



## 2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Mayor Info Sheet

The following questions were e-mailed to all candidates invited to attend the town hall. Below are those responses received as written by the candidate with occasional minor edits to conserve space on this sheet. Those candidates scheduled to attend have been highlighted in **red**. Key: **Bio Questions** | **Ice Breaker Questions** | **Issue Questions**

Name	Mike Martinez	Randall Stephens
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<b>Occupation / Main Source of Income</b>	Austin City Council Member	American Airlines Aircraft Maintenance Technician
<b>Previous Occupations</b>	Austin Firefighter, construction worker	CEO AD&M Advertising <a href="http://www.adbirds.com">www.adbirds.com</a> (Currently)
<b>Education</b>	A graduate of Leadership Austin, Council Member Martinez attended Temple Jr. College, Austin Community College and the University of Texas at Austin. Mike also completed the LBJ School/West Point Military Leadership Academy led by Dr. Michael Lauderdale.	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University A&P program
<b>How long have you lived in Austin (Years)?</b>	26	12
<b>How long have you lived in Texas (Years)?</b>	45	27
<b>If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin?</b>	When I moved to Austin in 1988, I had dreams of becoming a musician and enjoying everything Austin had to offer. I first worked as a construction worker for \$4.50 an hour and took the bus across town every day to get to work and back home. I was also a student at ACC then, working toward becoming an Austin Firefighter. I came to Austin as soon as I could, and knew right away that this was the City where I would build my future and my family, and it's been an incredible honor to spend the last 22 years dedicating my career to public service in the Austin community.	Transferred with American Airlines
<b>Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as?</b>	Democratic	Democratic
<b>Previous public offices sought and/or held and when:</b>	: I currently serve as an Austin City Council Member, and was elected in 2006. During my time as a firefighter, I was elected as the President of the Austin Fire Association in 2003.	Precinct Chairman 2008 as a Republican (recently converted to Dem)
<b>What civic organizations do you belong to?</b>	I'm currently a member of Austin Environmental Democrats, South Austin Democrats, Tejano Democrats, Capital Area Tejano Democrats and a sustaining member of the Travis County Democratic Party.	Austin Independent Business Association
<b>Have you ever been convicted of a felony?</b>	No	No

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Have you ever had any civil judgments against you?	No	No	No
Do you belong to your neighborhood or homeowner's association?	No	Yes	Yes
Have you participated in neighborhood planning?	Yes		
If yes, how have you participated?	Yes, via adoption of neighborhood plans at City Council. Working directly with stakeholders that volunteer countless hours in developing these plans has given me perspective on how valuable our neighborhood advocates are as resources for Council and for our City.		
What is your favorite book?	Tuesday's with Morrie.	Empire Of The Summer Moon by S.C. Gwinne (and whatever book currently reading)	
What is your favorite movie or television series?	Scandal	Dr. Strangelove by Stanley Kubrick (big fan of Peter Sellers)	
What is your favorite hobby(ies)?	Currently, my favorite thing to do is to spend time in the pool with my 2 year old son, Diego. I also have a 16 year old son who is an amazing young man that is a blast to hang out with.	Cycling, Hiking with my wife and dogs, camping and sailing, I am a cross country cyclist and have a blog: <a href="http://www.BicycleTouristClub.org">www.BicycleTouristClub.org</a>	
What is your favorite thing to do in Austin?	Austin is a vibrant city with so much to offer. I enjoy attending UT football and basketball games, catching live music, and running around Lady Bird Lake whenever I'm able.	Enjoy outdoor activities and music with my wife and friends.	
Why are you running for office?	<p>Austin is an amazing city. We are one of "America's Coolest" cities. We are one of the safest cities. We are the best big city in the United States for jobs, and we are one of the best places in America to raise a family.</p> <p>But Austin is buckling under the weight of its own popularity. Issues like traffic congestion and affordability are only going to increase in importance and complexity as our city grows, prospers and changes in the coming decade.</p> <p>As we work to deal with big challenges, we are fundamentally changing our city's government. At least nine out of eleven of the next Mayor and Council will be new in 2014.</p> <p>I believe that our continued forward movement and advancement as a world-class city depends on the choice we make in this election for Mayor and Council. Austin cannot afford a learn-on-the-job mayor. To protect our progress and effectively address our community's growing pains, we need a smart, experienced mayor who is ready to lead our city on day one.</p>	Frankly, I wanted to make a case for responsible governance and seek to end the practice of loans to campaigns. The current rail bond proposal appears to be designed to adorn real estate projects by investors who donated and loaned huge sums to the current mayor's campaigns. (I will outline deficiencies of Prop. 1 later). And having been an employer in Austin, having taken leadership roles in complex environments since I was a 21-year old Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force until the present day, I am confident in my ability to lead at the Mayoral level.	

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<b>What are your top three priorities for Austin?</b>	<p>Reducing traffic congestion and expanding transportation options are the most important things we can do to improve quality of life for middle class families, protect our environment, and keep Austin economically vibrant. We need an affordable mix of roads, sidewalks, bike paths, bus lanes and rail.</p> <p>Austin is facing an affordability crisis that disproportionately impacts middle class families. Prioritizing their needs as part of every policy decision has been my priority during my time on Council, and will continue to be my priority as your next Mayor. We must work to reduce regressive fees and encourage the legislature to allow cities like Austin to give flat rate homestead exemptions.</p> <p>The number one priority regarding environmental policy is climate protection, which affects water, energy, air quality, and quality of life for our citizens. I believe our most important goal for Austin Energy must be to address climate change while maintaining affordability standards.</p>	<p>Mobility: Move fast in correcting major issues with commuter roads and freeways in Austin.</p> <p>Smart Growth: Inspire Austin leaders to shift development focus for downtown to the peripheral areas outside SH183 and 290, with inexpensive apartments, single family homes and condos, retail and innovation zone attributes.</p> <p>Affordability: Introduce Business-Driven modes of operation to reduce the per capita cost of providing city services while sales tax revenues increase, and pass savings back to taxpayers in the form of lower city property tax rates and service rebates. Getting federal funding for indigent services would help county taxpayers by reducing Emergency Room visits and getting people the treatment they need for addictions and employment preparation, training, etc. Mantra here is; "Shift the load".</p>
<b>Traffic continues to be an increasing problem for many Austinites as they commute to and from work. Is this a top priority for you?</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>If so, what is your plan to help alleviate some of the traffic problems? If not, why?</b>	<p>As Chair of the Capital Metro Board of Directors, I helped lead our transit agency out of near financial disaster into a place of fiscal security while expanding services such as Bus Rapid Transit and the Red Line, and the agency has earned national recognition for unparalleled transparency. By providing quality and reliable public transportation, we're able to give our residents alternative options that encourage reduction of single occupancy vehicles on our roads. With now over 34 million trips each year taken by our riders, I would have to say this has been my single most important accomplishment that has helped our transportation goals in Austin. I fully support the overall vision of Project Connect, as well as continuing to improve our multimodal options in Austin. We must continue to view transportation as an integrated system and approach future initiatives in a way that ensures connectivity and access for everyone in our community.</p>	<p>Replace freeway crossing traffic lights with bridges, frontage roads, improved on and off ramps, and turnabouts to route traffic back when bridging is too costly or not otherwise practical. The example is SH71 and Riverside where a bridge now spans SH71 and traffic flows unimpeded. Continue development of the Urban Trails programs in order to use grant money where possible to fund commuter options for cyclists from suburbs to the urban core. More separated bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure without taking motor vehicle lanes is my mantra. Rail - if we build rail at all, should be elevated so as not to impede traffic on the roads.</p>
<b>What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin?</b>	<p>Our goals with economic development should be centered on serving our local small businesses and providing opportunities for the hard to employ. I have proposed that we expand our economic incentive policy to extend eligibility to small, local, existing businesses that want to grow in our City. They're an essential part of our local culture and vibrant economy; our policies do not currently provide enough opportunities for all of Austin businesses. Our current policy rewards companies that provide additional community benefits such as providing workforce development, implementation of programs to employ and train the hard to employ, healthcare benefits, domestic partner benefits and a commitment to hiring locally. It shouldn't just be about bringing jobs to Austin; we must consider the quality of those jobs and the benefits for the community overall and also continue our commitment to investing in workforce development programs to further expand opportunity for upward mobility.</p>	<p>Our Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ183) could be used to attract more business development at and around ABIA, in concert with the planned "Innovation District" which should be extended to new mixed use developments along SH183 from city limit to city limit. I see a lot of vacant land on ABIA's west side as well as across SH71 and up SH183. The former Bergstrom AFB Golf course land is also prime real estate for hotel and restaurant, and retail which would drive sales tax revenues up for all of Austin the year round.</p>
<b>Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents?</b>	No	No

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<b>Why or why not?</b>	I answered no because we should always actively look for ways to improve our existing practices to ensure equity and inclusiveness. I'm proud of our City's current anti-discrimination policy, which protects LGBTQ individuals in the work place, housing, and other public areas. Austin is one of the few cities in the state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This policy protects the livelihood of individuals. I hope it serves as a model for other cities (and Texas as a whole) to adopt and ensure dignity by preventing discrimination in the workplace. I introduced the creation of an LGBTQ Community Liaison at APD during the 2013-14 budget process. This recommendation came directly from the Human Rights Commission and helped Austin achieve a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index. Liaison Charles Loosen works to ensure collaboration, sensitivity, and dignity is being maintained between residents and APD.	
<b>Name some infill projects that are vital to the health and success of your district. What are the pluses and minuses of the development of these projects?</b>		Continued improvements for mobility. I live in District 6, far NW Austin. As a mayoral candidate I see a need to bridge socioeconomic gaps in perception. We need to remember to fix the roads and upgrade infrastructure in every neighborhood, not just the newest and richest. We are only as strong as our weakest links. It is easy to give platitudes such as; "Lions Municipal Golf Course was the first to allow African - Americans a place to play golf in Texas"; but it would be better if private organizations would reach out to form golf and mentoring programs for kids in East and Southeast Austin, and provide the lessons, clubs, and tea times so they could enjoy the sport within school curriculum and earn chances at golf scholarships.
<b>Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively?</b>	Yes	No
<b>Why or why not?</b>	Since former Mayor Senator Watson set a goal of having 25,000 Austinites living downtown in an effort to create a vibrant city center and address suburban sprawl, we have dedicated significant resources to improving downtown. Our downtown center is a critical economic engine for Austin which brings in significant tax revenue that helps fund projects and services across the entire City. Recent bond elections have provided additional funds for projects outside of downtown, but I do believe we can come up with a plan to equitably distribute our annual capital improvement budget and on-going department spending even better than we are today. In addition to ensuring equitable City investments in services and capital improvements citywide, we must also continue our efforts to provide affordable housing in every area of Austin. The new district representation will provide a great opportunity for continuing to prioritize those needs.	Over development of downtown has caused so much pressure on our commuter freeways, which are limited in capacity by poor design, and lack of wisdom on part of our civic leaders. The 10-1 City Council will be comprised of more people who realize this, and I hope will work with me as mayor to create a peripheral development plan. We should shift focus to drawing regional and small business employment and give priority for any future incentives to fill vacant existing commercial real estate first, as well as development of affordable and inexpensive housing along far East Austin, South and SE Austin.
<b>Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers?</b>	For	Against
<b>Will you require a total cost-benefit analysis before voting on any subsidies or loans to any businesses?</b>	Yes	

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<b>What are the strengths and weaknesses of Austin's new city district system?</b>	<p>Austin is facing a historic change with implementation of geographic representation. At least 9 out of 11 members of the upcoming City Council will be new. I believe one of the most important functions of our next Mayor will be to help our almost entirely new Council to be successful in their initiatives to serve their districts and our City as a whole. There may be a learning curve for some, and it will take seasoned experience to help the newly elected body navigate the process.</p> <p>We have some very qualified and engaged candidates running in each and every district, and I believe that we can transition through this new form of government with the best City Council we have ever seen, ensuring we all understand that implementing successful citywide policy is the entire Council's responsibility. Our government is about to be turned completely over to its citizens, as it should be. I believe this change is long overdue, and that Austin will be an even better City for it.</p>	<p>The new city council will be represented. We have an excellent slate of qualified and talented candidates running for city council. I am excited about the prospect of working with them.</p> <p>The next mayor will need to balance decisions and build support across the board. I have had the experience of doing that in my work and business life for the last 35 years and hope to be that mayor for all of Austin.</p>
<b>Would you entertain any further changes to the system?</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you believe that affordable housing should be distributed throughout the city?</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you support the energy and water conservation policies of the City of Austin utilities?</b>	Yes	Yes