

Fred Stewart Responses to Candidate Forum Questions

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Land Use:

1) *The residential population in Portland will continue to increase in the coming years. How can the city expand its residential population while ensuring that there are housing opportunities for all income levels?*

Portland needs a city wide economic plan that includes a focus on small and big businesses alike.

We need a stable funding pool to invest in housing, one that does not rely exclusively on outside resources such as federal and state programs. While we should take advantage of these opportunities whenever possible, a sustainable program, demonstrating Portland's commitment to low income housing, will rest on Portland's ability to fund it based on the strength of the local economy. Opportunities such as a transfer fee on properties that have tax abatements or a general real estate transfer tax have to be looked at. A 1% transfer fee assessed for the term of an abatement would allow the city to collect funds for investment in future housing objectives.

Portland needs to protect existing neighborhoods from over crowding by layering increases in density. The sustainability of an existing neighborhood should not be compromised by the development of a new one. Can we add more housing opportunities in an old neighborhood? Yes, but we have to do it the right way.

2) *The need to encourage increased employment and business vitality in the city will be critical to supporting Portland's expanding population. How do you propose to support business development in the city without sacrificing neighborhood livability and critical residential amenities such as open space?*

If Portland does not see an increase in living wage jobs, Portland will not see the growth in the population it expects. Portland has to develop deeper partnerships with small and big business and grow Portland's economy during the down cycle we are facing. This means that Portland has to be prepared to offer resources to growing and emerging small and big businesses that offer family wage jobs. We have to compete on the world market for investment in and placement of established businesses that are looking for new markets and locations. We have to make Portland the destination of choice for international businesses that offer family wage jobs to locate American based operations.

We need to restructure fees and taxes charged to favor businesses that employ Portland residents in family wage jobs. There are many businesses that do business in Portland, but employ few if any residents of Portland. While Portland does benefit from these organizations, their reinvestment in Portland is not as valuable to our economy as that of a business that is located in Portland and employs Portland.

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Transportation:

1) *Increased congestion in the city will affect the local economy and public health as well as contribute to global warming. How will you ensure that the people and goods will be able to move smoothly in and out of the city? How will you pay for these improvements?*

Portland has to commit to planning development to limit dependence on routine car travel. That means locating residential development, job opportunities, shopping and recreational opportunities to limit long commutes, and keeping core, older neighborhoods that already have residence and business in close proximity, as well as focusing more infrastructure development on mass transit and bike traffic. If we are able to make it possible for people to live in Portland without owning a car, then we will move toward both economic and environmental vitality.

2) *Pedestrian and bicycle safety are chief concerns for Northeast neighbors. What initiatives do you plan to undertake to ensure that residents can safely walk and bike to work, shop and play? How will you pay for these improvements?*

Our planning for the future lacks adequate understanding of how bike, walking and mass transit will benefit residential and commercial opportunities. Bike and walking traffic have not been the focus of our long term development plans. While it may be possible to look forward to a car free downtown, in our residential neighborhoods we will have to allow for multiple modes of transportation, while making it easier and safer to travel by bike, foot and mass transit.

Public Safety:

1) *We have seen a significant spike in gang activity and youth violence, however the East precinct continues to be understaffed and funding for gang and youth intervention programs are also very low compared to historic levels. How do you plan on addressing issues of gang and youth violence in Northeast Portland? What increase in funding for the East precinct and intervention programs do you have planned?*

What's been effective in the past is a mix of professionals, social workers, cops, etc., who stay with the task long enough to get to know the kids, those who are involved in criminal activities and their little brothers and sisters as well as the kids who are trying to go to school and get ahead. There aren't a lot of good cheap ways to do that, because it doesn't work unless you have enough people working on it. Funding is a question of priorities. How much gang violence will we tolerate before we're willing to take resources from some other city function to put an effective level of intervention on the street?

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2) *Graffiti and vandalism continue to cost local businesses thousands and thousands of dollars. What initiatives do you have planned for supporting graffiti abatement, investigation of vandalism, and the prosecution of vandals in the city?*

Again, it is a question of priorities. How much property crime will we tolerate before we are willing to take resources from other city functions to support investigating and prosecuting these crimes? I support making restitution and community service necessary components of sentencing in property crime convictions.

Neighborhood Associations:

What role will Neighborhood Associations play in your policy development and policy making decisions? What specific initiatives do you have planned to ensure that neighborhood concerns are not ignored by council?

I will work closely with Neighborhood Associations to develop consensus on a wide variety of issues facing Portland. I will also work hard to develop a funding source that will allow Portland to invest more resources in developing individual neighborhood associations. I was President of King Neighborhood Association for nearly 10 years. I know what an asset Neighborhood Associations are and I know how strategic investment in building up individual neighborhood associations can benefit Portland.

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