



## 2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Council District 4 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	Laura Pressley	Louis C. Herrin, III	Sharon Mays
<b>Campaign Phone</b>	512-762-3825	512-567-9489	512-553-4195
<b>Campaign E-mail</b>	PureRainLaura@aol.com	lchiii@stic.net	Info@Sharon4Austin.com
<b>Campaign Web-site</b>	<a href="http://www.PressleyforAustin.com">www.PressleyforAustin.com</a>	<a href="http://www.lousherrin.com">www.lousherrin.com</a>	<a href="http://www.Sharon4Austin.com">www.Sharon4Austin.com</a>
<b>Occupation / Main Source of Income</b>	Owner, Pure Rain, LLC	Civil/Environmental Engineer	Marketing consultant/Realtor
<b>Previous Occupations</b>	Engineer and Manager at Freescale Semiconductor, Inc.	Student	Marketing manager; entrepreneur (owned Baby Greens)
<b>Education</b>	Ph.D. Physical Chemistry	Bachelor of Science	Bachelor's degree in Public Relations
<b>How long have you lived in Austin (Years)?</b>	26	33	38
<b>How long have you lived in Texas (Years)?</b>	51	58	41
<b>If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin?</b>	UT Grad School in 1988	Not wanting to work in Houston	My family moved to Austin when I was 4 because my father was promoted at IBM.
<b>Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as?</b>	Democratic	Republican	Democratic
<b>Previous public offices sought and/or held and when:</b>	Austin City Council, Place 2 Against Mike Martinez	none	None
<b>What civic organizations do you belong to?</b>	Austin Neighborhoods Council, Windsor Hills Neighborhood Association, Restore Rundberg Team, ANC Subcommittee of the Land Development Code Rewrite, ANC Affordability Subcommittee	Boy Scouts of America	North Austin YMCA, board member North Austin Community Garden, chair Austin Food & Wine Alliance, events volunteer Love-A-Bull, Foster Mom  PAST: Dress for Success Austin, steering committee Rock the Vote, radio advisory board member Communities in Schools, career day speaker Lemonade Day Austin, volunteer
<b>Have you ever been convicted of a felony?</b>	No	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?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Have you participated in neighborhood planning?	Yes	No	No
If yes, how have you participated?	I'm a member of my Contact Team and President of my Neighborhood Association, Windsor Hills. I've participated in many of the CodeNEXT exercises, testified to the City Council Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee on Zoning and Neighborhood Plans.		
What is your favorite book?	Power of Intention	Science Fiction	Whispers - Dean Koontz
What is your favorite movie or television series?	Out of Africa	Superman / NCIS	Seinfeld
What is your favorite hobby(ies)?	Antiques	Woodwork	cooking, shopping, gardening, socializing
What is your favorite thing to do in Austin?	Be at Barton Springs	Entertainment - Movies, special events	I'm a person who is 'up for anything'. If it's something fun to do, I'm in. And if there's music and or food involved, I'll be first in line.
Why are you running for office?	To improve our affordability.	I want to hold the city council accountable for doing the business of the city and stop promoting small special interest groups. They need to serve the city as a whole.	I'm a business and community leader who has been a manager of people and projects for 20 yrs. My background and commitment to Austin is what we need on city council. Austin is a great city and I'm proud to call it my hometown. Our priorities and resources are not supporting the crucial needs of our community. In District 4 we lack basic resources: sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, a decent library, access to health care. We have challenges AND opportunities. We need a strong leader to get the district onto its feet. We must elect leaders who have a global view of Austin and won't get entrenched in a turf war. The districts are a great opportunity for local representation. It will take experienced leaders to work together, service the needs of our residents, and chart a path for the future of Austin that manages growth and builds an infrastructure that will support it. I am running for office because I have the leadership experience needed to represent District 4 at City Hall.

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<b>What are your top three priorities for Austin?</b>	<p>IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY--Austinites deserve to thrive in Austin. We will implement cost controls in utility departments, lower utility fees, develop a City of Austin Homestead Exemption and reduce subsidies to big corporations. These reductions will help homeowners and renters. A Homestead Exemption will enable more renters to become homeowners and build wealth for them and their families.</p> <p>PROTECT OUR NEIGHBORHOODS--Integrity and safety of our neighborhoods is key. We will protect our quality of life and ensure EMS, Fire and Police have the resources they need.</p> <p>PROVIDE REAL TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS--Efficient roadways lead the way to progress. We will optimize bus routes, traffic light timing, staggered work and class schedules, roadway and ramp design to improve mobility.</p>	<p>My top three priorities are transportation, affordable housing, and streamline City government.</p>	<p>Affordability Transportation Public Safety</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>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>If so, what is your plan to help alleviate some of the traffic problems? If not, why?</b>	<p>We will optimize bus routes, traffic light timing, staggered work and class schedules, roadway and ramp design to improve mobility.</p>	<p>We need to build more roads which is not a popular option with some Austinites. We need to put in things to move traffic along. I would support constructing new toll roads that once the roads are paid for the tolls will go away.</p>	<p>Beyond whatever happens with Prop 1, we need to improve Capital Metro so that it goes to more locations and runs more efficiently. The buses should also run until 3 a.m. to/from downtown on the weekends. DWI accidents and fatalities are frighteningly high in Austin. We need to provide alternatives to people driving downtown. There are many bus stops that don't have sidewalk access, seating or shade/shelter. If we want people to use public transportation instead of their cars we have to make it safe and convenient. City of Austin should consider having work from home days and staggered shifts to help reduce the amount of cars on the road during peak travel times.</p>

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<b>What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin?</b>	GROW OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES--Spend more of our tax dollars locally. We will increase the number of City contracts awarded to local businesses.	I think the greatest untapped opportunity could be training and promoting our unskilled labor force.	Small businesses are the key to the success of Austin. We have a thriving community of entrepreneurs and startups that are creating innovation and new jobs. The boom of restaurants in Austin has increased food tourism and the revenue generated by hotel taxes. Small businesses would benefit from a fraction of the support/resources that the city has given to out-of-town corporations. The return on the investment would be better. In District 4, we have an abundance of affordable and available commercial real estate that currently sits empty and blighted. If would could encourage and incentivize small/local businesses to come into our neighborhoods it would help revitalize the neighborhood, bring job opportunities, push out the low-level crime that happening in the parking lots, and provide shopping opportunities that we could access without getting on a major highway.
<b>Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents?</b>	No	Yes	No
<b>Why or why not?</b>	Not sure...need more information on how the current local, state and federal laws are possibly not addressing the needs for our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community in Austin.	I feel that they have all the same rights as anyone else living in Austin.	Violence acted out against the LBGT community is not treated with enough seriousness by the police department. Crimes go un-investigated and unpunished. There are not adequate policies in place to protect against job and housing discrimination. Though Austin is seen as liberal, prejudice lives and thrives here. As citizens of the United States, we are guaranteed equal rights. It is the duty of all level of governments to support and enforce that right.
<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>	We have a lot of undeveloped land in District 4 and we have a lot of opportunity for increasing single family and density development projects. We must balance these opportunities and make sure growth pays for itself and not provide subsidies and fee waivers to developers at the expense of our taxes increasing.	I am not aware of any infill projects other than the revitalization of Highland Mall to the Austin Community College campus and the Restore Rundberg project. I think both of these projects are going to encourage more business to this area which in turn creates jobs.	North Austin YMCA and the North Austin Community Garden are both great infill projects that have benefited District 4. Vacant land became a community center that is available to the public. There is a computer lab and a kids activity space, both free to the public. The YMCA also subsidizes many programs and memberships to the community. The community garden is an organic garden which allows people to fresh, organic produce that they might not be able to afford to purchase. It's also a beautiful public green space in a neighborhood that is densely populated and has blighted areas. The ACC Highland campus is another great infill project. It converted a semi-abandoned mall into a hi-tech college campus. There are plans for additional retail development of the space.
<b>Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively?</b>	No	No	No

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<b>Why or why not?</b>	My District 4 has been forgotten for decades with regard to resources for police, libraries, and parks.	I believe the City is putting all of its resources in promoting high rises and the Mueller development project. They are not really looking at the rest of the community.	District 4 is one of the most densely populated areas of Austin, but we lack basic infrastructure. Sidewalks, bike lanes, cross walks, access to health care - these are all lacking. The same is true in various other parts of Austin. I was recently told by a city official that there isn't money for sidewalks. I pointed out that the 2nd Street District was recently given "great sidewalks" that are wide with trees and benches. The same is being done on Brazos street. Neither of these areas is densely populated or used by a large population of tax-paying residents. The priority of our city needs to be making sure that basic resources are equally distributed across the city. Every day I see women with small children walking on the side of Lamar Blvd without the protection of a sidewalk or any barrier. That is ridiculous and completely inappropriate.
<b>Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers?</b>	Against	Against	Against
<b>Will you require a total cost-benefit analysis before voting on any subsidies or loans to any businesses?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>What are the strengths and weaknesses of Austin's new city district system?</b>	Strengths--Geographical Representation for areas of the City that have been neglected for some time, such as District 4 the Rundberg and St. Johns, areas. Weaknesses--Ward politics may result.	Strengths: All sections of the City will be represented. The City as a whole will have a voice in City government.  Weaknesses: The way some of the districts are outlined, there may not be many changes because some of the sections of the City may still not have enough votes to get things done.	The big strength of the new council will be better representation of the entire city at City Hall. There are areas of Austin that have never been included in the discussion when decisions are being made about the future of the community. The new district diluted the "he who raises the most money wins" tactic, which resulted in candidates of various backgrounds running for office. The challenge will be how will this new council work together? Council members with tunnel vision will only see how issues affect their district, which could create a turf war. With 11 voting members, power cliques could form that only support a particular agenda. Overall, I'm hopeful that this new system is going to great for Austin. It's important that the council we elect in November has the experience and acumen to get the job done.
<b>Would you entertain any further changes to the system?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you believe that affordable housing should be distributed throughout the city?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you support the energy and water conservation policies of the City of Austin utilities?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes