



2020 General Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Ben Easton

Office Seeking: Austin City Council, District 10

Political Affiliation: Libertarian Party of Texas

Candidate's Website: www.BenEastonDistrict10.org

Why are you running for this position?

I am horrified by the direction that our City Council is taking the city. The present members, including the incumbent in District 10, are way too liberal and PC. I am the man who can and will stand up and call a spade a spade, and advocate for a return to accountability and sanity.

What do you believe are the three most critical issues facing the City of Austin, and why?

1) The UGLINESS and ANGER and FRUSTRATION caused by the Epidemic of Homelessness Encampments & beggars everywhere; 2) The wrong-headed interpretation of recent police "brutality" and the misapprehension of "racism" which have led many to believe there is systemic racism in the APD ... which there is not; and ... 3) Boondoggles continuing to sprout at every gathering of socialist, welfare-oriented, government-loving, tax-raising, emotional-rescue-oriented fuzzy thinking bureaucrats who have NO IDEA about arithmetic, logic, accounting, etc., but who apparently have nothing better to do than invent new ways to kowtow to victim special-interest groups and promise them more of YOUR money and MINE!

If elected, what other items would you like to accomplish while in office?

My first, second, and third priority is: CLEAR the homelessness camps and rid the city of beggars, panhandlers, and con-men. Round 'em up, ship 'em out ... send 'em to Oregon or California, where they will be welcomed and heralded and honored. The homeless people who don't leave, but want to work, can be hired immediately to CLEAN UP the city ... from North to South, East to West. Issue them all brooms, dust pans, and several crates of Hefty trash bags EACH, for that is how out of control the mess is. They can help make our formerly fair city IMMACULATE ... and then they can help KEEP it that way. Send in the Power Washers ... under freeway interchanges ... and anywhere else that filth and crap have been allowed to gather and fester for the last several years. Our city needs to be, can be, OUGHT to be a Beautiful, Clean, Open, GREEN city ... welcoming to all healthy people who are here to appreciate it, respect it, and use it PROPERLY. I advocate the BANNING of all e-scooters that are not RESPONSIBLY

maintained by ACCOUNTABLE INDIVIDUALS. If there is a scooter left willy-nilly (i.e., not parked properly in a designated spot--out of the normal and proper flow of traffic) on a given PUBLIC space, it should immediately be collected in a dump truck and taken to the nearest landfill. The bill for this clean-up should then immediately be presented to the companies who have not yet figured out that it is ridiculous, tiresome, ugly, unsafe, and just plain inappropriate to CLUTTER our city with hundreds of these contraptions. Same for e-bicycles. Same for ALL "public" ready-to-go crap that modern Millennial types have been raised to believe do not require a proper home, a proper place, and proper respect for the general welfare of those around them. They are wrong.

How would you describe your position as it relates to balancing the needs of new job creation and big development projects, with the big problems of traffic congestion, cost of living, and affordability?

I trust real estate developers, bankers, architects, and engineers to read and interpret the Land Code--as horrifyingly inefficient and ambiguous as it is--and to build and develop accordingly. I trust the FREE MARKET to offer the general public the best products that exist, for the best price, while still allowing for good profits. "We need more affordable housing!" is one of the several battle cries of the mathematically and ethically challenged. In other words, Laissez Faire Capitalism is the best way to guarantee that people get the best of anything that exists in regards to goods and services--including houses, condos, skyscrapers, apartments, mobile homes, boarding houses, duplexes, and motels. Even tents! Traffic Congestion is a genuine and legitimate problem. The existing City Council and the Mayor tend to exacerbate this problem on several different levels. 1) They allow the homelessness fiasco to continue, which slows down everything; 2) Beggars at every major intersection add to the distractions--traffic is impeded every time a panhandler moves forward to tell more lies to the front two or three cars full of suckers waiting at the red lights; 3) The City Council does NOT manage multiple building projects very well, allowing major downtown arteries to be narrowed by one lane, or two, occasionally THREE lanes ... creating bottle necks all over town, weekdays and weekends; 4) Wasting resources and traffic flow space by converting to bicycle and "bus only" lanes; the city is littered with ugly orange cones and barriers that remain weeks after work has ceased or been completed; 5) I advocate getting at least 1/3 of all drivers OFF the roads and freeways by increasing the difficulty of drivers tests, and then actually confiscating licenses of habitually poor drivers ... forcing them A: to get off the road ... and B: to use Mass Transit which will eventually give Public Transportation a chance to actually pay for itself.

Do you believe that our Land Development Code needs to be updated?

Yes

If you answered "Yes" to question #13, what would you want to see updated in our land development code?

I have heard the code is 1800 pages long. As a teacher, a writer, and a philosopher, I will tell you that any governing document that long is patently ridiculous. The Constitution of the United States of America is only 42 pages long. Granted, it is pretty damned general, but you get my point. We need

somebody with COMMON SENSE to run the re-write. The first step is to limit the length, which would possibly force the introduction of LOGIC into the picture. 100 pages or less in length ... and get the damned special-interest whiners OUT of the process. And anybody who wants to specially modify rules for blacks ... or browns ... or whites ... or gays ... or women ... should have NO say. Or "small businesses" ... or "minority-owned" businesses ... etc, etc, etc. Keep special-interest victims AWAY from this important process! Good land development is color-blind, gender-blind, socio-economic caste-blind. As you folks no doubt know, a healthy developer is thinking--at minimum--about 3 to 5 groups of potential consumers in the eventual market place. The really good ones know that there are a dozen eventual uses for something, 33 ways to skin the cat, and then they use their best computer models, 5 decades of life experience, and then some gut extinct--as Texans--to come up with the best solutions. In NO UNIVERSE would I trust the City Planners to figure this out on their own. As a newly-elected City Council member, I would bring in the top developers, engineers, architects, and financiers, and say, "Roll up your sleeves and get to work!"

If you answered "No" to question #13, what do you like about our existing code?

One of RECA's top areas of focus has been to improve the overall permitting process to make it more predictable for everyone. Please indicate any specific policies you have worked on (or will work on) while in office related to improving efficiencies in the permitting process.

I'm 61 years old, the son of a real estate developer, the son-in-law of a real estate developer, and the brother of a real estate developer. I grew up in Houston. My father and father-in-law were partners for 50 years, very successful builders of shopping centers in Houston, San Antonio, and Austin. But in the mid-80s, they got the hell out of Austin. "Too much damn RED TAPE!" I remember them telling me. Perhaps they were a little on the "scrape and build" end of the spectrum, but my point is that they saw Austin as a NIGHTMARE of over-bearing bureaucracy even then. It is no doubt worse today. Requiring formulas for trees and handicapped parking spaces is, to a degree, understandable, but I have heard of insanely trivial mandates that hang up builders for weeks and months. I would be an advocate to clear the log jam of these small-minded obstacles and diminish the authority of the pinheads in the licensing and permitting offices.

What specific policies would you support to address our severe housing shortage and the rising cost to construct and produce housing?

A housing "shortage" is a subjective claim. The real issue is whether the market is actually FREE. And, of course, due to the fact that the USA has been tending Socialist for decades, it most certainly is not. That being said, I would be a vocal champion and defender of the Free Market, doing my best at every opportunity to expand the freedom of creators and consumers to trade value for value. An attractive city (such as Austin is presumed to be) will always bring in more people. And, when other states are going bankrupt, and people leave those places to settle here, where the lifestyle is good, it gets more crowded. This is a cycle that can never be reversed or outlawed. City Councils cannot and should not try to "manage growth" as such. The FREE MARKET will automatically and organically regulate growth,

justly, perfectly, by establishing prices for housing (and transportation) and the local economy will either support more population at a given average standard of living--OR IT WILL NOT! The City Council exists as an arbiter and a RULE CLARIFIER. The Council and the Mayor are administrators who ought to FACILITATE the growth (or non-growth). Nothing more. The fact that Austin housing prices are being driven up steadily year after year is a tribute to how attractive this "town" has been ... and PERHAPS still is. It is up to ALL OF US to do our best to maintain the cleanliness, the greenness, the openness, the beauty, the healthiness, etc. At some point, the immigrants (from California, Oregon, Kansas, China, France, Mexico, Georgia, etc.) will stop coming ... and a new (but temporary) equilibrium will have been reached. In terms of the rapid increase to construction costs, the same economic factors are at play. One thing I would do is IMMEDIATELY call for the Covid-19 Shutdown/Lockdown to end. This fear-based and wrong-headed approach is about to fully kill the economy. Let's get back to work!

What is your position on Project Connect?

A mega-boondoggle. I am against it. Our City Council, our Mayor, and our City Manager cannot even keep sidewalks in front of hotels, theatres, restaurants, and apartment buildings clean and clear. They are busy CLOGGING our streets and sidewalks with e-scooters, building barricades, blocking car lanes and designating bicycle lanes, ... clogging traffic ... allowing pedalling bars to "hurry" down busy downtown streets at 7 miles per hour, slowing traffic even more ... and allowing line-of-sight traffic awareness to be more diminished by the day due to homeless camps erecting tent cities under major on ramps and off ramps! Would I TRUST these people to design, fund, build, and manage a 10 to 100 billion dollar project?! Do you think I'm INSANE?!

What other measures would you support to improve current and future mobility throughout our city?

Get rid of bad drivers (prosecute and jail those who are stalled at red lights because they are texting ... shame them!) ... "make them" shift to public transit; driving cars should be considered a privilege and a responsibility (similar to flying an airplane). Signage in and around Austin is typically poor. Identify the bottlenecks in various interchanges and erect better and clearer signs. CLEAR the homeless people and vagrants and panhandlers!!! Yes, I know I'm harping on this, but damn it! This issue is truly related to how things are all clogged up and moving slowly. Convert the recently designated bicycle lanes BACK TO AUTOMOBILES! Expedite the major construction projects on freeways and other major arteries. Take off the damn masks--get back to work!!! Wake up, Austin, Smell the coffee! Do NOT let the bureaucrats and the socialist "experts" KILL Austin!

Do you support the expansion and improvement of major roadways and highways in our region, such as IH-35, US 183, and 360?

Yes

How do you think RECA or the business community should play a productive role in our city?

By endorsing and cheering for candidates like me who are willing to call a spade a spade ... willing to call the madness what it is. By constantly and boldly challenging ALL people at ALL levels in EVERY conversation who perpetuate the silly and outrageous lies about diversity-this and PC-that. Be ready to courageously CONDEMN all people who want a free ride, who want to claim the victim card, who want a special dispensation from the bureaucrats, who want to organize yet another special committee to study some imagined and ridiculous fantasy about somebody not giving them their chance to do or get something. Be ready to tell these freeloaders and leeches: "Get out of our way ... 'cause we're busy building and making our city even better!"