

2021 City Council Candidate questions

Candidate Name: Michael P. Griffith

1. What is your view about the Jefferson Parkway project?

Completing the regional beltway to keep regional traffic off local roads should remain a priority. However, with Broomfield pulling out and the compromise alignment that misses directly connecting c470 and Hwy93, I think the future is far from certain. I would like to see a better alignment that will more directly benefit our city and explore additional access points for impacted communities.

What is clear is that City leaders from Arvada, Broomfield, Golden and others will need to come together to figure out a solution.

Further, I will support efforts to evaluate the future of projects like the Jefferson Parkway to keep regional traffic off local roads.

2. What are your views on the Arvada Urban Renewal Authority (AURA)?

AURA has few active locations remaining. I believe the majority if not all blight in Arvada has been redeveloped. The mission of the AURA board will be largely complete soon. I look forward to the completion of their current projects and am open to evaluating the future of the board.

3. What are your views on using tax increment financing (TIFs) as an incentive for businesses to develop in Arvada? And, if so, what do you think should be incentivized?

TIFs are a tool, and an important option for keeping businesses interested in building in Arvada. In developing areas where the population is not high enough, yet, to support necessary community amenities, like grocery stores, TIFs make it possible. TIFs should be used to incentivize community amenities that would otherwise not be built, especially in areas missing critical amenities.

4. What should the city's role be in developing broadband internet for Arvada citizens?

Free market is my preference for internet services, but I am interested to hear how the last 18 months have refocused internet access as a concern for community members. Is there survey data available from Arvada that shows a preference?

5. What is your plan to help the city reach 100% use renewable energy by 2035?

Is this an official goal for the City? Who set it? What are the metrics of success?

Generally, to meet any sustainability goal, I would rely on my extensive professional experience designing, building, and certifying sustainable projects in the metro area. City Council needs someone that understands how mechanical, electrical, thermal, structural, environmental, and hydraulic systems work together to achieve the highest standards of efficiency and maintain a people first approach to all design efforts.

6. We understand that the city is working with other Jeffco governments to create Housing Navigation Centers to help the homeless achieve housing with needed supportive services. How do you plan to educate the residents of Arvada to help them understand the causes of homelessness and most importantly, support these Navigation Centers to avoid NIMBY-ism at the chosen locations?

This is a clear example of where a trade-off negotiation is needed between the city and the public. People experiencing homelessness are largely in need and want of help. The most effective way to help them is to ensure they are easily connected to the vast array of entities that are mission driven to provide services to them. These entities are nonprofit organizations, volunteer networks, and religious groups. I support policy programs that designate safe spaces to facilitate these connections on city owned land or appropriate private land in exchange for enforcing the clearing of the right of way (public spaces) and promoting public safety throughout the city.

7. It appears that existing city policies maintain the current "two Arvada's" -- wealthier and less diverse West Arvada versus older, less affluent East Arvada.
 - How specifically do you think the city can increase affordable housing, rental and for-sale products, to provide more diversity and affordability throughout the Arvada?

The best way for the city to increase access to a range of housing options, including affordable, is to increase the overall quantity of housing throughout the city. Diversity of housing types strengthen communities and help stabilize pricing, but context is everything and not every housing type needs to be represented in every location. The market responds to demand quickly and city policy change is a slow process. As City Councilor I will continue to look for opportunities to improve, amend, and condition projects seeking approval outside of the land development code. Each time I review a case as a Planning Commissioner I ask myself if there is an opportunity to negotiate a better outcome for the community, I will continue that as a City Councilor regardless of West or East location.

- Do you support formation of a citizen's Housing Advisory Committee?"

Civic engagement opportunities are wonderful, and I fully support them. I would want to socialize the concept with the rest of Council and city staff to determine the best way to get the most out of a new committee and to confirm if there is another existing committee that already provides a similar oversight. If so, perhaps that committee could be bolstered or have its charter updated.

8. Walk-ability and bike paths are increasingly popular, what are your ideas to increase the walk-ability of neighborhoods and assist the ease and safety of riding bikes?

Robust bike networks are a proven indicator of happy, connected, and healthy communities. In Arvada these paths are mostly recreational today. I support a future where citizens will have more opportunities to fulfill their commuting needs with an extensive bike facility network. I will rely on my extensive professional history in designing innovative bike and pedestrian facilities to ensure Arvada is ahead of the micro mobility curve.

9. Health Care is an issue most Americans are worried about. A health care resolution was presented to the City Council asking in the recent past asking the Arvada City Council to support a single payer universal health care system. If a similar resolution were again presented asking government leaders to support such a system, would you vote to sign and send to state and federal leaders?

This resolution was recently voted on and failed, I see little value in putting it back up. Healthcare is well outside of the scope of our local government. I would support putting a similar resolution on a future ballot, let the people of Arvada decide if they agree or disagree with this statement. City Council represents the residents, but it would be wildly inappropriate

to suggest that the City of Arvada wants single payer universal healthcare without giving the residents a chance to vote on that sentiment.

10. City policing is an issue foremost in many citizen's minds. There are many suggestions, concerns, and needs in Arvada.

- What are your thoughts on alternatives to uniformed police making mental health and public safety/nuisance calls?

I support any additional tools that help our police officers keep Arvada safe and secure. I am open to reviewing alternatives to uniformed police in special circumstances as a supplemental expenditure to existing public safety budgets. But I want to also review where this extra funding is coming from. What budget priority is being cut to fund this new arm of public safety?

- What will you do to get body cameras on uniforms before the state mandated date of July 1, 2023?

Where is the money coming from? What segment of the current city budget is going to be cut to support the new body cameras? What are the annual infrastructure and maintenance costs in addition to the cameras? How much additional energy will the servers use that contain the video archive files? How many new positions will be needed on the police force to manage the video archive?

I will ask all the questions above and more to make sure our police department is setup for success in meeting this state mandate. I would also advocate for exploring grant funding options from the state since this expenditure is in addition to the current police budget.

- Do you support a citizen's advisory committee to APD?

I support any opportunity for additional civic engagement from the community. I would review and socialize with my fellow Council members and confirm if there is an existing committee that serves a similar function. I believe community-oriented police departments like ours are made better by having more points of contact and input.