

### **What is your short and long-term vision for the City of Springfield?**

My home town, Springfield, is a city with great potential. Its citizenry and its *natural resources* (climate, size, opportunities, revenues bases, etc.) provide numerous opportunities for short and long-term greatness. These opportunities can best be realized by capitalizing on synergies which exists (or may be cultivated) between the city's leaders, the city's revenue generators and the city's citizens.

In the short-term, Springfield should continue its focus on education and medical care. These are both industries insulated from economic fluctuations found industries which are predominant in other cities. By accentuating continued growth in these two areas, we can enhance numerous other facets of Springfield's economy, including real estate, tourism, entertainment and retail.

In the long-term, Springfield should to continue to adapt to changing demographics and economic forces. One of our city's greatest strengths may be its stability and tradition. However, to maintain long-term viability Springfield will need to recognize that it will need to adapt to a changing economy, which is likely to be more technology driven. The economy of the future will be driven by information and innovation. Working with our school board, we need to have K-12 education that is the envy of the state (if not the nation). The enhancement of education in these formative years will have positive effects on numerous areas including our economy, lower levels of crime/poverty, and an enhanced livability for everyone. This focus on education can continue with our current focus on innovation centers, OTC and our other educational institutions. Working with City Utilities, Springfield can be not only the Queen City but also the **Green City** by emphasizing sustainability. Many of today's younger generation are seeking **GREEN** and **sustainable** alternatives. Using both our educational and medical resources Springfield can achieve notoriety in the areas of sustainability and by leveraging our GREENE county location we might gain a reputation of being at the forefront of both sustainability initiatives and energy (which can have other economic and livability pay-offs).

### **What are the City's strengths and how will you build upon them?**

As mentioned in the prior answer, our city has numerous strengths. First, our citizens have a culture based on hard work, honesty and self-reliance. We have a small-town culture with many big city amenities and opportunities. Second, we have a strong and vibrant economy that has a very stable foundation upon which we can build more viable industries and businesses. We can use our work-oriented culture and our well-trained/educated work force to attract businesses of the future that require workers proficient in developing technology-based materials and services. Given our health care-based economy, Springfield should be a natural attraction to firms focused on providing goods and services needed to support an industry that will continue to experience tremendous growth for the foreseeable future. Springfield has many entertainment, tourism and cultural resources we can leverage to create continued growth in areas that will facilitate a healthy, safe and happy populace in the future.

**Among the challenges faced by the City is the need for adequate revenue to deal with issues such a public infrastructure, sidewalks, nuisance properties, etc. What are your specific suggestions and approaches regarding those and other challenges?**

Specific answers to this question are certain to irritate (to say the least) someone. Revenue generation is a key variable in this equation. Further, it may be noted that failing to address problems mentioned in this question will hamper Springfield as it seeks to provide its citizens with safety, a high quality of living, and continued economic opportunities. Consequently, Springfield should seek ways to promote continued revenue growth that will facilitate civic exceptionalism. So, a major question is “what revenue generators provide the *greatest bang for the buck?*” It seems that many developers generate considerable personal profits (which is good) – but to continue to provide profitable development opportunities, Springfield must continue to financially support city’s well-being. So perhaps increasing taxes and fees on developers could support the increased infrastructure requirements associated with those developments. Other income options include special sales taxes, especially taxes which are inelastic to the extent that they adversely impact on our economy (hotel/airport/rental car taxes) or taxes which provide potential compensation from activities/products which might be associated with considerable costs (alcohol, festivals, etc.). While recognizing that revenue-generation (particularly taxes) is an area fraught with potential for negative reactions, Springfield must realize that investments made in infrastructure will pay dividends in the future. In fact, by investing today, we may expand and enhance our economic base by having more industry, more employers and more well-paid employment opportunities which will increase our potential for revenue generation by growing the potential revenue pie. In addition to these traditional revenue generators we may be able to use more innovative programs to attract improvements to sidewalks and nuisance properties. Perhaps we can emphasize neighborhood improvement districts or tax increment financing to address these areas. As we engage in the process of investing in Springfield, it should be noted that these should be regarded as investments which pay dividends, through increases in our revenue base (expanded industries and enhanced jobs) and through reductions in costs. A well-employed, educated population with a ‘wonderful’ living environment should also be one that experiences lower rates of crime and reduced poverty and blight. Thus, by investing today we are beneficiaries of not only greater revenues, but also reduced costs.

### **What would you like to see accomplished by the time you leave the Council?**

Given the honor of having the opportunity to contribute to a City I truly love, I would like to see Springfield achieve its potential (which I regard as tremendous). I would like for us to continue to develop a culture in which we realize we are all ‘in this together.’ For example, the Jilili’s (Bijan’s) gambled on downtown and provided a fine-dining restaurant. Their success seems to have had a synergistic impact on other areas of Springfield. Not only did their success provide a catalyst for other dining opportunities, but it also facilitated development in downtown Springfield, C-street, etc. Whether chicken or egg – providing dining opportunities also makes Springfield more attractive to industry and tourism. Enhancing attractiveness to industry and tourism leads to an expansion of more development in housing, utilities, medical, educational, etc. which creates a greater quality of life for all. Thus, as we develop one area (the airport) we can enhance other areas (tourism, industry, medical). So, to summarize I would like to be a part of helping to establish a culture of cooperation where we appreciate the fact that by working together WE can make Springfield a model city. Springfield should be a city that other city planners visit when they want to identify how to make their cities exceptional cities.