

Rotkin Response to LOBA Questionnaire

We also have a brief candidate questionnaire for you to complete and email to us no later than Monday, September 11. The 5 questions are below:

1. What are your priorities if elected to the Santa Cruz City Council?

My number one priority is to increase the City's tax base. If we want to provide the public safety, recreation, planning, affordable housing, and social services that our community wants and deserves, we will need to find a way to increase City revenues. This cannot be done by simply raising local taxes. Paying our employees well, so we can recruit and retain quality employees, also will require increased future revenues. We need to improve the business climate, get approval of an expanded tourist industry with high quality new hotels, and develop our green and high-tech industries, all of which are critical to increasing City revenues. The City Council cannot impose these changes on our community, but we will have to work closely with local citizens to help them understand how critical these kinds of changes are to our community. The need for quality jobs and maintaining City services is something people support in the abstract, but we need to show them the connection between those goals and the approval of key revenue generating enterprises. This is the major reason I am running for re-election to the Santa Cruz City Council.

2. What do you see as the top 3 issues facing the City of Santa Cruz and what will you do if elected to address them?

1) Improve the tax base while preserving our unique and wonderful local environment

2) see number one.

3) see numbers one and two.

3. If elected, how will you work to include the locally owned business community in your decision making process?

I intend to remain open and accessible to all sectors of our community, as I have been in my first five terms in office. I will be very pleased to sit down and talk with Loba, its members, and any representatives of the organization to discuss any matters of concern. I believe that I have demonstrated over the years that support for locally owned businesses is not just rhetoric for me. When it comes to making our local community, including Pacific Avenue, the beach area, and other shopping districts safe and welcoming to visitors and residents I have been responsive to the ideas and concerns of the local business community.

4. What is your position on Measure G - the proposal to raise the minimum wage only in the City of Santa Cruz

I oppose this measure. I have always been a supporter of increased minimum wages at the State and federal level. Increasing the minimum in a single city is very problematic, not only for local businesses, but also in terms of the likely impact on City revenues. Measure G has additional flaws that make it unworthy of voter support. These included a

lack of exemptions for developmentally disabled individuals who work in protected workshops like Goodwill and Hope Services, a failure to provide a lower minimum wage for businesses that offer their employees health and/or retirement benefits, and no special arrangements to cover the situation of waiters and waitresses who receive a large portion of their income through tips. It is appalling that the promoters of this measure made no attempt to meet with any members outside of their group in formulating the amount of the proposed new minimum or its other provisions or ramifications. Vote no on G!

5. What do you think can be done to improve the business climate in Santa Cruz?

To begin, see my response to your first question. There are a number of areas that need to be addressed in order to improve our local business climate. But most importantly, we need to work with our local citizens to help them understand how important the goal itself is. All of the services that matter to local residents are tied to revenues that depend upon the health of the local business climate. Specifically, there are several areas that deserve more attention from us. We need to develop our tourist industry and the key there is the need for one or more new high quality hotels and conference space. We need to continue the work we have already started in turning the westside industrial zone into a high tech industrial area that will draw new green industries and employers with high quality, well-paid jobs. We need to develop the arts as a commercial industry in our community, both in terms of an expanded focus on industrial design, but also as part of our tourist draw.

But none of this work can proceed very far if we do not make local citizens partners in the process of developing a new vision for our community that supports rational, environmentally sound development. We need to move past the view that every development is a bad thing, and that open fields are always better than any building and any building would be better if it could be smaller. Of course, we do not want to pave our community over or destroy the natural beauty and human scale that make this such a wonderful place to live, but we do need a little more work learning how to say yes to positive possibilities and not just no to everything that might change our community in some way. The irony is that "progressive," a term I helped popularize in the Santa Cruz context, has more and more come to mean "I like things just the way they are." If we don't change -- and, of course, change in thoughtful, sensitive ways -- we are in big trouble as a City government and as a community.