

Wheat Ridge 2020 Candidate Questionnaire 2011
Responses submitted by Karen K. Thaler
Candidate for City Council District I

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

I am unique in the fact that I am a District 1 native. I have truly seen not only District 1 but the city as a whole from this rare perspective. Truth be told I am not fond of the direction our city is headed and this position would provide the appropriate arena for change. I attended Steven's Elementary, Wheat Ridge Junior High and graduated from Wheat Ridge High School in 1987. I also graduated from Trim International School of Floral Design. I am a licensed cosmetologist in both Colorado and California. For many years I had my own business providing hair services for homebound seniors. I currently hold a position in landscape management. My husband's name is Dave who is also a Wheat Ridge native. My community involvement is as follows: The Carnation Festival Committee, W.R. Civic Academy, W.R. Police Citizens Academy and Walk & Watch program. The past five years I have represented W.R. as a state finalist for Mrs. Colorado earning Titleholder of the Year and Crowning Achievement Awards in 2008. I average sixty events a year both in and outside W.R. including Veteran's Hospital, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, fundraisers and reading proclamations before city council meetings. I also write the Hometown Pride column in The Neighborhood Gazette. My qualifications are as follows: I am over 18 years of age, a registered voter, have resided in W.R. and District 1 for more than 12 months and obtained the required 25 signatures from registered electors. I have fulfilled the legal requirements to run for an elected position it's up to the voters to decide if I am qualified. My values are as follows: representing not only District 1 but the entire city, standing up for what I believe is fair, having great respect for the dollar and the manner in which it is spent. Above all, I value and welcome citizen input because I firmly believe it's the citizens who define a city's success or failure.

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

2a. The overall aesthetics and the impact it has on the city are underrated big time, especially 38th Ave. In my opinion, if you want people and businesses to come to a city you have to first beautify what already EXISTS. For example, weed control, painting, mowing, watering, loose trash pickup, planting flowers, curtains not bedsheets in the windows, animal waste maintenance, duct tape on a businesses cracked street-facing window, dead plants in another street-facing window just to name a few. A little money goes a long way in creating a vision, it's the time and effort that is lacking. The buildings that have new facades or have been completely refurbished look great but the small overlooked details will always detract from the big picture. No one besides myself has addressed these issues thus far. I believe the overall neglect will keep our city from ever moving forward. I for one am sick of looking at it and would imagine passers-by are too. Simply put, some business owners need to clean up their act and be part of the solution instead of contributing to the problem. These things are huge factors in keeping W.R. from becoming a destination city.

2b. Unkempt rental properties. Making landlords accountable for property maintenance. A low-budget entity will only attract more of the same.

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?

Wheat Ridge 2020 was supposed to be self-sustaining within five years of its inception. 2010 marked the fifth year.

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

Having the city lighten up on the stringent building codes. W.R. has a bad reputation regarding this issue. A city can't increase its revenue if we make it impossible for a business to open up. As a city we have lost too many business opportunities due to endless council debate, studies and excessive building codes. We verbally welcome business but our codes say otherwise.

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?

At this point in time I am not in favor of the proposed 38th Ave. "road diet." Issues addressed in my answer for question #2a. should be implemented first. I feel a continuation of the previous Sheridan to Harlan St. improvements should be extended to Wadsworth Blvd. It would give continuity throughout "main street."

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?

Beyond just the next two years we as a city need to cease with the development of low-income housing.