

Open Government What are your ideas for making city government open and accountable?

One way to make city government open and accountable is to make records easily available. The records also need to be organized so it is easy to follow the sequence of events that led to a particular ordinance or decision. This especially applies to financial transactions. I believe Rapid City has taken major steps in transparency with the video and audio recordings of committee and council meetings.

Growth What city in the U.S. has done a good job of managing growth? What impresses you most about that city's management plan? What are your ideas for managing growth in Rapid City?

The city I'm most familiar with on a growth management aspect is Portland, OR. The most impressive part of their plan is the Urban Growth Boundary, and how they worked with surrounding government institutions to make it viable. Rapid City should encourage infill to property already within city limits, and consider an Urban Growth Boundary. The only way this will work is if the surrounding counties are on board, or else developers will simply build outside of and up to the boundary line.

City-County Cooperation What are your ideas about working with the Pennington County Commission to ensure the best possible growth and stewardship of the land and resources we share with the county? How can the historic divisions between the two bodies be overcome?

The Pennington County Commission and the Rapid City Common Council should collaborate to create a vision for the region that includes the urban as well as the agricultural areas. This vision needs to mesh needs of both and include a method to which we can sustain and support our regional economy, culture, and history. Historic divisions are overcome by friendly, open, and sincere communication.

Recycling How can the city improve its recycling program? Would you support a city tax on plastic bags used to carry purchases from store to car?

One way the city can improve its recycling program is by requiring private waste collection companies to separate recyclables from refuse. Currently these companies operate under the pretense that "the city separates out the recyclables." While this statement is true, anyone who takes the time to visit the MRF will see that this is a labor-intensive and low-yield process. Requiring private waste collection companies to sort recyclables will in turn place the duty of sorting at the source of the waste: their customers. This is a much more effective and efficient means of waste management.

I support a city tax on plastic bags used to carry purchases from store to car. I support this for three reasons. First, most are made out of oil and by reducing our use of plastic bags we reduce our dependency on oil. Second, only 1% of plastic bags are recycled. They easily become wind-blown and often end up in surface water, creating an environmental risk to our streams, lakes, and wildlife. Third, since plastic bags are made from oil, they have a very high BTU value. That is, there is a lot of energy contained in a plastic bag, to the point where one ton of plastic bags contains approximately the same energy as a ton of oil. Due to the lack of recycling, this equates to a major energy waste. If citizens are concerned the tax would cause them a financial burden, it is easily averted by using cloth bags.

Energy How can the city conserve energy and shift to renewable sources of energy? Does the city have an energy management plan, and to what extent do you support it?

The City of Rapid City can conserve energy through many routes. One route is to have an energy audit of all the city government buildings, and make improvements where the audit shows they are needed. The city can then keep track of how those changes are saving money, and regularly report it to the citizens of Rapid City to encourage them to do the same. One way to shift to renewable sources of energy is to invest in wind turbines and start powering the city buildings with them. Once they are proven viable perhaps we can expand the wind farm and start providing renewable energy to the entire city.

Yes, the city has an energy management plan that is directly linked on the city home page. I support it from the aspect that it provides a written guideline for energy conservation. For instance, the heating and cooling guidelines set measures so that rooms are kept cooler in the winter and warmer in the summer, which can amount to substantial cost savings. I think it can be improved by including automated building environment controls and the needs to switch to alternative forms of energy.

Water How can the city protect the creek and the aquifers from pollution? What can the city do to conserve water? How will the city address EPA requirements to control drainage into Rapid Creek?

One way we can protect the creek and aquifers from pollution by engaging in dialogue with the county to require modern septic systems in homes upstream of Rapid City. We can encourage water conservation by encouraging citizens to plant gardens with plants with low water requirements, and the city can offer property tax rebates to homes that replace their bluegrass lawns with less demanding grasses. An education program explaining how this saves money on many levels is essential.

The city is in the process of reevaluating its drainage control methods. The installation of bioswales that catch and filter the water before it enters Rapid Creek will be a major improvement.

Floodplain What is your view on construction in the 500 year floodplain? How can we provide more parking for the Civic Center Events without paving more of the floodplain?

The 500 Year floodplain extends out to many areas of Rapid City that are already developed, including most of downtown and all of the land between Rapid Creek and Lime Creek. Since most of this area is already developed, I view additional construction as infill that is essential to the future sustainability of Rapid City. If we were to suffer from a 500 year flood, our worries would be much greater than a few additional structures in that zone.

It's disappointing to see that the Civic Center's additional parking has taken our green space and replaced it with asphalt. One solution is to use existing parking lots and offer free public transportation to and from the civic center. Another solution would be to add a parking structure on the north side of the Holiday Inn.

Ducks How should the city control the overpopulation of ducks and geese in the parks?

The Waterfowl Management Plan outlines the steps the city should take to control overpopulation, and is well founded. It is based on input from specialists as well as other cities involved with similar issues. While not infallible, it contains a strong foundation of steps to control the waterfowl population at healthy levels through population reduction, population stabilization, and most importantly public education. Contrary to popular belief citizens will still be able to feed the ducks and geese; the only difference is that it will take place in designated feeding areas.

Non-discrimination How would you improve the city relationships with the Native American community? How would you support the work of the Human Relations Committee?

I believe the current Campaign to Unite forums are a great start to improving race relations in Rapid City. The key is to take what we learn from the dialogue at these forums and turn the ideas into a long-lasting mission by the city.

The Human Relations Committee consists of many well qualified professionals. We need to support their work by listening to their suggestions, and implementing them as we would the suggestions of any other qualified group of professionals.

Education How would you work cooperatively with public and private schools in the city?

We need to foster an environment where a strong and diverse education is considered essential to the community. The city needs to follow in the footsteps of other community organizations and invite speakers, educators, and programs to inspire our youth to set and achieve challenging goals. These programs must be accessible regardless of whether a student attends a private or public school.

Health Would you support a city tax on beverages containing sugar?

This question is too vague. There are many kinds of sugar, and correspondingly not all sugar is bad. Instead of spending time singling out particular sugars, I would rather spend time educating Rapid City, and especially our youth, on how to make healthy food choices.

Arts Is the city doing enough to support the arts, culture, and historic preservation? What more needs to be done?

I believe the city is taking great steps to support arts, culture, and historic preservation. With its support of the Dahl Arts Center through 2012 funding, the city helped build a jewel in Rapid City, which serves as both an arts and cultural center. By implementing a Historic Preservation Commission, the city has made a commitment to ensuring our historic buildings and areas remain places of enjoyment and source of identity.

I believe we can do more to support and promote the Lakota culture in Rapid City. I would like to see more festivals celebrating and the rich Lakota heritage and culture, and workshops educating us on the Lakota history.

Streets Are you satisfied with the condition of city streets? Ideas for improvement?

A city full of streets is difficult to maintain when there is the weather and vehicle impact like we have in Rapid City. While there will always be streets that are in a state of disrepair, I believe the city's 5-year CIP program is very proactive in mitigating these situations. One way to improve the longevity of our streets is to encourage public transportation, and alternative forms of travel, lessening an individual's impact on our road system.

Transportation What ideas do you have for promoting the use of public transportation? How can the city be friendlier towards cyclists and pedestrians?

The city is already expanding its bus routes, and making the bus system easier to understand and use. Next we need to encourage participation in creative ways. I think a "Free Friday" where all public transportation is free would encourage people to use Rapid Ride and help dissolve the stigma surrounding public transportation. The city can be friendlier towards cyclists by designating certain streets as bicycle routes and educating citizens on how to share the road. We can make streets friendlier to pedestrians by not granting sidewalk variances to developers, encouraging current land owners to fill in gaps in sidewalk systems, and ensuring curbs are ADA compliant.

Taxation Do you support the use of TIF's to increase sales tax revenue? Would you support an increase in property taxes if the city needs more revenue to provide public services? Would you consider removing the sales tax on food?

TIF's are a tool that works well if applied and used properly. I think the new TIF guidelines address transparency issues that left many skeptical with the old system.

It would be difficult to support an increase in property taxes without first ruling out all other funding sources. That being said I understand that our property taxes pay for many things that make our lives easier, and a situation may arise where increasing property tax is the most viable solution. I would have to weigh the issue when it is at hand.

Yes, I would consider removing the sales tax on food.

Wages How will you encourage businesses to pay wages that can sustain a family in this city?

One way to encourage business to pay higher wages is to create competition for the skilled, hard-working citizens of our city. One means of accomplishing this is by encouraging businesses that provide primary jobs to locate their business in Rapid City. We must find employers who see the value that common sense and a hard work ethic add, which will naturally yield a wage that can sustain a family in Rapid City. Additionally, we must not shy away from attracting companies who may compete with a company currently in Rapid City.

Accomplishments (for candidates running for re-election) What are city issues you have proudly and successfully promoted?

There are two accomplishments in my four months on city council I am particularly proud of. The first is my promotion of bicycle commuting, and planning to incorporate bicycle lanes on major streets slated

for construction in the near future. I, along with city staff, successfully lobbied the SDDOT to include a bicycle lane on Jackson Boulevard, which also led to the council directing the Metropolitan Planning Organization to update our plan for bicycle commuter routes throughout the city. The second is my involvement in Rapid City's efforts to become more energy efficient and sustainable. All in an effort to enhance the quality of life in Rapid City and in the end save money for the city and its residents.

Other What other comments would you like to make?

During my last campaign, I spoke with a majority of the residents in Ward 5, and gained an understanding of their ideas and concerns. Additionally, in my four months on city council, I have made a great effort to meet the city staff and learn their roles and specialties. I look forward to combining that knowledge in my first full term on the council. I will close by saying that serving in government takes creativity, vision, leadership, ingenuity and energy. It requires one to be approachable, and the ability to listen to your constituents' ideas and concerns and to act when appropriate. I believe I possess these qualities and abilities, and will continue putting them to use for the benefit of Rapid City.