



Applicant for Missoula County Commissioner Vacancy Questionnaire 2015

Missoula County Democrats believe **“the well-being of future generations is the primary responsibility of government and the lens through which policymaking in areas as diverse as energy, transportation, education, health care, human rights and taxation should be focused.”** We are asking you to complete this questionnaire to highlight your views. Questionnaires should be returned, with the resumes and letter of interest, to Todd Mowbray at secretary@missoulademocrats.org no later than July 17th before the Missoula County Democratic Central Committee applicant forum and meeting on July 28th at 7:00pm in the City Council Chambers. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

Name: Shantelle Gaynor

Political Party

X Democrat ___ Republican ___ Independent ___ Other Party ___ Prefer not to say

Contact Information

Address: 605 Woodford St.
City and Zip Code: Missoula, MT 59801
Phone: (406) 531-9822
Email: shantelle.gaynor@gmail.com

How long have you resided in Missoula County Commissioner District #2 - 8 years.

Are you planning to run for County Commissioner in 2016? X Yes ___ No

I am currently planning on running for County Commissioner in 2016. However, if another candidate is selected for the Commissioner position and they demonstrate themselves to be a collaborative, thoughtful leader, who is dedicated to hard work and making a positive impact within Missoula County, I will support his or her run for the seat in 2016. I am committed to strengthening the success of Missoula County as a leader and as a team player.

If not, have you endorsed another candidate for that seat? Who? - N/A

What are your credentials for running as a Democrat?

I am a lifelong Democrat and have dedicated my career to public service with a focus of developing and strengthening services to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence. My public service has encompassed local and state program and policy development, providing direct services, community organizing, and education, and the development of public and private funding for projects and programs.

Although the focus of my work is to improve the response to survivors of sexual and domestic violence, I firmly agree with the Missoula County Democrats' statement that **“the well-being of future generations is the primary responsibility of government and the lens through which policymaking in areas as diverse as energy, transportation, education, health care, human rights and taxation should be focused.”** Additionally, I share the values and support the ideas enumerated in the Montana Democrat Party Platform (adopted in 2014). I support the protection of our agricultural heritage, ensuring the representation of both rural and urban needs; advancing climate change prevention and risk management; promoting the advancement of socio-economic conditions of American Indians; upholding our right to a clean and healthful environment; working for fair and equitable taxation and budget policy that provides adequate funding for services; and supporting free, fair, and open elections. I believe in fostering economic development that promotes good jobs, with livable wages, in safe conditions, and equal pay for equal work.

I support the right to collective bargaining. I believe that the criminal justice system plays a critical role in our communities and should increase community safety while holding offenders accountable through multiple means, including alternatives to incarceration for non-dangerous offenders. Policies and services must strengthen all families and communities and ensure access to the basic necessities of life including health care, education, shelter, adequate nutrition, and lives free of violence. In addition, we must ensure that our veterans, elderly, and individuals living with disabilities have access to support and services within their communities. I believe in well-funded, quality public education. I am pro-choice and I support the Supreme Court decision upholding marriage equality. Finally, I am a passionate advocate for respect, fairness, and dignity in all areas of public life. I am committed to the elimination of harassment and discrimination, and ensuring that all people are treated equally before the law, regardless of race, gender expression, religion, age, sexual orientation, language, national origin, physical or mental ability, or marital status. Although I have never held elected office, I have contributed to furthering many of these goals both as a volunteer and financial donor to several organizations that engage on these issues.

Please list people who have endorsed your candidacy:

Sue	Malik	Montana State Senator
Michelle	Reinhart Levine	Former Montana House Representative
Erin	Lipkind	Missoula County Schools Superintendent of Schools
Martha	Newell	
Suzie	Estep	
Amy	Rubin	Attorney, Rubin & Reis Law Firm
Barbara	Berens	
Lucy	France	Attorney, Engaged Citizen
Olivia	Riutta	Member, Bonner Milltown Community Council
'Cilla' Ann	Moseley	Member, Swan Valley Community Council
Miles	McCarvel	Organizer, Ironworkers Local #14
Andrew	King-Reis	Professor of Law, University of Montana
Gyda	Swaney	Associate Professor of Psychology
Kitty	Feliz	Social Worker, Native American family advocate
Debby	Tatsey	Social Worker, Native American family advocate
Emily	Salois, MSW, ACSW	Native American family advocate
Kelsen	Young	Sexual and Domestic Violence Expert
Robin	Turner	Attorney, Engaged Citizen
Aaron	Brock	Engaged Citizen
Keegan	Flaherty, MSW	Engaged Citizen
Bonnie	Buckingham	Executive Director, Community Food and Agriculture Coalition
Don	MacArthur	
Heidi	Wallace	Youth leadership, Engaged Citizen
Amy	Capaloupo	Disability rights advocate
Sonya	Germann	Forrest management/Resource conservation specialist, County resident
Jessica "Pippa"	Browde	Attorney, Law Professor
Kim	Brown-Campbell, EdD, LCPC	Campus Assault Prevention Coordinator
Marty	Ludemann	Law enforcement, Engaged Citizen
Roy	Savage, Jr.	Veteran Outreach Advocate, US Navy Veteran
Traci	Sylte	Hydrologist, County resident
Amy	Martin	
Audra	Loyal	Small business owner, County resident
Caroline	Temple	Small business owner/Mental health professional

Kelly	McGuire, MSW	
Drew	Colling	Counselor
Ron	Liszak	Retired
Martha	Kimmich	Retired
Grace	Decker	Missoula County Public Schools Trustee

What is your vision for Missoula County’s future? Please elaborate on short-term goals (over the remainder of Commissioner Carey’s term) and long-term goals as well as the means available to achieve these goals.

My vision for Missoula County is to promote smart government that operates in an efficient, transparent, and cost-effective manner, with equal access for all county residents. Exemplary services are provided by dedicated and highly-skilled employees to solve problems and improve the lives of our residents. We will accomplish this through: open communication and collaboration with other government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the business community; through innovative, evidence-based approaches; and by focusing on the long-term environmental and economic wellbeing of the community.

Short-Term Goals:

1. Develop a Missoula County Strategic Plan

County services can be expensive to provide and there is a strong demand for growth in many areas. However, without a systematic analysis of problems and possible solutions, priority may be given to areas that *seem* to be our worst problems because of the visibility of a particular issue or the strength of organized advocacy to address a particular problem. Additionally, there is an ongoing challenge within Missoula County to ensure that the divergent needs of our rural and our urban communities are met. Finally, many departments and organizations within Missoula County have their own strategic plans that can appear to compete with each other for resources. While these plans are valuable, they are also limited in scope and are not unified under a single vision or plan of action. A comprehensive, strategic plan will help balance the response of the County and meet the myriad needs and challenges in our community in the most efficient, collaborative, and transparent manner.

As a new County Commissioner I believe that it is important to listen and collaborate with current leaders to realize our long-term vision by setting goals and objectives in a systematic, incremental manner. A strategic plan is a common-sense tool that will assess current efforts and chart a course to maintain and/or improve desired services for our citizens. A plan will help Missoula County leaders make decisions for allocating human and capital resources to achieve the identified goals, strategies, and objectives. Further, a plan encourages collaborations, partnerships and creative thought among County leadership, partners, stakeholders, communities and citizens. Finally, a plan clearly communicates the County’s intended direction over the next five years with a built-in mechanism for accountability by reporting back regularly on our progress to the community. Future policy and budget recommendations will be tied back to the plan. I will work to build support for this initiative with the other County Commissioners and elected officials, the Missoula County Leadership Team, and stakeholders. Strategic planning consultants are often utilized to develop plans because they are neutral players in the process, can ask hard questions, and keep diverse groups on track. I support identifying funding to hire a consultant to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process.

2. Adopt the Updated Missoula County Growth Policy and Subdivision Rewrites

County Community and Planning Services has been updating both its subdivision regulation and growth policies. Substantial work has already been completed and has included a substantial review of old regulations, extensive community outreach and engagement, and inclusion of stakeholders. Commissioners have been reviewing and approving sections of the rewrite as they have been completed. The County must finish this process in a timely manner to ensure clarity and predictability for our community. I will work with County officials and staff to evaluate and finalize this important process.

3. Implement research and initial planning for a Family Justice Center to provide co-located criminal justice and social services to victims of sexual violence, dating and domestic abuse, stalking, and sex trafficking.

Many communities have created “one-stop-shops” for victims of sexual and domestic violence to access critical services. These are often called “Family Justice Centers” where advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers are co-located to best meet the needs of victims. Numerous studies show that this model leads to more victims feeling supported and participating in their criminal justice cases, that workers better support each other and share knowledge and information which leads to less burn-out and higher job performance, and that over time, severe assaults in a community decline because of better outcomes in holding offenders accountable. Currently a small-scale effort to co-locate a prosecutor, law enforcement detectives, and advocates is underway. With proper planning, space, and funding, these efforts could be expanded and include needed social services as well. Initial planning will include meeting with City and County officials, department heads of City and County criminal justice agencies, stakeholders, and focus groups with individuals currently using criminal justice services. Simultaneously, a search for funding opportunities and technical assistance will be conducted. Further implementation will likely take more than one year.

Long-Term Goals:

The County must be problem-solving, innovative, and balanced in serving our city, towns, and communities through collaboration. Our County is as big as some states and our needs are as diverse. Outside of a comprehensive strategic plan, I support the following long-term goals:

1. Enhance funding of County services and ensure that they are accessible to everyone who needs them with a focus on healthcare and social services, and emergency and first responder services.
2. Strengthen the response to victims of sexual violence, dating and domestic abuse, stalking, and sex trafficking with the full implementation of a joint City-County Family Justice Center – a single department with co-located services provided compassionately and conveniently.
3. Provide continued investment in affordable housing with sustainable funding. Also provide continued support to homelessness prevention programs such as tenant-based rental assistance, the County’s winter-shelter program, and provide on-going support to area supportive housing programs.
4. Provide continued and increased investment in infrastructure that supports economic development by enhancing the quality of life of all Missoula County residents.
5. Support the development of a community climate action plan to help mitigate the effects of climate change in Missoula County.
6. Support efforts to provide housing for chronically homeless people, which will save our community millions of dollars that are currently being spent on services when they are most expensive – in the emergency room and in jail. Reallocate those funds to build housing for those who are often hardest to serve.
7. Support efforts to eliminate jail overcrowding. I support the work that is currently being done on this and am proud that County and City elected official have been active leaders on this issue.

Why do you want to be a Missoula County Commissioner?

I have a deep commitment to improving my community and enhancing the quality of life for all citizens of Missoula County. I want to serve as Missoula County Commissioner because my unique set of skills will benefit the Board of County Commissioners and our communities across the County. I believe that *how* we do business is as important as *what* we do. I am an active leader, with years of experience creating smart solutions to challenging problems through the respectful sharing of ideas, careful analysis of complex problems, facilitating collaborative processes, strategic planning, and evaluation of outcomes to create lasting change.

What leadership or board experience has prepared you for serving on the Board of County Commissioners?

My leadership experience and skills coupled with my commitment to ongoing learning and collaboration have prepared me to serve on the Missoula's Board of County Commissioners. I currently serve as the Division Manager for the Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services (RVS) which is a division of the Missoula County Department of Grants and Community Programs. In this position I analyze complex community problems, research promising practices and evidence-based solutions, foster collaborative relationships with partners both within and outside of government, develop annual budgets, secure funds and support from state and federal agencies, implement solutions, and evaluate results. I supervise a staff of advocates, community educators, and system coordinators working to end relationship violence and transform our community.

In addition to my work with Missoula County, I have also served on numerous advisory boards and boards of directors, including as a Director on the Healthy Indian Families Council, as the Vice President for the Federation of Missoula County Employees (MEA-MFT), and the President for the Missoula Family Violence Council. I am a current board member of the Learning Center at Red Willow and a board member of the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. I also serve on the University Council on Student Assault, and Missoula County's Justice System Team Response Advisory Board. In these roles I have overseen the development of organizational policies, budgets, staff development, and program development.

Finally, I serve as a grant reviewer for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, which allocates over \$200 million dollars annually to programs around the United States and U.S. Territories. I was selected as a grant reviewer because of my expertise in program development, efficient delivery of services, and knowledge about sexual and domestic violence.

What do you see as the three biggest challenges facing Missoula County and what would be your objectives in facing those challenges during the one-year appointment, if appointed?

- 1) The need for County services is greater than our current capacity to fund them. In the current (FY 2016) budgeting cycle County departments have requested over \$5 million dollars in enhancements to meet these needs and include infrastructure, technology, staffing, and social services. Developing a strategic plan will help Missoula County leaders make decisions for allocating human and capital resources to achieve the identified goals and objectives and guide the annual work plans of County departments.
- 2) Missoula County is perceived to work slowly with limited interagency cooperation and efficiency. The Fairgrounds have come to symbolize this inefficiency for many citizens. Government action must include a robust public process, but it must also accomplish its stated goals. I will work to reduce barriers to action and hold County staff accountable to providing the highest level of cooperation and service.
- 3) Finally, Missoula County must balance the needs of our urban core with our surrounding unincorporated, rural areas. Missoula County is greater than the sum of our parts. Our agricultural and wildland areas bring local food to our tables as well as offer world-class recreation opportunities. Our urban core is a regional hub of shopping, services, education, and job creation. All of this together is what makes Missoula County great. As a Commissioner, I will build on our shared values and desire for a healthy, strong County to find common ground and shared solutions.

Following the City of Missoula and the University of Montana, the County is working with the Department of Justice in a settlement over the prosecution of sexual assault, how would you ensure that the county's actions go above and beyond the basic requirements?

I have worked in the field of sexual and domestic violence intervention and prevention since 2002. I have attended over a thousand hours of advanced training in this area. I designed and implemented the first prevention programming at the University of Montana, worked as a community organizer and trainer on these issues in Seeley Lake, facilitated the design and implementation of the nationally and internationally recognized Make Your Move | End Sexual Violence campaign and I manage Missoula's City-County

Relationship Violence Services. The following are priority areas to ensure that the Missoula County response to sexual violence goes beyond the basic requirements:

- **FORMALIZE INFORMATION SHARING**

The Justice System Team Response Advisory Board is comprised of leaders from the many criminal justice agencies and service providers in Missoula City and County but does not have any formal authority to recommend policy or action, nor is its work routinely reported to elected officials to help inform them of emerging issues, or best approaches to solve problems. This Board should be formalized and its mission expanded to provide information and recommendations to our elected officials.

- **FUND OUR RESPONDERS**

Many of our criminal justice departments are underfunded and lack appropriate staff levels and/or training to meet the growing demand for services. Missoula County needs a long-term funding plan to ensure the health of these agencies and ensure that the training that has been delivered to date is continued into the future. As staff turns over, we need to ensure that the next generation of advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors have the training that they need to continue to deliver excellent services.

- **INCREASE ACCESS TO SERVICES**

Discussed above as a short-term goal

- **EDUCATE OUR COMMUNITY**

The Missoula Safety and Accountability Audit identified community attitudes about rape and sexual assault as a barrier to achieving successful prosecutions of these crimes. People sometimes react with skepticism or shift blame to the victim when they learn about a sexual assault. Long-held beliefs on gender roles and other societal stereotypes can contribute to myths and misperceptions about sexual assault. To combat this society-level barrier, we must invest in education programs and marketing campaigns to engage our community and challenge these beliefs. These long-held beliefs do not change overnight, however. We need a long-term, sustainably funded campaign that delivers multiple messages, from multiple sources, over time.

- **PREVENT VIOLENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS**

Related to education about rape myths and misperceptions, we need to invest in long-term prevention programming as well. Healthy Relationships education can begin in early childhood around healthy friendships and positive communication and span all the way to college where individuals are educated on how to be an active bystander who can help intervene if a harmful situation is unfolding. We need to design, fund, and implement a comprehensive K-College prevention plan.

Missoula County has had to pay out millions in settlements recently. How could the County Commissioners help county departments, and other County Elected Offices reduce harmful court cases and costs?

While Missoula County has been a party in several lawsuits, I challenge the notion that they are harmful. The civil court system is an important tool within society to seek redress when you are harmed. If the County operates in such a way to cause injury or breaches a contract, then it should be held accountable. However, the County should work diligently to avoid causing injury or breaching contracts. The County has written policies and procedures in place, follows State and Federal laws, and operates in good faith in regards to employees, citizens, groups, and organizations. To help ensure that staff are knowledgeable about their duties and reduce the incidents of lawsuits, the County should further invest in training for staff and supervisors. In addition, the County has many subject matter experts on staff, in areas such as human resources, civil and criminal law, and land use. As problems arise, County officials should ensure that these experts are consulted in an attempt to remedy problems before they rise to the level of a lawsuit. Finally, the culture of an organization can greatly affect how decisions are made by staff and supervisors. County officials must continuously cultivate a culture of respect based on openness and responsiveness with a firm commitment to solving problems. That culture begins with the County Commissioners.

Due to diminishing Federal and state support, local property owners have had to pick up the tab on basic infrastructure. What are your opinions for Local Option Tax including the Local Option Gas Tax?

A Local Option Tax such as a Gas Tax will have numerous benefits across the County but must be carefully considered. Local option taxes have a better chance of success at the ballot box when expenditures and uses are clearly defined and the community is involved in identifying needs that should be met. (As an example East Missoula and Bonner experience traffic congestion and parking problems throughout the summer as people head to the river to recreate. A bus shuttle in the summer may help improve road safety and relieve congestion, illegal parking, intoxicated driving, and trespassing on private property. A gas tax could help support this effort and meet an identified need.) I am in favor of a gas tax being placed on the ballot for voter approval, however, distribution or revenue between the City and County would have to be negotiated before the measure is voted on to ensure an equitable distribution of collected revenue will be available for projects in communities across the County.

What, if any, tradeoffs do you see between agriculture and development? What, if any, regulatory approach should be taken given the tradeoff you perceive?

Agriculture lands and development can co-exist when there are smart plans for growth, where valuable soils are identified and protected, and where developers, farmers and ranchers, and community planners work together. Some communities have seen the benefits from a relatively new model for suburban development called development-supported agriculture with farms serving as a way to entice potential buyers to settle in a new subdivision. In the planning process of a new neighborhood, a developer includes some form of food production – a farm, community garden, orchard, livestock operation, edible park – that is meant to draw in new buyers, increase home values and stitch neighbors together. In these cases, development near agriculture lands was a win-win. Missoula County has many of elements in place already with many incentives to protect agricultural lands while allowing for smart development. We have developers who recognize that a single house per acre is not a good investment, we have engaged organizations like the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition that develops and strengthens Missoula County's food system and that of the surrounding region, and we have thoughtful, dedicated staff in the County Community Planning and Services office that are experts in smart development.

However, Missoula County has seen loss of agricultural and ranch land, producers, infrastructure and the cultural heritage associated with these activities in the past even though there are several regulatory tools and local governments are both required and empowered to mitigate impacts to agriculture during subdivision review. In fact, the County Commissioners have the responsibility and duty to protect, enhance, and develop agriculture. Missoula County is in the midst of rewriting its subdivision regulations. Agriculture design standards and mitigation options are currently being reviewed and slated for completion in the Fall of 2015. This process is based on community consensus as much as possible. (Public comment on the Draft Framework – Agricultural Standards closed July 3, 2015.) I support the Draft Framework's assertion that there should be a suite of options available to preserve agricultural land including mitigation fees, design and land set-aside options, and support for voluntary efforts to protect agricultural lands (such as conservation easements).

How would you use development regulations to ensure a sustainable pattern of development?

Zoning and subdivision regulations are key tools to ensuring sustainable development. The current rewrite of the County subdivision regulations and Growth Policy will strengthen the ability of the County to ensure sustainable growth. The Growth Policy is designed to, "seek to protect the natural landscape and open spaces that are important to Missoula County, while preparing for the growth that is projected for the county and promoting the economic wellbeing of its citizens. Toward this ideal, the Growth Policy establishes goals, objectives, implementation strategies, and performance indicators."¹ As a Commissioner, I will monitor and evaluate how successful we are in meeting our performance indicators. Based on

¹ <http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/mccaps/MCGP/Docs/2015-1-26MCGP-DiscussionDraft-Goals.pdf>

performance, Commissioners, planners, and planning board members, can identify problems or barriers and act to eliminate them. Additional regulations may be needed to meet sustainability goals. I would need to consult with experts on staff and in the community and hold public forums to evaluate and weigh the best course of action to achieve sustainable development. Outside of regulation, policy can help ensure a sustainable pattern of development. Specifically, the County should support the City's development plan to focus inward. The County must remain committed to protecting our natural resources and agricultural heritage. Finally, the County should continue to support regional growth plans of our rural communities – such as the Lolo and Seeley Lake plans by working with community councils and providing needed infrastructure to support localized growth in those areas.

How would you work to build a spirit of shared community between the diverse segments of Missoula County, especially the rural and urban parts?

Developing a comprehensive strategic plan is one way to build a spirit of community. When diverse members of a community identify shared values, work towards a shared vision of the future, and focus on common ground it creates connectivity and community. All residents would be encouraged to participate in developing a comprehensive plan – through surveys, meetings, charrettes, etc. Outside of a planning process, a sense of shared community can be fostered through ongoing communication efforts. It is incumbent on the County to ensure that it is communicating about challenges and successes to all segments of the County through accessible means – from the use of Twitter to newsletters and newspapers. Through this level of communication, the County can also celebrate the strengths of both our rural and urban communities to foster pride in our whole county. Finally, the best way to build a strong sense of community is through strong relationships. As a Commissioner, I would visit with as many constituents and community groups as possible, throughout the County, to discuss concerns, issues, and problems. Through active listening, open and respectful dialogue, shared stories and experiences, and a commitment to strengthening relationships, I will link diverse people in diverse regions.

Missoula County recently decided to appoint, rather than assign to an elected clerk and recorder, election administration duties. Would you support making the election administrator an elected official again? And how will you evaluate the effectiveness of elections office as it exists today?

The role of election administrators is significant as they oversee all aspects of conducting elections and implementing election policies and procedures and it is vital that the person who safeguards our voting process is responsible to the voters. While I support making the election administrator position an elected official, I also recognize that the County needs to ensure that our election administrator has professional expertise as the complexity of elections has increased significantly, especially since the 2000 elections. Further, studies show that partisan election administration increases the risk of disenfranchisement while non-partisan election administration boosts faith and confidence in the electoral process and promotes fair and accurate electoral results. The process for changing the Clerk and Recorder position to a non-partisan position will take several years and must be accomplished at the legislative level. The current administrator is working under a three-year contract with Missoula County. During this contract, the Commissioners will review both her performance and if the appointment position structure is working effectively. Voter turnout and voter satisfaction are key indicators to evaluating the effectiveness of the office. Comparing turnout from year-to-year (recognizing that years with Presidential elections have much higher turnout), and reviewing complaints and how they were resolved will reveal significant information about the effectiveness of the Election's Office as it exists today. In addition, the County Commissioners established an Election Advisory Board. Reports from the Board on the effectiveness of the position and any voter complaints or problems are important in the evaluation of the performance of the election administrator. Finally, the Commissioners must hold public meetings on this issue as part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the position. While Missoula County has enjoyed talented and competent election administrators, it is critical to ensure that positive outcomes are not a result of any one talented individual, but because a system or process is in place that ensures accountability and competency over time.

What are your plans for economic development in Missoula County?

Strong economic development relies on a strong public-private partnership and must encompass multiple strategies. Missoula County's strongest asset is the quality of life that is enjoyed here. Our biggest need for attracting more companies to invest here is workforce development. Missoula County must continue to invest in infrastructure by building, maintaining and enhancing our transportation, communication technology, and our water and sewer systems. I support programs such as the State Revolving Loan Fund, the Treasure State Endowment Program, Community Development Block Grants, and the Community Transportation Enhancement Program to improve water, sewer, and roads. Additionally, we need a diverse economic activity in which people earn a living wage and earn equal pay for equal work. Our local labor unions do much to fight for these types of jobs while also working for safe work environments. Best value contracting is a tool that local governments can use to support these efforts. Finally, I support Missoula County's ongoing partnerships with Missoula Economic Partnership, Bitter Root Economic Development, and the Big Sky Trust Fund to attract business investment and reduce barriers for industry in Missoula County.

What is your opinion of the amount raised and allocation of the County levy to support poverty reduction efforts?

Missoula County allocates just over \$1.2 million from the "poor fund" to help fund community-based organizations that support the basic needs (such as food, housing, and medical services) to our most vulnerable residents. The County purchases these critical services from local non-profits who can deliver the services efficiently and effectively. Local non-profits can also use the monies that they receive as match to leverage additional grant funds, thus making the investment go even further. However, the demand for services is increasing from year-to-year and budgets are shrinking. Additionally, identified needs, such as the "housing first" program for the chronically homeless are going unmet. Each of these programs is critical and the dollars that are provided by Missoula County are an investment in preventing even costlier problems that can develop needs go unmet. Increasing revenue to meet these needs should be evaluated and considered. These efforts are not designed to reduce poverty, but rather they serve as a safety net. True poverty reduction efforts would likely include supporting a living wage and labor protections, supporting paid leave for families, reducing student debt and making education affordable, supporting efforts to enable senior citizens to remain healthy and living at home, etc. Missoula County would have to research and develop an evidence-based plan to implement initiatives or programs to *reduce* poverty.

The guiding principle of the City of Missoula's growth policy for five years has been Focus Inward. What, if anything, should the County Commission do about that?

The County Commissioners can play a role in supporting Missoula's "Focus Inward" growth policy even though the City and County have separate growth plans. One area that the Commissioners can encourage growth that is in-line with the City's plan, is by appointing members to the Consolidated Planning Board who support this vision for the City while also representing the needs of County residents. (The County's growth plan, which is currently being updated, must be responsive to County residents as it will cover all of Missoula County except the area within the city limits of Missoula.) As an example, the County has a surplus of approved plats for a single dwelling on one acre of land. Members of the Planning Board can recommend that no more of these plats are approved as they can contribute to sprawl. In addition, County Commissioners can continue to encourage and support cooperation between the County and City planning and development offices. County planners already work closely together to resolve issues and reduce duplication with City planners while ensuring that County developments meet City standards for urban development, such as including sidewalks, gutters, and streets when that development is expected to be annexed by the City. Finally, the County Commissioners can continue to support the development of County parks and trails. These amenities are tremendous assets to those living within the urban core as they provide easy access the natural landscapes and recreational opportunities that provide many of the reasons the residents live here and enjoy a high-quality of life. These amenities support a vibrant urban core and sustain inward growth.

Should the County Commission continue its support for replacing the Maclay Bridge at North Avenue with a bridge at South Avenue?

The continued support for replacing the Maclay Bridge at North Avenue with a bridge at South Avenue is warranted, with on-going scrutiny and monitoring of the project to ensure that there is proper environmental review and mitigation. Additionally, it is critical that the bridge and the roadways leading up to the bridge are designed to support bike and pedestrian facilities and appropriate landscaping. The need for a new bridge is well documented. Repair of the existing bridge at North Avenue would cost millions of dollars over time with diminishing returns – much like trying to maintain an old car. Additionally, the concerns of increased neighborhood traffic from commuters driving to Missoula on U.S. Route 93 seeking to bypass the Brooks/Reserve Street intersection is unlikely to develop into a problem. Traffic studies have identified that the type of trip is a determining factor for route selection. For work/commuter trips the length of the route and routes with higher average speed are key determinates for drivers. U.S. 93 is both the most direct and fastest route for commuters. Further, the Montana Department of Transportation will cover most of the costs of designing and engineering the bridge itself and has waived the requirement that the County foot 25 percent of the bill until the project is completed. Finally, in April, 2015, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution to affirm its commitment to the completion of the South Avenue Bridge. Without extraordinary reasons, there is little that can be done to reverse this course of action that has already been committed to.