's property tax rate has steadily increased since the end of the recession and recently Missoulians have expressed surprise at increases in property tax assessment values by the Department of Revenue. Consider the balance between providing services and infrastructure and city taxpayers' ability to pay. **In your opinion, has the City of Missoula struck the right balance?**

No, the city has not created the right balance. The only reason the taxes are continually skyrocketing is because the city council is allowing for extreme gentrification in the city of Missoula, and that is not acceptable. I see the level of gentrification in our city today as a means to make the rich and powerful more wealthy and to make those in poverty inherently more poor. Of course, like I mentioned previously, I absolutely support constructing nice buildings within the city, but we ultimately need to be scrupulous on where we allow these high dollar projects to be located, so that we are taking care of everyday Missoulians. I think if we followed this parameter we honestly wouldn't need to continue raising taxes on the poor and middle class, because we wouldn't be subsidizing the wealthy nearly as heavily. So overall, no, I don't think the city has created the correct balance, but I also think that taxes are high enough and that we need to cap this current tax rate as our max rate for the time being.

- 5) City Council recently passed a resolution in support of Missoula County's federal BUILD grant application to help fund streets and infrastructure west of Reserve Street between Mullan and Broadway. Support for the resolution, at the committee level, was not unanimous and there was discussion regarding where development infrastructure should be targeted. **What is your opinion of the BUILD grant request and how much involvement do you believe the council should take in coordinating growth policy with the County?**

I think the BUILD grant is great and I'm glad that the city is applying for it again in conjunction with the county! I know that we've tried in recent years to get this grant approved for our city, but I am optimistic that it will finally get approved this year. I definitely believe that this will be a major benefit to our community at-large, for businesses, for realtors, and for the everyday Missoulian. I also believe that it is great the city and the county work together on our growth policies, because I think if we are coordinating in solving issues together and we are ultimately on the same track with the growth policy, then I believe it will be a lot more efficient. And also, we are both very close in the way that each body's policies affect each other, so I think the more we work together and the more we talk, the better!