

BOISE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES' QUESTIONER



Boise City Candidates' Questioner

A follow up to the first nonprofit sponsored City Council Candidates' Forum, this questionnaire provides a space for all candidates to participate in answering the questions posed at the event. All candidates were offered equal opportunity to participate by submitting responses through a google form.

The answers from all candidates that responded are compiled here in this document that will be shared with the participating nonprofits, serving to educate the tens of thousands of our members and supporters in the Boise area on both the issues and candidates. To learn more about this issues raised in this questioner and find opportunities to get involved locally, reach out to any of the nonprofit partners.

Partnering Organizations

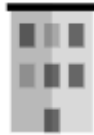
Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii
Idaho Chapter Sierra Club
Intermountain Fair Housing Council
Snake River Alliance
Add the Words
Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation
International Rescue Committee
Boise Bicycle Project
Idaho Organizing Project
Interfaith Equality Coalition
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
ACLU Idaho
Tidwell Social Services
United Vision for Idaho

TOPIC AREAS

TRANSPORTATION



FAIR &
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING



SUSTAINABILITY



CIVIL RIGHTS
& PROTECTIONS



EQUITABLE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



Document Organization

This document is organized in the same manner the questions were posed to council candidates. Each section begins with a question, followed by the answer provided by each candidate. Responses are grouped according to candidate seats, and organized following both alphabetical and numerical order.

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick
	Lisa E. Sanchez
	Frank Walker
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson
	TJ Thomson
SEAT 6	Holli Woodings
	Nicholas Jones



Question #1

The City of Boise is unique in that it is the only major metropolitan city in the country without direct control in the development of its own streets. ACHD fills this role. While many of the country's most walkable and bikeable cities have invested in new and innovative infrastructure, Boise's lack of street ownership has made it difficult to keep pace or forge ahead.

Knowing the unique relationship with ACHD, what can or should the City do in order to increase bikeability, walkability, and access to public transportation for its diverse citizen base?

<p>SEAT 2</p>	<p>Rachel Misnick</p>	<p>Boise is overdue for addressing public transportation. One of the core stances of my candidacy is increasing public transportation, so it would be one of the focal points of my time spent in office. Funding through setting proper fares, offering discounted bulk transit passes to organizations, advertising revenues, initial Federal assistance, or introducing a strictly limited local optional sales tax (possibly on event ticketing) are ideas that I have been researching and considering. Improving bicycle and pedestrian pathways are important as well, and ideas such as creating bicycle and pedestrian friendly pass-throughs connecting adjacent neighborhoods will encourage non-motorized commuting and travel. Bicycle and foot traffic should be encouraged, though the reality is that it is not sustainable in inclement weather, and is not practical for people with longer commutes or for those with disabilities. Within Boise itself, the bus system should be greatly expanded; this is also important as an integral part in the ability of the city and developers to create more affordable housing. The City of Boise also needs to work in tandem with our surrounding cities to create a workable intercity transit system to handle, at a minimum, a large portion of commuter and event traffic. The city's relationship with ACHD is certainly unique, and a concentrated effort needs to be made to create a good relationship between the two entities. Both ACHD and the City Council should spend time researching how to achieve public transportation, traffic management, and non-motorized transportation goals while efficiently managing the Taxpayers' money.</p>
	<p>Lisa E. Sanchez</p>	<p>I am a renter living in the North End and I work in downtown Boise. Since 1989, when I first moved to Boise, I have always tried to find work that is near my home to minimize the issue of accessibility. As our city grows, and as housing costs increase, I know that some of us may be forced to live farther away from our workplaces, and affordable transportation will play a significant role in our lives. I believe a better working relationship between the city of Boise and ACHD can help address the issues of access in the city. Boise has several initiatives in place that are working on the issue of accessibility in a variety of ways, including the Energize Our Neighborhoods model which was piloted in the Vista neighborhood, and the Transportation Action Plan. ACHD has Community Programs that focus on projects that consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, by ensuring safe sidewalks (compliant with ADA standards) and safe routes to school. Both entities are committed to meeting the community's need for improved accessibility. One of the first people to endorse my campaign was ACHD Commissioner Jim Hansen. Brooke Green, Senior Transportation Planner for the ACHD, and current candidate for House of Representatives for District 18, has also endorsed my campaign. I would like to help the city and ACHD to work together by expanding on the long-standing relationships I already have with key members of ACHD and the city of Boise.</p>
	<p>Frank Walker</p>	<p>The City of Boise needs to have control over the final design of the streets within the City. With control, the City can work to implement the Boise Travel Action Plan which provides solid guidance on creating a more bikeable and walkable environment. Gaining control over final design would not undermine ACHD's core mission and should not be a point of contention. The tension with ACHD is unfortunate yet not limited to Boise. ACHD is a special purpose district created to construct and maintain roads and bridges in the County. To the extent that the District extends its influence beyond this function, it does so at the expense of the general-purpose governments in</p>

		the County. The City must be able to design its streets and let ACHD construct and maintain them.
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	Both ACHD and the City have unique roles when it comes to the transportation and commuting needs of Boise. We have the power, individually, to make positive change. But together, the impact of a positive relationship would increase long-lasting, efficient, and effective bikeability, walkability, and transportation options. The City should acknowledge and take responsibility for our relationship with ACHD for the purpose of effective improvements to the transportation needs of Boise. By promoting a bilateral relationship that fosters communication, collaboration, and communication between groups, our community needs and goals in regards to bikeability and transport can be prioritized.
	TJ Thomson	Lacking the ability to have direct control over our streets means we must work collaboratively with ACHD to ensure that the transportation needs of our city are met. This isn't always an easy process as Boise's and ACHD's vision and objectives do not always coincide but, as our city and the rest of the Treasure Valley continues to grow, it is imperative that we find common ground. I am committed to working with ACHD to help implement Boise's Transportation Action Plan, a roadmap to a diverse and modern transportation system that fits the needs of all our residents. Expanding public transportation options, providing more walking and biking routes, and focusing on effective street design and infrastructure, are just some of recommendations within this plan. This, however, is just a first step and will take some time to implement. I am committed to not only working with ACHD to form consensus around a modernized and accessible transportation system, but also working with ValleyRide to expand hours to accommodate people who work nights and weekends. We should also have more express lines operating more frequently on our main arterials so our bus system accommodates the needs of all commuters.
SEAT 6	Holli Woodings	Public transportation and safe streets for bicycles and pedestrians are critical elements of our city's sustainability and keys to smart growth in the city. A collaborative relationship between the City of Boise, ACHD, and ValleyRide is important to that vision, and has already begun with the development of the Transportation Action Plan. With a growing economy and an influx of new residents and developments we need to be planning for the future and making it easier for those folks who want to get around without a vehicle to do so safely and conveniently. I support an expanded bus system with longer hours of operation, Sunday routes, and more buses running along our main arterials and busiest stops. I'm interested in looking at creative and sustainable funding sources to make that happen quickly. The more we can encourage less single occupancy cars on the road the better off we'll be.
	Nicholas Jones	We need to all operate (City Council, ACHD, etc.) with the following in mind... "Will this project increase the livability of Boise inhabitants." By following this ideal, all parties involved should be able to find common ground to move forward with. If the answer to the question is yes for all... Go for it. If it is yes for some and now for others... we need to talk about it in detail.



Question #2

Boise is experiencing the loss of affordable housing options through the process of properties aging out of their contractual requirements to accept federal housing assistance. Other ongoing barriers include “not in my backyard” mentalities, zoning restrictions, new construction projects falling short of Fair Housing Accessibility standards, limits of inclusion to seven protected classes listed in the Federal Fair Housing Act, and a lack of funds for builders willing to put in affordable and fair housing.

In working to provide more fair and affordable housing in the continued development of the City of Boise how do you intend to address these ongoing obstructions to fair housing?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	Increasing the availability of affordable homes is another core focus of my candidacy. The development of affordable housing in Boise should be a project that we work on hand-in-hand with local contractors groups and associations. These groups know first hand what all is involved in the final sales price of single family homes, and what the difficulties and risks are in creating multi-family units in the downtown area. Both proposed and current housing regulations should be carefully reviewed and revisited to determine the benefits versus the additional costs they impose on the creation and renovation of new developments and existing homes. Housing development also should be worked on simultaneously with the planning of public transportation, as many residents in need of affordable housing may not have other means of transportation; this is particularly important in the downtown area, where there simply may not be enough space to create parking lots or garages for multi-family units. As related to the downtown area, infill options for multi-family units should be prioritized. Mixed-income housing and mixed-used areas have been shown to be much more beneficial to low income residents than segregated housing, increasing chances of finding employment and reducing crime, so these types of development should be greatly encouraged.
	Lisa E. Sanchez	In addressing the areas of smart growth, fair and affordable housing and livability, I see myself continuing the good work that Ben Quintana has started with his direct involvement in the “Energize Our Neighborhoods” programs, which has had great success in their Vista Neighborhood pilot program. This program builds up our neighborhoods, protects what makes them unique, and makes them desirable places to live, and grow in. As a City Council member I would champion the expansion of the City’s current programs such as the Affordable Housing Loans and increase the number of rental properties in the City of Boise’s portfolio to ensure that low income tenants have access to affordable housing. I would also evaluate plans other cities have used to increase their affordable housing including: requiring investors to build and offer a certain percentage of affordable units in multifamily developments in return for allowing a larger number of market-rate units, Introducing linkage fees in the downtown Boise sector, Encourage the building and permit changes to allow for ADU building options in our neighborhoods, Offering incentives for investors and builders to partake in the plans for fair and affordable housing structures. As a former Fair Housing tester with the Intermountain Fair Housing Council, I helped to enforce the Fair Housing Act. I know through my own work experience that housing discrimination happens regularly, but in times of scarcity, the incidents of housing discrimination are even more pronounced. I can offer a broader perspective of who is affected most acutely by the current affordable housing shortage in Boise, and how we as a community working together can address the issue.
	Frank Walker	Affordable housing is a critical need in Boise. I have proposed redevelopment on the Bench from the rim to Cole Road. Through the use of tax increment financing, focus on infill projects can be facilitated. Affordable housing will not be created by market forces without incentives from the City, state and federal governments. There simply is not enough profit margin in affordable housing to warrant the risk and reward for private business. Incentives need to be used city-wide and staff should be dedicated to this one priority.

SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	<p>We are in the midst of a housing crisis here in Boise. According to the Housing Working Group in Boise’s Continuum of Care, 33% of housing vouchers provided to families and individuals in need are returned without being utilized because we have not built enough housing to keep up with community need. I have spoken with City employees about affordable housing specifically, their answers tend to be some permutation of "it's out of our hands." It makes me question whose responsibility it is if not the city's? I do not believe that it is out of the city’s hands, but rather that it ought to be a TOP priority for the City to ensure that through our rapid development as a burgeoning metropolis we are able to match the development of hotels, and for-profits, with housing that makes sense for our community. It’s already happening where middle and low-income community members are being pushed not only out of downtown, north, and east Boise, but out of Boise city entirely. We must move affordable housing options and mass transit to the forefront of our development decisions, and make good on its promise to be a truly welcoming city.</p>
	TJ Thomson	<p>Boise and other municipalities in Idaho do not have the tools other cities our size have at their disposal that would allow us to take a more proactive role in providing affordable housing like mandatory inclusionary zoning, a practice that is prohibited by Idaho law. Until the Idaho State Legislature provides municipalities additional tools, we must get creative. Moreover, we cannot force developers to take Section 8 vouchers. We can, however, support the use and expansion of CDBG and HOME funds provided through HUD to address our growing need for affordable housing. As a city, we take this issue very seriously. The City of Boise's Affordable Homeownership program offers citizens of low to moderate income the opportunity to purchase a home within Boise city limits. Boise also offers over 300 affordable rental units to the community. I will continue to support our efforts in these areas, but more action is required. We’ve sought innovative solutions to make a difference. In 2015, I joined my colleagues on the city council to approve a land transfer in which Spaulding Ranch, a historic farmstead on the Boise Bench, was given to the City of Boise in exchange for 6.5 acres of land at the western edge of downtown, near the Boise River. One stipulation of the deal was inclusion of low-income housing in the new development. While this type of practice alone won’t solve the problem, it is an example of how we can be creative in addressing it.</p>
SEAT 6	Holli Woodings	<p>We need to be supporting the development of affordable housing in Boise. I think the city is beginning to take leadership on this issue, but it’s one that we need to address sooner rather than later. Boise, and Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority, currently offer incentives to housing developers for the expansion of affordable and subsidized housing, much of which is being deployed near downtown. At the same time, we must remain focused on minimizing negative impacts of housing scarcity in our neighborhoods and ensure transportation doesn’t continue to impede the distribution of housing in the valley. When making decisions on specific mixed-income and low-income developments, we need to balance the input of the neighborhood with the good of our neighbors and our city. Socioeconomic and ethnic diversity has been shown to enrich our neighborhoods and the lives of our kids, which is important to remember.</p>
	Nicholas Jones	<p>There needs to be education that takes place concerning the “not in my backyard” mentality in some cases. But in many cases they are absolutely correct. The bottom line is the process needs to be simplified for these builders. A real task as that is what everyone says. But if we work together it is something that works.</p>



Question #3

The City of Boise is currently preparing a renewable energy strategy that includes setting a percentage clean energy goal for city wide electricity.

What clean energy goal should the City of Boise set and what would be your role as a city council member to promote the future of clean energy in Boise?

SEAT 2	<p>Rachel Misnick</p>	<p>It is a very optimistic and admirable goal to reduce our city's carbon footprint while it is experiencing such a high rate of growth. It appears that other cities are setting 100% goals, however, before I can recommend a hard number for the percentage, I will need to spend significantly more time researching this issue than I have been able to at this point. There are proven methods though to reducing energy consumption, including the installation of more efficient insulation and windows in both existing home and businesses, and designing new buildings with energy efficiency in mind (such as positioning windows and designing buildings to promote efficient air flow and utilization of nature to regulate the temperature throughout the building). Idaho Power itself is currently making plans to shut down two of its coal-fired power plants and replace the needed energy with flow from renewable energy sources. The City should also look into creating relationships with area colleges and universities to promote research and development of non-battery stored alternative energy sources. Finally, increasing public transit and the use of non-motorized methods of transportation will greatly assist in reducing the City's footprint.</p>
	<p>Lisa E. Sanchez</p>	<p>I have been knocking on doors in Boise, in an attempt to hear directly from my neighbors about issues that affect them and inviting them to share their ideas for addressing those issues. I spoke to a gentleman who sells and installs solar panels, and he expressed frustration at having to wait several weeks for approval from the city to install the solar panels for his Boise customers. The gentleman said that the process is much faster in other surrounding communities. There are people in our city who are committed to clean energy, but some of our processes seem to discourage them. I would like to help identify ways that the city can streamline these processes so that the people who are motivated to embrace clean energy resources can do so with as little friction as possible. I applaud the new composting program that Boise has instituted, and the city residents have enthusiastically embraced it. When the city makes it easier for folks to do the right thing, the people of Boise will respond. I am committed to helping Boise to do as much as possible to embrace opportunities for clean energy.</p>
	<p>Frank Walker</p>	<p>The goals set forth in the City's 2015 Livability Report are a great start. Implement the net-zero energy goal for new construction of City Building if it has not been adopted yet and move the 50% energy use reduction for existing buildings goal from 2030 to 2025 and implement policies to achieve this end. I also support the creation of a <u>department dedicated to quality of life and sustainability</u>. The goals set by the City need to be centralized and not delegated to various departments where sustainability is not its core function. Public Works and Development Services, for instance, cannot always coordinate projects and services when one has one piece of the puzzle and one has the other.</p>
SEAT 4	<p>Naomi Johnson</p>	<p>In order to be 100% clean, the amount of energy that a city utilizes must equal the amount of clean energy being produced by that city. As we rapidly develop here in Boise it is essential that we match our focus on development with focus on protections for our environment. By definition, an unsustainable system is one that cannot be sustained, so as a City, we have no choice but achieve 100% sustainability. In setting that goal, WE decide how long it will take by assessing many different factors and taking into account the needs and concerns of our neighborhoods. One thing, in particular, I will be looking at is local solutions to waste and recycling. City composting has been a wonderful thing, but we need to keep taking steps forward. Buildings account for a very significant percentage of greenhouse gas emissions. I would look into forming a public/private workgroup to plan with advocates and industry leaders,</p>

identifying and implementing best strategies for city code to reduce those emissions. I acknowledge the disproportionate harm the communities of color and lower-income neighborhoods face as a result of climate injustice. In the words of Majora Carter, “You shouldn’t have to move out of your neighborhood to live in a better one.” One of the ways I intend to show up in vulnerable communities for better air quality is through neighborhood air quality testing and opposition to bringing the F-35 squadron to Boise. So far, I am the only candidate running for seat 4 that has vocalized opposition on the F-35 issue. The impact of fine particulate matter on air quality and winter inversions in the Treasure Valley has been documented for years, our own Boise State University has collaborated on studies detailing the negative effect of particulate specifically from air traffic. As a candidate, I would actively promote setting our goals to be 100% clean, we are in the position to lead, and should consider it our responsibility to do so.

TJ Thomson

Boise’s Sustainable City initiatives aim to demonstrate the City’s commitment to lead through policies and projects that ensure the sustainability of our community, economy and environment. Strategies include increasing citizen engagement to inform sustainable policies and projects within the City and the community at large; promoting transportation alternatives, such as bike share, a Downtown circulator, and the multimodal center; creating economic opportunity through energy innovation; supporting safe, healthy, and caring communities for all Boise citizens; and leading by example through City conservation, energy efficiency and resource recovery programs. A sustainable city is one in which all projects and initiatives are developed considering the environmental, community, and economic impacts and benefits. The City of Boise has instituted or proposed dozens of sustainability initiatives during my eight years in office, including setting aggressive energy reduction goals for city buildings; a plan to convert all streetlights to LED technology, saving \$65,000 annually; retrofitting public buildings with water and energy saving features; reducing water consumption in city parks, saving millions of gallons annually; implementing an anti-idling program; and, initiating Curb It, the city’s curbside recycling program. I will continue to support these types of initiatives going forward.

SEAT 6

Holli Woodings

Boise has some unique traits that make it a great place to lead in the adoption of renewable energy, such as our geothermal system and overall number of sunny days. I would like the city to adopt a goal that would challenge our departments to think in creative and innovative ways, and also be achievable. That goal could also be incremental, with the percentage increasing every 5 years so we can measure our success against our milestones.

Nicholas Jones

Our decisions should be made thinking forward to the future. That is the role we should play. I am all about clean energy.



Question #4

As a city council member, you'd be able to work closely with the Boise Police Department to establish positive policing practices, innovative solutions to community needs, and accountability measures in BPD's work with many marginalized communities in Boise, such as those experiencing homelessness, those with mental health needs, refugees, immigrants, people of color, non-English speaking residents, the LGBTQ community and individuals experiencing domestic & sexual violence.

Keeping those impacted communities in mind, what community policing practices would you advocate for as a city council member?

<p>SEAT 2</p>	<p>Rachel Misnick</p>	<p>The Boise Police Department deals with larger populations of marginalized communities than do any of our surrounding cities, which requires an additional level of awareness when they are called to assist in a law enforcement capacity. There should be targeted education of our officers regarding cultural differences and how to most effectively handle people with mental illness; this is to assist in a more rapid de-escalation of emotional states when the police are brought into situations, and is also to help avoid situations where it may appear that the officers were more callous than necessary. I know that the Department has had image issues in the past, but I understand that the current Police Chief is working to improve this image. As a city council member, I also would encourage implementation of strategies targeted at creating positive relationships and trust. This can be done through simply engaging in behaviors such as making positive contacts during the course of the day (saying good morning, engaging children in conversations, etc) and participating in community-oriented volunteerism.</p>
	<p>Lisa E. Sanchez</p>	<p>I am very pleased with the leadership of the Boise Police Department under Chief William Bones. Chief Bones has made visible efforts to interact with the various communities that make up our city, and he exemplifies the way I would like to see all BPD officers engage with our community members. I feel that having a more diverse police force would help connect the community to our police department. Police officer recruitment from various geographic locations in Boise and other currently underrepresented populations could help fully integrate the police and the community they serve. A community policing approach gives community members more say in the quality of life they can create in partnership with the police. As a paralegal with the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program, I work directly with people who are experiencing homelessness, people who are living with mental health conditions, refugees, immigrants, people of color, non-English speaking residents, the LGBTQ community, survivors of domestic and sexual violence. I myself fall into some of those categories. I know that our police officers are called upon to wear many hats for our community, and they are to be commended for all that they do to keep our community safe. As a city council member, I would work to strengthen the bonds between the BPD and our diverse community members.</p>
	<p>Frank Walker</p>	<p>There should be police task forces dedicated specifically to the needs of marginalized members of our community such as the homeless. BPD is already sensitive to the needs of this community and is not enforcing vagrancy laws in a heavy-handed manner. The vast majority of calls for service to the BPD are not for strict law enforcement, but to deal with people in crisis who need assistance. Boise PD works closely with the refugee community and participates in the social service network formed as Idaho Neighbors United. This work must continue. I have worked with refugees from Liberia seeking asylum in the past. I have also worked with refugees through the Idaho Office for Refugees and have met with its director to better understand the challenges the organization faces. Refugees come to this country ready to assimilate and work hard to begin a new life here. I am proud that cities in Idaho such as Twin Falls and Boise have embraced refugee resettlement programs. This population is a great addition to the area. There can be zero tolerance for discrimination in Boise, both in civil practice and criminal offenses. Law enforcement must be a vital tool to enforce</p>

		the City's policies against discrimination and prosecuting criminal violations of those policies.
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	Acknowledging the history of policing as having a brutal, coercive, and colonial relationship with marginalized communities, when elected I would support community-centric policing models that provide best training for officers working in Boise. I will do so while also holding space for civilian oversight agencies to keep both individual officers and the Boise Police Department as a whole accountable to the public that they are meant to serve. It is long past time for a paradigm shift from a focus on protection of property to one that serves to address diverse community needs. I want police academy curriculum to include cultural training as well as training on serving persons with disabilities and victims of domestic and sexual violence, preferably in partnership with community organizations and leaders in those areas. In the event of a police shooting, I would call for an independent investigation and special prosecutor, as well as mandatory drug testing of any officer involved. I strongly support jobs programs and Ban the Box policies to empower returning citizens and reduce recidivism rates. Keeping in mind the effect of environment on crime as well as the constructed existence of "Fear of Crime," I would work towards development beneficial to all residents, including a plan to inspect and phase out lead or lead-tainted pipes from neighborhoods and keep Boise free of fracking and wastewater injection-well operations. I will continue to inform my advocacy on these issues with research into evidence-based policy and by deepening my relationships with organizations focused on these issues. I am committed to following the lead of the impacted by listening and trusting their lived experience.
	TJ Thomson	The Boise Police Department does a great job working with these communities and has taken leadership in doing so. For example, BPD has liaisons that work closely with communities of color, refugees, and the LGBTQ community to ensure their specific needs, with regards to policing and support, are being met and their voices are being heard. They are also provided with ongoing training to address the specific needs of domestic violence victims and those experiencing homelessness. Regarding accountability, Boise's Office of Police Oversight serves to promote confidence in our law enforcement institutions through providing unbiased investigations of citizen complaints, independent review of police actions, policy recommendations, and on-going public outreach. I have developed a close working relationship with our officers during my time on council and have worked to provide them the tools and resource they need to better serve all of us, and will continue to do so.
SEAT 6	Holli Woodings	Working closely with the Boise Police Department is the key here. I've been impressed with the ability of Boise Police to keep Boise the safest city of its size in the country. They've also taken many proactive steps such as appointing officer liaisons to foster collaboration with marginalized communities. I support the expansion of these efforts, and look forward to supporting Boise Police as they continue to keep Boise safe and inclusive.
	Nicholas Jones	Training and accountability are key.



Question #5

The State of Idaho blocked cities from increasing the minimum wage in 2016 and the state has been stuck at \$7.25 an hour since 2009, while workers under the age of 21 can be paid \$4.25 per hour for a period of 90 days. Many of Boise folks rely on minimum wage to try to support their families, and economic hardships for those families can compound intersecting issues because financial independence unattainable- like families experiencing domestic and sexual violence but unable to leave.

Because Idaho has failed to raise the minimum wage, what are ways that city leadership can promote livable wages as a key component to the economic health of Boise and its most impacted community members, including non-college pathways to living-wage employment?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	First of all, I disagree with the State’s decision to take that power away from its cities, and believe that the Legislature has overstepped its boundaries. Since it has been effected, however, this increases the pressure to innovate and implement other ideas, and working with local employers is necessary. Increasing the availability of quality, affordable housing, and reducing dependence on having independent transportation (as discussed in another question) would be large factors in easing the financial stress on minimum wage workers, even if wages are not increased. While there is always a need for entry-level workers, additional career training should be encouraged. Since Idaho is a right-to-work state, wages are consistently lower than more unionized states, and while Boise is experiencing a phenomenal growth rate, minimum wage employers are having difficulties filling positions; this is likely due to the increased cost of housing in Boise, and the fact that our surrounding cities are also thriving. Some employers have raised their wages out of necessity in retaining employees, but many have not. I believe that we should reach out to employers in an educational manner on the benefits of lowering turnover rates by various methods, which include raising wages. We should also encourage local employers to consider the benefits of implementing Federally Registered Apprenticeship programs and offering educational assistance to employees.
	Lisa E. Sanchez	I grew up in Burley, Idaho. I was raised by a single mom who at times worked 2.5 full time jobs to support our family of four. My mom died just shy of her 63rd birthday in 2005, and I am convinced that my mother’s early death was due to exhaustion. I believe that my mother quite literally worked herself to death, and because of the work I do, I know that there are people in Boise who are today also working themselves into an early grave. A living wage for a single person in Idaho is \$14.90 according to the People’s Action Institute, but the State of Idaho does not allow the city to increase the minimum wage. There are currently about 1,600 people who work for the city of Boise and our city pays out \$8 million in contracts to businesses that provide services to the city. The city of Boise has an opportunity to lead by example by paying its employees a livable wage and ensuring that city contractors follow suit. Boise is not afraid of making bold moves in the name of human rights, and by choosing to pay its employees a living wage, Boise would be setting the standard for the rest of Idaho.
	Frank Walker	One action to be taken by the City is to ensure that any public funds expended through the City on public works projects guarantee the payment of livable wages to all workers. Consideration of all bids for these projects should include proof that livable wages will be paid, the use of independent contract workers strictly limited and all workers have health and workman compensation benefits. This can be set out in the City Code by ordinance and strictly followed. At the conclusion of a project, a performance audit can ensure compliance. The City has a vibrant economy, yet it is difficult to reach people living in poverty and provide solutions to the social issues they face without more tools from the state and federal levels. Unfortunately, the Idaho legislature actively works to tie the hands of municipalities to act progressively. The City is left to combine its resources with socially aware non-profit organizations, religious groups and medical providers to combat these challenges. The City must also continue to dedicate 100% of the federal funds received by Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to programs serving the needs of the vulnerable populations in the City. Finally, the City must focus its economic development efforts to potential

		employment paying better than the accepted livable wage. In the 1990's the City pursued call centers aggressively. This created jobs above the minimum wage, but not by much. Efforts must be focused on good paying jobs and not less.
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	The term "living wage" refers to the amount per hour an individual needs to earn in order to have their BASIC NEEDS met, per state. According to the report "Families Out of Balance", Idaho's living wage is \$14.57. Our minimum wage is \$7.25, in the space between \$7.25 and \$14.57 we find our community members struggling, we find parents working two or three jobs in order to fulfill the very basic needs of their children. I have heard existing council members explain that this issue is no longer dealt with through the city due to the block by the State of Idaho mentioned above. I disagree. I believe we continue to have a responsibility and play a role in this issue. There is a bill being promoted by Mat Erpelding that would incrementally raise the minimum wage to \$12 between now and 2019. This is a great way to improve wages for many of our community members as well as the spending power that it would create over time, to empower the businesses alongside the employees. As a City, we should support and promote this bill publicly. As liaisons for the needs of our community members, it is our responsibility as council members to insert ourselves into these issues, whether or not we are the ultimate decision-makers in the end.
	TJ Thomson	Since municipalities in Idaho are prohibited from raising the minimum wage, there is not much we can do to raise wages overall; however, the city can set an example and institute innovated contracting practices to ensure that those selected to perform work on behalf of the city are paid a livable wage. The City of Boise currently has policies in place that promote these practices for our own personnel through a committee made up of only city employees to make wage and benefit advisory decisions on behalf of city employees. During my time on council, I also spearheaded a living wage jobs initiative to help raise wages for City of Boise employees and will assure every employee now and forever will receive a living wage.
SEAT 6	Holli Woodings	I support a living wage and support raising the minimum wage, though as a city we are unable to do that because of Idaho statute. At the city, we can lead by example and make sure our contractors are working toward a living wage, and through the support of local, growing businesses who pay good wages.
	Nicholas Jones	As a business owner here in the treasure valley... I can relate to other business owners who cringe at there being a raise of the minimum wage. But the reality is promoting shop local really does work. When people buy from local store fronts those store can pay higher wages and lower prices. BUT when people buy from big online box stores there are two choices: 1) Store owners pay the minimum wage to employees because they don't have enough people shopping local. 2) Two if there is a raise to minimum wage... those stores go out of business because they can't pay staff at that rate... UNLESS people shop local. SO the solution is for people to shop local. Also... Just so you know, We don't pay minimum wage in my game store. We try to help people live. But we can do that cause people shop local for us. Without that we would not be able to. (SIDE NOTE: First off... The actual age for the Youth minimum age is 20, not 21. So the question is incorrect. Secondly... I doubt there is any employers in Boise right now actually paying the Youth Minimum wage. If you know of one... Please let me know. I am pretty connected and don't know a single company doing that. SO, there is no reason to focus on that right now.)



Question #6

The City of Boise is committed to becoming the most livable city in the country, but transportation barriers often separate Boise's most vulnerable citizens (low-income, refugee, immigrant, elderly, youth, disabled, individuals experiencing domestic & sexual violence etc.) from engaging in all that Boise has to offer.

What can the City of Boise do to break down those barriers and create safe, sustainable, and effective transportation options for all of its citizens?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	Boise is overdue for addressing public transportation. While encouraging bicycle and foot traffic is a necessity as well, it is not sustainable in inclement weather, and is not practical for people with longer commutes or those with disabilities. While improving bicycle and pedestrian pathways are important (such as creating pathways between neighborhoods), methods of vastly increasing and funding public transit need to be researched and implemented. Within Boise itself, the bus system should be greatly expanded; this is also important as an integral part in the ability of the city and developers to create more affordable housing and reduce reliance on individual methods of transportation, which would reduce financial stress on low-income residents. The City of Boise also needs to work in tandem with our surrounding cities to create a workable intercity transit system to handle, at a minimum, a large portion of commuter and event traffic. While there are many options for funding public transportation, many have a greater effect on low income households. One of the core stances of my candidacy is increasing public transportation, so it would be a focal point of my time spent in office. Funding through setting proper fares, offering discounted bulk transit passes to organizations, advertising revenues, initial Federal assistance, and introducing a strictly limited local optional sales tax (possibly on event ticketing) are ideas that I have been researching and considering. Public transportation must be addresses in Boise, and I am still researching ways of creating a viable system.
	Lisa E. Sanchez	For our most vulnerable community members, having adequate public transportation is a basic need that directly affects their quality of life, and may even be key to saving lives, in the case of people living with medical conditions or who are fleeing violent home situations. I work with vulnerable communities in my work as a paralegal with the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program. I know firsthand how having adequate public transportation can change lives for the better. The public transportation issue is two-fold: connecting all areas of Boise and connecting Boise to other parts of the valley. These two issues have a common thread: improved routes and increased frequency. Public transportation is directly connected to the issues of affordable housing, traffic, environmental impact, and growth. The current system is not working for most Boiseans, with the focus on access in the city's downtown and most of its residents living outside of that bubble. An ideal public transportation solution would work toward linking the entire community. It would connect our community in work, play, and everyday activities, because we do more than just travel between home and work. ValleyRide is currently tasked with connecting the Treasure Valley and is maximizing dollars by receiving federal matching funds. However, there is more that needs to be done to meet the growing needs of the valley. The City of Boise should continue to partner with the other municipalities in the valley to ensure that a collaborative and user-centric approach to the public transportation issue is taken when identifying and executing solutions. It would benefit the valley to look at expanding the idea of the circulator from moving folks around the core downtown area, to connecting the valley, which will improve access to affordable housing and recreation, reduce environmental impacts, enhance shared economies, and engage with our neighbors.
	Frank Walker	The City needs to focus on affordable housing in locations close to the services needs for the mobility limited. Public transportation is a critical issue that sits atop the horns of a dilemma, ridership levels don't justify heavy investment and ridership will not come without a more comprehensive route system. All communities in the Treasure Valley need to seriously attack the problem by planning for the development of fixed rail service between Caldwell and Boise in the next 25 years. Park and ride facilities

with shuttle services should link each major employer to the downtown and university. Work must continue to enhance the bus system and finally, a continuous push at the Statehouse for local option sales tax, dedicated to public transportation. A sales tax to support transportation, that is approved by the voters, must be the priority for urban cities in the state.

SEAT 4 **Naomi
Johnson**

I am a fan of trusting the data of lived experience and the voices of our fellow residents. When it comes to transportation, I've met a lot of people in the community (not just for city council, but for years), and what I hear is that we need to improve the current system before anything else. I will act quickly on improvements to our bus system, with audible bus announcements and by implementing more lines with more frequent stops running more hours on more day than the assumed "typical" work week, because that's not when all residents work or need access to public transit. The downtown circulator is projected to cost \$111 million. If we made improvements to our current system, it would cost between 30 and 40 million. Seeing the comparison there, it's really easy to prioritize representing all of Boise, rather than exclusively the downtown area, which is historically where improvements to public transit are made first. We have folks living in food deserts on the Bench, for example, who need access to public transit yesterday to ten years ago. Lack of transportation is often cited as a major barrier to receiving services like proper healthcare and crisis counseling. I believe that making common-sense changes to increase ridership will ultimately have a more positive effect on the safety of utilizing the bus system. After the critical needs of individuals experiencing multiple jeopardies are met with improvements to our existing system, I will reassess the need to go further, particularly at getting light rail out to the surrounding areas so that we can help the environment while we remove barriers to access for our most underserved neighbors. If I am sitting at the table on City Council, you will see improvements to our current transportation system first, a commitment to evaluating the effectiveness of our system, and maintaining what works while keeping the voices of those experiencing marginalization and partnerships with community organizations and leaders front and center.

TJ Thomson

Transportation is one of the most pressing issues our city and valley face and it is imperative that we work to expand access to public transportation for all our residents. It's even more important for the 32% of residents in Ada County that are the working poor. Limited transportation means limited opportunities for jobs. Our valley spends \$1.5 billion on personal transportation (gas, insurance, repairs, etc.) and only \$15 million on public transit. In Boise, transportation funding must come directly from general fund revenues, placing it in competition with other necessary services – such as police and fire services. However, we must invest in expanding services. More service means more economic freedom for our citizens. We have a few options, including a local option tax or use of Local Improvement Districts (LID). A local option tax requires approval by the legislature, and using an LID is more beneficial to a specified area, for a project such as a downtown circulator. A \$10 million increase in funding, as proposed in ValleyRide's ValleyConnect2.0, would significantly increase coverage and expand operating hours, making our transit system usable for those who work late or on the weekends. Ensuring that the voices of all our citizens are heard as we plan our future transit is critical. We should continue to support ValleyRide's Regional Coordination Council. This council is made up of residents that represent the immigrant community, residents with disabilities, lower-income families, veterans, our senior citizens, and others, and they make sure every rate change, route change, or policy change is considered from the lens of these constituents, and that the transit system is responsive to the needs of those most dependent upon on it. Ultimately, we must advocate for better valley wide transit, not just transit in Boise. For Boise to succeed, the entire valley must succeed, and transit will play a key role in moving this vision forward.

SEAT 6 **Holli
Woodings**

Boise, and the entire Treasure Valley, need to work together to improve ValleyRide, our public bus system. Through greater dependability, more frequent service, and evening and weekend service, we can elevate ValleyRide's viability as a transportation option. We also need to continue our focus on working with ACHD to ensure our streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. The Transportation Action Plan gives us a framework to put safe and usable street designs to work for our residents.

Nicholas Jones There is so much in this question..... I will address one aspect of it... Busses need to have extended hours. I have a couple employees who ride the bus to work (for good reasons). But they can ride it in to work but not home cause the bus stops running 30 minutes before they get off. That is a problem many people face.

Question #7

As a city, we have very limited resources for people who are experiencing homelessness. We know that a vast majority of homeless women and children are experiencing homelessness because they are fleeing domestic violence. History has shown that the resources we do have available do not meet everyone's needs, like shelters' refusal to acknowledge companion animals, people who may be transgender and/or people with mental issues who cannot comfortably reside in a shelter.

What is your vision for how the City of Boise should respond, including any alternative projects you imagine, to meet the diverse needs of our growing homeless population?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	<p>Taking care of the homeless has presented difficulties to every city throughout the years, and since there is such variety in the reasons people are homeless, it is extremely difficult to create a comprehensive plan to care for all of them. New Path Community Housing is an excellent step forward in caring for displaced people who have no desire to be homeless, such as women with children, and those who are experiencing hardship due to a job loss; those that choose to be homeless, experience difficulties in shelter life, do not want to follow shelter rules, or have mental illnesses are much more difficult cases though. My vision for the City is to work closely with medical and mental health professionals to improve shelter environments, spend time reaching out to those living on the streets, offer them opportunities to create a feeling of investment in our community, and create a network of job training opportunities. The goal is to assist as many people into self-sufficiency as possible, instead of just focusing on providing food and shelter. We can do this through a variety of actions: meet and greet volunteerism to let homeless individuals know that people care and that there are options available to them, creating community garden areas within shelters and offering access to simple art supplies and adult coloring books to help individuals focus on something other than day-to-day basic survival, and volunteer opportunities (and transportation to volunteer locations) for shelter residents should be provided. Those with drug addictions and mental illnesses are much more difficult, since one cannot help a person who does not want to be helped. However, these are the ones that need to be regularly reached out to, possibly in a case-worker style, by mental health volunteers, who may possibly be able to assist them with after creating a relationship. Many of the homeless also deal with depression, usually due to the circumstances which led to their situation. Depression is a horribly difficult, oppressive mental state that is incredibly difficult to pull out of. These are the ones that would likely be able to become self-sufficient members of society if given the regular attention of a volunteer, distraction opportunities as discussed above, and then helped with job training and placement. While many homeless individuals may have criminal records that hurt their chances of finding employment, showing participation in volunteer activities shows a level of commitment that employers tend to favor. Increasing public transit will also assist in allowing individuals to attend training and seek employment. The issue of allowing companion animals into shelters is a very difficult one to solve. While it is proven that contact with animals provides great mental and physical benefits, when living someplace that is in close quarters with others, there are complications – mainly cleanliness and the safety of both others and the animal itself. I do believe that companion animals owned by those in need should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account both the animal's behavior and any likelihood that that the animal will be injured by other residents. There are volunteer organizations (such as the Alliance of Therapy Dogs) that can send out volunteer requests to visit housing projects and shelters to provide at least some beneficial contact with a companion dog.</p>
	Lisa E. Sanchez	<p>As a community, we can do so much more. When I saw Cooper Court being dismantled, and observed Boise trying to manage the various needs of those affected, I realized there is no quick fix. Shutting down Cooper Court did not eradicate homelessness. There were and are still people who need our help. The city was responding to the optics of Cooper Court rather than the complex issues of homelessness. I have been heartened to see that the city is responding to the community feedback about the way it initially addressed the issue of increased homelessness. One</p>

of the ways Boise is helping people who are struggling with homelessness, is by partnering with community organizations like Catch of Ada County through the Housing First Initiative. It is not uncommon for people to struggle with multiple issues in addition to homelessness. By addressing the issue of homelessness first, community partners can work together to ensure we are providing the best possible solutions and opportunities for people to thrive. When it comes to homelessness, I want people to remember that we are talking about people, and no one wants to be reduced to their current living situation or any other narrow definition of a person. We are humans, all of us vastly different, but we all have dreams for a better life, we all have passionate pursuits, and we aspire to be more than our current circumstances may allow. As a former bilingual civil rights investigator for the Idaho Human Rights Commission, and someone who was arrested in 2014 in an action to add the words "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" to the Idaho Human Rights Act, I am committed to creating an inclusive community. That inclusion should exist at all levels of our city, including services that we provide to our most vulnerable residents. Growing up in Burley, Idaho, my mother often took in people who were struggling with issues of homelessness. It is a very personal approach to the issue, but one that forever changed the way I viewed public service. It is this level of compassion and grace that I would like to see our city embrace in regards to the issue of homelessness.

Frank Walker

Hubert Humphrey said "...the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped." Local government is in the best position to respond to these challenges and not seeking resolutions for the homeless is not an option. Over the years, homelessness grew steadily in Boise, and there was little public dialog speaking to the issue. The passage of the panhandling ordinance and its court challenge seemed to start the discussion in earnest. Boise must take the lead in funding programs to seriously to address the issue. It should be a vocation, not a chore. The New Path project is an example and first step in providing a way off the street. CDBG funds must be dedicated annually to more programs like this. When establishing an annual budget at the City, support for funding must be a priority.

SEAT 4 Naomi Johnson

There is a new project that just broke ground in Boise, it is a housing-first project that ensures a safe-place for 40 chronically homeless Boise City community members and it is built on an evidence-based philosophy that by providing housing first, we give an opportunity for success to participants - more so than a shelter can provide. I am looking forward to the City playing an ongoing role in its relationship to the hospitals as they provide support for case managers - a key component in the success of programs like these. Where our city has done poorly is the way in which they dismantled Cooper Court, a large homeless community, two years ago. While many of the individuals that were residents of Cooper Court, at times, under-utilized current resources available to them (shelters, community resources, etc.) my background in social justice and systems work informs the need for our city, as a system, to take responsibility for failed resources. Most disgraceful, though, was the timing of the City's decision to expel those community members from their home - just before the coldest months of winter. Boise must do better than this.

TJ Thomson

'Housing First' is an evidence-based approach to ending homelessness that prioritizes dignity to persons experiencing homelessness and saves our community money. I believe it is the most effective approach to ending homelessness. While our Housing First Initiative – a partnership between the city and many other local organizations – does not address all the issues identified in the question above, it is a meaningful start that will hopefully be expanded in the future. It centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing intensive supports and services that address each person's unique needs. Concerning the limitations or restrictions in our shelters, it is my understanding that the Interfaith Sanctuary does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, family status, sexual orientation, veteran status, gender identity/expression, disability or age. I would be open to finding ways in which the city could assist our shelters and other organizations that provide service to those experiencing homeless

and have mental health issues with appropriate training and resources to better fit their needs.

SEAT 6 **Holli Woodings**

New Path Community Housing is a great step in the right direction to provide safety to those experiencing homelessness in our city. We need to continue the collaborative efforts of the many organizations who made New Path a reality as we deploy proven models such as Housing First to serve our residents experiencing homelessness. Additionally, we need to focus on the need for affordable housing in our city, as lack of affordable housing is the #1 cause of homelessness in our community.

Nicholas Jones

Complicated issue... Something that takes time. I try my best to hire homeless individuals in one of my business because it is simple work and is something that helps them get off the street and into a place to live. I have two success stores so far and hope to have many more. But I have learned some things along the way... They don't go to shelters because they don't feel safe there. Their entire life fits into a backpack. If that gets stolen they have NOTHING. AND one individual I hired is trying to store using. But the shelters are a haven of drug use and dealing and he knows he can't go there of he will use again. So he sleeps on the street (and occasionally my home... Not recommended others do that though... I just have a section people can stay in). What I am saying is that we have to address this as a community. People in my situation have to help out of the goodness of their heart. I am one man.. But their are others like me who want to help if they just know how. AND we also have to fix the shelters... They have to be a place people feel safe and that is just not the case.



Question #8

Open space is an incredibly important part of Boise's environment and culture, but access to the process and incredible recreational opportunities are often limited by different factors.

What are your thoughts on the future of the open space levy and how do you envision keeping the public involved in open space plans and transactions?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	The open space levy was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and extra care should be taken to properly handle the money brought in by the levy. I'd like to encourage the Boise's Open Space and Clean Water Advisory Committee to encourage public input through such efforts as actively seeking public input for ideas and problem areas, encouraging schools to discuss the project with students, organize field trips, and possibly send fliers home with students regarding the project. We could also hold contests for ideas, and regularly put out news articles focusing on specific areas that are being improved. It is essential to keep the entire community involved and knowledgeable about the purpose of these improvements, and to encourage those who live in all parts of the city to take advantage of the benefits offered by our open spaces.
	Lisa E. Sanchez	Growing up with limited means, I have only recently realized that my upbringing involved incorporating conservation into my family's way of life and was an important value that guided our behavior. I am a lifetime member of the Girl Scouts, and the Girl Scout Law specifically addresses "using resources wisely," which is something I would always emphasize in programming activities with our young scouts. I grew up in the 1970s and '80s, when anti-littering, anti-pollution campaigns were instrumental in making our community aware of our responsibility for preserving our natural world and to see clean waterways and public land as resources to protect and maintain. I am proud to be associated with an organization like the Girl Scouts where we teach our scouts that they should leave a place better than they found it (Leave No Trace). I believe that instilling these values at a young age will make conservation work a lifelong value for future generations. Engaging young people in conservation work, like educating them about the importance of supporting efforts like the open space levy, is important to the long-term protection of our nature areas. Boiseans are concerned with the rate of development in the Boise Foothills and how it will limit the number of people who are able to enjoy the natural beauty that makes Boise so special to our residents and visitors. As a longtime Boisean, I appreciate the longtime and ongoing work that is being done by our city and community leaders to ensure that as many people as possible are able to benefit from going into nature. As I hike the Boise Foothills, I notice that I am usually one of the few Latinas on the trail. I would love to pay it forward by serving as the ambassador to the Boise outdoors for the rest of our community who have yet to discover the joy of going into nature right here in our very own backyard! We don't have to be perfect, we don't need fancy clothes, and it's okay to be afraid. We can bring our imperfect selves to the experience and come away with a better sense of what it means to be a Boisean.
	Frank Walker	Through the Ada County parks department, I was heavily involved in the support of foothills trail access and construction through the Ridge to Rivers system in unincorporated Ada County. The City and County worked well together and hopefully still do. I support a continuous annual levy for foothills acquisition, preservation and trail development. I believe Boiseans will continually support it. I also support efforts to preserve critical open space south of the City such as Hubbard Reservoir and support funding to this end. Bird watching is a recreational activity enjoyed by many in the valley and needs to be promoted as a key component to our quality of life as much as any other activity. A comprehensive trail system south of the City needs to emerge to compliment recreational activities in the foothills.
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	I was saddened to hear the news about the Open Space and Clean Water Levy. I feel a great disservice was done to the people of Boise when the city failed to safeguard their will as spoken by a 74% Yea vote on the levy. Because I am a frequent and grateful user of Boise's green spaces, I will be a trustworthy advocate as well as a bridge to

		increased council transparency and community involvement when it comes to development and protecting our resources. I will promote better management and increased inclusivity when it comes to the projects the levy will pay for.
	TJ Thomson	I am very supportive of the Open Spaces Levy. Public involvement and input is essential and always sought, not just in the Open Space Advisory Committee, but in all facets of government. Our Open Space Board is subject to Idaho open meetings laws and every resident can submit comments or attend a meeting. Requests for Proposals are also widely publicized, so if someone has an idea for an action or recommendation the board should consider, there is opportunity to do so. All recommendations the board makes go before City Council for discussion and determination of whether to accept the recommendations, send back, or reject – which serves as another venue where the public can weigh in and make their voice heard.
SEAT 6	Holli Woodings	Boise has a long history of support for open space. Committees such as the Open Space and Clean Water Advisory Committee, which is made up of community members nominated by the public, give a voice to the way our tax dollars are deployed. Boise is always better when our residents are involved in making decisions that impact us now and in the future.
	Nicholas Jones	I support it.



Question #9

Earlier in 2017, the Boise City Council passed a “Welcoming City” resolution. The Idaho Legislature also introduced a bill that would require local law enforcement to uphold immigration enforcement policies and prevent cities from enacting ‘sanctuary city’ ordinances.

What role should the Boise City Council play in protecting Boise’s large and diverse immigrant community?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	<p>Boise has done an excellent job of encouraging a community filled with diversity and harmony, and this work should be continued. I firmly believe that the immigration laws in the United States need to be reworked as they are unnecessarily complex and result in a large number of peaceful, immigrant-hopefuls being denied the opportunity to become a citizen. I am watching with interest in the hope that our Congress will actually work out a new system within the near future, negating the growing pressure of the States to dispute what is and is not within Federal jurisdiction. While I am a staunch proponent of the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people), and believe that the Federal Government has stepped over its boundaries in many areas, with our increasingly mobile population, I do agree that the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (which greatly increased fairness in immigration) grants immigration policy to the Federal Government in the interest of National Security. However, local law enforcement’s duty is uphold State and Local law. I do not feel it is the City Council’s duty to encourage local law enforcement to block the performance of Federal agents’ duties, and believe there should be cooperation to a point that does not include the expectation that local law enforcement agencies will use their resources to perform additional duties for the Federal government that do not fall within the scope of their daily expectations.</p>
	Lisa E. Sanchez	<p>Boise has been admirable in taking the lead in creating an inclusive and welcoming city. It should continue to be bold in its effort to protect every Boise resident from discrimination and hate. I learned early on when I first moved to Boise to attend Boise State University in 1989, that I was not leaving racism and discrimination behind in Burley, my hometown. I learned that those attitudes followed me in the form of fellow students who embraced racist philosophies, and I needed to shout down hate wherever I found it. The first place I was ever called a "spic" was on the BSU campus. Because of that experience, I have spent all my time in Boise working in support of human rights. I am the most qualified person to serve on the Boise City Council based on my own personal experience as a onetime newcomer, and my work experience as a civil rights investigator. We live in a beautiful city and state--it really is too great for hate.</p>
	Frank Walker	<p>The City should implement the policies of a sanctuary city without drawing the attention from the legislature or federal government. These are anxious times. The City can lead in implementing policies undone by the present administration and move forward where it can on climate control, immigration protection and other national policies to preserve out dignity and quality of life. There are state and federal services, such as the Idaho Office for Refugees and Jannus which provide considerable resources to refugees in their transition to the U.S. The City presently strongly supports these agencies and should not use its resources to duplicate services. The City could create a service with non-profit organizations to voluntarily categorize immigrants in a system that matches skills and credentials to the businesses within the area.</p>
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	<p>Labeling ourselves as a Welcoming City is not enough - how does that translate? We must ensure that we are not allowing our police to act as federal agents, have hard policy against discrimination and profiling, and show up as a City in cases where other Idaho communities are actively oppressing entire immigrant communities. We have to ask ourselves if Refugees do not feel safe calling the police in our community, what are we doing wrong?</p>

TJ Thomson	We are a nation built by immigrants and refugees seeking refuge. I am grateful for all that our refugee community brings to our outstanding city. We welcome refugees in our neighborhoods, city, and state. I believe that all people that are of differing identities make our communities and nation stronger. I stand up for immigrants and refugees and strongly support our “Welcoming City” designation. I am proud to have been a part of a city council that welcomes and stands up for the most vulnerable in our community. It’s not only the right thing to do but our community is vibrant in part because of the diversity of thought, culture and experiences that immigrants and refugees bring to our neighborhoods. The city council should continue providing a supportive and safe environment where participants can express their fears and concerns.
SEAT 6 Holli Woodings	Boise has an obligation to ensure the safety of all our residents, regardless of national origin. Boise City Council has a role in ensuring proper resources for those who keep our city safe, and for community engagement efforts to ensure our residents needs are being met.
Nicholas Jones	Our power is limited. But when it comes to planing and zoning, I am all for it.



Question #10

Many refugees and immigrants arriving in Boise are educated, professional people in their birth countries. Though credentials frequently don't work in their new country, these new community members have much expertise to offer.

As a City Council member, what ideas do you have for increasing the value of the experiences of our refugees and immigrants to positively impact their ability to find living wage employment?

SEAT 2	Rachel Misnick	I believe that two large hurdles these refugees encounter are first, a language barrier, and second, the reluctance for schools and employers to accept foreign training (due to the concern that it may not meet current U.S. standards). We should work together with educational organizations and those involved in assisting refugees to research methods of improving immigrants transition into U.S. employment; these methods could include increased offerings for them to better learn English, and improving assistance in helping immigrants apply for either recognition of their overseas degree(s) or getting credits granted toward gaining a U.S. college degree.
	Lisa E. Sanchez	Boise is home to a wonderful organization that is dedicated to helping newcomers to our country capitalize on their education and use their skills and talents in our community: Global Talent Idaho works to help refugees and immigrants to give their best selves to our local community. I would encourage our city to highlight the work of this organization and to facilitate partnerships with GTI. As a former employee of the Idaho Department of Labor and a BSU alum, I would like to help GTI partner with the appropriate departments to help newcomers expedite their ability to work in Idaho. I believe that by working together, we can help everyone in Boise meet their highest potential, which is a benefit to the individual and to the community at large.
	Frank Walker	There are state and federal services, such as the Idaho Office for Refugees and Jannus which provide considerable resources to refugees in their transition to the U.S. The City presently strongly supports these agencies and should not use its resources to duplicate services. The City could create a service with non-profit organizations to voluntarily categorize immigrants in a system that matches skills and credentials to the businesses within the area.
SEAT 4	Naomi Johnson	Our City should mirror the support of our grassroots leaders when it comes to enabling the empowerment of our immigrant communities in civic, economic, and linguistic development, as well as welcoming the unique gifts they have to offer us as neighbors. Statistics show us that there are a few factors that help New Americans thrive, such as adequate transportation systems and support for entrepreneurship. While the city is limited in what it can do to transfer credentials, I will lend my voice in support of the Idaho State Board of Education addressing that issue while also doing what I can within my role as a member of city council. Other cities have implemented programs like Atlanta Georgia's Connect Home events, where families in immigrant-dense neighborhoods received education on utilizing technology to improve their employment and educational opportunities, equipped with free tablets and internet service for 12 months. I would love for the City of Boise to work alongside community groups on projects like those mentioned above. As a member of the community, in 2016 I organized an art walk to bring allies to view Stronger Shines The Light Inside, Boise's Arts & Humanities photojournalism project by Angie Smith, which was nationally recognized for supporting diversity and inclusion. I organized a fundraiser, Run Toward Citizenship, that funded citizenship fees to increase access to rights of citizenship for 100 new Idahoans. After attending Neighborhood Narratives at Jump and hearing from a variety of New Americans, myself, a local grassroots group and the same individuals that spoke worked on a project that took place just one week ago bringing hundreds of neighbors together at Sunset Park. The purpose of the event was to bring inclusivity and opportunities for stronger relationships between neighbors. This is more than just words for me; this is something I have acted to address in the past, and I can be counted on to continue to assist in building a welcoming community now and in the future.

TJ Thomson	The City of Boise does not have the jurisdiction over accreditation or licensure. This is something that needs to be dealt with by professional organizations or universities that provide accreditation or membership, or by state or federal licensure boards. We have several great organizations, such as the Agency for New Americans, that assist members of our refugee community in obtaining the necessary accreditation they need to resume their careers. I support their efforts and look forward to seeking additional creative methods to assist our refugee population in this way.
SEAT 6 Holli Woodings	Organizations such as Global Talent Idaho are currently forming partnerships with many local businesses to help immigrants make the critical connections necessary to continue their careers in Boise. I am interested to learn how the city supports the efforts of the many organizations that assist new Boiseans. If the City Council can engage in ways other than ensuring adequate housing and transportation options for our residents, I'm open to learning.
Nicholas Jones	Again.. limited power here for a council member... BUT we can certainly make sure there are places for them. And I support doing so.