

# **1. INTRODUCTION-Please introduce yourself and describe why you are seeking a seat on the Alexandria City Council. For this question you are welcome to submit a brief video.**

It is wonderful to have this opportunity to communicate about my campaign for City Council with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. For seven years, I had the privilege to serve the Chamber as your representative to the City's Budget & Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC).

I'm running to help make this special place where we live and work even better. Five ways to do that:

- We need to restore integrity, transparency and accountability so residents and businesses are not surprised by new proposals for things like road diets, a slaughterhouse, overdevelopment, and stream restoration projects.
- We need to promote responsible development that's more mindful of infrastructure pressures and the quality of life in our neighborhoods, while attracting more businesses and visitors to the City.
- We need to accelerate school construction to meet burgeoning enrollment – without colocation of housing on school campuses.
- We need to get traffic moving again, particularly as we all emerge from the pandemic, and particularly on Duke Street!
- We need to live our Eco-City pledge once and for all, particularly to save our tree canopy and scarce natural parkland.

Many of you don't know me, so a little about my personal background:

- I was born in Baltimore into the only Puerto Rican family in the area.
- I attended public schools, graduated from Duke University, and worked my way through business school at William & Mary.
- My wife Bonnie and I were married in Alexandria 32 years ago, raised our children here, and they both attended the public schools. We have lived in Old Town, North Ridge, and now Seminary Hill, next to Clover/College Park, so we know the city from east to west.

My business experience is much more extensive than anyone running ...

- I have 35 years as a management consultant, business executive and now small business owner.
- I have advised dozens and dozens of companies of all sizes in a wide variety of industries, including some of the largest in the US and the world.
- Also, it has been my honor to serve a number of agencies of the federal government, and many federal contractors that support them.

- Most importantly, I bring to city council experience working with 20 local governments across North America on issues of management, budget and operations. Because of that, I already know how city government operates and will not have to learn as much on the job.

And I've been engaged in community activities for three decades:

- I spent 7 years on our city's budget committee (BFAAC) as the **representative of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce**, so I understand better than most how this city's finances work and the implications of budget decisions on our local businesses.
- I currently serve on the City's Mobility Advisory Committee, the Citizen's Advisory Committee of our Commonwealth's Attorney, where we discuss issues of social justice in the criminal justice system, and the board of the Seminary Hill Association in the West End.
- As a leader of our largest youth sports group, Alexandria Soccer Association, I successfully lobbied City Council for a number of new athletic fields across the City to address growing demand and safety problems. I also started that organization's first scholarship program for youth from vulnerable communities.

## 2. **COVID-19RECOVERY–Please share your thoughts on what economic recovery looks like for the City, particularly its businesses.** [L] [SEP]

I am not worried about our City government's ability to bounce back from the pandemic. We have the resources to withstand the impact of the crisis for two reasons: (1) the City's substantial "rainy day fund" that has doubled in the last 10 years (unnecessarily on the backs of commercial and residential taxpayers), and (2) the substantial aid coming from the federal government in the wake of the pandemic.

I am most worried about small business owners, landlords and tenants. As my son has served as an eviction policy expert at a national association, I have become aware of the potential for landlords and tenants to work together on pushing for accelerated aid distribution of to help them both. The City needs to do all it can for both stakeholder groups.

We should also continue to support our local businesses that have been hit the hardest, particularly restaurant owners, small shop owners, tourism businesses, and their employees.

**3. COVID-19 CHANGES—  
The City has relaxed a fair number of regulations to allow for businesses to operate under COVID-19 protocol. Which of these loosened restrictions would you like to see in perpetuity? Are there any you would like to roll back?** [L]  
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I am not sure we need to roll back any of them. I particularly like the increase in outdoor dining and the closing of high pedestrian traffic blocks that are not really needed for vehicular traffic. Let's allow restaurants to keep those outdoor tables on the streets and expand their businesses during peak times. It also adds to the festive atmosphere of our historic district and Del Ray, which I am sure benefits tourism and other local shop owners as well.

**4. EQUITY & INCLUSION - There is a broader conversation about equity in relation to COVID-19 as well as racial justice in response to recent events throughout the country. Alexandria demonstrated a commitment to advancing equity in its work with the addition of the Race and Social Equity Officer. As an elected leader, working in concert with the Race and Social Equity Officer, what ideas do you have to help Alexandria, particularly the business community, work towards being more inclusive?** [L]  
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As a City Council member, I would be prohibited from getting involved in the work of the City Staff, so I can't literally "work in concert" with any of them. However, I will support policies that promote equity in all that we do. As it relates to businesses, we should continue to encourage minority business ownership in the City so that the business owners look increasingly like the rest of the community they serve, and we achieve greater equity overall in our local economy.

**5. CITY ISSUES—What do you feel are the three (3) most pressing issues facing the City of Alexandria today?** [L]  
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1. **Restoring Integrity, Transparency and Accountability at City Hall:** We need to get City Hall to make residents and business owners their central

focus once again, and always do the right thing by them. Only then can we restore trust in our city government.

2. **Promoting Responsible Development:** We need to address our Affordable Housing challenge, but not by needlessly overdeveloping the city, which will only serve to reduce neighborhood quality of life and put untenable stress on our core infrastructure: Schools, roads, sewers, and storm water lines.
3. **Accelerating School Construction** to meet the demand of our burgeoning enrollment – and without co-location of adult housing on school grounds.

## 6. **STATE AND REGIONAL ISSUES—What do you feel are the most pressing state and regional issues effecting Alexandria?** [SEP]

**Affordable Housing:** We must address the impact of Amazon. Already, we are seeing home values skyrocket. Rents are sure to follow. I believe that Alexandria should do everything we can to support our vulnerable residents who are being priced out of the market. I do not agree that the City should follow the MWCOG suggestion for a target number of new units for Alexandria. Alexandrians should set our own goal, not follow what officials from other jurisdictions or the Urban Institute think is our fair share of the burden. In fact, Alexandria has done far more over the past five decades to house the most vulnerable residents in Northern Virginia. Moreover, we are already, and by far, the most densely populated NoVa jurisdiction. It's time for Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun to do their fair share with the considerable undeveloped land in their jurisdictions.

Unfortunately, the current city council is using only one tool to address the issue – overdevelopment. That policy has already led to overcrowded schools, more congestion on our major roads, and flooding in Del Ray and Rosemont. I support using subsidies for current Alexandria residents so that they do not have to move, and for former residents who would like to return to the City where they grew up. All of those people represent an important part of the fabric of our community. I oppose increasing the population of the city by as much as 40%, as some city officials have proposed.

**Traffic/Transportation:** We need to work on congestion on arterial roads and seize opportunities to relieve choke points during non-Covid rush hour times. While some have called for regional solutions to the cut-through traffic problem, no one seems to have one. I would work with local employers to explore the possibility of more telework and non-traditional shift hours. We should also emphasize regional transit solutions since most workers who live in Alexandria leave the City to go to work and 80% of our local workforce comes into the City from elsewhere.

I do not favor reducing lanes for motor vehicles on our major arterial roads, particularly Duke Street and King Street (between Quaker and 395). This will only make it harder for the overwhelming majority of residents who depend on motor vehicles for mobility to get to and from work, cart kids to school and activities, and to access businesses at peak rush hours.