

Council of Neighborhoods 2021 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks your position on the voice of neighborhoods in governing the City of Olympia.

The COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (CNA) is made up of leaders from the 35 City-recognized Neighborhood Associations (NA). The CNA's job is to foster effective communication between the City and its neighborhoods on a variety of issues such as land use planning, public safety, and neighborhood services. Neighborhood association boards inform and gather residents' perspectives on City issues so that all residents (homeowners and renters) have a voice. Those perspectives are brought to CNA.

While each neighborhood can advocate on their own behalf regarding city policies, the CNA does not take positions on issues but does advocate for meaningful, transparent, and timely engagement of neighborhoods in City activities and planning decisions.

Your responses will be shared with the neighborhood associations for distribution to neighborhood residents and on our CNA Website.

Thank you for helping us inform our residents and voters.

Please send your response to cna.olympia@gmail.com no later than June 30, 2021.

Questions

1. *What are your thoughts about the role of neighborhoods in the City's planning and decision-making affecting their neighborhoods? How would you work with neighborhood associations to make our community a better place to live?*

Neighborhoods are a valuable resource for City Planning. Unfortunately there has not been a collaborative effort on the part of the leadership here in Olympia. Meaningful and intentional dialogue has to happen in order for the needs of neighborhoods to be adequately met. It is my job even as a candidate to build relationships and engage with as many folks as possible, so that when there are decisions being made that affect individuals, groups, neighborhoods, etc. there are diverse perspectives being shared. I will be proactive in being transparent and create spaces and opportunity for community feedback, input, cares and concerns as often as possible.

2. *Do you believe there is value in preserving the character of single-family neighborhoods while the city pursues high density development?*

Absolutely! Character is important, however in addition to character, environmental impact should be a priority. We must think about how our actions today will impact the future (people and of Mama Earth). The systemic challenges we face that dictate how the city

develops must be exposed so that we can move from crisis and begin recovery and then onto sustainability.

3. What are your thoughts about changing Olympia Council's elections from at-large to district representation? [link to Municipal Research and Services Center, for more information <https://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Governance/Special-Topics/Council-Election-by-Wards-or-Districts.aspx>] ***I support district representation along with Rank Choice voting. Both increase and promote equity, more accurate representation and better suited outcomes when it comes to voting.***

4. Would you support allowing a representative from a recognized neighborhood association to participate as a voting or non-voting member in the deliberations of City Commissions and Committees?

Most definitely. If there was equitable representation from ALL neighborhoods then participation in voting would be something that I support. With that said there should always be non-voting member deliberations. "Nothing About Us Without Us" will be the message that I carryout while in office.

5. Home ownership is declining in Olympia but remains a goal for many individuals and families and contributes to income equality. What would you do to facilitate new opportunities for home ownership?

I will advocate for a city housing authority that along with countless other services/resources, home ownership programs will be one of the core programs that is nurtured in a way that creates opportunities indiscriminately to families throughout the City of Olympia. Housing is a human right. I would remain steadfast in identifying neighborhoods that still allow Redlining and eliminating those types barriers must happen in Olympia so that there is equity in home buying options. This oppressive practice still happens in our city and violators of redlining must be shutdown and prosecuted.

6. The City maintains a great deal of information in GIS format that would be valuable for neighborhoods. Would you support organizing this information at a neighborhood or subarea level and opening the City's GIS data to better public access?

Yes I would support this. Anytime there is an opportunity to inform and educate the residents, it should be taken. There must be safeguards to protect privacy in accordance with the laws, so if they are in place and there is better public access then that means that there is more accountability and transparency. Additionally there must be ongoing efforts to have greater participation in neighborhoods associations from historically marginalized people in our community and there should be equitable access across the board as long as privacy is not compromised.

7. Would you support a way for neighborhoods to have a greater voice in prioritizing how City money gets spent? If so, in what ways?

All neighborhoods/residents should have a voice in prioritizing how city money gets spent. A way this could happen is through a diverse development council that is made up of residents(selected in an equitable way), developers, renters, homeowners, small business owners, etc. that operates with transparency and accountability. Another way is to allow non-voting members of neighborhood associations and other community members to be a part of the deliberating process.

8. Many times, local government will focus on large or regionally significant projects and under-value the impact relatively small amounts of money can have in neighborhoods. What would you propose the City do to ensure that neighborhood-level benefits are balanced with commitments to large/regional projects?

The city must commit to investing in neighborhoods indiscriminately. There should be a sub committee for neighborhoods that works closely with the city's Planning Commission. Public meetings and town halls are time consuming but an essential part of cities with strong trust from their residents. Transparency should be the norm and not something people have to sue the city to receive.

9. The City's Comprehensive plan established a Subarea planning process. The purpose is to increase collaboration with community members early in City planning processes. The City is starting its next Comprehensive Plan update. Should the city continue subarea planning in the next Comprehensive Plan update and if so, how would you improve the process?

I believe the city should continue subarea planning as established in the Comprehensive Plan. This process should continue as long as all parties involved are able to provide input. Elected officials could improve this process by meeting accessibility needs. The public should not be expected to educate themselves. All plans and updates should be clear and presented in plain language so that there is a clear understanding of what is going on.

10. Public safety is an important issue for neighborhoods. What would you do to address the safety and security concerns of residents in neighborhoods, the downtown and parks?

Invest in our Crisis Response Unit and get folk housed and connected with wraparound services that are accessible. Addressing the systemic issues that contribute to housing insecurity, homelessness, biased policing along with anything else that has created mistrust between our residents and law enforcement. One of the chief complaints from the residents that there has not been an adequate response to homelessness and that they no longer feel safe.

11. Currently, the Comprehensive Plan calls for creating neighborhood centers. What would you do to address the gap between the vision for Neighborhood Centers and making them happen?

Since it is in the City's Comprehensive Plan I would start by following up to make sure it has been included in the budget. Neighborhood Centers are important. Identifying barriers to development of Neighborhoods would be a good starting point. If there is a need to change city ordinances to facilitate development would also be something that I would support.

Candidate Name: _____

Candidate Contact Information: _____

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