



2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Council District 7 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	Ed English	Jeb Boyt	Leslie Pool	Melissa Zone	Pete Salazar	Zack Ingraham
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Occupation / Main Source of Income	Retired	Attorney / HR Consultant (spouse)	Executive Ass't, Travis County	Senior Planner	Former Employment Specialist	LegalZoom.com Sales/Marketing
Previous Occupations	Sales and Marketing	Assistant Attorney General, Staff attorney at state agencies, title examiner	Travis County 2011-current; National Wildlife Federation 2004-11; Legislative Aide, TX House 2000-03; TxDOT Planner/Mgr 1991-99; TX Emp Cmsn 1985-91; Senator Bentsen caseworker, Senator Lloyd Bentsen, Austin District Office; Citibank (now Frost), marketing assistant	Urban/Regional Planner	Clinical Case Manager	Sales/Medical Assistance
Education	BA - Political Science	BA, American Studies from Reed College, Portland, Oregon; JD with Environmental Certificate, Pace University School of Law	B.A., cum laude, Grove City College (PA) 1977; attended mid-career MPAff, LBJ School of Public Affairs, 2000	Master of Public Administration and B.A. in Urban Studies	B.A. History	Texas State Univ. through Jr. Year.
How long have you lived in Austin (Years)?	31	21 years	34	4	34	13
How long have you lived in Texas (Years)?	60	39 years, not counting summers home from college	37	4	34	13

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If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin?	Job transfer	Job opportunities and to be near my family in Texas	married, husband was in grad school at UT	I married a 4th generation Texan	N/A	My family was from Austin and I moved here from Los Angeles after graduating high school to work and live.
Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as?	Republican	Democrat	Democratic	Democratic	Democratic	I do not have any party affiliation and try to focus on the issues. I do tend to vote more libertarian, but stray from party loyalty.
Previous public offices sought and/or held and when:	None		ran for AISD school board in 1992	N/A	N/A	n/a
What civic organizations do you belong to?	Volunteered with Red Cross and Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Hill Country Conservancy, Alliance for Public Transportation	LiveableCity, Treasurer and Executive Committee member Bull Creek Road Coalition, Design Principles Workgroup chair Justices of the Peace & Constables Association of Texas, member, Legislative Team variety of Democratic clubs	American Planning Association, Crestview Neighborhood Association, Crestview Planning Contact Team,	I am a former Employment Specialist for Caritas of Austin. I worked with returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. I represented Caritas with the ECHO, a group of non-profits that addressed housing, employment and veteran's issues. I sat on all work groups and co- chaired the employment work group.	None. I have done extensive work with the APD in regards to training to prevent dog shootings. This was successful and lead to big improvements in training standards at no additional cost to the taxpayer.
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Have you ever had any civil judgments against you?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Do you belong to your neighborhood or homeowner's association?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

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Have you participated in neighborhood planning?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
If yes, how have you participated?	Assisted with general information on Code Next with whatever information was most current at the time.	I participated in the Allandale neighborhood's response to the vertical mixed use initiative. I organized a coalition of urbanist groups, the Austin Urban Coalition, to follow and participate in the Imagine Austin comprehensive planning process.	stakeholder meetings, neighborhood meetings, public forums	My neighborhood planning began in the 1980s. My career allows me to work with neighborhoods on land development applications & ensuring neighborhood interest is protected in the development review process. I have employed participatory planning throughout my professional career to maximize resident's input as stakeholders. I provide pro bono work for neighborhoods. I was instrumental in assisting several neighborhood associations in North Austin stop approval of a cut-through from a high-traffic road through their neighborhood. I helped them focus on solutions, workings of city process & making sure they were doing the right things & galvanized their efforts to a workable solution. I'm instrumental in helping Crestview Neighborhood work with the city for a park that was promised in 2000. Currently, I am helping several neighborhood associations who are adjacent to a proposed PUD for two 210 feet high rises & three 60 feet tall buildings by reviewing a transportation impact analysis.	I sat on a housing work group with ECHO, evaluating the housing needs of Austin. We then gave those recommendations to city officials, spoke to state officials, and federal. I worked in these areas with various non-profits for over 5 years.	
What is your favorite book?	Ice Station Zebra	Neal Stephenson, Cryptonomicon	Girl with the Dragon Tattoo	Me Talk Pretty One Day by David Sedaris	The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes	The 4 Agreements
What is your favorite movie or television series?	A Few Good Men	It's a Wonderful Life	currently The Bridge, Halt & Catch Fire, Mad Men, Downton Abbey	Northern Exposure	The Godfather	Game Of Thrones
What is your favorite hobby(ies)?	Tinkering with computers	Cycling	reading, gardening, music, cooking, travel	cooking and hiking	Sports, Hunting, Fishing, and cards.	playing piano
What is your favorite thing to do in Austin?	The live music scene	A weekend of Saturday markets, movies, dining, and visiting friends when we never get in a car.	dinner w/friends, listening to live music (house concerts)	Hanging out at Zilker with our dogs on the weekends.	Pecan Street Festival	Go to the park with my sons.

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Why are you running for office?	<p>I worked extensively for passage of the 10 – 1 system; a more representative form of government. Austin has been a great place to live and work for the 31 years I have resided here, all of that in District 7. The time to give something back has come. The city needs someone who fully appreciates what the 10 – 1 campaign was all about and a fresh voice disconnected from past decisions and connections to city boards, commissions or employment. I am that honest voice who will listen to any common sense, constructive suggestions on moving Austin forward and addressing the challenges we face regardless of who or where the suggestions come from. My career provided me with years of opportunities to work with contract negotiations (including government contracts; a valuable skill set given next year's 3.5 billion dollar budget) and to bring people with different points of view to the table to find common ground, reach agreements, and move forward.</p>	<p>I went to law school, in part, due to my interest in public service. I have been actively involved in public affairs through organizations and campaigns. I am looking forward to the chance to serve on the Council. This year - with the opportunity to serve on the first Council under the 10-1 system and the chance to put into place the new culture and the new practices and procedures for the Council's operations - I could not imagine sitting on the sidelines.</p>	<p>I'm running for Council to bring my progressive leadership, perspective, and extensive experience with civic and community issues to the table. I have lived in Austin since 1980, served on four city commissions, two county bond task forces and the city's 2012 bond task force. I have been actively involved in numerous issue campaigns over the years and have worked for elected officials at state and local governmental levels doing legislative, program and policy work. I have the background and level of knowledge being on the City Council requires to hit the ground running if elected.</p>	<p>I'm the only one who's got the in-depth, relevant experience with the issues that everyone's concerned about. Specifically, I've been a professional urban regional planner for 20 years. Every day I've been dealing with complex transportation issues, land development and zoning issues, water and environmental issues. And it's always been my job to look out for neighborhoods and taxpayers.</p> <p>I'm the only candidate in this race who's got real solutions. For example, I repeatedly say growth should pay for growth. Right now in Austin our taxes keep going up to pay for growth, but the developers who profit from growth get all sorts of exemptions and waivers. That's out of balance and we need to fix that as part of our affordability problem. Also, protecting neighborhoods and preserving neighborhood plans are central themes of my campaign.</p>	<p>I have been working on housing, employment, and veterans issues for almost a decade. In that time the city has done little to create policies that would address these issues. They depended on non-profits, and other groups to create Band-Aids instead of them creating solutions. We are losing are small businesses, native Austinites are leaving because they can't afford to live here anymore. We must grow responsibly and make sure Austin's soul stays strong fore the future.</p>	<p>In 2013 I was forced into action to try and stop dogs from being unnecessarily shot by law enforcement. I worked with the APD Continuing Education Department and several officers there including Art Acevedo and Lt. Curtis Krause. I spoke at City Hall as well as several other public forums on behalf of dogs and how this could serve the best interests of law enforcement and the community. Ultimately they accepted my recommendations. These events opened my eyes to how much one individual could accomplish if motivated and willing to collaborate and find compromise in a given situation. This positive experience mixed with the opportunities the 10-1 ruling provides made me feel I could impact other important issues related to affordability, transparent government, transportation, and police accountability. If elected I plan on restoring the peoples faith in the Austin City Council while finding logical and fiscally responsible ways of solving problems.</p>

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What are your top three priorities for Austin?	Addressing - Traffic/congestion, affordability (including property taxes), fiscal responsibility on the part of the City of Austin	Addressing affordability and transportation and ensuring that the new Council fulfills on the promise of greater accountability under the 10-1 system.	affordability, tax reform, transportation, water	Deal with complex transportation issues, deal with complex affordability issues and establish a cost-effective city government. The key here is a mindset shift; we have to do things differently. Who should be paying for growth? We're so dependent on bonds and we wouldn't have to be if we had growth paying for growth. Our taxes are paying for road improvements that the developer should be mitigating. Expand the density bonus ordinance and enforce it, the city keeps giving waivers. Amend the ordinance for an emphasis on affordable middle class housing to be included in developments. My fiscal priorities and principles are to ensure cost-effective delivery of essential services. Public safety, utilities, transportation and the environment are my priorities. I would look for opportunities to identify redundancies and unnecessary expenditures in support services, especially those budgeted in the General Fund.	Responsible Growth Greater Access To Public Transportation Greater Support For Small Businesses	Affordability, Fiscal responsibility, and police accountability. I want to fix the city code and bring down housing costs. I want to look at Austin Energy as a business and return savings to the citizens. I want to restore faith and discourse into the council and make financial records public. I want to demilitarize the Austin Police and ban the use of military gear in Austin.
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. I have worked on transportation issues for years with the Alliance for Public Transportation and during the 2010 and 2012 bond campaigns.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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<p>If so, what is your plan to help alleviate some of the traffic problems? If not, why?</p>	<p>All possible remedies need to be in the toolkit for City Council members to consider. That includes the use of and additional emphasis on road improvements, better bus service, cost effective rail lines (I was the first in my District 7 race to go on record as opposing the rail proposal that will go before the voters in November), ride sharing, bike lanes, improved walkability, expanded taxi service and more. Although not forms of public transportation per se, we as a city need to encourage staggered work hours, more work from home opportunities, geographically dispersed employment opportunities, etc.</p>	<p>I support the Proposition 1 urban rail bond on this November's ballot. I am in favor of the Reconnect Austin vision for rebuilding I-35 and restoring connections between Downtown and East Austin, and the overall improvements to I-35. I support the plans for managed lanes on South Mopac and 183. I support the extension of the Burnet and Lamar rapid bus routes to Round Rock and Pflugerville and the other improvements described in the North Corridor Plan for Project Connect. I support the development of other corridor plans under project connect. I support Imagine Austin's vision of a compact and connected city where activity centers are linked by transportation corridors. I support the extension of Austin's bikeways, including more extensive use of protected bike lanes. I support the plan for the Lone Star Rail from Georgetown to San Antonio, and I will make securing funding for it one of my top priorities on Council. I will work to develop a plan for improving 360 and a plan for the Oak Hill Y that will not contribute to greater flooding downstream along Williamson Creek.</p>	<p>I support multi-modal transit options in our urban region: rail, roads, buses, bike and pedestrian. We must provide properly paved and maintained sidewalks and bus stop structures that provide shelter & shade that connect to neighborhoods, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. Crestview Station, for example, needs parking for the Red Line.</p>	<p>The goal here is to reduce congestion, and there are tools we're not using that can help taxpayers. Implement Transportation Demand Management tools. The City needs to partner with other agencies and businesses to sell bus passes at work, figure out if employees can telecommute, and work with companies to create staggered work hours. I would like to see a healthy mix of mobility options for everyone with convenient and inexpensive public transportation, including urban rail and reliable bus service with average headways of no more than 15 minutes. I would like to see interconnected and well maintained bicycle and pedestrian facilities designed to limit conflicts with automobile traffic.</p>	<p>I think if we increase connectivity in Austin, which means we need to increase our bus service to all areas of Austin, we need to expand the time of service to at least 3:30AM. We need to open up the toll roads during peak hours of traffic, so people can use them for free.</p>	<p>If elected I would support a new ordinance for road improvements. \$400 Million is included in the prop 1 bond which I do not support. I do think that was a mistake by the current council to connect those two things, rail and roads, in one bond. I would support a separate bond after additional data and consulting to find the appropriate areas to focus the funds as well as the appropriate amount to spend.</p>

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What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin?	I offer an answer with qualifications. I do believe that recruiting companies to Austin has its place, provided that the companies recruited and the advantages they may bring to the table will fill current or anticipated unmet needs. As an example, I would like to see companies come to Austin that provide employment opportunities for Austinites, in areas of the city that are currently short on employment opportunities, and target most of those employment opportunities toward those with more modest educational levels (jobs where the typical income level would be in the \$30,000 to \$60,000 range). These might include green jobs, clean manufacturing, distribution centers and the like. As a city we have a real opportunity to diversify the local economy beyond current levels.	Improving Austin's permitting and code compliance system so that it is efficient, consistent, reliable, and predictable. Businesses spend far too much time and money dealing with City requirements that can be opaque and arbitrarily applied.	Local small businesses are a major factor in shaping the character around town. We should celebrate and support them. The permitting process is extremely difficult and time-consuming, and needs reformed. Additionally, I support the City's economic development staff shifting focus away from recruiting major commercial businesses to Austin and instead work to support and expand our local and small business economy.	The city devotes an inordinate amount of economic development funding to attracting large corporations from out-of-state. I would work to shift the emphasis to development and expansion of locally owned businesses and startup ventures in Austin. Also, the city's permitting processes need to be streamlined and more user friendly in order to reduce the time and money that small businesses have to expend to satisfy conditions of permits. I favor shifting the city's priorities for the use of tax incentives to benefit small, locally owned businesses.	I think we need to create independent business corridors, that support local businesses in all areas Austin. This will promote local businesses in our many festivals and concerts. This will grow Austin's culture in other states, and countries.	I think the formation of local businesses is the greatest untapped resource. If elected I will support businesses by rewriting the city code, working with zoning issues that price businesses out of established areas, lower taxes, and rework code compliance so that we have more WholeFoods or Amy's Ice Cream's starting and thriving here in Austin. We must support and prop up our local businesses.
Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents?	No	I am undecided on this.	No	No	No	Yes
Why or why not?	I have heard from many that the legal rights and protections do not go far enough. I would ask those most affected by these issues for their input on how and what changes and improvements should be made. In general and throughout my career and personal life I have found it best to seek the council of those closest to any issue for their advice.	I support an ongoing review of the benefits and rights granted by the City to its LGBTQ employees to ensure that the City is meeting our standards of equality and to ensure that we are doing as well, if not better, than our peer cities throughout North America. We should also review whether LGBTQ residents are receiving protections in employment and housing where City funding is involved.	The City has made strides in ensuring equality for its LGBTQ employees but more can be done. I believe all policy issues should be considered through the lens of the LGBTQ community, for example the recent Parental Leave paid time off program applying to same-sex parents. I would propose a new City Commission on LGBTQ issues that would address community-wide issues as well as issues specific to our employees.	The city has done an excellent job compared to many other cities, especially in Texas. The Human Rights Commission's Municipal Equality Index is a great barometer of how we are doing. Increase recruitment of LGBTQ employees, and on boards and commissions. I would like to see the city do a better job at anti-bullying educational programs in our schools and to monitor closely the Hate Crimes Task Force. Diversity across all areas ensures a healthy city.	I think we are doing well, but we can do better in making sure people have the same rights as all Texans.	I think Austin is a forward thinking city and tries to treat people equally. If elected I would want my staff to reflect that diversity as well.

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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?	<p>My sincere apologies on failing to provide an in-depth answer to this question, but time constraints make that difficult. I wanted to get this questionnaire submitted without any further delay.</p> <p>In short, District 7 needs parks, transportation hubs and some high density housing WHERE appropriate.</p>		<p>District 7 does not have "infill" specifically, but the Burnet Road Corridor Plan is focused on the types and mix of commercial entities along Burnet and Anderson Lanes. Compatibility standards are key here as is respecting and including the time neighborhoods have spent developing Neighborhood Plans & Future Land Use Maps.</p>	<p>Although I didn't agree with the large subsidies the city gave the developers of The Domain, I do believe new development should be concentrated in that area. I would like to see an emphasis on a mix of employment centers. That will then support a mix of housing and retail.</p>	<p>Like I stated before we need to create small business corridors protecting small businesses in district 7. Without these corridors we will eventually lose small businesses due to massive growth.</p>	<p>The Bull Creek land that is up for sale would be a vital piece of land to use for development of either affordable housing, park space, hike and bike trails, a supermarket or apartment communities. Unfortunately the current city council budgeted horribly for this and there are no funds available with which to purchase it. This is ultimately a huge failure as it will either be a lost opportunity or it will be purchased and put future Austinites in debt.</p>
Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Why or why not?	<p>My sincere apologies on failing to provide an answer to this question, but time constraints make that difficult. I wanted to get this questionnaire submitted without any further delay.</p>	<p>Regardless of the merits, the perception in the outlying neighborhoods is that the balance is tilted toward Downtown. In part, this is due a lack of transparency on how the revenues generated from Downtown, particularly from large events, benefit the City as a whole. In general, the City needs to be more transparent about how the hotel/motel and alcoholic beverage taxes from Downtown flow into the City budget.</p>	<p>The city can do better. Outlying areas feel they are neglected - they want more parks, pools and public safety in their neighborhoods. Infrastructure, roads, sidewalks, water lines for example, need upgrades and maintenance. The city budget should reflect a better balance of spending throughout Austin.</p>	<p>The city has placed an unfair emphasis on downtown priorities. One can argue that downtown serves everyone, and I agree to some extent. However, the burden of paying for infrastructure improvements for downtown developers must not fall on individual citizens alone. Skyrocketing property taxes are forcing residents to move to the suburbs, contributing to urban sprawl.</p>	<p>The lack of access to public transportation in all areas of the city hinders many Austinites to work shop and live where they want to. They limited to the times in which they can enjoy our city.</p>	<p>The needs of down town tended to weigh heavier on the minds of the city council. I would imagine that evens out under the new 10-1 city council.</p>

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Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers?	Against	In considering whether to support any incentive deal, I would want to verify that the benefits were worth the requested subsidies. I would work to verify that the factors of concern were minimized and offset to the greatest extent practicable (i.e. adding performance measures regarding ensuring that a certain percentage of the existing and new employees reside in Austin and Travis County). In addition, I would prefer to see incentives used to attract businesses to the activity centers described in the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan and that the businesses add to the diversity of Austin's overall economy. As part of any incentive agreement, we should also require that companies receiving incentives comply with the City's goals for domestic partner benefits, MBE and WBEs, etc.	Against	Against	Against	Against
Will you require a total cost-benefit analysis before voting on any subsidies or loans to any businesses?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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<p>What are the strengths and weaknesses of Austin's new city district system?</p>	<p>This is a subject near and dear to me given my intense involvement with getting the 10 - 1 system on the ballot, passed and a fair set of district maps drawn. I don't know that I can really do justice to the question in just 1000 characters. Please ask me this question at the Town Hall event -- I'd love to share my experiences with this process.</p> <p>I'll use some of the space available to answer this question to comment on the question below this one. I would entertain further changes to the system after having given the current system time to operate and then see what refinements would be appropriate.</p>	<p>The strengths are the much needed accountability that it will provide. The Council members will be responsive to the residents and businesses of the district. The districts will also give the people of the districts a more prominent voice at City Hall and in public affairs. The weaknesses of the system include the risk of ward politics in which Council members are concerned largely only with matters in their own districts and/or that the Council members are able to exercise extensive control over decisions affecting their district. I am also concerned about the churn built into the system. With the existing term limits, it is likely that half of the new Council will be gone in six years, after a two-year term and a four-year term. I am concerned that this would be a loss of knowledge for the City and that it might strengthen the position of City staff who may seek to simply outlast Council members that will be gone after only a few years.</p>	<p>Strengths include a real grassroots connection to neighborhoods and businesses in the proscribed areas. Council members will be more accountable to the voters. Weaknesses include district lines that split cohesive neighborhoods and voting precincts (Rosedale is a prime example – the neighborhood is split between 7 & 10, and pct 236 is cut in the middle at 45th Street). I would try to put split neighborhoods back together when the lines are redrawn during the 2020 census. Neither a plus nor a minus, but a reality: Council members will have to weigh benefits to their specific district with benefits to the City in its entirety when making decisions. Some of these decisions will be distinctly challenging; others, not so much.</p>	<p>The strength of the 10-1 system will bring about more transparent and accountable city operations to its citizens. The weaknesses is that many of the 10-1 members are not experienced in city government and unintended consequences could happen from making poor policy decisions based on lack of knowledge of city government.</p>	<p>I believe its strength is that it will provide representation in all 10 districts, but we must look beyond our districts as well to address the problems of Austin as a whole.</p>	<p>The strengths are there will be more ideas and better representation for the city as a whole. The weaknesses are the potential for too much disagreement and too many district specific concerns that prevent city wide collaboration. Ultimately, this is why someone with experience in collaboration and compromise is key.</p>

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Would you entertain any further changes to the system?	No	Yes. There is a great deal of interest in proposing that Austin move to a Strong Mayor system. There is also interest in presenting again the proposal to have the City Attorney report to the Council instead of the City Manager. I think that we should have a discussion about how the redistricting process worked. There was little discussion of the mechanics of redistricting prior to the vote in 2012. In particular, I'd like to discuss whether we really need to have the Commission to Select the Commission that cost a great deal of time and money. The voters did also approve the 8-2-1 proposal, and I would be in favor of a discussion of whether we should again look at creating two at-large districts or - as I would prefer - two super-districts, each comprised of five existing Council districts (combining Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in one super-district would allow it serve as a Hispanic-opportunity district).	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you believe that affordable housing should be distributed throughout the city?	Yes	Yes, but I also recognize that property values are not equally distributed throughout the city.	Yes	Yes	No	No
Do you support the energy and water conservation policies of the City of Austin utilities?	Yes	Yes, and I support the recommendations of the recent Water Policy Management Task Force.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No