



## **2005 Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview October 2005**

*Candidate: Dennis Rooker (I), Jack Jouett District*

*Complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow [website](#).*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is Charlottesville Tomorrow. An Advocate for Our Future Today. Charlottesville Tomorrow is a non-partisan community organization working on land use, transportation, and community design issues. Visit us on the web at [cvilletomorrow.org](http://cvilletomorrow.org).

On November 8, 2005, Albemarle County voters in 3 magisterial districts will be electing members to four-year terms on the Board of Supervisors.

This recording is Brian Wheeler's interview of Dennis Rooker, candidate for the Jack Jouett seat on the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Rooker, the incumbent, is running as an Independent. His opponent for this seat is Christian Schoenewald.

### **INTERVIEW**

Dennis, thank you for participating in this interview with Charlottesville Tomorrow. The complete audio and written transcript for this interview will be available on the Internet. Information from this interview, from some of the candidate forums, and from your campaign materials, will be used in the compilation of Charlottesville Tomorrow's non-partisan voter guide. As you know, Charlottesville Tomorrow does not endorse any candidates and our goal is to provide information to the public so they can make an informed vote on issues related to land use, transportation and community design.

Also, as you are aware, some of the questions you will be asked have been provided in advance, others have not. All candidates will be asked the same questions. Are you ready to start?

Dennis Rooker: I am. It's a pleasure to be with you, Brian.

**1. Please describe your past political experience.**

I've been honored to represent the Jack Jouett District on the Board of Supervisors for the past four years and I'm presently Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. Prior to that, I was on the Planning Commission in the County for four years representing the Jack Jouett District. I also served as Chair of the Planning Commission. I've served on transportation committees in the area for 16 years, including on the MPO Policy Board for the last four years and I chaired the MPO Policy Board last year. I've also served on the County's Fiscal Impact Committee for 10 years, served on the Planning and Coordination Council which is a joint City County University Planning Committee for the past four years and I've served on several other committees such as the Meadowcreek Parkway Design Committee.

**2. What makes you better qualified than your opponent(s)?**

I've lived in the area for 35 years, went to UVA undergraduate and Law School, have a law degree. I've been in business in Albemarle County for 20 years. I've owned and operated businesses that have employed more than 150 people over the years. I've owned property in the County for 33 years. My kids went to school here. My wife taught in the school system here and as I stated in my answer to the first question, I think I have substantial experience serving on the Board, serving on the Planning Commission, serving on transportation committees, serving on committees that are joint cooperation type committees such as PAC and I don't think that my opponent brings any of those things to the table.

**3. What do you think is the best water supply source to meet our community's needs for growth and for drought, and a follow-up, would you support a pipeline to the James River to address our water supply needs? Please explain why or why not?**

I think the thing that people in the area need to understand is that we have a storage issue with water, not a supply issue. On a given day, about 97% of the water that comes down the South Fork Rivanna River goes over the dam and downstream. The situation is that in times of severe drought such as the drought that we had several years ago which has now been recorded as the drought of record for the area, we could experience storage shortage problems as we go long period of time without rain. I think the important thing is that we come up with a plan to expand the water supply and get it implemented that will take us out a good number of years if that drought of record is experienced again, that will take us out in terms of our storage capabilities.

The community went through a period, a planning period, where the community was exposed to a number of potential water supply source increase options and community input was received. At the end of that process, it was clear that there

were a number of people who had different opinions about different options in the community and in looking at the situation, we had four boards that have input and/or a veto power on the decision about how we expand our water supply. That is the Board of Supervisors, on which I sit; City Council; the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority; and the Albemarle County Service Authority. It became apparent to me that we needed to try to develop a unified position among those four boards if we were going to take a plan to the regulators that had a good chance of being approved.

In the spring, I initiated the creation of a small group which consisted of the Mayor, myself, and the chairs of the two Service Authority boards, to meet and come up with a unified position. We met about 10 times, came up with a unified position to recommend to our boards. I think our boards have all approved that option and that is the option of expanding the capacity at Ragged Mountain substantially by raising the dam and connecting the Ragged Mountain Reservoir to the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. It provides the opportunity for Ragged Mountain to be filled with water from the much bigger watershed from the South Fork and the ability to move water back and forth in both directions in the pipeline so that water can be treated at its most economic point given the circumstances.

It is an option that has been embraced by all of the environmental groups I believe in the community. It is an option that was originally recommended, to the best of my knowledge, by the Nature Conservancy. We have taken that. We met with regulators to discuss that option in June. I believe that most of the regulators think that it's a viable option for the community. I think that that will go to a public information meeting later this month, possibly October 27<sup>th</sup>, with the idea that if we get good public input on that, that it would be taken to application which would probably be filed in March. I think it's an option that is not the most expensive option which is a plus. It is an option that will provide our water from within our watershed areas. It enables us to better control the quality of the water that is utilized and I think it's an option that will provide us with a 50-year water supply source, so I think it meets a lot of criteria. I think it's a good option and I think it's supported by the majority of the people in the community.

As far as the James pipeline, I certainly support the option that we're taking forward much more than I would support a James pipeline. I think that one of the big arguments against tapping into the James as a water source is that we're not as certain about the quality of the water that we're going to get. There's a whole area of emerging pollutants, pharmaceuticals that are flushed into toilets. We would, in effect, be getting the water that has been inundated upstream by various pollutants from other communities. Of course, we would be able to treat that and I'm certain that the Health Department could certify after treatment that the water was fine for use, but I think that chlorine creates carcinogenic byproducts in water and the longer the chlorine sits in the water, the worse the byproducts; the more chlorine you have to use, the worse the byproducts, so I've always felt like we should try to find a water source that required less treatment

rather than more treatment and I think that the option we're pursuing does that. And there are many many other reasons why the James pipeline is not, I think, a very acceptable option to the community.

I know that the town of Scottsville has weighed in very heavily against having a pipeline brought through their area. It would involve bringing the water pipeline source through a largely rural area which some people I think fear might expand that area into a growth area at some time which will be contrary to our growth management policies.

**4. The Board of Supervisors will approve ordinances to support recently adopted changes to the rural areas portion of the comprehensive plan. Do you support the rural areas portion of the comprehensive plan and what new zoning ordinance strategies do you think stand the best chance to protect the rural areas for future generations?**

I strongly support the new rural area plan. I participated in drafting that plan when I was on the Planning Commission. I participated in drafting the guiding principles of that plan and I had the pleasure of working with the other Board members to achieve approval of that plan by the Board of Supervisors. It includes a number of strategies for better protecting the rural areas, for improving the agricultural economy of the rural areas, for protecting crossroads communities and I endorse those strategies.

The Board at our most recent strategic retreat adopted a goal at my recommendation of adopting the strategies that are contained in the rural area plan over the next four year and, as I said, there are more than a hundred strategies, so it will require a lot of work by staff, a lot of work by the Planning Commission and a lot of work by the Board.

I think that two of the most important strategies are phasing and clustering. Phasing would be basically a time release of development rights approach. I think that that has been utilized by other counties. Madison County, Rockingham County, Augusta County, Orange, all have phasing requirements. I don't think that we've received negative feedback from— I think we've received positive feedback from those communities about how the plan has worked. It has helped slow down the pace of development in the rural areas in those communities. It's an approach that allows rural area landowners to sell off pieces of their land as needed, but it does not foster the large developers coming in and buying up big chunks of rural area land and putting in subdivisions of 50, 100, 200 homes that would be marketed all at once, so I think that's a very important strategy.

Certainly clustering is another very important strategy. Clustering, as we envisioned it in the rural area plan, would require that rural area developments have conservation parcels or tracts that constitute 80% of the rural area parcel involved. That would mean that the development part of it would be clustered on

20%. The result of that would be to leave large, undisturbed conservation tracts throughout the rural areas so I think it's extremely important that we move forward to implement both of those strategies.

**5. Consider the growth we see in Northern Virginia. What mistakes have local governments made there and, if you are elected, what will you do differently here?**

I think, first of all, we have a rural area plan that I just discussed that if properly implemented will protect large parts of Albemarle County. The rural areas constitute 95% of the land in Albemarle County; 5% is in the designated development areas. I think the Northern Virginia counties referred to also took somewhat of a duplicitous attitude toward development and land protection. While they had strategies to try to protect land, they also had strategies to promote economic development and growth and sometimes those strategies don't mix well.

Albemarle County has avoided spending public dollars to attract more growth. To me, that's a very important policy decision. It is a decision that is probably in equipoise on the Board. I think there are three members of the Board who probably support being more active and spending more dollars to foster economic development and I think there are three members that want to go slower in that area; they don't think that the County needs to get involved in promoting and soliciting and funding additional businesses coming into the area.

Our economy is exceptionally strong in this area. We have about 1,500 to 2,000 people a year moving into the area. UVA is somewhat of an engine of growth in the community. They continue to add students. They continue to add faculty. They have construction projects that total about \$600 million underway. They projected that that would add 1,200 jobs to the local economy. They are making substantial efforts to acquire additional research grants and this year they obtained about \$313 million of research funds. According to their estimates, they add about 30 jobs for every million dollars of research funds. That's about a thousand jobs if you do the math on that.

NGIC just announced that they're going to bring 1,200 more jobs into this area, primarily transplants from the Washington, DC area because the federal government has mandated that defense operations scatter so they're more than 100 miles away from Washington for I guess primarily defense and strategy reasons to protect against terrorism. The goal of having their operations decentralized and looking to the 100-mile radius puts us right in the crosshairs. We are about 105 to 110 miles outside of Washington, DC depending on what part of the County you're in.

Sperry Marine has added about 70 employees. They're expanding their facilities. State Farm is adding a couple of hundred employees or has added some and is

continuing to add employees. I think the total will be up near 200 by the time they're finished, so that's a few of the things going on. Princeton Biotech is locating in the UVA Research Park.

Because we're a high-quality place to live, because of the quality of life we have, our economy has been strong, continues to be strong, and I think the last thing we need to do is try to stimulate things further, so I think that one of the things we're doing differently from Northern Virginia is we're not actively out trying to stimulate more growth in the community. I think our concentration is on trying to maintain the quality of life in the area in the light of substantial growth that has occurred without stimulation.

I think our plans for providing for better forms of development in the growth areas, which I think we'll probably talk about in a later question, are also a step that we're taking that I don't think has been taken on as significant of a scale in the Northern Virginia communities you referred to.

**6. Goals of the "Neighborhood Model" form of development, a form intended for the County's population centers, includes interconnected neighborhoods and more compact, walkable communities with a mix of housing types that allow a larger population to live, work and shop in a smaller area. Do you support these goals of the Neighborhood Model for new development?**

I do. If you look at the items that Neighborhood Model includes, things like pedestrian orientation, neighborhood-friendly streets and paths, transportation networks and interconnected streets, mixed uses, neighborhood centers, buildings and spaces of human scale, relegated parking, affordability with dignity, redevelopment, site planning that respects terrain, and clear boundaries with the rural areas, I doubt that there are many people who could hear those principles which are the principles of the Neighborhood Model that we adopted, that would disagree that that is a good form of development to try to encourage in the growth areas.

I mentioned earlier we're growing at the rate of about 1,500 to 2,000 people a year. Those people are going to live somewhere when they get here and the question is where. I often ask people when they talk about the Neighborhood Model or a particular development, I often ask them, well, there're going to be about 1,500 to 2,000 people moving to Albemarle County next year, where would you like to see them live. Our plan is to try to protect the rural areas and to try to provide for a better form of development in the urban areas, the growth areas, so that people elect to live in the growth areas. And the Neighborhood Model is one way to try to do that.

We have numerous strategies in place for trying to protect the rural areas. The acquisition of conservation easements program, land use taxation, agricultural

forestall districts, mountain protection plan, ground water protection ordinance—those are all things that have been put in place to try to protect the rural areas and the resources in the rural areas.

In the development areas, if we can implement the policies of the Neighborhood Model I think we'll see a better form of development that is attractive to people and is a reason why they will elect to be there. I think the experience at Old Trail is an example of that.

**7. One example of a significant Neighborhood Model provided is Old Trail Village. Do you think Old Trail will be quality growth for Crozet and Charlottesville-Albemarle, and a follow-up, will it provide affordable living choices for our citizens and how will they remain affordable?**

The question has several components to it. The first, I guess, is dealing with Old Trail and I think Old Trail is an example of the Neighborhood Model development. Crozet is an area that was master planned. I think the Old Trail development fits substantially into that master plan. The developer agreed to build all of the infrastructure that was called for in that geographic area of the master plan. That's a development that will have about nine miles of sidewalks, bicycle paths, about five miles of walking trails. It's located beside schools. The trails will connect the development with the schools, so the schools will be walkable from the development. If you count the public golf course which the developer built, it will have about as much open space as developed space. It will have a park in the center of it that's bigger than Crozet Park. It is setting aside area for greenway protection, for hiking purposes. It will have a town center which will be walkable for virtually all of the residents that live within Old Trail.

It will have a mix of housing affordability levels. I think you'll see everything from houses that sell for a \$1.2 million down to townhouses that sell more in the \$200,000, \$225,000 range. There'll be apartments in the community so you'll have a mix of affordability across ranges of types of houses.

Part of the proffers that were made for Old Trail involved 15% affordable housing proffer which means that about 300 of the residences there will be in the affordable range, either rental affordable or ownership affordable. The County has adopted an affordable housing component to its comprehensive plan and one of the strategies in that comprehensive plan section is to obtain 15% affordable housing in new rezonings, either in numbers of units or in some other contribution to affordable housing.

We have a Home Buyers Club that the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program has operated. That presently has about 75 people in it. Most of the people who've gone through that program over the years have bought a home.

It's geared toward lower and middle income people and helping to educate them about how to manage their financial resources and how to buy a house.

One of the strategies in the affordable housing component of the comprehensive plan was to create an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee which we did and they made a number of recommendations back to us. One of those was to create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. We have done that. The County has committed \$500,000 to that trust fund. We've obtained proffers from developers which should add about another \$400,000 to that and so part of the plan is really to help with the affordable problem is to get people into housing, but (1) educating them about how they buy a house and we have the Home Buyers Club for doing that; (2) to help them with down payment assistance which the Housing Trust Fund is designed to do. The Housing Trust Fund has obtained low interest rate commitments from lenders, lower than market interest rates, so to help people into loans that are somewhat more affordable and obviously to make certain that there is some stock of affordable housing out there that people can then buy. Old Trail with their affordable housing proffer will help achieve that goal as do, we hope, other developments that may take place in the community in the future.

**8. Our designated growth areas tell developers where we want them to build. Should we also tell developers through zoning what form we want that development to take? Why or why not?**

The first part of the question—designated growth areas tell developers where we want them to build. I think it's very important and appropriate for a community to through zoning regulations and other appropriate regulations to determine where development should take place in the community and I also think it's appropriate to determine what the form that development will take and I think that on any kind of significant rezonings— Since the last year I was on the Planning Commission, we started requiring developers to proffer pretty much what they were planning to build, the form of what they were planning to build, in some cases, codes of development.

We wanted specificity because we wanted to make certain that when we rezoned land, we were going to get what the developer said he was going to produce when he came forward with the proposal. The only way to do that is to have codes of development or to tie in the proffered plan of development with the proffers themselves so that you have a legal, enforceable obligation to build what has been proposed, so I think it is appropriate for the community to determine the form and certainly the preferred form of residential development in the designated growth areas is the Neighborhood Model. That doesn't mean that every development of every size is going to have all 12 elements of the Neighborhood Model but it is a checklist of the kinds of things that we expect to see in rezonings that occur within the growth areas.

**9. What types of incentives should exist for developers to build in our population centers or designated growth areas, and a follow-up, can you name some specific regulatory or financial examples? And should the development here be required to conform with the Neighborhood Model?**

I think the biggest incentive that a developer has for building in the growth area is that there will be market demand for his product and if Old Trail is an example, I believe so far every area that they have put on the market has sold out almost immediately so that indicates to me that there is big demand for the kind of product that the Neighborhood Model is fostering. There's generally a substantial increase in value of land when it's rezoned and in recognition of that, I think it's appropriate that some of that value be used to assure that the form of development is the kind that the community wants and it fits into the community and preserves the values of the community that surrounds the new project.

We have certain incentives, for example, for affordability. We're looking at increasing density bonus arrangements for developers. I think the Housing Advisory Committee recommended that in certain cases there be density bonuses of up to 50% if certain affordability goals are met and I think that's the kind of thing we can look at to encourage more affordable housing. But we also need to be mindful that what is built needs to fit in with the surrounding community, immediately surrounding community in which it's going to take place.

**10. Do you support construction of a Western U.S. 29 bypass around Charlottesville on the currently proposed route or some other route? Please explain why or why not and where another route might go.**

I've been a long-time opponent of the current Western Bypass route for number of reasons and the Board of Supervisors has twice passed unanimous resolutions opposing that particular route. It goes through six neighborhoods. It takes 15 acres of land from our largest school complex, the Albemarle Greer Jouett Ivy Creek Special Needs School Complex. It runs for about a mile along our reservoir on steep banks right above the reservoir and there are numerous other reasons why from a community standpoint it's not a good transportation solution.

From a traffic standpoint, all the traffic studies going back to 1987 and even the current transportation studies that we've done at the MPO, traffic studies that have been done by VDOT that have been provided to the MPO, indicate that 90% of the traffic in the 29 corridor is local. Only 10% is through. In the through north-south traffic is less than 3,000 vehicles. That's out of a total of around 65,000 vehicles a day in that 29 corridor. So the transportation studies have indicated the building the bypass would not substantially improve the traffic flow within the corridor. Governor Warner voted against the bypass route when he was on the Commonwealth Transportation Board. He did that because he didn't

think that it was a route that would provide much transportation relief for the dollar being spent.

The cost estimate today on the Western Bypass route is about \$270 million. Our Commonwealth Transportation Board representative Butch Davies was in the state legislature one time from Culpeper and at that time he was a proponent of the bypass. He had not spent much time studying it, didn't know many of the facts or cost figures on it. Once he got appointed to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, we invited him here, showed him the traffic numbers, talked to him about the cost. He actually went and walked the route. Following that, he determined that it was not a good deal for the state to build the bypass, that they could not cost-justify it based upon the traffic relief it would provide and the costs. Phil Shucet, the Commissioner of Transportation, spent some time studying the bypass facts and figures and came to the same conclusion. So, I don't think that many people who have spent a lot of time studying the project from a cost benefit standpoint have determined that it's a good deal even for the state.

Taxpayers for Commonsense and Friends of the Earth have selected that bypass route as one of the 20 worst transportation projects in the country at least four times. Every time they have come out with their publication which highlights the worst transportation projects in the country, the bypass project has been among them as a project which wasted taxpayer dollars and was damaging to the environment at the same time, so I don't think that it's a good solution for our area or for the state.

As far as another route for the bypass, I think if the state is really serious about creating a limited access north south route, they would need to try to build something that connected Interstate 66 with Interstate 64. The entire corridor from Charlottesville up to 66 has become heavily developed. Every house has an entrance on 29 that adjoins 29, every farm has an entrance on 29, sometimes multiple entrances. There are I think over 30 stoplights now north of the proposed northern terminus of the bypass and there're more going in all the time. I think Greene County and Madison County both have applications for additional stoplights on 29 pending, so that corridor is simply not going to be a limited-access free-flow type of transportation corridor that the state sometimes talked about 29 being.

They actually did a study of what it might cost to do that within the corridor and it indicated it would cost—this is 10 years ago—and they indicated it would cost well over a billion dollars so I don't think the strategy of putting down a quarter-of-a-billion dollar band aids along the existing 29 is going to succeed in turning that into a limited-access high-speed corridor.

**11. Please describe any other transportation projects on the Route 29 corridor that you would support to reduce congestion.**

I've generally supported the projects that are in our UnJAM 2025 plan which is the long-range transportation plan for the area. That is a plan that was developed following a federally-mandated process. We have a citizens committee called CHART that every five years develops a new recommended long-range plan. Their recommendation goes to the MPO Technical Committee and then that recommendation comes up to the MPO Policy Board. I've participated in adopting the most recent long-rang plan on the Policy Board and I participated in adopting, I think, the last two plans when I was on the MPO Technical Committee.

I think we need [some] specific projects in the 29 area. We had a land use and transportation study that was done of the part of 29 from Greenbrier down to the 250 Bypass and that study recommended a number of improvements in the 29 area that would significantly help the flow of traffic. I think short-term improvements, we need to widen 29 from Hydraulic Road down to the 250 Bypass. We need to add a ramp, an additional exit ramp off of 29 onto the 250 Bypass in front of Best Buy. We need to extend that ramp out once it gets onto 250.

The County has widened 29 from Hydraulic Road out to the bridge at Sam's. The widening of 29 in front of the Hollymead Town Center for about half a mile has been done at the expense of the developer pursuant to a proffer. We need to widen 29 in the gap area. I think we also need to improve the geometry of 29 around the entrance to Forest Lakes South. I think there's a significant safety issue there at the hill that is right in front of Forest Lakes South.

Hillsdale Drive is I think an important linkage to make on the east side of 29. We are endeavoring to try to improve connections so that local people and local traffic can move within their neighborhoods and can move up and down, can move north and south without having to go on 29. I think you have that with Georgetown Road and Hydraulic Road and Berkmar. Eventually, Berkmar may be extended across the river. I think that's in the long-range transportation plan. There is a road that's in the Hollymead Town Center that would go north south that would be in line to connect with Berkmar eventually. And certainly Hillsdale on the east would allow people that live on the east side of 29 to move around, get to shopping, get back to their homes, etc., without going on 29. Those are important things.

I think we need to look at improving transit in the area as certainly our population continues to increase and we have a dense enough population in areas to make transit work. I think we need to take advantage of it. We need to engage in strategies to take vehicles off of the roads. We have a Park & Ride program. We need to continue to look for ways to expand that program. We need to work

on ways to expand employer participation in Park & Ride projects and shuttle bus projects.

I think the Meadowcreek Parkway is an important linkage and I'm not certain if we have a separate question on the Meadowcreek Parkway here or not. If we don't, I'll talk about it now. The Meadowcreek Parkway is a project that the County has supported as one of its highest priority projects for 20 years. It is in the County about a \$20 million project and that's just the County's portion of it. We've been setting aside secondary road funds for that project for about 20 years. It takes a long time when you get— This year I think we get \$3.8 million of total secondary road funds, 25% of which have to go as a matter of law to unpaved road projects which leaves us with about \$2.9 million. You can imagine how long it takes to get enough money set aside to build a project like the Meadowcreek Parkway which is a \$20 million project in the County. We have that in our six-year plan. It looks like it will be fully funded to start construction in 2008.

The City has been setting aside similar money in its urban allocation funds and we're very fortunate that we were able to obtain \$27 million of federal funding to build a grade-separated interchange where Meadowcreek would intersect the 250 Bypass. That's something I've been working on for about three years. When we had our new Commonwealth Transportation Board representative appointed for this area, Butch Davis, I invited Butch to Charlottesville, sat down with him, went over the traffic numbers for the Meadowcreek Parkway, showed him that if we build the Meadowcreek Parkway and we don't have a grade-separated interchange that the 250 Bypass would be operating at an F level of service the day you open the Meadowcreek Parkway. The wait time would've increased about 250 to 300% on the 250 Bypass during rush hour, so my point to Butch and the point I made to the resident engineer of VDOT for the Culpeper District who I also met with, was that the last thing we want to do in this area is cut the ribbon on a project that everybody's been anticipating for 20 years and find that the traffic flow on the 250 Bypass is suddenly halted or operating at an F level of service.

So we have been working in the community together to try to find a funding source so that that project could be built simultaneously with the construction of the Parkway. We were very fortunate to kind of get our cards in order. We invited the Commissioner of Transportation to a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors and City Council to show him how important that project was to the function of our transportation system. He after that meeting got completely on our side, supported and indicated they would provide strong support if we would apply for federal funding. We applied for that funding through Senator Warner's office. It's called Federal Earmarked Funding.

We happened to be in the right place at the right time with a good game plan and the transportation bill was being signed. I think they had not signed one in the

prior five years and Senator Warner, because of the position he was in with his committee appointments, was in a position to obtain a project. He chose our project. We got the funding at the time that the transportation bill was signed and I think that's a great win for our community to make certain that the Meadowcreek Parkway, when it's built, will operate with the 250 Bypass that improves the overall transportation network significantly.

## **12. What are your overall transportation priorities?**

I think I generally, as I stated to the last question, I generally support the UnJAM 2025 recommendations which include a number of projects to improve both vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic throughout the area and bicycle traffic. I think the plan envisions a multimodal transportation network and I think that that's been reflected in the priorities set in the 20-year road plan.

We recognize that transportation funding is a challenge to say in a way that probably minimizes the problem, but transportation, as I mentioned earlier, we have this year \$3.8 million of secondary road funds. Two years ago we had \$4.7 million. Two years from now, we're projected to get \$2.7 million of total secondary roads for the County. During that period, it's expected that the cost of projects will have about doubled. If you do the math on that, you have about 30% of the real dollars two years from now that we had two years ago which is extremely difficult for our community.

For the first time, the Board of Supervisors has started allocating significant sums of money to transportation projects. This year we included in our budget a total of \$2 million of operating and capital improvement funds for transportation. We recognize that it's unfortunate that local citizens and local taxpayers are going to have to be all of a sudden bearing the burden of transportation funding that everybody has expected would be a state expense. To me, it represents another area where the state is somewhat walking away from its responsibilities and leaving them to the localities.

To give you an example—they created something called a revenue sharing pool of \$40 million and they're basically saying to localities if you want to tap into that pool of funds, you have to put up your own matching fund first. Albemarle County has done that. We applied for the maximum amount we could get from the pool which this year turned out to be about \$750,000 and that will enable us to basically turn our \$750,000 into a million and a half and hopefully advance some projects.

The Board established a secondary road list of priorities. I certainly would like to see us achieve our priorities. The Meadowcreek Parkway is no. 1 on that list. We want to see the primary road projects that I described earlier on 29 realized and accomplished. I think we see a transportation value in completing Southern Parkway which would connect Avon Street with 5<sup>th</sup> Street. There's already a

connector from Route 20 over to Avon Street, so if you complete that, you've got a link from Route 20 all the way to 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Our fire and rescue people have indicated to us that that's exceptionally important from the standpoint of their adequately servicing the southern growth area of the County. Georgetown is probably the most heavily trafficked small road in the County. It has probably more buses and student pedestrians on it than any other road in the County. We need to complete the pedestrian network on Georgetown Road, the sidewalk network. We need to make it a safer road. We need to add bike lanes on the road. That's a project that has been in our six-year plan for a long time and due to the funding problems, has not gotten to the top of the list but it's going to be at the top of the list hopefully this year and I think we'll have a neighborhood meeting in the spring to get neighborhood feedback on how that plan might move forward.

I think a couple of other projects that are of importance in the community—the concept of an eastern connector that would connect Route 29 or Rio Road over to Route 20 that would keep traffic from going down Rio Road or the Meadowcreek Parkway onto the 250 Bypass and creating that short chokepoint at the Free Bridge that is a bad traffic situation today. The eastern connector I think would help alleviate that. We have allocated \$250,000 of local funds. The City has matched those funds and we're moving forward with a location study which would include traffic analyses for that potential project.

Another one is Jarman's Gap Road. I think the improvements to Jarman's Gap Road are very important to the Crozet community. We need to make certain that that project moves forward. Due to the funding cuts from VDOT, it has been delayed and I think that's a project we might look at advancing with some of the money that we have recently put in our operating budget and CIP budget for transportation projects.

**13. What is your top priority for action by the Board of Supervisors if you are elected?**

My top priority is to take the actions necessary to preserve and protect our quality of life and our environment and our natural resources in the face of continued growth. I mentioned earlier that the community without government stimulation is growing at about 1,500 to 2,000 people a year. In order to lighten the footprint that that increase in population has on our community, in order to protect our rural areas, in order to protect our natural resources, I think we need to implement the strategies that are in the rural area plan and that's a significant undertaking.

As I mentioned, there're about a hundred different strategies in the rural area plan and we have established a goal of adopting the ordinances and the other programs necessary to implement those strategies over the next four years, but I

think it's going to take a lot of work by the Planning Commission, a lot of work by the Board of Supervisors, and it's going to take resolve. Some of that resolve will have to be political resolve because some of the issues that may arise might become controversial.

Along that same vein, I'd like to see us adopt a mountain protection ordinance. I think protecting the mountains and the resources that they house— All of our water resources originate in our mountains, for example, is extremely important. They're also a very important aesthetic quality to the community and very important to the economy because people— Our quality of life, the reason why people come here as tourists, often is because of the beauty of our mountains and I've seen areas out west—Denver, for example. You could drive out Interstate 70 towards the mountains in Denver for years and years and there was no development on the mountains. The reason was it was not economical to develop those areas, but once development in the flatlands got out to the edges of the mountains it became economical to develop the mountains and they did and now when you drive out Interstate 70, which is on a plateau until you hit the mountains and you start up, the mountainsides there are covered with development. The aesthetics of the area have been, I think, permanently impaired and I think people certainly in California have seen the same things.

There're a lot of reasons why it's not good to develop on the mountaintops and other than resource protection. It's extremely expensive to provide governmental services to homes that are on tops of mountains. Picking up kids on school buses, providing police coverage, providing fire and rescue coverages in those areas is extremely expensive for a community, so I think I would like to see us have the political resolve to pass a mountain protection ordinance to give teeth to the mountain protection plan which is in the comprehensive plan, was adopted a number of years ago and one of the strategies there was to adopt a mountain protection ordinance but the Board has not done that. It's another one of those issues that has been basically a 3-3 issue and has not moved along. We did appoint a new mountaintop protection committee to work to see if some consensus could be developed that would be brought back to the Board to act on.

Likewise, I'd like to see us adopt an historical preservation ordinance. We have an historical preservation plan in the comprehensive plan, but we have not adopted an ordinance to really give teeth to the plan.

I think we need to make efforts to increase land in conservation. Ten percent of the land in the County is now either in public or private conservation easement, permanently protected. At my recommendation, we adopted a goal at our strategic planning session to increase that by 50% over the next four years. That would place 15% of County land in permanent conservation easement and I hope that we move forward with resolve to achieve that goal. I think we need to

complete the approval of our community water supply increase plan and I talked about that a little bit earlier.

I think we need to implement our affordable housing plan and I think we need to complete the master planning of our development areas. We have Places 29 going on now which is a master planning of the northern growth area and I think we need, once we finish that, we need to move on and complete master planning of all of the development areas in the County because it creates a picture in each of those areas for how the area should look like in the future and if you don't have that picture, it's like putting pieces of a puzzle down on a table randomly as opposed to according to a plan.

**14. What are the greatest challenges facing the Albemarle County Planning Commission and what type of person will you nominate for a position on the Commission?**

The Planning Commission performs an exceptional important role in our community land use planning. Every land use issue that ultimately comes to the Board of Supervisors goes to the Planning Commission first and we expect them to thoroughly work over plans to ask the right questions to get the appropriate information from staff and to ultimately make a recommendation to us that is based upon the facts and circumstances and the goals and priorities that we have in the County, so I think it's very important that the people on the Planning Commission have some working knowledge of land use issues in the County and that they understand the goals and priorities that have been set by the Board of Supervisors.

I think Bill Edgerton who is the present Planning Commissioner in the Jack Jouett District who I appointed four years ago exemplifies those traits. Bill is an architect. Bill has had substantial experience in environment work over the years. He's had substantial experience in working with affordable housing. He's a thoughtful, intelligent person and I would ask Bill if he would consider serving another four years if I'm re-elected.

**15. Do we have appropriate resources in County government to achieve the objectives in our comprehensive plan? And a follow-up, in what way, if any, do we need to make changes and what impact will your recommendations have on staffing and the annual budget?**

I've been very interested in making certain that the County operates like a business. I'm a businessperson. I've owned and operated businesses over the last 20 years. One of the things we have done is adopt a five-year business plan so that we can look at not only the short term implications but the longer-term implications of decisions we made from a financial standpoint. We've adopted a strategic plan so that from a policy standpoint we can look at how various decisions are furthering the ends of our strategic plan goals.

The County is very fiscally sound. We have the lowest tax rate in the state of any county with more than 90,000 population and that's before you take into consideration the 10 cents that goes to the City under the revenue agreement that was signed more than 20 years ago that prevents the City from annexing parts of the County, so if you take that 10 cents off, we operate on 64 cents.

Our bond rating is exemplary. We're the smallest County in the country that has a AAA bond rating by Moody's Investors Services and we're one of only 40 counties in the country— We're the smallest county in the country and one of only 40 counties in the country that has a AAA bond rating. This indicates to anyone purchasing County debt that we are one of the safest places you can invest your money available in the country, so I think, in the first place, we're fiscally sound.

I think that we've achieved a balanced form of development in the County. We have a good mix of industrial, a good mix of light industry, the kind of light industry that fits into a community with a high quality of life like ours. We have a good mix of retail and we have a good mix of different ranges of affordability of residential.

To understand the budget and understand the need for that kind of use mix in the County, you don't have to look any further than the school budget. I think this year the cost of educating a child in Albemarle County is about \$11,000; \$4,000 of that is paid by state and federal funds and about \$7,000 by the County, so for every school-age child, the County is paying out of its resources about \$7,000. Take the example of \$300,000 house at a 74 cent tax rate, that house is paying around \$2,200 a year in real estate taxes. If that one child is costing the County \$7,000 of its funds and \$11,000 if you count state and federal funds, so residential development by itself usually creates a financial deficit. You have to have a reasonable balance in order to be a healthy County government from a financial standpoint. I think we have achieved that.

We're been very fortunate and I think that when I look at our financial capability going forward, I think that we have the financial capability of meeting the goals that we set in our comprehensive plan because the County has been operating in a very businesslike way over the years. We have a five-year capital improvement plan. We have a 10-year long-range capital improvement program so I think that we're not just looking out a year or two, we're looking out multiple years and when I see us looking out multiple years, I think we have the resources that we can achieve our comprehensive plan goals.

**16. Have you received any endorsements yet that you would like to make the public aware of?**

I think I received the most important endorsement that's available and that's that I was voted into office with about 70% of the vote four years ago and that's the endorsement I look for.

**Dennis, thank you very much for your participation.**

Thank you, Brian. It's been a pleasure.