

John Haschak

Questions for Candidates

1. Bicycling/walking and safe bike/pedestrian infrastructure enhances quality of life and addresses issues such as affordability, equity, access, health, and the safety of our streets. In your view, what can the City/County do to actively encourage more people to bike and walk?

I strongly support people becoming more active especially walking and biking. The Safe Routes to School Grant is a very worthwhile project. I am very excited and supportive of Senator Mike McGuire's bill to create the Great Redwood Trail. I also would like to see the Willits Creek Trail opened so that there is a pathway to walk between Brooktrails and the town of Willits. I grew up walking that trail and it would be a great public benefit to see it reopened at some point. I also look forward to making Main St. in Willits more pedestrian and bike friendly with the new configurations that Caltrans must do. There are other places around the county where better caution signs, stop signs, lane markings, and sidewalks and bike paths/lanes would greatly improve safety and people's willingness to walk or bike. People's attitudes toward wellness should be promoted whenever possible.

2. Studies from Portland and other US cities show people on bicycles spend more per month in local business districts than those arriving by other modes. Bicycling and walk also promote a "shop local" mindset (it's difficult to get to a faraway store to shop if you are walking or biking). What steps would you take to ensure that local businesses in your shopping district are able to benefit from better access by bicyclists?

The reconfigured Main St. should have a beneficial effect on businesses in Willits. Overall, our district is very dependent on personal automobile transportation due to steep terrain, lack of bike trails and pathways, and distances. As a teacher at Blosser Lane Elementary School in Willits, I understand the current limitations of walking and biking. With the traffic on Hwy 20 and Main St., many students cannot safely walk or bike to school.

In Laytonville, efforts are being made to create walking paths, bike lanes, and greater awareness among the residents to ensure greater safety and promote increased walking and biking. One example of this is the walking path along the Branscomb Road.

I am open to hearing about all ideas to increase access and safe routes for bicyclists and pedestrians.

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3. Childhood obesity and chronic weight related health issues are a major problem. As an elected official how would you use your position to foster an active living agenda that will make measurable improvements in these chronic but often preventable diseases?

I have been attending the Healthy Start meetings in Laytonville. The County can promote greater health and well-being by supporting programs such as Walk and Bike Mendocino programs, streamline the process for building the skatepark in Laytonville, encourage the roads department to promote safe alternatives to car transportation, and be positive examples of healthy and active living, I will attend many of the community wellness events. I will be a model of maintaining wellness. I exercise daily and look forward to walking and biking up Low Gap Road and around Ukiah on lunch breaks and other times after I am elected.

4. Forty percent of vehicle trips are less than two miles and many of us trip-hop with our cars rather than walking when we have a number of closely located errands to do. Will you commit to using your leadership position in the community to “walk the walk” by personally walking and biking whenever possible during your tenure in office?

The above answer talks about my personal commitment to greater health and modeling that behavior. I am a big proponent of parking in the first available parking spot and walking from there to the destination. This saves gas and allows for more steps to the destination.

5. We are at the point now where increasing on-street infrastructure like bike lanes will require some difficult decisions, which will not please everyone. A classic example is the struggle between installing bike lanes, sometimes at the expense of on-street parking. Give us some insight into your decision-making process and how you plan to balance the opinions of residents who may be at odds.

While all points of view need to be considered, I feel that a community that embraces pedestrian and bike friendly policies is a much more attractive community for both the residents and visitors. We have the opportunity to “market” our communities as part of post-bypass destinations, wellness destinations, and natural resource destinations. Changes that we make in our communities that enhance the quality of the experience of spending time (and money) in our local businesses are changes for the positive.

6. Do you have a biking or walking related story you’d like to tell?

I love biking, running, and hiking. For the last few years, my son and I have rode our bikes from Willits to Fort Bragg on the old Sherwood Road. I run several times a week in the hills near my house. I have backpacked, hiked, and biked around North, Central, and South America. One trip that I frequently reflect on is the Rails to Trails bike path I rode a few years ago from Aspen Colorado to Glenwood Springs. These activities are highlights of my life.