

Roger Wilson- Candidate for Alderman

Please provide a 250-word introduction in addition to your specific responses to the questions below.

More than twenty years ago, Roger and his wife Stacey moved to Frederick and discovered a caring and welcoming city. Roger and Stacey are blessed with three beautiful daughters—Halle, Zoe, and Gabby—and hold a profound commitment to the Frederick community that welcomed them with open arms.

Roger is responsible for managing governmental affairs for the County Executive, including serving as a liaison to Frederick County's twelve municipalities, the Frederick County Delegation, and with the County Council.

Roger is passionate about Frederick City's economic future. His previous career as a technology executive at IBM taught him the importance of education in the new economy, and the untapped potential that Frederick has to create a strong economic base through alliances in higher education and private sector partnerships.

In 2007, Roger had the unique opportunity to participate in the Leadership Frederick County (LFC) program, sponsored by the Frederick Chamber of Commerce. The exposure to current and emerging local issues inspired Roger to roll up his sleeves and commit to a lifetime of public service.

He has served on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the United Way of Frederick County; Board of Trustees Frederick Community College (FCC), served as a Commissioner for the Frederick City Planning and Fair Housing Commissions; Roger is a lifetime member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and mentors young men through the Necktie Club. Roger is a member of the Rotary Club of Carroll Creek, and mentors and reads to students at Lincoln Elementary.

1. With the significant annual carrying costs, totaling over \$1 million, and the immense price tag put on the costs to fully develop the property as a regional park, how do you propose to make the Hargett Farm property an asset to the taxpayers of the City of Frederick and where do you expect to raise the money to improve the property with an estimated price tag approaching \$100 million?

This was clearly a bad financial deal that city taxpayers are still paying for today. I am not fully behind the current plan, which has an expensive price tag for the taxpayer and an unproven benefit to the city overall. A better use of this parcel of land is an investment in a couple of athletic fields and possible senior housing through a public and private partnership.

2. Blight has been an irritant for downtown residents and merchants for many years – how do you propose to address the situation to deal with examples like the Asiana building and other underutilized properties in the retail district? Unaddressed blight threatens to undermine the morale of property owners trying to keep and maintain a momentum for progress. What is your position?

Addressing blight and unused assets throughout our city is one of my top priorities. I believe the city has the tools in place to solve this problem today, but lacks the political will to implement. As an Alderman, I plan to offer a new resolution to address blight in our city. The resolution will include: 1) strengthening the city's code enforcement powers and process for remediating blighted properties, 2) establishing a city workgroup that includes legal, permits, and code enforcement that is proactive in addressing neglected property, and 3) implementing a computer database to track code enforcement and permits.

3. Do you consider the tax/equity – sharing equation between the City and the County to be one which is fair to city taxpayers and if not what do you intend to do about the situation? What is your position on the level of City taxes relative to services, and do you agree or disagree that City taxes are a hindrance to being competitive in attracting business, and residents, why or why not?

Yes, I believe the tax equity equation between the City and the County is fair. Recent state law requires the municipalities in Frederick County and Frederick County Government meet annually to assess duplicate services and a review of the tax equity or differential equation. When I moved to Frederick twenty years ago, my trash was picked up twice a week. Today, trash is picked up once a week and bulk trash has been discontinued. We need tax transparency. City residents need to know the services they are receiving for their taxes through an annual report mailed out to residents or making this information accessible via the City's website.

4. Route 15 continues to be a traffic bottleneck which impacts all City residents and our businesses – what steps do you propose the City should take to address the problem?

The City should aggressively advocate for the expansion to three lanes of Route 15 from I-70 to Biggs Ford Road to eliminate traffic bottlenecks and provide traffic calming options. Route 15 is a State responsibility and an important roadway for city residents. The City's partnership with State Highway Administration (SHA) is essential. I propose strengthening the communication and collaboration with SHA and Frederick City to implement plans to expand Route 15 over the next decade. As an Alderman, I will attend Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) meetings to share progress and receive feedback from constituents as the proposed expansion project progresses.

5. Please provide one positive concrete idea to address the groups of homeless or disenfranchised who loiter for hours at a time around some of our more valuable public assets (Carroll Creek Linear Park, Baker Park, and the public library to name a few). What can be done to ensure our residents and businesses continue to use such assets or locate there.

Frederick is a caring and welcoming community which values helping people in need. The City has seen an increase in the number of individuals who are homeless and the city has responded by establishing a shelter and the expansion of the Community Action Agency's capabilities. But, I believe the city can do even better. A housing-first approach is a good initial step to get people off the street and into a safe environment. I propose a public and private partnership to use underutilized building assets in the city to establish several additional shelters. At these shelters, mental health services and job training programs should be offered to assist individuals in getting back on their feet and becoming responsible and productive citizens again.

6. Assuming you had the support, what one measure would you implement almost immediately upon being elected to office?

After I am sworn in as an Alderman, I will offer a new resolution to address blight in the City.

There are key initiatives I would like to address as an Alderman.

- 1) Strengthen the City's Adequate Public Facility Ordinance (APFO) policy
- 2) Propose new resolution to address homelessness in the City
- 3) Propose resolution to address heroin and opioid abuse in the City
- 4) Strengthen the City's commitment to Frederick's Sustainability Plan

7. What can the City do that it is not already doing to attract new businesses to enhance the assessable base within the City?

The city can do a better job advocating for state and federal grants for infrastructure improvements for roads, and offering better transportation options. As an Alderman, I will work with state and federal officials to increase the MARC train trips to Washington D.C. and advocate for Saturday and Sunday trips to and from Washington D.C.

8. What is your position on the East Street planning effort? How familiar are you with the corridor planning efforts currently underway? What would you like to see done differently with regard to the future of East Street?

I am a strong advocate for the revitalization of East Street and will continue to advocate for additional investment in the Capital Budget.

I am quite familiar with the planning efforts currently underway. I envision a mixed-use plan, with retail and housing, including bike paths and a walkable community that matches the character of historic downtown Frederick.

9. The State of Maryland recently decided to relocate the Department of Social Services out of the William Donald Schaeffer Building on All Saints Street. Moving those critical human services and programs may hamper client's efforts to access them. What can the City do to help ensure continued access to critical services? What is the City's responsibility in this regard, if any?

The City should continue their advocacy and partnership with the State and the County to ensure Transit services are in place to enable clients to get to the services they require. In addition, the City should consider using vacated properties for satellite locations to bring services to the community where it is needed. Many of the services offered at the Department of Social Services are also offered online. Clients should be able to access these services from their home or local library.

10. How do you as a candidate for office feel about the role of the City regulatory agencies (permits/inspections/planning/zoning/historic preservation)? Do you believe that City departments have an obligation to accommodate citizen and business owner requests that are legal, legitimate and appropriate? Do you think this is something that is already in place, could use some guidance, or needs a lot more focus and vision from the City elected leaders?

I believe that the city can improve constituent services. Each of these agencies serve an important role for the citizens of Frederick. I believe in a One-Door Policy. When a constituent has a problem or issue to address with the City, that constituent should be able to go through one door in order to solve it. A constituent service representative should be able to triage the constituent's needs and navigate them to the correct agency for problem resolution.

11. With the vibrant growth of downtown in recent years, Frederick has become a weekend destination for people from across the region. What types of investments do you feel the City should make to attract businesses and skilled workers to relocate to the City of Frederick permanently? Are there internal processes that you feel the City can improve upon to position it to be more attractive to prospective businesses and residents?

Parking remains a problem for small businesses in downtown Frederick. I believe the City should invest in the construction of another parking deck. The City should also bring back the shuttle service to transfer workers back and forth from the Key's stadium and the downtown area. Additionally, the City should add electric chargers to parking decks to accommodate residents and visitors that have electric cars—a trend that promises to only grow in the future. Finally, I believe the City should advocate for more MARC train trips during the week and weekends.