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Published December 17, 2005

## Campaign to make residents a priority

• This is the second in a five-part series where the Leader speaks to the candidates for January's special election to get their takes on the issues.

By Mark R. Madler, The Leader

MAGNOLIA PARK -- In his run for a seat on the Burbank City Council, David Gordon has one goal in mind: to better serve the people of the city he has called home for more than 20 years.

The 50-year old Gordon believes the council has abdicated its responsibilities when it comes to development in the city, favoring big developers rather than the residents who must face the effects of new commercial and residential projects.

advertisement "There is a great deal of uncertainty as to how these new impacts will affect the community," Gordon said. "All this is occurring without public review or hearing by the City Council."

Ballots for the all-mail election will go out on Jan. 3, and must be mailed back to the City Clerk's office by 7 p.m. on Jan. 24.

The candidate receiving the most votes will take the seat former Councilwoman Stacey Murphy vacated in August after being charged with one felony cocaine possession charge and one misdemeanor child endangerment charge.

A Burbank resident since 1983, Gordon served on the Planning Board -- including one year as chairman -- from 1995 to 1999, as chairman of the Magnolia Park Citizen's Advisory Committee for three years and for two years on the Administrative Services Committee of the League of California Cities.

Carolyn Berlin, who served with Gordon on the Planning Board, described him as a sincere individual whose word can be trusted.

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"I have confidence in his ability to serve the entire community," Berlin said. "I know he will look after the residents and the small business owner. That doesn't often happen with a candidate."

The special election is Gordon's first foray into politics. He first became involved with city matters in the early 1990s when a plan was floated to widen Hollywood Way and eliminate on-street parking. In the past year Gordon has emerged as a vocal critic of a development agreement between the city and Bob Hope Airport.

But his record on the Planning Board is evidence that he is not against development. Gordon cast favorable votes for numerous large projects, including the NBC and Warner Bros. Studios master plans, Gordon said.

As a council member, he would bring common sense to the development in the city, Gordon said.

"Development is only needed if it equates to progress," Gordon said. "Progress to me means the development project improves the overall

conditions in an area. If there are negative impacts, it shouldn't be approved."

One development that almost fits his criteria of a success is the Empire Center shopping area. But even that project falls short because little thought was put into making sure the streets could handle the traffic that was anticipated, and public transit to the center is woefully inadequate, Gordon said.

If elected to the council, Gordon pledged to investigate whether conditions placed on commercial and residential projects are being met and said he would push for a freeze on the city's ability to change development agreements without a full hearing.

#### DAVID GORDON: ON THE ISSUES

Considering the circumstances for the special election, do you think the City Council has a credibility problem and how would you address that as a council member?

Yes, the City Council has a credibility problem. First, to restore trust and confidence in our city government, I have proposed mandatory, random drug and alcohol testing. I would no more want someone voting on city business while under the influence than I'd want them driving under the influence.

Further, time after time promises to the people are broken. Any and all city business is the people's business. Many important matters directly impacting the people are considered and decided behind closed doors. The people believed they were promised there would be no airport expansion without a vote through Measure B. Yet, in January 2005, our airport commissioners, including Bill Wiggins, and the council, voted to expand the airport with no vote of the people. The people were promised protection from traffic congestion created by big projects in the city. Now, the City Council is allowing development agreements to be changed, creating more traffic and overcrowding impacts, without any public hearings or review.

How can the city balance financial stability yet still offer competitive salary and benefits that will attract and retain city employees?

All development needs to pay its own way. Land giveaways and selling valuable city property at fire sale prices is not the way to go. Common sense tells us we should not have to bankrupt a prosperous city, to pay for essential services and compensate the loyal, dedicated employees who provide them. I would thoroughly evaluate each item in the budget.

Is more development needed for the city and if so what kind would you support?

Consideration should always be to put people first. They will either benefit from a development's fruits or suffer from its fallout. If the impacts of a project make things worse, it's not progress. Forcing people out of their cars to walk blocks or miles to woefully inadequate public transportation is wishful thinking and no solution to the traffic congestion caused by over-development.

An example of development not needed for the City is expansion of the airport. The development agreement offers absolutely no protection whatsoever from this outcome. Expanding the airport will not improve overall conditions in the area and Burbank's quality of life will be forever changed from what its people have grown to cherish and expect.

What is the biggest issue facing the city?

The city has failed to prevent over-development, traffic congestion and the threat of further airport expansion to relieve Los Angeles International Airport. Once the terminal is relocated, there will be routine jet take-offs to the east over our neighborhoods in the Hillside, the Rancho, Magnolia Park and Toluca Lake. The airport has already been expanded. Claims that an airport noise task force will somehow mitigate aircraft noise are doubtful, especially when the public has been deliberately excluded from the process.

#### BIO BOX

Name: David Gordon

Age: 50

Occupation: Optometrist

Education: El Camino Real High School, Woodland Hills, Calif.: 1970-1973; UCLA Biological Sciences/Honors Science Program: 1973-1975; UC Berkeley: 1975-1979.

Degrees: UC Berkeley -- Bachelor of science in Physiological Optics: 1978; Doctor of Optometry Professional Degree: 1979.

Family: wife, Barbara; son, Matthew

Community service: Chairman, Magnolia Park Citizens Advisory Committee 1993-1996; Burbank Planning Board (one year as Chair) 1995-1999; Burbank's representative to the League of California Cities, Administrative Services Committee (section on ethics in government) 1997-1999; participated in Neighbors in Dialogue community workshops; Magnolia Park Merchants Association; member Burbank PTA 1999-present; coach assistant Burbank Park League T -Ball & Baseball.

Contact: [www.gordonforburbank.com](http://www.gordonforburbank.com)

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