

Questions Submitted by ChangeAustin.org supporters
for 2011 City Council Election

- The Statesman did a couple of articles about city employees with city vehicles driving them home, etc., which is not allowed and costing us taxpayers a lot of money. What has been done about stopping this?
- Why does Austin Energy continue to promote and waste so much money on "green" energy which will greatly increase the cost (30+%) to its customers---us taxpayers. This is especially troubling and offensive when the world's environmental experts are divided on whether there is a real problem. With the current economic situation, I would think Austin Energy would be exploring cost reduction ideas!!
- US HUD says that PSH should not be located in high crime and drug activity areas to avoid inadvertant relapse of recovering people. What criteria are the city using to locate PSH and should they follow the national guidance provided by US HUD?
- Why is there very little affordable housing in areas of high opportunity as defined by the Kirwin institute?
- Should PSH be tied to existing Section 8 given the historical concentration of Section 8 in East Austin?
- What will you do to follow through on the City's promise to revitalize East 12th Street according to the Urban Revitalization Plan?
- Do you understand that previous Charter Revision Commissions have made clear that the Mayor's plan for 6 or 8 single-member districts will not meet the Voting Rights Act requirement for an "opportunity district" for African-Americans?
- If the city is REALLY concerned about cost and keeping cost down, why does Austin Energy have a policy of allowing employees to retire, draw their city retirement money, and then be hired back by Austin Energy? Private industry depenmds on employees retiring so that they can hire new people for less money, etc. thus reducing costs. An excuse for rehiring these retired employees is needing the experience/knowledge of the retired person is an indication of a poorly managed company if it cannot survive without a few employees.
- Do you understand that we might be able to increase voter participation in city elections, if we draw the districts small enough, so that ordinary citizens can walk their district and thereby compete against more well-funded candidates?
- Do support the Mayor's plan for 6 or 8 single-member districts, and if not, what do you support and if so, why?

- Why do council members not understand we do not want expensive rail?
- Why do council members insist on spending so much money on consultants? We have smart people here in Austin.
- What part of stop spending our money do you not understand?
- Given the fact that since 1990 Austin has become the most expensive large city in Texas with regard to overall cost of living and that the severe shortage of affordable housing has been called a crisis since the CAN "Through the Roof Report" of 1999, and that in spite of all of the efforts thus far to address the problem with affordable housing (From SMART Housing to the \$55 million affordable housing bonds) the situation has only gotten much worse in the last few years, do you believe that instead of continuing these individual "silo" initiatives, we need to develop an overall economic strategic plan not only to address affordable housing but more over to provide direction for reducing the cost of living for Austin residents?
- Since Austin is now in the process of developing a new Comprehensive Plan, would you support directing the City Administration to include in the comprehensive planning process the development of an economic business plan for our future to address affordable housing and the problem of the increasing cost of living for our residents?
- What kind of infill architecture and land planning should we have in the inner city neighborhoods to accommodate population growth?
- Should our future urban rail be double tracked so as to have dedicated lanes or should it share lanes with automobiles?
- Should the city design urban rail alone or should Capital Metro be an equal partner?
- What is their view regarding the way council Members are elected--at-large or districts.
- What is one thing you will do that will generate a positive and profound change to every citizen of Austin?
- When will the City stop putting fluoride (hydrofluorosilicic acid) in our drinking water?
- It was reported that **1/3 of the people in Travis County are below the poverty level.** Why the hell are you continuing to spend the limited tax funds on silly items like trains and incentives to hotels, movies and so on. We need to stop the spending NOW and what would you do if you get into office to stop the massive spending by the city?
- Don't you think that it's irresponsible to spend millions of dollars "to study" the idea of a train before you even give the taxpayers (you know - the ones who are going to be made to pay for it) to vote on it to say if they want it or not?

Would you recommend for ALL buildings to have the address number highly visible

from the street. This would assist emergency vehicles responding as well as assist people looking for a specific address. Benefits would be quicker response and save time and fuel looking for an address.

- Why not start a campaign to invent and develop water faucets that easily regulate the flow of water? The study from Tucson, as I recall, shows that the average home wastes about 70% of their water used. Most of this is waiting for hot water to arrive from the hot water heater or simply opening the faucet full force for minimal use requirements.
- Who has to pay increased taxes when you vote to let privileged companies and businesses locate here and not pay any school taxes?
- Will you tell us if you will accept donations, favors, tickets, jobs for your relatives and family, promises of future employment and future “consulting” contracts if you vote to give special favors like no school taxes to favored companies?
- What is the process for deciding which company get tax breaks and which doesn't?
- Do you believe in “Growth at any price” ?
- At what point would you say that Austin has “grown too big”?
- Do you think it's right that suburbs should pay taxes to reward inner city tax projects over the concerns and needs of city suburbs?
- Will you vote for any rail project?
- Do you understand the concept of “starve the beast”?
- Do you think government is the solution for most problems, and therefore, more government is better?
- Given your failure to understand the basics of open government, what makes you think you're qualified to lead this city? Hasn't your ego gotten in the way of being a good public servant?
- How would you boost City of Austin revenues in ways less harmful than increased all-day-and- evening parking charges in downtown and surrounding areas, which goes into effect this summer?
- What are your plans to alleviate the homeless problem?
- How do you plan to improve accessibility in Austin?
- Do you believe that the inner city is more important than the outer neighborhoods of the hard working honest good middle class people who have fled the inner city?

- Will you champion reinstating free use of public transportation for the disabled?
- How do you plan to curb unnecessary violence at hands of the police?
- Will you have a truly open door policy for the citizens of Austin?
- Will you help institute timed traffic lights to alleviate traffic and lessen pollution and gas consumption?
- Will you help institute gas conservation methods by all city vehicles; i.e., requiring all city vehicles be shut off if they are not being driven?
- Will you encourage open city meetings and discourage ALL closed door operations?
- Will you truly represent us?
- Why are you continuing with a multi-billion train project when the people of Austin don't want it?

Why is it that you would spend several billion dollars on a train system that no one rides, when you could invest just half that in buses which could be moved to adjusted needs, unlike the stationary rail which is limited to the set tracks it is forced to ride on?

With infrastructure costs sky rocketing, why isn't a real effort being made to counter the influx of the tens of thousand of illegal aliens who are taking up the housing, costing us millions of dollars in healthcare & social services and education? Plus with the large number of illegal alien gangs committing crimes here in Austin (as reported by the city of Austin and Travis County), why aren't the city, county and even the state arresting these criminals and shipping them back to Mexico or to the nearest boarder?

If elected, would you insist in the removal of the harmful chemicals from our drinking water, including Fluoride?

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- What are your ideas toward making the rail and bus system more effective?
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- Would you put an end to the mad effort to toll every road in Austin and stop the proposed tolling of MoPac and other roads we have already paid for?
- We are very concerned about the conflict of interest issues and unprofessional work performed by City staff in Development Review under Greg Guernsey. Marc Ott has not corrected this problem in the two years he has been working in Austin (and he is making almost as much as the President of the U.S.).

- What can City Council members do to improve staff efficiency and effectiveness and eliminate staff, usually geologists, who continue to do work for applicants at the same time they are reviewing the applicant?
- What will you do to correct the under-representation of suburban areas throughout city government councils, committees and commissions?
- What will you do to install a public tennis court, new parks and a recreation center in the areas experiencing population growth but no new public services near the Domain?
- Why is Austin the only city of it's size in the USA without a synchronized traffic light system to speed the flow of traffic?
- Do they intend to follow the scientific sector's advice to cut consumption and waste as much as possible, offering plentiful retrofitting jobs, or follow the Chamber of Commerce's advice and increase consumption and jobs, any kind, as much as possible,
- What they feel the long range goals of the city should be, that should be spelled out as the City Auditor once ordered, so that there is at least something by which progress can be measured?
- Do they intend to follow the scientific sector's advice to cut consumption and waste as much as possible, or follow the Chamber of Commerce's advice and increase consumption and jobs as much as possible,
- Do you feel the need of some competent professional and scientific advice on this question
- Would you rather have single member districts so you can more fully represent the interests of your constituents?
- Where would you cut the budget for AISD if there was not enough money to fund the whole budget?
- Do you feel the City Manager, a permanent employee, has too much power over the all too temporary City Council, and if there is an imbalance, what might be the remedy?
- What will you do to correct the inequities in property valuation and taxation?
- Would you be willing to vote in the affirmative to implement "Public Surveillance" cameras to be placed in your City Hall Offices?

Do you think the gadflies that frequent the City Hall Chamber is a direct result from all the bullshit that comes out of your offices?

A lot of money has been spent in north Austin to complete roads. When will South

Austin receive equal treatment?

- What provisions would you make to support people suffering economic difficulties because of the national economic disaster?
- What criteria would you identify for the city to use regarding quality of life here in Austin?
- What portion of the revenues coming in to the city from taxes would you use to grow/develop the city?
- Who do you think should pay the cost of development in the city?
- Why does Austin continue to want additional expansion of the light rail system when it has been a complete and total failure to date?
- What specifically is being done to address the traffic issues on I35 and MoPac?
- What specifically is being done to address the huge pending rate hikes for Austin Energy (the rate increase is to support a "feel good" plan to increase wind and solar power no matter if it is cost effective--or not)?
- Who would you trust to determine the effectiveness of city departments?
- What criteria would you identify for the city to use regarding quality of life here in Austin?
- What specifically should be done to correct the antiquated water delivery system? If the leaks in the system were fixed the impact on water usage would be far greater than conservation efforts?
- What's their intention about raising or reducing property taxes on Austin homeowners?
- With a bully pulpit to work from, what do they intend to do about the proven longtime inequity in TCAD's appraisal of residential property (highest TCAD can get away with) versus commercial property?
- Do you intend to keep Austin in WTP4, and if so, do you have a plan to sell surplus treated water at Austin rates or better to neighboring customers and/or trade treated water back to LCRA or its subs/affiliates for credit against COA's bill owed LCRA for Lake Travis water? (I.e., let's make that WTP4's surplus capacity pay for itself.)
- What provisions would you make to support people suffering economic difficulties because of the national economic disaster?
- What is your position regarding toll roads within the city limits?

- Why does Austin continue have the highest paid government workers in Texas?
- Where would you cut the budget for AISD if there was not enough money to fund the whole budget?
- What specifically is being done to address the traffic issues on I35 and MoPac?
- What specifically is being done to address the huge pending rate hikes for Austin Energy (the rate increase is to support a "feel good" plan to increase wind and solar power no matter if it is cost effective--or not)?
- What specifically should be done to correct the antiquated water delivery system? If the leaks in the system were fixed the impact on water usage would be far greater than conservation efforts?
- Why is the City Council considering an urban rail vote for 2012 on a transportation system that hardly anyone uses? (except to Leander/Cedar Park WHO CARES???)
- Since you are dead set on putting this bond election on for urban rail, how are you expecting federal funding assistance
- To help augment the 1.2 Billion dollar cost (today's estimate) for this fiasco ,when federal funding is going to be very limited nationwide?.
- Why does Austin need trolley cars taking another lane in the road?
- When is Austin going to support toll bike lanes?
- When is Austin going to cut its budget, not just freeze, like any other business.
- How much more can I take before I move out of Austin?
- When are we planning to add High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to I-35? In a city that prides itself on transportation alternatives, having lanes dedicated to carpoolers, along with motorcycles, will go a long way in easing traffic congestion. This will save not only time for commuters but also will help our environment by taking more cars off the road and reducing idle times.
- What approach should the city employ to stop gangs and other criminal activity?
- Are you willing to support a world-class mass transit system, or are you willing to settle for the ineffective efforts of Cap Metro?
- Explain what you know about world-class mass transit and your experiences with world-class mass transit. What exactly would be your goal and what are the steps and timetable on which it could be accomplished?

- When would you like the city to stop growing?
- What mass transit ideas would you try to promote?
- What can the council do to reduce the cost of government in Austin?
- Can the City of Austin function and its citizens prosper without a City policy that promotes growth -- growth meaning increases in new businesses and increases in population and housing development? If your answer is yes, how can this be accomplished?
- Should the electric utility be weaned off of coal and nuclear power? If so, how can this be accomplished and what would be the timetable?
- Should waitresses, hotel workers, janitors, receptionists and other downtown workers be able to live in the central downtown area? If not, why not? If so, what can the City do to accomplish this and why has it not been done?
- What is the estimated per rider / per year annual cost of the Mayor's new choo-choo train?
- What was the estimated per rider / per year annual cost of the CapMetro choo-choo train?
- What is the ACTUAL per rider / per year annual cost of the CapMetro choo-choo train?
- What assurances can you make that the Mayor's choo-choo train costs will be closer to reality than Cap Metro?
- Why should anyone believe these estimates?
- Is there any urban choo-choo train in America that pays for itself? Where? Why is that city more like Austin than the many cities where choo-choo drains are a massive drain on the taxpayers?
- Do you believe "density is destiny" in Austin? To what point do you believe increased population and density is a good thing for Austin?
- It seems Austinites have been suffering under increased economic, infrastructure and traffic problems under our present rate of growth, If you acknowledge this, do you believe the City of Austin should continue to promote growth with such organizations as the City of Austin Growth and Redevelopment Department, and the City of Austin Chamber of Commerce?
- Under what conditions do you believe Austin should pay subsidies to businesses in exchange for their moving to Austin?

- Who do you believe should oversee and rate the performance of the city staff managing the current "Imagine Austin" comprehensive planning process? How and when will this oversight/review coincide with the product and conclusions currently being reviewed and adopted by the planning commission and city council?
- What commercial-zoned property in Austin should NOT be upzoned to Planned Unit Development (PUD), which essentially writes its own rules with respect to building height and compatibility with adjacent residential properties?
- The City of Austin Neighborhood Planning and Development Department has worked with Austin neighborhoods to create Neighborhood Plans, which have been adopted into the City Comprehensive Plan. What role should these neighborhood plans play in the new Comprehensive Plan?
- The development community enjoys the services of a 16+ member Development Assistance Center. Austin neighborhoods are served by 2 Neighborhood Assistance Center members. Do you know the ratio of Austin residents who make their living in the development industry vs. those who live in predominately single-family residential neighborhoods? Do you see any disparity between these two groups and the level of services they receive? If so, what would you do to resolve the disparity?
- Do you know what mechanisms are currently in place to co-ordinate planning and development efforts between the City of Austin and the Austin Independent School District? Do you believe these mechanisms are adequate. If not, what would you do to improve them?
- When a business or residential structure is found to be non-compliant with city code, what do you believe to be a reasonable time period for the owner of the property to come into compliance? After that period, what actions can/should the City take with the violating property owner?
- Will you not vote for spending any new or additional money to current projects without it being revenue neutral?
- To any candidate: Will you commit to taking Capital Metro buses for 100% of all of your vehicle trips for one full week during your first year in office? If not, why not?
- How will you help shift the burden of property taxes from residential home owners to commercial property owners who may not be paying their fair share?
- Politics are inherently a divisive profession. What will you do as a candidate to encourage civility, openness, transparency, and a respectful tone in our public discourse?
- What has the city of Austin done for the neighborhoods in the last two years? We all know what you've done for corporations.

- What promises were met and executed that you offered Austin residents who voted for you?
- New candidates: What would you do for the neighborhoods your first year serving.

- I would like their opinion on the council's habits of emailing (not the gossip or name-calling part) and meeting outside of official mtgs, and whether they feel that the open meetings act has been violated.
- What do they think of this whole Imagine Austin process? Do you believe this is an effective measure for getting public input? Does it address the real concerns, and how would you improve it?
- In Austin, what responsibility do you feel towards populations you consider to be the most vulnerable?
- In terms of your policy proposals, what leadership will you bring to the table in concrete terms, ie Proposals, and how will you address the basic needs issues for those populations during this crisis?
- Do you think growth is a positive thing for Austin?
- Why do you want to keep such a growth rate for Austin? Growth was supposed to bring in money, yet the city has never been as broke as it is today!!

What are the candidates doing to combat human overpopulation?

- Why must we wait until Nov 2012 to vote on single member districts?
- With the increase in energy costs why are you forcing the energy user to pay for higher cost alternative energy?
- Would you support or oppose the proposed agreement between the City of Austin and NRG Energy in which the city would buy power from the proposed new units at the South Texas Nuclear Project?

- I thought the lottery was going to help out the schools, looks like the school system is worse then ever. I'd like to know why lottery money isn't doing what we were told.
Thanks, -Kevin

- Do you feel like we have a crime problem in Austin? What will you do about it?

- What will you do to rectify the taxation without representation situation that occurs when Austin utility customers in the Austin ETJ get part of their payments for utility services transferred to the Austin general fund, yet are unable to vote in Austin elections and therefore have no say in how their money is spent (nor in choice of utility providers)?