

## Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) 2008 City Council Candidates Forum Questionnaire Responses – Place 3

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<b>Growth Management</b>			
1. Do you believe the City of Austin should have a comprehensive growth management plan?	A comprehensive growth management plan is a necessity for our city which has experienced consistent growth. We plan for roads, we plan for water, and we need to also be planning for housing, our infrastructure, and they need to all be in one document that is easily accessible and easily understood. It should answer questions like, how much growth can our infrastructure handle? What improvements do we need to make now? What improvements do we need to make in the future? If we approve that project, what does that do to the context of the neighborhood, the city, the region?	Yes. I support an inclusive community-based process for creating a comprehensive growth management plan, but I am concerned about launching into an entirely new process in lieu of enhancing the current neighborhood planning process into which so many citizens have already invested their time and energy over many years. Too often we've seen our community engage in planning activities only to have a next approach trump the work already completed. I'd rather look first at ways for Austin neighborhoods to translate their work into something more meaningful – something that truly drives public safety and transportation decisions in addition to land use responsibility. I support the broad recommendations included in ANC's call to action to manage Austin's growth and will work to increase the planning resources identified and prioritized in the resolution.	I believe that the city should have some plan for the next 20 years to guide and manage growth.
2. Will you, as a City Council member, in partnership with the ANC and a broad range of other community stakeholders, embark upon development of a viable growth management policy?	Absolutely! I'm very excited that ANC has brought this issue up, and I look forward to working with you as we form a new growth management policy for our city. I'm also on the board of CAMPO and I think we should engage our neighboring cities as well to discuss how their land-use patterns affect Austin.	Yes. I believe my biggest strength as a candidate is my ability to bring broad and balanced perspectives together to effectively get things done. I decided to challenge the incumbent Council Member specifically because of her reputation for inaccessibility and her resulting ineffectiveness over the last three years.	I believe that citizens know what the best developments are for their neighborhoods. As such, I believe that the city should work closely with neighborhoods to bring those wanted developments to them. The city shouldn't tell neighborhoods what they want.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Jennifer Kim</b>	<b>Randi Shade</b>	<b>Kenneth Weiss</b>
<p>3. How would you ensure that the growth management policy is grounded in sound research and analysis, that it is applied consistently, collaboratively and comprehensively, that it is adhered to and that it is a living document?</p>	<p>The living document part of the question I feel is the key to making the growth management plan a workable reality. We need to be able to adjust the plan as we grow and understand what is happening in our community. Too often this city plans and forgets. We need to have an ongoing conversation about growth even past whatever report is written. I'm interested in ideas to keep this conversation alive, possibly a Growth Management Policy board whose specific function is to approve updates and enforce the provisions of the policy. To make sure the policy is drafted in 'sound research and analysis', we need to look at other cities and see how they've approached growth management. When I visited Vancouver last year, I met with several city officials about the Coal Harbor area where they looked at how many residential units, office space, and retail the area could handle and zoned accordingly. I'm interested in exploring a similar practice in Austin.</p>	<p>As I mentioned above, we must increase planning resources so that everyone has access to the information needed to make good decisions. The process has to build on the work that's already been done and input must be broad and balanced. Once the plan is developed it becomes important to evaluate the plan's effectiveness and make adjustments as needed. Evaluating the plan will ensure that City staff implement the plan as intended by the policy makers and will also enable the Council to continue to work with stakeholders on an ongoing basis to ensure the plan is revised and/or modified as needed, so that the plan meets the community's needs over the long term.</p>	<p>I believe that it takes input from the neighborhoods as to the development people want in their communities.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>4. Will you commit to a thorough review of our economic development strategies to ensure that future growth will pay for itself and not result in taxpayer subsidies?</p>	<p>I support halting sales tax rebates for retail developments like Domain and voted for the resolution to stop that practice. It puts small businesses at an unfair disadvantage. These types of rebates are simply an unfair perk for businesses that don't need them. We need to be very conservative in our use of incentives. It's interesting how Dallas has approved over 100 incentive deals, whereas Austin has approved only about a dozen. They should not be used for retail businesses. We are fortunate in that we don't have to lure businesses with incentives to come to Austin. However there are unique opportunities to encourage the development of biotech, renewables, and the creative industries, and we should be open to considering and supporting those if the gains to society (cleaning our environment, curing disease and illness, etc.) and to the Austin community are significant. I also passed an ordinance requiring that those companies meet our minority and women business enterprise goals.</p>	<p>Yes. It only makes sense for the City to evaluate whether it is getting the appropriate return on its investment. I will be a strong advocate for transparency, including the use of internal and independent auditors, to ensure that job creation, salaries, and/or any other performance requirements are being met before any City-granted economic benefit is received. It's clear to me that increased tax revenue by itself hasn't solved our City's economic problems, because many other factors are also at work. We always have to consider costs, not just increased tax revenue. Local governments are carrying bigger burdens as state and federal services have been cut. A thriving community of large local employers can be beneficial to people at every economic level, but my bias is toward helping local employers succeed and providing job opportunities where the most direct, most obvious needs exist. Any economic development strategy that grows our base of large employers while generating neither job opportunities for a broad range of low and middle-income residents, nor new business and entrepreneurial ventures supporting the large employer, nor new tax revenue sufficient to pay for the cost of growth, is unacceptable in my book.</p>	<p>I have always believed that we should be ready to provide services to any development that we incorporate into the city. The city should not annex subdivisions and make them wait for years for services while they are paying city taxes.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>5. Do you believe there is an alternative view to Austin’s current growth forecast assumptions that predict a doubling of the population by 2050? If so, will your view incorporate the carrying capacities of our natural resources to produce a sustainable community and how so?</p>	<p>We need to plan for all scenarios, but there are absolutely other alternatives to current growth forecasts. The carrying capacity of our natural resources needs to be one of our top concerns when discussing growth. Austin is blessed with many natural resources; one of the few areas in the country where becoming a sustainable city can be a reality in our lifetimes. I believe the policies resulting from a growth management plan will give us better direction on how to get to full sustainability.</p>	<p>There are always alternative views and unforeseen events that can make an impact; however, Austin has maintained a relatively constant rate of growth for more than 150 years (population doubling every 20 years). I am not a demography expert, but everything I’ve ever seen suggests that virtually any region in the southwest part of our country is going to continue to experience population growth in the foreseeable future. That’s why the second part of this question seems far more important than the first part. There is so much we can do to become a sustainable community. To move us forward toward this goal and to help meet Austin’s future water and energy needs, my decision-making on the City Council would always prioritize conservation, recycling, and the generation and distribution of renewable energy over coal or nuclear. I would push to continue to improve the City’s residential and commercial energy efficiency programs, to help us conserve more. I would champion efforts to expand and streamline residential and business recycling programs. I would work to actively increase public involvement and awareness across all initiatives related to achieving sustainability. Too often people operate in individual silos which prevents maximum impact from any single initiative. I would also explore the role of Chief Sustainability Officer and find ways to ensure that sustainability planning is taken seriously from an operations perspective City-wide, department to department.</p>	<p>Doubling our population from 750,000 to 1.4 million may happen sooner than later. The Austin economy is still reasonable strong and may continue that way even after other cities markets cool. One of the hardest resources hit will be water. Will we have enough water to supply all the citizens of Austin? One issue is to conserve water by using drought resistant plants and xeriscaping, and two, educating the public on all the ways to save water.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<b>Neighborhood Planning</b>			
<p>6. What do you consider to be the top three objectives of neighborhood planning, and do you think these objectives are being met under the current framework? If not, how do you propose to ensure that these objectives will be met?</p>	<p>1. To better understand the voice of the community; 2. To better understand the future of a neighborhood and how growth will impact it; 3. To provide a clear, concise policy document to assess needs and provide a plan to accomplish meeting those needs. Many have been through the neighborhood planning process and have the scars to prove it. Our current system for neighborhood planning is in drastic need of an overhaul. We need to figure out a better framework to have the neighborhood plans reflect the desires of the people asked to dedicate a year (sometimes longer) of their life, and then end up with a document the city can use on a daily basis to make decisions and understand them in a larger context. One neighborhood plan that comes to mind is the East Riverside Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan, which to this day is not completely passed. The neighborhood representatives were concerned with the amount of rental housing in their area and were interested in encouraging ownership with new projects. Instead of working with the neighborhood representatives on possible policies to encourage home ownership and control the amount of rental housing in EROC, the neighborhood plan was more concerned with the color on the map. I want to graduate from coloring and get back to planning. Let's get some real solutions in our neighborhood plans with true direction for our neighborhoods.</p>	<p>1. Preserve the unique characteristics of every neighborhood as defined by the residents of the neighborhood. 2. Plan for future growth in a way that fits with the existing community. 3. Communicate a clear directive to City Council and City staff for residents' and businesses' vision for the future of each neighborhood. The idea of neighborhood plans is a good one, but the City has too often fallen short of maintaining the integrity of the plans. The plans are to be developed through a very deliberate process, but there is a lot of inconsistency from one neighborhood to the next, particularly when it comes to making modifications. I want to place more emphasis on neighborhood plans and their implementation, and I want to increase the resources available for staff, training, planning, information sharing, research and analysis.</p>	<p>I don't have enough information to make an educated statement on the top three objectives of neighborhood planning.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>7. Has neighborhood planning alleviated any of the contention surrounding certain zoning and development issues since its inception?</p>	<p>No, but it should. The idea behind neighborhood planning is that we are getting ahead of the problems and figuring out solutions before it's too late. I don't think our plans do that. Let's get better plans, let's get better policies, and let's enforce them.</p>	<p>I think it helped in some ways and hurt in others, but generally has not succeeded in making a meaningful improvement in the way we plan. Neighborhood plans are designed to communicate a clear vision for an area to City planners and policy makers. Too often the City doesn't adhere to the plan and the vision that was intended. That's why so many people I've spoken with seem to feel "duped" after engaging in the neighborhood planning process. They feel their time and energy may have been wasted. We need to reboot the neighborhood planning process to be more inclusive and predictable. Currently, code enforcement is complaint-driven, and Future Land Use Plans are taken only as recommendations. People are surprised to learn that their plan makes recommendations, but a newly proposed project that conforms to zoning requirements but not the intent of the neighborhood plan can and is still often pursued. We can and should find ways to better implement the recommendations generated by neighborhood plans.</p>	<p>I don't believe so. Neighborhoods like Oak Hill want a Town Center concept in their community, but instead the city wants to tell them what they want. I don't think this is the right answer to neighborhood planning.</p>
<p>8. Will you make the specific community-identified needs included in neighborhood plans a priority starting point for future bond packages?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes. Yet another reason why comprehensive planning makes sense.</p>	<p>Yes, but the neighborhoods should have a say in what developments they want and don't want in their neighborhoods. Then the city should provide the bond package to supply the necessary infrastructure.</p>
<p>9. Do you think the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) should be the only enforceable component of neighborhood planning?</p>	<p>No. NCCDs prove a need for something more. Every neighborhood is unique and needs different protections put in place. The neighborhood plan is the most appropriate document to set those policies.</p>	<p>No. The entire package of documents warrants consideration or we should stop asking residents and business owners to painstakingly develop full-blown neighborhood plans which are then submitted for approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.</p>	<p>No, again, I believe that the neighborhoods that are affected by developments should have a voice in those developments and/or their land usage.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
10. Will you require the city manager to process any proposed land use or zoning changes for any reason, such as the TOD ordinance, in accordance with the adopted neighborhood planning amendment process that includes full participation of all stakeholders for any property within a neighborhood planning area?	Yes. That should be standard on all land use changes regardless of who brings it forward.	Yes. Again, there seems to be no point in having a watered down process that has no meaning. I don't want citizens to feel duped. As long we have the neighborhood planning process in place, we should adhere to its intent.	I believe that communities should be allowed to have development such as TOD. I will support what the citizens want in their neighborhoods and if that requires some zoning changes, then I will support that.
11. Will you direct staff to provide every neighborhood planning area an analysis of the existing zoning capacity before approving any zoning changes in the area?	Yes, we are currently doing similar modeling for the CAMPO town center initiative, so it is a very reasonable request to include that modeling at the neighborhood planning level.	Yes.	I believe we need to have sufficient zoning in all areas residential, commercial, and industrial before we make any changes in zoning.
<b>Zoning</b>			
12. Under what circumstances would you <u>not</u> support a valid petition of the community or a recommendation of a neighborhood plan team in a zoning case?	I usually adhere to a valid petition on a zoning case. In fact, during the time I have been on the council, I have the largest number of votes against zoning requests where there was a valid petition. But there must be allowable exceptions with regards to health, safety and the environment.	I know that a valid petition is an important tool for preventing inappropriate zoning changes. It often represents the desires of a significant portion of the residents in a given area of town. In almost every case, I would expect to strongly support a neighborhood's valid petition. But, I can't know exactly what the future holds, and I've learned in life that absolutes can get you in trouble. I can't make the pledge that I will never vote against a valid petition, but I can make the pledge that if I ever do it will be in the name of a clear, compelling, broad community value.	I believe the city of Austin should look at all neighborhood plans for developments that the neighborhood wants in their community rather than waiting for citizens to go to petitions or lawsuits over proposed development in their neighborhood. Citizens know what is best in their neighborhood therefore the city should listen to the citizens.
13. Will you commit to support the existing zoning compatibility standards in general? Under what circumstances, if any, do you think compatibility standards should be waived?	Compatibility standards are the base line defenses neighborhoods need for protection against intense development. Waiving these standards should only be done with neighborhood consent.	Yes, but again, I can't know exactly circumstance we might face, so I would leave the door open for waiving a compatibility requirement when there is a clear, compelling, broad community-value-based reason for doing so.	Any and all waivers would be granted on two conditions. 1) It will only be on a case by case basis, and 2) only if the community wants that particular type of development would we consider a wavier.
14. Will you uphold the current compromise restrictions and standards set forth in the VMU ordinance including no increased height over base zoning, compliance with compatibility standards, no VMU/commercial creep, affordability as set forth by neighborhood associations' recommendations, and availability of expedited residential permit parking?	Yes to <u>all</u> of the above.	Yes.	I will again, have to research the implication of the VMU ordinance. However, these scenarios all seem like waivers to me, and again that would require we let the citizens of the community decided what's right for them.

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>15. Will you make available to neighborhoods and to decision-making bodies relevant information regarding transportation, infrastructure, housing and other critical matters prior to making land use decisions?</p>	<p>Information is the key to making the right decisions for neighborhoods. Over the past 3 years, I have had an open office to those wanting information from the city. I will continue to serve as a liaison for the community and work to get them the information they need to make decisions in their neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>I believe in order to make an educated decision all this information should be provided to neighborhoods about the impact development will have.</p>
<p>16. In areas where a neighborhood opposes up-zoning to convert residential use to some other commercial use, and where adequate commercially zoned property is already available, will you commit to vote against such up-zoning?</p>	<p>When making a decision on any zoning case, I use a variety of resources, which absolutely includes the recommendation of the surrounding neighborhood. One of the first things I did in office after handling a few zoning cases was hire a staff member specifically dedicated to talking with the community and making recommendations to me. I believe it is important to gather as many facts as possible about the case and make a decision based on those findings. In principle, I feel commercial development should remain on major arterials and not encroach upon residential neighborhoods, which is the usual request from neighborhoods, so I feel we're on the same page.</p>	<p>I would expect to oppose most conversions and upzonings when it's clear that neighborhoods don't want them, but I have to leave the door open to the possibility that specific circumstances could present a clear, compelling, broad community benefit. What's critical is to find and maintain balance on an ongoing basis between the pressures of growth and the mission of preserving neighborhood integrity, through improved planning process and better communication.</p>	<p>Again, I believe the neighborhood should have a say in the developments and zoning changes that affect their community.</p>
<b>Community Values</b>			
<p>17. Will you commit to uphold the community's desire to protect the Lady Bird Lake Corridor and vote against any proposed zoning change that would encroach on the current base zoning and Waterfront Overlay restrictions? Will you sponsor and vote for a re-drafting of the 1999 waterfront overlay to re-establish the spirit of the 1986 community consensus?</p>	<p>Yes, I have and will continue to oppose any variances to the Waterfront Overlay. I will gladly sponsor a redrafting of the waterfront overlay to make whatever changes necessary to protect Lady Bird Lake. I have worked alongside Save Town Lake throughout my term and will continue to work with them in my next.</p>	<p>Yes. I support re-establishing the spirit of the 1986 community consensus.</p>	<p>I am strongly committed to protecting Lady Bird Lake and her shores from encroachment from commercial development. Lady Bird Lake and her shores should be used as park land and green space for all of Austin to use.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>18. Are you committed to making affordable housing on city-owned property a priority use?</p>	<p>Yes, this was one of the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Incentives Taskforce, which I sponsored, and I fully support family-sized affordable housing being the priority use for all government-owned properties. Currently, I am working on including affordable housing in the Green Water Treatment Plant redevelopment project and advocating the preservation and creation of affordable housing for any redevelopment of the Brackenridge Tract.</p>	<p>Yes. We can't ask developers to make affordable housing a priority and then not make it a priority on our City-owned property. For example, I supported the mandates for affordability that the City Council recently established for the redevelopment of the Green Water Treatment Plant site downtown, as well as the 40% set-aside in the Tax Increment Financing plan for affordable housing.</p>	<p>If the city can not use the property for either park land, green space, or other city use such as an office building, or similar then yes we should use the property for affordable housing.</p>
<p>19. How do you propose to ensure city-wide affordable housing, including in the downtown central business district. What levels of affordability do you think should be supported?</p>	<p>Affordable housing was my top priority during my term as a council member. I sponsored the creation of the Affordable Housing Incentives Taskforce, which was a broad coalition of real estate professionals, affordable housing advocates, and neighborhood representatives working together on common goal: find a way to get deeper-levels of long-term affordable housing across the entire city. The resulting ordinance, which passed in January, was a giant first step. I am continuing to work on a city-wide preservation policy to preserve our existing stock of affordable housing. Austin's families continue to be displaced by expensive 1-bedroom apartments and condos in our inner city. And I am working with staff on the most comprehensive housing survey this city has ever seen. We must plan for housing as we do for infrastructure. The market study will give us an assessment of what housing we have and what housing we need (at what levels), so we can create policies to make home ownership a possibility for every family in Austin. I am committed to making Austin affordable, where a single-working parent earning minimum wage can afford to own a decent two bedroom home.</p>	<p>We should follow the recommendations from the Affordable Housing Incentives Task Force and create more tools that leverage the findings in the current Downtown Planning process. Creating mechanisms that encourage private sector investment in addressing our affordable housing challenges is important, as is strengthening the relationship the City has with leading nonprofits working successfully in this arena. We need to create a clear and transparent method for reporting and performance review to ensure we're getting the results we expect from the bond program, which is a first of its kind. We should do everything we can to prove that it works, so we can do it again. Regarding other affordability strategies, we should explore targeted exemptions and tax relief for original residents and also seek ways to influence the legislature with respect to its over-reliance on property taxes, which is contributing directly to our affordable housing challenges. As for levels of affordability to be supported – I think we need to focus on strategies for levels from 60% MFI to 80% MFI. Different levels and different objectives (i.e. rental vs. ownership) require different strategies.</p>	<p>I don't believe that there is a 100% solution to city wide affordability, however, we could make new developments provide certain number of affordable units with in there development. Affordability levels vary among every citizen in Austin.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>20. Do you think that historic preservation is important to Austin and will you support Local Historic Districts that meet the prescribed high standards for approval/support?</p>	<p>Historic preservation is extremely important to protecting the character of Austin neighborhoods. I think the Local Historic Districts are a great tool for neighborhoods to join together to safeguard their neighborhoods, and I will support those applications meeting the qualifications set by the city.</p>	<p>I think historical preservation is critically important for maintaining Austin’s unique character, but without knowing the details of a proposed Local Historical Districts ordinance, I can’t commit to support it. I do support the general goals I imagine would inform such an ordinance. Regardless, if elected I will make sure that neighborhoods get better access to information about how to achieve historical preservation.</p>	<p>Being a sort of historical buff myself, I agree that we should preserve Austin’s Heritage and History.</p>
<p>21. Do you think that protection of the integrity and character of Austin’s existing established neighborhoods is important and will you support maintaining existing standards established by the Residential Design and Compatibility Standards?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes, based on my understanding of the standards.</p>	<p>Following answer 20, I concur that some of Austin’s older neighborhoods need to be preserved. I also believe that at the same time some of Austin’s neighborhoods want new development such as a town center concept or transit oriented design.</p>
<p>22. Do you believe outdoor music venues and the noise associated with them are problematic for neighborhoods within their audible range? If so, how do you propose to protect quality of life in our neighborhoods while supporting Austin’s unique position as “Live Music Capital”?</p>	<p>I do not believe that maintaining peace and quiet in a neighborhood and supporting live music are contradictory notions. Live music venues need to be located on major arterials (surrounded by commercial development only) and downtown. The noise ordinance must be enforced, which is why the city budgeted for more sound detectors for the police department. At the same time, new residential construction needs to meet higher standards for soundproofing to protect their residents and not threaten established music venues downtown.</p>	<p>With regard to downtown, my feeling is that if residents don’t want to hear music, they should seriously consider living elsewhere. With regard to residential neighborhoods outside of downtown, I am for strict enforcement of the current ordinances governing noise. In extreme circumstances, where there are specific situations at the neighborhood level that have proven to be persistently problematic, I would also be open to exploring public investment in technologies that could help deliver solutions.</p>	<p>When citizens reside near an airport or railroad they must understand that there is a certain level of noise produced by that activity. When residents live near a live music venue they must also assume a certain level of noise produced by that activity. I propose that the ordinance have loud music stop at earlier times during the week and allow those times to be extended on the weekends.</p>
<b>Code Enforcement/Permitting</b>			
<p>23. What improvements should be made in the current code enforcement process to sufficiently deter improper and non-compliant construction?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, code enforcement unfairly relies on neighborhood associations to make complaints before enforcement happens. I have been a vocal proponent of hiring additional code enforcement officers to do random checks of construction projects to ensure compliance.</p>	<p>We should invest more in code enforcement and facilitate proactive rather than just complaint-driven code enforcement. We need better training, too, to achieve more consistent interpretation of the code. Improving code enforcement will be one of my top budget priorities if elected.</p>	<p>I believe the public should be educated about the permitting process whether you are just replacing your water heater to adding on to you home.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
24. How will you ensure that permitted project plans are designed and implemented to fully comply with all applicable codes and ordinances?	We must educate those seeking site permits on the code. They must know what they can and cannot do before it is too late. We must fully inform builders of the rules and of the repercussions for violating those standards. And, absolutely no variances should be granted for new construction code violations.	In addition to the resources mentioned above, I would call for more inspections and also explore larger fines.	All city employees involved in the zoning and development departments should be required to attend semiannual or annual training on the law and ordinances.
25. Do you believe that maintaining as much as possible of our urban forest/urban tree canopy is an important goal for Austin and if so what would you do to prevent the removal of protected trees by builders and developers who see it as a worthwhile trade-off to pay the small fine assessed as penalty?	Yes, the current fine is too often treated as a fee-in-lieu. The builders pay to knock down the trees. I think we should consider establishing a higher fee and a penalty to require the planting of additional replacement, past what was previously established by the code.	I recommend the death penalty. Just kidding – it has been a long night☺, but I do think removal of a protected tree should be dealt with severely. Maintaining our urban tree canopy is not just an aesthetic or even emotional issue, it’s also a key strategy for achieving improved overall energy efficiency.	To protect the trees the fine should be increased to make it not a worthwhile trade off for developers. At all possible chances trees should be either stay on site or transplanted to a new location.
26. Do you believe that tearing down a structure to its foundation should be classified as a remodel allowing for a completely new (often much larger) structure to be built which would not need to come into compliance with current code?	No, that is a new construction. I sponsored a resolution to bring forward a code amendment to redefine the meaning of residential remodels. I am currently working with stakeholders, such as members of CANPAC and the real estate community, to establish new standards and new baselines for requiring new construction permits.	No, and I support changing to code to prevent this from happening.	I do not agree that this type of development is considered a remodeling. All new development should comply with current codes.
<b>City Government Structure and Representational Effectiveness</b>			
27. Do you favor continuing with our at-large form of city government, moving to single-member districts or moving to a combination of both and why?	A mixed system of at-large and single member districts could improve constituent service and save a lot of time for constituents, to be able to turn to one council member for a particular neighborhood issue instead of having to call or meet with all seven members. I firmly support putting this on the ballot and letting the public decide.	While I don’t believe our current system is broken, I do believe it’s possible that we could be better served by a mixed system of representation that incorporates both single-member districts and at-large districts. A mixed system would, ensure that every citizen has more than just one representative, while I believe still offering the opportunity for more accountable, more accessible and possibly more diverse representation than the current system affords. The devil is always in the details, however, and for now, the issue seems to be shelved for want of a clear, broad call for change.	The government should not tell its citizens what type of government they should have. Having said that, I believe the citizens of Austin should have the right to vote on this issue. Therefore, government by the people for the people.

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<p>28. Do you believe that the current City Council election process (at-large) fosters adequate community representation?</p>	<p>See above answer.</p>	<p>I can't say for sure. So many of the challenges seem to be related to council member accessibility and outreach rather than the actual election process. As a candidate I will say that I think I have benefited from and gained a broader perspective than I might have otherwise had as a result of running city-wide. And, I know that it will be incumbent upon me to continue doing the outreach I am doing as a candidate when I am in office. Just an aside, but I am not shooting for adequate community representation, I am shooting for something much better. In other words, I will work for an A not the mere passing grade of C this question suggests.</p>	<p>There is a lack of accountability in city government and as long as the citizens allow their elected officials to continue this kind of behavior government will not change. The citizens must hold their elected officials responsible and accountable.</p>
<p>29. Please answer a. below if you are a current Council Member and b. if you are not.</p> <p>a. Do you have time to make regular efforts to stay in touch with the community including neighborhoods throughout the city? Do you have time and how do you manage soliciting input from affected neighborhoods regarding issues before Council?</p> <p>b. Will you make regular efforts to stay in touch with the community including neighborhoods throughout the city and how? Will you solicit input from affected neighborhoods regarding issues before Council? If so, describe the process you would use to involve impacted citizens.</p>	<p>Yes, I have done this a number of ways – emails, personal meetings, neighborhood meetings, town hall meetings, phone calls, letters and my open office hours. There are many ways that we can stay in touch and discuss issues of concern or ideas neighborhoods have.</p>	<p>Yes. The responsibility of engaging citizens at City Hall falls on Council members. The Council sets the tone for the way the City's staff involves citizens, as well. I will actively seek the input of citizens and neighborhood groups rather than simply relying on them to visit me. I will continue attending meetings, town halls and community forums after I am elected - not just while I am campaigning. I will make it a standard operating procedure for my office to contact those who will be impacted by issues on the City's agenda. Again, I will seek people out to get their input rather than simply waiting for them contact me, and I will not be a Council member known for being difficult to reach. I will be available and accessible, and I will make my meeting schedule public so people will see from my actions how seriously I take this commitment.</p>	<p>I have two plans. The first, is to have an open door policy and what I consider "Citizens Day's" where citizens can contact my office and make an appointment to see me personally to discuss issues in their neighborhood and the city. The second is to stay in contact with as many community leaders as I possibly can based on my schedule. I will work effortlessly if there is ever a major problem in you community.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<b>Open Governance</b>			
<p>30. How will you work to ensure that all materials citizens need to participate in city processes will be made available on-line with plenty of time for citizens to review, research, and respond prior to the meetings where the information will be considered. How will you empower city staff to place such info on-line? How may citizens participate more in city meetings without being physically present?</p>	<p>I believe <i>finally</i> filling the neighborhood ombudsman positions will be a great first step in improving the experience with working with city staff members. The ombudsman will have immediate access to information and can work with neighborhood representatives so hopefully they can devote some of their precious time to their real jobs. No citizen should have to sleep up at One Texas Center to get information from staff. I would like to work with the neighborhood ombudsman office to set some standards for city response time. The sooner we can get information out to the public, the sooner we can resolve issues, and hopefully, avoid last minute nightmares, which are all too common lately. I also would like the city to develop an alert system for actions that citizens are interested in being notified of, from development permits, subcommittee actions, boards and commissions actions and meetings. This could be to cell phones, fax, phone messages or email. This would be similar to the legislative alert system that exists.</p>	<p>I am strongly committed to the idea that the City can do a much better job of utilizing the Internet to empower citizens with early, honest, easily accessible information. I know that a process is currently ongoing to improve the functionality of the City’s website in this regard, and I expect to engage significantly in that process if I am elected to serve. Austin city government should lead the nation in accomplishing efficient electronic interaction with citizens who wish to participate in the democratic process this way.</p>	<p>I believe any major development in a neighborhood should be given extra time in the zoning and development process to allow for notification of citizens when their neighborhood is affected by this type of development.</p>
<b>Working with AISD</b>			
<p>31. How do you propose for the City Council to work with AISD to protect our aquifer, build better buildings, and preserve/enhance existing neighborhood schools?</p>	<p>Require SOS compliance and green building standards and also support the neighborhood schools initiative (I am on the Joint Subcommittee for AISD/City/County) and better coordination and sharing of information between AISD and the City of Austin as we update our comprehensive plan.</p>	<p>The City Council and city staff needs to be working closely with the AISD Board of Trustees and the management of the school district on an ongoing basis to ensure that the district honors the strictest standards contained in the City’s land development code and, more broadly, Austin’s community values when it comes to building practices and growth planning.</p>	<p>I propose we work hand and hand with everyone involved in school building developments so that site plans concur with the SOS ordinance and the neighborhoods vision of what their neighborhood should look like.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<b>Business Development</b>			
<p>32. Will you work to reduce subsidies to large employers? Will you do a total cost-benefit analysis process before providing any subsidies or loans to any businesses? How will you help and support small businesses get started, thrive, and grow?</p>	<p>See answer to Question 4. Yes and Yes. I have been a leading proponent of small business as the Chair of the Minority/Women Business Enterprise and Small Business Subcommittee of the Council. I worked to make sure that small businesses that were listed a subcontractors on projects would actually get the work they were promised. I worked to add a small business ombudsman to help with permit and regulatory issues in the city. I also added a small business outreach staff person to publicize our resources including free business planning, finance counseling and market research. I am currently working with city staff to create a program to help locally owned businesses expand from one store or service location to multiple locations so more of our retail spaces will be filled with successful, locally owned and unique Austin businesses.</p>	<p>As I said earlier, it only makes sense for the City to evaluate whether it is getting the appropriate return on its investment. I will be a strong advocate for transparency, including the use of independent auditors, to ensure that job creation, salaries, and/or any other performance requirements are being met before any City-granted economic benefit is received. As for supporting small businesses, I think many local business owners feel that their biggest challenges aren't going to be solved by new programs, but rather increased focus and attention on the basics such as ensuring the City has reliable and affordable utilities, quick and predictable permitting process, fair and stable regulatory functions, safe neighborhoods, strong infrastructure, and overall economic vitality. Besides focusing on these things, I would strengthen the relationship the City has with Austin Independent Business Alliance to increase support for the IBIZ districts program and its efforts to help connect independent businesses to commercial developers. I would support organizations like BiG and PeopleFund which support local entrepreneurs with special technical assistance and financing needs, as well as supporting our community's many Chambers of Commerce and other business networking groups. I will look for ways the City can enhance its services while reducing utility rates and/or fees for local businesses. And I'd include local nonprofit organizations in the mix as they operate as businesses, too, just with a different tax status.</p>	<p>No, subsidies for large businesses. I support small businesses and I propose that the city of Austin hold regular schedule work shops and seminars to help small businesses stay profitable or help those who want to start a small business.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<b>Environment</b>			
<p>33. Within the city limits of Austin are a number of urban creeks and watersheds associated with those creeks. The creeks of Austin are jewels in Austin's crown, but they have been neglected by the amount of impervious cover that is allowed to be put on the ground and the lack of good water quality controls both in neighborhoods and in the commercial areas. Would you be willing to direct the City Manager to investigate how runoff in those watersheds can be cleaned up and the possibility of lowering impervious cover limits on development and redevelopment in the central city areas?</p>	<p>Yes. Let's do that now!</p>	<p>Yes, I strongly support protecting our urban creeks and watersheds.</p>	<p>This study may indeed cost a lot of money to the tax payers of Austin. I would, however, propose that we study limiting impervious cover on new and redevelopments in Austin. It would be economically unfeasible to force residents to place water quality controls on their properties, but commercial development should be required to have at least some type of water control.</p>
<p>34. What is your thinking/position on amending the SOS ordinance as Austin develops into the contributing and recharge zones of the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer? What elements would you see as necessary in order to consider amending the ordinance? Have you any background in the areas of pollutant loadings, impervious cover, state of the art water quality controls? Would you be willing to seek the advice and guidance of the scientists in the Watershed Protection Department of the City of Austin in order to obtain the best information available on pollutants, impervious cover, and water quality controls available currently?</p>	<p>The Watershed Protection and Development Review Department is exactly where this conversation needs to be taking place. I believe we have some of the best watershed staff in the nation with some of the best managing practices, which is why I convinced TxDOT to allow WPDR staff to be the eyes and the ears for Williamson Creek during the construction of US 290 in Oak Hill.</p> <p>Amending the SOS ordinance is risky and needs to be done with great caution. The goal needs to be improving environmental standards, not allowing more development to take place or we may end up with unintended consequences. Right now, I am working with city staff to improve our erosion and sedimentation controls to help mitigate additional pollutants poring into the Barton Springs Aquifer.</p>	<p>If elected to the City Council I will be a consistent advocate for the strict enforcement of the SOS ordinance and will work with the rest of the City Council and the community at large to advance policies that result in the net reduction of pollutants flowing into the Barton Springs watershed. I don't have a specific background in the areas of pollutant loadings, impervious cover, or state of the art water quality controls, but I am willing to seek the advice and guidance of the scientists in the Watershed Protection Department of the City of Austin in order to obtain the best information available. I am also willing to actively seek advice from other thought leaders and scientists in our community.</p>	<p>I believe that the redevelopment portion of the SOS ordinance should have included at minimum a 10% reduction in impervious cover. Every time a property is redeveloped in the sensitive area, 10% of impervious cover goes with it. Education is always the best way to deal with problems. The more educated you are, the better choices you can make. I would consider the opinions of scientist and their recommendations.</p>

Question	Jennifer Kim	Randi Shade	Kenneth Weiss
<b>Transportation</b>			
<p>35. Would you commit to support alternative transit options such as improved bus service, better bike lanes, more sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements? Do you support the proposed trolley system that Mayor Wynn is promoting and if so, how do you envision the city paying for it?</p>	<p>The city's first priority for funding alternative transit needs to be focused at the state and federal levels. Funding from the federal level has been cut drastically and is unfairly weighted to cities with existing transit systems. State funding for mass transit is sadly non-existent. We need to lobby our representatives at both levels to change the trend. As a board member of the Capitol Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), which allocates state and federal funding to Austin, I will be looking for a new director with experience with mass transit and the processes it takes to make it a reality. We also need to explore all our options to get well-planned transit as soon as possible. Our bonding capacity is limited, so we need to think of creative solutions. I like the idea of tax increment financing districts (TIFs) around transit stations. There are several issues that need to be worked out before it could be a viable option, but I think there is room to explore more there.</p>	<p>Yes to improved bus service, better bike lanes, more sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements. I support the concept of a downtown circulator of some kind, but am not yet sold on any concept or financing plan.</p>	<p>I do support adding additional bike lanes and sidewalks. I propose that we revamp CAPMETRO and create a spoke and hub system rather than the system we have now. We can also utilize the express, limited, and local schedules for bus service. I believe that Mayor Wynn's trolley system may work, but more studies must be done to see how they would impact traffic, pedestrians, and the monetary cost of the system.</p>
<p>36. Will you support the changes in the CAMPO 2030 plan as requested in the City's AMATP, thereby limiting roadway expansion in our core area neighborhoods?</p>	<p>I believe there are places where road expansions are appropriate and places where road expansion is not. Existing neighborhood roadways are not. We don't need our kids trying to cross a highway on the way to school. They tried that in Houston and it doesn't work. For most roadways, that money would be better spent improving signalization and safety.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>I currently do not have enough information to make an educated statement about the CAMPO 2030 Plan.</p>