

2025 Longmont City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Council Candidates: At-Large

We asked every candidate to respond to a set of 26 community questions. These came from both the Chamber’s Public Policy Committee and members of the public, with some questions combined for clarity. Candidates were free to skip questions, so not every answer will appear.

- A single star (*) means the question came directly from a community member.
- Two stars (**) mean the question reflects both committee and community input.

The Chamber shares these questions and responses without endorsing any viewpoint. Responses to questions are exactly as the candidate wrote them.

It is additionally worth noting that some questions and responses refer to the following documents, which we encourage you to familiarize yourself with:

- [Envision Longmont](#)
- [Advance Longmont 2.0](#)

At-Large Candidates

Voters will be able to vote for up to two candidates, as there are two vacant At-Large seats.

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Jake Marsing

Campaign Website: jakemarsing.com

About:

I'm Jake Marsing, a husband, dad to two young kids, fourth-generation Longmonter, high school social studies teacher, and community advocate. Growing up in north Longmont, I saw firsthand what it means to work hard and persevere here. My family's roots run deep here, from my great-grandfather's farm to my grandmother and parents growing up in the city.

I've spent my career serving our community, from working as a legislative aide in the Colorado State Senate to serving on local boards like Longmont's Housing and Human Services Advisory Board. Today, I teach and support students while raising my own family in the city I love.

I'm running for City Council to ensure Longmont remains affordable, inclusive, and vibrant. I'll fight for working families, advocate for access to quality early childhood education, and help our city grow sustainably—building a Longmont where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

General Vision

If elected, what would be your top priority in office?

Longmont is at a crossroads. My top priority is making sure our city remains a place where working families and local businesses can thrive together. Too many folks are being priced out by the cost of housing, childcare, and everyday expenses, and that impacts families and businesses.

I'm running to be a voice for working people, including small business owners, entrepreneurs, and the workers who power our local economy. That means tackling barriers like housing affordability, childcare costs, and infrastructure so businesses can recruit and retain talent and families can put down roots. It also means being responsive and accessible, ensuring every neighborhood and business owner has a seat at the table.

In short, my top priority is building a Longmont for Everybody, a city where families can thrive, businesses can grow, and our community remains strong for generations to come.

What is your plan for advocating Longmont's business needs at the state and federal levels?

I've spent much of my career working at the intersection of community and government, including time handling constituent services in the legislature. That means I know how to cut through bureaucracy, navigate agencies, and make sure local needs are heard and acted on.

If elected, I'll use that experience and the relationships I've built at every level of government to advocate for Longmont's business community. I'm proud to already have the support of leaders like Congressman Joe Neguse, Rep. Karen McCormick, and Senator Katie Wallace, and those relationships matter when it comes to connecting our local priorities with state and federal resources.

Whether it's infrastructure funding, workforce development, or ensuring policies don't create unintended burdens on small businesses, I'll bring a proactive approach: listening to local businesses, carrying their concerns to Denver and Washington, and making sure Longmont's voice is represented at every table where decisions are made.

***What will you do to protect the council and staff from being distracted by issues that don't fit within the city's strategic plan?**

If Council is spending time on something, it should connect back to our community's larger vision. That's why I believe we need to reinvest in Envision Longmont, not just as a document on a shelf, but as a living guide to the work of the city. Re-engaging residents in that process is how we keep our priorities clear and aligned with the people we serve.

I admire the goal-oriented leadership that folks like Dr. Tim Waters championed during their time on Council, and I'm proud to have his endorsement. His approach was about setting clear goals, holding ourselves accountable, and making sure progress could be measured. That's the model I want to carry forward.

For me, that means Council's role is to set the goals and direction, then follow up consistently to make sure we're moving toward them, whether privately or on a Tuesday night. Staff should be empowered to focus on execution, with clear direction and support from council. By grounding our work in a refocused Envision Longmont and a goal-oriented leadership model, we can stay focused on the issues that matter most.

Minimum Wage

****Do you support setting a local minimum wage above the state requirement? If so, what rate do you believe is appropriate, and how do you anticipate it would affect local businesses? Given the pressure from county commissioners and special interest groups to accelerate minimum wage increases — and considering the reported business closures and job losses in cities like Denver, and Niwot — what would be your approach be on this issue?**

Yes. I believe Longmont families deserve a living wage. I also believe we need to get there in a smart, responsible way. My vision is for Longmont to ultimately reach a living wage, indexed to inflation. Based on the data in Boulder County, that would mean roughly a \$25/hr wage. I know that scares folks. I get that fear. That's what I also know the only way that works is through gradual, phased increases that are coordinated with nearby communities. That allows us to track impacts on prices, hours, and jobs as we go, and make sure Longmont stays competitive in the region. I would not go about this the way it was done at the county level.

We need to be intentional about who is affected and when. Teenagers, students, and first-time workers should still have entry-level opportunities, while adults working full-time should be able to support their families.

Raising wages can't happen in a vacuum. We have to pair it with offsets that reduce any potential unintended consequences and offer real support for small businesses. Any proposal to get to a living wage must be combined with offsets like reducing city fees, cutting red tape, streamlining permits, and looking at creative partnerships like childcare support that help employers keep staff. That way, we're

not just asking businesses to absorb higher costs; we're making sure they have the tools to succeed alongside their workforce.

When workers earn more, they spend more locally. That strengthens small businesses and our economy as a whole. My commitment is to bring workers and employers to the table together, so wage policy works for everyone in Longmont.

Environment & Sustainability

What are your plans/programs for balancing growth and environmental sustainability?

Growth in Longmont is an economic reality, and the question isn't whether we grow, it's how. I believe we can welcome new neighbors, attract businesses, and expand opportunity without sacrificing the things that make Longmont special.

For me, balancing growth and sustainability starts with smart land use. That means encouraging growth where infrastructure already exists, prioritizing infill and redevelopment before expanding outward, and building "missing middle" housing that uses land efficiently while keeping neighborhoods vibrant and walkable.

When council has the opportunity to be choosy, especially around things like annexation, we should be. Not every project makes sense for our community. We should prioritize for sale construction, smart infill, redevelopment, and "missing middle" housing where infrastructure already exists, instead of sprawling and putting more pressure on water, roads, and open space.

We also must maintain our commitments on renewable energy and climate action. We're already on the path to 100% renewable power, and we need to finish that work while investing in energy efficiency for homes and businesses. By lowering utility bills and reducing emissions at the same time, we can align environmental goals with economic benefits.

Finally, I believe sustainability includes fiscal responsibility. For me, I see it as both an environmental and economic challenge. Every new development should help pay for the infrastructure and services it requires, so that growth doesn't overburden current residents or city resources.

Longmont can be a model for how a city grows sustainably by protecting open space and water, investing in renewable energy, and making sure growth adds value to our community instead of eroding it.

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***Longmont is five years away from its 2030 goal of sourcing all electricity from carbon-free sources. However, with Platte River Power Authority planning to replace its coal-fired turbine with a natural gas unit, this goal will not be fully met. Projections suggest the cumulative cost to Longmont residents will be around \$100 million by 2030 due to steeply rising electric rates (~\$2,500/ household).**

Given Longmont's negligible contribution to global CO₂ emissions, and the fact that roughly half of the city's electricity reportedly now comes from carbon-free sources, should the city reconsider its goal and recognize that the progress made so far represents its fair share, or should it stay committed to the original target, regardless of the financial cost?

I'm proud that Longmont has been a leader in setting bold climate goals, and I believe we have a moral and ethical responsibility to stay the course. My two young kids are counting on me to do everything I can to hand them a livable planet. That's why I am firmly committed to continuing our work to achieve 100% renewable energy.

But let me be equally clear: I also oppose putting the costs of that transition onto working families. Rising electric bills hit low- and middle-income households the hardest, and I won't vote for another rate increase without an offset to protect residents. We need to keep PRPA accountable for accelerating renewables and storage in ways that save ratepayers money over time because the truth is, clean energy is already the cheapest source of new power in Colorado.

Longmont can't solve climate change alone, but we can lead by example, just like we've done before. Our city has shown that innovation is possible from becoming one of the first communities in the country to ban fracking, to building NextLight, to committing to renewable energy ahead of our neighbors. Staying committed to the 2030 goal sends the message that Longmont will not back down from the challenges of our time.

In short: we can protect both the planet and people's pocketbooks. We do that by rejecting false choices, demanding innovation from our power provider, and making sure working families don't carry the cost of progress alone.

Housing Development

****How will you balance sustainable growth and affordability with concerns about increased density—such as traffic, noise, and strain on infrastructure—while also addressing homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges?**

That's quite a question! You've basically asked me to solve all of Longmont's biggest challenges at once. Truthfully, these issues are connected. When we add housing in a thoughtful way, focusing on for-sale homes working families can actually afford, in places with good transit and infrastructure, we ease the pressure that drives sprawl, traffic, and skyrocketing prices. When we balance growth with sustainability, we preserve quality of life for existing neighborhoods while making room for the next generation. And, when we tackle homelessness, panhandling, and behavioral health with a housing-first approach, paired with prevention, case management, and treatment, we reduce the strain on public spaces and services.

In other words, the path to affordability, sustainability, and livability is the same: thoughtful planning, balanced growth, and a compassionate, pragmatic approach to our toughest social challenges.

Balancing these challenges takes clear eyed, principled leadership that understands how policy impacts people.

Fiscal Responsibility

What strategies would you implement to increase city revenue and enhance local economic sustainability without burdening residents or relying heavily on federal and state funding?

Longmont needs a revenue strategy that grows with the community, without nickel-and-diming residents. That starts with supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs so they can thrive here, creating a stronger tax base through local success rather than new burdens.

I'd like to see the city streamline permitting and licensing processes, reduce unnecessary fees, and make it easier for local businesses to open, expand, and hire. I want Longmont to be the easiest place on the Front Range to open a business. Right now, too many entrepreneurs and developers are being stymied by a permitting and development process that pits the city against the entrepreneur against the city, rather than working collaboratively.

We also need to think creatively about revenue diversification. That can mean modest user fees for out-of-town users of city services (like at our airport), pursuing smart public-private partnerships, and leveraging Longmont's leadership in renewable energy and fiber broadband as economic drivers.

The goal is a stable, sustainable city budget built on a healthy local economy that supports residents and businesses alike, without relying on constant rate hikes or short-term outside funding.

Advance Longmont

***What do you see as the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0, and what, if any, modifications would you propose? Additionally, what steps will you take to protect its integrity and promote its effective implementation?**

Advance Longmont 2.0 gets a lot right: it's a clear, place-based economic strategy that centers inclusivity, vitality, workforce development, and cross-sector collaboration. It hits a ton of the key drivers that working families need. The plan's collective-impact approach, aligning city, business, nonprofit and education partners around shared goals, gives Longmont a credible framework to compete for jobs while preserving community character.

I'd strengthen it in a few ways.

First, I'd make "for-sale missing-middle" housing an explicit economic objective

Advance Longmont emphasizes talent and place; if we're serious about retaining teachers, nurses, and first-responders, we must target incentives for for-sale products priced for working families. That means fast-track permitting, fee waivers, making sure the incentives in our IHO are lined up, and doing all we can to expand affordability.

Second, I'd pair economic development with childcare and workforce supports. Employers struggle to recruit and retain staff when childcare costs are prohibitive. The plan should fund an Advance Longmont childcare-workforce partnership: employer-assisted childcare incentives, developer-provided childcare space in new projects, and EDP-led convenings to match employers with providers. Lack of access to childcare is a massive issue for primary employers looking to come to Longmont, and real solutions matter. I appreciate the work that's already started here under the Advance Longmont 2.0 framework, and I'm excited to contribute how I can.

Third, I'd establish anti-speculation and anti-displacement guardrails to protect neighborhoods. I support testing tools like targeted anti-speculation taxes, first-refusal for local nonprofit housing partners, and vacancy/flip monitoring so investment grows ownership, not transient rental stock. Making sure Longmont's housing stock is for Longmont residents matters.

The bottom line is that I support Advance Longmont 2.0 and want to see it strengthened and enacted. Beyond that, though, council needs leaders who will protect its integrity by keeping funding stable, giving LEDP the resources to succeed, and holding all of us accountable for results. Plans only matter if they're implemented. My goal is to make sure Advance Longmont 2.0 isn't just another vision on paper, but a real roadmap that delivers housing, childcare, jobs, and opportunity for the people who call Longmont home. To get there, I'll be a staunch advocate for LEDP and its mission on council and stand ready to support ensuring they get the 50/50 funding split they're asking for, and that the city does all it can to attract and support primary employment.

Arts Funding & Recreation

What is the city's role to support and fund the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces in Longmont?

I see arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces as core city services. They're part of what makes Longmont vibrant and livable. But, I also think we have to be intentional about scope, scale, and how we fund them. A library, rec center, or neighborhood park that serves thousands of families every week across all income areas is different from a performing arts center that may reach a smaller share of residents.

My approach is to prioritize projects that deliver the broadest access and impact, while making sure we aren't asking our lowest-income residents to fund amenities they're unlikely to use through regressive tools like sales tax. That means being thoughtful about funding mechanisms, leveraging partnerships, philanthropy, and regional dollars where appropriate, while keeping city investments focused on equity and community benefit.

Ultimately, I support the growth of arts, culture, recreation, and shared spaces in Longmont. They build community identity, strengthen our economy, and improve quality of life. But they have to be done in a way that's financially sustainable and fair to the families who are working hardest to make ends meet.

What role do you see the Sundance Film Festival playing in Longmont's cultural and economic landscape, and how would you balance its benefits with residents' concerns about congestion and affordability?

I think it's important to be realistic about Sundance. The festival will primarily center on Boulder, and I don't expect Longmont to experience the same level of congestion or direct impact. That said, events of

this scale ripple outward, and we need to be ready for the opportunities and challenges that will come our way.

On the positive side, Sundance could bring visitors, hotel stays, and spillover traffic to our restaurants, breweries, and cultural venues. That's good for our economy if we're proactive about capturing it. We should position Longmont as a complementary cultural destination, highlighting our arts community, local businesses, and outdoor spaces, so that folks who come to the Front Range for Sundance also discover what makes Longmont special. I've discussed how the city can support counter programming to compliment what is happening in Boulder, lift limits on short term rentals temporarily, and try to get as much benefit as possible.

At the same time, we can't ignore residents' concerns. Large-scale events anywhere along the corridor tend to put pressure on traffic patterns, and raise affordability questions. Our job is to stay ahead of that: strengthen our housing protections so residents aren't displaced, invest in transit connections that move people efficiently without clogging streets now, and keep affordability and impact front and center.

In short, I see Sundance less as a challenge to brace for and more as an opportunity to plan for. If we're thoughtful, we can capture economic and cultural benefits while protecting the affordability and quality of life that Longmonsters value most.

Civic Discourse & Engagement

What strategies would you implement to foster more respectful, productive discussions on local issues and encourage civil engagement while reducing vitriolic discourse?

I've had the privilege of serving this community in a number of capacities, including my time as staff in the Colorado General Assembly, where politics and vitriol were front and center every day. What I learned there is that even in a highly charged environment, you can get things done if you stay focused on solving problems and keep your values front and center.

At the local level, the job of a councilmember is more straightforward: it's about filling potholes, keeping neighborhoods safe, and making sure city services work for everyone. But how we do those things matters. If we approach issues with respect, listen carefully to residents, and explain our decisions clearly, people may not always agree, but they'll know they were heard.

That's why I've pledged to answer every constituent within 24 hours, never turn down a meeting request, and hold regular town halls and listening sessions across the city. Consistent outreach, early engagement, and real follow-through are how we make sure every resident has a voice in city decisions.

I'll bring that approach to council: focus on the basics, model respect in every interaction, and make sure that values like fairness, transparency, and accountability guide how we deliver for Longmont. That doesn't mean I won't stand on my principles and fight for good causes. I promise I will. There are folks on council I will disagree with. But, at the end of that disagreement, my goal will be to work where we can to solve problems.

Business Startups, Costs, Commercial Development & Permitting

How would you address concerns over blighted or underutilized commercial areas?

Blighted and underutilized commercial areas are both an economic and community challenge — they weaken our tax base, limit opportunities for small businesses, and hurt neighborhood vitality.

I think the answer is twofold. First, we need to expand and diversify our tax base by attracting a broader range of employers. That means supporting LEDP in their mission, giving them the resources and clear direction they need from council to recruit businesses that bring quality jobs and reinvest in our community.

Second, we should be proactive in reactivating vacant or underutilized spaces. That includes incentivizing redevelopment where appropriate, streamlining permitting for small business tenants, and using tools like façade improvement programs or flexible zoning to make reinvestment easier. We also need to keep equity in mind, making sure redevelopment doesn't just push out locally owned businesses or raise costs beyond what working families can afford.

In short: use the city's economic development tools to grow the base, while making sure reinvestment strengthens Longmont's character.

****What steps would you take to make Longmont a more competitive and business-friendly city, especially for startups and commercial development? Some have stated concerns that the planning and permitting process has become slow, complex, and costly — making it difficult for businesses to build and occupy space — how would you work to streamline these processes? Additionally, what strategies would you support to help keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses?**

I've heard from too many business owners and developers that Longmont can feel like the hardest city to work in on the Front Range. My top priority is changing that. I would establish a dedicated permit liaison to guide startups and developers through the process, cutting red tape, and clarifying requirements so city staff are partners, not obstacles.

I also support using digital tools, clear timelines, and streamlined approvals to make planning predictable and efficient.

At the same time, we need to keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses. I'd encourage redevelopment of underutilized spaces, flexible zoning, land use changes, and programs that lower barriers for local tenants.

The goal is simple: make Longmont a city where starting a business is straightforward, predictable, and collaborative so entrepreneurs can thrive, our economy grows, and the community benefits.

***Downtown businesses are estimated to be about 80% locally owned and operated. What would you do to protect and support that character? What top goals would you prioritize to ensure downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming to local businesses and the community? (Question submitted by Longmont Downtown Development Authority, our economic partner)**

I remember downtown Longmont when it was more pawn shops and liquor stores than boutique coffee shops. That change is a testament to the growth of our community, but as downtown evolves, it's

important to keep it accessible to a diverse business base. The character we've built downtown, thanks in large part to LDDA, is worth protecting. It's part of what makes our city unique.

To keep downtown vibrant, I would focus on supporting local businesses by making it easier to open, expand, and thrive through streamlined permitting, targeted incentives, and programs that help keep rents accessible. At the same time, investing in streetscapes, safe parking, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and public spaces will make downtown welcoming for residents and visitors alike.

Preserving downtown's character also means thoughtful redevelopment that complements the local business mix instead of replacing it. Partnerships with local business associations and anti-displacement measures will help ensure decisions reflect the community's priorities.

We also need to expand parking where reasonable so people can comfortably spend extended time downtown. One idea I've been exploring is multi-level garage parking in the lot behind the Pumphouse/O'Shay's at 6th and Main. That lot is one of our most heavily used, and adding capacity there, paired with better biking and pedestrian infrastructure, would make downtown more accessible without sacrificing character.

Downtown is the heart of Longmont. My goal is to keep it thriving, welcoming, and rooted in the people and businesses that give it its identity.

Social Issues & Equity

***Are there or could there be local initiatives you would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents who may be disproportionately affected by broader policy changes—such as immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and those facing barriers to healthcare?**

What we know about this administration is that it will drop the ball each and every day between now and January 20, 2029. In its place, local leadership in Longmont must be ready to pick it up and protect our community. Federal policies have repeatedly targeted immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and others who already face barriers to healthcare and basic services, leaving too many people vulnerable.

In Longmont, we need proactive initiatives and leadership to fill those gaps. I support expanding access to affordable healthcare and strengthening local nonprofit services by doubling our HHSAB budget to fund programs for food security, housing assistance, legal support, and ensuring city policies do not unintentionally create additional barriers.

Longmont must be a place where everyone, regardless of immigration status, income, or circumstance, can live safely and thrive. My goal is to make sure that when the federal government fails, our city steps up to protect our neighbors and maintain a strong, inclusive community.

RTD & Public Transit

Should Longmont explore new public transit options such as Front Range Passenger Rail? If so, what are they?

Yes, Longmont should absolutely explore new public transit options, and I'm firmly supportive of Front Range Passenger Rail. RTD has systematically reduced service to our city over the years, leaving residents without the regional connections they've been promised. The commuter rail, for example, was promised over 20 years ago but still hasn't materialized, despite Longmonsters paying into the system.

I support FRPR and the work of leaders like Mayor Peck and Karen Benker, and I am committed to helping see it through. But we can't wait indefinitely. If Front Range Passenger Rail or a similar alternative doesn't move forward, Longmont must explore all feasible options, whether regional partnerships, public-private solutions, or local transit expansions, to ensure residents get the service they deserve.

Longmont has been patient, but the city deserves reliable, connected, and modern public transit, and I will fight to make that a reality.

Business Acumen

Have you signed the front of a paycheck?

I'm proud to say that I have signed paychecks, not in the traditional private sector, but as a registered agent and fiscal officer for organizations and campaigns. In those roles, I've been directly responsible for managing budgets, ensuring timely payroll, and balancing the needs of staff with the resources available.

Handling payroll taught me the importance of accountability, attention to detail, and making decisions that affect real people's livelihoods. It's experience I would carry forward as a city council member.

What real-world business experience do you bring, and how would that experience affect your approach to budgeting, hiring, or marketing to help shape city policy?

I don't come from a traditional business background, and I think it's important to be upfront about that. What I do bring is real-world experience managing budgets and people in the settings I've served. At Frederick High School, I oversee our broadcast program, managing resources, setting priorities, and ensuring the program delivers results for students and the community. In my church, I've helped manage budgets and make decisions about hiring and programming as a former lay leader. And in the legislature, I led an office where accountability and responsiveness were daily priorities, along with hiring and general management.

Those experiences taught me the value of careful stewardship, transparency, and keeping people at the center of every decision.

Running a city isn't the same as running a business. The goals are different. Our goal as a city should be about making sure taxpayer dollars are used wisely, programs align with community priorities, and results are delivered that residents can see and feel. That's the mindset I'll bring to budgeting, hiring, and policy decisions on Council.

Sugar Mill and Brownfield Developments

Do you have a vision for redeveloping the historic Sugar Mill site? If so, how would you address environmental concerns, sustainable infrastructure and engage the community and developers to benefit Longmont as a whole?

I believe the Sugar factory site is an opportunity, but only if we approach it honestly. The site is a mess. The soil is contaminated, the buildings contain large amounts of asbestos, the structures themselves are unstable. It will take millions of dollars just to make it habitable. That means rushed or piecemeal solutions will fail residents and waste public dollars. We need a deliberate, phased, and well-resourced redevelopment plan.

Environmental due diligence is critical. We need a complete brownfields assessment and remediation plan so developers and the public know the true costs and timelines. Longmont should aggressively pursue state and federal remediation grants (EPA brownfields, Colorado programs), tax-increment financing or infrastructure grants, and public-private partnerships so cleanup doesn't fall entirely on either taxpayers or the developer, which makes the site less attractive for potential development partners.

From there, we need to pick the right partner. Any RFP must require demonstrated experience with brownfield remediation, sustainable infrastructure, and large mixed-use projects, plus community benefits that can be negotiated in: local hiring, affordable units if we're going to put in housing, and commitments to long-term maintenance. I'd back an RFP process with clear evaluation criteria and project milestones, and contract provisions if developers don't deliver.

Third, sustainability and infrastructure: prioritize green stormwater systems, renewable energy readiness, all-electric building standards where feasible, and durable multimodal access so the site improves, not burdens, our streets and utilities. Build infrastructure in phases tied to occupancy to limit upfront risk.

Fourth, community engagement and leadership. I look to leaders like Matthew Popkin for technical guidance and community trust. He's been a leader on this issue from the jump, and I'm committed to working with him on the project so residents see tangible gains at the site.

The sugar factory can be an asset, but only with honest accounting of cleanup costs, a skilled development partner, committed funding strategies, strong sustainability standards, and community guarantees that the project benefits Longmont as a whole.

Are there specific commercial areas in Longmont that you would prioritize for redevelopment or improvement? If so, which areas, and what strategies would you use to enhance them?

Yes, there are commercial areas in Longmont that could benefit from targeted redevelopment, and one area I see a lot of potential in is the triangle near Left Hand Brewing at Boston Ave. There's a triangle in this area that could become a pedestrian-friendly development corridor that attracts both residents and businesses while enhancing connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods.

My approach would focus on mixed-use redevelopment, prioritizing spaces that combine retail, office, and residential uses to create a vibrant, walkable environment. I'd work to streamline permitting and incentivize reinvestment, so developers and small business owners can take on projects without

unnecessary delays or red tape. Streetscape improvements, expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and thoughtful parking solutions would make the area accessible and welcoming.

Finally, I'd engage nearby residents and business owners early in the process to ensure the development reflects community priorities, preserves neighborhood character, and supports local entrepreneurs. The goal is to turn underutilized commercial space into a thriving, connected, and pedestrian-friendly part of Longmont.

Vance Brand Airport

What role does Longmont's Vance Brand Airport play in supporting the economic growth and transportation needs of local businesses and residents?

Vance Brand Municipal Airport plays a unique role in supporting Longmont's economy and transportation needs. For local businesses, it provides access for small aircraft, enabling client visits, business travel, and connections to regional markets. The airport also supports aviation-related jobs and recreational activities, including operations like Mile High Skydiving, which bring visitors and tourism dollars to the city.

Importantly, Vance Brand is also a hub for medical flights and emergency services, ensuring critical transportation for residents when time is of the essence.

At the same time, the airport must coexist with nearby neighborhoods so the entire community can see Vance Brand as the genuine community asset it has the potential to be. I support measures that balance its economic and recreational value with the quality of life of residents, encouraging voluntary noise abatement, limiting excessive "touch-and-go" operations, and maintaining open channels for community feedback.

Longmont deserves an airport that contributes to the economy, supports residents' safety, and remains a community asset everyone can appreciate.

Envision Longmont calls for development, including residential, near the Vance Brand yet some airport stakeholders have expressed concern about noise complaints and safety. What's your philosophy on land use planning in that area to balance the City's housing needs with concerns about airport operations?

Development near Vance Brand Municipal Airport presents both an opportunity and a challenge. Longmont needs more housing, and smart infill near existing infrastructure, including the airport, can help meet that demand. At the same time, residents and airport stakeholders have legitimate concerns about noise, safety, and operations.

My philosophy is thoughtful, balanced land use planning. That means using tools like setbacks, noise buffers, and design guidelines to ensure new housing is compatible with airport operations, while preserving the airport as a community asset. It also means engaging residents, developers, and airport stakeholders early and consistently so that concerns are addressed before they become conflicts.

In practice, this approach allows us to grow responsibly, meeting Longmont's housing needs without compromising safety or quality of life. We can have both a thriving airport and safe, livable neighborhoods if planning is proactive, data-driven, and guided by collaboration.

***What is your position on allowing housing development near the Longmont airport, and how should the city manage potential conflicts between aviation activity and residential growth?**

I am supportive of development near Longmont Airport when it is thoughtfully planned, engages the community, and incorporates stakeholder feedback. Projects should address safety concerns, comply with FAA regulations, and include measures like noise buffers or setbacks to reduce conflicts with aviation activity. Potential residents and tenants should also be clearly notified about the impacts they'll be dealing with.

At the same time, development in this area should meet broader community needs, including for-sale housing, mixed-use spaces, and amenities like childcare that support working families. A project like Modern West 2 is a model of the kind of development I could support if it meets these criteria.

Ultimately, the city should manage potential conflicts through proactive planning, clear guidelines, and ongoing communication with both residents and airport stakeholders. This approach allows us to expand housing responsibly while preserving the airport as a valued community asset.

Tourism

In 2023, nearly 600,000 visitors generated over \$277 million in economic impact for Longmont and supported more than 3,000 local jobs — outcomes made possible through strategic destination marketing and management. What is your perspective on the role of tourism and continued investment in destination marketing to benefit both residents and visitors?

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont's tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

Tourism brings valuable dollars and supports local businesses, but it isn't the central driver of Longmont's economy. Most visitors are passing through on their way to Denver, Boulder or the mountains. Our long-term economic strength relies on supporting working families, small businesses, and sustainable growth.

That said, I support strategic tourism initiatives that benefit both residents and businesses. I want to work closely with Visit Longmont to highlight local businesses, cultural assets, and community events, making sure investments in marketing and destination management align with city priorities and enhance quality of life.

My vision is for a pragmatic, community-centered approach: use tourism to complement, not define, Longmont's economy—supporting jobs, local entrepreneurs, and vibrant neighborhoods while keeping our city affordable and accessible for the people who live here.

Childcare

Childcare costs in Longmont and Boulder County are among the highest in the state of Colorado. What could you do as a councilor/mayor to help bring down the costs of childcare for families while helping childcare providers earn more thriving wages?

Childcare in Longmont and Boulder County is unaffordable for far too many families, and the shortage of quality spots is a barrier to both parents and the local economy. It costs more to send a 2-year-old to daycare than a 20-year-old to CU Boulder. That's an economic crisis for working families, and one of the core reasons I got into this race.

As a father of two young kids and an educator, I recognize this as a moral and economic crisis. Every child deserves access to quality early education, and every family deserves a choice that doesn't break the bank.

On council, I would push for creative, community-driven solutions to expand access and lower costs. One approach I support is the creation of an early childhood education special district, which could raise and distribute dedicated revenue to address the \$60+ million gap between what our kids need and what's currently available. This would be a community-focused mechanism to ensure every child has access, regardless of income.

I also support incentives for developers to include on-site childcare and early learning centers in new residential or mixed-use projects. This increases capacity, reduces commuting burdens for families, and provides childcare providers with stable, fair wages.

Ultimately, my goal is to make Longmont a place where families can thrive, children can succeed from day one, and childcare providers are valued and fairly compensated. I will fight to ensure that no family is left behind due to cost or lack of access.

----- End of Questionnaire Responses from Candidate Marsing -----

Alex Kalkhofer

Campaign Website: AlexForLongmont.com

About:

I'm Alex Kalkhofer, and I've spent the past decade and a half building efficient, compliant logistics and international trade operations. As Chair of Longmont's Transportation Advisory Board, I champion practical projects like signal timing improvements to protected crossings, making our streets safer and more connected for everyone all while supporting local businesses. My wife Emily, our two kids, Alder (8) and Alice (6), and I love calling Longmont home. I'm committed to preserving our community's character while driving smart growth in housing, transportation, and small business.

General Vision

If elected, what would be your top priority in office?

My top priority is building a transportation system that supports a thriving local economy. Longmont's streets and infrastructure must safely and efficiently connect residents, workers, and customers. As Chair of Longmont's Transportation Advisory Board, I prioritize practical improvements like better signal timing, protected crossings and bike lanes. All of this will reduce congestion and maximize access to local businesses. A safe and efficient transportation system is a foundation for a thriving community.

I will also champion streamlined, predictable permitting processes that help businesses expand quickly and developers deliver affordable housing without unnecessary delays or costs. The city's high fees for infrastructure upgrades (such as traffic lights and utility connections) create barriers to development. I'll negotiate reduced costs that developers must pass on to buyers, improving affordability for Longmont's workforce.

By cutting red tape and lowering development costs, Longmont can attract and retain businesses while ensuring our workforce can live affordably nearby. I'm committed to fostering a business environment where city policies are clear, consistent, and responsive. When businesses thrive, our entire community benefits.

What is your plan for advocating Longmont's business needs at the state and federal levels?

I'll leverage my experience with the Transportation Advisory Board and Community Action Program to advocate through existing regional partnerships. My supply chain management background helps me understand how businesses need predictable regulations and efficient processes. I'll work with state legislators on infrastructure funding, streamlined permitting, and workforce development programs. Through organizations like the Boulder Economic Council, I'll ensure Longmont businesses have strong representation in regional economic initiatives that attract investment and support local entrepreneurs.

***What will you do to protect the council and staff from being distracted by issues that don't fit within the city's strategic plan?**

I'll advocate for clear governance protocols that tie agenda items to Advance Longmont 2.0 and measurable community outcomes. When issues arise outside our jurisdiction, I'll work to redirect them appropriately while keeping council focused on areas where we can deliver results like housing, transportation, business support, and infrastructure. My approach emphasizes data-driven decision making and staying focused on what residents and businesses need most from local government.

Minimum Wage

****Do you support setting a local minimum wage above the state requirement? If so, what rate do you believe is appropriate, and how do you anticipate it would affect local businesses? Given the pressure from county commissioners and special interest groups to accelerate minimum wage increases — and considering the reported business closures and job losses in cities like Denver, and Niwot — what would be your approach be on this issue?**

I approach local minimum wage increases cautiously, recognizing the balance between supporting workers and maintaining business viability. Rather than unilateral increases, I support regional coordination with neighboring municipalities to prevent competitive disadvantages. My priority is creating economic conditions where businesses naturally offer good wages through reduced regulatory barriers, streamlined processes, and attracting higher-paying industries. I'd want to study impacts on similar-sized cities and hear from local business owners about implementation challenges. We will also support employees growth through training programs where we partner with Front Range Community College (FRCC) and St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD).

Environment & Sustainability

What are your plans/programs for balancing growth and environmental sustainability?

I support practical sustainability measures that provide economic benefits. We need to have energy efficiency programs that reduce costs for businesses and residents, renewable energy partnerships that create jobs, and development standards that manage growth impacts. Green infrastructure like permeable surfaces and retention areas can manage stormwater while creating community assets. Strategic growth along transit corridors reduces sprawl while supporting local businesses through increased foot traffic and customer access.

***Longmont is five years away from its 2030 goal of sourcing all electricity from carbon-free sources. However, with Platte River Power Authority planning to replace its coal-fired turbine with a natural gas unit, this goal will not be fully met. Projections suggest the cumulative cost to Longmont residents will be around \$100 million by 2030 due to steeply rising electric rates (~\$2,500/ household).**

Given Longmont's negligible contribution to global CO₂ emissions, and the fact that roughly half of the city's electricity reportedly now comes from carbon-free sources, should the city reconsider its goal and recognize that the progress made so far represents its fair share, or should it stay committed to the original target, regardless of the financial cost?

While I support environmental goals, the projected \$2,500 per household cost requires serious evaluation. We should explore cost-effective alternatives like regional partnerships, innovative financing, and phased approaches that balance environmental progress with economic sustainability. The city should be transparent about costs and timelines, seeking resident input on priorities. Regional coordination may achieve better environmental outcomes more affordably than individual municipal efforts.

I support tapping into residents' solar energy by providing incentives for battery storage and developing micro power stations to utilize that renewable energy before relying on gas-fired backups. Smart investments in distributed clean energy can help meet carbon goals cost-effectively while empowering residents to participate in sustainability.

Housing Development

****How will you balance sustainable growth and affordability with concerns about increased density—such as traffic, noise, and strain on infrastructure—while also addressing homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges?**

Strategic density near transit corridors and employment centers reduces infrastructure strain while supporting local businesses. I support missing middle housing like duplexes, ADUs, small apartment buildings where we add housing choices without overwhelming neighborhoods. For homelessness, regional partnerships with Boulder County and evidence-based services addressing mental health and substance use are more effective than municipal efforts alone. Clear development standards can manage traffic and noise concerns while meeting housing needs.

Fiscal Responsibility

What strategies would you implement to increase city revenue and enhance local economic sustainability without burdening residents or relying heavily on federal and state funding?

Focus on economic development that grows the tax base by attracting businesses that create good jobs, supporting existing business expansion, and investing in infrastructure that makes Longmont more attractive to employers and visitors. Streamlined permitting and business-friendly policies encourage development that generates sales tax and property tax revenue. Regional partnerships can reduce service costs while strategic tourism investment creates revenue. The goal is sustainable growth that funds essential services without excessive tax increases.

Advance Longmont

***What do you see as the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0, and what, if any, modifications would you propose? Additionally, what steps will you take to protect its integrity and promote its effective implementation?**

Advance Longmont 2.0 provides a solid framework for balanced growth, economic development, and community character preservation. Its strengths include community input, measurable goals, and integration of housing, transportation, and economic development. I'd enhance implementation by strengthening regional partnerships, modernizing our development codes to support missing middle housing, and improving metrics for business friendliness and development efficiency. Regular community check-ins ensure the plan evolves with changing needs while maintaining core principles.

Arts Funding & Recreation

What is the city's role to support and fund the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces in Longmont?

Arts and recreation are essential quality-of-life amenities that attract visitors, keep residents in Longmont, and support local businesses. The city should maintain core recreational facilities and programs while partnering with nonprofits and private organizations to expand cultural offerings. Strategic investment in arts venues and community spaces creates gathering places that support local businesses. Grant programs and venue partnerships can leverage public investment to support diverse cultural programming without excessive municipal costs.

What role do you see the Sundance Film Festival playing in Longmont's cultural and economic landscape, and how would you balance its benefits with residents' concerns about congestion and affordability?

Sundance provides significant economic opportunities through visitor spending and national visibility. Our goal should be to welcome these visitors and make Longmont a top destination, turning increased activity into lasting benefits for our local businesses, restaurants, and cultural scene. The key is managing growth to maximize benefits while addressing resident concerns about traffic and costs. I support infrastructure improvements to handle increased visitors, coordination with local businesses to capitalize on this influx, and policies ensuring housing affordability remains protected. Regional partnerships will help with logistics, while strategic marketing leverages the festival to promote Longmont year-round as a top cultural destination.

Civic Discourse & Engagement

What strategies would you implement to foster more respectful, productive discussions on local issues and encourage civil engagement while reducing vitriolic discourse?

Create structured forums that focus on facts and solutions rather than politics, use neutral facilitators, and establish clear guidelines for respectful dialogue. Community coffee hours, neighborhood meetings, and online platforms with moderation can provide venues for productive discussion.

Transparent information sharing and regular progress reports build trust. My approach emphasizes listening first, finding common ground, and focusing on shared community goals rather than division.

Business Startups, Costs, Commercial Development & Permitting

How would you address concerns over blighted or underutilized commercial areas?

Target strategic areas for infrastructure investment, streamlined redevelopment processes, and incentives for quality improvements. Flexible zoning that allows mixed-use development can revitalize underutilized areas while creating housing opportunities. Partnership with property owners, tax incentives for improvements, and facade grant programs can encourage private investment. Focus on areas with good transportation access where improvements can catalyze broader economic development.

****What steps would you take to make Longmont a more competitive and business-friendly city, especially for startups and commercial development? Some have stated concerns that the planning and permitting process has become slow, complex, and costly — making it difficult for businesses to build and occupy space — how would you work to streamline these processes? Additionally, what strategies would you support to help keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses?**

Drawing from supply chain experience, I'll implement concurrent permitting reviews, digital permitting submittals, and clear timelines with accountability measures. Create a "Good Neighbor Pre-Application" process bringing developers, neighbors, and staff together early to identify issues before formal submittal, reducing redesigns and delays. For commercial renters, explore shared infrastructure costs, streamlined tenant improvements, and mixed-use incentives that create more commercial space naturally moderating rents through increased supply.

***Downtown businesses are estimated to be about 80% locally owned and operated. What would you do to protect and support that character? What top goals would you prioritize to ensure downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming to local businesses and the community? (Question submitted by Longmont Downtown Development Authority, our economic partner)**

Support local business success through improved parking management, coordinated events that drive foot traffic, and infrastructure improvements that create attractive gathering spaces. Streamlined permitting for small business improvements, facade grant programs, and marketing partnerships help local businesses compete. Mixed-use development policies that maintain ground-floor commercial while adding housing can support businesses through increased customers while preserving downtown's walkable character and local ownership.

Social Issues & Equity

***Are there or could there be local initiatives you would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents who may be disproportionately affected by broader policy changes—such as immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and those facing barriers to healthcare?**

Support partnerships with nonprofits and Boulder County for services beyond municipal scope, maintain city programs that provide direct assistance, and ensure city services are accessible to all

residents regardless of status. This includes language access, affordable utility programs, and coordination with regional organizations providing healthcare and social services. Local initiatives should complement rather than duplicate county and state programs while addressing gaps in service delivery.

RTD & Public Transit

Should Longmont explore new public transit options such as Front Range Passenger Rail? If so, what are they?

Yes, Front Range Passenger Rail would provide significant economic and transportation benefits by connecting Longmont to the Denver metro area and regional destinations. I support advocating for Longmont inclusion in rail planning, improving local transit connections to future rail stations, and coordinating development around potential stations. Enhanced regional connectivity supports local businesses by improving workforce access and customer reach while reducing transportation costs for residents. We also need to hold RTD to account by increasing frequencies and adding routes we demand.

Business Acumen

Have you signed the front of a paycheck?

While I haven't owned my own business, I grew up in a family of entrepreneurs. My family ran multiple restaurants and clothing stores, and I started working at my mother's restaurant in high school. This gave me hands-on experience with customer service, inventory management, cash flow challenges, staffing issues, and the daily realities of small business operations. Combined with my corporate experience managing multi-million dollar budgets, I understand both entrepreneurial challenges and operational efficiency.

What real-world business experience do you bring, and how would that experience affect your approach to budgeting, hiring, or marketing to help shape city policy?

I have three areas that have shaped my experience throughout my life. My family's restaurant/retail operations is where I learned customer service, inventory management, and small business cash flow challenges; 15+ years managing supply chains and budgets most recently at Teladoc Health involving contract negotiations, vendor relationships, and regulatory compliance; and volunteer leadership managing organizational budgets and stakeholder coordination. This combination provides perspective on both small business challenges and corporate efficiency, which I apply to streamlining city processes and supporting entrepreneurs.

Sugar Mill and Brownfield Developments

Do you have a vision for redeveloping the historic Sugar Mill site? If so, how would you address environmental concerns, sustainable infrastructure and engage the community and developers to benefit Longmont as a whole?

The Sugarmill presents opportunities for mixed-use development that honors historical significance while creating community assets. Environmental remediation should be transparent with community oversight. Development should include public spaces, potentially cultural venues, and housing options that serve various income levels. Strong community engagement throughout planning ensures development serves broader community interests while creating economic opportunities and preserving historical elements where feasible.

Are there specific commercial areas in Longmont that you would prioritize for redevelopment or improvement? If so, which areas, and what strategies would you use to enhance them?

Focus on areas with good transportation access and infrastructure capacity: corridors along major streets that can support mixed-use development, underutilized shopping centers that could benefit from redevelopment, and areas near employment centers where worker-serving businesses would thrive. Strategic investment in infrastructure improvements, streamlined approval processes, and targeted incentives can catalyze private investment in priority areas while supporting existing businesses during transition periods.

Vance Brand Airport

What role does Longmont's Vance Brand Airport play in supporting the economic growth and transportation needs of local businesses and residents?

Vance Brand provides essential business transportation, supports aerospace and technology companies, and contributes to Longmont's economic diversity. General aviation serves business needs, flight training creates jobs, and aerospace companies provide high-paying employment. The airport also supports emergency services and recreational flying that contributes to quality of life. Strategic marketing and infrastructure improvements can attract more aviation businesses while maintaining good neighbor relationships with surrounding communities.

Envision Longmont calls for development, including residential, near the Vance Brand yet some airport stakeholders have expressed concern about noise complaints and safety. What's your philosophy on land use planning in that area to balance the City's housing needs with concerns about airport operations?

Require noise disclosures and design standards for residential development near the airport, maintain clear height restrictions for aviation safety, and create buffer zones that could include compatible uses like light industrial or office space. Strategic land use planning can accommodate both housing and aviation through appropriate design. Development should complement rather than conflict with airport operations while meeting community housing goals.

***What is your position on allowing housing development near the Longmont airport, and how should the city manage potential conflicts between aviation activity and residential growth?**

Support carefully planned housing development that acknowledges airport operations through appropriate design standards, noise mitigation, and buyer disclosure requirements. Compatible housing development can coexist with aviation through proper planning, zoning that creates appropriate buffers, and development standards that address noise and safety concerns. Regional housing needs require utilizing available land responsibly while protecting existing economic assets like the airport.

Tourism

In 2023, nearly 600,000 visitors generated over \$277 million in economic impact for Longmont and supported more than 3,000 local jobs — outcomes made possible through strategic destination marketing and management. What is your perspective on the role of tourism and continued investment in destination marketing to benefit both residents and visitors?

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont’s tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

Tourism's \$277 million economic impact and 3,000 jobs demonstrate significant community benefit. Strategic tourism investment should focus on assets that also serve residents like parks, trails, cultural venues, and local amenities. Partnership with Visit Longmont leverages expertise while ensuring city priorities align with tourism goals. Sustainable tourism growth manages visitor impacts while maximizing economic benefits through coordination with local businesses and infrastructure investment that serves both residents and visitors.

Childcare

Childcare costs in Longmont and Boulder County are among the highest in the state of Colorado. What could you do as a councilor/mayor to help bring down the costs of childcare for families while helping childcare providers earn more thriving wages?

To help bring down childcare costs while supporting provider wages, the city should work closely with childcare providers to ensure all available openings are widely broadcasted to families, helping fill as many slots as possible. We can also improve communication about financial assistance options so families are aware of resources to help offset costs.

Additionally, I support zoning flexibility to increase home-based childcare options, streamlined licensing for quality providers, and partnerships with employers to explore workforce childcare solutions. Advocacy for state funding that boosts provider wages without raising parent costs, along with exploring regional collaborations and innovative financing, can help expand affordable, high-quality childcare availability and sustain providers.

This combination of proactive outreach, regulatory support, and funding advocacy creates a more accessible, affordable childcare system that benefits families and providers alike.

----- End of Questionnaire Responses from Candidate Kalkhofer -----

Steven Altschuler

Campaign Website: steve4longmont.com

About:

I owned my first business when I was 22 years old. When I sold that I went to work for an automotive parts supply company based in Dallas, TX. After 18 months of in the field sales training, I was promoted to sales manager and was sent to Toronto to open up Canada for the company. I hired and trained all of the sales team. At 32, I bought a carpet and drapery store in California, 7 years later, after tripling the volume of the business, I sold it for 3 times what I had paid for it and moved to Boulder County in 1995. Two years later, I started my own business selling and installing Hunter Douglas blinds. Within 2 years, I was the largest Hunter Douglas dealer in Boulder County. In 2007, my family and I moved to Longmont to be closer to schools for my daughter. In 2019, I sold my business and currently continue to manage my rental properties which I have acquired throughout the years.

General Vision

If elected, what would be your top priority in office?

The very first ordinance that I will put forth, is to require homeless people and their possessions to remain at least 100 feet from a storefront and 500 feet from a school or park. There are many things that we can and should do to REALLY help the homeless, but businesses are the engine that runs every city. We must protect our businesses and actually help them to be MORE successful, not hinder them.

What is your plan for advocating Longmont's business needs at the state and federal levels?

First we must decide what those business needs are. They are different for every type, industry and size of business. As a small business owner for over 35 years, I have a good idea of what businesses need: lower fees for opening a business, less red tape, less city oversight etc. I plan on making myself very available at monthly after hours events and by email, to allow the business owners to tell me their specific needs. Longmont is a "Home rule" city and as such we do NOT have to follow EVERY state rule. I will consult with non-city attorneys to find out how much wiggle room we have.

***What will you do to protect the council and staff from being distracted by issues that don't fit within the city's strategic plan?**

The current City Council plan seems to be to build 7,10 and 14 story buildings on every possible piece of land. Combined with reducing parking everywhere and building 1000's of low-income, subsidized housing, which will make living in Longmont a nightmare. Combine that with removing 30-50% of parking spaces and you have nowhere for customers to shop and 1000's of people living in Longmont that cannot afford to shop. This is not exactly a "Strategic Plan" that I can support.

Minimum Wage

****Do you support setting a local minimum wage above the state requirement? If so, what rate do you believe is appropriate, and how do you anticipate it would affect local businesses? Given the pressure from county commissioners and special interest groups to accelerate minimum wage increases — and considering the reported business closures and job losses in cities like Denver, and Niwot — what would be your approach be on this issue?**

As I have stated repeatedly on this issue. I am ABSOLUTELY against this “minimum wage” increase being crammed down our business' throats. If a business has a good employee, the owner or management will gladly give a raise to keep them. It is much less expensive than continually hiring and training new people. We have many empty businesses in Longmont. If we can fill those vacancies with good, vibrant businesses then more Longmont citizens will be working in Longmont. saving on gas, reducing traffic, and organically increasing wages for everyone. All a 50% forced increase will do is close or move many businesses, create 100's and 100's of more unemployed and drive those newly unemployed either into the city owned, subsidized housing, or create many more homeless.

Environment & Sustainability

What are your plans/programs for balancing growth and environmental sustainability?

See below.

***Longmont is five years away from its 2030 goal of sourcing all electricity from carbon-free sources. However, with Platte River Power Authority planning to replace its coal-fired turbine with a natural gas unit, this goal will not be fully met. Projections suggest the cumulative cost to Longmont residents will be around \$100 million by 2030 due to steeply rising electric rates (~\$2,500/ household).**

Given Longmont's negligible contribution to global CO₂ emissions, and the fact that roughly half of the city's electricity reportedly now comes from carbon-free sources, should the city reconsider its goal and recognize that the progress made so far represents its fair share, or should it stay committed to the original target, regardless of the financial cost?

5 years ago Longmont was looking pretty good in regards to our excess electricity capacity. Adding many EV cars, reducing natural gas, stopping coal plants and nuclear plants, and building 1000's of new apartments have all been a drain. Also, Statewide, Bitcoins and AI are HUGE drains on our capacity. We need to be extremely aware of the very real risk of having our grid crash. We need to keep having natural gas as a clean and very inexpensive fuel source. Electric is 4X the cost of gas. A \$200 gas bill would be an \$800 electric bill and may make many citizens lose their homes. Yes, I think the city should reconsider its goal.

Housing Development

****How will you balance sustainable growth and affordability with concerns about increased density—such as traffic, noise, and strain on infrastructure—while also addressing homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges?**

We currently have about 350 vacant rental apartments in Longmont. We have over 750 houses for sale that are selling very slowly. I believe we have already overbuilt, and at least for now, we do not need anymore. Where is it written that we must provide housing for anyone and everyone that may want to live in Longmont? Most of our citizens moved here for a certain “quality of life”, that is being eroded very quickly, especially with our city council wanting 7,10 and 14 story buildings even on Main Street. The #1 complaint by 75% of all Longmont citizens is traffic. I had a retired Longmont water engineer tell me that Longmont only has enough water for about 100,000 residents and we are already over that number. STOP BUILDING! What we can and should do is convert some apartments into condo type of for sale units. A 1-2 bedroom, 1 bath would sell for \$150K -200K. They already have separate addresses and separate utility billing. A conversion would be a simple matter of paperwork. The mortgage would be the same or less than rent and the new owner would have an asset that would get more valuable over time, increase in value with inflation, and provide a tax write-off. We need to get our younger people into the real estate market and let them start growing wealth. The city would benefit due to increased property tax revenue and the project itself would be better maintained when the residents have an ownership interest.

Fiscal Responsibility

What strategies would you implement to increase city revenue and enhance local economic sustainability without burdening residents or relying heavily on federal and state funding?

From 2019 to 2024 our population grew by 2.5%. In the same time span, our budget grew by 22.5%. In 2023, our property taxes went up over 35%. I would rather see Longmont reduce their spending and give Longmont residents a tax break rather than always taking more and more. We need to find ways to support our businesses and encourage more residents to shop locally. A tax free day? A citizen discount or a shopping card after spending X amount or turning in receipts from X number of local businesses?

Advance Longmont

***What do you see as the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0, and what, if any, modifications would you propose? Additionally, what steps will you take to protect its integrity and promote its effective implementation?**

As I have said many times...filling a city with low-income, subsidized housing units will bring in more lower income workers. Longmont has more than enough low income workers. If a person cannot afford to pay their own rent, how is that person going to help contribute to a thriving and vibrant local economy? Longmont was at its strongest financially when we had vibrant chip and computer companies. Now, if you drive along Clover Basin all you see is vacancies. Companies that pay much higher salaries will have a higher percentage of employees that desire nicer homes and yards for their kids and entertainment. We need to make sure that nicer amenities are available for those that long for

that style of living, and some nicer apartments with amenities for those that have no desire to be a homeowner.

Arts Funding & Recreation

What is the city's role to support and fund the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces in Longmont?

First, we need to "Keep Open Spaces Open"! Too many city council members have been voting to change open space, change zoning laws-and then allow massive construction and over run our city with cars and traffic. Keep our parks and recreation going. They are well used and enjoyed by all. They help make Longmont-Longmont. Arts and cultural programs should be a free market option, just like a movie theatre, bowling alley or supermarket.

What role do you see the Sundance Film Festival playing in Longmont's cultural and economic landscape, and how would you balance its benefits with residents' concerns about congestion and affordability?

Boulder is anticipating charging every homeowner who wishes to rent out a room or their home for the film festival \$195.00 for a permit. In my opinion, this is insane, selfish and greedy! If people have an opportunity to make a little extra money for a few weeks, let them! The City of Longmont and local businesses will make a lot of extra money from all these tourists buying food and shopping, Everyone's revenue will go up and the city will profit in that way. Longmont could be promoted as a great place to be "home base" during the festival. We may need to have our police officers assist during peak hours to help traffic flow the best way possible.

Civic Discourse & Engagement

What strategies would you implement to foster more respectful, productive discussions on local issues and encourage civil engagement while reducing vitriolic discourse?

A lot more education on our 1st amendment could go a long way in fostering more respectful and productive discussions. Everyone should be able to enjoy free speech, not just someone that shares your opinion. We are all free to walk away. However, speech that incites riots or violence needs to be punished through our courts or our penal system. If anyone can commit violence and not be punished, it just encourages more violence. Perhaps local community forums could be implemented to encourage discussions on local issues among our residents.

Business Startups, Costs, Commercial Development & Permitting

How would you address concerns over blighted or underutilized commercial areas?

Why are they blighted? Taxes too high? Not enough easy parking? Too many homeless and panhandlers chasing customers away? Buildings falling apart? Inconvenient access? Gangs in the area? Overpriced rents? We must figure out these questions first. Perhaps a reduced tax structure while improvements are made, better signage, and increased police presence in these areas would be useful depending upon the specific need.

****What steps would you take to make Longmont a more competitive and business-friendly city, especially for startups and commercial development? Some have stated concerns that the planning and permitting process has become slow, complex, and costly — making it difficult for businesses to build and occupy space — how would you work to streamline these processes? Additionally, what strategies would you support to help keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses?**

I am a believer in the free market and “supply and demand”. Our city council doesn't need to control everything. When there are vacancies, rents will come down. Speaking from personal experience, any landlord would rather have 60% rent from a good tenant than 0% from no tenant. The city can do things like police patrols or reducing red tape and excessive, expensive permits to make starting a business in Longmont more attractive.

***Downtown businesses are estimated to be about 80% locally owned and operated. What would you do to protect and support that character? What top goals would you prioritize to ensure downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming to local businesses and the community? (Question submitted by Longmont Downtown Development Authority, our economic partner)**

I would do the exact opposite of what our current city council is doing! We need to have more parking, better access and better prices. Pricing can be affected by cost of theft, rent, utilities, wages, etc. Having festivals, Unity in the Community, art walks and such have been a great start. Let's build on that. Perhaps something like a Bingo card where a citizen can get rewarded or entered into a drawing for visiting 3 different stores in 1 day, free “Ride Longmont” trips on a slow business day such as Mondays, or a scavenger hunt with the winners getting a Downtown Longmont gift card would be some ideas.

Social Issues & Equity

***Are there or could there be local initiatives you would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents who may be disproportionately affected by broader policy changes—such as immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and those facing barriers to healthcare?**

Longmont taxpayer money should go to help Longmont citizens that have fallen on a hard time, need help and are trying to help themselves, too. We cannot, nor should we, build a free home for every homeless person in Colorado, as one current city council member stated on his website. Denver is always sending their homeless to Boulder County whenever they have a “sweep”. Boulder had Longmont build a shelter that they send their homeless up here to stay in. Getting behind our local non-profits such as the Our Center and The Inn Between is necessary to help support folks that are transitioning. I would personally like to see our lower income citizens be able to take classes at Front Range in order to broaden their skills and make themselves more valuable in the marketplace.

RTD & Public Transit

Should Longmont explore new public transit options such as Front Range Passenger Rail? If so, what are they?

If the Sugar Mill is developed with over 2500 residences (about 7,500 more residents) as one Ward 2 person wants and if Longmont builds 14,000 new residences (about 42,000 residents) as one mayoral candidate wants, those will add at least 5,000 cars from Sugar Mill development and 30,000 cars from

other new residences to our already over-crowded streets. How many would need transportation to Denver? At best, we could provide a transportation system for residents to get to a station at 119 and I25, or Hwy 66 and I25, to hop on a Denver-Cheyenne rail system. However, in my opinion, a rail in Longmont makes no sense logistically or financially.

Business Acumen

Have you signed the front of a paycheck?

Yes, 1000's.

What real-world business experience do you bring, and how would that experience affect your approach to budgeting, hiring, or marketing to help shape city policy?

35 years of owning my own businesses, building a business in Longmont from a start-up in Gunbarrel into the largest window covering business in Boulder County in 2 years. Please see my bio above for more details.

Sugar Mill and Brownfield Developments

Do you have a vision for redeveloping the historic Sugar Mill site? If so, how would you address environmental concerns, sustainable infrastructure and engage the community and developers to benefit Longmont as a whole?

I am open to discussions and I realize that ultimately something needs to be done. 2 years ago, there was a \$2 BILLION proposal that included 100's of businesses and 2500+ apartments/townhouses and even an event center. Though I had no vote at the time, I was against that for several reasons including but not limited to: 8-10 years of construction that would reduce Ken Pratt to 1 lane each way, 1000's and 1000's of trucks removing old, contaminated dirt and bringing in new dirt, Longmont being way off of the highway, and the resulting increase of traffic when finished. Broomfield spent \$10's of MILLIONS on their event center right on HWY 36 and in the past few years had to shut it down for lack of use. They spent \$10's of MILLIONS more to remove it.

Are there specific commercial areas in Longmont that you would prioritize for redevelopment or improvement? If so, which areas, and what strategies would you use to enhance them?

In general, N. Main, 17th and Pace (Safeway area) and Clover Basin west of Hover have many areas that are vacant. We do NOT need more high-rise apartments in these areas, but we do need business redevelopment that can provide good paying jobs for our local residents. This will help reduce traffic on Main, Ken Pratt and Hwy 66. Having better paying jobs will also make our local businesses more successful. One of the ideas I have to stimulate these areas is to have special events to drive business into a particular area and create a heightened awareness to the existing businesses. Generally, it seems like the majority of events and festivals in Longmont take place in the downtown area and it would be great to spread out these events to different parts of our city.

Vance Brand Airport

What role does Longmont's Vance Brand Airport play in supporting the economic growth and transportation needs of local businesses and residents?

I honestly do not know how extensive the economic impact of the airport is. In my opinion, they were here first and the City of Longmont needs to honor that.

Envision Longmont calls for development, including residential, near the Vance Brand yet some airport stakeholders have expressed concern about noise complaints and safety. What's your philosophy on land use planning in that area to balance the City's housing needs with concerns about airport operations?

The problem with "Envision Longmont" is their vision of Longmont is 10 and 14 story buildings, high density and high traffic. Basically, they want another Denver. If people in Longmont want to live in Denver then go there, but most Longmont residents moved here for a quieter and more idyllic lifestyle. We need to honor, respect and protect that desire.

***What is your position on allowing housing development near the Longmont airport, and how should the city manage potential conflicts between aviation activity and residential growth?**

See above.

Tourism

In 2023, nearly 600,000 visitors generated over \$277 million in economic impact for Longmont and supported more than 3,000 local jobs — outcomes made possible through strategic destination marketing and management. What is your perspective on the role of tourism and continued investment in destination marketing to benefit both residents and visitors?

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont's tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

Anytime you can get out of area people up here and spending their money in our city, it makes everyone a little wealthier. As much as possible we need to find out why those 600,000 came to Longmont and build on that... Hunting and leaves changing in the fall? Skiing in the winter? Climbing 14ers in the summer? Rocky Mountain National Park? Enjoying trees blooming in the spring? We can build on all of those. We need to check with the local hotels and find out why they are busy. Weddings? Grandchildren? College graduations? I am big on finding synergies so that each need grows and supports another.

Childcare

Childcare costs in Longmont and Boulder County are among the highest in the state of Colorado. What could you do as a councilor/mayor to help bring down the costs of childcare for families while helping childcare providers earn more thriving wages?

Again, I am a free market advocate. The city should NOT own or run daycare centers. That is for an enterprising, business person to do. If the city does it they are only raising everyone's taxes to provide this "free" or reduced cost benefit to a few. The city CAN find ways to cut red tape and regulations to reduce the cost of running such a business. Some ideas may include using a vacant city owned building, or even help to find retired school teachers or grandparents that might want to spend some time with kids.

----- End of Questionnaire Responses from Candidate Altschuler -----

John Lembke

Campaign Website: lembkeforlongmont.com

About:

I'm a husband and father. I have degrees in mechanical engineering and engineering management. I can bring my problem solving skills as an engineer to Longmont's government.

Longmont faces real, pressing issues: kids going to school hungry, families struggling to find childcare, preventable car crashes, and a lack of affordable housing. These are not abstract policy issues, they directly impact the community where my children are growing up.

I'm committed to honest leadership and real conversations. I believe in bold policies to build a future where our kids, and all working families in Longmont, have the opportunity to thrive.

General Vision

If elected, what would be your top priority in office?

Housing affordability..

What is your plan for advocating Longmont's business needs at the state and federal levels?

I would get regular feedback from the business community on specific needs for advocacy. I will build relationships with our state and federal leaders so that I can be an effective channel to communicate the needs of our community.

The one specific item I know I will advocate for at the state level is enabling legislation to allow us to transition our current property taxes to what is called Land Value Tax or Universal Building Exemption. This encourages efficient land use, reduces sprawl, and incentivizes business investment.

***What will you do to protect the council and staff from being distracted by issues that don't fit within the city's strategic plan?**

This is driven by the agenda set by the mayor. We must be focused on our priorities and set agendas based on the strategic plan. It is the leaders of the city that need to drive that. This isn't easy and many people have pet projects or nice to haves that require enormous effort for miniscule gain. Projects must be prioritized by what has the biggest benefits.

Minimum Wage

****Do you support setting a local minimum wage above the state requirement? If so, what rate do you believe is appropriate, and how do you anticipate it would affect local businesses? Given the pressure from county commissioners and special interest groups to accelerate minimum wage increases — and considering the reported business closures and job losses in cities like Denver, and Niwot — what would be your approach be on this issue?**

I am not opposed to setting a local minimum wage. I find it frustrating that the state did not give cities more discretion in how to apply it, like setting it at a certain level for large businesses. The first thing we should do is equalize our discriminatory tax code that punishes small business and end subsidies for large companies. The intent is to force companies that have pricing power and wage setting power to pay more because they have the profit margins to do so.

Finding an appropriate rate is a values judgement. In the short term, when we raise the minimum wage people will lose their jobs and businesses will close like they did in Niwot. In the long term businesses that can automate, will to increase productivity so they can pay more. There is nothing in the minimum wage report on how much profit businesses paying minimum wage have. If they only profit \$100,000 and we set a minimum wage that raises the payroll by \$100,000 then the business ceases to exist or must dramatically raise prices. Many of the marginal businesses are struggling because of government policies that favor certain businesses over others. I am thinking Costco which the city paid \$7 million directly. They then only pay \$15,000 per acre while Your Butcher Frank and the Longmont Dairy pay \$50,000 per acre. It isn't possible to compete when the government subsidizes big business like that.

I would press on those special interest groups that want to raise the minimum wage to also lobby state legislators to legalize the land value tax so that fewer businesses are marginal, we end the tax subsidies for large businesses, and we lower housing costs. If we lower housing costs the wage necessary to be a living wage goes down and the minimum wage needed also goes down and more businesses will survive an increase in the minimum wage.

Environment & Sustainability

What are your plans/programs for balancing growth and environmental sustainability?

I personally do not view these things as being mutually exclusive. We have not had as many people take advantage of efficiency works audits as they city targeted. I had an efficiency works audit done and insulated my house at their recommendation and the results were excellent.

One program I would like to see us trial is to let people opt for a demand meter for electricity. A demand meter charges a different price of electricity based on the time of usage. It costs different amounts to generate electricity at different times of the day. Generally, at peak demand in the middle of the day the cost is highest. For people and businesses that can change the time of day they run machines there is tremendous amounts. My parents who owned a business out of state saved thousands when they installed a demand meter.

***Longmont is five years away from its 2030 goal of sourcing all electricity from carbon-free sources. However, with Platte River Power Authority planning to replace its coal-fired turbine with a natural gas unit, this goal will not be fully met. Projections suggest the cumulative cost to Longmont residents will be around \$100 million by 2030 due to steeply rising electric rates (~\$2,500/ household).**

Given Longmont's negligible contribution to global CO₂ emissions, and the fact that roughly half of the city's electricity reportedly now comes from carbon-free sources, should the city reconsider its goal and recognize that the progress made so far represents its fair share, or should it stay committed to the original target, regardless of the financial cost?

It is tempting to abandon a goal even if it is unachievable. If we only ever had goals we were 100% sure we could achieve, we would not make as much progress we have in society. I believe we should not change the target even if we know we will miss. We track the miss and look at why we failed to achieve it. Replacing a coal fired power plant with natural gas is an immense improvement in terms of its impact on human health. Deaths from mining and burning coal are alarmingly high compared to other sources. I believe we owe it to future generations to continue to reduce combustion power plants because the fine particulate emissions from coal and natural gas are particularly harmful to children and pregnant women. Do I want us to go straight to a non-combustion source absolutely but if converting a power plant to natural gas is the fastest way to stop burning coal then we should do that.

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/death-rates-from-energy-production-per-twh>.

Housing Development

****How will you balance sustainable growth and affordability with concerns about increased density—such as traffic, noise, and strain on infrastructure—while also addressing homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges?**

This question appears to be making links that I don't believe are accurate.

There is only 1 thing that reduces homelessness and that is reducing the cost of housing. Addressing mental health and substance abuse are necessary to help people for other reasons but they have a negligible impact on reducing homelessness.

Sustainable growth and affordability come from legalizing more different types of homes. It is illegal to build anything except a detached single-family home in 65% of Longmont. I would allow duplexes in more of the city.

Strain on infrastructure is a bit disingenuous, low density puts a strain on the city budget because our roads in much of the city are overbuilt and the low density of the area does not generate enough tax revenue to support those roads. They should be rightsized for their use.

Addressing traffic is partially a comparison problem. We have a few roads like Hover and Ken Pratt that are congested and much of the city streets are quite empty. To address congestion, we must shift from 100% single use zoning and make changes to our street and intersection design.

Fiscal Responsibility

What strategies would you implement to increase city revenue and enhance local economic sustainability without burdening residents or relying heavily on federal and state funding?

I believe we need to reduce our reliance on the federal and state governments. The big bold change I want to implement is to transition our property tax policy to be a land value tax. We should stop taxing the buildings and tax only on the land. It provides better stability in tax revenue, it discourages land speculation, it incentivizes efficient development, it accurately taxes underutilized land like parking lots, and lowers taxes on most homes.

Advance Longmont

***What do you see as the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0, and what, if any, modifications would you propose? Additionally, what steps will you take to protect its integrity and promote its effective implementation?**

I see the key strengths being is specificity around the businesses and the methods to attract high paying jobs.

Modifications I would propose would be an intentional relationship with CO-Labs and CU Boulder which are accelerators for businesses to take intellectual property from the university and national laboratories and create businesses.

The plan touches on the disparity in income. I would propose that we add something to address it. One would be to eliminate the benefits cliff for residents in Longmont. Earning \$1 more in income causes people to lose thousands in benefits and traps them in poverty. Also, the segregation of neighborhoods by income which happens all over the country including Longmont is a contributing factor. I have always found that who you know is more important than what you know when looking for a job. If people in low-income neighborhoods don't know anyone in high income neighborhoods that can connect them to a solid career path it becomes a barrier to economic mobility.

Arts Funding & Recreation

What is the city's role to support and fund the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces in Longmont?

The city should take an active role and be the leader in funding parks, recreation, and community spaces. Those are all fundamental public goods and everyone in the community benefits from them.

I personally love the cultural programs the city puts on. I think they are valuable to the community. The city should have a secondary role in supporting and providing funding and should follow the lead of members of the community in those events.

Supporting the arts meaningfully is tougher. Something I recently learned is that development follows art. I want the city to be supportive of the artists in our community, I am not an artist myself and don't want the city to force something that wouldn't naturally exist. I believe favorable tax treatment of the

Firehouse Art Center and Longmont Public Media are valuable to the community. The art walk and the concerts downtown are all wonderful events in the community.

What role do you see the Sundance Film Festival playing in Longmont’s cultural and economic landscape, and how would you balance its benefits with residents’ concerns about congestion and affordability?

For economic benefit I would waive the city’s short term rental requirements for that week so people can rent out a room and make extra money. People will have to stay in Longmont as there aren’t nearly enough hotel rooms in Boulder for all the attendees.

It will be critical for us to have a more robust bus service in the area for the event. Approximately 80,000-100,000 people attended the event in Utah. Having an extra 40,000 to 50,000 cars for the event would be a burden. We must finish the bus rapid transit service between Longmont and Boulder before Sundance so the diagonal highway is not filled with thousands of extra cars.

As far as cultural landscape, I will hold judgement until the first event to see how many people come to Longmont. Boulder is hosting the event, and I don’t want us to spend taxpayer money on something with no return.

Civic Discourse & Engagement

What strategies would you implement to foster more respectful, productive discussions on local issues and encourage civil engagement while reducing vitriolic discourse?

I am a champion of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), particularly multi winner RCV. Our current election system of first past the post leads to minority rule. In the current system elected leaders must cater to a cohesive minority to get elected. The other method would be a citizen’s assembly for difficult cultural decisions. In a citizen’s assembly a group is chosen through a lottery to discuss a particularly difficult issue, develop a specific proposal with legal experts, and finally that proposal is put on the ballot for the city to vote on. It keeps the city council and staff from being dragged into heated values-based issues.

Business Startups, Costs, Commercial Development & Permitting

How would you address concerns over blighted or underutilized commercial areas?

Implementing a Land Value Tax would be an enormous first step. I wrote more details about it in response to another question. One of the primary purposes of LVT is to get blighted and underutilized commercial areas to pay taxes in line with the value of the land or sell to someone who will do develop it into something more productive.

For the second part, I don’t think we should subsidize converting blighted areas if it will drive businesses in other parts of the city under. Large subsidies like the \$7 million we gave to Costco in direct payments came from local businesses and residents. I’m not willing to take money from critical services or raise taxes on existing businesses just to make things look good, investments in blighted areas need to stand on their own financially.

****What steps would you take to make Longmont a more competitive and business-friendly city, especially for startups and commercial development? Some have stated concerns that the planning and permitting process has become slow, complex, and costly — making it difficult for businesses to build and occupy space — how would you work to streamline these processes? Additionally, what strategies would you support to help keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses?**

I would propose we track project permitting timelines by project complexity. For simple projects it should be very fast. Other cities have achieved same day permitting for simple projects. We should set a goal for the same. For small development projects I would also propose that we develop standard guidelines for buildings to meet in terms of looks, size, efficiency, and intended use to go through a less arduous approval process.

***Downtown businesses are estimated to be about 80% locally owned and operated. What would you do to protect and support that character? What top goals would you prioritize to ensure downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming to local businesses and the community? (Question submitted by Longmont Downtown Development Authority, our economic partner)**

This is the biggest reason to implement a land value tax is to support local businesses downtown. Current property tax policies apply a small business tax penalty when they don't have their own parking. Small locally owned businesses subsidize large corporate businesses under our current property tax system.

The approval process to open a business needs to be faster.

Social Issues & Equity

***Are there or could there be local initiatives you would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents who may be disproportionately affected by broader policy changes—such as immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and those facing barriers to healthcare?**

One of the items I talk about with folks is the benefits cliff aka the poverty trap. I have worked with a lot of people that couldn't get a raise or work more hours, or they would lose thousands in public benefits. I would love to see us transition some of our social safety net into something called a reverse income tax. Individuals can best determine how to spend the money they need. I don't have illusions that this will be easy but when we set up systems that permanently pull people out of poverty our long-term burden will go down.

For health care access I heard an interesting suggestion that I would like feedback from the fire department on. We would provide inexpensive basic health care to folks in the community at our fire stations.

RTD & Public Transit

Should Longmont explore new public transit options such as Front Range Passenger Rail? If so, what are they?

I believe in building systems incrementally. The cost and speed for us to build out a bus rapid transit system (BRT) is much faster than anything on rails. As things develop around the BRT we can prove that a rail investment is worth it.

I am not optimistic that RTD will ever get us a train. We are getting free buses within the city in place of a train. I am personally a huge fan of trains. I have ridden trains in several countries, Germany, France, and the UK. It appears that the Front Range Passenger Rail is our best option to connect us to other cities in the front range and I am on board with any rail system that is financially sound.

Business Acumen

Have you signed the front of a paycheck?

Not a physical check but I have digitally approved a lot of timecards for people that have worked for me.

What real-world business experience do you bring, and how would that experience affect your approach to budgeting, hiring, or marketing to help shape city policy?

I have worked in multiple manufacturing plants and worked closely with our finance teams. I have had to investigate, justify, and install hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of equipment.

When it comes to hiring, I believe we need to really know we need someone before we expand the team. Hiring and firing shortly after for budget reasons ruins the morale of an organization.

Sugar Mill and Brownfield Developments

Do you have a vision for redeveloping the historic Sugar Mill site? If so, how would you address environmental concerns, sustainable infrastructure and engage the community and developers to benefit Longmont as a whole?

I am more pessimistic than others about the Sugarmill site. The cost of renovating that area and dealing with the environmental cleanup will be a burden. In my opinion I would leave that as the last part of the city to touch. We need the city finances to be healthy and capable of generating the income to afford that renewal effort.

Before we get working, I want the city to have a robust housing and transit plan for that area before breaking ground. In my opinion the city should draw up the vision for it and then solicit developers to do that work.

Are there specific commercial areas in Longmont that you would prioritize for redevelopment or improvement? If so, which areas, and what strategies would you use to enhance them?

First, Main St. south of the railroad tracks to Ken Pratt. It seems to be a natural extension of downtown to rezone that area and allow it to be redeveloped over time.

Second, the southeast corner lot of Hover and Nelson Road. I heard that there is a developer interested in that lot. The intersection of Hover and Nelson, Nelson Rd to Ken Pratt, and the large empty parking lot need to be redone. Access to that commercial area from any residential area is extremely challenging and part of the reason many businesses close in that plaza.

Vance Brand Airport

What role does Longmont's Vance Brand Airport play in supporting the economic growth and transportation needs of local businesses and residents?

The Airport is a public good like a park. Part of Envision Longmont is committing to operating the airport at Vance Brand. From what I know it is almost entirely a recreational airport. There is very little economic use of the airport for commercial transport. I live very close to the airport, and we go watch the planes take off and land on occasion.

If the city desires the airport to support economic growth we would need to target it for a whole new use like flight schools, or manufacturing things that must be installed in place. From my conversations with neighbors, I don't believe more commercial use is desirable by most of the residents near the airport.

Envision Longmont calls for development, including residential, near the Vance Brand yet some airport stakeholders have expressed concern about noise complaints and safety. What's your philosophy on land use planning in that area to balance the City's housing needs with concerns about airport operations?

I want to do something bold. We should put a measure on the ballot for the residents of Longmont to decide. I believe there are a small minority of very loud voices that don't like the airport. A citywide vote would settle the matter. This is a values judgement decision, and those decisions are best determined through direct democracy in the form of a citywide referendum. Do we as a city want to codify the existence of the airport? If yes, they we need to commit to a path to optimize the airport operation. If people vote it down, then city council has a better understanding of the priority between development and the airport.

***What is your position on allowing housing development near the Longmont airport, and how should the city manage potential conflicts between aviation activity and residential growth?**

My biggest concern around the airport is the use of leaded gasoline in aircraft engines. I believe we need to focus on phasing it out.

The city is in a difficult situation because the airport has been there since 1945. There are many people who live near the airport and don't even notice the noise. There are others who find it to be unbearable. I personally find the noise from cars to be more intrusive than airplanes. I think the city needs to determine first if we want to continue to have an airport. Once that is settled, we can focus on what the

priority is. We must acknowledge that for some people the only solution for them is to get rid of the airport and unless that happens they will continue to have conflict.

Tourism

In 2023, nearly 600,000 visitors generated over \$277 million in economic impact for Longmont and supported more than 3,000 local jobs — outcomes made possible through strategic destination marketing and management. What is your perspective on the role of tourism and continued investment in destination marketing to benefit both residents and visitors?

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont’s tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont’s tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

I would start by learning more from Visit Longmont. Envision Longmont only has one sentence dedicated to tourism, that is not enough to make an informed judgement. I think the city’s goals around improving our transportation infrastructure will keep Longmont an attractive place to visit. Continuing to invest in our downtown area as a destination for people to visit will also help the tourism industry.

Childcare

Childcare costs in Longmont and Boulder County are among the highest in the state of Colorado. What could you do as a councilor/mayor to help bring down the costs of childcare for families while helping childcare providers earn more thriving wages?

I propose we follow the lead of Mesa County. They set up a program with their health department to train more individuals to open in-home day cares. My wife and I sent our children to an in-home day care before they were old enough to go to school and our experience was excellent. The pay for people running them is much greater than the people that work in an early childhood education center.

Early childhood education advocates have proposed a property tax increase to fund more children to attend formal schools before preschool. I am willing to put that on the ballot, but I think the likelihood of passing is low. Which is why I believe we should focus on more in-home childcare opportunities. It costs the government very little, it will be faster to get started, and the pay for the providers is higher than in a school.

----- End of Questionnaire Responses from Candidate Lembke -----

Riegan Sage

Campaign Website: VoteSage.com

About:

I've zigzagged all over our nation to land here in Longmont, a place I've absolutely fallen in love with. My two children are educated at a St. Vrain Valley School, I am grateful to drink the delicious tap water here, and I'm constantly impressed by the people I meet and what is at our disposal as citizens of Longmont.

For the last 23 years I have consistently sat on and led multiple non-profit boards and committees from theatre to education to my current homeowner's association. I have an MBA in management science consulting and marketing (I took extra finance classes for fun). I care deeply about people, our city and our future. I believe in listening. I want to hear all sides of a proposal, gather community input and ask deep questions. I live my values; it isn't always easy or convenient but I don't compromise there. Some of my values include honesty, respect for all people (even those with whom I disagree), reducing waste, personal responsibility, and continuous learning.

General Vision

If elected, what would be your top priority in office?

Representing the people who live and work here is my first and highest priority. As an at-large candidate, I feel strongly that my role is to be the citizens' voice on Council, not to push a personal agenda. Beyond that, my objective is to protect what we all value in Longmont: the green spaces, agricultural lands, diversity of voices, small businesses, and distinctive neighborhoods. Besides protecting what we love, we need to plan strategically for the future. This includes attracting primary employers (preferably those in line with the City's values and priorities), and reexamining city taxes and fees to ensure that entrepreneurs and small businesses aren't at a disadvantage compared to larger companies operating in Longmont. As we build more housing, we must be mindful of what, where, and for whom we are building so that our choices make sense and serve the people who live and work here. We must partner with developers who share a vision with the city and, preferably, are local. As we grow, I want us to be strategic rather than opportunistic – planning rather than reacting.

What is your plan for advocating Longmont's business needs at the state and federal levels?

At the state level, I would advocate for a change in our minimum wage law so that we could act as Ohio or Minnesota have and be able to set minimum wage can be set based on the number of company employees. This would allow us to support entrepreneurs and small businesses by not increasing minimum wage when it is untenable, while allowing us to require national chains to offer higher wages to local employees.

I would also advocate for our local agribusinesses, so that our smaller local producers can have a positive impact on our community.

At the federal level I would advocate for allowing farms to claim tax credits for investments in solar panels. Agrivoltaics (the practice of growing crops under solar panels) is an exciting area of opportunity for our region, and I'd like to be able to incentivize those businesses.

***What will you do to protect the council and staff from being distracted by issues that don't fit within the city's strategic plan?**

It's hard to say what I would do in a broad hypothetical situation; however I generally like to ask focusing questions such as: what is the purpose or end goal of this discussion? Who is this policy serving? Especially in a forum where words, ideas and processes are discussed, tangents and distractions are understandable byproducts. I have found the most expedient way of moving through these types of situations is to determine what the real ask or issue is (sometimes it is unwinding two or more interwoven ideas or concerns from each other) and speaking to it or them directly. Acknowledging that there is a tangential issue that is out of line with a city's plan can give speakers, staff and Council an opportunity to assess whether that issue must be further considered, or if it simply required acknowledgement before moving on.

Minimum Wage

****Do you support setting a local minimum wage above the state requirement? If so, what rate do you believe is appropriate, and how do you anticipate it would affect local businesses? Given the pressure from county commissioners and special interest groups to accelerate minimum wage increases — and considering the reported business closures and job losses in cities like Denver, and Niwot — what would be your approach be on this issue?**

At the fishbowl discussing the increase of minimum wage, the overwhelming take away was that many of our small businesses are currently paying above minimum wage and that an escalation of minimum wage that would mirror what Boulder County set (\$25/hour by 2030) would shutter businesses in Longmont. With the rising costs for local businesses – from tariffs to rent –I think it would be foolish to support such a policy. Small businesses give flavor to a city, employ people, provide goods and services, and offer meeting spaces to the public. Furthermore, it is in an employer's best interest to retain and entice good employees. If workers choose to travel 8-12 miles away for a higher paying minimum wage job, that creates a market incentive for employers to consider what they're offering employees–, not just in wages but inclusive of them.

I would also like to work with state legislators to model Colorado minimum wage law to look more like Ohio or Minnesota, where minimum wage can be set based on the number of company employees. That way if Longmont wanted to raise the minimum wage in the future it could do so without negatively impacting small businesses and early stage entrepreneurs.

Environment & Sustainability

What are your plans/programs for balancing growth and environmental sustainability?

In the past, Longmont has committed to ensuring that we have enough water for the city at full capacity. I think that is strong policy, but I do not believe that this has been reexamined as we approve and add more housing, especially taking into consideration our agricultural lands. There is a push for a

lot of development, and though there is definitely room for growth I think we need to get very specific how much growth is sustainable with the resources at our disposal.

I am a proponent of protecting our green spaces, and with extreme heat as a climate risk for our area we must be mindful about how much of our city is paved over as well as what steps we are taking to offset hardscape development.

I recently discussed with our fire chief the threat of wildfires, and he shared with me the City's efforts to create balance- if we get rid of our grasses to reduce fire risk in riparian areas, we remove habitat for animals and put ourselves at greater risk for flooding. It's an ongoing balancing act- our environment is made up of living organisms- they are always in flux. We have city staff that deal with this ongoing balance, and I think we are doing a pretty good job of communicating with the public about specific tactics homeowners can take. As we move into the future, which is unknown and continues to change, we must act with awareness towards maintaining balance as we plan for human and infrastructural growth.

***Longmont is five years away from its 2030 goal of sourcing all electricity from carbon-free sources. However, with Platte River Power Authority planning to replace its coal-fired turbine with a natural gas unit, this goal will not be fully met. Projections suggest the cumulative cost to Longmont residents will be around \$100 million by 2030 due to steeply rising electric rates (~\$2,500/ household).**

Given Longmont's negligible contribution to global CO₂ emissions, and the fact that roughly half of the city's electricity reportedly now comes from carbon-free sources, should the city reconsider its goal and recognize that the progress made so far represents its fair share, or should it stay committed to the original target, regardless of the financial cost?

It is my understanding that the investments made by Platte River Power Authority are already sunk costs. PRPA has already made a 30 year commitment to finance their infrastructure changes that Longmont, Estes Park, Loveland and Fort Collins have directed. Because of that, the escalation of power costs for the next five years have already been forecast (an increase of about 50% by 2030) and though they are expected to continue to rise after 2030, the raises should begin to taper off as renewables do not require the same cost per input as coal, gas, etc. Of course there will still be maintenance, replacement, and personnel costs but most of the costs for changing to primarily renewable energy sources are front loaded. To be blunt: the transition to renewable energy should continue, and we should do what we must to mitigate the impacts to our at-risk community members. But those costs will stabilize, and whether we achieve carbon neutrality by 2035 or 2030 it will still position Longmont for sustainable growth into the latter part of this century.

Housing Development

****How will you balance sustainable growth and affordability with concerns about increased density—such as traffic, noise, and strain on infrastructure—while also addressing homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges?**

We should be building smaller. With falling birth rates, dwindling household size, and rising costs, it simply makes the most sense. Smaller homes are less expensive to build, maintain, heat and cool. Small, single-story homes are great for an aging population who want less property to care for and they also

make great starter homes, which is currently missing from the housing mix. Building near amenities and transportation can help make car ownership unnecessary, further increasing affordability, reducing traffic and increasing walkability.

So much space has been wasted by not building residential above commercial space; this should be amended moving forward. It is a win-win as it increases the walkability of a neighborhood, creates an effortless market for ground floor businesses, and broadens the rent structure for developers. Creating “missing middle” housing (duplexes/triplexes), live-work spaces, and offering direct incentives to homeowners for building ADUs can help increase the housing supply without sacrificing the character of a neighborhood or stressing any given artery too much.

We must also know definitively how many people we can add to our city before our water infrastructure is affected, and we should be asking at what pace we can grow so that our power grid can grow alongside us (especially with confounding factors such as two way electrical flow from individually owned solar panels).

Homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges have little to do with affordable housing. The causes of homelessness are various. For some it is the combination of a lack of a safety net in a high cost of living area and an inclement event such as loss of a job or hospitalization. These situations could be ameliorated by more affordable housing, or by other social safety net programs that help people/families remain in their home.

However, others become houseless due to mental health issues. These individuals may require housing, but they also require wrap around services to help them do more than just locate and pay for shelter. There is no single mental health issue that causes someone to become houseless- some may be overcome in time with treatment, and some may not.

Substance abuse is a third reason that some people become houseless, and sometimes people who suffer from houselessness turn to substance abuse as their life circumstances are overwhelming. This is another case where those suffering require more services than just a safe place to sleep or live.

In both of these latter scenarios Maslowe’s hierarchy of needs must be addressed. Addressing addiction (which has no magic bullet solution, even when a substance user has a home and resources) and mental health issues (which can be equally complex) are compounding factors without safe shelter, food and water. The countries that have excelled at greatly reducing their houseless populations have very different cultures than ours, and a different perspective on housing. If we decided in the United States that shelter was first and foremost a human right – rather than a vehicle for attaining and preserving wealth – then perhaps we could address these issues more holistically (though certainly not without major repercussions for the economy).. In fact we are currently witnessing the very opposite happening, with large investment into rental units by institutional investors precisely because market rents are easily adjustable (in Colorado even voluntary rent control is illegal). This creates a major impediment for low-income earners who would like to become homeowners, and for whom a fixed-rate mortgage would at least flatline the expense of shelter.

These are hard questions, and there are no easy answers. The best we can do as policymakers is to bring open minds, open hearts and a commitment to keep trying to find a better solution.

Fiscal Responsibility

What strategies would you implement to increase city revenue and enhance local economic sustainability without burdening residents or relying heavily on federal and state funding?

We have two main avenues for addressing this: attracting new primary employers and increasing tourism. Longmont is a fantastic place to live: we have NextLight internet, resources like Longmont Public Media, an interested and engaged population, plenty of community events, great air quality, access to trails and parks, a phenomenal view of the mountains, a growing and thriving Main Street... there are many reasons that we are an attractive place to move as a primary employer. We also have sunshine to spare- which would be another great reason to attract green tech companies to our city. I am interested in engaging with the Longmont Economic Development Partnership to aggressively attract likeminded primary employers to Longmont, while ensuring that any deals we cut directly benefit the people of Longmont with training and employment opportunities.

I am also extremely keen on increasing tourism here. It is expensive to eat out and shop and I want people from outside Longmont to come and patronize our businesses. Currently our Main Street shuts down pretty early, even on weekends, because we just do not have the foot traffic to support staying open later. I would like to explore with LDDA as well as with business owners, how we can attract more clientele from outside of Longmont- how we can become a destination for Lyons, Eerie, Firestone, even Louisville and Lafayette. Creating easy ways of getting between our surrounding cities would be a boon to this as well, so creating a coalition among our other municipalities to establish transportation solutions will be beneficial to all. Furthermore, we know that Sundance is coming to Boulder in January of 2027. Though migration up to Longmont is expected to be lower in year one than in the years that follow, we should be preparing now for a year one opportunity to introduce the world to our businesses, restaurants, hotels, and airport. The revenue for our businesses and the resulting tax dollars could be significant.

Advance Longmont

***What do you see as the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0, and what, if any, modifications would you propose? Additionally, what steps will you take to protect its integrity and promote its effective implementation?**

Advance Longmont 2.0 has clear and specific goals aligned with the needs of our city. The Steering Committee has the appropriate stakeholders involved. The ideas outlined and communicated through AL2.0 are idealistic in the most positive sense; if growth is only measured in dollar signs and within a silo of overall property and business valuation then we are missing the forest for the trees. AL2.0 addresses these blind spots in its foundation. As we continue attracting primary employers, clear communication between prospective employers and Advance Longmont is integral. There are so many things about Longmont that are attractive; however, we should not just be selling our resources, we should be creating a partnership- offering support and incentives and expecting support and prosperity for all in return. As I see it, Advance Longmont 2.0 will be most effective in creating relationships with companies that can integrate into community in Longmont, both receiving and offering support for a robust, multi-faceted, mutually beneficial experience as opposed to a purely transactional relationship measured only in tax incentives..

Arts Funding & Recreation

What is the city's role to support and fund the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces in Longmont?

Parks are a public good. They offer places to play and rest, to enjoy the outdoors and should be maintained by the public (with the use of tax dollars) for the public. The scenery and weather in Longmont and Colorado at large is a huge draw to those coming here, and a big reason that people stay. The parks were a very big reason that my family moved to Longmont. Beyond public safety and infrastructure maintenance, the city's main responsibility is providing for its citizens. Everyone benefits from parks, public art and community programming. Every great city in the world makes space for these in varying degrees, because they are important to the people who live there and these amenities attract tourism. The city, businesses, and populace directly benefit in tourism dollars and land valuation which both increase when we invest in park and communal space beautification, cultural programming, and the arts.

The fear that some people exhibit around the relationship between government and the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces are two-fold. The primary issue is funding. A city's budget is finite, and when there are other practical issues at hand such as public safety, infrastructure development and maintenance, and needed social services the "nice to have" public amenities tend to get deprioritized. This is especially true in leaner years. I would posit that we could do a better job of fostering public volunteerism and feelings of ownership of our public spaces so that individuals or groups can sponsor or spend time maintaining public spaces. We need to be creative in organizing and spending, especially when times are economically harder, to support the morale of the public; these marginalized priorities are most appreciated and needed then.

The second concern in the relationship between government and the arts is that art often purposefully pushes the boundaries of comfort, which can set the stage for criticism not just of the artists involved but also of those who fund said art. Yet uncomfortable conversations have value, particularly as we have become less tolerant of differing points of view. Personally I feel that Longmont is set up well to be a model to our nation for how ideological diversity can be a strength, how we can participate in civil dialogue, and how we can create a strong community together by honing listening and diplomacy skills on all sides.

In short: I firmly believe that the city should be supportive of the arts, parks and community programming. There is a public need for it, it pays us back in the long run, and it helps build community. And a robust community is how we survive uncertain and difficult times.

What role do you see the Sundance Film Festival playing in Longmont's cultural and economic landscape, and how would you balance its benefits with residents' concerns about congestion and affordability?

I see the Sundance Film Festival as a great opportunity for Longmont. We've got 13 breweries, three distilleries, a hard cidery, fantastic restaurants, great shops, homeowner short term rentals and hotels all lined up to benefit from the extra patronage and at a time of year where we do not generally see a lot of tourism. I would like to see Longmont hold its own fringe festival, so that visitors do spend time (and money) here in Longmont, and that we have something for our own citizens to participate in and enjoy as well.

The transit piece of the puzzle is absolutely crucial. Whether we are coordinating with RTD, hotel, or private bus/shuttle companies it is in the best interest of everyone involved to ensure that there are considered and planned out transportation options for those visiting Longmont. Whether Boulder County Fairgrounds acts as a Park-n-Ride for shuttles to Boulder, or we have service from designated areas, including hotels, we should be having these planning conversations now. Regarding in-town traffic: preparing for two weeks of increased patronage in the city might need to include temporary shuttles between economic centers. Preparing for this influx is the crucial step that sets us up for success– not just in year one, but over the years to come as well.

Civic Discourse & Engagement

What strategies would you implement to foster more respectful, productive discussions on local issues and encourage civil engagement while reducing vitriolic discourse?

As touched on in my arts and funding answer: I believe it is crucial to our community to come together and end the divisiveness that has been so toxic to our nation and city. I am not a trained communication facilitator, so I would like to get input from experts in this area before giving concrete steps we should take as a city to begin healing this rift. However, I do believe– as I mentioned in my closing comments at the first candidate forum this year–that we should all do a better job of listening to one another. Ask questions and listen, really listen- putting aside assumptions and judgements. And above all, be kind. I think these are habits worth fostering.

Business Startups, Costs, Commercial Development & Permitting

How would you address concerns over blighted or underutilized commercial areas?

We should be redeveloping these areas. Envision Longmont has some good ideas as to how to engage in redevelopment of existing structures; however I would add that if we are repurposing existing buildings, structural reinforcements should be made so that residential apartments or condos can exist on top of commercial space. We have wasted a tremendous amount of space in Longmont by zoning hubs and corridors as commercial areas rather than mixed use areas. Village at the Peaks could have offered prime housing on second and third floors, building in diversified rent income for developers, foot traffic for businesses, and with public transit stops right there it would have made a lot of sense. We should not make an error like that again. We reduce traffic on our streets and strengthen community by creating walkable neighborhoods with amenities and accessible transportation..

****What steps would you take to make Longmont a more competitive and business-friendly city, especially for startups and commercial development? Some have stated concerns that the planning and permitting process has become slow, complex, and costly — making it difficult for businesses to build and occupy space — how would you work to streamline these processes? Additionally, what strategies would you support to help keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses?**

Please also see questions 1 [Top Priority], 8 [Fiscal Responsibility], and 9 [Advance Longmont].

The permitting process for new businesses in existing commercial space absolutely needs streamlining. I want to determine what the bottleneck in that process is so that we can appropriately remedy it. There

are certain departments where city employees are over tasked, so whether it is a personnel issue or a process issue or something else, we need to investigate the cause before we can cure it.

Fees and taxes for small businesses need to be considered as well, so that large businesses do not have advantages over small and entrepreneurial endeavors, at least from the municipal perspective. The idea of levying a charge on empty commercial space has been suggested, and I'm interested in exploring that as an option to affect commercial rents. Introducing intentional business incubator space is another avenue of possibility. We currently have two different spaces that tend to act as default incubators but with the right partners we could offer more shared spaces and proportional rent, encouraging and supporting our local entrepreneurs.

***Downtown businesses are estimated to be about 80% locally owned and operated. What would you do to protect and support that character? What top goals would you prioritize to ensure downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming to local businesses and the community? (Question submitted by Longmont Downtown Development Authority, our economic partner)**

Downtown is on an upward trajectory. We have an engaged populace that does shop locally, and programming like the winter passport further encourages that behavior. As I mentioned earlier, we need to reexamine the tax and fee structure to advantage small businesses in Longmont. Increasing tourism in partnership with Visit Longmont will ensure that we are attracting visitors to Longmont to offer additional support for our business community. Most people don't visit somewhere with the hope of getting exactly what they can have at home. It is our small businesses, our unique offerings, that make Longmont an attractive place to visit (and live).

Finally, I will prioritize working with LDDA to find new ways to partner and support our local businesses. I've spoken to a number of business owners in the downtown district, and they had nothing but good things to say about the support they receive from LDDA.

Social Issues & Equity

***Are there or could there be local initiatives you would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents who may be disproportionately affected by broader policy changes—such as immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and those facing barriers to healthcare?**

See also question 7 [Housing].

There definitely could be local initiatives that I would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents. I am very much in favor of using our agricultural lands in robust ways, including to help feed our neighbors in need. I am for programming that keeps families and individuals in homes, as this is significantly less disruptive and less costly than needing services after they have lost their primary shelter.

RTD & Public Transit

Should Longmont explore new public transit options such as Front Range Passenger Rail? If so, what are they?

I'm definitely open to exploring new public transit options that better the lives of the people who live here in Longmont while also reducing traffic congestion and street repair costs. But our history with RTD has not been great and there have been lots of promises made but not kept. I believe this has cost policymakers some of the trust of the public, which is not easy to earn back.

I also think we can do a better job of making our city bikeable and walkable. Not all transit solutions need to have the letters RTD in the name. Ride Longmont, for instance, is a great example of the City taking initiative to build a better system for residents. Unfortunately it is still putting traffic on our streets and not our sidewalks, which is where we can do better. More pedestrians and bikers means more foot traffic to our businesses.

Finally, we have some opportunities with RTD that have so far been left on the table. Simply connecting their FlexRide service with open enrolled schoolchildren in the St Vrain Valley School District could dramatically reduce traffic congestion in the morning, as parents would not need to shuttle those children to school.

As we lay the foundations for sustainable growth, transit is one of the three legs of the stool we should be considering first (the other two being water and energy sustainability).

Business Acumen

Have you signed the front of a paycheck?

No, but I have worked with a number of entrepreneurs building or expanding their businesses. Additionally, I have sat (and do sit) on boards that put out RFPs, develop and approve budgets, review vendor contracts, and pay invoices.

What real-world business experience do you bring, and how would that experience affect your approach to budgeting, hiring, or marketing to help shape city policy?

I have an MBA in management science consulting and marketing, and have worked with a number of early stage entrepreneurs building or expanding their businesses. I have also worked in sales, business development, real estate, education and theatrical production as well as sitting on multiple boards and committees. My experience across multiple industries offers me a wealth of perspective.

My approach to city policy is shaped by these experiences, my desire to fully understand an issue and my attention to detail, which I hope is evident throughout my responses here.

Sugar Mill and Brownfield Developments

Do you have a vision for redeveloping the historic Sugar Mill site? If so, how would you address environmental concerns, sustainable infrastructure and engage the community and developers to benefit Longmont as a whole?

I think just about everyone in Longmont has seen the Sugarmill and imagined what it could be. The scope of the site is so large that I think it would best be served in a mixed use capacity, but structurally it would need to be assessed to determine what is repurposable, in what capacity, and what limitations exist. This is assuming that all the owners are amenable to selling/redeveloping at a realistic price; this has been the sticking point for all city councils before when attempting to revitalize the site. There are already comprehensive studies and plans available on our city website, but before we can do anything we must surmount the ownership hurdle.

Are there specific commercial areas in Longmont that you would prioritize for redevelopment or improvement? If so, which areas, and what strategies would you use to enhance them?

I am open to any number of possible plans, provided they: preserve our agricultural lands; consider the impact on transport and our less advantaged communities; provide a net benefit for Longmont as a whole and not merely for the developer in question. With the new traffic patterns on Coffman, I'd like to see increased commercial activity on that street as a complement to our downtown businesses. As a Prospect resident, I'd like to see other neighborhoods create and support local amenities like grocery stores or coffee shops- having these in walking distance both reduces traffic and increases community. A riverfront development is certainly ideal as well. This is not an exhaustive list, there are lots of opportunities for us ahead! Let's be smart about how we grow, so we don't lose what we love.

Vance Brand Airport

What role does Longmont's Vance Brand Airport play in supporting the economic growth and transportation needs of local businesses and residents?

Vance Brand already plays a critical role in the support and development of our local businesses, even though some residents may not be aware of that fact. When many Longmonsters think of the airport, they tend to think of aircraft noise; however, residents should know that we are already doing everything we can to reduce that noise (by adopting a Voluntary Noise Abatement Procedure, or VNAP). Since we accept FAA funding for Vance Brand, we are prohibited from implementing anything more restrictive. There has been some speculation as to how we may engage with pilots (training and otherwise) to act more consciously to their altitude tracker and I'm interested in furthering those conversations.. Additionally, due to the controlled airspace around DIA not all of the airplane noise affecting residents can be attributed to Vance Brand- much of it may be from other regional airports nearby.

I share this because I see the further development of our airport as critical to the growth of our city. The economic impacts of a strong regional airport are profound; a 2024 assessment estimates Vance Brand has an economic impact on Longmont of nearly \$30 million dollars annually. But we need to start with the basics: our Airport Master Plan is outdated, and our supportive services at the airport need to be addressed. With the future of Boulder Airport in doubt, I believe that shoring up investment and support for Vance Brand is one of the most pressing issues facing the next City Council.

Envision Longmont calls for development, including residential, near the Vance Brand yet some airport stakeholders have expressed concern about noise complaints and safety. What's your philosophy on land use planning in that area to balance the City's housing needs with concerns about airport operations?

I believe City Council made the correct decision by refusing to approve the Modern West developments. As I said in the previous question, we need to update our Airport Master Plan in order to best prepare for the future.

Envision Longmont is an excellent and exhaustive document. The ideas outlined in its 188 pages are creative, inclusive, and forward thinking. My biggest issue with Envision Longmont is the map, which like our Airport Master Plan should be refreshed for this decade and the next era of growth.

Across the nation we have seen municipalities that allowed their drinking water to degrade to dangerous levels, or allowed developers to create unsafe buildings. These are policies created for the protection or betterment of the few over the many. For these and other reasons, I believe people have lost faith in their represented officials. I want to earn the trust of the people I represent, and the risk of building unsafe housing is too great. There are other places that can be redeveloped and built on in Longmont, this is not the only parcel.

To be clear though: if the FAA were to deem that this space was appropriate for housing and it did not interfere with a renewed Master Plan, I would consider it viable.

***What is your position on allowing housing development near the Longmont airport, and how should the city manage potential conflicts between aviation activity and residential growth?**

I am not categorically opposed to residential development near the airport, however I'm not convinced that is the highest and best use of all the lands surrounding it either. I think it would be in everyone's best interest to resolve the current issues that we have between the airport and residents in the nearby area before we compound the issue with further residential development there.

Tourism

In 2023, nearly 600,000 visitors generated over \$277 million in economic impact for Longmont and supported more than 3,000 local jobs — outcomes made possible through strategic destination marketing and management. What is your perspective on the role of tourism and continued investment in destination marketing to benefit both residents and visitors?

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont's tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

I am 100% for increased tourism in Longmont. I said it when I submitted my name to fill the Ward 2 seat in January; tourism has been part of my platform from the very beginning. It is expensive to go out to eat, to shop, to drink and go to entertainment venues and the people of Longmont shouldn't have to keep all our businesses afloat by ourselves. I live in Prospect New Town- it has its own small downtown with shops, restaurants, and services. It's a wonderful benefit of living in Prospect, but it is very hard for many of the business owners because not enough people know that it exists and the residents of my

neighborhood can't support all the businesses by themselves. I see this as a microcosm of Longmont- we need to work with Visit Longmont to publicize that we are here, that we have fantastic things to offer, that people should come and visit and patronize our businesses. Furthermore, I believe we can leverage our farm lands as an agritourism destination and continue to capitalize on our many strengths as a city.

Tourism is not only good for our businesses, it further incentivizes the creation of accessible transportation (which I see as very positive), and it offers more tax revenue to further serve the needs of the public who live here at no cost to our residents. Let's make Longmont the best place to live and a great place to visit.

Childcare

Childcare costs in Longmont and Boulder County are among the highest in the state of Colorado. What could you do as a councilor/mayor to help bring down the costs of childcare for families while helping childcare providers earn more thriving wages?

As it happens, the State of Colorado already publishes one of the best resources on this topic, called "Best Practices to Support Child Care," which outlines in great detail specific steps which can be taken at the community level to support both child care providers and families. Childcare facilities typically have high labor costs and operate on razor-thin margins, so I would advocate first for solutions which address this challenge: through direct public financing, reduction of fees and zoning changes to incentivize creation of facilities within communities. While reducing administrative costs is helpful, it's also critical to not forego all oversight; therefore I would advocate for a balanced, incremental approach to these changes as the safety of our children is what is at stake.

Other programs I would support rolling out in controlled test phases include: floor-area ratio incentives to developers who are interested in increasing density; encouraging the development of onsite child care at employer facilities through permit simplification/incentives; working with the Boulder County Early Childhood Council to find further opportunities for integration into Longmont's services- such as offering free NextLight to child care providers and identifying vacant city property that could be re-purposed into a facility.

----- End of Questionnaire Responses from Candidate Sage -----

Crystal Prieto

Campaign Website: [Crystalforlongmont.org](https://crystalforlongmont.org)

About:

I am a Family Development Specialist and lifelong Longmont resident with extensive experience in nonprofits, the school district, and local government. I currently serve as Chair of the City's Housing and Human Services Advisory Board and volunteer on the Education and Public Policy Committee for EFAA. With a Bachelor's degree in Human Services focused on high-risk youth and a minor in Criminal Justice, I have dedicated my career to strengthening families and building community partnerships. As a small business co-owner with my spouse of 17 years, I also understand the challenges facing local businesses and bring both professional and personal perspective to public service.

General Vision

If elected, what would be your top priority in office?

If elected, my top priority will be to strengthen Longmont's foundation so that both families and businesses can thrive. Affordable housing, access to childcare, food security, and mental health support are not just social issues, they are economic issues that directly impact our workforce, our schools, and our business community. I will work to ensure city resources are spent responsibly and focused on solutions that improve quality of life, support local businesses, and create a stronger, more resilient Longmont.

What is your plan for advocating Longmont's business needs at the state and federal levels?

As a small business co-owner, I understand the challenges local businesses face and the importance of having strong advocacy at the state and federal levels. I will work in partnership with the Chamber and business leaders to elevate Longmont's priorities, from workforce development and infrastructure to access to funding and grants. By building strong relationships with our state and federal representatives, I will ensure that Longmont's business community has a clear and consistent voice at every table where decisions are made.

***What will you do to protect the council and staff from being distracted by issues that don't fit within the city's strategic plan?**

I believe the council's role is to stay focused on Longmont's strategic priorities while also listening to community concerns. To avoid distractions, I will advocate for using the strategic plan as our roadmap and ensure council agendas and staff time are aligned with those goals. When new issues arise, I will evaluate whether they support the city's vision and values before committing resources. This approach keeps us accountable, prevents mission drift, and ensures taxpayer dollars are directed toward actions that strengthen our community and economy.

Minimum Wage

****Do you support setting a local minimum wage above the state requirement? If so, what rate do you believe is appropriate, and how do you anticipate it would affect local businesses? Given the pressure from county commissioners and special interest groups to accelerate minimum wage increases — and considering the reported business closures and job losses in cities like Denver, and Niwot — what would be your approach be on this issue?**

I think any discussion of raising wages has to be data-driven and phased in responsibly. If we do it, it should be paired with policies that actually help businesses absorb the impact — things like workforce development, small business support, and cutting down on barriers to growth. My goal is simple: make sure Longmont families can afford to live here, without creating unintended harm to the businesses that keep our community strong.

Environment & Sustainability

What are your plans/programs for balancing growth and environmental sustainability?

My plan is to balance growth with environmental sustainability by encouraging smart development that supports housing, business needs, and quality of life. I support energy-efficient building practices, multimodal transportation, and renewable energy investments that reduce costs in the long term. Protecting our natural resources isn't just good for the environment, it makes Longmont more competitive and attractive for families and businesses alike.

***Longmont is five years away from its 2030 goal of sourcing all electricity from carbon-free sources. However, with Platte River Power Authority planning to replace its coal-fired turbine with a natural gas unit, this goal will not be fully met. Projections suggest the cumulative cost to Longmont residents will be around \$100 million by 2030 due to steeply rising electric rates (~\$2,500/ household).**

Given Longmont's negligible contribution to global CO₂ emissions, and the fact that roughly half of the city's electricity reportedly now comes from carbon-free sources, should the city reconsider its goal and recognize that the progress made so far represents its fair share, or should it stay committed to the original target, regardless of the financial cost?

I support the transition to cleaner energy, but I believe the 2030 target is overly ambitious and may place too great a financial burden on families and small businesses if not carried out cautiously. Longmont has already made meaningful progress, with about half of our energy now coming from carbon-free sources. We should continue advancing sustainability at a pace that is both responsible and affordable. Also, if greater control over energy remains with the city, we must also build in strong protections to ensure accountability, fairness, and affordability for residents and businesses as the transition moves forward.

Housing Development

****How will you balance sustainable growth and affordability with concerns about increased density—such as traffic, noise, and strain on infrastructure—while also addressing homelessness and panhandling linked to mental health and substance use challenges?**

Balancing sustainable growth with affordability requires thoughtful planning and community input. I support smart, balanced development that maintains the character of our neighborhoods while ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with growth. That means investing in transportation, safety, and city services to minimize traffic, noise, and strain on resources.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the visible challenges of homelessness, panhandling, and the mental health and substance use issues that contribute to them. My approach is to strengthen partnerships between the city, nonprofits, and regional providers to expand access to treatment, housing, and supportive services, while also enforcing ordinances that keep public spaces safe and welcoming. Growth must work for both families and businesses, while compassion and accountability guide how we address our most vulnerable populations.

Fiscal Responsibility

What strategies would you implement to increase city revenue and enhance local economic sustainability without burdening residents or relying heavily on federal and state funding?

To strengthen Longmont's economic sustainability without placing additional burdens on residents, we need to grow our local economy in ways that expand the tax base rather than raise taxes. That means supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, streamlining permitting and licensing, and attracting diverse industries that bring quality jobs. I also support investing in workforce development, partnerships with our schools and Front Range Community College, and creative use of public-private partnerships to fund key projects. By focusing on smart growth, innovation, and strong local business support, we can increase revenue and build long-term economic stability without overreliance on state or federal dollars.

Advance Longmont

***What do you see as the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0, and what, if any, modifications would you propose? Additionally, what steps will you take to protect its integrity and promote its effective implementation?**

One of the key strengths of Advance Longmont 2.0 is that it emphasizes inclusive, community-driven economic growth. I appreciate how it brings together business, education, nonprofits, and government to focus on shared priorities such as workforce development, supporting entrepreneurs, and ensuring Longmont's growth benefits all residents.

That said, I believe there is room to strengthen the plan by putting even greater focus on small business resiliency, especially given how vital they are to Longmont's economy, and by ensuring equity goals are tied to measurable outcomes.

To protect the integrity of Advance Longmont 2.0, I would work closely with the Chamber, LEDP, and other partners to maintain transparency, track progress against clear benchmarks, and ensure community voices remain central in its implementation. Strong collaboration and accountability will be essential to making the strategy effective and sustainable.

Arts Funding & Recreation

What is the city's role to support and fund the arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces in Longmont?

The city plays a vital role in supporting arts, cultural programs, parks, recreation, and community spaces because these are not only central to Longmont's quality of life, but also key drivers of our local economy. Events and community spaces draw residents and visitors alike, creating foot traffic that supports small businesses and brings revenue into our local economy. I believe the city should maintain sustainable funding for these programs while also leveraging partnerships with nonprofits, local artists, and the private sector to expand opportunities. In doing so, we can strengthen both community connection and economic vitality.

What role do you see the Sundance Film Festival playing in Longmont's cultural and economic landscape, and how would you balance its benefits with residents' concerns about congestion and affordability?

[Candidate did not respond]

Civic Discourse & Engagement

What strategies would you implement to foster more respectful, productive discussions on local issues and encourage civil engagement while reducing vitriolic discourse?

Civility begins with leadership, and I am committed to modeling respectful and transparent communication even when we disagree. I will promote structured forums and outreach that give residents a voice, while keeping council discussions focused on solutions rather than personal attacks. By fostering a culture of respect, accountability, and listening, we can reduce vitriol and strengthen engagement so every resident feels heard and valued.

Business Startups, Costs, Commercial Development & Permitting

How would you address concerns over blighted or underutilized commercial areas?

Blighted and underutilized commercial areas represent both a challenge and an opportunity. I would support revitalization strategies that attract diverse businesses, encourage mixed-use development, and create spaces that serve residents while generating economic activity. Partnering with property owners, small business entrepreneurs, and developers can help bring new life to these areas while preserving affordability and character. By leveraging tools such as public-private partnerships, smart zoning, and targeted incentives, we can transform underutilized spaces into vibrant, productive parts of our community.

****What steps would you take to make Longmont a more competitive and business-friendly city, especially for startups and commercial development? Some have stated concerns that the planning and permitting process has become slow, complex, and costly — making it difficult for businesses to build and occupy space — how would you work to streamline these processes? Additionally, what strategies would you support to help keep commercial rents within reach for small businesses?**

Making Longmont more competitive starts with supporting small businesses and startups. I would work to streamline planning and permitting by modernizing systems, improving communication, and providing clear timelines to reduce delays and costs. To address affordability, I support encouraging mixed-use development, partnering with landlords and developers to help stabilize commercial rents, and exploring incentives that keep spaces accessible for small businesses. Reducing barriers and keeping costs manageable will strengthen Longmont's economy and help local businesses thrive.

***Downtown businesses are estimated to be about 80% locally owned and operated. What would you do to protect and support that character? What top goals would you prioritize to ensure downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming to local businesses and the community? (Question submitted by Longmont Downtown Development Authority, our economic partner)**

Downtown is the heart of Longmont, and the fact that 80% of its businesses are locally owned is what gives it character and vibrancy. I would prioritize policies that protect and support small businesses by keeping commercial rents manageable, streamlining permitting for improvements, and promoting events and cultural programming that bring people downtown. Accessibility is also key, so I support investments in safe transportation, parking, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. My goal is to keep downtown welcoming, vibrant, and economically strong by ensuring it remains a place where local businesses can thrive and the community feels connected.

Social Issues & Equity

***Are there or could there be local initiatives you would support to ensure a strong safety net for Longmont residents who may be disproportionately affected by broader policy changes—such as immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and those facing barriers to healthcare?**

Yes, Longmont has some strong initiatives, but I believe more can be done through collaboration. One of my top priorities will be connecting city services, nonprofits, schools, and local partners to strengthen access to housing, food, healthcare, and other essential resources, especially for immigrants, refugees, low-income families, and residents facing barriers. A stronger safety net not only helps families find stability, it also supports workforce participation and strengthens our local economy. By improving coordination, we can reduce long-term costs and build a healthier, more resilient Longmont.

RTD & Public Transit

Should Longmont explore new public transit options such as Front Range Passenger Rail? If so, what are they?

Yes, Longmont should explore new public transit options, including the Front Range Passenger Rail and other regional connections, because reliable transit is essential for residents, workers, and businesses. Expanding transit can reduce traffic congestion, cut emissions, and improve accessibility. At the same

time, any new system must be studied carefully to ensure it is affordable, efficient, and well-integrated with existing services like RTD and Longmont's micro transit program. We must also hold RTD accountable for the commitments and funding Longmont residents have already paid into, to ensure our community receives the service it deserves. Exploring flexible options and regional partnerships will help us meet community needs while keeping costs manageable.

Business Acumen

Have you signed the front of a paycheck?

Yes, as a small business co-owner with my spouse, I understand firsthand the responsibilities that come with signing the front of a paycheck. Running a business has given me direct experience with budgeting, managing expenses, supporting employees, and navigating the challenges local business owners face. That perspective shapes my commitment to making Longmont more supportive of entrepreneurs and small businesses.

What real-world business experience do you bring, and how would that experience affect your approach to budgeting, hiring, or marketing to help shape city policy?

As a co-owner of a small family business, I've learned firsthand the importance of budgeting, hiring, and marketing with discipline and care. I've also been part of one of the most successful nonprofits in Boulder County, which has perfected the recipe for running an effective, sustainable organization. Those experiences taught me that financial responsibility and efficiency are possible, and they've been a top priority of mine from the very start of this campaign. On City Council, I'll bring that same mindset to ensure taxpayer dollars are used wisely while supporting families and small businesses.

Sugar Mill and Brownfield Developments

Do you have a vision for redeveloping the historic Sugar Mill site? If so, how would you address environmental concerns, sustainable infrastructure and engage the community and developers to benefit Longmont as a whole?

The Sugar Mill site is one of Longmont's greatest opportunities for transformational redevelopment. My vision is a project that both honors the history of the Sugar Mill and sets a new standard for innovation, sustainability, and economic growth. Because it is the gateway to our city, it should be something that signals pride and ambition, a development that attracts businesses, creates community spaces, and draws people from across Colorado. I believe we can do this while addressing environmental concerns responsibly and ensuring that the community has a strong voice in shaping the outcome. Whatever rises there should celebrate our heritage, reflect our values, and serve as a model that other cities will admire.

Are there specific commercial areas in Longmont that you would prioritize for redevelopment or improvement? If so, which areas, and what strategies would you use to enhance them?

[Candidate did not respond]

Vance Brand Airport

What role does Longmont's Vance Brand Airport play in supporting the economic growth and transportation needs of local businesses and residents?

The airport is a valuable community asset and an important part of Longmont's economic future, so protecting its ability to operate safely and effectively must be a priority. At the same time, I recognize the city's pressing need for housing. My philosophy is that any land use planning near the Vance Brand Airport must begin with respect for airport operations — ensuring there is adequate space and buffer to minimize safety risks and noise concerns. Growth in that area should be thoughtfully planned, with clear communication so new residents understand and accept the realities of living near an airport. Done right, we can meet housing needs while also safeguarding one of Longmont's key assets for innovation and economic opportunity.

Envision Longmont calls for development, including residential, near the Vance Brand yet some airport stakeholders have expressed concern about noise complaints and safety. What's your philosophy on land use planning in that area to balance the City's housing needs with concerns about airport operations?

[Candidate did not respond]

***What is your position on allowing housing development near the Longmont airport, and how should the city manage potential conflicts between aviation activity and residential growth?**

[Candidate did not respond]

Tourism

In 2023, nearly 600,000 visitors generated over \$277 million in economic impact for Longmont and supported more than 3,000 local jobs — outcomes made possible through strategic destination marketing and management. What is your perspective on the role of tourism and continued investment in destination marketing to benefit both residents and visitors?

How would you work to align City priorities with tourism and destination goals—particularly through collaboration with nonprofit partners like Visit Longmont? What is your vision for the future of Longmont's tourism economy and its broader contribution to the community? (Question submitted by Visit Longmont, our economic partner)

Tourism plays a vital role in Longmont's economy, supporting local jobs and generating revenue that benefits the entire community. Continued investment in destination marketing is essential, not just to attract visitors, but to showcase Longmont as a place to live, work, and do business. My perspective is that tourism should be aligned with our broader city priorities: supporting small businesses, promoting cultural and outdoor amenities, and highlighting Longmont's unique identity. Collaboration with partners like Visit Longmont is key to making this work, and I believe the City should strengthen those relationships to ensure efforts are strategic and effective. My vision is for Longmont's tourism economy to grow in a way that brings direct benefits to residents, through stronger small businesses, vibrant events, and increased visibility, while preserving the character and quality of life that make people want to visit in the first place.

Childcare

Childcare costs in Longmont and Boulder County are among the highest in the state of Colorado. What could you do as a councilor/mayor to help bring down the costs of childcare for families while helping childcare providers earn more thriving wages?

Childcare is one of the most pressing challenges for Longmont families, with costs among the highest in the state and limited capacity to meet demand. I've seen firsthand through recent funding hearings the innovative efforts of nonprofits and the City, such as staff childcare subsidies, but much more needs to be done. Currently, licensed providers in Longmont can only serve about 18% of children ages 0–5, which is unacceptable if we want families to thrive here.

As a councilor, I would prioritize this issue by establishing a task force or committee under the City to bring together providers, nonprofits, and community stakeholders to align efforts, identify new funding opportunities and grants, and recruit additional providers. We need a coordinated and aggressive approach to expand affordable childcare options while also ensuring providers can earn sustainable wages. This isn't just a family issue, it's an economic issue, and addressing it will strengthen Longmont's workforce, support small businesses, and make our community more livable for all.

----- End of Questionnaire Responses from Candidate Prieto -----



Thank You for Reading

This questionnaire was prepared by the Longmont Area Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee with input from our economic partners and community members.