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2009 AARP Voters' Guide

Burlington Mayoral Election

How to use the AARP Voters' Guide:

Here's how this Voters' Guide works. AARP asked key questions about issues important to our members and their families of each major candidate for this race. Each candidate was allowed up to 125 words to answer each question. AARP did not edit or modify those answers. The candidates were asked to check the support or oppose circles. The candidates may have chosen not to check a circle.

AARP has provided a summary of our position for each of the issues.

- Pass this guide on to friends and family.
- Share your views with the candidates.
- Ask for clarification from any candidate whose answer seems unclear.

Be sure to vote on March 3rd.

www.aarp.org/elections

Mobility

Q ■ *Do you support or oppose making upgrades to Burlington's streets and sidewalks a top priority to better accommodate all types of transportation?*

AARP's Position:

Upgrading Burlington's streets and sidewalks as a top priority.

Support Oppose

Bob Kiss (P):

Upgrading Burlington's streets and sidewalks as a top priority.

Support Oppose

Andy Montroll (D):

Upgrading Burlington's streets and sidewalks as a top priority.

Support Oppose

AARP research shows that as residents of Burlington get older, they are less likely to drive. Lack of transportation is often a barrier to participation in a host of community activities, leading to greater isolation. To meet the transportation needs of non-drivers and those who prefer to take a bus, walk, bike, or use a scooter or electric wheelchair, the city must have a safe and accessible street and sidewalk system that accommodates all types of transportation, not just cars. The Burlington Transportation Plan calls for conversion of some city streets to Complete Streets to achieve this goal. In addition, the city's sidewalk program will identify priority areas for improvements. AARP supports full implementation of these programs and recommendations.

An accessible city has been one of my top priorities as Mayor. With my support, the Walking Work Group, Burlington Bike Council, Local Motion, AARP and City Departments pursued a variety of initiatives to make Burlington a more bike and pedestrian friendly place. The City added "count-down" crosswalk signals at critical intersections throughout Burlington. We requested and voters approved new funding for regular maintenance of streets and sidewalks. We conducted a new sidewalk needs survey. And, BPD renewed its commitment to consistent enforcement of pedestrian, bike and motor vehicle laws to enhance public safety. We are committed to the concept of "complete streets" that provide equal, safe access to cars, bikes and pedestrians.

I support upgrading Burlington's streets and sidewalks to accommodate our city's many pedestrians and road users. Improving street conditions is a matter of public safety for all Burlington residents, particularly senior citizens. To that end, I also support the addition of ground level lighting to make nighttime foot-traffic safer along main arteries in our town. Beyond the streets and sidewalks, we also need to work with CCTA to ensure that the bus routes and schedules better meet the needs of our diverse community, including our seniors. Initiatives such as these will improve access to the city center, and allow all residents, particularly seniors, to participate more fully in the Burlington community.

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Support **Oppose**

Dan Smith (I):

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Support **Oppose**

Kurt Wright (R):

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Support **Oppose**

AARP research shows that as residents of Burlington get older, they are less likely to drive. Lack of transportation is often a barrier to participation in a host of community activities, leading to greater isolation. To meet the transportation needs of non-drivers and those who prefer to take a bus, walk, bike, or use a scooter or electric wheelchair, the city must have a safe and accessible street and sidewalk system that accommodates all types of transportation, not just cars. The Burlington Transportation Plan calls for conversion of some city streets to Complete Streets to achieve this goal. In addition, the city's sidewalk program will identify priority areas for improvements. AARP supports full implementation of these programs and recommendations.

I support the development of complete streets, as is noted on my website at www.dansmithformayor.com/Priorities. Upgrading our transportation infrastructure for all modes of transportation is crucial to supporting our seniors. My vision of complete streets includes improving our overall walkability, improving bike access, improving wheelchair access, enhancing safety for all modes of transportation, and building towards long term urban prosperity. In a challenging economic time, with municipal obligations mounting, with city families and seniors feeling the strain, Burlington needs a mayor who understands how to think creatively to generate new investment so we can afford these upgrades, knows how to work with ideas from all quarters and can deliver on economic development.

I have long been a strong advocate for improved streets and sidewalks. I supported both initiatives that were on the ballot in November. I believe it is critical to all citizens of Burlington but particularly to our seniors. I will continue to work to ensure that we do a better job of implementing the programs in the Transportation plan and will make it a priority of my administration.

Q ■ *Do you support or oppose the use of local development incentives to create a new model of affordable senior housing that includes long-term care services, access to transportation and community connectivity?*

AARP's Position:

Use of local development incentives for new model of senior housing

Support **Oppose**

Bob Kiss (P):

Use of local development incentives for new model of senior housing

Support **Oppose**

Andy Montroll (D):

Use of local development incentives for new model of senior housing

Support **Oppose**

Burlington's senior housing bonus provides an incentive for the development of one type of housing: high density, age-restricted, affordable apartments. There is growing demand for more choices in types of housing, including multigenerational options. A growing number of older residents are in need of long-term care services to live a high quality, safe life in the setting of their choice. Many older residents who no longer drive are disconnected from the community by lack of transportation. AARP Vermont supports creating additional incentives to the senior housing bonus to support development of affordable housing with long term-care services, access to transportation, and connections to community services that addresses the evolving needs of Burlington's older residents.

I support development incentives that provide valuable benefits to the community. The city already has an affordable senior housing density bonus. This bonus encourages housing developers to include and finance senior housing opportunities that serve a broader income range of tenants or owners. Other incentives are possible and deserve serious consideration for inclusion in the city's housing development policy. Burlington will benefit from new affordable housing choices that allow for downsizing and lifelong independent living.

I believe in a Burlington that provides housing for all ages, from children in our schools, to the families that support them, to the retirees we all hope to become. As a community, we should be able to support seniors who wish to stay in their homes, as well as those who wish to move into other types of housing specifically suited to seniors. However, we need to do a better job reaching out to the senior community to determine the range of desired housing and then work toward meeting those goals.

One specific housing project that holds particular promise is the redevelopment of the DMV building on North Avenue. This location's proximity to shopping and bus routes makes it an ideal location.

Housing

Q ■ *Do you support or oppose the use of local development incentives to create a new model of affordable senior housing that includes long-term care services, access to transportation and community connectivity?*

AARP's Position:

Use of local development incentives for new model of senior housing.

Support Oppose

Dan Smith (I)

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Burlington faces a variety of challenges when it comes to housing stock and capacity for our seniors. I support the development of a zoning ordinance and slate of incentives that embraces versatility in our effort to respond to the changing demands of our entire community. What is clear is that the ordinance is not keeping pace with the demands of our seniors and the needs of our workforce. AARP's February 2007 report shows that 11% of Burlington's population was age 65 and older in 2005, that number is expected to almost double by 2025. Burlington's seniors deserve the opportunity to age in a supportive environment with flexible housing options that meet their needs in their golden years.

I am a supporter of building more housing and enhancing all Housing options for our seniors including middle income Housing. As Residents of Burlington grow older often times they want to move out of their houses and into something smaller. We are not meeting this growing need in Burlington and I will provide the leadership to change that. I will push for developing Senior Housing particularly in locations that can link up to the services that are so important to our seniors, such as the site on North Avenue that would link to services at the Ethan Allen Shopping Center. My mother in-law recently moved into Heineberg Senior Housing so I am even more aware of the problems associated with this issue.

Q ■ Do you support or oppose municipal funding for the senior centers at current levels and how would you ensure this funding is sustained in the future?

AARP's Position:

Municipal funding for senior centers at current levels.

Support Oppose

Bob Kiss (P):

Municipal funding for senior centers at current levels.

Support Oppose

Andy Montroll (D)

Municipal funding for senior centers at current levels.

Support Oppose

Burlington's senior centers are an essential part of the city by providing social, recreational, health and wellness, and nutrition programs for hundreds of older residents. Most Vermont communities provide municipal funding for some or all of their senior center's operations. Until 2008, Burlington provided almost no funding to its senior centers. In FY'09, \$75,000, representing approximately one third of each center's annual budget, was appropriated to Burlington's two senior centers as a one-time allocation from the city's reserves that helped keep the centers open. Additional funding comes from the United Way, grants, and individual contributions. AARP Vermont supports municipal funding at FY '09 levels from the city's general fund to ensure the senior centers can continue to operate and provide essential programs to Burlington's older residents.

As Mayor I proposed \$75,000 in new funding for senior centers in the FY09 budget to support The Heineberg Senior Center and The Champlain Senior Center. Without city support, both of these Centers are in financial jeopardy. I will propose \$75,000 again for senior center funding in the FY10 budget. We must work together to develop a mix of revenue and resources to insure that elder services are available now and in the future. Hopefully, with a new Administration in Washington, federal funding to meet human needs may increase. We should explore all of our options over the next year to secure a sustainable funding stream for these two senior centers.

I completely agree that our senior centers are an essential and integral part of our community. When the senior centers were in jeopardy due to lack of funding, I supported the appropriation of \$75,000 from city funds to help support them on an interim basis while longer term solutions are developed. As we look forward, I believe that the first step is for the city to work with the senior centers to help them obtain the necessary funding, whether from private, federal or state sources. As these efforts bear fruit, our senior centers will become less reliant on city funding. However, if it becomes necessary, as mayor, I would continue to fund the senior centers as we have from city funds.

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Senior Center Funding

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Municipal funding for senior centers at current levels.

Support Oppose

Dan Smith (I)

Municipal funding for senior centers at current levels

Support Oppose

Kurt Wright (R):

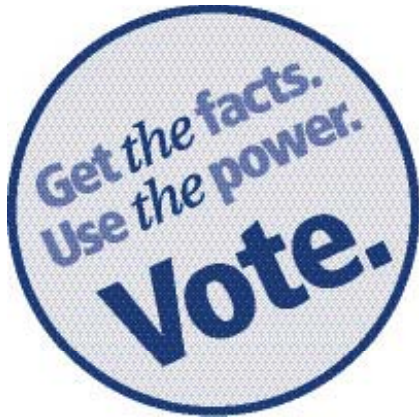
Municipal funding for senior centers at current levels

Support Oppose

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I support funding for the senior centers at current levels and I am committed to partnering with the centers to ensure their success into the future. We are at the beginning of a long and painful recession that will challenge us to identify stronger and more innovative strategies to meet the needs of seniors. This situation reinforces the need for new leadership that brings a fresh, independent perspective, a mayor who can align all aspects of city government to focus on revitalizing the economy in order to increase city revenues and strengthen the safety net that exists not only for our seniors, but for the single moms, and working families that are being buffeted by a struggling economy.

I was instrumental, working together with others, in getting the City to step up to the plate - for the first time - and provide the funding necessary to keep our Senior Centers open. These centers provide an invaluable service to our seniors and it is essential for Burlington to have a continuing commitment to support them. I sponsored a resolution calling for increased funding from the city so my personal commitment will be firm.



Election Day for Mayor, City Council and other local officials is Tuesday, March 3rd. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. For information on how to register to vote, find your polling place, or request a ballot to vote by mail, call the City Clerk at 865-7000 or go to <http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/ct/elections/>.

AARP Vermont is working to make Burlington a livable community for older adults, with a focus on housing, mobility and community engagement. To find out more, visit <http://www.aarp.org/sk/blcp/>.

Voter Information Inside



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