



City Council Candidate Survey 2021 Birmingham Municipal Election

Greater Birmingham Ministries invites you to complete this candidate survey. Your responses will inform our non-partisan 2021 Birmingham Municipal Election Guide, which will reach over 20,000 Birmingham residents. Please return your completed candidate survey to electionguide@gbm.org by July 2.

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District: 3

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1. Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography.

I have lived in Birmingham for 9 years come from a family of wildlife conservationists in Auburn, Alabama. Currently I work as a Library Assistant with the Jefferson County Public Library Cooperative, but I have lived many different experiences - I have been an anatomy teaching assistant at UAB, a housekeeper, a cook, a server, a tutor, courier, and an office specialist in a law firm. I am a grassroots organizer and serve as the networking coordinator on the Cella65 activist team where we have organized protests, vigils. I work with many of the nonprofits and grassroots organizations in and around Birmingham that work tirelessly to make lives better for the people of Birmingham - these are the people whose voices have been left out of government and I am honored to fight alongside them in our pursuit of justice.

2. Please name any endorsements you have received.

Byron "Anti-Charter School" Lagrone, candidate for Board of Education District 3, has endorsed me.

3. What are the biggest issues in your district and how would you address those issues in your role as a councilor?

There is great inequity here from one neighborhood to the next. The biggest issues, especially highlighted by the pandemic, are housing, climate change, and accessibility for the disabled. My role would be to advocate for and pass ordinances that will tangibly improve our streets and housing accessibility.

4. How do you think the City of Birmingham should provide economic and corporate incentives?

The City Council has the responsibility to evaluate the quality of incentives by channeling the people's vision for the City into any prospective partnership. We have people growing their businesses right here in Birmingham and we want our neighbors to have novel opportunities for training and employment. We want to continue celebrating Birmingham's unique community by ensuring small businesses, and local entrepreneurs and start-ups can compete and thrive by giving them access to the same type of incentives we currently give to large corporations. If the City Council evaluates a multi-million dollar incentive package for a large corporation, they must take the time to clarify and guarantee exactly the contributions that a prospective company or economic opportunity will provide. If the company is not providing jobs with dignity, jobs for the current residents, jobs with good health insurance and employee protections, jobs with growth opportunities, then we must demand these applicants come to us with a solution to the City beyond mere retail or tax revenue. We can seek partnerships with ethical companies who commit to Community Benefit Agreements. We can ask the tough questions in committees and get to the bottom of how their resources will be used.

5. In 2020 Birmingham had the highest homicide rate in 25 years. So far 2021 is on trajectory for an even higher homicide rate. In your role as a councilor, how would you address crime and public safety?

To effectively reduce crime we must focus on crime prevention, which requires that we create policies and programs that address the root causes of crime such as lack of access to health and mental health care, good jobs, quality housing, healthy & nutritious food. As City Councilor I would work with the City departments focused on crime prevention and mental health emergencies and ensure effective funding for these programs. If a proposal by the executive body, the Mayor's administration, did not get the support of the people or did not rely on evidence-based crime prevention proposals, I would not support the proposal and would refuse to pass it until the proposal would result in a truly equitable, workable plan. I also support community policing, an authentically derived citizen review board, and a fully transparent and police department. Should the Chief of Police and the Mayor provide these tools, I will pass legislation for them to carry out their plan. I would advocate for programs like the Peacemakers and

CAHOOTS to address many situations outside the level of a standard police officer role. I will do my part to model our future ordinances from other cities who have had success in public safety. Additionally I believe the City should invest in our youth to combat crime - sports and cultural and recreational activities and programming for our K-12 kids provides something for them to do and keeps them engaged in activities instead of on the street being recruited or influenced by violence around them.

6. In your opinion what are the most critical public services that the City of Birmingham is funding or should fund and how will you use your position as a councilor to ensure these are funded?

Our basic public services are all in desperate need of funding and repair. As I have campaigned for others in other districts, walked in my own, served in my own, it is unacceptable to me that our transit options include waiting for 3-4 hours or more for a bus that may never come or scooters discarded all over sidewalks that are incomplete or impossible to maintain due to their composition. Neither transportation option are an answer for the homebound and disabled that are in the most need, they are not an answer for the public that work long or odd hours, they are not an answer for students balancing their lives, and they're not an answer for the elderly to be able to access all other public works such as parks, trails, and libraries. As councilor I will establish redirecting funds from unexpended or long-forgotten projects into areas of need. I will proactively develop relationships with eager departments or projects from UAB and qualified, reliable vendors to bring resources, such as Medicare seminars, into underserved areas. The City can provide affordable housing opportunities for wealth building by targeting down payment assistance. The council has the power to sufficiently fund and appoint people to the Land Bank Authority, a board with can transform vacant lots into livable spaces with the help of a robust legal team.

7. Where in our communities do you see opportunities for Birmingham government to address the inequity between people of different races, genders, and sexual orientations, and how, as a councilor, will you support policies to address these gaps?

Systemic racism, patriarchy, and the kyriarchy are the broader oppressive forces that sustain lack of representation. The Birmingham government must do more by establishing specific offices and liaisons who are best suited to represent the immediate needs of these wealth and societal gaps. The City must devote itself to incentivizing progressive workplaces and companies dedicated to accommodations and protections to people with identities other than cis, white, heterosexual. This also applies to housing. Without stable housing people are easily displaced by rising costs so I will fight for rent control in District 3 and for all of Birmingham.