

Candidate Information:

Full Name: Gregg G. Ybarra

Position Running for: City Council Ward 6

Campaign Email: gybarraward6@gmail.com

Campaign Website: www.gybarraward6.com

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've lived in Springfield for over 30 years, specifically in the Thurston area for over 25 years. I shop and hire local. I support the business community by owning rental property in the Thurston area. When there is property needs, I hire local contractors. There are six families living in these units. They too support the community and our local economy.

Business, Economic Development, Community

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

My view of economic development is seeing sustainable business growth and advancements in the well-being of the community. Economic development is important, and so is how a community pursues supporting business, educating citizens, and investing in infrastructure. A healthy business environment will keep and attract businesses. A healthy business community benefits everyone through more tax revenues and employment opportunities.

- 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 to grow responsibly. **"Springfield: Growing, Improving, Inviting. A great place for everyone to enjoy."**

That said - We need to properly plan the growth.

Urban Growth Boundary challenges will require proper planning by the City Council, Mayor and City Employees to address future infrastructure needs. Request for state funding and staffing will require community input and the support of the business community.

Supporting our critical infrastructure is one of the most important responsibilities of City Council. We can't put off maintaining what we currently have. Rehabbing and maintaining will enable us to function and grow.

Finally, maintaining our budget without raising taxes. In a time of low interest rates, municipal bonds are a potential solution to fund government projects. Funding and retaining Police, Fire and Life Safety personnel. Finding ways to fund these vital services without wasting taxpayer money will be the biggest challenge during a time of growth.

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

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce offers industry insights and how Springfield business leaders see the future of Springfield developing. It's in the City of Springfield interest to have the backing of the business community.

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

Most definitely working with the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce is a good start. Immediate response from chamber personnel with assistance is a plus. The Chamber will be a valuable ally. Websites, e-mail and small group meetings will be employed to communicate with the business community to obtain feedback and ideas as well.

As City councilor, I will uphold my duty to make decisions that are in the best interest of the Springfield community. I value the ability of the private sector and will work with business leaders to set goals and visions. I welcome all recommendations for the future of our community and will consider them when goal setting.

Public policy for Investment, Spending, Taxes, and Fees

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

I would pursue a policy that speeds up the permit timeline for multi-family residential projects for affordable housing as well as expand public transit to allow those in affordable housing to get to their jobs.

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

When determining the effectiveness of any infrastructure project I would consider how it impacts the immediate area, the business community, potential population inflow and logistic providers. For example, if we wanted to grow the business community down Highway 126 (Main Street East), I would consider how a business could connect with their office or warehouse to Interstate 5, can they buy a lunch near their office, can they live with their family in the general vicinity. These things are important to businesses looking to relocate and for employees who may want to live in the community where they work.

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

My plan for balancing new construction with rehabbing, etc. involves acquiring vacant or underutilized spaces in Springfield, then put them on the market. I would entice builders, investors, etc. to build affordable housing units on these lots.

New construction is as important as maintaining the investments we have already made. When determining between a new development and a rehabbing project, I would consider the services and area that the existing development supports, and what the new construction has to offer. However, new development will generate new tax revenues that can finance rehab projects.

Bottom line: This is a good issue to have. If Springfield is building, it means Springfield is healthy.

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.)

I believe the taxpayers should have a say in how they are taxed, and the voting process is important. However, the City Council position is an elected **leadership** position. When put in a position to lead...Lead! Referring decisions to the voters is time-consuming and cost money. As a Counselor I should reflect the views of the majority of my constituents. These are my neighbors, friends, co-workers, business associates, fellow church members, etc. I will act in their best interest. If the decision is not viewed favorably with the voters, they can always vote me out come next election. That's the beauty of our electoral process.

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

My strategy to control spending is to be transparent. We should give citizens a user-friendly way of seeing how the City of Springfield is spending their money. There should be a more direct way of citizens voicing their opinions and expressing what they consider waste. Shine a light on it and either explain its value or get rid of it. People don't mind paying their fair share, but they don't like paying taxes for things that don't make sense to their specific community and neighborhood.

I would explore issuing bonds to finance major projects. I don't like debt, but this strategy would prevent raising taxes.

10. What would you do with an unexpected \$1,000,000.00 budget windfall and why?

I would direct some of the one-million-dollar windfall to outstanding needs identified in the current budget.

- a. Police body camera funding – A portion of the money will purchase body cameras. Having cameras will increase the safety of the public and police, improve accountability, prevent false accusation of misconduct and can be used as a learning tool.
- b. Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Planning – Springfield can use the some of the money to continue the planning process, which is extensive.
- c. Police and Fire & Life Safety funding – A portion of the money will go towards personnel health. What does the City need to do to keep these people healthy (stress related issues)?
- d. Fix up parks – Springfield citizens are known for their outdoor activities.