

Auburn Community Conversation #6

Location: Auburn Public Library

Date: October 8, 2013

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Given the difficult decisions that our community must face, and the reality that property tax increases must be minimized, what are our priorities for Auburn's future?

PRIORITIES INTRODUCED BY RESIDENTS

Listed in order as discussed by residents.

- An organized scaling back of government spending
- New regional organizations to deliver services
- Economic development
- Education
- Safe Neighborhoods

DISCUSSION NOTES

Points of view included:

An organized scaling back of government spending

- Careful selection of choices while scaling back-not hasty last minute decisions
- Which roads to be repair less, etc.
- Cover basics first.
- Arts less important.
- What can private funds cover?

New regional organizations to deliver more cost-effective services

- Lewiston & Auburn already share many services: water, water treatment, Economic Growth Council, Airport, Gt Falls TV, buses, railroad, joint purchasing.
- Also share services with neighboring communities, e.g the library serves Minot too.
- Are there next steps? More services to be shared? Combine cities? If combine more local governments, how will people continue to feel empowered?

- Who should provide 911? City? County? Redundancy?
- Is the role of county government obsolete? Need new regional groupings? Are there too many layers of government? Local, county, state? Time to retool?

Economic development

- Need more marketing of industrial potential.
- Need to more aggressively go out and recruit businesses to come here.
- Industrial growth reduces pressures on residential property tax.
- Have high quality infrastructure, needs more utilization.
- Lots to be proud of here.

Education

- Auburn's education system should be excellent.
- Can we afford school tax increases?
- Quality education is essential to future economic development.
- Need to make sure all investments are good investments.
- Need to explain new ways of learning. Takes time.
- Difficult to justify expanded school spending at a time of government retrenchment.
- School buildings must be maintained.
- The current high school is an investment that lasted a long time. Worn out now.

Safety & neighborhoods

- Want liveable walkable neighborhoods.
- Need to attract and retain young families with quality of life.

- Housing stock must be quality.

Other

- Need to create a shared vision for the community—very important for economic development.
- More assets here than many people know e.g. world-class water treatment
- Need more citizen participation.
- Need more ways to find out what's here.