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E: info@logcabinaustin.us
W: logcabinaustin.us
F: [fb.com/LogCabinAustin](https://www.facebook.com/LogCabinAustin)
T: [@LogCabinAustin](https://twitter.com/LogCabinAustin)



2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Council District 9 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	Erin McGann	Kathie Tovo
Campaign Phone	512-470-9156	512-632-8796
Campaign E-mail	erin4district9@gmail.com	info@kathieforaustin.com
Campaign Web-site	erinforcitycouncil.com	www.kathieforaustin.com
Occupation / Main Source of Income	Program Supervisor at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice	Council Member
Previous Occupations	I have worked at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for 7 years, first as a Parole Officer for special needs offenders, later as a Human Service Specialist linking clients with HIV with the local ASO, then working as a contract monitor for \$25 million in contracts for the mental health program supported by TDCJ called TCOOMMI. Currently I run a reentry program for offenders coming out of prison. Prior to working for TDCJ, I worked for mutual fund companies facilitating multi million dollar trades and reviewing trades for fraud.	director of programs and communications; assistant professor; lecturer; freelance writer
Education	BS in Justice and Policy Studies from Guilford College, MS in Criminal Justice from Texas State	Ph.D. UT Austin; MA, UT Austin; B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
How long have you lived in Austin (Years)?	12	23
How long have you lived in Texas (Years)?	12	23
If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin?	My husband and I were both laid off in the tech crash in the early 2000's. He decided to go to grad school at UT for Architecture, I came along. He dropped out of UT, but we stayed in Austin because we loved it here.	graduate studies at The University of Texas at Austin
Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as?	Unaffiliated	Democratic
Previous public offices sought and/or held and when:	None	Austin City Council Member Place 3
What civic organizations do you belong to?	ECHO- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition Austin /Travis County Reentry Roundtable Texas Interoffice Coalition for the Homeless I also served on the Citizens Review Panel through the Office of the Police Monitor until March,2014	St. John's United Methodist Church; Families with Children from China; UT Ex-Students Association; Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority Alum.; Settlement Home Advisory Board; Campfire USA Program Advisory Board; Adoption Knowledge Affiliates; Heritage Neighborhood Association; South Austin Democrats, Black Austin Democrats, Austin Environmental Democrats, Capital Area Progressive Democrats, Stonewall Democrats, and Central Austin Democrats.
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	No	No

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Have you ever had any civil judgments against you?	No	No
Do you belong to your neighborhood or homeowner's association?	No	Yes
Have you participated in neighborhood planning?	No	Yes
If yes, how have you participated?	N/A	I served on the Planning Commission and the Neighborhood Planning subcommittee, I have been a member of the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Planning Team, and I have had the opportunity to review neighborhood plans as a Council Member.
What is your favorite book?	This is a trick question! I love to read-- So The Art of Racing in the Rain; One Good Dog; The Snow Child; Pecked to Death by Ducks; In Cold Blood....	I'm an avid reader and have no absolute, #1 favorite; however, the Bread Givers is a book that has remained a favorite of mine through the years.
What is your favorite movie or television series?	The Princess Bride and Orange is the New Black	West Wing
What is your favorite hobby(ies)?	I run marathons and sew not at the same time)	reading; learning about antiques
What is your favorite thing to do in Austin?	Running with Gilbert's Gazelles, sewing at Stitch Lab and Going to the movies at the Alamo Drafthouse	Spend time with my husband and daughters, especially at the Downtown Farmers Market.
Why are you running for office?	<p>I am running for City Council because we have a distinct lack of accountability in City Council.</p> <p>The City of Austin can improve its ability to work with the citizens, its affordability and livability, and its commitment to the re-use of resources and green energy. The current council is not responsive to the citizens of Austin and the city departments have followed suit. We can be better at serving and listening to the citizens of Austin, and I will make sure they are heard.</p> <p>We have begun a new era in politics in Austin; ten newly formed districts will get a new representative on City Council, and district 9 deserves a choice to have new representation as well.</p>	It has been a privilege to serve on the Austin City Council. I am proud of what I have accomplished in my first term on Council and look forward to continuing my work on affordability, housing, environmental sustainability, and preserving the quality of life in this great city.
What are your top three priorities for Austin?	<p>Reduce frivolous spending</p> <p>Increase customer service and accountability through out the City departments and government</p> <p>Create a reliable cost effective transportation system</p>	<p>Affordability. I have led the Council in initiatives aimed at reforming our broken property tax system, and introduced a successful resolution to create the first-ever city homestead exemption. I have voted against unnecessary public tax subsidies -- supporting only those that resulted in strong benefits for Austin, and I helped strengthen the vetting process for economic incentives.</p> <p>Education. We need to keep our central city neighborhood schools open, to adopt policies and practices that keep families with children in our central city, and to leverage city and school district resources in effective and efficient ways.</p> <p>Putting people first. When I ran in 2011, I promised to listen to everyday Austinites, not just the big developers and lobbyists. I have taken strong stances to protect the environment, to develop programs for youths and seniors, and to look out for the interests of Austin residents and businesses.</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?	I plan to create a web of park and rides around the city at all the major roadways. I will then have busses that run regularly from the park and rides to other areas of the city. The busses will not all be regular sized busses, but based on the demand of the area, some places would get smaller busses to accommodate needs. I will also increase the time of bus routes, ultimately striving for a 24 hour bus system. The transportation must be convenient and inexpensive to encourage people to ride.	There isn't one magic cure to Austin's traffic problems. We must invest in roadway improvements as well as in alternative forms of transportation that enable Austinites to move around without needing a car. I voted in favor of Project Connect, which sets out a long-term vision of transit. I also place a high priority on building sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure and investments in Safe Routes to School. The Families and Children Task Force Report provides a blueprint for making our neighborhoods safer, including traffic calming, family-friendly enhancements, and education programs aimed at creating a more walkable community.
What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin?	Local business. Our city has spent millions of dollars encouraging large businesses to move to Austin and very little encouraging local business. We need to support and encourage local business.	As Austin is now the fastest-growing city in the nation, I do not support using incentives to attract out-of-town corporations unless the proposal can demonstrate extraordinary benefits for Austinites. While it is important to continue to grow and diversity our local economy, we must also recognize that we have burgeoning local businesses that can also benefit from our economic development efforts. I support prioritizing our economic development dollars to help local businesses grow and investing in local talent through workforce development initiatives.
Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents?	No	No
Why or why not?	If we still have to ask this question the answer can only be no	I am proud that the City of Austin holds a 100 score on the HRC's Municipal Equality Index. Part of the reason we have such a high score is that the City of Austin is an LGBTQ-friendly employer. However, there is always room for improvement; for example, it's my understanding that the City's health care benefits may not now cover transgender transition procedures. I will continue to work with LGBTQ leaders, like Equality Texas, to ensure that all employees are treated equal under the city's policies and practices. In May of this year, the City Council directed the City Manager to evaluate its policies, as measured by the HRC index, and recommend to council changes to enhance our equality practices.
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 TXDOT offices on 45th street will becoming available for development soon, and this area could become a great development of varied cost housing, protected elder housing and low income housing. The pluses are obviously creating more affordable housing in Austin. The negatives are the infrastructure in the area is already stressed and an increase in drivers wouldn't improve the situation. Additionally we have sections of Airport Blvd that could use some serious TLC. The issue here is attracting developers to work to improve the area, and still keep the rents low enough for the established businesses	Triangle, a mixed use development with more than 500 residential units. The development includes open space and a good mix of businesses that serve the needs of residents and others; I believe the rental prices tend to be relatively high-priced. Capitol Studios, a Downtown affordable community developed by Foundation Communities; this project will provide the first affordable community constructed Downtown in 45 years. This development serves a critical need for affordable housing near an area of town with a high concentration of service industry jobs; however, the 100% efficiencies can only serve single adults.
Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively?	No	Yes
Why or why not?	In the past we have not. The council has all lived in central Austin and all development and improvements have been central based. The new 10-1 council will increase the equity for all the citizens of Austin	The City has made good strides in recent years in tracking infrastructure and capital investments in different areas of Austin. Although recent investments have been distributed well, certain areas of the city still suffer from years of neglect and need significant resources and additional investment.
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?	The strength is that all Austin will be represented; it should encourage involvement in the government process and create a robust voting environment. The weakness comes in if any member of the council neglects to realize many of the issues coming before council will affect the entire city and only votes for the benefit of his or her district	District representation will enable Council Members to focus more intently on a limited area and to better learn that area's needs, resources, challenges, and opportunities. The new system will still require Council Members to work together for the good of the whole city, however, and that will require much collaboration and productive dialogue.
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