

# Gooch: address the distrust of the City Council and the infamous Grand Jury Report

*Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News is profiling candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council and Douglas County Commission. The stories are being published in the order they were received.*

**Name:** Adrian Gooch

**Age:** 57

**How long have you lived in South Lake Tahoe?** 35 years

**Job/profession:** Retired



Adrian Gooch

What would you build or tear down on the South Shore to make it great, as in what Whistler is like?:

I would continue every effort possible to get the convention center built. As an additional remark – I think South Lake Tahoe is pretty great.

What form of recreation do you participate in? What recreation improvements would you strive to make in SLT?:

My family and I are huge sports fans. In my younger years I

participated in softball, volleyball, and bowling (I was terrible at volleyball, but had fun anyways). Now I enjoy easy hikes, walking, and a little kayaking. Many years ago when our children were younger we were involved in Little League, Babe Ruth, football, basketball, soccer, and bowling. Now we get to live vicariously through our children and our oldest granddaughter and we try to attend as many functions as possible to show our support while they play softball, soccer, basketball, and dance. The Parks and Recreation Department does a fantastic job of offering recreation options for the community. I do not have a favorite or preferred recreation. I would support any recreation improvement that is reasonable and financially prudent.

**Recreation tourism is expected to be the driving force of the South Shore economy in the coming years, and according to a decade-old study, the majority of the South Lake Tahoe residents would like to see cycling-type facilities and maintenance projects. So, what do you specifically plan to do to improve our substandard, dangerous bike paths and lanes and roads beyond hiring a consultant to tell us how bad they are?:**

The city does not need to hire a consultant to tell us how bad the above noted items are. I personally am not a cyclist (however, I was the staff person who started the initial research and preparation that was needed from the city for the Bicycle Friendly Award). The city and California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC) have a great partnership in which the CTC funds pay for the construction of the bike paths/trails, but those funds generally do not, or cannot, be used for maintenance. Measure S funding was structured differently so that there are funds available for maintenance and repair. I would like to see if 1) the CTC grants could be structured differently; 2) how about creating a nonprofit "Bicycle Trail" fund that interested parties could donate tax deductible dollars to; and 3) I would ask if the many great cycling events that are held here in SLT contribute any financial

assistance toward the maintenance of the bike lanes/paths.

**What are the three major issues facing South Lake Tahoe and how do you expect in four years to make it so they are not major issues when your tenure is through?:**

The first issue I would address is the current distrust of the City Council and the infamous Grand Jury Report. I will do everything in my power to regain the community's trust in its leadership. This issue needs to be addressed immediately and never stop. I am a common sense person by nature and do not condone any "closed door meetings" (not to be confused with "Closed Session"). To me a city councilmember is someone who represents the community – this requires listening to what the community is saying whether you agree or not; set goals and policies and stay focused on those goals. Give direction to the city manager and let everyone do their job without micromanaging. Ten years ago having a council subcommittee was the exception to the rule, now it is hard to find an issue where there is not a council subcommittee.

The second issue is community. I would like to brainstorm and come up with some concrete attainable ways to bring people and families back into our community. We need community enhancements that all can enjoy. I am a supporter of affordable housing and that should remain a goal, but I would want to look at enhancing that goal by looking for options in assisting homeowners who are facing foreclosure.

The third issue I believe is directly related to the second issue and that is the economy. The city should consider offering economic incentives such as; streamlining city requirements, fast-tracking any permitting processes, offer business incentives, and encourage or possibly enter into a public/private partnership with the large employers to offer more options for employee housing. I would look at the Economic Development programs and try to find a way to offer the same programs that are currently offered to persons in the

low income category and expand the programs to include persons who are in the moderate income category (similar to what was done with the First Time Home Buyer program with the addition of the Moderate Home Buyer program). I would encourage new businesses without sending the mixed message of “the city needs new businesses, but it doesn’t want your business”. The city has in its city code, General Plan, and community plans the requirements which define/outline if a particular business is allowed, where it is allowed, etc.

**What compelling idea have you read in the citizens’ input of the revamped, in-progress update of the city’s General Plan?:**

What I felt compelling in regards to the citizens’ input was two issues that re-occurred during the process, and those were safe pedestrian and bike amenities and a sense of community/neighborhood. I agree.

**How do you plan to boost revenue in SLT?:**

Seriously look for and pursue a secondary revenue base. “We need to diversify” has been said so many times, that it sounds like a broken record. Tourism is and always will be our primary source of revenue. At one time it was the gaming and the lake, well we all know about the gaming decline, but we still have the lake. I am very interested in the geotourism concept.

Grants are and have been a source of revenue to the city for a long time. However, with grants, usually come restrictions and we have to be very analytical and pencil out what a grant is going to cost the city in the long run. I would like to meet with the city manager and Lori Marino, the grant coordinator, and talk about some grants that may be available from sources that the city has traditionally not applied for.

I would also like to evaluate the amount of additional revenue the city would receive if the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) was increased from 10 percent to 12 percent for the vacation

home rentals. It is my understanding that the city is collecting approximately \$1.2 million a year now from vacation home rentals.

Last but not least, I would ask the public and the city employees for suggestions – never underestimate the power of collective brainstorming.

**What stands out to you in the 2010-11 budget?:**

Well, actually the first area I looked at was the City Council budget. Almost all other departments have been asked in the past “to hold the line” or more currently, to decrease their budgets. The City Council budget for the 2010-11 fiscal budget year is significantly higher than last this budget year. Why?

**What needs to be done to allow businesses to thrive in SLT?:**

The city needs to be as supportive as possible. There are various organizations that offer a wide variety of services for the business in SLT. What has never been done (to my knowledge) is a gathering of all the various organizations (city, county, chambers, EDD, LTCC, etc.) to identify who is offering what, identify if any of the services overlap, and more important determine if there is a gap in the services and who is best suited to fill that gap. The more the city can do to help the better, if the city cannot help, it should not hinder.

**What have you done to help South Lake Tahoe be a better community?:**

I have dedicated 18+ years to the community as an employee of the city. I did a wide variety of duties with good old-fashioned values. I treat all people the same, be fair and honest and always try to do my best.

**What boards, commissions, or other experience do you have?:**

My experience includes: the Olympic Torch Relay Committee, the

recording secretary for the Solid Waste Joint Powers Authority, the city's Information Technology committee (now defunct), recording secretary for the Airport/City, TRPA, League to Save Lake Tahoe, and attorney general negotiation meetings, the formation of the city's housing rehabilitation and the First Time Home Buyer programs, the Heavenly Village, EVR Phase IV, the convention center, Linear Park, the author of the first successful Economic Development Technical Assistance grant, and a committee member for the retirement reception for Father John Grace.

**Why should voters vote for you over someone else?:**

Because I am exactly what this community needs. I have the government experience and knowledge that is needed. My time working for the city has given me the experience of knowing the "nuts and bolts" of the organization so that I am aware of what goal and/or promise is feasible and attainable. I have had positive interactions with the other governmental agencies and organizations in the community. I also have the knowledge and experience of being a former small business owner in the private sector.

I have the time and the passion to do what I feel is right for this community. I always try to look at an issue from both sides. I am fully aware of the impacts that come from being a city councilmember and I am prepared to take them on and do my best. I want to represent this community, I do not have a desire to be the shock wave of a new higher consciousness, nor be a visionary of a new world of freedom and prosperity. I simply want to serve and improve the community that I live in and love. This council election comes at a very critical time for the community and it is imperative to vote for the right people for the right reason.

**BlueGo, the public transit, is mired in lawsuits and bankruptcy. Do we need public transit on the South Shore? If so, how do you propose to make it functional?:**

Yes, we need public transit on the South Shore. The profit margin in public transportation is slim to none and I would propose looking at a joint effort in obtaining and retaining a transit provider. When the convention center is built (yes, I believe it will be), there could be an opportunity to tap into a funding source for transit. We also have to remember that the bankruptcy and lawsuits with BlueGo are very unfortunate and disappointing, but the city cannot fix all – there are transit agencies in this community as well.

**Do you support commercial air service at Lake Tahoe Airport? Why or why not?:**

Yes, I support the Lake Tahoe Airport and feel it is an asset to the city. There are hurdles that will have to be addressed (example: the legal obligations between the city, TRPA, League to Save Lake Tahoe, and the attorney general), but with hard work, compromise and negotiations, it can be done. How a commercial air service would be structured will most likely be determined by the above mentioned proponents involved in the lawsuit. The commercial air service that is feasible to this community will most likely be a smaller commuter service and that's OK – it would be a step in the right direction.

**Is there any individual, group or organization you would not take campaign money from? Why?:**

Actually, I have not taken any campaign money from anyone other than my family. Needless to say, my campaign budget is small, but I am also not beholden to any organization or group.

**Nepotism and favoritism runs rampant in the city when it comes to hiring preferences. The council sets policy. What type of policy would you write regarding nepotism and favoritism?:**

There is a city policy in place for nepotism. The city does have a number of employees that are related and/or married. The ones that I know are good employees who are very conscious

of the nepotism policy. This is a small community with only a handful of what you might consider select employers (pay decent wages and offer benefits), it is very unlikely that you will find any of those employers that do not have employees who are related and/or married as well. Being that said, I do believe that the policy can be revisited and strengthened with language that is very clear and enforceable. Favoritism is different – there is not a policy in place that I am aware of. I would initiate a very specific, clearly written policy and have it go into effect immediately. If there is one accusation of favoritism, it should be thoroughly researched, if there are two accusations of favoritism, chances are very high that you do have a problem that needs to be addressed. It doesn't matter who the employee is or who they know – it is not acceptable and should not be tolerated. I have seen employees who have been let go unjustly and I have seen employees pass their probation period who should not have.

**While you were employed by the city of South Lake Tahoe you were a supporter of now former City Manager Dave Jinkens' and spoke highly of him. Is he the type of leader you think is best for the city? Why or why not?:**

I had the opportunity to work with David Jinkens when he was city manager and before him, I had the opportunity to work with David Childs. Both were very different in their management styles, but I can tell you that both were very dedicated and hard working individuals. If you could take the admirable traits that each man had and put them together, you would have a very good city manager.

What I respect most in a leader is: high integrity, transparency, leadership by example, fairness, connected to the community, the employees, and the City Council (in that order), and be a team player. I do not want/support a CM to tell me what they think I want to hear – I want a CM to have the courage to tell me what I need to hear.



**Do you see any potential conflict as former employee going back and setting policy for friends and former colleagues? Why or why not?:**

The answer to this question is probably the easiest one and the answer is – no. You cannot run for City Council without the knowledge that at some point you are going to set policy that some people will like and others will hate – that goes for friends, former colleagues, and the public in general. The employees of the city are very knowledgeable and reasonable. I have to go forward believing that they would trust me to do what I feel is best for the community and the organization. (In anticipation of a “comment” – most city employees do not live in the city limits, so they are unable to vote for me.)

**Tell us something about yourself that voters don't already know:**

I am a smart good listener and very down to earth. I can feel passionate about an issue, but I am not an “in your face, I am right” person. I am goal oriented and strive to keep a positive attitude. I love to surround myself with people who are upbeat, trustworthy and who love to laugh as much as I do. I am patient, but persistent. On the lighter side, I can survive adversity – after all, I am a Red Sox fan.