



RECA
REAL ESTATE COUNCIL
OF AUSTIN

2020 General Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Michael Lovins

Office Sought: Travis County Judge

Political Affiliation: Republican

Candidate's Website (if applicable): www.MichaelForTravisCountyJudge.com

Why are you running for this position?

I am running to start restoring common sense to local government. Austin has changed dramatically in the last couple of years. The City Council allowed homeless people to camp anywhere they please, leading to homeless camps under practically every bridge in town. More recently, City Council voted to dramatically cut the Austin Police Department budget, meaning that APD will lose 150 officers. These two disastrous changes have quickly and predictably led to a dramatic increase in crime. For most of my 22 years here, Austin has been one of the safest major cities in the country. That is no longer true, and it's getting worse quickly.

What do you believe are the three most critical issues facing Travis County and why?

Public Safety Homeless Camps Affordability

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

Make the public health system run more efficiently to deliver high quality care to the people who need it most.

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?

The free market organizes and balances these problems better and more efficiently than government. Government's primary role is to enforce property rights. Government interference tends to drive the cost of living up, not down. Traffic congestion is a major issue, and we are sitting on the edge of a major transportation revolution with driverless cars and the sharing economy. Government should plan transportation infrastructure with that in mind.

Do you believe that Title 30 (Travis County/City of Austin Subdivision Code for ETJ) needs to be updated?

I do favor changing Title 30

If you answered "Yes" to question #13, what would you want to see updated in Title 30?

The first problem that needs to be corrected is that the City and County do not actually abide by the law, and this failure drives up the cost of new housing. Of course, those costs are ultimately passed to the consumer. That should be fixable without changing the law itself. Second, changing the code should be done after bringing all stakeholders to the table, including developers and engineers, to take into account different perspectives. Then, we can find as much common ground as possible to enact strategic changes, instead of ad hoc changes that fail to consider unintended consequences.

If you answered "No" to question #13, what do you like about Title 30?

One of RECA's top areas of focus has been to improve the overall permitting process to make it more predictable for everyone. Please outline any specific policies you will work on while in office.

Deadlines for responses from the County need to be met, especially on traffic impact analyses. Better oversight is needed to ensure that staff does not slow play disfavored projects.

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

Travis County Commissioners Court has limited power related to housing, even in unincorporated parts of the county. Regulations should be minimized wherever possible to lower the cost to construct housing.

What is your position on Project Connect?

Strongly opposed

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

Implement telework policies for all County employees whose jobs would permit it. Encourage private sector companies to promote telework. More roads will be needed, though, as telework can only take so much pressure off the transportation system.

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?

Private businesses provide the jobs that make our economy vibrant and dynamic. We need to hear the voices of the business community to ensure that local government is an ally and not an impediment to businesses.