



## **Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire**

*The following questions present an opportunity to learn more about your views on key community issues and your vision for the City of Dallas. **Please complete and return no later than 11:59PM on Monday, February 20, 2023.** All candidate questionnaires will be published on our website. Late questionnaires will not be accepted for endorsement evaluation.*

1. What are the top 3 issues facing your district?

Affordability - We need to keep lowering our municipal property tax rates and support programs that help people stay in their homes through city-assisted repairs. We also need to continue supporting affordable housing initiatives like we do here in Oak Cliff.

Safety - We need to keep supporting public safety officials in their efforts to bring crime rates down. I am also a big proponent of building infrastructure with pedestrians and cyclists in mind so that our residents, especially children, can get around safely.

Empowerment - We need to fight for our residents to determine their own futures on matters like zoning, development, and funding. I am a strong supporter of neighborhood associations and community groups.

2. What are the top 3 policy priorities you plan to advocate for in the first 90 days of your term?

Bond Funding - We have a bond coming up and I want to work with various groups across Oak Cliff to squeeze every drop of funding out of the next bond to make improvements to Oak Cliff's municipal infrastructure like roads, sidewalks, and parks.

I-345 Remedy - I am hopeful that Dallas stands up against TxDOT to find better solutions to reconnect Downtown Dallas and Deep Ellum. When the government came in to build this highway, they displaced primarily Black neighborhoods, and I am hoping that we can restitch these communities and use the new land to encourage Black-owned/led development.

Neighborhood Development - We have several pending zoning cases here in Oak Cliff in long-ignored neighborhoods to allow them to rezone their neighborhoods to promote development that they would like to see rather than being forced upon them by special interests from elsewhere.

3. How have you contributed toward the reduction of crime and incarceration throughout your career?



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I am a licensed attorney and previously worked frequently as a criminal defense attorney in Oak Cliff. On the City Council, I have supported focusing on public safety officials going after violent criminals and deprioritizing minor crimes, which usually target Black and Latino Dallasites.

### 4. What can a Councilperson do to affirm Black residents' trust in local government?

Money is the message. It is easy to talk, but it is hard to deliver. I have tried to use government as a tool of investment and trust. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, one of Oak Cliff's small businesses, the Bishop Arts Theatre Center, was especially hit hard. The Bishop Arts Theatre Center is a Black-run, community arts endeavor focused on telling the stories of Black and Latino artists. When pandemic relief money was being disbursed around the city, the Bishop Arts Theatre Center was one of my top priorities in my district because communities like Oak Cliff wouldn't be as special without businesses like this in our neighborhood. I got them the funding they needed to stay afloat during the pandemic and continue to thrive to this day, arguably with better financial footing than before the pandemic as we helped them pay off their mortgage. This is just one story but I believe Black residents need to see the government invest in parts of Dallas that Black residents create for themselves and the rest of Dallas. We don't create for them, but we support what is organically initiated.

### 5. What will make your tenure on the council different from your predecessor's (if you are an incumbent, your previous term)? Specifically, what aspects of the previous two years would you like to see change/have done differently? What are your priorities going forward?

The West Oak Cliff Area Plan was a big success on how much outreach the city did. And this is despite much of it happening during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we did learn a lot from this about engaging the community through non-traditional means, like community canvassing, and I hope to use these lessons to make our subsequent zoning hearings more successful.

### 6. What role, if any, does socio-economic status (housing, education, poverty, and transportation, for example) contribute toward public safety?

I believe the answer is immensely. This is why I am supportive of programs that help close the poverty gap. I support affordable housing projects and housing repair programs and we have delivered on these in Oak Cliff. I support public transportation initiatives, like free DART passes for DISD students. I support making Dallas a city where you don't need a car to thrive and succeed. There are things I hope the state acts like like allowing Dallas to legalize marijuana which I would move for us to immediately act on, partly to stop locking people up for no reason. While I strongly support public safety officials, I am glad we are focusing more on violent crimes and less on criminalizing poverty.

### 7. How do we remedy the historical and systemic injustices experienced by Black Americans in Dallas?



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I go back to my prior statement that money is the message. When majority Black neighborhoods ask for municipal improvements, we fund them at the same rate and level as White neighborhoods. When we do things to support business development or help existing businesses, we help Black businesses at the same rate as White businesses.

8. As Dallas develops, affordable housing continues to be a pain-point in communities of color. Black communities and other communities of color are seeing themselves priced out of areas with generations of family history in order to welcome in expensive developments and more white, affluent residents. What are your plans for equitable development and protections for residents being disproportionately impacted by these projects?

We have been working on these issues with some success already. I believe programs that fund home repairs are critical to keep people in their homes. I support building new affordable housing like we are doing at Zang and Davis in my district on the grounds of a former government building. We are also creating zoning changes in Oak Cliff, including conservation districts, to discourage developers from coming in and tearing down people's houses. It may be counterintuitive but I believe we must protect existing housing stock and encourage new development in undeveloped blocks to help keep our existing residents in their neighborhoods.

9. The Black community experiences lower education performance compared to their peers. While the Dallas ISD board takes leadership over the schools, what opportunities do you see, from a city perspective, to support efforts made by our schools to close racial disparity gaps in educational attainment and proficiency scores?

The City has a role to play, especially through our funding of recreation centers and libraries which can serve as educational opportunities for families, especially those with children under three years old. I only have one library in my district but I am proud that we have funded things like toddler story time, tutoring sessions, and more programs to support children there.

10. Economic access and opportunity have continued to be issues politicians have campaigned on but have failed to completely deliver for the Black community. What are your plans to increase access to jobs, training, and other opportunities to ensure greater economic progress in the Black community?

I am a big supporter of funding Black-led initiatives. I have a great working relationship with the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce, which is currently Black-led. I look for equity in the leadership of organizations as the city is considering investing.



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11. Reliable and affordable transportation options are critical for the sustainable growth and development of communities. Whether it is DART, our major streets and thruways, or walking/biking paths, Black residents depend on access to build community, work, and thrive. What are your plans to improve effectiveness of and access to transportation for Black communities and residents?

I am a big supporter of pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle infrastructure, and DART access. I believe I have one of the strongest records in Dallas of funding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. On DART, I am on the forefront of advocating for all DISD students to receive free passes for buses and trains.

12. Broadband internet, especially since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, has become increasingly key to access education, the economy, and community. Many residents lack reliable access in a city where technology is available and the industry is thriving. What are your plans to increase affordable access to broadband internet for Black communities?

The City and DISD have been successful so far in our goals to provide subsidies to bridge the digital divide. Not every eligible person has received this subsidy but we are hopeful to see these numbers grow.

13. Equity, as a focus area, continues to be part of the ongoing conversation around policy and advocacy. Please define equity and how the term guides your thinking on policy decisions.

Equity is about equality of opportunity with everyone having the tools necessary to have the same chance of success regardless of their starting position. This is something I consider as I am thinking through how we solicit public opinion on zoning or development projects across Oak Cliff and our city.

14. Environmental Justice is critical to elevating communities which have received a disproportionate share of the impact of industry and development. What have you done and/or plan to do to improve the environment and access to greenspace in Black Communities.

I have been supportive, through securing funding and giving my time and voice, to the Southern Gateway project here in Oak Cliff which I am hopeful provides green space and economic opportunity while reducing pollutants in a part of Dallas that is heavily Black and Latino.

15. Maternal mortality among Black women is high compared to their counterparts, and access to essential health care materials and services is an ongoing challenge for Black women in particular. How have you worked to address this critical issue and/or plan to do so if elected.

I have to be honest and admit this is something I have not considered as part of our duties here at the City of Dallas. I would humbly ask for more information about what cities can do on this issue.



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**Belief Statements**

*To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with the following statements? Please include a detailed explanation for your response.*

1. Ensuring equitable access to the economy for all residents is a responsibility of the City Council.

Yes

2. Socio-economic factors play a significant role in education, public safety, and public health.

Yes

3. The future of a city depends on the collective advancement of all residents and all communities.

Yes

**Thanks for completing our questionnaire. If there is anything else you'd like to share with voters about yourself or your campaign, please use the space below to do so:**