



2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Council District 2 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 | Delia Garza | John C. Sheppard |
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| Campaign E-mail | info@deliagarza.com | john@johncsheppard.org |
| Campaign Web-site | www.deliagarza.com | www.johncsheppard.org |
| Occupation / Main Source of Income | Attorney | REALTOR |
| Previous Occupations | Firefighter/EMT-B | El Lago Tortillas / Assistant Sgt at Arms for Texas House of Representatives |
| Education | B.S and J.D | approx. 60 college hours (UT & ACC), I have also completed hundreds of hours of Real Estate courses and am certified as an instructor by the Texas Real Estate Commission |
| How long have you lived in Austin (Years)? | 12 | 30 |
| How long have you lived in Texas (Years)? | 36 | 40 |
| If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin? | I fell in love with Austin when I visited during college. | My dad was looking for a job! (it was Summer before 5th grade for me) |
| Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as? | Democratic | Democratic |
| Previous public offices sought and/or held and when: | None | this is my 1st time |
| What civic organizations do you belong to? | Dove Springs Recreation Center Advisory Board Hermanos de East Austin Seedling Foundation Mentor | Austin Board of REALTORS Salem Walk Association of Neighbors South Austin Optimists Texas Democratic Party |
| Have you ever been convicted of a felony? | No | No |
| Have you ever had any civil judgments against you? | No | No |

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| Do you belong to your neighborhood or homeowner's association? | No | Yes |
| Have you participated in neighborhood planning? | Yes | Yes |
| If yes, how have you participated? | <p>Regarding the previous question and not belonging to my neighborhood or homeowner's association, I am not a member because I do not live in an area with either of those types of organizations.</p> <p>I have attended several Southeast Contact Team Meetings and City Council meetings regarding neighborhood planning.</p> | I was president of our N.A. and have attended meetings regarding zoning, bike lanes, etc. |
| What is your favorite book? | I don't really have a favorite book but autobiographies are my favorite and the last one I read was My Beloved World by Sonia Sotomayor and I enjoyed it. | To Kill a Mockingbird- closely followed by Tom Sawyer & The Fountainhead |
| What is your favorite movie or television series? | Orange is the New Black | old movie - Lawrence of Arabia (especially if you can see it on the big screen, like at the Paramount), more modern- Real Men (Jim Belushi/John Ritter a duo of comedic geniuses) / old TV -Seinfeld, new TV - Always Sunny in Philadelphia |
| What is your favorite hobby(ies)? | Running | I enjoy my veggie garden immensely, though I don't give it the attention it deserves, I also love going fishing, or to the beach when I can. |
| What is your favorite thing to do in Austin? | Running or volleyball in Zilker Park | chips & salsa & a drink on the patio (used to be at Jaime's on Red River, but lot's of options I've been exploring since they closed |
| Why are you running for office? | As the daughter of a firefighter and stay-at-home mom, I learned firsthand the value of serving the community early on. My father, who began his career as a migrant farm worker as a child, and my mother were very involved in their community and encouraged their three daughters to give back and pursue higher education. My upbringing inspired me to dedicate my career to public service and advocate for working families. Through years of public service to the Austin community, I've been able to see firsthand that there are areas that have been neglected for far too long. This was one of the biggest inspirations that drove me to work tirelessly to get 10-1 passed to ensure that Austinites would finally be fairly represented. I want to be a strong voice for the residents in District 2 that deserve to have someone fighting on their behalf to ensure equitable delivery of City services and advocate for policies that protect quality of life for all of Austin. | I am running for Austin City Council because I will be the council member that fights for South Austin (Dist2), but always also, I will always work for the consensus that is right. I am a candidate that is not beholden to any special interest groups and I will represent a change from the politics as usual on the city council dais- a change away from the councils of the past that have been bought and sold by the same cliques that placate voters, and then ignore them . |
| What are your top three priorities for Austin? | Addressing the affordability issue, traffic congestion, and ensuring smart, sustainable growth and economic development. | Public Safety, Affordability, Mobility. |
| Traffic continues to be an increasing problem for many Austinites as they commute to and from work. Is this a top priority for you? | Yes | Yes |

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| If so, what is your plan to help alleviate some of the traffic problems? If not, why? | Our approach to transportation in the future has to be multimodal, ensuring that we're meeting the needs of all Austinites. I support adding a rail option but do not support Prop. 1. Capital Metro has really ignored South Austin and we need to go back to the drawing table with the Project Connect Vision (done under the current council system that ignored South Austin). One quick way to improve traffic is a better and efficient bus service. We need more busses, better routes, extended service, and dedicated bus lanes. We could also do more to encourage employers to offer alternate work schedules and they could also provide reduced bus fare passes. Lastly, it's also very important when we are planning for growth (Imagine Austin), we are making sure the proper infrastructure (roads) are in place so that we aren't overburdening existing corridors with new traffic created by new neighborhoods. | "Traffic" implies that everyone is in or has, or wants a car. At the risk of channeling Nietzsche via Eddie Murphy in 'Coming to America', You must first stand and walk, and run and dance before you fly, one cannot fly into flying." First we must solve our sidewalk crisis- some neighborhoods have been waiting on them for decades! Then, we need to examine our trail & bike systems, expand our bus routes (especially the frequency of routes, and the lack of late night early / early morning routes). The lack of busses between midnight and early morning ignores the fact that many tech workers have overnight work schedules and that a huge number of Austinites (especially in Dist2) work downtown and need a safe ride home. |
| What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin? | I think the renewable energy industry, such as solar panels, is an untapped opportunity for economic development. I also believe the South Austin has been ignored with regards to planning economic corridors and would push for some growth and economic opportunities in Southeast Austin. | Our film industry needs to be encouraged further- not just a movie here or there, shot in surrounding rural communities and say that it's "made in Austin". |
| Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents? | No | No |
| Why or why not? | I think in any government process, there is always room for improvement. I am committed to supporting efforts to increase sensitivity training for all of our public safety agencies and City departments, and improve resources and protections for our LGBTQ community. | I don't think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to the majority of its citizens, but because I have never lived in Austin as a member of the LGBT community, it would be presumptuous for me to make that assessment. However, I do know that Austin is one of the most progressive cities in the country, and if it's not the best place to live, and let live for anyone- then we need to make it so. |
| 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? | I can't think of any infill projects that are "vital to the health of and success" of my district. I understand the concerns about infill. Neighborhood plans are formed after many hours of volunteer input and collaboration, and should be held in the highest regard. I believe it's appropriate to require a supermajority for zoning changes that override neighborhood plans. Infill options should be true options and all stakeholders should have the opportunity to give input. | Austin Energy has proposed a campus on Ben White that will cost at least \$60 million dollars. We need to explore the use of the old AMD campus being repurposed for this- it's unfair to tax payers not to. Also, District 2 is the largest (geographically) of all the 10 districts- there is ample opportunity for development, done correctly, and more importantly, there is a need for more retail, especially grocery store options. |
| Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively? | No | No |
| Why or why not? | District 2 has long been neglected. We have some basic needs such as sidewalks. I understand why Downtown gets most of the attention, but this new move to the 10-1 system will give Southeast some long overdue attention. | No, the city council of the past 20+ years has been heavily tilted towards a downtown first mentality. Even the council members that have hailed from South Austin have been part of the same downtown / Tarrytown / real estate speculator cliques that give lip service to different groups, but have obvious priorities that don't coincide with the majority of Austinites. |
| Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers? | Against | Against |

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| Will you require a total cost-benefit analysis before voting on any subsidies or loans to any businesses? | Yes | Yes |
| What are the strengths and weaknesses of Austin's new city district system? | <p>With regards to the question on subsidies for large employers, I don't think it is fair to ask for a simple For or Against response. I would have preferred an "It depends" option. The issue of subsidies is a complex issue with many moving parts. I believe each case should be taken on a case-by-case issue. The current economic incentive plan is a great step in the right direction in requiring certain things (number of local jobs, living wage, etc.) from companies before incentives are granted. I think subsidies are a tool that can be used to strengthen our economy but we must be judicious in granting them.</p> <p>Regarding 10-1, I see only strengths. I was part of the organization that petitioned and campaigned for 10-1. This is a huge step in the right direction in giving Austinites fair representation and bringing a voice to many areas of Austin that have been long neglected.</p> | <p>The new geographic system is long overdue- if not for the paternalistic 'gentleman's agreement' of the past 3+ decades, it would have been overturned long ago by the courts. The new geo system will be great if it elects new voices and new ideas with concern for their parts of town- if it elects the same old same old group of insiders and their cronies, then it will simply serve as a cheap cosmetic that gives us the illusion of change.</p> |
| Would you entertain any further changes to the system? | Yes | Yes |
| Do you believe that affordable housing should be distributed throughout the city? | Yes | Yes |
| Do you support the energy and water conservation policies of the City of Austin utilities? | Yes | Yes |