

Spectrum News 13 Voter Education Initiative Questionnaire and Answers

1. Why are you running? If elected, what would be your top goals as city commissioner?

I'm running for Orlando City Commissioner because of my desire to bring my decades of experience and proven record of success to this position to continue fighting for the Residents of District 5 and the City of Orlando. My top priorities for D5 are Economic Growth, Senior Care Concerns, Homelessness, Housing Affordability and Youth Development.

2. Downtown Orlando was recently impacted by the law that bans public sleeping. How can District 5 meet the needs that arise as a result of the law's passage?

We must approach our homelessness challenge with compassion and empathy, especially for the most vulnerable members of our community. However, I firmly oppose enacting laws that merely defer this issue. Instead, I propose a data-driven approach: gathering and analyzing information about the homeless population in District 5 to gain deeper insights into their needs and guide our decision-making.

Expanding homeless services is crucial; beyond food and temporary shelter, we must offer mental health support, substance abuse treatment, and employment assistance. Additionally, I advocate for establishing designated safe spaces and authorized encampments. These areas would provide essential amenities like bathrooms, showers, and storage for personal belongings, ensuring dignity and basic needs are met.

3. What is your view on the current state of safety in the downtown area? What would you do to address safety concerns downtown during peak bar/restaurant hours?

Ensuring the safety of residents and visitors in the downtown area is of paramount importance. While downtown Orlando generally enjoys a vibrant and bustling atmosphere, it's essential to address safety concerns, particularly during peak bar and restaurant hours when large crowds gather.

I'd start by launching public awareness campaigns to educate residents and visitors about personal safety tips, responsible drinking behaviors, and available resources for reporting emergencies or suspicious activity.

I'd work with bar and restaurant owners to implement responsible alcohol management practices, such as training staff to identify and address potential issues related to overconsumption or disorderly conduct.

Lastly, I collaborate closely with law enforcement to prioritize problem areas, aiming to prevent major incidents during peak hours. This collaboration would also guarantee swift response in case such incidents do occur, bolstering overall safety measures.

4. Amid those downtown safety concerns, there have been several new initiatives to make the culture and business makeup of downtown more family friendly. How do

Spectrum News 13 Voter Education Initiative Questionnaire and Answers

you balance this new vision for downtown while continuing to support existing downtown businesses?

I think the goal is to cultivate diversity within our downtown ecosystem. It's essential to strike a balance between creating a family-friendly atmosphere for both locals and visitors while ensuring a safe nightlife environment for adults. This equilibrium will foster ongoing success and expansion for the businesses in the downtown vicinity.

5. There are a number of affordable housing developments in District 5, but there is still a great need for more affordable housing. What ideas do you have to help those in need of an affordable, sustainable place to live despite options that are seemingly already there?

To boost the availability of affordable housing, I'd promote the expansion of affordable housing options. This includes advocating for the development of more mixed-income housing projects. Additionally, I'd support stronger tenant protections and the implementation of rent control measures to prevent displacement. Furthermore, I'd work towards attracting higher-paying job opportunities to the area, enabling residents to increase their income and better afford living expenses in the district.

6. While making way for many new businesses in Creative Village, some long-time residents have expressed concerns that historic Parramore has been erased. What will you do to ensure that the history remains intact and that Parramore proper is not forgotten?

With the construction of the soccer stadium at the heart of Parramore, the neighborhood now comprises two distinct sides: the Creative Village side and the Historical Business District side. Historically, the Creative Village side has been predominantly zoned for residential use. While it primarily caters to the needs of EA and its employees, it offers amenities that local residents can use and benefit from. Things like restaurants, schools, a park that host food truck vending sales on weekends and mixed income apartment living accommodations.

On the other hand, the business district side of Parramore requires significant attention and revitalization efforts. I am committed to spearheading redevelopment initiatives in this area to ensure it keeps pace with the growth occurring in the area especially with the expansion of the sports and entertainment complex around the Kia Center just blocks away.

7. District 5 will be home to a new \$500 million entertainment complex across from the Kia Center, which will include a hotel, retail space, housing, and parking, scheduled to open in 2027. How do you ensure this doesn't just drive tourism, but also has a positive impact on other businesses and the residents of District 5?

The proximity of business development to residents in District 5 presents a significant opportunity, provided that our residents are actively included in the workforce opportunities stemming from this expansion. It's crucial that our community members are made aware of all

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available opportunities, spanning from construction and operations to maintenance roles. By ensuring transparency and accessibility to these opportunities, we empower our residents to fully participate and benefit from the economic growth within their own neighborhood.

8. How would you eliminate the food desert in District 5 and bring nutritious options to residents?

First and foremost, our corner stores must begin offering healthier food choices. Additionally, we need to expand community gardening initiatives and mobile farmers markets. However, of utmost importance is the need for an increase in local small businesses that serve healthier dining options.

9. How would you change the perception of the Parramore community when it comes to crime?

In my three years residing in the Parramore community, I haven't encountered serious crimes firsthand. While I've observed incidents like car break-ins and petty street crimes, I haven't witnessed any serious violent offenses. However, it's evident that District 5 faces challenges with homelessness, with individuals sleeping on the streets and soliciting for money, often to support substance abuse habits. Addressing substance abuse among the homeless population is imperative. Moreover, young people may engage in petty crimes due to the presence of opportunities. By eliminating these opportunities, we can deter opportunistic behavior.

10. We often talk about engaging youth in the community in an effort to address crime. What is your plan to engage parents? Will you include them in any initiatives to making the community safer for youth in the area?

Ensuring our youth remain engaged in constructive leisure pursuits is crucial. The City Parks and Recreation Department must offer educational and recreational activities tailored to accommodate them. I intend to introduce a chess league for our youth through the park system. This initiative aims to teach and challenge local youth to think more strategically, fostering their overall cognitive development.

11. You have two areas in District 5, the Orlando Gasification Plant and Griffin Park Homes, that were subject to pollution and air quality concerns. What are your plans to clean up District 5?

In both cases, we have pinpointed the sources of pollution and poor air quality. Our initial step is to raise awareness about these issues and empower affected residents to mitigate the harmful effects of pollution or consider relocation if necessary. Moving forward, our focus will be on cleaning up these environmental hazards and implementing stringent regulatory measures to prevent their recurrence.

12. What would you do to increase accessibility to parks and other recreational activities for youth?

Spectrum News 13 Voter Education Initiative Questionnaire and Answers

I would create specialized programs tailored for youth, such as sports leagues (including chess), arts and crafts workshops, and educational sessions such as financial literacy programs.

13. If suspended Commissioner Regina Hill is reinstated, do you plan to run against her when the seat is up for reelection in 2025?

Yes, definitely if I can offer better representation to the residents of District 5.