



## 2014 – Austin Mayoral and City Council “Get to Know Your Candidate” Town Hall City Council District 5 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   | Ann Kitchen  | Dan Buda  | Jason Denny  | Dave Floyd   | Dave Senecal   |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|
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| <b>Occupation / Main Source of Income</b>  | Healthcare Consultant & Attorney                                       | Realtor/Property Manager  | Texas General Land Office  | lawyer/consultant/business owner                             | Computer Systems Tech  |
| <b>Previous Occupations</b>  | Assistant Attorney General   | Chief of Staff, Sen. Wendy Davis; Committee Director, Sen. Mario Gallegos | Marine   | general counsel/owner of insurance business                  | Control Engineer   |
| <b>Education</b>   | J.D. University of Texas; BA Psychology / Social Welfare               | Bachelors in Economics, University of Michigan                            | Marine Corps   | UT-Austin, BA; Washington & Lee University JD 03             | BSEE from UT @ Austin  |
| <b>How long have you lived in Austin (Years)?</b>  | 35   | 8   | 10   | 22   | 35   |
| <b>How long have you lived in Texas (Years)?</b>   | 58   | 8   | 37   | 26   | 35   |
| <b>If not a native Austinite, what brought you to move to Austin?</b>  | UT   | Climate, Economy  | Marine Corps   | dad moved here to work at Texas Municipal League             | Family and School  |
| <b>Though a non-partisan race, generally, what political party do you associate with or are registered to vote as?</b> | Democratic   | Democratic  | Republican   | Democratic   | Independent  |
| <b>Previous public offices sought and/or held and when:</b>  | State Representative, D48  | Member, Austin Impact Fee Advisory Committee, July 2009-December 2011     | None   | Dem Precinct Chair- 2005                                     | None   |

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| What civic organizations do you belong to?                     | Currently – TexHealth Central Texas, Livable City  | n/a  | Military Veterans Employment Network, Austin Junior Chamber, Community Advocates for a Safer Austin | Young Mens Business League, Austin Young Chamber of Commerce, Engage ATX, Austin Young Lawyers Association, The Creative Fund | Sierra club, Lake Travis Clean up, Texas Association of Sports Officials, Various Live Art venues in volunteer capacity. |
| Have you ever been convicted of a felony?                      | No   | No   | No  | No  | No   |
| Have you ever had any civil judgments against you?             | No   | No   | No  | No  | No   |
| Do you belong to your neighborhood or homeowner's association? | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| Have you participated in neighborhood planning?                | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | No  | No   |
| If yes, how have you participated?                             | Our neighborhood recently experienced a tragic accident which has spurred planning to address cut-through traffic and high rate of speed on the major street running through the neighborhood. Goal is to improve safety particularly for area around the elementary school and potentially improve bike infrastructure. | I have attended Planning Commission meetings, especially on the South Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan. | I am the watch commander for my neighborhood watch  |   | N/A  |
| What is your favorite book?                                    | No Answer  | Dante's Inferno  | Hunt for Red October  | Americana   | None   |
| What is your favorite movie or television series?              | No Answer  | The Empire Strike Back   | The Good Wife   | Archer  | Shawshank Redemption   |
| What is your favorite hobby(ies)?                              | No Answer  | Guitar, piano, tennis, soccer  | Baseball  | photography, cycling, hiking  | Hiking   |
| What is your favorite thing to do in Austin?                   | No Answer  | People watch during SXSW   | Enjoying our beautiful parks  | acting in amateur lawyer musical comedy   | Volunteer at live theater and music events   |

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| <p><b>Why are you running for office?</b></p> | <p>I am running to offer my experience at a critical time for our city, when at least 9 out of 10 council members will be new and the city is facing critical challenges, largely stemming from our rapid growth.</p> <p>In the 20+ years I have lived in South Austin, I have dedicated my life to taking an active role in improving our community. As a former State Legislator and advocate for people, I have represented much of District 5 and know how to effectively work with and listen to the people of South Austin. This campaign is about taking care of our home, our neighbors, protecting what we love about Austin, and making a better city for the people of Austin.</p> <p>Together we have an opportunity with a new government and climate of change, to bring everybody together from all parts of the city to take on tough issues - and make this a city that offers opportunity for everybody.</p> | <p>With the new 10-1 council system, it is important to elect council members who have experience in public policy-making and believe in providing constituents a voice. I spent six years at the State Capitol over the past four legislative sessions, as both a Chief of Staff to Sen. Wendy Davis and a Committee Director for Sen. Mario Gallegos, working on policy relevant to the challenges facing Austin, including public education, transportation, property tax appraisal reform, payday lending reform, and public safety. I believe my substantial policy experience and work in bringing people to find consensus and move policy forward will be an asset to the new council.</p> | <p>I am running to make sure that South Austin is represented by a regular guy and not a downtown insider who is beholden to special interests. Transportation and traffic in South Austin is my number 1 issue and I will fight to ensure that District 5 has access to public transportation and better roads.</p> | <p>I love the character of this city, and I want to see Austin grow into a future with a strong economy built on a sustainable foundation. My parents met here and I've lived here since I was 13. As a person who grew up in Barton Hills (my parents still live there) I take special pride in the opportunity to represent District 5. Along with this desire to represent my home area as Austin rapidly grows, I bring to the table 11 years of experience as a lawyer, consultant, and business owner and as a leader in charitable, civic, and professional organizations. I appreciate Austin's past and am a stakeholder in its future. I bring the motivation and skill set needed to represent District 5 residents well.</p> | <p>I have lived in District 5 for most of my 35 years in Austin. District 5 has quite a bit of potential for contributing to the quality of life in Austin. There are especially interesting and high impact neighborhoods in District 5, including the Zilker Park Neighborhood, Onion Creek, South Lamar, Manchaca and the large part of South Central Austin. Giving this area the opportunity to better participate will be positive for Austin. I am motivated to ensure this opportunity is realized.</p> |

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| <b>What are your top three priorities for Austin?</b>  | <p>Priorities for the people of District 5 are similar to many in Austin. People are tired and frustrated by traffic congestions, diminishing affordability, threat of running out of water, imbalance in availability of services experienced by some, and desire for greater representation. Onion Creek and Williamson Creek flooding must be addressed for resident's safety and to address environmental degradation from upstream development. Adequate green space and neighborhood parks is another important issue.</p> | <p>Managing growth: It is important to grow our city in a responsible manner, taking into account our limited water supply, energy needs, lack of proper road and water infrastructure.</p> <p>Responsible government: With a \$3.5 billion city budget, we need to bring our focus back on how to effectively spend taxpayer dollars, bring back a culture of service to city hall, and provide more accountability and transparency to city council meetings and the policy-making process.</p> <p>Affordability: Property taxes, utility costs, and housing prices are all factors in the growing lack of affordability. Austin Energy and Water Utility need to be reviewed for both programs and rate structures. A better effort needs to be made to provide affordable housing units throughout the city, and provide more appropriately priced and sized housing. Implement a phased-in 20% homestead exemption.</p> | <p>"Increased Transportation for South Austin</p> |            | <p>Affordability, Transportation, Water.</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>Community Safety</p>                           |            | <p>Yes</p>                                   |

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| <b>If so, what is your plan to help alleviate some of the traffic problems? If not, why?</b>    | <p>No single fix exists. We must provide more options to build a better-connected system. With tighter public funds, we need lower cost, more immediate congestion relief while we tackle long-term issues: 1) street redesign to improve traffic flow 2) flexible hours, work days and telecommuting, 3) sidewalk and bike infrastructure, 4) maintain and improve existing roads, 5) improved access to Metro Rapid and other bus routes, 6) stronger voice for South Austin in mobility planning e.g. a South Austin transportation-planning project.</p>  | <p>We need to increase the reach and frequency of our bus system, and find ways to incent people to use the system. Short term solutions include retiming of streetlights and building more efficient intersections. Our sidewalk infrastructure needs to be improved, especially around bus stops and schools. TNCs such as Uber and Lyft must be allowed to operate legally in the city. And we need to provide more night service both to reduce DWIs and give our downtown service industry workers an alternate to cars.</p> | <p>Water Conservation"</p> | <p>transportation infrastructure, long term water planning, planning and development to complement affordability</p> | <p>The transportation goal listed above centers around facilitating a reduced dependence on personal automobiles for commuting to work and for attending entertainment events. Additionally, we need access to the airport included in any mass transit plan. Current rail plan does not address these priorities. One option that was not sufficiently vetted is using the Union Pacific right of ways. These include paths to the airport and to outlying communities. This would be a much better investment than downtown to downtown tracks.</p>   |
| <b>What do you see as the greatest untapped opportunity for economic development in Austin?</b> | <p>Support for local and small businesses is a key untapped opportunity for economic development. Although the city provides support through the Small Business Development Office, for example with information about affordable health coverage, the city needs to make improvements. For example, the City's PDR department need to reform to address problems with the permitting an development processes which create barriers for small businesses. The permitting process can be time consuming and costly, effectively preventing small business owners from starting a business due to the costs.</p> | <p>Realizing that our small businesses are the economic generator for our city and providing resources to help them grow and train Austinites for the jobs created.</p>   | <p>Yes</p>                 | <p>Yes</p>   | <p>Austin has great tools available including business incentives, a desirable workforce, and a positive living environment. We can improve by focusing these tools towards some of the intangible goals of the community such as education, entrepreneurial growth, diversity and affordability. A specific example would be to motivate an increase in the internship program at large and small work places, manage our permitting and licensing processes to motivate growth in the direction that complements Austin's culture. Foster small and new businesses Promote Austin's culture and desirable workforce focus on interns and job growth beyond the walls of the company itself.</p> |

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| <b>Do you think Austin affords enough legal rights and protections to its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents?</b>                                   | No  | No   | I am against Prop 1 and Urban Rail at this time. I believe our resources would be better allocated by increasing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes and expand the service areas further into South Austin. | Starting from the ground up, with improved intersections, signaling, and traffic control. Moving up to improving arteries and connecting highways. We need a commuter rail system, like Lone Star Rail. I'm not opposed to light rail, but I don't think now is the right time. We are better off with expanded Bus Rapid Transit and regular bus service. We should also push innovation with TNCs and ride share services, as well as incentivizing companies to allow telecommuting and flexible work hours. | Yes  |
| <b>Why or why not?</b>  | I believe the city can do more to protect the rights for LGBT residents, for example with regard to access to healthcare, reducing discrimination in housing and employment, and protecting students from bullying.   | No. While Austin is a leader in providing LGBT rights and protections, we can do more. Strengthening anti-bullying policies at AISD will help protect LGBT and all other students.   | I believe that ridesharing, including Carma, is a huge opportunity for economic growth that will also decrease commuter traffic on our streets.   | I think we have an opportunity to become a leader in medical technology and life sciences. This is contingent on capital and business development services to work with the talent and R&D the med school will bring to the city. I am highly supportive of the creation of a medtech and life sciences incubator to go along with the opening of the medical school.   | While the State is not positioned as well, Austin shares a diverse and integrated culture with good legal and community support in place. I am motivated to continue this path and hope to influence the state to catch up to Austin in this arena.  |
| <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> | Austinites have expressed concerns about the impact of rapid growth on neighborhoods, including granny flats, infill development, parking, and lack of infrastructure resulting in flooding. I share those concerns and believe implementation of Imagine Austin and revision of the Land Development Code must include neighborhood plans. | Our neighborhoods have voiced concerns over efforts to increase the allowance of infill projects, including the CodeNEXT process, the proposed South Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan, and the recent push by council to ease restrictions on the use of ADUs, or "granny flats." I share those concerns and as we plan to manage our future growth, care must be taken to protect our existing neighborhoods and keep density in appropriate places. | Yes   | Yes   | The transportation goal above includes mass transit and reducing the need for personal vehicles. District 5 already has issues with on-street parking availability and event traffic impeding the enjoyment of their neighborhoods. We are also interested in the rail decision as the Union Pacific option includes an active line that runs through much of District 5. Specific to the new districting system, we need to enable the contribution and participation of the District 5 community in the decision making process, which will ensure a better result for the City of Austin. |

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| <p><b>Are the needs of downtown Austin and its outlying communities being balanced effectively?</b></p> | <p>Yes</p>  | <p>No</p>  | <p>I believe that the city has put in appropriate protections for our LGBTQ community that minimize the effect on our residents and businesses. Protections and regulations that do not infringe upon others rights and/or place an undue burden/ increase costs to businesses will have a better chance at gaining my support. The fact that the city affords health benefits to same sex partners (as well as straight couples who live together but are not married) is a great selling point to attract top job candidates.</p> | <p>The city itself appears to provide good legal protection for LGBT citizens in city/city contractor related employment and in housing. Austin is still inside of Texas, though, which as a state does not do well on this matter. AISD, which overlays Austin, could also improve helping LGBT kids with bullying and harassment. I am, however, interested in further dialogue with the LGBT community to see where city government can help affect positive change.</p>  | <p>No</p>   |
| <p><b>Why or why not?</b></p>   | <p>Single member districts provide the opportunity to address the longstanding imbalance of resources between downtown and outlying areas in South Austin. District 5 residents will have a representative whose job it is to listen, champion their concerns, and develop solutions.</p> | <p>For too long, city council has focused on downtown while neglecting other parts of the city. South Austin need more attention paid to our schools, our roads, our bus service, our sidewalk infrastructure, and a better way to manage the explosive growth making its way south from South Lamar Blvd.</p> | <p>I am unaware of any infill projects in District 5. I believe that these projects can be of importance in many cases and look forward to seeing how they can serve District 5 in the future.</p>  | <p>We have multiple projects along Lamar (e.g., Lamar Union, 704) that are adding food, entertainment, retail, and residential options to the area. The increased amenities are great, though through poor planning regarding impact, transit, and infrastructure these new developments will most likely over-stress South Lamar. Thus, through poor oversight from the city's planning and development departments what should be positive for residents in the area will probably cause a lot of problems for neighborhood residents.</p> | <p>One of the positives of 10-1 is the distribution of the decision making process and the broadening of the representation across all neighborhoods. Throughout my campaign I have heard the same message of frustration at the lack of representation and the lack of an advocate for this district in a position to influence the council. I am motivated to work with this new structure and make the council a more representative and effective organization.</p> |

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| <p><b>Will you vote for or against subsidies to large employers?</b></p>  | <p>There will always be a role for the city and other groups to recruit firms to the community, as the economy changes and different industry clusters gain new markets while others lose markets over time. The goal should be recruiting those companies that work to develop a better community as a whole and fit our Austin values.</p> <p>I believe we should limit using public incentives to subsidize development without receiving extraordinary community benefits in return for the people of Austin. Improving standards for workers, including healthcare benefits, living wage, safety trainings, local hiring, should be part of requirements for companies receiving incentives. Also fostering locally owned small businesses should be a much greater part of any city incentive program.</p> | <p>Against</p> | <p>No</p>   | <p>No</p>  | <p>For</p>   |
| <p><b>Will you require a total cost-benefit analysis before voting on any subsidies or loans to any businesses?</b></p> | <p>See previous.</p>   | <p>Yes</p>     | <p>The City has been run by downtown insiders who are beholden to special interests and ignore the outlying communities. With the new 10-1 system, South Austin will have an opportunity to elect a regular guy who will speak up for our issues and needs.</p> | <p>Downtown has seen a lot of great development, but there has been a lack of attention to outlying areas. Proposition 1 is a great example of this mentality. It is being presented as an aid to easing traffic congestion on 35, when in reality is it more of a downtown development project. I have nothing against downtown development, but it can't be focused upon to the exclusion of the rest of the city. Ask a resident of Onion Creek how they feel about the downtown boardwalk, and you are likely to be asked why they couldn't have adequate flood warning systems first.</p> | <p>Yes</p>   |



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| <b>What are the strengths and weaknesses of Austin's new city district system?</b> | <p>The new district system offers the opportunity to provide a voice for all parts of the city and bring everyone together to tackle the tough issues we must face to manage growth and protect our quality of life. Some have expressed concern that the district system will encourage councilmembers to only focus on their district, to the exclusion of the rest of the city, and potentially make it more difficult for the council to move forward. I believe we should give the district system an opportunity to work, before considering any further changes to the system.</p> | <p>Strengths include better constituent response due to smaller, geographic districts. This should lead to better community and neighborhood involvement due to a closer relationship with city council members. The new system will also give parts of Austin representation where none has been before.</p> <p>Weaknesses include the potential for ward-style politics and a possibility that council members will defer too much to the "home" council member when dealing with issues within one particular district.</p> | For         | For        | <p>I need to comment on the above two required questions. Yes, I am willing to vote for subsidies as that is a powerful tool in maintaining Austin's economy. That said, there are motivations, metrics, and goals that have to be spelled out and monitored. If we align the goals of the community with the measured results of the subsidies, that would be a good investment. On the cost-benefit analysis, that is not just a dollars and cents effort. That includes intangibles such as education, job growth beyond the four walls of that company, and environmental enhancements that we can gain. On the new 10-1 system, it is all positive with respect to distributing the decision making process, improving the level of representation and diversity of the council, which will bring us more innovation and better ideas. On the negative side, there will be a transition as this new group learns how to work together and adapt to the broader spectrum of demands this district system will enable.</p> |
| <b>Would you entertain any further changes to the system?</b>                      | No  | Yes  | Yes         | Yes        | No  |

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| <p><b>Do you believe that affordable housing should be distributed throughout the city?</b></p>          | <p>Yes</p>  | <p>Yes</p> | <p>There are no weaknesses I can find. This is a great thing for the city and especially for those who live outside of downtown.</p> | <p>First: there are a lot of caveats on voting for incentives. Large companies must bring net value to the deal, have jobs for locals, and be ready to hire local companies as service providers. Otherwise, the answer is against. As to 10-1: it's decades overdue. The previous system lived on as a way for a entrenched groups to hold onto consolidated political power. Now you are seeing a fairer system that will be more inclusive of areas outside of the city's core. In the future it would be good to see a couple of at-large seats, as this could help by CM's oriented toward overall city goals. It is unfortunate that the 8-2-1 proposal, which addressed at large council members, was merely a ruse to attempt to kill single member districts. Perhaps in the future we can see a genuine attempt to bring in at large council members. Also, at some point the city will need to consider a strong mayor system.</p> | <p>Yes</p>   |
| <p><b>Do you support the energy and water conservation policies of the City of Austin utilities?</b></p> | <p>Yes</p>  | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Yes</p>   | <p>Yes</p>  | <p>Yes</p>   |