

Wheat Ridge 2020 Candidate Questionnaire 2011
Responses submitted by Lily Griego
Candidate for City Council District II

Why are you the best candidate to represent your district? Please relate your answer to your background, qualifications and values.

I truly want to represent the residents of this district. This endeavor is not about my own personal agenda, this is about you, the citizens of District II. The City Councilor is the one political office that still has the potential to work directly with and listen to the public on a close, personal level. I have an innate ability to work with the public and be attentive to what they want and listen to their concerns. I also have worked in a number of different roles in local government, including retail sales tax, use tax, revenue, water & sewer utilities, business licensing, code enforcement, planning, and zoning (land use). With the knowledge I have gained in my 15 years as a civil servant, my high level of energy, and my ability to work with the public, I know that I will serve you well.

Kathy Hartman, former Jefferson County Commissioner, recently endorsed me by stating, "Lily Griego was one of the hardest working, most dedicated employees I worked with at Jefferson County. She worked very hard to protect our neighborhoods from run-down properties and other problems that would hurt property values. I am sure she would be a great City Councilor for Wheat Ridge." Protecting this community is only one facet of the job that lies ahead. The person that will be successful in this position will understand preservation of valuable properties, maintaining property values, working with stakeholders in both the public and private sector to firmly establish the economic sector of Wheat Ridge, be familiar with safety needs of both the citizens and the Police Department, and will be someone who understands City ordinances and the structure of City government. The best candidate will not be limited to understanding business needs, or housing needs, or organizational skills; the best candidate will come to the table with a vast array of qualities, starting with the abilities of putting public needs above her own and listening to the citizens' concerns in all matters, followed by the capability to be a voice for the community. I am the candidate that has these qualities!

Finally, I want folks to know my commitment will not be limited to City Council meetings. I have listened with my heart to this community and know that as leaders, we have to follow our hearts. We need someone who will be a voice for libraries that are facing shorter hours of operation, or possibly closure. We need someone who will advocate for schools in all parts of the district, for the families that need a school within walking distance. These are only two examples of valuable community gems that have directly impacted the City of Wheat Ridge and District II. I am the person for the job, because I can advocate for our young families and our seniors, and speak with passion on matters that need a voice!

What are your top two policy goals and how should they be addressed?

I don't think it would be fair to limit the focus to only two policy goals, at this time. Wheat Ridge is similar to other communities right now in that some things are working well and many of my neighbors have commented that "things don't need to be fixed if they aren't broken." Yet, we are also similar to other Cities in the County, the State and across the nation in that we are struggling as

well. We have large senior population living with a mix of young families, households that may only include one parent and some that include multiple generations. The City must be a place where all of these residents are able to enjoy life in a safe community, with access to good schools, and accessible libraries and other amenities that aid in a healthy, productive, educational lifestyle. This isn't easily achieved and it isn't going to happen with only one focus on economic development. Building upon the successes of what has been achieved so far requires the attitude I mentioned at the beginning of this questionnaire: one that is focused on the residents, not a personal agenda. Yes, economic development needs to be a primary focus, along with establishing and working in a transparent government. However, citizens do not want rhetoric from their government officials. People want to have a responsive government, with good customer service. And people really want to know when economic times are challenging for everyone that the City Council has taken the appropriate actions to ensure a safe, vibrant community will be able to survive during an economic downturn without sacrificing important services at the sake of the people.

The role of Wheat Ridge 2020 is to catalyze community and economic development to advance Wheat Ridge as a vibrant and sustainable City. How should the City fund and support that role?

Whole heartedly! Wheat Ridge 2020 has become a major contributor to the community of Wheat Ridge and has taken proactive steps to get folks involved in the community. The City needs to continue to build a strong bridge of cooperation and collaboration with folks and entities who are working toward the common goal of a vibrant and sustainable City!

What ideas would you promote to strengthen the City's revenue base?

Recently the United Neighbors held a candidate forum, which is available to view at: <http://www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/index.aspx?NID=824>. It was clear that the majority of candidates were in agreement that businesses, both mom & pop shops, and larger commercial centers need to know that Wheat Ridge is open for business. Yet, I was the only candidate from District II to state that we also need to step out of our comfort zones and advocate for collaboration between stakeholders in both the private and public sectors. The City needs a strong general fund that is not solely dependent upon sales tax revenue. Therefore innovative ideas need to be forthcoming and that only happens when we work in a cooperative manner that is open to many folks working toward a common goal: the success of the City.

Please comment on the 38th Avenue Corridor Plan and how you would work to support and advance that plan. Would that support include funding WR2020's role?

The plan is in sync with what the City needs to remain vibrant! The plan promotes a place where folks can eat, play, shop, walk and simply put: "hang out" as one resident recently mentioned to me. Although there is some frustration among citizens, most may be alleviated by communicating with them why the City, Wheat Ridge 2020, and all stakeholders must support efforts to generate revenue and provide enjoyable entertainment for our citizens. The primary concern is the road width and safe access for 1st responders. I personally researched the concern with planning staff and directly to with Police Chief Brennan, and know that these are not concerns for all 1st responder stakeholders in Wheat Ridge. The planning staff advised me that they referred the plan to the Police Department, the Fire Department, Exempla Lutheran, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) to ensure that all safety needs were being reviewed by the appropriate staff. Again, an objection to the plan was not presented.

I know that the citizens who live closest to W. 38th Ave. are concerned and they should be as they are the most impacted by the proposal. Yet, everything I have sent thus far demonstrates an attempt to support the City in economic development and yet create a place within the City for the enjoyment of place.

What do you think is the most important issue facing Wheat Ridge over the next two years and how would you propose to address it?

The most important issue facing Wheat Ridge over the next two years is meeting the needs of the community. We need people in place on Council who are willing to work with the citizens first and foremost, also with other Council members, staff, and advocacy groups in both sectors to find solutions to problems and increase the City's ability to provide for the residents. The City needs several things to occur simultaneously which requires someone with the tools that I bring to the table. It will be imperative that Council continues to balance the budget and make the smart decisions. Council will also need to familiarize themselves with the increasing needs of a changing senior population. Council will also need to collaborate with Wheat Ridge 2020 and other stakeholders in the community to establish residential and commercial communities that attract young families to purchase homes here and spend their time here reinvesting in our community. Additionally, the Council needs to understand how Wheat Ridge will need to continue to maintain our parks, bike paths, and all infrastructure as part of the service that a City provides for its residents. With all of this said, it is so important that voters understand the role of the City Council person requires someone with the experience, knowledge, energy and spirit to do the job and do it well!