

## **Travaris McCurdy, Candidate for City of Orlando Commission District 5**

Special Election for the City of Orlando District 5

13 Questions from Spectrum News 13

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

I am running for City of Orlando Commission District 5 because I am ready to serve on Day 1 and have the experience and track record to represent the voters of District 5 best. My background in public policy has taught me how to ensure resources are available to the residents who need them and that my door is always open for citizen engagement. I'm also answering the call of voters who asked me to run.

I plan to focus on affordable housing, infrastructure, and economic development/sustainability. I also plan to weave youth outreach into all of the priorities and initiatives I support at City Hall, as they are the future.

### **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?**

District 5 can meet these needs by building upon already established public-private partnerships to ensure the increase and availability of permanent housing solutions for the homeless population. The passage of this law is one of the many reasons I always supported the protection of home rule as a State Legislature as it's essential for cities to identify the solutions that work best for their unique needs in this area and most, areas. I would also ensure the conversation related to next steps for implementing the ban included City Hall, residents, non-profit leaders, faith-based leaders, and business leaders from across the city to address the problem so that District 5 does not face the burden alone.

### **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?**

Again, to address safety concerns downtown, I would bring a diverse group of leaders affected by safety concerns to the table to ensure decisions related to current policies considered the interests of those affected. I would work closely with law enforcement, business owners, restaurant owners, bar owners, and residents.

Improving public safety downtown is critical as we want to ensure that the heart of Orlando is somewhere workers, families, tourists, etc. can comfortably visit 24/7.

### **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**

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

As a father, I want to see a vibrant, diverse, and balanced downtown. The City of Orlando Parks & Recreation/Economic Dev. Dept. does an excellent job of offering family-friendly events and I would love to see this only increased.

As businesses need customers to stay afloat, I would also ensure that foot traffic is always encouraged as it keeps restaurants, bars, and retail, afloat. I would continue to support existing businesses by ensuring the safety of their customers, who then keep businesses flourishing. I want a downtown where families can live, work, and play that's diversified and offers something for everyone.

**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?**

Equity in affordable housing needs to be expanded beyond one city district. I commend the City of Orlando for investing \$58 million of its ARPA funds in affordable housing. As a former state legislator and current advocate from city hall, I will encourage our legislative delegation to fully fund Sadowski to alleviate the burden we feel on the local level.

I would also increase communication and citizen engagement with residents and neighborhood groups to ensure that individuals know the steps they need to take to identify, prepare, and apply for programs to help them secure an affordable, sustainable place to live. I would work closely with Mayor Dyer and the City Council, the City's Housing Department, local nonprofits, and others to ensure that residents of District 5 are aware of all opportunities to take advantage of programs and initiatives supported by the City and nonprofits to secure an affordable, sustainable place to live.

To sum it up, I would increase communication and citizen engagement to ensure those who need it—get it.

**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?**

Educate and support projects like the Wells Built Museum and Luminary Green Park. There is so much rich history in Parramore and it's vital to preserve it so that residents and beyond know our narrative and story. There is a way to innovate and modernize while keeping the identity of honoring those leaders who created Parramore. I would love to explore opportunities for

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historical markers throughout the entire area and this could possibly something we could work on with our leaders on the state and federal level.

- 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?**

District 5 is excited about the new entertainment complex, and I would love to be a champion in ensuring that residents are a part of it. I would work with D5 residents to ensure they receive proper certifications to apply for these opportunities. Again, this is where I would enhance communication and citizen engagement beyond just "check the box." MWBE businesses and residents will be a part of this project, and I would help by ensuring they were aware of all opportunities for business and job growth. Residents will be ready to work Day 1 the same way I will be able to work Day 1 as their commissioner.

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

I would work with organizations like Second Harvest, 4Roots, and Hebni Nutrition to create collaboration opportunities to increase food security and program access. I would advocate for expanding programs using SNAP for healthier food options the same way I did in Tallahassee and over the past 10 - 15 years.

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

First, it is absolutely vital to ensure the community at large is aware that the people of Parramore are proud of where they come from and where they live. It's a community with a rich history, and it empowers families to take pride in themselves. That's where it starts: investing in our children, fostering healthy relationships with law enforcement, and closing the gap. Residents come first. Engage youth and ensure holistic mental health.

- 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?**

It's impossible to engage youth without engaging parents and guardians—whenever the caretakers are, we need to empower them, as they are the first teachers for our children. Ensuring they have the tools to talk and provide guidance about crim will be critical.

**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?**

I will look for opportunities to work with healthcare systems on outreach and education for healthcare concerns related to these two areas. In addition, I would work with the City's GreenWorks Initiative to identify grants available on the federal level to help clean up the parts in most need in District 5.

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

Receive input to the services they want to know. Ensure pools, basketball courts are up to code and open. Ensure they are ADA compliant like Lake Lorna Doone – this park we should all strive to mirror.

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

Understanding this is an interim role, I'm running for the residents of District 5 because, as of today, they have gone 50 days and two council meetings without a commissioner.