

Jon Buck
Candidate – Mayor
Littleton Business Chamber Candidate Forum 2021

1) What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the downtown Littleton area? Give us three positive and three negative responses with a short explanation.

- a) Historic – enjoying the very area that Littleton’s residents have experienced for generations is something we should all be proud of.
- b) Uniqueness – Littleton’s downtown is a distinct area in the South Denver Metro area that any municipality would long to have within its borders
- c) Amazing potential – feasible, informed, and bold decisions can turn downtown into a regional draw for economic boom for generations to come
- d) Used primarily as a secondary thoroughfare for most of region’s residents – the more people just past through to save a few minutes, the more they ignore the area for patronage
- e) Negative parking perception – having an expectation of store front parking causes a negative perception of all other parking options
- f) Lacking a cohesive vision for its future – downtown will bend to loudest voices without strong leadership

2) What is your priority for development in the city and why?

The priority for Littleton needs to be the revitalization and utilization of current spaces and land. Littleton is unable to expand outward to meet any residential and/or commercial needs, which requires our leadership to be smart and informed about the options we do have for managing growth and future needs. There are many areas of our city that are in desperate need for revitalization, particularly in the commercial sector and multi-family residential areas. Numerous business areas that were at one time thriving commercial centers are now mostly-empty spaces that will continue to decline if no intentional changes are made by city leadership to revitalize. Community-empowered clean-up efforts in specific areas in most need will also go far to bring pride back to areas that have let trash and disrepair become the norm.

3) The Littleton Business Chamber (LBC) advocated for a \$.50 tax increase to be placed on the ballot in November, City Council voted for a \$.75 increase. LBC has requested that the City Council sunset the \$.75 tax increase down to \$.50, after the city has met its capital improvement requirements. Are you for or against sunsetting \$.25 of the tax increase? Explain why or why not.

I am for the sunsetting of the \$.25, whether it is tied to a timeframe expiration (fifteen years for example) or when certain capital improvement requirements are met, as mentioned in the question. The reason for my support of the sunsetting is that it will require our city to do a better job of being wise and intentional about our budgeting process going forward, knowing that we must find new revenue solutions and become more efficient with our expenses in the

timeframe until the sunseting occurs. City leadership has the opportunity to take an honest look at the realities of the path that Littleton is on, which is a path currently that will lead to decreases in mobility, safety, and hometown enjoyment in the very near future if no drastic changes are made.

- 4) Other than the proposed sales tax increase, what three steps would you take to get the City in a more stable financial position?

Nearly four-fifths of Littleton's total revenue comes from sales and use tax (79%). Thus, an informed and honest city leader knows the importance of intentional commercial support for businesses within Littleton. Financial stability must primarily consider a thriving commercial sector for revenue health. My first step towards this end will be to work to create and improve distinct commercial spaces throughout the city that emphasize walkability and experience, including the regionally-unique Littleton downtown area. Second step will be to further invest intentionally in draws to our city for regional residents and Littleton's residents, particularly in noticeable infrastructure health, care for our city's natural beauty and landscape, and emphasis in arts and culture. Finally, financial stability requires taking the step of wisely cutting bloated expenses that do not line up with Littleton's vision for its future.

- 5) Why do you feel you are the best choice for City Council? Why should someone vote for you?

I am running for Mayor because this is a critical time for our city's future, especially with the critical issues we are facing in our land use code and its implementation, budgeting, wide-spread infrastructure needs, economic opportunities, amongst many other issues. What our city doesn't need is just more of the same, particularly the old system of City Council that was based on leadership practices which expected to simply "get their turn" to be Mayor instead of earning trust from the voters of our city separately. This practice unfortunately led to a leadership model that for far too many Council members wasn't based on making informed courageous decisions, but politically-driven decisions catered to agendas, squeaky-wheels, and finally getting their "deserved" position as Mayor. We have a chance to change that semi-nepotistic system once-and-for-all by how Littleton's citizens vote for Mayor.

What our city needs in this critical time is a strong leadership presence, one that is capable of listening to every stakeholder and can objectively weigh each voice to determine the best path forward. Littleton needs clarity and collaboration in this critical time. My experience personally and professionally brings exactly this. With over a decade of experience in founding, leading, and sustaining collaborative efforts in our community, I have the skills and know-how to consider the wide-range of voices and opinions and to inspire our community to direct our efforts into effective positive changes, while preserving what makes Littleton great. My role in leading a local nonprofit requires daily decision making, strategic planning, and system management, all of which are pressing needs for our city's leadership roles.

- 6) What is your plan to involve businesses outside the “football” in your decision-making process?

Since our city’s revenue health is significantly tied to the health of the commercial sector in Littleton, it should be a no-brainer for all of city leadership that the voices and perspective of businesses within our city limits are heard and factored into city decisions. Historically, Littleton’s reputation with businesses has been positive, but in recent years with shifts in our political landscape, that reputation has taken significant hits in ways that have discouraged companies from seeking business in our city and stifled the health of businesses that already call Littleton their home. With all of this in mind, my plan to involve all businesses within Littleton in order to ensure that the collective voice of business owners is more-intentionally considered in the city’s decision-making process going forward.

- 7) How do you plan to get input regarding business in Littleton other than through City staff?

Though City Council members can certainly improve initiating the conversation with each individual business sector, it is impossible to gather the voices of all businesses individually, especially with the limited time commitments expected of City Council members based on Littleton’s governance mandates. Thus, the most effective way for this input from business to City Council is for the businesses themselves to continue to strengthen their collective voice, being clear on what the city can do to improve the commercial sector’s health and what factors continue to impede success for business owners. Accurately understanding the perspectives of businesses throughout our city is of critical-importance, so my plan in this area will be to empower and encourage the consideration of the collective commercial voice however the city can help, initiating that understanding within sustainable means.

- 8) What would be your plan to handle the increasing issue with the homeless disrupting businesses and how would you expect the police department to handle these problems?

What is needed in this area is a clear mandate and ruling from City Council on this issue. Since the Mayor’s fundamental role is to facilitate City Council meetings and to vote like other members on issues, my plan will be to first gather information and data on the severity of this issue. With the necessary data gathered from businesses affected that clearly shows the disruption, I will then initiate the conversation showing the real concern and effects, facilitating a robust conversation with City Council concerning the creation of laws if needed and the enforcement of said laws by citizens first and then by the Police Department if necessary.