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more than 50 percent of the time. I have a family and a job, and sometimes I want a day off! Anyway, in the River Road/Santa Clara area, I'd say annexation is their biggest issue. We've had conversations with the leaders out there. [Former Assistant City Manager] Jim Carlson found a 1982 document about annexing those folks, and I can understand the city's point of view, wanting to have the tax base necessary to provide core services out there. Of course, do they want those core services? Do they want to be part of the city? I believe in letting voters speak, asking the people outside the city if they want to be inside or not. If we talk about annexing, they're not my constituents yet, but that's 10,000 more voters. I think the River Road area is willing to be in the conversation, but Santa Clara's not willing to have that conversation yet.

Downtown, people are concerned about public safety. They want more police presence; I think they'd be happy to have a beat cop. In Trainsong and Active Bethel Citizens (ABC), there's the railroad and pollution to deal with. In Whiteaker, the community is looking at developing a quiet zone, not only for the whistles, but a more complex plan that might involve closing a couple of the railroad crossings. In Trainsong [where I live], there's a lack of neighborhood involvement, and we have a lot of pollution with Baxter and quality of life issues. In some of the houses, there are generations of people living with no hope. It's urban blight. The other day, [Register-Guard reporter] Ed Russo said, "I was in

your neighborhood, and it looks pretty rough down there."

What about the new City Hall plan? Do you support it?

I think if voters are willing to pay for it, I'm all for it. Our building is in disrepair, and we need to get the Police Department out from underneath the basement. Where and how, well, I'm not as detail-oriented as some of my peers. I could use some storage, and I would look forward to having a staff person for everyone.

What do you hear is happening in downtown development? What would you like to see?

Well, people are holding their cards close to their chests, so I don't know what is happening. I'd like to know! I hear whispers, of course. I'd like to see more people living downtown, be it subsidized or low-income, that's great, but we also need something to make people want to stay downtown. We need places to work and to shop, services like grocery stores where working families can afford to shop. I want it to be diverse, truly diverse, not just in thinking but with actual different minorities present down here.

Speaking of race, how do you think white progressives in Eugene are doing around issues for Latinos?

Well, a lot of white progressives have their hearts in the right place and want to help. But unless you've been in a country where you're the minority or you've been through white privilege training, it's hard to begin to understand. I grew up in

Riverside, where every family was Latino and had eight to 10 kids, and we all went in a herd to Catholic school and church. I knew everybody I saw would be a friendly face. Raising kids up here, I didn't know that experience of racism, didn't understand what my three sons were going through. My boys are blue-collar workers, chewing tobacco, working in the mills — just guys, but people see them as Latino first. It's a really challenging, complicated issue, and for [progressive] people who say "I don't see color," I'm like, "Are they for real?" Brown-eyed boys and brown babies — they're the bomb! [Laughs.] Obviously, we all have our personal biases, that's very human, and for people not to acknowledge those biases is not the best route; instead, we need to educate ourselves and go from there. When you start out saying you don't have any biases, part of the story is not being told.

So how is the city doing around race and who's in power?

The city is making efforts, having some conversations around race, taking baby steps. But who's in power? Well, I like to think the people who vote are the ones who are in power. I'm told there are other people who think that the people with money are the ones in power. ...

I was at an LCOG (Lane Council of Governments) dinner the other night to present David Kelly an award, and we're in this room of about 75 or 100 people. They were all wearing suits, and they all don't look like me.

Do you feel like you have to be a role model?

Yes. When I was running for council, I was like, win or lose, this is a step in the right direction. I was going out to schools and encouraging kids to be involved, to follow politics, register to vote, speak their minds and participate.

What are the strong points of Eugene, in your opinion?

I think about Riverside and Oregon vs.

California values and what's been done to communities. It scares the hell out of me that people [there] have raped the environment and grown at an unmanageable pace. I hope here, we don't forget our sense of community, our desire to be a healthier community and sustain growth for children and our grandchildren — but not at a cost to the environment. I think the mayor's Sustainable Business Initiative is really going up the right path.

When I was elected ... I was appalled at the behavior in council meetings. Mayor Piercy has set a tone that everyone is welcome, that we're all peers on the council.

... It's a safe place. [With a wink at her empty latte cup:] We've got good coffee! No, really, the quality of life is second to none. I'm humbled when I think about how different this community is from where I was from and what I grew up with. We put such a high value on humans, how we live our lives, the quality of education and the environment. People are willing to make sacrifices to have that, to take some inconvenience for preserving our quality of life. That kind of conversation doesn't happen in Riverside at all — we were just living. Here, it's like, how well do we want to live? **EW**

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