

District Two Supervisor Candidate Questions

Presented by the Save Our County - Joint Coalition

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El Dorado county's five elected Board of Supervisors hold positions with the potential to impact nearly every aspect of life in our county. Whether it's business owners, homeowners, parents, employees, senior citizens, or tourists - it is the local level of government that we must interact with most closely.

Because of this, it is vital to know each of the candidates thoroughly before an election takes place. Familiar names and even previous experience hold less value than the articulated thoughts, intentions, and plans of each individual who wishes to be selected to serve the voters of our county in such an influential manner.

The following questionnaire will be presented to each candidate running for Board of Supervisor in District 2. These questions are intended to facilitate a sense of transparency and open communication between the candidates and the voters. We greatly appreciate the time taken by each candidate to provide detailed responses to these questions.

Kevin W. McCarty – Candidate for District 2 Supervisor

1) Statement: An elected El Dorado County Supervisor represents the interests of the people within his or her district.

1) Question: If elected, how do you plan on keeping abreast of the people's views on important issues impacting your district? Be specific and detailed in your answer and include frequency of meetings and locations.

2) Answer: I will supplement physical presence at community meetings with a regular forum in the form of a video call (Zoom / Google Meet) either monthly or biweekly, with an open opportunity for any and all D2 residents to discuss issues of concern, either pertaining to an item coming up for review by the Board, or other items not currently on the agenda but should be. Just as Zoom has made government processes more accessible for the average citizen since the pandemic era, I would utilize this option to make my office more accessible to those who may not have the time or resources to visit my office in person. I will also be available for one on one phone calls as needed.

2) Statement: The Commercial, Industrial, and R&D Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirements were approved by the voters in the 2004 General Plan and subsequently modified by the Board of Supervisors within a couple of years. The modifications increased the overall FAR in El Dorado County by more than 250%. This change alone has opened the door for massive projects such as the recently proposed Amazon distribution center in El Dorado Hills.

The FAR limits the overall square footage of a building on a given lot. By increasing the size requirements of these types of projects, impacts to aesthetic footprints, traffic, the number of individuals in the buildings daily, and our precious water supply are also greatly increased. The voters approved the FAR to protect and maintain our rural county.

1) Questions:

- a. Will you support restoring the FAR requirements to the limits which were approved by voters in 2005?
- b. What are your views on the BOS changing a voter-approved document that was promised to the voters in order to protect the county's rural environment?

2) Answers:

- a. Yes, I would support restoring the FAR requirements to those which were approved by voters.
- b. Land use development documents that are approved directly by the voters should only be altered mid-term when there are extreme / exigent circumstances which would cause an undue hardship to the relevant community if upheld. The hardship of a specific project applicant is not enough of a reason to alter the General Plan. Important revisions that may arise should be put before the voters to decide as a ballot measure / referendum.

3) Statement: In 2016 El Dorado County voters approved Measure E concerning roads and traffic congestion. It is designed to restrict commercial, industrial, and residential developments that could negatively affect traffic.

1) Questions:

- a. What are the key aspects of the voter approved Measure E, and why do you believe they are important to our rural county?
- b. How does Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) measure the potential traffic congestion with proposed projects?
- c. What would you do to ensure enforcement of this voter-approved initiative?
- d. Do you believe that Measure E safeguards our county from excessive traffic brought on by large housing projects?
- e. Do you believe that housing developers should pay for the necessary road improvements to mitigate traffic congestion as a result of the new development?
- f. If allowed road capacity is exceeded as a result of a proposed project would you deny the project?

2) Answers:

- a. Measure E reinstated some key factors of voter control over new residential growth, specifically curtailing the power of the Board to authorize development projects which would impact traffic congestion levels, as well as the ability to allocate county funds for such purposes.

- b. VMT is a way to measure traffic impacts by the underlying element – people driving vehicles to and from places – rather than simply measuring traffic congestion (Level of Service). It was implemented as a way to grasp the impacts of development projects proactively, to encourage land use policies and planning which would reduce the cause of traffic, rather than just mitigating the effect of congestion, for example, by adding lanes to a highway.
- c. Some elements of Measure E were struck down by the courts in 2017, specifically those limiting the financial authority of the Board, as well as language which some argued would make developers pay more than their ‘fair share’ of costs to improve road infrastructure. The remaining elements still stand and serve as an important voter control on the influence of large corporate developers. I would ensure that these principles are adhered to, and work to find solutions to the transport infrastructure problem using State and federal funds, in conjunction and alignment with relevant community stakeholders.
- d. Yes, I believe Measure E safeguards our county from excessive traffic brought on by large development projects. I believe that the Board needs to find solutions to the traffic infrastructure problem without circumventing the authority and intent of the voters, and that this can be achieved without allocating resources from the general fund.
- e. Housing developers should pay for the necessary road improvements to mitigate traffic congestion resulting of their development. As noted by the court in 2017, there are limits to how much can be demanded, but the principle stands. The question for us as a community is: how do we bridge the funding gap if developer fees are not enough to pay for the required infrastructure upgrades? I believe El Dorado County residents pay enough federal taxes to justify appropriation of the required investment capital. Until they are sufficient, we are obligated to deny any large new development projects that would impact traffic.
- f. Yes, per the terms of measure E, I would deny any project which violated the Level of Service (LOS) F for a designated roadway as a result of its construction.

4) Statement: Projects approved by the Board of Supervisors do not always align with all aspects of the General Plan which is designed to protect the citizens of El Dorado County. In many cases projects are recommended by staff and then approved by the BOS without full alignment to the General Plan.

1) Questions:

- a. How would you ensure that projects coming before the BOS align with the General Plan requirements?
- b. When, if ever, is it legitimate to override the General Plan?
- c. What will be your decision-making process when projects do not align with the General Plan?

d. Under what circumstances would you deny a project that does not align with the General Plan?

2) Answers:

- a. As a resolute proponent of smart development, I would require all large development project applicants to first hold a public forum in which members of the community could provide input and any discrepancies with the General Plan be identified and explained. It is in the interest of the developer and the community for all these concerns to be addressed upfront, it is otherwise a waste of time and energy for an application to get all the way to the Board only to be denied. The community meetings should be loudly advertised, and all concerns should be brought forward in the beginning of the process.
- b. It is appropriate to override the General Plan if the majority of the affected community is in support of a proposed amendment / variance. The General Plan is designed to protect our communities, and if they are willing to change it, then the Board should reflect their will.
- c. Projects that do not align with the General Plan will be judged according to community feedback, as noted in answer (b) above. There are other potential exigent circumstances which could bear on the decision, such as imminent needs of the wider community (emergency services facilities, for example) but absent such factors, consent of the surrounding community is of paramount importance.
- d. As with the above answers, if the community does not support a non-aligned project and it serves no imminent need for county services, I would have no choice but to reflect that consent and deny the project.

5) Statement: The General Plan protects the many aspects of El Dorado County lifestyle cherished by residents and visitors alike.

1) Question: What are the top three important parts of the General Plan from your viewpoint? Your response should explain why they are your top three and how they protect the citizens.

2) Answer: In my reading, the top three elements of the General Plan are Land Use, Transportation / Circulation, and Housing. All of the other elements are undoubtedly critical factors in ensuring smart growth, but the above elements are inseparable from the rest, and of pinnacle importance no matter the context. Land Use is what guides the distinction between areas of urban development versus rural areas, and also the hubs serving the rural areas of the county. Without this element, we have no means of preserving rural character because it would be unidentified. Transportation / circulation is the element underpinning Measure E and the threshold beyond which no additional development is tolerable. Nobody can live in a community unless they can effectively access it via roadways. Housing is of course how all of us live here, or anywhere. I believe our children and grandchildren have a right to live in the county they grow up in, as well as a reasonable amount of newcomers who appreciate our community and

environment enough to join it. A certain amount of new housing is always needed, and the job of the County government, and the Board of Supervisors in particular, is to make sure this development aligns with all of our other community priorities.

6) Statement: The grand jury recently called out the county Planning and Building Department for its inefficient and draconian permit approval and tracking process. The TRAKiT implementation system which tracks projects was approved in January 2017, but six years later the software still does not work, and negatively impacts residents.

1) Question: What steps would you take as Supervisor to correct this problem and ensure departments are operating efficiently and with the public's interest in mind?

2) Answer: This is an issue that seems simple but has enormous consequences for the average property owner, and for our larger community housing needs. As one who manages projects throughout several jurisdictions in California, I can say with confidence that even if eTRAKiT is successfully implemented, it is still a defective system which will not serve the needs of its customers – our community. As Supervisor I will give one last shot to staff to fully implement the system, and if it cannot be done within 6 to 12 months, I will vote to terminate the contract and engage a different system provider, such as Accela. Streamlining our permit review system is the single most important aspect needed to fix our housing crisis, and I would accept no excuses for further delays or malfunctions in the eTRAKiT system.

7) Statement: Many residents want responsible development but believe that past County Supervisors and senior County Administrators have had a reckless disregard for the interests of residents who want to preserve the rural and semi-rural quality of life in this county.

Decreasing housing density, larger minimum lot sizes, decreasing FARs, decreasing building height limits, decreasing traffic levels of service and, mandatory developer-paid road improvements are all ways to slow growth and preserve the quality of life that El Dorado County visitors and residents expect. Sadly, the County has been doing the just the opposite.

1) Questions:

- a. Do you support any or all of these types of measures?
- b. What would you do to decrease traffic congestion and density?

2) Answers:

- a. I support all the above-named measures. There are certain regions of community development which warrant special standards, but in the rural regions of the county, all these measures are appropriate to consider.
- b. I believe that streamlining our permit review system will enable residential growth to be more spread out across the territory of the county, thus placing minimal strain on existing transportation and services infrastructure. For our

community centers, I would spearhead the effort to seek State and federal funds to bridge the funding gap for roadway infrastructure improvements.

8) Statement: The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) should be one of the first steps for a proposed project in the county. Prior to a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) the TAC should assess the proposed project's benefits, impacts, risks, and major concerns. This TAC report should be presented to county officials and the public, so the citizens can voice their opinions prior to a developer spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a full EIR.

1) Questions:

- a. What do you think should be the major requirements of a TAC report?
- b. How should the TAC report be presented to the citizens in the district?

2) Answers:

- a. TAC is essentially a preliminary meeting for all relevant county departments to review a project and offer feedback as a basis for the land use entitlement conditions. This gives the applicant a chance to address the comments proactively and ensure the discretionary use can commence upon application approval by the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission. As one who has experienced a TAC meeting, it is a useful venue for applicants and staff to engage prior to the drafting of a project report.
- b. A successfully implemented online public records system would allow for citizens to access all relevant information for a project without undergoing an arduous records request process. El Dorado County is woefully deficient in this regard, and I would press relentlessly as Supervisor for our online records systems to be updated and made accessible for concerned citizens.

9) Statement: Water supply is one of the top three concerns of county residents. EID presents an in-depth report every five years, and issues status updates every year. EID refuses to present the five-year water in-depth report to the general public at a time when concerned residents can attend and have a two-way conversation with our public utility.

1) Question: What would you do as Supervisor to make this a requirement of EID?

2) Answer: EID publishes its Comprehensive Annual Report, five year Capital Improvement Plan, and five year Financial Plan on its website, which contain a great deal of detailed information. That said, if there is evidence of any withholding of relevant information to the public, I would be willing to investigate further. I am committed to the principles of transparency and accountability within all aspects of my professional life and will continue to do so as District 2 Supervisor.

10) Statement: Currently, expanding the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) is determined by new growth approved by the Board of Supervisors. EID's debt is around \$400 million

dollars, mainly due to expanding for development, of which cost is transferred onto the back of ratepayers. EID does not have a debt ceiling or cap.

1) Questions:

- a. Do you think ratepayers should continue to pay for developer expansion?
- b. Should the Board of Supervisors be required to consider the cost to ratepayers when approving developments?
- c. What do you feel the Board of Supervisors should do to make water more economical for residents, businesses, and agricultural users?

2) Answers:

- a. Ratepayers should only be responsible for financing developer expansion if they are allowed a thorough opportunity to voice their concerns and feedback. If subject ratepayers believe a particular development is in their interest, then EID rates can justifiably be accepted as a necessary cost. Otherwise, we need to find alternate ways of funding EID infrastructure.
- b. Yes, the Board should be required to consider costs to ratepayers when approving developments; if not, they are derelict in their duty to the public.
- c. There is no doubt that a significant amount of capital is needed to maintain and expand our water supply to residents, regardless of any additional development that may be incoming. However, there are also many items in the EID budget for recreational and discretionary uses which are not related to essential services. These items should be financed via fees collected from the users of the respective recreational services. The primary EID budget should be allocated strictly for essential services, and the major capital improvement projects (hydroelectric, waterline replacement) should be spread out over several years to mitigate cost increases to ratepayers.

11) Statement: The homeless situation in El Dorado County has the citizens concerned for the safety of the homeless and all that entails, as well as the safety of residents and business owners.

1) Question: What are your thoughts on the homeless problem in El Dorado county and what would you do to address the situation?

2) Answer: Homelessness is the result of many factors both on an individual and society level which has reached epidemic proportions in many part of our state. As someone who commutes regularly to downtown Sacramento, I see tent cities on virtually every sidewalk, and terrifying instances of drug-induced psychosis daily. There are certainly many cases of people who have “fallen on hard times” and sleep in their vehicle while trying to rebuild their life, and these people deserve our compassion and assistance in getting “back on their feet” with stable employment, shelter, and purpose in life. That said, most of the visible cases of homelessness are inextricably linked to severe drug addiction and sometimes schizophrenia. We need to keep the mental health component at the front of our mind in dealing with this problem, although it is also true that other states with higher per capita rates of drug addiction do not have the same level of homelessness as California

because their housing options are more affordable. On the latter aspect, this is just one more reason why we need to fix our permit system and make housing affordable again. On the former aspect, we should let our law enforcement officials perform their duties in conjunction with mental health / addiction services staff to get people the rehabilitation that they desperately need, not just incarcerate them.

12) Statement: Many residents envision their children being able to afford a home in the county where they grew up. However, rising home prices and interest rates have largely priced them out of the market.

1) Questions:

- a. What solutions to this problem do you support?
- b. Where should affordable housing be built?
- c. Define what affordable housing means to you.

2) Answers:

- a. This is the most important issue of my campaign since it is the one issue which the County has the most control over and affects the greatest number of people, especially young families. As a father of two daughters and in the process of building a home, I am acutely aware of the financial hurdles to homeownership for millennials and Gen Z, and there are several things that I intend to pursue as District 2 Supervisor. Overhauling the Planning and Building Department is the keystone element which must be confronted to streamline the construction permitting process for small landowners. I also support looking at an array of ordinance revisions which would facilitate small residential construction, whether ADUs, secondary homes, or owner-build tiny homes. I support the implementation of Title 25 “the owner builder code” beyond just the area of Grizzly Flats impacted by the Caldor Fire. I am committed to making the ADU permit process streamlined enough that an average resident can navigate it easily and swiftly get approval.
- b. Affordable housing in the sense of large multifamily development should be limited to Community Regions per the General Plan, which in District 2 would be Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills. For single family dwellings, we should have an abundance of options available for young people and new families to choose from, as the natural result of a streamlined permit review process. These single-family residences can and should be spread out across the beautiful rural areas of our county, which would distribute the additional demand for services so that the impact is marginal and does not disrupt the existing balance in our established communities.
- c. Affordable housing means different things to different people, but under the State definition of under 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) this in El Dorado County would imply a single person making \$68,340 or less annually, equivalent to a full-time wage of \$32.85 per hour. A person at this income level is typically a skilled tradesman or otherwise likely to be on salary. Per federal government definition, housing is “affordable” if it costs no more than 30% of monthly household income for rent and utilities. At the \$68k income

benchmark, this equates to \$1,708 per month. The average asking rent for 2022 in our county was \$1,644 per month which leaves \$64 for utilities. Nobody even in a small apartment can afford water, gas, electric, and communications services with just \$64 per month. We need a Board of Supervisors that is willing to act (not just talk) so that landowners can build ADUs and secondary homes and bring down average asking rent prices.

13) Statement: Public interaction with the Board of Supervisors is limited to a 3-minute one way conversation on an agenda item or during Open Forum. In addition, Open Forum is scheduled for 1:00pm while people are working and unable to attend without taking time off work.

1) Questions:

- a. What are your thoughts on changing the public feedback so it's more conducive to the residents' busy schedules?
- b. How can the 3-minute rule be changed to accommodate more in-depth feedback required for complicated topics?
- c. What opportunities could be created for the general public to have a two-way conversation with the BOS on selected topics?

2) Answers:

- a. I am open to ideas from the public as to how the feedback process at Board meetings can be more accessible to working people. Off the top of my head, I would think that we could move the "open forum" section to the very beginning of the meeting agenda, so that people can either visit in person or call-in at the start of the day, and then have the rest of their day free to work or otherwise spend as needed. Having this section in the middle of the day is inconvenient and requires people to take off half or even a full day just to be a part of the conversation, which I agree is inappropriate.
- b. I would be amenable to increasing the 3-minute rule across the board, but particularly believe it is appropriate for each citizen to have at least five minutes to provide input on agenda items that have the potential to impact communities or otherwise represent a large allocation of the county budget. The Board has done this on certain occasions, so it can be done more often, if there is consensus. I will advocate for longer comments as Supervisor.
- c. The Planning Commission has had several "workshop" items over the course of 2023 which enabled multiple rounds of public comments and more of a two-way conversation to explore complex topics. I believe it would be appropriate for the Board of Supervisors to do the same and be open to calling up members of a public input panel to get in-depth information and feedback where the issues at hand require more thoughtful analysis.

14) Statement: Development pressure continues to build in the southern portion of El Dorado Hills resulting in a loss of open space and significantly increased traffic. Open

space south along Latrobe Road would appear to be a target for developers to continue building out western El Dorado County.

1) Question:

- a. What is your outlook on continued development south along Latrobe Road and along White Rock Road within District 2?

2) Answer:

- a. Many tracts have already been subdivided along Latrobe and White Rock Road, which are almost certainly projects which have already been approved. Looking further down the line, the preponderance of parcels are designated as Rural Residential on the General Plan, so construction of additional single family dwellings are to be expected. We should keep this designation in mind as new projects come forward, and ensure that the new homes are low-density, with lots of open space for backyards, small agriculture / gardens, and other aspects in keeping with the rural landscape.

15) Statement: Urbanization is now marching east up the Highway 50 corridor from Folsom to El Dorado Hills to the Bass Lake area, changing the rural character south of Highway 50 in El Dorado Hills and along Bass Lake Road north of Highway 50 within District 1. A large mixed-use development has been proposed near the Bass Lake Road / Highway 50 interchange within District 1.

1) Questions:

- a. Will you allow this encroaching development to impact land within District 2?
- b. How can you slow down this development?

2) Answers:

- a. To the extent that approved projects have yet to be implemented, I will ensure that any terms of the development that were promised to the community – affordable units, parks, open spaces – are strictly fulfilled. For projects currently only proposed or still in the design phase, I would require the developer to hold a community engagement event, potentially during an official Board meeting, to ensure that all concerns and objections are made public from the very start. If those concerns cannot be effectively assuaged, and the objections overcome, then I would advise the applicant to reconsider their course of action and warn them of a likely project denial. If the applicant finds a way to work with the community and build a consensus of approval from residents, then we can proceed forward on those terms.
- b. As noted above, I will engage actively with developers to disincentivize submitting project applications unless they have already “sold” the idea to the surrounding community. I will fulfill the will of District 2 constituents, whether that is to approve or deny a specific project. If a project developer does not take this caveat seriously, they will ultimately waste their time and resources in pushing a project only to be denied. On the other hand, if the developer finds a way to build consensus and engagement with the

community, I will not slow this development and would instead applaud that the applicant benefits from a newly streamlined permit review process.

16) Statement: Long range plans include the potential for development of Marble Valley south of Highway 50. This area is designated as low density residential of 5 to 160 acres and is outside of the urban boundary line. Residents are deeply concerned that the county will allow this area to become another Folsom with terrible traffic and stop lights.

1) Questions:

- a. What is your position on the potential development of Marble Valley?
- b. What are your thoughts on amending Rural Region lines?

2) Answers:

- a. Using the “Village of Marble Valley” development plan as a point of reference, I see both positive and negative aspects from the perspective of the General Plan. On the positive side, it is encouraging that a significant amount of acreage is reserved for open space, parks, vineyards, and low density residential in accordance with the existing land use designation. The addition of an arts center and new schools would also likely be beneficial. As far as the acreage allocation, the majority would likely be in keeping with the rural residential aesthetic. On the other hand, 22% of residential units are allocated to medium density, and 16% to high density, a troubling deviation. The substantial amount of higher density units means that traffic impacts are a serious concern. These residents would inevitably add load to Highway 50 and thus negatively impact its Level of Service rating. The applicant, staff, and the Board need to address this concern before considering approval of the Marble Valley Village project as designed.
- b. In general, boundaries of Community Regions and Rural Centers should remain static until formally amended during a review period for the General Plan. In instances where the community and Board approve a new project that alters the land use makeup, I believe it is appropriate to let Rural Region lines update accordingly. In the Marble Hill example, if approved as currently designed it would clearly be an extension of El Dorado Hills and/or Cameron Park, and it would be illogical to consider the development as part of a Rural Region. If the high density residential were removed, it would at least plausibly be able to remain outside of the two Community Regions.