

# 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 \*

ceglie@gmail.com

First Name, Last Name \*

Lynn Underwood Ceglie

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? \*

My first choice was to unify Rogers and Middletown High Schools enabling a state reimbursement of more than 60 percent. I attended the meetings at Middletown Town Hall and was disappointed by the majority of Middletown council members disparaging and untruthful comments about the Newport Public Schools and the City of Newport in general. At that point, I realized Newport needed to look in another direction to replace Rogers. I voted to place the question on the ballot because I believe Newport residents have the right to vote on such an important matter. At this point, a new Rogers High School – with all the incentives including Pell expansion - would receive a state reimbursement of 52.5% percent. This is a one-time guaranteed state reimbursement.

I am concerned about the impact of building a new school on property taxes, but I am equally concerned about our students attending a school that desperately needs to be replaced. According to the City's latest projections, the school bond would have no tax impact in 2022. The yearly projections on a \$400,000 home are for example: year 2023 - \$52; year 2024 -\$68; and year 2025 - \$36. If the bond is defeated, of course, we will need to re-examine the issue.

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? \*

We have an opportunity in the North End with the Pell Bridge realignment to create a parking lot for approximately 300 cars. Shuttles and a bike path will help alleviate the number of cars entering the downtown areas. Memorial Boulevard also is a gateway to the city. RIDOT's proposed safety changes, such as speed feedback signage and "HAWK" crosswalks with sensors that stop traffic when pedestrians need to cross, have gone out to bid and the work should begin in the fall. I think we also need to create better signage to direct traffic out of the neighborhoods and onto the main arteries such as America's Cup Avenue. Before the pandemic, Jeanne Napolitano and I were working with RIDOT and Discover Newport on a plan for a pilot program that would offer free "hop on-hop off" shuttle service and how to increase the use of the Gateway parking lot. Unfortunately, that project is on hold for now.

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? \*

Covid-19 is having a dramatic effect on every industry. Cancelled events and closed attractions that draw visitors have hurt our local economy, but I believe Newport's tourist industry is very resilient and sustainable.

When I look back at Newport over the years, this City has faced many challenges such as the departure of the Navy in the 1970s and the loss of the America's Cup in 1983. Newport has persistently emerged stronger thanks to those attracted to its natural beauty, deep harbor, and historic preservation, as well as the ingenuity of our residents and businesses. I have been very surprised that the Downtown, Bellevue and Broadway are very vibrant with diners and shoppers despite this current crisis. The council and administration are working to promote Newport as a center of a "Blue Economy" with businesses linked to the ocean such as defense, marine trades, fisheries, renewable energy, and others. The Pell Bridge realignment is critical in opening up land for companies to establish themselves here. It is the duty of all councils to promote diverse economies that provide year-round, well paying employment. "Innovate Newport", located at the former Sheffield School, is a prime example of the city's commitment to diversifying our economy.

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

For years, Discover Newport has been looking toward a more technology driven business model. The closure of the Visitors Center has been considered for years as the building is very large for the organization's needs and the services they provide. I am looking forward to a revamped Discover Newport that will continue to promote Newport as a top leisure and business destination. I am open to ideas that could present exciting opportunities for this gateway to the City. The council has not been briefed yet on possible uses and opportunities, so stay tuned!

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 Benefit Agreement is a contract negotiated between the City and a developer to enhance services or amenities in a neighborhood or community. Some examples that I would consider, with input from residents, are job preferences for Newport residents, job training and mentorships, additional transportation opportunities, improved infrastructure, and civic amenities such as a library annex and additional recreational spaces.

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

For the past three terms, I have worked hard to be responsive to the concerns and needs of 2nd Ward residents and responsible for following through on solutions. Running for one of the four At-Large seats, I promise to be the same responsive councilor to all Newport residents. I am dedicated to working on safety and quality of life issues. I am fully engaged in our community working as a liaison with the senior population, social service organizations, environmental groups and others. During this Covid-19 pandemic, I have distributed hundreds of masks to visitors on America's Cup Avenue, Bellevue Ave and Cliff Walk. I am in daily contact with residents, council members, city administration and staff working on issues that better our community. We are so lucky to live here, and I am very honored to represent the City of Newport.

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?

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