

2020 Newport RI City Council Candidates Questionnaire

TO: 2020 CANDIDATES FOR NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ALLIANCE FOR A LIVABLE NEWPORT
SUBJECT: ONLINE COUNCIL CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE
DATE: July 29, 2020

As ALN has done for every local election since 2008, a City Council candidates' questionnaire has been created as a means of assisting Newport voters in making their election choices. The accompanying Word document contains questions for this year's City Council candidates selected from submissions ALN has received.

At Large candidates are asked to respond to six (6) questions and Ward candidates to the same six (6) plus a seventh (7) Ward-specific question. Candidates are urged to limit their response to each question to no more than five hundred (500) words (unless otherwise specified) and to enter those responses online via Google Forms. Candidates can either enter their responses directly on Google Forms or formulate responses first using the Word document and then transferring those to Google Forms.

Responses must be received no later than the end of the day on August 8, 2020. As soon as possible after that date, all responses will be uploaded at the same time to the ALN website (www.newportalliance.org) and made available for public viewing with accompanying notifications to the public through ALN's email subscriber list (approximately 600 subscribers) and through advertising and promotion on local radio, print, and online media.

This year ALN is delighted to be joined with our 2020 Election partners, Newport This Week, The League of Women Voters, The Newport Chamber of Commerce, WADK Radio, Newport Buzz, and Channel 18 Community Television. This collaborative will be conducting live "Zoom" public forums to which you have already been invited.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire or the Google Forms procedures, please send an email to info@newportalliance.org and you will receive a quick response by email or phone, depending on the nature of the question. Do you still need help with the form or process? Contact Chip Leakas ALN board advisor (401)339-0777 mobile generally 9am-9pm

ALN commends each of you for choosing to run and serve for the Newport City Council and looks forward to hearing from you as to the pressing issues and challenges Newport faces today.

2020 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE
Questions For All Council Candidates (At Large and Wards)

Email address *

amccalla2019@gmail.com

First Name, Last Name *

Angela McCalla

Elected Council Office you are seeking: *

Council "First Ward" ▼

1.) Do you support the November ballot question for Newport to issue more than \$100million of bonds to be used to expand The Pell School and replace Rogers High School? If no, explain your reasons. If yes, what do you say to Newport residents and business owners concerned about the impact on their property taxes? If yes or no, what action(s) would you promote if the ballot question is defeated? *

Yes, I am a strong supporter of passing the bond. If we continue to remain inactive there will be no question that construction costs will rise, interest rates will rise, and the reimbursements will end up in the hands of other communities. Our students deserve this. We all know good schools mean stronger property values. It will also mean we will be developing a state of the art educational center for all residents while helping to jump-start our economy. We are eligible for a 52.5% state reimbursement while the interest rates are at an all-time low. If we do not take advantage of these low interest rates and state reimbursement, the project will end up costing a great deal more in the long run. We need to create a plan to reduce the tax burden for owner-occupied homes in Newport. Let us look to immediately put in place some form of a homestead exemption that can reduce the tax burden for our home owning residents.

2.) Traffic and parking problems in Newport persist and seem to be getting worse despite being the subject of countless studies and ad hoc committees. What specific measures (other than forming more committees and conducting more studies) would you promote to alleviate the problems? *

The city started the Master Transportation plan last November to address topics such as parking, traffic, public transit, ride-sharing, accessibility opportunities, and active mobility options. In addition to assessing the City's existing transportation infrastructure, the Transportation Master Plan also provides an opportunity for the community to establish a shared vision to equitably address the transportation challenges facing the City, as well as to set achievable and measurable goals that will shape Newport's long-term mobility strategy and inform future development. During this time, the drafting of the RFP has been done and has signed off with a Memorandum of Understanding with the state and I expect that the RFP will be released in the near future. While on the council I was the lead sponsor for addressing parking issues regarding visitor parking and executing the planning board to conduct further studies regarding this. Additionally, I supported the resolution of Green and complete streets that promote more walkable areas and provide mechanisms that would promote slower modes of transport. I was also a lead sponsor of the resolution for Traffic Safety measures and calling for immediate action to increase safety for cyclists and modes of travel on our streets.

3.) Newport's economy is closely tied to tourism. The risk of that dependence has been made abundantly clear by the COVID pandemic. What, if any, alternatives do you see to the reliance on tourism? Based on your answer, what specific actions should be taken to further promote tourism and/or what specific actions should be taken to expand the economy beyond tourism? *

It is hard to determine what our economy will look like in the future but I believe investing in shovel-ready projects are a key that will help to jump start our economy. One specific investment that I strongly support is the rebuilding of our public schools. Having good public schools helps to transform the way teaching and learning will take place and ensure state of the art educational facilities. Having a strong public school system drives property value and will also bring in much needed jobs to those who are out of work.

We have also learned during this pandemic that we need to prioritize diversifying our economic portfolio for the city. We need higher paying wages for families to be able to live here.

4.) The closure of the Visitors Center was announced recently. What do you propose should be done with the property? *

I feel confident that the City staff and City Council will be researching and discussing possibilities for the property. Additionally, I will be discussing proposals with the residents of Newport. There needs to be further research on this matter before I can offer or support a proposal for the site.

5.) A Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) template is being considered as part of the North End Urban Plan (NEUP). What would you like to see included in the CBA template? What measures will you promote and support to put the NEUP on a clear path to implementation?" *

As Ward One Councilor, I have been a watchdog for the city's North End Urban Development working group, always bringing the concerns of residents of the First Ward to the table. We have to get this right. The City must put the needs of its residents first and all economic development initiatives must be considered in the prism of how it will affect our residents and our neighborhoods before we allow any new project. The Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) required for developments utilizing the Float Zone need to incorporate a formal process for community participation when the CBA terms are being negotiated by the City. Furthermore, we need to ensure that the residents most vulnerable to displacement of their homes are part of the community representation.

I believe that a CBA is a great strategy for ensuring that all residents have the ability to directly negotiate with developers for the benefits that are important to them. A CBA can set a wide range of benefits in exchange for community support and an agreement to refrain from litigation. Our CBA agreements must be legally enforceable and written into our ordinances. It will give residents the leverage contract between a coalition of community-based projects or the city and the developer of a proposed project.

6.) What do you most want Newport voters to know about you? (Limit response to a maximum of 250 words.)

The development of the North End and the Bridge Realignment are very big projects with big impacts for my constituents. I have been a strong advocate for the First Ward. I have done the research, met with friends and neighbors and fought for the residents whenever necessary.

My message to voters during the 2018 campaign for City Council was "Your choice for a voice." As I walked through the neighborhoods of Ward One I met many residents who spoke to me about the changes taking place in Newport: the big hotels, the tourism economy, the need for a new high school and expansion of our elementary school, and the rising cost of housing for year-round residents. I promised the residents that, if elected, I would be the voice of the residents of Ward One. I believe that I have kept that promise to the voters in my ward and I look forward to being elected for a second term to continue to advocate for all of Newport residents.

7a.) Question For Third Ward Council Candidates ONLY ::: Ocean Drive is the scene of traffic problems, speeding, illegal parking, and (primarily at Bretton State Park) loud noise and trash. Although these problems are at their worst during the summer months, they persist to some degree throughout the year. What specific measures would you promote to deal with these problems?

7b.) Question For Second Ward Council Candidates ONLY ::: The intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Memorial Boulevard is the scene of congestion and multiple accidents every summer. The traffic overflow from the north to Memorial is now affecting Red Cross and Gibbs as well. What measures should be adopted to handle this problem?

7c.) Question For First Ward Council Candidates ONLY ::: The preferred plan for the Pell Bridge Offramp Realignment is now known. What measures should the City of Newport plan and enact to minimize disruption to the surrounding neighborhoods both during construction and, more importantly, after project completion?

On many occasions I have spoken to the City Manager about developing a plan to lessen the disruption to the residents of Newport during the lengthy process of the Bridge Realignment. Currently the city has not created a process to address how we will move people through the city and the surrounding neighborhoods abutting the bridge. Part of the plan needs to be a solid communication network between the City, the State and the residents. Residents, businesses, travelers and workers need to be notified of closed roads, detours and delays. It is imperative that a plan be developed. Residents, businesses, travelers and workers need to be notified of closed roads, detours and delays. The noise and air pollution needs to be addressed. I intend to be involved in the plan every step of the way and to bring the concerns of residents to City Hall as the project unfolds.

