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Citizens' Climate Lobby



December 12, 2015 City of Houston Runoff Election Environmental Questionnaire

Early Voting in the City of Houston (Harris County):

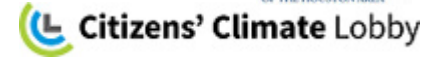
Wednesday - Saturday	December 2-5, 2015	7am - 7pm
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Each of the candidates was asked to respond to the following three questions. Responses have been published exactly as submitted including spelling or grammatical errors. Any responses that exceed the character limit of 1000 characters are ended with asterisks at the point of the character limit.

- 1) In 2015, Houston expanded curbside recycling for all neighborhoods with city trash services. What specific policies or programs would you support to build on this progress and address illegal dumping, prevent new trash facilities from being located in low-income areas, and expand recycling, composting and education?**
- 2) This December, the UN Climate Change Conference is meeting in Paris, France to achieve a universal agreement on global actions for all nations to address climate change. How will you lead Houston as a global city in addressing climate change?**
- 3) What local environmental and environmental justice issues are most important to you? What policies will you support to address these issues?**

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Sylvester Turner - Candidate for Mayor



Councilmember Davis has been pushing for more cameras to deter illegal dumping and identify violators. I support his efforts and will work to find funding for them. I would also like to join with Constable Rosen, who has been putting cameras up, and other constables throughout the city to prevent dumping and punish those who are dumping in our community. Illegal dumping has been a problem in my district

- I have no sympathy for violators and will work aggressively to track them down. Regarding recycling, I am committed to expanding recycling to every Houston neighborhood. I am eager to explore policies to encourage building owners - whether contracting with the city or with a private firm - to adopt recycling plans. Houston has a low recycling rate compared to other cities, and a significant part of that disparity results from a lack of information. As mayor, I will prioritize efforts to increase public awareness of the positive impacts of, and best practices for, recycling.

Energy-efficient technologies and energy conservation are major ways to reduce energy consumption and make Houston cleaner and greener. I am pleased with the city's ongoing embrace of renewable energy - we are currently the top municipal purchaser of renewable power in the nation. Additionally, our municipal efficiency efforts have been effective in substantially reducing energy consumption in city buildings, as well as in reducing the emissions of city vehicle fleets. The city is currently moving toward zero-emissions for the city fleet. This is an example of the type of common-sense effort that I will continue as mayor. Long-term investments in our transit infrastructure, the establishment of community-wide efficiency goals, and the establishment of incentives for efficient behavior such as switching to electric vehicles are additional air quality improvement solutions that I would like to explore as mayor.

Two very important issues from the perspective of environment, public health and our economy are flooding and extreme heat. With respect to flooding, the city must work with Congress to fully fund the Brays Bayou project so that the bridge and channel modifications that are necessary for flood reduction are completed as soon as possible. We must work closely with all stakeholders - the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, TxDOT, and the Flood Control District to develop and implement a comprehensive flood reduction strategy. Finally, we must embrace the most up-to-date technology so that we are aware of potential flood events well in advance, and we must improve communication with citizens so that they know of flood problems before they happen. We may also need to revisit the prioritization formula for the repair and construction of drainage control structures. The current formula tends to undervalue the need of low-income neighborhoods, leaving dangerous and unsanitary open ditches in the middle of some of our most vulnerable Houston communities. As mayor, I look forward to implementing a fair and effective plan for our drainage infrastructure.****

Bill King - Candidate for Mayor



Recycling: I support a voluntary expansion program for recycling: apartments and businesses not currently covered by recycling collection should have the option of buying in to the program. Illegal Dumping: I have no sympathy for those who willfully violate the law and trash Houston neighborhoods. My web site details by plans for improving the capacity of the Houston Police Department to make

timely responses to citizen complaints, so that people responsible for illegal dumping can face appropriate accountability. Lower-Income Neighborhoods: There is a simple explanation for the unfair decisions of the past-disparities in political influence leave some neighborhoods behind (not just in facilities siting, but in other areas like road repair and drainage.) I support objective, scientific decision-making that treats all Houston neighborhoods equally. This principle will apply to all City departments, including Sanitation, Public Works, and emergency services.

The science is clear that climate change is underway and that human activities are one of the primary drivers. The only question that still merits serious debate is this: given what we know, what do we do about the problem? Protecting the world against climate change is an investment that is worth making. But I am not a fan of investing our limited resources in feel-good programs that have no proven impact on the environment. I am hopeful that the Paris conference will end with commitments from nations like China and Brazil-along with the United States-to begin a significant and comprehensive emission reduction agenda. If that doesn't happen (and perhaps even if it does), then Houston should think long and hard about mitigation strategies to protect coastal populations and assets. If a powerful storm surge were to hit Gulf Coast refineries, for example, the environmental catastrophe would be unprecedented.

Effective conservation is an ongoing process that must constantly be informed by the newest science, but I am also mindful of being a good steward of taxpayers' dollars. What I understand from my conversations with Air Alliance Houston and other front-line activists is that there is plenty of 'low-hanging fruit' that can improve our air and water quality with only a modest investment. I am particularly interested in addressing particulate matter from heavy diesel engines: the City operates a large fleet of these vehicles and could save money by switching to natural gas or electric power while also improving public health outcomes. When it comes to water quality, the City of Houston itself is one of the biggest pollution threats in the region. Our wastewater treatment plant has been under EPA consent agreements for decades, and the facility still leaks raw sewage into the estuary. For years I have been an active supporter of the Galveston Bay Foundation, so this continuing problem is of personal concern to me.****

Mike Knox - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 1



No response received.

Georgia Provost - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 1



I would support the existing ordinance on illegal dumping and look for resources to enforce it better. HB 274 that was passed in the last legislative session increased the fines and penalties on those who are caught dumping illegally. I would work with our district council members to better enable them to target illegal dumping.

I would work with local leaders in the effort to address climate change such as Dr. Bullard at TSU to create a local strategy for addressing this issue.

Making sure that situations such as CES on Griggs don't happen to anymore of our communities of color and Crushed Concrete plants are moved to industrial areas and away from our neighborhoods. I would support stricter rules and maximum fines on those who pollute and dump illegally in our communities.

David Robinson - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 2



The City needs to consider re-invigorating its anti-illegal dumping campaign. Moving enforcement from HPD to the Department of Neighborhoods has resulted in increased challenges in enforcing illegal dumping. I have advocated increases in the funding for the enforcement components of these programs. In addition, there needs to be more programs in place

to promote education and awareness around the importance of recycling.

As the world's energy capital, Houston is uniquely positioned to promote real solutions to climate change. As a City, we should provide incentives that promote Green industries and businesses.

Of great concern to me are drainage and flooding issues caused by irresponsible and often illegal development that result in disproportionate amount of storm water runoff polluting our bayou system. We need to continue to support the enforcement component of City drainage ordinances, ensuring that property development occurs in a manner which is safe and environmental friendly.

Willie R. Davis - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 2



No response received.

Roy Morales - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 4



No response received.

Amanda Edwards - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 4



The City is moving forward with “One Bin For All”, which, proponents say, will mean a higher rate of resource recovery. The City is reviewing several proposals, and I am open to moving forward, subject to additional safeguards and diligence. If the City is not able to reach its recycling goals with One Bin For All, I will support continued commitment to single-stream recycling. With dumping, earlier this year

the City and County installed cameras in areas with high incidences of dumping. If successful, the project may warrant expansion. The challenge is the expense of camera installation and infrastructure compared to the expansive nature of the problem. Illegal dumping is taking place across much of the City so I would explore reporting incentives as well. As for trash facilities, the City should strive to locate them in unpopulated areas, and when selected, they should be done so with input from stakeholders.

Houston is becoming a leader among municipalities in taking concrete steps to reduce its carbon footprint and “green” the city. The City of Houston now gets the majority of its electricity from renewable sources; it has begun converting its vehicle fleet to hybrids and electrics; curbside recycling has been expanded to all neighborhoods and more people may participate in a one bin program; parks and green spaces have been added throughout the city with more coming soon. However, we can do more. By expanding and improving our public transportation system options, we can get Houstonians where they need to go more efficiently and reduce vehicle miles by taking cars off the road. The City of Houston should also encourage and incentivize development so that residents live near where they work and socialize. As an elected official, I will work to lead by example, to encourage my fellow citizens to reduce their own carbon footprints, as I will my own.

We must make sure that your income status does not equate to injustice regarding environmental hazards such as illegal dumping or exposure to environmental hazards such as unsafe landfills. We must combat the tendency to disregard our marginalized communities and I will be a voice for that.

I would also like to see the expansion of the City recycling programs to apartments and businesses. I am also interested in the increase of clean and renewable energy initiatives, such as solar and wind energy generation, in Houston and throughout the state of Texas. I will support national policies like the Clean Power Plan, whose implementation will lead to increased renewable energy generation.

Jack Christie - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 5



I was instrumental in that passing. Mayor Parker appointed me to head up committee with CM Davis to look for ways to prevent illegal dumping. Cameras were recommended, and I helped fund cameras. With existing capacity and additional recycling there should not be a need for many years for additional facilities.

I acknowledge that climate change occurs. I have advocated for the transition of all city, county, port, metro, and HISD vehicles to natural gas.

Recycling, use of clean-burning natural gas, encouraging bike-share and affordable mass transit.

Sharon Moses - Candidate for At-Large Council Position 5



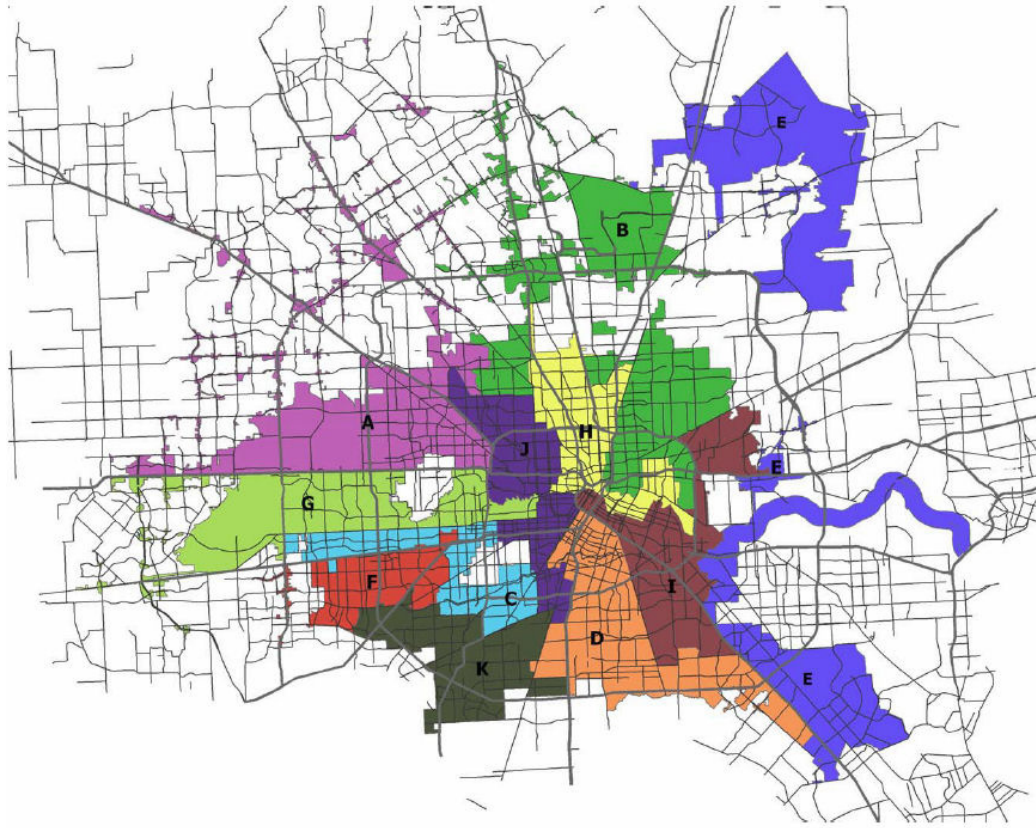
I am interested first and foremost in education. I believe we need to take specific steps to educate the public on recycling, composting and other issues that would express the importance of sustainability and protecting our environment. Further, I strongly support any efforts we can take to address illegal dumping as it is not only an eyesore, but it is a health hazard as well.

I support having specific areas that are known as “hot-spots” for illegal dumping to be monitored via camera access and the increasing of fines if a person is caught. In regards to trash facilities in low-income areas, when I worked for Ada Edwards we fought against the concrete crushers to prevent them from hauling concrete throughout their community. We were successful in that endeavor and I would utilize that same zeal in my effort to prevent trash facilities from being located in low-income areas in our city.

Climate change is very important to me, and whether or not people want to admit it, it is a serious issue. I believe we can work on reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. I would like to lead Houston by revisiting our position on this issue to see if we are complying as we should.

I remember when President Clinton signed the executive order 12898 in 1994 to address environmental justice in minority and low income populations. I supported the efforts then and I still support them today. Locally, I believe we can address the same issues by expressing our concerns for our own communities and by implementing plans and policies that would prevent environmental injustice within our perspective communities. With that being said I would support policies not implementing landfills and trash facilities in low income areas just to name a few. I would also support policy efforts to decrease our air pollution wherever possible.

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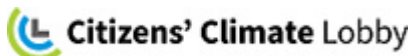
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Richard Nguyen - Candidate for Council District F



I have worked hard with our Solid Waste Department to pickup illegal dumping in District F. It is a huge problem for us. I would like to see more frequent heavy trash pick up. I think a large part of the problem with dumping is the fact that it is easier to dump your heavy trash or junk than it is to wait for the City to come by and pick it up.

As to new trash facilities, it stands to reason that those types of facilities will be built

where the land is more affordable. However, that does not mean we have to continue to put these facilities next to poor neighborhoods. I would rather our trucks drive an extra couple of miles than to continue to concentrate these types of facilities in low-income areas.

I have supported the Alief Community Garden and I am proud of the work they have done to educate residents on composting and urban gardening. With the expansion of curb-side recycling I would like to focus on education. We as a city could recycle so much more!

Houston should be a leader in addressing one of the worst problems facing our country and region. I am very proud of the contract we recently approved to invest \$80 million into solar energy over the next 20 years. We also recently approved new programs to help with energy inefficient buildings. I will work with the new administration to make sure we continue to address climate change and build upon the work we have already done.

Illegal dumping is the one of the top environmental problems in my district and I will continue to work on this unsightly problem. Again, I would like to see more frequent heavy trash pickup.

We have done some some great things at the city to help curb pollution.

From increasing the use of LED bulbs in streetlights to expanding the city's energy-efficient vehicles, we have made a lot of progress. It is imperative that we continue to look for innovative ways to improve our environmental impact. I will work with the new administration to make sure that happens.

Steve Le - Candidate for Council District F



No response received.

Karla Cisneros - Candidate for Council District H



I applaud the expanded curbside recycling program, but know that more can and must be done. Working in partnership with other neighborhood organizations (civic clubs, school, churches, etc.) the city can improve recycling efforts through education programs that help residents understand how important and how easy it is to recycle. As a teacher, I

know that working through neighborhood schools is a great way to arm families with the information they need to fight illegal dumping, about the value composting, and community gardening.

I will advocate for and support city policies that contribute to responsible actions regarding climate change.

One of the goals I've had as an educator is to build strong connections between my students and the environment, and I will continue to do that in my role as a city council member. A unique opportunity exists in District H to better connect low-income neighborhoods to our bayous. In addition to White Oak Bayou and Little White Oak Bayou, Buffalo Bayou actually runs for about tens miles through the southern part of the district. Beyond the major investments that have already been made along Buffalo Bayou in the central part of the city, there are opportunities to connect low-income neighborhoods to our bayous as well. People protect what they care about.

Jason Cisneroz- Candidate for Council District H



There needs to be more education on what can be recycled and what cannot. We recycle at our campaign office, but we don't see as many green cans on the street as we should on collection day. With regards to illegal dumping, I have tackled that issue as a community service police officer at HPD. And as part of an expanded community police force, I would like

to see enhanced illegal dumping patrol as part of a community service officer's regular duties.

The City of Houston has made some important strides in purchasing clean and renewable energy for City buildings. I would like to continue that record. Beyond that, I see that a major hurdle to more energy efficient building being the high initial cost of retrofitting a building. So if the City can somehow find a way to incentivize energy efficient retrofitting, we can reduce the carbon footprint across Houston.

Illegal dumping is a major issue, not just in my neighborhood but across most of District H. Through education, hard work, relationship building, and enhanced enforcement, we can put a major dent in illegal dumping. Beyond that, air quality has always been bad in Houston, but more specifically District H. Many neighborhoods are either adjacent to or in industrial areas that contribute to Houston's overall poor air quality. And further down the road, we will need to address water quality in our bayous.

No one wants to see new trash facilities in their neighborhood. But what often happens is that the community is not involved in the decision making process. By working directly with neighborhood leaders, we can improve the impact that a neighborhood has on the City to make their voice heard.

Mike Laster - Candidate for Council District J



No response received.

Jim Bigham - Candidate for Council District J



No response received.