

As downtown construction continues to revitalize our community, it also presents challenges, particularly regarding parking availability. How do you plan to manage the impact of ongoing construction on parking, and what long-term solutions would you propose to address the shortage of parking spaces in the downtown area? Furthermore, how would you balance the need for development with the need to maintain accessibility for businesses, residents, and visitors?

Jacob Coleman* - Candidate: Waconia City Council

Managing the impact of ongoing construction on parking and finding long-term solutions for downtown Waconia's parking needs requires a balanced approach that considers both immediate challenges and future growth.

****Short-Term Parking Management:**** During construction, I would work closely with city staff, business owners, and contractors to minimize disruptions. This could include temporary parking solutions, such as designating specific lots or areas for overflow parking and improving signage to guide residents and visitors to available spaces. I would also explore partnerships with nearby property owners to create additional temporary parking options, ensuring that businesses remain accessible throughout the construction period.

****Long-Term Solutions:**** To address the ongoing parking shortage, I propose a multi-faceted approach. This could involve a combination of creating more parking spaces through strategic use of underutilized areas or encouraging mixed-use developments that incorporate parking solutions that could help alleviate pressure on existing spaces.

****Balancing Development and Accessibility:**** It's crucial to ensure that development enhances the vibrancy of downtown without sacrificing accessibility. I would advocate for development plans that include integrated parking solutions and pedestrian-friendly designs, making it easy for residents, visitors, and customers to access downtown businesses. By maintaining open communication with all stakeholders and carefully planning each phase of development, we can ensure that Waconia grows in a way that supports both economic vitality and accessibility for everyone.

My goal is to create a downtown area that is both vibrant and accessible, where development meets the needs of the community while preserving the ease of access that businesses, residents, and visitors rely on.

Jim Lohan - Candidate: Waconia City Council

Growth is key to our ability to increase tax revenues without overwhelming the businesses and residents. Working aggressively with new investors to be part Waconia improvement is key. Details below in my position plan.

Simon Malinski - Candidate: Waconia City Council

I believe in responsible growth. As our city continues to mature, evolve and change we must be mindful of utilization of space and resources. Parking challenges represent a real concern for business owners trying to attract patrons to their businesses. Utilizing city space for parking should be considered when weighing benefits of use of each owned property. High density commercial and residential will continue to impact parking in our community. I am committed to working with all stakeholders in the best interests of our goals.

Derek Siddons - Candidate: Waconia City Council

The goal will always be to make downtown infrastructure more usable for businesses and more appealing for visitors. As construction continues, I would hope to salvage some opportunity to create public spaces for parking and gathering. Zoned areas dedicated to easily bringing folks into downtown to enjoy all Waconia has to offer.

Additionally, the recent monthly concert events downtown have been a huge success from an attendance and support standpoint for downtown businesses that have been impacted over the last few years. We need to continue to think creatively about how we help these businesses thrive in a very challenging environment when downtown is being invested in with the current annual projects.

Tim Litfin - Candidate: Waconia Mayor

This is a complex question. It is true that parking has been impacted downtown for the past two years. That is the sad reality of street construction.

We need to do a better job of keeping the contractor on task. For the past few weeks there have been pieces of construction equipment that have not moved at all and are continuing to block parking spaces near the intersection of Main Street and Spruce Street. Those construction pieces of equipment were there as recently as Monday, August 26 when I finalized this document. While door knocking with residents in that area, I heard their frustration firsthand for components of this project, including the parked equipment that limits their access to the street and to parking on the street. Moving pieces of equipment that are not being used is an easy fix. All it takes is communication and awareness by the city, and to collaborate with the contractor. By being aware and by communicating better, the city could limit resident's frustrations and avoid situations like this with any project.

Communication with the contractors and project administrators is necessary. This is not rocket science and it will help when projects are underway. I have a great deal of experience collaborating with contractors. Daily conversations and weekly construction meetings are important to keeping simple things like moving equipment when it is not being used, to becoming an issue.

Long term parking shortages exist in thriving downtowns. Wayzata, Excelsior, Edina, and Delano also need more downtown parking. Thankfully, Waconia has a thriving downtown. Low hanging fruit solutions are the need for more and improved signage to help people find parking. Enforcement of vehicles that are parked overnight in downtown lots will also help.

We need to make sure that new developments and new apartment style buildings, or new multi-family dwellings in the downtown area follow code. We should also work with these projects to expand their parking footprint to accommodate more vehicles. This could be a win-win, and it would be less expensive for the city to partner with a project on increased parking, rather than having the city build a new parking lot on its own.

Lastly, access to the downtown is critical during the day, evenings and on weekends when visitors want to visit our downtown library, restaurants, attend a movie, or shop. During construction projects, as I mentioned above, we need to make sure the contractors do not simply block parking spaces because they can. Yes, contractors need space, but they also need to be controlled. Was it the right thing for the city to block off part of Olive Street during the yearlong construction project at the new Uptown Apartment complex. By doing so,

that negatively impacted downtown parking. That work could have been done in shifts rather than blocking off the street during the entire project. Perception is reality, and the perception of blocking off part of Olive Street for that project was not good.

Mayor Nicole Waldron* - Candidate: Waconia Mayor

As a city we always do our best to stage the reconstruction to allow for as much parking and accessibility as possible. To acquire additional parking spaces in the future, we look for opportunities with every project. Currently on Main Street, we have redesigned some parallel spaces to angled parking. We are also looking for creative ways to expand public parking options within newly proposed projects as redevelopment continues to happen.

The downtown redevelopment that has been completed over the past couple of years has been very overdue, so the work needed to be done. The current project was staged to allow the best access possible with the least amount of impact. Stages of the project were left open until work needed to be done, while others were completed and reopened before the completion of the project. We have also put incentives into the bid package to encourage early completion of the project, further lessening the total impact time.

CONTACT THE CANDIDATES

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How Can I Vote in Waconia?

City of Waconia residents have multiple options for voting:

1. Vote by mail.
2. Vote at City Hall, 201 South Vine Street (City of Waconia Residents Only).
3. Go to the Taxpayer Services Department at Carver County Government Center, 600 E. 4th Street, Chaska, (ALL Carver County Residents).
4. Vote in person on Election Day on November 5, 2024.

**Early and Absentee Voting at City Hall (Waconia residents only)**

Early and absentee voting starts September 20 and goes through November 4. Waconia residents can vote at City Hall Monday - Thursday from 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, and Fridays from 7:30 am - 11:30 am. Extended hours include:

- Saturday, October 26 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 29 - 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 2 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Sunday, November 3 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 4 - 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If you are not a City of Waconia resident (but reside in Carver County) you can absentee vote at the Carver County Government Center in Chaska. Their hours are different than the hours listed above.

How Do I Vote by Mail?

To request a mail ballot, please visit the [Secretary of State's Website](#) or www.waconia.org/votebymail.

City of Waconia Polling Locations

The City of Waconia is no longer part of a Ward Boundary System. Your polling place may have changed in 2022. The City of Waconia is divided into three precincts, please view the polling places listed below. If you are unsure of the precinct in which you reside, please consult the [City of Waconia Precinct map](#) (link).
www.waconia.org/DocumentCenter/View/3042/WaconiaPrecincts

Precinct 1

Faith Lutheran Church
800 Waconia Parkway North
Waconia, MN 55387

Precinct 2

Trinity Lutheran Church
601 E. 2nd St.
Waconia, MN 55387

Precinct 3

Waconia Ice Arena
1250 Oak Avenue
Waconia, MN 55387

Questions? Call City Hall at 952-442-2184

Current Elected Officials

For a full listing of current city, county, state, and federal elected officials, visit www.DestinationWaconia.org/live/#government.

