



E-REP 2022
CANDIDATE
QUESTIONNAIRE
**COUNTY
COUNCIL**



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QUESTION 1:

What sort of changes – positive or negative – have you seen in the County’s finances as we emerge from the pandemic?

ANSWER 1:

Due to careful spending and early planning, the County was well positioned to weather the financial challenges associated with the pandemic. Vanderburgh County saw increased revenue in the Highway and Local Roads & Streets funds. Our local option income tax revenue also increased as local businesses offered wage increases to recruit and maintain staff.

QUESTION 2:

What are your top 3 funding priorities to protect or increase and what makes them your focus?

ANSWER 2:

Public safety is a top priority. I’m dedicated to providing our officers with the tools they need to insure our safety. The jail expansion and added court space are both long overdue. These projects will reduce overcrowding at the jail and increase efficiency in our judicial system by allowing jury trials to move forward. Investing in roads and infrastructure will help attract new industries and bring jobs to the County and I supported a \$7 million road re-paving plan to be completed in 2023.

QUESTION 3:

The business and civic community have set a goal to increase the total population of the region with particular emphasis on those in the 20 to 34-year-old age group. What sort of investments in programs or infrastructure do you believe can be made to help attract more people to the region?

ANSWER 3:

Oak Grove Road economic development and increased expansion at the Promenade in Burkhardt Road TIF area. Sewer expansion on NE Boonville New Harmony & I-69 to allow for developing infrastructure along the I-69 interchange corridor. I am confident that these improvements will create good, affordable housing as well as provide quality of life such as walking trails and entertainment venues.

QUESTION 4:

The County Council plays a significant role in guiding and approving economic development incentives. As you consider future development projects, what do you think are the most important things to consider in granting incentives and what types of incentives are you most supportive of?

ANSWER 4:

The number of full-time jobs created, wages and benefit packages, if local contractors and labor will be used and the total investment in real and personal property are key considerations when a tax phase-in is requested. I support road expansion, sewer and water infrastructure incentives in addition to tax phase-in based on the county’s established scoring system.

QUESTION 5:

What is your priority issue you plan to champion during your term on the Council?

ANSWER 5:

Public safety, continued efforts to keep taxes low, economic development along I-69 and Oak Grove Road, improvements at Burdette Park and participating in the fundraising efforts to renovate the historic Veterans Memorial Coliseum will be my priorities.



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QUESTION 1:

What sort of changes – positive or negative – have you seen in the County’s finances as we emerge from the pandemic?

ANSWER 1:

The county received \$35 million through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), most of which has been allocated, including \$10M for broadband, \$5M for sewer upgrades, \$3M to upgrade the coroner’s office, and \$13M plus for jail expansion. The positive impacts of these expenditures will ripple through our region for years, but ARPA will not be repeated. We will have to work hard to sustain these initiatives in future budget cycles.

QUESTION 2:

What are your top 3 funding priorities to protect or increase and what makes them your focus?

ANSWER 2:

If ARPA funds are not sufficient to complete the roll-out of broadband across District 1, that will be priority one. High-speed internet is essential for landing and keeping high-paying jobs.

Meanwhile, electric bills in Evansville have increased 45% over the past 5 years. I will vote in support of renewable energy projects to bring down utility costs.

Finally, we must incorporate technology training into our education programs, not only in our schools but in our workforce training.

QUESTION 3:

The business and civic community have set a goal to increase the total population of the region with particular emphasis on those in the 20 to 34-year-old age group. What sort of investments in programs or infrastructure do you believe can be made to help attract more people to the region?

ANSWER 3:

First, if we want to increase the county’s younger workforce, effective high-speed internet will be key. Second, we need to support “quality of life” projects. Partnering with the city on its “Complete Streets” initiative would help make our neighborhoods more accessible and, frankly, joyful. Finally, while the County Council has no direct involvement in events planning, we should be supportive of everything from Frog Follies to live-music “porch festivals” and beyond.

QUESTION 4:

The County Council plays a significant role in guiding and approving economic development incentives. As you consider future development projects, what do you think are the most important things to consider in granting incentives and what types of incentives are you most supportive of?

ANSWER 4:

The County Council works with several organizations to promote economic development, but on its own, one of its few tools is tax abatements, mostly under the umbrella of TIF (Tax Increment Financing) districts. Vanderburgh County operates five TIF districts, but at present, only one of these has provided significant positive returns. Promoting and expanding development in the four under-performing TIF districts is an area I intend to explore further if elected.

QUESTION 5:

What is your priority issue you plan to champion during your term on the Council?

ANSWER 5:

I will work to bring down our county’s unacceptably high energy costs, and I will push to incorporate technology training into both our schools and our workforce. Finally, we need to address the complicated issues of mental health and substance abuse, both of which drive up our incarceration rates and make it difficult to operate our existing and future jail facilities. For details, please visit my website: <https://www.karenreisingforcountycouncil.com/platform>.