

Questions for Georgetown City Council Candidates

What was the most important factor that influenced your decision to run for Georgetown City Council?

As we witness the opportunities and challenges of this period of incredible growth, it would behoove the Council to recognize that the impacts of this growth are not homogenous, and some communities may see more of the opportunities, while others may see more of the challenges. In my time on Council, I have worked strenuously to build bridges of connection and communication, and I have heard, loud and clear, the hopes and concerns of my neighbors and constituents. I have also demonstrated my willingness to do my homework, ask the tough questions, encourage engagement from wide-spread communities and people throughout Georgetown, and put in the time and effort to make sure that this growth will be equitable in its impacts.

What is your ideal vision for the future of economic development in Georgetown?

I would like to seek balance with our investments in economic development, particularly between new businesses, and those that already exist. I would like to see the Council commit to earmarking a percentage of our economic development dollars for locally-owned, mom-and-pop businesses, to provide them with equitable opportunities for growth and expansion. I believe that the best local economies are those which recognize the contributions of those business owners who have started their businesses and live right here in Georgetown, and reward them with financial support. We should also prioritize incentivizing new businesses that commit to paying living wages to their employees, so that they may afford to live, work, and play here in Georgetown.

The City of Georgetown is currently looking at a mobility bond. Based on the current information available, would you support a call for a bond vote?

I would, but I would like to see a mobility bond recommendation that is holistic in nature, and includes public investment in all of our transportation infrastructure, including the implementation of our Bicycle Master Plan, our Sidewalk Master Plan, ADA improvements, hike and bike trail extensions, and pedestrian safety measures.

What is the biggest infrastructure gap facing your district in Georgetown?

The lack of land. My district has some of the most valuable, if not the most valuable, real estate in the entire city. As such, there are many who are interested in capitalizing on that, which may look good on paper for some property owners, but feels threatening to others, who are concerned about affordability, and their ability to continue to live in Georgetown, or for future generations to live in Georgetown.

Over the coming years, TxDOT plans a major reconfiguration of the Williams Drive overpass of Interstate 35. This project will impact businesses in this corridor and in your district. How do you plan to work with TxDOT and City Staff to ensure the businesses do not have another unnecessary burden on their operations?

Timing will be key! We must ensure that the 971/Northwest Blvd projects are completed before construction even starts on the Williams Dr project, to ensure that we have alternative routes available to drivers. In addition, we need to work with all entities to have a cohesive and comprehensive plan for signage, public notification, and perhaps even an advertising budget, to encourage residents and visitors to support the businesses in the impacted areas, during the construction period.

The Chamber surveyed our members and 80% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that “government should avoid action that unnecessarily raises the cost of housing so that our housing is as obtainable as possible for the community's workforce.” Based on these results, how can local government avoid action that unnecessarily raises the cost of housing?

What is the biggest concern you have heard from businesses and how do you plan to address these concerns?

We find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic, and uncharted waters. Business owners want understanding and empathy from governmental bodies, financial support, regulatory flexibility, and a willingness to try new ideas. I think most of these emotional and financial investments have been made, by the various levels of government, during the first phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I think all elected officials can do more to come up with plans for the rest of 2020, and into 2021, that lay out concrete and measurable resources we are ready and willing to bring to the table, to make sure our locally-owned business community survives the pandemic, and thrives in the days after. Not only will this benefit the businesses, it will reap rewards for our resident workers. It could be a win-win if we are willing to do the collaborative work necessary to accomplish these goals.

What do you think has been our City's greatest accomplishment within the past 10 years?

The investments we have made in the heart of Georgetown: our Downtown Square and the surrounding area. A vast majority of people who have moved to Georgetown in recent years have done so because of the “small town feel,” which is directly correlated with our Most Beautiful Town Square, whether they live within walking distance, or in a neighborhood in another part of the city. While the popularity of the growth in this area is not without its challenges and public debate, I believe that we have demonstrated that community investment, coupled with a robust level of community feedback and involvement, are a good mix. We all benefit, when we balance the desires of our locally-owned businesses, with the residents that live in adjacent areas. The end result in one of which we can all be proud.

What makes you the ideal candidate for the City Council position?

The fact that I'm a secret introvert with a passion for doing what is right and fair. What this means is that I'm not interested in the “limelight,” and prioritize meeting and talking

with my constituents, and understanding their concerns, over getting covered by the media. We need public servants who put people first, and I think I have shown, time and again, that that is my first and only priority.

What do you believe is the biggest threat Georgetown faces, and how would you address the issue if elected?

Preserving and ensuring equitable allocation of our natural resources, in the face of growth. I believe we need to revisit our conservation policies for water, landscaping, and heritage trees, as well as our policies for green spaces & parks. I would like to see Council adopt, as part of our visioning process, a commitment to preserving those resources for ourselves and future generations, as a fundamental human right. Access to those resources, as a public good, should also be part of the equation.

In January, the Chamber sent a letter to City Council in support of City Council adding downtown parking. The Chamber's Board was indifferent on location and encouraged council to move forward with the addition of parking. What is your solution for parking in downtown Georgetown?

I am grateful for the time and dedication of those citizens who participated on the Parking Garage Stakeholders subcommittee, and am personally satisfied with the resulting suggestions for the future design of a downtown parking garage. When it comes to the location of a future garage, I believe that we need a robust engagement process, and must solicit the input of subject-matter experts to weigh all the pros and cons of all the options available to us, before deciding upon a location. I agree that the need for more public parking is imminent, and that it must be close enough to the downtown core that it will be utilized. Ideally, the plan will also incorporate elements that make the utilization of the space dynamic, incorporating retail and perhaps even housing elements, in the final product. Once the right location is decided upon, we must look for opportunities to partner with other governmental entities and developers who understand the vision for the garage and the priorities of our community, in order to incorporate all elements, within a reasonable budget and timeline.

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