

We invite the 2025 City of Charleston council candidates to respond with their views and plans to support a thriving, diverse local economy, back local businesses and entrepreneurs, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

1. Supporting Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs

What specific policy or program would you champion to reduce administrative burdens (such as complex permitting processes or restrictive zoning) for new and expanding small, locally-owned businesses and entrepreneurs, especially those creating a more diverse mix of retail and services in Charleston?

I've heard the same complaints from small and large business owners, as well as long-term and newer residents alike: the City's permitting and zoning approval processes are absolutely broken. As an outsider, I don't know if it's because of understaffing, inefficiency, favoritism, or a combination of all.

Therefore, if elected the initial approach I would undertake is a comprehensive fact-finding mission and public report within the first 90 days in office to uncover the cause of this breakdown and barriers to change. These findings would underpin an intensive collaborative advocacy effort to compel the necessary changes, as revealed.

2. Quality of Life for Local Residents

Charleston's growth has intensified traffic congestion and contributed to high housing costs. What is your plan to improve the daily quality of life for residents by addressing the intersection of transportation and housing, specifically to enable local workers to afford to live closer to their jobs and reduce reliance on long-distance commutes?

District 4 has the greatest potential for infill multi-income and multi-type density, especially in tandem with soon-to-come Lowcountry Rapid Transit. As a councilmember, I would like to lead block-by-block and neighbor-by-neighbor engagements on striking a balance between growth that infrastructure can keep up with and preserving the very residential character that has drawn the world here.

I plan to become an expert on innovative solutions sourced worldwide, a diligent participant in regional planning collaborations, and a convener of neighborhood conversations, so that residents from all walks of life can comprehend and buy into the complex solutions required to strike community balance and cohesion.

Note: The success of the Lowcountry Rapid Transit system is crucial for our region, especially for local workers who deserve to live closer to their jobs. I am deeply concerned that passengers will be deterred by delays caused when buses integrate onto non-dedicated regular traffic on the Peninsula. I will strenuously advocate to revisit this decision.

3. Maximizing Local Impact of City Spending

How would you reform the City's purchasing and procurement policies to prioritize and increase the percentage of municipal contracts and purchases awarded to qualified local businesses and suppliers, thereby recirculating tax dollars within the local economy?

I absolutely support prioritizing and increasing the percentage of municipal contracts and purchases awarded to qualified local businesses. I would look to Lowcountry Local First to educate me about the ins and outs of this necessary reform, to include the appropriate percentages, and parlay that with my 20+ years of legal experience in order to draft and secure approval of impactful implementing policy.

4. Diversifying the Local Economy

Recommendations to update the City's 10-year old Tourism Management Plan kicked off earlier this year in partnership with Bloomberg Associates. How do you believe the implementation of this revised plan, in partnership with other local policies, can help address the loss of neighborhood businesses and ensure our commercial districts remain diverse and vibrant?

I entered the race to represent District 4 out of both contentment and concern for the rapid economic, livability, and demographic changes underway on the Charleston Peninsula. With over 100 years of familial history north of Line Street, I embrace energy and investment because I want my hometown to thrive. Nevertheless, as my family feels the unease of skyrocketing property values and shifting cultural mores, I worry that Charleston is losing what makes us special.

Those concerns also extend to the loss of neighborhood businesses. Charleston must not become Anytown USA. These deep-seated hometown values will be my lens with respect to updating the Tourism Management Plan.