



Denton City Council Candidate Questionnaire

BUILDING COMMUNITY
Joining Together for Mutual Growth

This Questionnaire is a Word document which allows you to respond without regard to space limitations.

Candidate information

Name of candidate:

Office sought / party: City Council City of Denton District 1

Date of interview: Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Candidate Mailing address: 4521 Green River Dr
Denton, TX 76208

Candidate Phone number: 940-600-1001

Candidate E-mail address: mirvine@yahoo.com

Why are you running? Focus on higher income job opportunities by developing West side of the airport.

What are your three top priority issues?

- 1.) To take the focus away from wanting warehouse jobs in Denton to getting more manufacturing and tech jobs.
- 2.) ERCOT accountability and/or DME independence.
- 3.) To support policies that increase the amount of available housing.

What is your prior or professional or community engagement with local REALTORS? None

Campaign Information

How much do you expect to spend in this race? \$5,000 (already spent close to \$900 of my own)

How much have you raised so far?

None, I've spent my own. I've built my own website, promoting my Facebook page with targeted demographics on different ads, and have done my own data research for targeted mailers and fliers in the coming weeks. I've done some door-to-door knocking, but have decided against continually doing that. I imagine this race will go into a runoff, and would like more money at that time. Also, I suppose some people like yard signs, so I need to purchase more of those. I've also contacted a 3rd party company that will do a text messaging campaign for me which will cost approximately \$400.

Campaign treasurer: Myself

Campaign consultant(s) if any: None

Anything else you'd like us to know?

If the GDWCAR decides to support your campaign, would you accept funds from our Texas Association of REALTORS® Political Action Committee (TREPAC)? These funds have been contributed by local REALTORS as well as persons in the community.

Yes

REALTORS® are committed to our communities, our clients, and the public. We work to ensure private property rights are protected, and that Texans can buy, sell, lease, and enjoy real property. To accomplish those goals, we monitor and advocate on a wide variety of local, state, and federal policy issues. The following questions seek to understand your position as a candidate and potential lawmaker on issues that will impact housing and real estate within your jurisdiction.

Issue: Rental Registration

Background: Several cities across Texas have undertaken excessively restrictive measures on rental property in their communities in an effort to monitor landlords and generate local fee-driven revenues through rental property. Some of these actions are registration of rental property and the inspection of rental property, with permitting and other subsequent fees associated with these measures.

Candidate Question 1: *Would you support or oppose proposals to enact a rental registration and/or rental property inspection fee?*

Please Explain your Position in Some Detail:

I would oppose proposals about rental registration and inspection fees. The state of Texas already provides renters/tenants with a good foundation of protections. Rental registration seems overreaching, and just adds more expenses tacked on by the government.

Issue: Short-term Rentals

Background: Short-term rentals, or vacation rentals, are typically defined as those rented for less than 30 consecutive days. These are typically single-family homes in neighborhoods of cities that are desirable to visitors.

Some cities have banned short-term rental use in their local development or zoning codes and others have limited the use under specific parameters or guidelines. Registration programs may be required for all short-term-rental owners or may be limited to those owners who exclusively rent their properties as an investment.

Candidate Question 2: *Would you support or oppose banning short-term rental use in your city?*

Please Explain Your Position:

On one hand a property owner should be able to do what they want with their property; especially if used in a manner to supplement their income. On the other, there have been some examples of bad short-term rental properties that have led to negative experiences with neighbors of these short-term rental places. I don't support outright banning them, but would be open to some sort of policy that punishes those who continually disturb their neighbors.

Issue: Eminent Domain

Background

Texas has ambiguous eminent domain laws that many believe are at odds with the state's philosophical support of private-property rights. The Texas Constitution limits the scope of eminent domain power and requires "adequate" compensation for the land on which eminent domain is used. However, there is a lack of consensus about the term "adequate" and the law does not address several matters related to eminent domain.

A few examples that may not be considered in determining "adequate" compensation could be:

- 1) Requiring fractional division of property that may impact the value of the remaining portion adversely.
- 2) Destroying (acres) significant stands of trees.
- 3) Creating a traffic pattern that impacts the value of a remaining portion of property.

Candidate Question 3: *Please share your thoughts on eminent domain, including property-owner rights and what constitutes an "adequate" offer.*

Please Explain Your Position:

I'm opposed to eminent domain in almost all circumstances, and I would need convincing on each individual case the city would try utilizing this tool. An adequate offer to me is what the market value is.

Issue: Tax of Professional Services

Background

As long as policymakers look for ways to restructure the tax system, Texas REALTORS® will actively participate to ensure the buyers, sellers, and owners of real estate, and real estate professionals, have representation. Texas REALTORS® is committed to working with the Texas Legislature to create a tax policy that is just and fair to all Texans.

During previous legislative sessions, there have been various proposals advocating new taxes. These taxes range from a state income tax, expansion of the sales-tax base, additional taxes on business, and “sin” taxes, among others. In recent years, the Texas Legislature has debated proposals to expand the sales-tax base to include professional services, which currently have certain exclusions.

Candidate Question 4:

Would you support a tax on professional services, such as commissions paid to a real estate broker or fees paid to an accountant or architect?

Yes No

Please Explain Your Position:

There is no state income tax, and commission-based salaries are income as is the fee I will be paying a CPA next week to file my taxes.

Issue: Property Taxes and the Appraisal Process

Background:

Creating a budget and adopting a property tax rate to support that budget are major functions of locally elected officials in Texas.

In simple terms, the Texas property tax system is based on an equation that multiplies a property's appraised value by locally adopted tax rates. In recent years, Texans have seen skyrocketing property tax bills due to rapid increases in appraised value and little or no change in their tax rates. In addition, over the last decade, many local taxing jurisdictions have seen their budgets increase over 60%, far outpacing the rate of inflation and population growth.

When appraisal values increase, taxing jurisdictions can hold the line by adopting a tax rate that guarantees no new revenue will be realized from existing properties, instead relying on new or improved properties to generate new revenue. (Formerly known as the “effective tax rate,” new property tax laws resulting from Senate Bill 2 from the 86th Texas Legislature will rename this the “no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate.”)

Some taxing entities assert that if they do not change or even lower tax rates, but taxpayers' overall bills go up due to an increase in the appraised value of the property, this does not constitute a property tax

increase.

Candidate Question 5: *If a property owner's tax bill goes up, does that constitute a tax increase?*

Yes No

Please Explain Your Position:

Seems like a simple yes to this question should suffice. If you're paying more involuntarily, then you've been taxed more.

Candidate Question 6: *Do you support increased transparency measures, including (but not limited to) better notifications and explanations of terms, to ensure property owners fully understand why their property tax bill increases or decreases, and would you work to implement such changes in your city?*

Yes No

Please Explain Your Position:

Being transparent builds trust, even when in disagreement with people of differing political leanings. Currently there is debate that the current city council isn't all that transparent with their closed meeting minutes. Transparency shouldn't be a selective issue to embrace. When a person gets their property tax bill, it should explain how and why there was an increase to their property taxes. Without justification in the increase, then it just seems outright unfair.

Candidate Question 6: *While considering the relationship between local taxing jurisdictions (city, county, or school district) and the Central Appraisal District, what role do you feel the Chief Appraiser/Central Appraisal District should play in the budgeting process for your city?*

Please Explain Your Position:

They should be able to give an approximate amount of tax revenue generation from property taxes so those who draft budgets can plan accordingly to what they will have.

Candidate Question 7:

The State of Texas does not require the disclosure of sales prices for real property transactions. However, for many years, many local governments and central appraisal districts (CADs) have argued in favor of mandating such disclosure.

Would you be in favor of any proposed legislation to mandate the disclosure of the sales price of commercial and residential real estate transactions?

Yes No

Please Explain Your Position:

For commercial properties, some businesses would view it as a competitive advantage to keep their purchase or sell price confidential. For both commercial and residential, this seems rather intrusive when the property is already be taxed by the government.

Background

State law allows for an Agriculture Special Valuation (often mistakenly referred to an ag exemption) on certain lands, which can lower the property's tax liability. The tax savings a property owner receives depends on the current market value of the property and the type of Ag Valuation the landowner holds.

However, the law also enables local governments to collect substantial "rollback" taxes on agricultural land when the owner stops using it for agriculture. This penalty is commonly called a rollback (or lookback) tax because it recaptures the taxes the owner would have paid had the property been taxed at full market value in previous years.

A law passed by the 86th Texas Legislature reduces the lookback period from five to three years and reduces the interest from 7% to 5%.

Candidate Question 8:

Although modified in recently, state law allows local governments to collect a "rollback" tax on agriculture land when the owner stops using it for agriculture as a disincentive for taking the land out of agricultural production.

Do you favor repealing the rollback tax applied to agriculture land when the owner stops using it for agriculture?

Yes No

Please Explain Your Position:

If they stop using their land for agriculture, then why should be entitled to have it taxed as such? Seems fraudulent to let them continue on while other homeowners do not get a special reduced valuation.

Issue: Infrastructure Overview

Recent State and Local Background

Water – Since the passage of Proposition 6 in 2013, a ballot measure that created a long-term fund for water and water infrastructure projects, Texas REALTORS®' water policy has focused on removing statutory and regulatory barriers to implementation of the nationally renowned Texas

Water Plan.

Transportation – As a general philosophy, Texas REALTORS® believe in a return to the pay-as-you-go system for public access (non-tolled) roads, which served this state so well for so long. Recently, lawmakers have been reluctant to increase registration fees or the gasoline tax, so the state moved toward a system of bonding and toll roads. That unsustainable system is ending, as the state's bonding capacity is essentially exhausted and there is a general distaste for creating more toll roads.

The resulting problem is significant: In 2013, the Texas Department of Transportation suggested it would need an additional \$5 billion annually to maintain current roadway conditions. In 2014, Texas voters approved Proposition 1, a measure designed to take advantage of the state's oil and natural gas boom by providing a portion of the oil and gas severance tax to the State Highway Fund (Fund 6). In 2019, lawmakers extended those provisions to ensure no interruption of funding for 10 years.

In 2015, voters approved Proposition 7, a referendum that, among other things, dedicated \$2.5 billion of existing sales tax revenue to the credit of the State Highway Fund for the maintenance, construction, and expansion of non-tolled roadways.

Energy – Texas companies, competing in the global marketplace, also need adequate, reliable, and reasonably priced energy to keep Texas a business-friendly environment. Without access to such energy, the economic prosperity of Texas and its citizens is threatened.

Candidate Question 9:

The Metroplex, including Denton and Collin County is expected to approach 20 million people by the year 2050. Additionally, the A&M Real Estate Center predicts Denton County's population in 2050 will be over 3,000,000 people. This growth will balloon infrastructure needs for the entire area, including the city of Denton, exponentially.

Local Infrastructure will also be a critical issue as time progresses, maybe even more than it has been in the past. Do you feel that we are keeping up with infrastructure development for the city of Denton now? What, if anything, do you think is needed to prepare the city and this general area for the growth that has begun?

Please Explain Your Position:

I believe the city of Denton has positioned itself well for future growth, but there are some pain points that need to be addressed:

- 1) Denton has invested in its energy generation and infrastructure where other municipalities haven't. With the recent winter storm, I think Denton needs to evaluate its relationship with ERCOT since other areas of the state are not contributing to the electrical grid equally. The El Paso Electric company isn't part of ERCOT, and for the most part kept the power on. I believe DME and the city of Denton needs to conduct a feasibility study of going independent of ERCOT, and an all-in benefits analysis of remaining with ERCOT.
- 2) The intersection of 380 and I35 was recently redone, but it is still terrible to where traffic backs up in the North Bound lanes of I35 in addition to the access road on the side. This intersection needs

to be completely re-engineered as growth continues in that area of Denton.

- 3) The intersection of Colorado Blvd. and S. Mayhill Rd. needs to switch to an intersection with a traffic light in addition to being looped in with the railroad crossing directly to the East of it. Traffic already backs up here at the 4 way stop and the area is still growing.
- 4) The roadways around the airport need to be built up with the expectation of future growth. Additionally, the I-35 Frontage Rd turn onto 1515 can be unsafe due to lack of visibility. It will be easier to expand the lanes in and out of the airport now rather than later as this will make it look more appealing to potential suitors.
- 5) The city needs to keep up with the construction and expansion plan on University. Other areas of downtown Denton seem to be neglected and should be fixed and updated with a future outlook of more growth.

We appreciate your time and look forward to seeing you on March 23rd, and a continuing relationship! Please share any additional comments or questions you may have.