

Candidates nix property tax hike for roads

User taxes on gasoline and new development — and not property tax increases — are the ways to pay for road work in Oakland County, according to most candidates running for county commission from the Observer & Eccentric coverage area.

With one exception, incumbents said they would not campaign to raise property taxes for roads. Non-incumbents, including former Birmingham Mayor Donald Jensen, who defeated an incumbent in the August primary, answered similarly.

All agreed that roads were a top priority for the county, but they favored other financing methods including increased funding from the state's gasoline and weight tax fund, a higher tax on gasoline sales and impact fees for building developments that add to the strain on Oakland County roads.

The candidates were responding to a questionnaire distributed by Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

Twenty-three of 30 candidates, including all incumbents and at least one candidate in each of the 15 races, responded. Here are their answers:

DISTRICT 6: Incumbent Republican Ralph Nelson, 422 Wesley, Rochester, said he would back a voter-approved tax increase only if there were a "firm schedule" for completing the project.

Democrat Thomas I. Carleton, 914 Fairview, Rochester, did not respond.

DISTRICT 10: Incumbent Democrat James A. Doyon, 31729 Harlo, Madison Heights, favors an "infrastructure tax" levied on new development.

Republican Mark W. Chester, 1351 Milverton, Troy, said funding should come from county, state and federal sources without additional taxes.

DISTRICT 12: Both Republican incumbent Susan Kuhn, 1260 Langley, Clawson, and Democratic challenger Harold J. Robinson, 139 Lakeside Drive, Royal Oak, would leave any tax increase up to voters.

DISTRICT 13: Republican incumbent Robert W. Page, 2468 Manchester, Birmingham, would support a gas tax if combined with revised state and local funding.

Democratic challenger Charles J. Salgat, 2651 Winter Drive, Troy, said there "may be no other choice" than a tax increase.

DISTRICT 14: Incumbent Republican Marilyn E. Gosling said other avenues should be explored before attempting a tax hike.

Democrat Linda D. Lash, 3111 Avon Manor Road, Rochester, did not respond.

DISTRICT 15: Incumbent Republican David L. Moffitt, 6828 Cathedral Drive, Birmingham, lists the pitfalls of other funding methods but said surveys show residents are unlikely to support a tax hike.

Democrat Albert W. Zolton, 29549 Gilcrest, Farmington Hills, opposes any property tax increase for roads.

DISTRICT 16: Incumbent Republican Roy Rewold, 5515 Jendean, Rochester, said funding should not come from increased taxes.

Democrat Stanley Teague, 494 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, did not respond.

DISTRICT 17: Republican incumbent John E. Olsen, 12959 Lincoln, Huntington Woods, would support a tax on developers rather than a property tax.

Democrat Angus McPherson, 2679 Oxford, Berkley, did not respond.

DISTRICT 20: Incumbent Democrat Lawrence R. Perneck, 29315 Pine Tree, Southfield, would not support a tax hike until the road commission is bipartisan or transferred to the authority of an elected official.

Surgery prevented Republican Alan S. Kohn, 22552 Hallcroft Trail, Southfield, from responding.

DISTRICT 21: Democratic incumbent Alexander C. Perinoff, 15801 Providence Drive, Southfield, would campaign "only for a gas tax."

Republican challenger Douglas R. Sokolowski, 24400 Mulberry, Southfield, opposes a tax increase and said more funds should come from state, federal and local sources.

DISTRICT 22: Republican Donald W. Jensen, 1233 Maryland Blvd., Birmingham, would give "reluctant support" to a tax increase provided it was "modest, temporary and directed toward major users."

Democrat Paul O. Ashba, 32477 Westlady, Birmingham, won't support a county tax until the road commission is restructured and the state gas tax formula is revised.

DISTRICT 23: Incumbent Republican Nancy McConnell, 119 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, would not back a property tax but would support a "regional gasoline tax" if combined with contributions from developers and more state dollars.

Democratic challenger, Red Dobski Sr., 230 S. Tilden, Pontiac, did not respond.

DISTRICT 25: Incumbent Republican G. William Caddell, 870 Wolverine Drive, Walled Lake, said other sources, including taxes by commuters, should fund roads.

Democrat Mark S. Bosler, 1448 Hidden Meadows East, Walled Lake, said increased taxes may be needed for road maintenance but that road expansion should be funded by new developments.

DISTRICT 26: Incumbent Thomas A. Law, 5125 Middlebelt, West Bloomfield, could support a tax hike "to maintain and improve the local road systems in communities that I represent."

Democrat Arnold Sabaroff, 6283 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, did not respond.

DISTRICT 27: Republican incumbent John J. McDonald, 23171 Appleton Court, Farmington Hills, and Democrat Johannes F. Spreen, 34070 Lyerholt, Farmington Hills, both say that other sources can be tapped before resorting to tax increases.

Cars to use more plastics; Budd tells of discovery

The use of plastics in the production of cars and trucks will increase dramatically in the next few years. The prediction is from the Budd Co., Troy-based automotive supplier, as it announced a technological breakthrough in the manufacture of its plastic sheet molding compound.

A new development — a combination of innovative chemistry and automation — enables the company to increase by more than 300 percent the speed at which these parts and components are produced, according to Jerry Purcell, president of Budd's Plastics Division.

"That's the manufacturing equivalent in plastics of breaking the four-minute mile at track," Purcell said.

components such as hoods, doors, decklids and quarter panels for most North American vehicle manufacturers.

The new technology eliminates production speed as the key obstacle hindering expanded use of the material, he said. And because of faster production, "it holds the potential of tens of millions of dollars in savings for vehicle manufacturers worldwide."

Purcell also noted that the development — dubbed Budd System 59 — will give North American automakers a competitive edge of several years over their Asian and European rivals.

The reason, he said, is that "overseas competitors are in a catchup

position and have yet to learn to use plastics on a large scale."

PURCELL SAID announced development of the new development was delayed until "at least 100,000 parts had been produced and established quality levels and production speeds had been achieved."

Purcell said that the bottom-line benefit of lower cost combined with plastics' inherent advantages of lighter weight, corrosion resistance, higher quality and design flexibility, will accelerate use of the material.

He predicted that Budd System 59 will advance by several years a recent projection that there will be 300 to 400 pounds of plastics in the typical car by 1995.

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