



2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Council District 8 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	Becky Bray	Darrell Pierce
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Campaign E-mail	becky@brayfor8.com	district8@darrellpierce.com
Campaign Web-site	www.brayfor8.com	www.darrellpierce.com
Occupation / Main Source of Income	Transportation Engineering/Planning	Principal, SNAP Management Group, Inc.
Previous Occupations	Transportation Engineering/Planning	Manager of Corporate Procurement, IBM; Director, Executive Business Administration, General Services Commission; Commodity Manager, Motorola.
Education	Texas A&M - MS and BS Science (Civil Engineering)	Crockett High School, Bachelor’s Degree in Business from St. Edward’s University, Graduate, Austin Police Academy, Graduate of Leadership Austin
How long have you lived in Austin (Years)?	40	34
How long have you lived in Texas (Years)?	45	36
If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin?	Native - schools out of Austin	My father retired to the Bergstrom Air Force Base when I was 16.
Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as?	Republican	Democratic
Previous public offices sought and/or held and when:	None	Ran unsuccessfully in 2006, Austin City Council, Place 6
What civic organizations do you belong to?	Settlement Club of Austin Junior League of Austin Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Texas Emancipet Real Estate Council of Austin (civic and professional)	Planning Commission, ISD Boundary Task Force, Chamber of Commerce Board, Transit Working Group, Austin Public Education Foundation
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	No	No
Have you ever had any civil judgments against you?	No	No
Do you belong to your neighborhood or homeowner’s association?	Yes	Yes
Have you participated in neighborhood planning?	Yes	Yes

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If yes, how have you participated?	<p>I have attended meetings, facilitated and participated in the process as both a resident, professional engineer and land planner.</p> <p>I am an American Institute of Certified Planner - AICP (land and transportation planning), Professional Engineer (PE) and Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE). So for both my job and as a resident I have had a variety of opportunities to participate.</p>	<p>I organized and implemented a remodel of our Western Oaks neighborhood entry way. I was a member of the Western Oaks HOA Board and sat on various planning subcommittees for the Western Oaks neighborhood. In addition I served on Planning Commission and led Open Space clean-ups.</p>
What is your favorite book?	Historical based -	Good to Great, Jim Collins
What is your favorite movie or television series?	GRIMM, Shark Tank, Big Bang Theory	The Cosby Show
What is your favorite hobby(ies)?	Volunteering, running, biking, being outside, anything with animals	Gardening, Cooking
What is your favorite thing to do in Austin?	Running, biking in my neighborhood, spending time with family and friends	Jazz Clubs, Canoeing, Golfing
Why are you running for office?	<p>I have wanted to run for quite some time. With the implementation of the new 10 – 1 system, the southwest part of Austin will finally have a seat at the table. For too long there has not been a responsible and common sense voice at the table. We are the 11th largest City with some significant needs. Our current council system has failed to truly address the community's transportation, water, development, city services, educational and affordability issues</p>	<p>I am a 34-year resident of Austin who graduated from Crockett High School and St. Edward's University. I am the father of three wonderful daughters and the husband of an extraordinary wife who is a partner with me in all our endeavors. I am actively involved in my neighborhood, as well as my church, Greater Mount Zion. As the owner of a consulting firm, I am focused on process improvement and performance management for numerous government agencies and businesses. My combined public and private experience at the General Services Commission and companies such as Motorola and IBM exceeds that of any other District 8 candidate. My civic commitment to Austin includes serving on public commissions dealing with education, planning, chamber of commerce, and transportation. I will be a passionate, dedicated and accessible council member.</p>
What are your top three priorities for Austin?	<p>Transportation - Continue moving forward with roadway construction. We need improved transit options (park and ride, express bus, bus rapid transit, traditional service). We need to protect our local roadway networks while allowing for connectivity and pedestrian/bicycle access. Water - Large problem requiring the development of a true long term solution and Austin should work with neighboring communities. We should be looking at underground water storage, increasing water reuse opportunities, water conservation measures, or even rain water collection. City services - A very broad category, but in general the way the city is doing business impacts all of us. The City's development review/permitting systems needs to be revisited. The system has become very cumbersome and as such it adds to the price of doing business in Austin. When setting the budget, Austin needs to take care of the residents before taking on pet projects. The City needs to work for the citizens and not against</p>	<p>District 8's three most critical issues are transportation, community services, and protection of our environment. I would address each by securing adequate funding to support a regional, comprehensive transportation study for all of South Austin, ensuring lights on city streets are synchronized to yield optimal traffic flow, maximize the efficient delivery public safety services, and find funding to protect our open spaces, aquifer, and parks.</p>
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?	Traffic is a huge problem for our City and if not addressed could jeopardize our economic vitality. There are many things we as a city need to do. We must continue to move forward with the planned transportation projects – SH 45 SW, S MoPac, Y at Oakhill. The City must work with TxDOT, CTRMA and others and learn to do more with less. This includes the development of more innovative intersections which typically increase capacity at a much lower cost. We must work with Capital Metro and surrounding communities and develop a truly regional transit vision and plan. This plan must address the needs of the residents in each of the communities and include expanded transit services. The City also needs to develop areas where residents can live, work and play and lessen their dependence on the private automobile or at least lessen the commute patterns. The City also needs to create collaborative partnerships that encourage telecommuting and alternative work schedules.	Dante's Inferno
What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin?	I believe there are two untapped economic development opportunities in Austin. The first is the creative sector. I have many friends in this area and I think that there are not enough opportunities for them. I see them struggling to find an art venue, health care, affordable housing, or a work space. I also fully understand the lack of late night transportation options for many of the individuals working in this sector. The second opportunity includes the trade sectors. I think the City, ACC and AISD need to work collaboratively in the creation of educational opportunities that address the wants and needs of those students who may not want to continue on to a traditional four year college, but may want to learn a trade skill and work immediately.	<p>It is important for the City to provide economic development incentives for medium to large employers that create employment and education for semi-skilled and non-technical workers. Some type of revolving micro lending fund should be created for emerging growing local companies with a stable track record.</p> <p>In response the question "Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers?": It is important for the City to provide economic development incentives for medium to large employers that create employment and education for semi-skilled and non-technical workers. Some type of revolving micro lending fund should be created for emerging growing local companies with a stable track record. These efforts should be very targeted.</p>
Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents? Why or why not?	<p>No</p> <p>I know that the GLBT community is very active within the Austin community and I think Austin is making progress toward providing protections. I would like to see more interaction and communication between these communities and the various city departments and the city in general. I personally do not know the detailed issues or concerns that the GLBT community face and would welcome the opportunity to learn and understand.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Austin is the leader in Texas for support of LGBT rights. While Austin is a leader in LGBT equality, there are always opportunities to do more towards making sure everyone's rights are protected.</p>
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?	The most critical project for District 8 would be the redevelopment of the Y at Oakhill. Currently leases are not being renewed and/or commercial redevelopment projects are being halted. This is primarily due to the land owners and developers not knowing what is going to happen with the intersection of HWY 71 and US 290. The City needs to work with CTRMA and TxDOT and move the interchange project forward. The project is at least 6 years away, but once the plans are decided upon the revitalization can begin. As a resident in this area, I would like to see commercial, retail and office space be developed along with the expansion of ACC. This would become a true activity center for our part of town. While I recognize some residents do not want the added traffic or the influx of people, the increase can be mitigated through local access control.	District 8 needs more schools and a recreation center. A plus for infill development is that it will create more opportunities for our District to become a better place to live, learn, work, and play. A potential minus for infill development is always going to be the environmental concerns. District 8 is located within the environmentally sensitive Edward's Aquifer Recharge Zone. Therefore, any and all development in District 8 must meet environmentally smart and responsible standards.
Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively?	No	No

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Why or why not?	Austin has become to downtown-centric. The far too long the City has been directing residential and commercial development as well as community resources into downtown while not paying attention to other areas. This only leads to more residents working downtown, increasing the demands being placed on our roadway system and generally making it harder to do anything in the central business district. This has all come at the detriment to the outlying communities. I believe many of the needs of the outlying communities - roadways, infrastructure improvement, sidewalks, parks and open spaces, and community areas (library, community centers) – have largely been ignored because the majority of our City’s resources are directed to downtown. The current council structure allows a small vocal minority to redirect resources away from the outlying communities	For years, Austin has focused the majority of their efforts to developing and maintaining Central Austin. This has caused a sever disparity in the quality of infrastructure, public transportation, and entertainment options for all other suburban parts of the city.
Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers?	For	For
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?	The strengths of our new system far outweigh the weaknesses. Under this new system we will have the rare opportunity to hit the reset button on our city governance system. This system will allow so many more people the opportunity to have their needs and concerns heard. Instead of all council members being elected from the central area, we will have council members from all parts of the City which will expand the conversations. I am hopeful that all new council members take the time to get to know the different areas of the City and the various issues facing them. The biggest weakness will be avoiding ward politics, but I believe by working together, communicating and understanding each other we can all work together for betterment of the City of Austin as a whole.	<p>The strengths present a great opportunity to reset our local government and create some real opportunities for change and providing a voice for all Austin communities. The potential weakness is for the new council to not create shared strategic principles that may result into a level of district gridlock that minimizes moving issues forward.</p> <p>In response to the question "Would you entertain any further changes to the system?": We need to explore how we can in the most cost efficiency way establish offices in each district. An inventory should be done to determine the vacancy of local government facilities in each district.</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