

Candidate Questionnaire: Charleston County Council 2018 Cycle



LLPAC STEERING COMMITTEE

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As a Charleston County Council member, you will make decisions that will impact land use, public health, affordability, and other livability considerations in the Lowcountry.

In this ten-page questionnaire document, Lowcountry Livability PAC has included an overview on a number of issues that are important to livability in Charleston County. The questionnaire was produced in order to assess your knowledge of (and commitment to) the goal of livability for our citizens.

If you seek endorsement by Lowcountry Livability PAC, please respond to these questions in writing by Monday, May 14, 2018 at 5 p.m. LLPAC may also conduct an interview with you in order to ascertain a more detailed understanding of your position on the issues.

In addition to your positions on current livability issues, we also consider your record, experience, leadership and viability as a candidate, and the input of local community leaders in determining our endorsements. We do not make endorsements in all races. We reserve the right to publish any and all statements in the questionnaire. You will also be invited to take The Livability Pledge at your interview. Please let us know if you have any questions.

You may return the questionnaire by email or by mail. Our address for return or questions is:

Lowcountry Livability PAC
P.O. Box 20722
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About livability

Lowcountry Livability PAC is committed to livability as a primary governing goal.

Whatever the political discussions may be at any point, the ultimate aim of government must be to support quality of life for citizens—livability. Livability has many components: it includes the built and natural environments; economic prosperity; social stability and equity; educational opportunity; and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities. Whether directly or indirectly, all decisions of Charleston County Council relate to maintaining residential quality of life, and all the factors that support health, happiness and personal fulfillment.

Job and recreational opportunities, a mild climate, a robust cultural, culinary and nightlife scenes, and a rapidly escalating real estate market have created enviable growth in the region, including attracting a relatively young demographic and a fair number of part-time residents. Many poorer residents have been forced to sell family property or move far from job opportunities due to property taxes and rising rents. Few have been able to participate fully in the economic opportunities that others have.

Within Charleston County's 1,358 square miles can be found the most vibrant of urban living, exploding suburban neighborhoods, and sparsely populated rural areas. Its citizens hold a broad range of views on what might be the ideal "quality of life." Livability for ALL requires embracing these differences, but finding a way to harness the region's growth while still maintaining an authentic local identity, economic opportunities for all, general quality of life, and an appreciation for the history and tradition of the Lowcountry.

Part 1: General information

Incumbent / Candidate Name

Signature

Council District

Home Address

Email Address

Phone Number

Office Address

Campaign Email Address

Campaign Phone Number

Campaign Address

Campaign Manager

Campaign Manager Phone Number

Campaign Manager Email Address

Please attach and submit an example of your campaign literature or a sheet with a summary of your campaign message.

Part 2: Overview questions

INSTRUCTIONS

Please write your answers immediately below each question in the space provided.

1. Would you welcome an endorsement by Lowcountry Livability PAC?

2. Please list your media, polling and/or fundraising consultants:

3. How much do you currently have in your campaign account and what is your fundraising goal?

4. Please list the principal areas of your public record and/or civic engagement.

If you do not have a public service record, you may list other experiences showing involvement in or leadership on livability issues and/or provide several references from the community on the back of this page or in a cover document.

Part 3: Issue questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

This issue questionnaire is in two sections, the first a multiple choice, opinion ranking and agree/disagree section. Here, you may find the same issues being framed in more than one way. In questions asking you to rank items, the number 1 should *always* be used to signify the highest importance or priority. The second section is an essay section in which your written responses are requested.

Overall challenges, priorities & perceptions

These initial questions have been designed to provide a sense of your priorities.

5. According to your judgement of their importance, please assign a priority ranking opinion (1 through 5) on carrying out the following projects/issues in Charleston county.

1 = higher priority 5 = lower priority x = reject

_____ Establish bus rapid transit between Summerville and Charleston within three years.

_____ Design and build a massive-scale, regional flood control system like ones in the Netherlands, for example.

_____ Increase the amount of dedicated rural green space owned by the public.

_____ Build a bridge dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians across the Ashley.

_____ Widen 526.

_____ Introduce and promote affordable housing solutions.

_____ Build the 526 extension.

6. Please number the following items according to how you think they should be prioritized.

1 = higher priority 5 = lower priority x = reject

_____ Address drainage and flooding issues

_____ Find ways to reduce the number of motor vehicles on our streets and roads

_____ Adopt a new county government code of ethics to combat back-room deals

_____ Focus on ways that racial inequality can be addressed forcefully

_____ Complete I-526

If there is another issue of priority for you, please make note of it here and rank it relative to the others in this question.

7. Mark each line below as to how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.

1 = *strongly agree* 6 = *strongly disagree* x = *reject*

- _____ Members of County Council are always well-informed on the issues before them.
- _____ Members of County Council faithfully and properly represent their constituents.
- _____ Members of County Council often vote according to their own private concerns.
- _____ Members of County Council often don't follow the advice of their professional staff members.
- _____ Members of County Council are always civil among themselves when conducting the public's business.
- _____ County Council provides an excellent example of clean government.

8. The following items bear upon our community's quality of life. Please rank them according to how urgently (or whether or not) you think they should be addressed. You may use an "X" to rule any one out.

There are seven statements. Please rank them compared to each other in an order between 1 and the total amount you wish to rank, if you've excluded any.

- _____ Allow people who were permitted to buy property in flood-prone areas to be relocated (or to elevate their homes) at public expense.
- _____ Urgently finding ways to build more housing for police, fire and health care workers near where they work.
- _____ Facilitating alternative transportation modes and challenging the public to use those alternatives instead of personal automobiles.
- _____ Charleston's trolley system was an efficient mode of mass transit, dismantled in the 1930's. County government should support an updated trolley system serving our most densely populated areas.
- _____ A separate bridge should be built over the Ashley for bus rapid transit, cyclists and pedestrians.
- _____ Charleston County should contribute to the LowLine because it will bring additional economic prosperity to the entire Lowcountry.
- _____ Require that all planning recommendations address the areas of transit, housing and employment as they relate to each other.

Transit: challenges & choices

9. It has been estimated that all of the alternatives listed below could be accomplished with the \$860 million in costs for the Interstate 526 extension. Do you believe that spending \$850 million on the eight-mile-long extension of Interstate 526 is more important than...

Circle yes or no for each statement.

- YES NO completing the Johns Island pitchfork and building the Main Road flyover.
- YES NO building a state-of-the-art Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system from Summerville to Downtown Charleston within three years.
- YES NO building 20 additional miles of BRT that would serve West Ashley and James Island.
- YES NO building separate bike lanes for every major road in the county.
- YES NO quadruple the current frequency of CARTA buses.

10. Putting aside the Interstate 526 issue, please rank the following transportation priorities in order of priority for completion.

There are four statements. Please rank them compared to each other in an order between 1 and the total amount you wish to rank, if you've excluded any.

- _____ Widen all of our highways and roads to accommodate traffic.
- _____ Build a Bus Rapid Transit system.
- _____ Financially support multiple transportation modes include bus, cars, bicycling and walking in order to give people more choices and alleviate congestion.
- _____ Adopt a ride-share (car) system and find a way to incentivize people to use it.

Water: rising tides and flooding challenges

11. In the past three years, many areas of Charleston County are experiencing much more flooding on clear days, with no solution in sight. Please rank the priorities below according to how urgently you feel they should be addressed.

1 = higher priority 5 = lower priority x = reject

- _____ Government funding, both local and national, must be found to help people get their homes out of the flood plain before the next flood for elevation and buyouts
- _____ A regional action plan for the most pressing flood mitigation issues should be implemented wherever we have solutions that are not being put into place.
- _____ Retain leading flood management experts, such as engineers from the Netherlands, to remain in the Lowcountry until we have developed a flooding plan.
- _____ A multi-jurisdictional flooding czar must be appointed to deal forcefully with this threatening problem.

12. Some say that developers are being permitted to add subdivisions, etc. in an uncoordinated way, threatening many of the things we love about the Lowcountry. Record your agreement or disagreement with the following statements, labeled A through E.

Circle yes or no for each statement.

- YES NO A. Charleston County government should adopt policies that discourage sprawl and encourage more density in development along transit and utility corridors.
- YES NO B. Require better coordination in planning for transit, housing and employment by through multi-jurisdictional planning overlay districts, and intergovernment agreements that promote a regional approach to these issues.
- YES NO C. Growth is inevitable and we should be much more flexible about how strictly we observe our Urban Growth Boundary.
- YES NO D. Hundreds of acres of land has been acquired under the half-cent sales tax Greenbelt program but we should double the acreage in the Greenbelt program.
- YES NO E. Charleston County should assert more control over our towns and cities and exercise more control over developers on a regional basis.

13. Now, please rank the five items from question 12 above in the order you would prioritize them, using their associated letter.

1 = higher priority 5 = lower priority x = reject

_____ A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E

Racial equity

14. Charleston County, with the rest of South Carolina, is dealing with a heritage of racial inequality. Please rank the following according to how you would prioritize them.

1 = higher priority 5 = lower priority x = reject

- _____ County Council should enforce racial equity in employment and procurement among all contractors.
- _____ County Council has no responsibility in the matter of racial equity.
- _____ Charleston County should make sure it spends equally in white and black neighborhoods.
- _____ Top priority should go to minority communities threatened by flooding and/or employment problems.
- _____ Charleston County should team up with nonprofit organizations to help ensure that heirs, especially in our threatened African-American neighborhoods, are able to keep their properties.
- _____ Charleston County should make it a priority to document and preserve our many African-American Settlement communities in the unincorporated areas and create local and National Register Historic districts for each.

Ethics

15. Please rank the following “clean government” improvements you would pursue as a member of County Council.

1 = higher priority 5 = lower priority x = reject

- _____ Adopt stronger “Sunshine” laws to tighten restrictions on executive sessions.
- _____ Adopt new policies on ethics, including a crackdown on awarding County contracts to Council members and other public officials.
- _____ Prohibit chairman and members from making unilateral decisions and/or signing agreements without a second signature or vote.
- _____ Instruct County staff members to quickly respond to media requests for information, including records of meeting proceedings.

Questions to be answered in writing

INSTRUCTIONS

On separate sheets, please provide a concise written response to the following questions. Feel free to go into the background for your thinking on the question.

16. Do you feel that the general public knows what services the County Council is required to provide? If not, how do we fix that, is there a policy fix, are there educational fixes?
17. Would you feel comfortable meeting privately with a developer or business entity when that developer or business entity has business before a Board, commission or the County Council?
18. What do you feel the role of commercially oriented lobbyists or special interest groups that stand to return a sizeable investment should be regarding County Councilmember's education of issues?
19. The City of Charleston has committed \$20 million of funding toward its housing affordability problem. Does the county have a similar problem? How many units a year of additional housing should the county build or renovate to meet our current and future needs. Where should those units be? Is that response adequate to address the problem?
20. Do you feel that owners of homes that met all flood regulations at the time that they were constructed (including those that predated the 1968 act and its later modifications) deserve assistance with removing their now flood prone homes out of the flood plain, either by raising, moving or demolishing the homes? If there were additional funds available in state and local programs such as Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC) program, should the County Flood Plain Manager be required to assist with this mitigation?
21. If you feel that this questionnaire has omitted a subject area you believe important, or you would like to provide further information about your thinking on any question, please submit any additional remarks.