

## **District 8 and Mayoral Candidate Questions and Answers**

We asked District 8 and the Mayoral Candidates to answer five questions that are of interest to the Association. The questions we asked are listed below. The responses we received are listed below in alphabetical order for District 8 and the Mayoral Election.

### **Candidate Questions**

**1. No New Billboards.** Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and more than 350 other cities across the state have ordinances banning new billboards. San Antonio is the only major city in the state of Texas lacking a “no new billboards” ordinance. Do you support a “no new billboards” ordinance for San Antonio which would prohibit construction of new billboards, or conversion of old style billboards to digital design? *(Please answer by ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.)*

**2. Open Process.** It is the experience of our association that over the last 2 years city decision making has become opaque to private individuals and groups. Items are artificially put on ‘fast track’ and passed without real public scrutiny or input. Do you share this viewpoint? If so, what do you pledge to do to correct the problem? *(Please answer with 100 words or less.)*

**3. Land Use.** Land use issues, such as for zoning, corridor designation, street closure, etc., are of vital importance to neighborhoods and neighborhood groups. Will you pledge not to put private and special interests above those of ordinary citizens? How will you work with neighborhood groups to protect quality of life of our neighborhoods? *(Please answer with 100 words or less.)*

**4. Quality of Life.** Even in the area represented by our association, the urban blight of graffiti is becoming more pervasive. What new initiatives do you support to correct this and other Quality of Life problems? *(Please answer with 100 words or less.)*

**5. Other Issues.** If you are elected, what other neighborhood problems will you work to solve? *(Please answer with 100 words or less.)*

## District 8 Election

### Mike Berlanga

**1. No New Billboards.** Yes

**2. Open Process.** I support an open process on all items that affect the neighborhoods. If am elected to the City Council, you will not see backroom dealings deciding the fate of our neighborhoods. In making zoning decisions, I pledge to always consult the neighborhood associations affected by changes sought. I shall never forget that people in the neighborhoods of District 8 elected me.

**3. Land Use.** First, I can tell you that I would have opposed closing the street (Mockingbird) that is located around the McCombs dealership. I will not win over votes by special interests and lobbyists. The neighborhood spoke loud and clear on that issue. It is unfortunate that the Planning Commission approved the closure. I believe that the street is safe and used by many District 8 residents which helps alleviate traffic in other parts of the District.

Secondly, you should know that I will consult with neighborhoods at public meetings and directly with the neighborhood leadership to make sure that we are on the same page when deciding important issues.

**4. Quality of Life.** I propose a shot gun blast to address this problem: (1) increase fines and other penalties for those convicted of graffiti in this City; (2) I will propose to fund more neighborhood patrolling by SAPD and improvements to the Cellular on Patrol program; (3) I will propose that we improve the technology we use to abate graffiti. There is new technology that allows spray paint to be removed without damaging the structure or the paint below.

**5. Other Issues.** There are many issues that need to be addressed. If I am elected we need to work

on traffic solutions, improved response times by the Fire Department, increased patrolling in the neighborhoods, improved hours for our libraries and city pools and preserving the character of our neighborhoods.

### Jacob Dell

**1. No New Billboards.** Yes

**2. Open Process.** I have personally experienced this lack of clearness and what I consider to be unbalanced reviews of critical decisions, for example, the sign ordinance. My pledge is simple: Equal representation under the city code with complete transparency. I will support this effort by publishing every vote I make on the internet in a searchable database so citizens can review my actions at anytime.

**3. Land Use:** I pledge to give ordinary citizens a balanced voice and tirelessly fight for a better quality of life in our neighborhoods.

**4. Quality of Life.** Graffiti is like a fever, it is a symptom of a larger problem or disease. We must immediately increase the number of uniformed officers on patrol in our neighborhoods; rewrite the city ordinance while working with the local courts to create a system of graffiti abatement as part of the penalty phase and ensure that vacant lots or empty storefronts have the graffiti removed within 48 hours of its creation.

**5. Other Issues.** The biggest quality of life issue in San Antonio is traffic. San Antonians' ability to travel efficiently within the city is vital to our economic survival and must be continually improved without the use of toll roads along existing thoroughfares. This issue affects the safety of children traveling to and from school and adds an estimated 340 hours per year of idle time in the car commuting. By implementing immediate fixed at failed intersections, and strategically planning for the future, we can effectively increase quality of life while reducing pollution and lost time.

**Melissa Martinez-Carrasco**

- 1. Billboards.** No, as this question is worded
- 2. Open Process.** Yes, I do share this viewpoint. The council not only needs more transparency but the public needs to have a chance to be informed. Items that have a direct connection or impact to constituents can be posted at the city website for the public to view prior to the council voting on them.
- 3. Land Use.** Absolutely. I am tired of special interests coming before the citizens of this city. With me, there are no ties to any special interest or private groups. I think that neighborhood associations can be the mechanism in which we connect with residents. I would work to make myself available to meet with neighborhood groups to protect quality of life.
- 4. Quality of Life.** I support the enforcement of stricter penalties for those that deface property. I also support making those pay for their crime by painting over graffiti and having them clean over it. I would also work with the arts community to have neighborhood graffiti clean-up projects and I would personally participate.
- 5. Other Issues.** Traffic congestion is a major issue. I would commit to putting money into relieving the congestion in various hot spots instead of focusing on mass-transit which would burden taxpayers and not give any immediate relief. I also believe that there are projects that never get worked on or take years to even have a status update. I would work directly with the neighborhood associations to bring to light the highest priority issues and work to resolve them immediately.

**Jody Sherrill**

- 1. No New Billboards.** Yes
- 2. Open Process:** I do not support this lack of transparency. Issues need to be fully discussed with all stakeholders - neighbors, businesses, developers etc. We need to make sure that the whole council works together giving direction not simply doing what city management wants. Council is suppose to run the city not an individual council person or the manager.
- 3. Land Use.** We need to insure that everyone's voice is heard. We especially need to listen to the neighbors who are most impacted by any change. Change is inevitable but private interests groups should not dictate what is done (or not done). All neighborhood groups will be encouraged to provide input. I am proposing monthly meetings of neighborhood groups for this purpose (not to say what I've done).
- 4. Quality of Life.** We must make sure that the city police assigned to do this job do it properly. Better use of surveillance equipment and rapid response times are essential. Offenders need to be persecuted to the maximum extent of the law and where minors are involved, the parents need to be held accountable for damages. We need more police presence inside the neighborhoods to deter crime not just to respond to it.
- 5. Other Issues.** Street maintenance needs to be accelerated. Construction times for road projects need to be abbreviated to limit the nuisance to drivers and business. City wide we need to start looking at impervious cover limits (not just over the recharge zone) and lighting requirements. We need to find a way to increase density without effecting traffic, open space, trees, and large lot neighborhoods. We need to relook the tree ordinance and to find a way to stop oak wilt (lest we loose these valuable trees). My website is electjody.com or I can be reached at 325-9309.

**Reed Williams**

**1. No New Billboards.** Yes

**2. Open Process.** Yes. Decisions made without transparency and due process destroy mutual respect and trust among all parties and kill responsible government. First, we must request that city staff, developers and zoning authorities provide sufficient time for volunteer citizen groups to understand and become involved in the decisions affecting their neighborhoods. Second, your Councilperson must work proactively to restore trust among all parties with early, continual, and respectful dialogue. Third, the five-signature memo method of accelerating items to the agenda should only be used in emergency situations and with proper notification to all citizens affected.

**3. Land Use.** Land use issues are a specific application of the open process discussed in question two. I pledge to protect the interest of all citizens. Designating citizens as ordinary, special, or private is divisive. Bridging these divides is a precondition to sustainable development in our neighborhoods. Your City Council representative must be perceived as intellectually and financially independent of all interest in order to have the credibility to eliminate distrust and facilitate desirable change in our neighborhoods. As your independent City Council representative, I will always strive to not only protect, but also improve the quality of life in your neighborhoods.

**4. Quality of Life.** Improving the quality of life in a neighborhood is a shared responsibility of the government and the citizens. The City must increase the expenditure for police, fire and EMS personnel and equipment. Increases must be made now while we are restricting expenditures in other areas of the City budget. We can not wait for the economy to recover to protect our citizens and property. To assist the citizens, I propose regular working sessions around the district to inform the citizens and provide structure for their

efforts to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

**5. Other Issues.** We have many obvious problems in our neighborhoods such as traffic, crime, and emergency response times. All will require diligent attention. The question going into any difficult job is not just what, but how. Currently, problem solving in our City and Districts is on demand and reactionary. We are jumping from crises to crises. This must change. I spent a career transforming organizations from on-demand problem solving to planned and scheduled problem solving. It was successful in the private sector and is directly applicable to what we face in our City today.

<b>Mayoral Election</b>
-------------------------

**Lauro Bustamante**

**1. No New Billboards.** Yes

**2. Open Records.** I can be reached at 777 7755. I will Advocate citizen participation in the decision-making process, by encouraging open communication between citizens and their government. Examples range from visioning, in which citizens play a major role in determining the future of their community, to the Neighborhood Resources Program, to community-service activities. Citizens also can present issues to the Mayor and Council at Citizen's Forum during General Session meetings; talk one-on-one with council members at a drop-in sessions; or express their concerns at a Public Hearing or Walking Town Meeting. In addition, citizens are encouraged to become members of boards and commissions.

**3. Land Use.** My mission & the goals that I seek to promote include my experience, character, education, commitment to self-management (wellness), energy level, wisdom, patience and winning personality. Being self funded & 100%

free of special interests, my loyalties are focused on the broad public interest.

My qualifications are: Law Doctorate, BS Communications, Minor Business Admin, Associates Liberal Arts, CLE hours 643.98 in Law & 84.50 Ethics, Internships: Bankruptcy, Family Court, District Attorneys' Office, San Antonio resident 55yrs with 35yrs Businessman & 25yrs Attorney in Federal, State & local laws. Educated 5 children.

**4. Quality of Life.** We can decrease graffiti and crime through education.

Preschool programs create economic benefits—including reduced costs of crime, drug use and teen parenting .A one-year increase in average years of schooling for dropouts would **reduce murder** and assault by almost **30 percent**, motor vehicle theft by 20 percent, arson by 13 percent, and burglary and larceny by about 6 percent. We can supporting Mayor's P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County, preschool, college and workforce education committee.

Achieve the following education criteria:

- No illiteracy,
- No high school dropouts,
- Every HS graduate should attend College or Technical School

**5. Other Issues.** My recommendations to traffic congestion and EPA are:

- Enhanced public transit system - including light rail,
- Invest in a Commuter rail line between San Antonio and Austin
- Consolidate Alamo Regional Mobility Authority and VIA
- Promote electric, air, solar, wind, natural gas powered engines
- Solicit green auto startups to locate in SAT. India produces cars that sell for \$2000.

We can too! Take advantage of the new industrial and technology revolution. A Mayor should ask every time policy and fiscal decisions are being

considered: "What impact will this decision have upon the children of the city?"

### Julian Castro

**1. No New Billboards.** *No answer received.*

**2. Open Records.** *No answer received.*

**3. Land Use.** *No answer received.*

**4. Quality of Life.** *No answer received.*

**5. Other Issues.** *No answer received.*

### Diane Cibrian

**1. No New Billboards.** Yes

**2. Open Records.** It has been an honor to represent City Council District 8. I have worked directly with neighborhoods throughout our district to ensure that neighborhoods have a voice at City Hall. As a result, many projects have been completed. These include the district-wide Quiet Zone, installation of traffic lights, repair of the Wurzbach railroad track, the cleaning up of serious code compliance homes, sidewalk projects, street light synchronization, drainage concerns, and other neighborhood concerns.

**3. Land Use.** Yes, I will continue to engage stakeholder groups of neighborhoods to accomplish results for our city.

**4. Quality of Life.** As a City Councilmember I have held four graffiti wipeouts in the district with hundreds of volunteers. I have worked directly to increase funding and develop the first-ever city-wide comprehensive approach to eradicating graffiti. As a result of our efforts, the City removed 50% more graffiti this year than last year. We also purchased surveillance cameras and have apprehended graffiti criminals. Additionally, as a member of the City's Intergovernmental Relations Committee, I have advocated for stiffer penalties and additional law

enforcement. As Mayor, I would launch a city-wide effort to combat graffiti.

**5. Other Issues.** Public Safety: Neighborhoods need more police, firefighters and EMS. I will work to bring 24 hour SAFFE officers for neighborhoods.

Alleviate Traffic Congestion: Neighborhoods need comprehensive traffic solutions and multi-factored transportation options

Property Tax Relief: Neighborhoods need a Mayor that is fiscally conservative and work to keep a low tax burden.

### **Trish Deberry-Mejia**

**1. No New Billboards.** Yes

**2. Open Records.** As a communications professional, there is little that is more important to me than an open dialogue on issues affecting public policy.

As mayor, I will commit that no agenda item will be voted upon until sufficient public notice has been solicited, recorded and considered.

Additionally, I commit to holding quarterly townhall meetings in every quadrant of the city, where individuals, neighborhood associations and other groups may present their ideas, concerns and comments to me and key staff.

Maintaining open lines of communication is critically important.

**3. Land Use.** Community interests take all forms: residential, commercial, private, public, individual, community. Each and every day, decisions are made about how this city will grow and prosper. Each of these constituents – and some wear more than one hat – needs a place at the table and a venue in which to convey their opinions and concerns. As mayor, my door will

be open and I will be more accessible than any other mayor in modern history.

In addition to personal accessibility, I will be available through electronic means: email, online chats, etc.

**4. Quality of Life.** Graffiti is a city-wide problem and needs community support. The first line-of-attack is to hold these individuals accountable and if they are minors, holding their parents accountable too. Those who tag properties need to clean them up, and their parents need to help.

Additionally, I would enlist community-wide Cellular-on-Patrol teams to randomly patrol graffiti-prone areas during prime tagging hours and report activity to peace officers for follow-up. Taggers need to be held accountable and the full weight of the law needs to bear down on them.

**5. Other Issues:** Sidewalks and traffic control within neighborhoods are a key concern. Neighborhoods without sidewalks need them; existing sidewalks need maintenance. Increased traffic along residential streets and major arterials call for additional investment in infrastructure and proper planning.

As mayor, I will make sure that we hire a planning director to direct our city's growth.

### **Napoleon Madrid**

**1. No New Billboards.** No

**2. Open Records.** I believe that fast track is used for benefit city corruption and to take away the power from the people. Also to take away government accountability then a system is benefiting special interest groups that only want to get paid back from all the brave money (AKA) donations that they invested in their candidate it is illegal but for us on one care look at today's race we see candidate that have or are still in city council that have done nothing on their own but

willing to take all the credit for every thing, but you and the rest of the city really don't care because look at all the dirty money. But neighborhoods accusations still indorse them I will prove it to you see all of the candidates but more then half is shut out but on one cares. Every one will indorse the wrong candidate with all their dirty money.

**3. Land Use.** Question why would you indorse any candidate that is receiving special interests money funny thing you will everyone else is and will be.

Yes I will put the citizens always first because I am one of the few candidates that will not take special interest money you can see for yourself their bankroll how much is from dirty money is that the kind of candidate you are willing to indorse if you all ready know the candidates that are taking/receiving special interests money, so my soul my dreams or my city is not for sale if this is the candidate you are looking for then I am your man to indorse. If your endorsement is for sale then please pick, someone else pick one of the other that have all the receiving special interests money.

**4. Quality of Life.** As mayor I would work with the city council to pass resolution, when anyone that buys a paint can they will have to register that can and when the can is fond we will know who paid for it. That is the first step to win the battle. Next no long making the home owner or business reasonable to clean it up make, those who have been arrested for that crime or others will clean it up it is just that simple right. If their under age then we will have their parents clean it up with them, it would be the last time they would do that. Instead of hire more police I would remove the illegal element from your neighborhood and every else and keep them in jail.

Tell me why the city is fining our good citizens when they are the one that are being victimized and then our city victimizes them again make no sense to me. You have to understand the city government is corrupted and if you really want to change. Then why would you put someone back if their corrupted tell me why would you do that,

then nothing changes 'right, then why complain, if your not willing to put the right person in office, when you have the chance to do so now.!

**5. Other Issues.** First you have to be willing to elect the right person with no special interest ties.

As mayor I would audit the city books to stop the corruption and then to see what the real budget.

I would replace all of the division department heads that have been holding up and waiting your tax dollars

I would walk all of the worse spots of the city and then to take pictures and show the citizens and start from there, I would rebuild and repair the low water areas and fix the bad drainage right the first time.

Install more city light and speed bumps and create new micro police substations inside those highest claim areas and get rid of the illegal element for one and for all, and keep them in jail for good.

I will come to you and ask your neighborhood where do you want me to start and where would it benefit you the most.

A great leader must be a great listener, and the not to be afraid to lead!