

# 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](http://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](mailto: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 \*

elizabethfuerter4@gmail.com

First Name, Last Name \*

Elizabeth Fuerte

Elected Council Office you are seeking: \*

Council "At Large" ▼

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 do support the bond 100%. Our children deserve the best educational infrastructure to teach them all they will need for tomorrow's workforce. To know that our only high school has been declared one of the worst in the state is a great disservice to our students. Newport citizens, whether it's our school administration, school staff, city staff, and anyone entering every day into our buildings, have allowed our city-owned school structures to deteriorate. It is not our children's fault for our oversight and neglect. A costly oversight failing on the taxpayers of our city, but the taxpayers must see tis bond as an investment. An investment for which we won't immediately see the rewards, but we will all reap the rewards of living in a prosperous city with a higher economic return from a better Public School system. I recommend meeting with our citizens of Newport to discuss other tax incentives as an appreciation to our property owners for their investments and contributions to our children's education. Plus, the current offer in reimbursements offered by the Rhode Department of Education might not ever happen soon. An Investment now is an investment for the future economy of our city.

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? \*

For the past year, I have been participating in the Newport Transportation Citizens Group. There is no quick fix to our transportation woes. We look forward to having the city hire a consultant to develop a Traffic Master Plan for the entire city. I look forward to working with Transportation Master Plan consultants and our citizens to come up with a plan to reduce our traffic congestions. I recommend that the newly hired consultants to demonstrate the pros and cons of building two upscale parking garages away from downtown and design a shuttle system that will allow visitors to leave their vehicles securely parked on the north end of the city. I imagine a city that does not require personal cards to get around because we have a well-designed shuttle system that will take us within two blocks to where we are going. I urge our citizens of Newport to participate in the conversation of what they would like to see done with the traffic issues we all face every day.

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? \*

I love that our city is inviting to all in the summer months, boosting our local economy. But is that enough? What about our year-round residents? The local Newporters help keep our economy afloat during the winter months. Incentivize our residents to spend more of their money during the winter months. Newport is missing the family attractions that we all go elsewhere to spend our money. We have minimal activity institutions that cater to families. Let's get our citizens to talk more about what they would like to see to boost our economy during the winter months. I believe that if there are family attractions to get folks out of their homes during the winter, some of the restaurants can make up some of the money lost during COVID-19. I'm just one person noticing what's missing, but I want to hear from all the citizens of Newport what they would like to see and get them to help our local businesses beyond the summer tourist season.

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

I believe using that space to build a state of the art self-sustainable parking garage. Encourage our tourists to park and walk down to shop and eat.

I also believe that the best use for that space can be for a family venue to help families do things together -- a kid-friendly center for all ages. Our local youth and young families stay away from downtown as there is not much for them. If we develop a kid-friendly center, families can do activities year-round with their children, and our youth will have a reason to go to the downtown area more often.

Community Benefits Agreements can be an ideal tool to use for what can that space be. We must consider an establishment that will cater to our year-round residents and families, as they are the ones that are left here after the summer tourism dies down.

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?" \*

A Community Benefits Agreement (CBAs) is an empowering agreement between developers, the city, and all residents. I want our citizens of Newport to understand that CBAs are ways of establishing a contractual agreement that a developer will do right by the citizens of Newport. A CBA can meet the residents' needs closest to a project that can ensure reductions on noise and debris removal, environmental studies, and even minimize traffic disruptions. Other examples of CBAs: can secure a percentage of the job opportunities for training and hiring our residents and maintaining affordable housing opportunities. Tax revenues from a specific project can be set aside for funding a local cause or non-profit. A CBA is a tool the city can use to ensure all developers hold their end in giving back to the community. A CBA is a tool that ensures developers have Newport citizens at the table during the proposal phases, before submitting their plans to the Zoning and the Planning departments. We need the city to stipulate a policy that every construction project establishes a Community Benefits Agreement process.

The community must have a seat at the table to better understand the effects of a construction project. The city can ensure that a CBA is a policy that meets the equitable demands of those disenfranchised and those immediately affected by an construction.

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

I have been living in Newport for over 20 years. I have never felt more the need to get civically engaged as I am feeling it now. I love this city. I have raised my children in this city, and now I'm seeing my grandchildren grow in this city. If we continue the path we are in now, our children will not have the skills and the means to live in Newport. Newport is full of rich cultural histories, rich stories of our ancestries, rich in diversity, and rich in community and a real sense of neighborhood. We are losing sight of the needs of our citizens. We must create a balance in the economy for the visitors and the economy of our Newporters. I bring the opportunity to be the voice of the people, not just those that are always present. Our youth and our aging population are our most precious population, and we are neglecting them. Our education infrastructure is not preparing our children for tomorrow. I want to help put in place the policies that will ensure all citizens have a voice. Systems that will raise those that are disenfranchised and marginalized. Let's develop the methods that will continuously remind policymakers that nothing moves forward until all Newport citizens are part of the decision-making.

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?

N/A

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?

N/A

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?

N/A

