



CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES 2018

The Bend Neighborhood Coalition asked the candidates for City Council and Mayor to address several issues affecting neighborhood livability. We said we would circulate their answers, as written, to our members and other interested citizens. Here are the responses from one candidate.

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1) **Name:** Sally Russell

2) **What do you see as the main threats to the livability of Bend's neighborhoods as the City grows?**

"Threats" to livability can also be viewed as opportunities to understand what aspects of our city and our unparalleled growth require attention or tweaking to create a more harmonious experience for residents. One person's idea of "livability" can be completely different from another's: Focusing primarily on aspects of policy that benefit all Bend residents — such as maximizing the potential of the UGB plan and facilitating positive college-community interactions — will ultimately benefit all Bendites and their respective neighborhoods.

These are the opportunities I see for our neighborhoods, our community, that a strong, experienced, committed Mayor can cultivate successfully:

- **Transportation Infrastructure:** Safe, well-maintained roadways, ensuring you can get where you need in a way that works for your time and your wallet. Adequate, walkable sidewalks with safe pedestrian crossings; well-marked, strategic bike lanes; street calming, adequate parking and, potentially, parking permits are all strategies that will make our streets and neighborhoods safer. The free Ride Bend city shuttles, already in action the past two summers, can allow even greater ease of movement throughout the city, attract tourist ridership and are a judicious, legal use of tourism-related funds with a tangible benefit for year-round residents.
- **Housing:** Housing that is safe and affordable, both for renters and homeowners, creates stability within neighborhoods and the community at large. Another high priority is to create faster/easier/ financial incentives for builders to build affordable apartments for students and professors (with adequate parking, of course, close to the the OSU-Cascades campus). My plan is to build neighborhood hubs so throughout our city, these local centers can provide the services close to where people live. This (modeling has confirmed) will reduce traffic moving E-W and N-S throughout Bend, as people will live closer to the goods and services they need.
- **Economy:** While tourism is part of Bend's economic stability and resilience, an emphasis on continuing to diversify our economy through varied economic sectors such as pharmaceuticals, technology and outdoor recreation products is a key long term strategy for Bend. These jobs are compatible with Bend's existing culture, can support living wage jobs, and will create a more stable economy for the long term.
- **Arts/Community Events:** The vibrancy of our music and special events community also reveals a need for dedicated, supported venues that facilitate synergistic relationships among participants, neighborhoods, business owners, growing families and seniors. Coordinated and collaborative scheduling efforts by the City, musicians, promoters and neighborhood associations as well as

sound monitoring, noise curfews, bass control standards, reduced decibel levels after sunset in Winter, Spring and Fall, and a City-fostered respect among stakeholders is key to building good relationships within the community.

3) What changes in City policies do you support to address those threats?

- Create entertainment districts/ venues in non-residential areas, primarily buffered by non-residential areas, specifically for venues over 1,000 people.
- Reduce SDC's for small homes.
- Collaborate with Bend Parks and Recreation to reduce their SDC's for affordable housing.
- Make the City building process more streamlined and more transparent to both the community and developer/builder, and while becoming more time efficient at the city-level. Implementing a newly created concierge position in Bend's planning department which - together with upgrades to the City of Bend's software platforms - will be key in this endeavor.
- Continue to look for and pursue State-funded programs for affordable and workforce housing close to infrastructure, especially in the Bend Central District, in Opportunity and Expansion areas.
- Prioritize travel efficiency by prioritizing key missing street and transportation connectors, especially small missing segments (Purcell), sidewalk segments and bikeways separate from primary automobile arterials.
- Create safer neighborhood streets by and making intersections safer by developing a "bucket" of street calming devices for inner neighborhood areas, which they can choose from.
- Work with State and Federal partners to increase dollars for road improvements and increase our transportation options.
- Focus on infill sidewalks in areas close to retail.
- Re-evaluate the CC (Convenience Commercial) allowed and conditional uses for compatibility with existing/older vs newly established neighborhoods.
- Town & Gown Committee - I will lead consideration of this concept with the new 2019 Council in our Goal Setting sessions.

4) On which of these issues do you expect to take a leadership role on Council.

The mayor's role is to take a leadership role on all of these issues and collaborate with the other six members on council to find areas of agreement and innovation.

5) Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following:

- a) Establishing parking districts in areas where nearby uses create excessive demand by non-residents
Agree strongly
- b) Creating neighborhood compatibility zones to buffer residential areas from the offsite impacts of adjoining commercial and mixed use areas (through a step-down in permitted uses)
Disagree strongly

- c) Establishing a university district to concentrate campus-related development in adjoining mixed use zones, while protecting the character of nearby residential neighborhoods
Agree strongly
- d) Terminating the ability to transfer non-conforming short-term rental permits on sale of the property
Disagree strongly
- e) Planning for one or more entertainment districts where outdoor amplified music and late-night entertainment is concentrated and allowed to operate under more relaxed guidelines
Agree strongly
- f) Developing code regulating events on private property (e.g., duration, frequency, proximity to other uses, requirements for parking, public safety, etc.)
Agree strongly
- g) Reducing decibel levels in the noise ordinance to more closely match other cities
Disagree somewhat
- h) Adopting an occupancy limit or high occupancy permit as a means of avoiding single family homes being used as rooming houses or stealth dorms
Disagree strongly

6) How can the impacts of tourism be mitigated to protect the quality of life for Bend’s residents?

Increased focus on using advertising to attract tourists more consistent with the existing Bend culture, e.g., Visit Like a Local, The Bend Pledge

Focus on 8-hour auto travel radius for marketing

Free and frequent shuttles in the most impacted areas advertising to attract tourists more consistent with the existing Bend culture. Ride Bend has been successful in attracting tourists during the past two Summers.

To clarify considerable confusion regarding use of the City of Bend’s Transient Room Tax Funds:

- The use and division of TRT funds is dictated by both State and city codes/ ordinances. Currently, the City of Bend is in a lawsuit with Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association over a relatively small change in use of TRT funds. Any future changes will take a collaborative approach to maneuver through the legal morass.
- Using TRT marketing funds to build/pay debt service/maintain/manage a performing arts center will, under most any scenario, likely far exceed TRT funds currently used for marketing.
- It should be noted, tourism has been flat the past 3 years, with a slight decline this summer.
- Also, slightly over 62% of the Transient Room Tax goes to Bend’s General Fund, of which 85+% goes to public safety, primarily Police and Fire. Any reduction of TRT’s would directly impact capacity in these services.

7) Do you believe the STR code passed in 2015 has successfully curbed the loss of inventory of residential homes to tourist use? What improvements to that code would you support?

The 2015 Short term rental program has been working as envisioned. Statistics show the return of homes in the areas with very dense STR's are returning to longer term rentals and full time home ownership.

The "Good Neighbor" Policy, annual site inspections including verification of available parking as shown on the permit, and the direct owner contact information has resulted in a very significant reduction in the incompatible behavior taking place in neighborhoods before this code was passed.

Terminating the ability to transfer the historic (before the updated 2015 STR code), non-conforming STR permits upon the sale of property is illegal. The current code is working to reduce STR density in our inner neighborhoods without CC&R's. The new code was written carefully to respect the property rights of those people who had already purchased property and/or applied for a STR permit under the code in place.

8) What changes to the role of the elected mayor should be made to better address the City's needs?

A directly elected Mayor will more accurately reflect the voices of the 90,000+ people who live in Bend today. However, she/he will still only have one vote of the 7-member Council.

At least four (4) Councilors have to work together and agree upon any decision passed by Council.

The role of the Mayor will have be to organize and set the Council agenda, and work with the other 6 colleagues to determine goals, direction and agreement on policy setting. A Mayor with strong collaborative skills is the best choice for this system.

It has been suggested that an elected Mayor should force a change from the current Council organization to a "Strong Mayor", weak city Manager system. This magnitude of change in city leadership and management would invariably require a greater community investment in councilor salaries and staff support. Given the lukewarm vote on increasing councilor compensation it is unclear whether the city voters are ready for that kind of change.