

Paul Bingham
Candidate - District 3
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.

Positive: 1. Many boutiques, coffee shops and trendy restaurants have been developed in the Historic DownTown, HDT, area which are attracting a variety of people from outside Littleton, including tourists, to the area. Good for business.

2. This is an attraction to people who live here also, causing us to frequent HTD more often. Also good for business.

3. Some of the housing development in HDT, while not supporting our "Community Character", have provided more housing which supports more shopping in HDT.

1. The increased traffic is awful. And it is getting worse.

2. The increased interest is causing increased interest in expanding existing building's sizes, especially in height. This is not necessarily good.

3. The increase in boutiques, etc, has caused some essential services to leave HDT, stationary, hardware, clothing, etc for example.

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

a) New residential homes. This would be my 2nd priority. We can use more, in a variety of sizes and affordability. We need some affordable housing

b) New commercial business. This is my third priority. We need new commercial business to help our city prosper.

c) Revitalizing and utilizing current spaces. This is my first priority. This can include small businesses, homes, and the city's buildings. It can include "Economic Gardening" that Cris Gibbon used to practice so well to revitalize small businesses. We need to support our small businesses - they are Littleton's backbone.

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 testified before city council for the 0.5% option as being the safer alternative of the two for the ballot. As an item that "we have to pass." And 0.5% provided the necessary funds. Council voted otherwise, reasoning that the extra amount would prevent the city from asking for another higher rate for a long time.

Sunsetting the "extra" 0.25% after the city has met it's Capitol Fund requirement is OK with me. The Sunsetting idea was part of the original discussion.

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

1. Our city needs a more diverse revenue base. We are relying on retail sales tax and need other sources of income. I would work to figure out other sources.
2. The city's new Priority Based Budgeting shows signs of helping the staff do a more efficient job of budgeting. I support that.
3. For years we've talked about a Lodging tax. I support passing that and the newly discussed increase in the retail Marijuana tax.

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

I've lived in Littleton for over 50 years. During and after retiring from Martin-Marietta I have been engaged with our city. Evidence of that is having received "Citizen Of The Year award twice; 2017 and 2020-21. I am a Mechanical Engineer, cum Rocket Scientist. For the last 15 years I've attended every city council meeting. I know what they've done, what they are faced with now, and how they operate. I feel that I have a wealth of experience and knowledge of Littleton with which to serve our city on city council.

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

1. In District III I'm involved with business outside the "football" almost daily. I talk with them now and will increase my communication with them.

Also, reading the monthly city Revenue Reports as I have for years, I get an insight on how different areas are prospering, or not.

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

I'd do that the same way I do now, by listening only I'd increase my doing so. I'm considering having District meetings like Council Member Carol Fey has done for the last 4 years. While well attended, almost no small business owners came to those meetings.

Also, reading the monthly city Revenue Reports as I have for years, I get an insight on how different areas are prospering, or not.

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?

My plan would be to support the Tri-Cities Homelessness Policy Group. Their Action Plan was approved by city council on Tuesday, 9/21/2021. I was involved in their activity with Denver University in collecting data a couple years ago.

I do not expect our fine Littleton police to handle our homeless problem. They will be part of any attempt at a solution of course. And our police have started using mental health workers in their contacts with the homeless.

In addition I would seek support for building lockers in which homeless people can secure their belongings. Until they can find housing, securing their few belongs is one of their main problems. Yes, this would draw the homeless but it might be incorporated into a "Bridge House" that council discussed at their last council meeting.