


St. Helena Chamber of Commerce Questionnaire - response from Supervisor Diane Dillon
May 9, 2014


County Supervisor Questions

As you know, LAFCO conducts a sphere of influence study every five years. The City of St. Helena last year requested that the study be done early and was turned down. Do you support an early completion of the St. Helena sphere of influence study?

*It is my understanding that the current schedule for the City's review is fiscal year 2014-15, i.e., the study could start within a couple of months, so it seems a moot point to request it be advanced. As Supervisor, I want to support the residents of the City of St. Helena and their elected body. The request for the early study was made last year by the City Manager, without apparent direction from the Council. **The Council should have an agendaized discussion at a public meeting of the reasons for such a request, if it feels it is necessary at this time.*** 

Would you support a revenue sharing annexation agreement between Napa County and the City of St. Helena if Ag land remained in the county?

This takes the County in a direction it has never gone before. This question is bigger than a simple yes/no answer. It requires an in depth public discussion of the pros and cons of such an agreement, so that everyone understands them, before one can answer yes or no.

*First, to my knowledge, no Board of Supervisors since 1968 has voted to support annexation of lands designated in the County's general plan as Agricultural Resource (what's commonly known as the Ag Preserve) to a city/town so that it could enjoy greater revenue, at a cost to the County. The voters have protected Ag Resource lands with Measures J and P. **Is annexation a way to start the unraveling of the Ag Preserve?*** 

*Second, there is a downside countywide (to all the citizens of the unincorporated and incorporated areas) to transferring revenues from County to any City/Town because the County uses tax revenues to provide services to everyone countywide. **If revenues are transferred, the County will have to cut services. Flu shots? Deputy sheriffs? Mental health services? Road repairs? What will be cut?***

*Third, if the County is forced into such an agreement, how will the County replenish those revenues? For instance, **will it in turn be forced to approve a new hotel (e.g., by supporting a Measure P vote)** that will further erode the use of Ag Resource or Ag Watershed designated lands for agricultural uses?*

What will be your major issue of focus for the next term?

The main issue before us is protection of our water resources.

In addition, protecting against the imposition of a Vegas-style casino/resort anywhere in the county is a fight from which I will not relent.

Further, the issues identified below must be addressed! (especially traffic and housing)



With the County's portion of the Hwy29 Channelization project completed and with CALTRANS beginning the widening in 2015, do you intend to use your close relationship with CALTRANS to ensure that our businesses and harvest will not be adversely impacted?

Absolutely. I continually monitor what CalTrans is planning throughout the 3rd Supervisorial District, so that I can advocate for whatever changes in those plans are needed to protect the viability of local businesses -- including our wine and tourism industry -- and reduce impacts on residents, as much as possible.

Protecting Napa's agricultural roots and assets are important but so too are supporting initiatives that insure cities throughout the County thrive. How do you go about deciding appropriate land use between city or Ag purposes? What do you propose to be a balanced approach to decision making and management of how land use decisions are made. Do you see a hierarchy between urban use and Ag use?



I am a strong advocate for city-centered growth. Commercial and other urban uses belong in our cities/town. I do not see a hierarchy but a balance in adhering to that concept.

What do you see as the 2 key issues facing Napa County in the next 2-5 years?

- 1) Water supply: protecting it; making the resource that we have be sustainable to support our agricultural industry and, in turn, our residents*
- 2) Dealing with the tension between the transportation (traffic!) challenge, and the location of new jobs and housing. Traffic is the most congested it has ever been. It's a reflection of our success as a destination, the need for wineries to have direct-to-consumer contact, and the location of new agricultural industry and tourism-related jobs vs. the housing for those jobholders.*

What do you see as the key issues facing Upvalley specifically that may be at odds with Napa County as a whole?


The impact of new job creation Up Valley with the inability of our small cities/town to provide adequate affordable housing for those jobholders. There is not enough infrastructure (water/sewer/transportation) in the Up Valley cities/town for the location of all of the necessary housing.




The traffic impact of creating new desirable destinations Up Valley for wine customers and other tourists, when most of those customers/tourists must come into the county from the south, through the cities of Napa and American Canyon.

St Helena Chamber of Commerce County Supervisor Questions – Lewis Chilton


As you know, LAFCO conducts a sphere of influence study every five years. The City of St. Helena last year requested that the study be done early and was turned down. Do you support an early completion of the St. Helena sphere of influence study?

Yes, this study is required by California law every five years and I support the City of St Helena's reasonable request to move its review ahead of two other small districts. It is appropriate to conduct this study sooner rather than later as there are significant issues related to development impacts that need to be resolved in a fair, open way. 

Would you support a revenue sharing annexation agreement between Napa County and the City of St. Helena if Ag land remained in the county?

I would support a revenue sharing agreement based on identifying specific impacts and dollar costs for services paid for by the taxpayers of St. Helena due to adjacent County commercial development. I do not support annexation of agricultural lands from the County but would be willing to discuss annexation of commercially zoned lands if identified as appropriate. 

What will be your major issue of focus for the next term?

My immediate focus would be to restart the General Plan process to resolve the land use issues in Angwin. The County has ignored their own promise to take up this issue after June 2010. Current County policy encourages dense residential development in Angwin, which not only affects Angwin but will increase traffic up valley and threaten the groundwater supply. We urgently need a balanced, open process to ensure that our rural lands are protected while allowing Pacific Union College to fulfill their long-term educational mission. 

Councilman Chilton: With the County's portion of the Hwy29 Channelization project completed and with CALTRANS beginning the widening in 2015, do you think it is possible for you to develop a relationship with CALTRANS to ensure that our businesses and harvest will not be adversely impacted?

For the past six years I have served on the Napa County Planning & Transportation Agency where we regularly work with CALTRANS. I understand the challenges of the state bureaucracy and have experience working with local & state level CALTRANS representatives to benefit our residents.

Protecting Napa’s agricultural roots and assets are important but so too are supporting initiatives that insure cities throughout the County thrive. How do you go about deciding appropriate land use between city or Ag purposes? What do you propose to be a balanced approach to decision making and management of how land use decisions are made. Do you see a hierarchy between urban use and Ag use?

Protecting Napa County’s agricultural lands is essential both for the wine industry but also for the economies of our cities. I strongly support the “grand bargain” of our county which is we reserve the unincorporated areas for agricultural use and the cities are the appropriate location for residential and commercial development. The County must acknowledge that it’s land use decisions – even for winery projects – have tangible effects on the cities. Similarly, the cities must manage growth appropriate for their community and based on available resources such as water, sewer and public safety services. I oppose the County’s attempts to change state law to exempt itself from affordable housing requirements. This would effectively push all housing requirements onto the cities without any financial or services consideration for the impacts on the cities. Instead the County must work collaboratively with the cities, especially Napa and American Canyon, to protect our ag lands and also provide needed housing.

What do you see as the 2 key issues facing Napa County in the next 2-5 years?

We are clearly seeing evidence that Napa County is hitting a “tipping point” in terms of the impacts of additional development in the Ag Preserve and our cities. This is affecting traffic, water resources and our small town way of life. We need leadership on the Board of Supervisors that will start the conversation on these impacts and creative ways to address them. Instead, we look backwards at our past accomplishments while avoiding the changing circumstances of the future.



Also, we must urgently address our deteriorated County road system. Continued neglect is leading to outright failure of many of our roads. The County spends very little of its discretionary funds on maintaining our roads and due to this lack of prioritization, down the road we will be wasting Measure T funds on more costly complete road reconstruction versus the lower cost of regular maintenance.

What do you see as the key issues facing Upvalley specifically that may be at odds with Napa County as a whole?

With recent redistricting, the Upvalley portion of Napa County is represented by only one Supervisor. This shift threatens to lessen the County’s focus on agriculture and preservation as others focus on issues more pertinent to their constituents. We must have a Supervisor that not only champions the heart of our agricultural area but also has positive, productive relationships with elected leaders from throughout the County. I bring these relationships to the Third District Supervisor position



which is key to being able to address key Upvalley issues in a mutually beneficial fashion that is also supported by our communities and leaders in the south.