



Candidate Questionnaire

2020 Primary Election

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce strongly encourages engagement between elected officials and chamber members as a way to inform and to be informed on issues of interest and impact to the chamber community. Local non-partisan elections are a great opportunity to deepen our understanding of each other.

While the Chamber will not be making any candidate endorsements, we seek to inform our members and voters by engaging in dialogue with those interested in serving and representing our community. We'll offer a number of opportunities to do so in the weeks leading up to election day. The first of these is this candidate questionnaire.

We're inviting each candidate running for office on the 2020 primary election ballot (opposed or unopposed) to submit their response to the following questions in writing. These questions have been formed by the Chamber's *Business Advocacy Council*, a diverse group of business and community leaders, through a deliberative process with issues of interest and impact on our business community and our local economy in mind.

Questions and answers will be published unedited on the Springfield Chamber's digital news platforms including the chamber website (www.springfield-chamber.org), the chamber's online news *The Bottom Line* (www.springfieldbottomline.com), and in the *Member Connect* a weekly bulletin distributed via email.

If you wish to participate in this opportunity to inform and engage with the chamber community, please **submit your answers in writing no later than Wednesday, March 18th to max@springfield-chamber.org.**

Candidate Information

Full Name: Kori Rodley

Position Running for: Springfield City Council, Ward 3

Campaign Email: electkorirodley@gmail.com

Campaign Website (if applicable): <https://korirodley.com/>

Endorsements (if applicable): International Assoc. Firefighters (IAFF) Local 851; Teamsters #37; Many Rivers Group of the Sierra Club; Central Labor Chapter of the AFL-CIO; UFCW Local #555; updates on website

Personal/Background

- 1. Please provide a brief statement on your personal, professional and service record in service to and support of the business community.**

I am a life-long Oregonian, raised in a Douglas County logging family, and having spent the majority of my adult life living and working in Lane County. I attended the University of Oregon, Portland Community College, and Lane Community College; and have spent more than twenty-five years working in management--both in nonprofit organizations and small local businesses. I have been a small business owner myself, and have worked to help organizations negotiate transitions, increase revenue, and focus on growth. I am currently the Equity and Engagement Manager at United Way of Lane County.

I have served and continue to serve on several boards of directors, committees, and task forces, including my current service as chair of the Lane County Equity and Access Advisory Board and president of the Tri-County Chamber of Commerce serving Junction City, Harrisburg, and Monroe, Oregon. I currently serve as the Ward 3 representative on the City of Springfield Budget Committee and on the Budget Committee for Springfield Utility Board (SUB.) Additionally, I am involved with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce through my work at United Way and am a member of the Springfield City Club. My past service has included the Equity Committee for the 4J School Board, the Eugene Ballet Board of Directors, and the Eugene Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee (CDBG.)

Business, Economic Development, Community

- 1. In your view, what is economic development and why is it important to our community?**

To me, economic development includes the overall well-being and prosperity of our entire community. A strong, vibrant business community creates opportunities and improves the lives of the people who live, work, and play in our city. We need thriving small businesses and an environment that supports and encourages entrepreneurs, as well as livable, accessible neighbors where workers can settle and contribute to the long-term prosperity of Springfield.

- 2. What is your vision for Springfield, and what do you see as the three most significant challenges, opportunities, and solutions to achieving that vision?**

My vision for Springfield is one in which newcomers are welcome, businesses thrive, we embrace growing diversity, and we have affordable, available housing at every price point. I would like to see enrollment in our school system stabilizing and then growing. I am committed to making sure that anyone who wants to live here and do business here--and that includes people who have lived here for decades--can thrive in this community.

Our biggest current challenge is the availability of affordable housing. We have not invested in building housing at all levels and we need to work hard to create an

environment where people who want to and are able can rent and purchase homes in our neighborhoods.

Secondly, we need to invest in the infrastructure to keep up with our growing city--this means everything from road and sidewalk repairs, increased ADA compliance in our public spaces, transportation infrastructure, and making a plan for crumbling and outdated buildings. We are outgrowing some of our spaces (i.e., the public library) and it is up to our elected officials to make a plan and lead efforts to make sure our infrastructure not only keeps up with current growth, but that we also have a plan for the future.

Thirdly, as someone who has spent a fair amount of time looking at both the City of Springfield and the Springfield Utility Board budgets, we need to have a financial plan for the future. The impact of PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) as well as the costs of needed future infrastructure investments will impact our budgets substantially. We need to prepare for these budgetary challenges with creativity and focus.

3. What role does/could the Chamber of Commerce play in implementing that vision?

I believe the Chamber of Commerce plays a huge role in the implementation of this vision. Private enterprise, for example, is key to tackling our housing crisis. It is less expensive, quicker, and more efficient for local businesses to help address these challenges. The effort to improve our infrastructure also relies on local businesses and workers to drive that progress.

A thriving and healthy business community is one of the main harbingers of a vibrant city. The Chamber's focus on economic prosperity and creating a welcoming environment where diverse businesses can grow and succeed is absolutely critical to achieving a Springfield in which newcomers are welcome, businesses thrive, we embrace growing diversity, and we have affordable, available housing at every price point.

4. How do you plan to engage the business community in the city's priority-setting and decision-making process?

I believe the business community plays a key role in the helping to drive and inform both

setting priorities and helping to make decisions regarding strategy, plans, and projects. Partnerships with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce and other professional, trade, and entrepreneurial networks are part of a thriving relationship between local government and the business community. I will continue my approach of including diverse voices at decision-making tables and involving stakeholders at all levels. I prefer to approach problems and challenges from all levels and be as informed as possible and

the diverse opinions and contributions of business owners and the business community are an important part of that process.

Public Policy for Investment, Spending, Taxes, and Fees

5. What is your affordable housing strategy or policy proposal?

I would like to see Springfield partner more with county and regional projects and work to encourage housing development at all levels. We seem to have been focused on either supportive housing using state and federal funding or high-density, high-cost housing (market rate apartments) in recent years and have done little or nothing to encourage smaller, affordable housing development for first-time or empty-nest home buyers. Additionally, the building of “middle housing” --townhomes, duplexes, etc. would allow for our aging population of homeowners who are ready to down-size to do so--making other housing available for family and younger homebuyers. We need to explore renovation of existing neighborhoods and preserving some of the older, post-WWII neighborhoods that have been the most affordable in Springfield.

6. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of any proposed public infrastructure investment? Feel free to offer an example.

I am someone who wants to look at challenges and opportunities from all possible angles, and hear differing opinions in order to get a solid understanding. Things that are important to me when considering public infrastructure projects are impact--in terms of people and interconnectedness with other projects and partners; cost and benefit (including what sort of revenue-generating opportunities exist); the long-term viability (what will upkeep and maintenance cost?); how does said project or investment either compete with or complement other planned projects? What will be the benefit in terms of jobs and revenue to local businesses, workers, schools, etc.?

7. How would you balance new construction with rehabbing, expanding, and better utilizing our existing residential and commercial spaces?

Both renovation and new construction are important to revitalizing our city and solving our affordable housing crisis. I would emphasize renovation as a key to better utilizing existing residential and commercial spaces. In order to make more middle-income housing affordable for family and first-time homebuyers, we need to explore renovation of existing neighborhoods, such as the Paramount district. We do have quite a bit of existing commercial space that is under-utilized and there is great opportunity to renovate. Rehabbing increases density and usage. For example, going from a primary commercial space to a mixed-use space including housing, retail, office, warehouses, etc. all in what may have been a warehouse space. Our beloved Booth-Kelly Center is a perfect example of successful implementation of rehabilitation of commercial space.

Additionally, I believe that better-utilizing existing spaces, buildings, and commercial lots helps to keep expenses in check--there is less need for new roads, sidewalks, utilities, etc. if we can work within existing framework.

8. **Do you believe major tax and fee increases should be referred to the voters? (some recent examples: safety, payroll, carbon or other emissions/climate tax, corporate activities tax, etc.) Please explain why or why not.**

Whether a major tax or fee increase should be referred to the voters depends on the project or the tax, and the circumstances surrounding it. At a city level, the answer can really depend on the need, the time-frame, and the rationale.

9. **What strategies or policies would you support to control government spending that effectively lessens the need to increase taxes, fees, or other charges.**

I find that often controlling spending is really a matter of prioritizing and looking to leverage existing resources. I tend to prioritize people over things when it comes to spending and look for ways to build creative collaborations to control expenses.

10. **What would you do with an unexpected \$1m budget windfall, and why?**

What a fabulous dream! Having seen first-hand the challenges of the city's budget, I would first look at shoring up for long-term expenses/obligations and look to using the money to help us catch up on deferred infrastructure issues. I would also invest in economic development incentives in order to leverage this revenue to encourage the building housing.