

From: **Zachary Oyler**

A common theme you will find throughout these points is how interrelated they are and we cannot fix one without the other.

- Neighborhoods: Our neighborhoods set the tone for our community: what people see when they come to look at Peoria as a place to move, how safe and secure you feel when you are sitting at home in the evening, the pride you and your neighbors are taking in your homes, and the job that the City does in providing basic public services. The unfortunate fact is that neighborhoods have deteriorated with budget cuts to code enforcement, deterioration of our streets and other infrastructure, and the aging and deterioration of large pillar homes in the neighborhoods that have led to a domino effect of declined housing values. As Realtors, many can recall a time where buyers didn't want to live south of McClure, then it was Forrest Hill, now we hear War Memorial and some even further north. This could be viewed as just a problem for those areas but as they are the entryways into Peoria, they keep people from wanting to live here, their housing value deterioration causes the tax impact to be spread across the community, and they absorb a higher amount of services such as Police and code enforcement. We need hands on leaders in these neighborhoods helping to find specific solutions for each area; the district councilperson cannot do it alone. As a first step to doing my part, I am investing in renovating older homes to help strengthen the neighborhood and drive increased tax revenue without raising taxes.

- Infrastructure: It is critical to both our neighborhood and our business climate to address the deteriorating infrastructure. The first thing a client notices when going to look at a home is the condition of the road they are driving on. Likewise, that is the same thing for a business. Who wants their customers to drive up to their place of business on terrible roads? Not to mention the impact it has on their company owned vehicles. We must renew and strengthen our commitment to allocating budget dollars to roads, bridges and other infrastructure meanwhile ensuring effective use of those dollars. A big part of this is about priorities and if a homeowner doesn't fix a crack in the foundation, at some point they will destroy the house. This concept is no different in our community, fix the roads or let the city go?

- Budget: All of these things culminate with the budget and are impacted back by the budget. We need better neighborhoods that are driving a stronger tax value to lessen the burden felt in other parts of the city and help the budget. We also need better roads to make our city more attractive to business and homeowners. More business equals more property and sales tax revenue. We are not going to be able to tax ourselves out of these challenges; raising taxes only makes more people and businesses want to move. We need to get hands on at finding out what our current business owners need to make it beneficial for them to stay here and what we can do to attract new. This is more important than ever. We also must start thinking outside of the box at how to address the long term budget issues and doing so long before budget season comes. I have watched the council for many years start pitching new ideas within weeks or months of taking a vote on the budget. At that point it is too late to have a concept vetted out and come up with new solutions. We must act now and be thinking about the

impact of our decisions 10/20/30 years from now. One effort can make a difference: the home I most recently renovated was generating \$800 a year in property taxes, it will now generate over \$2500 per year in tax revenue based on what it sold for.