



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.

Name: John Hilliard

District: 9

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1. Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography.

Councilor John R. Hilliard has served District 9 on the Birmingham City Council since 2017. He serves as Chair of the Economic Development Committee and is a member of the Governmental Affairs/Public Information, Planning & Zoning, and Transportation Committees. Councilor Hilliard is a lifelong resident of Pratt City and a long-time public servant having served his community in the Alabama State Legislature for 10 years.

2. Please name any endorsements you have received.
3. What are the biggest issues in your district and how would you address those issues in your role as a councilor?

Councilor John Hilliard's top priorities are public safety, education, and economic development in our neighborhoods. In 2020 alone, Councilor Hilliard helped to facilitate over \$250,000 in donations to District 9 schools and youth programs.

Councilor Hilliard has helped to bring in new retail businesses and recruit new industrial jobs to District 9. As a real estate developer, Councilor Hilliard has also fought to help citizens in District 9 and across Birmingham take ownership of vacant homes and vacant lots and revitalize the community from within. He has hosted 2 seminars on purchasing tax properties and working with the Birmingham Land Bank Authority.

With Councilor Hilliard pushing for progress, One Pratt Park was opened and over \$36 million in capital improvements were made in District 9. The Wylam area saw the construction of a new library and youth football facility. Councilor Hilliard helped to secure a grant of more than \$800,000 to improve and repair infrastructure at the Birmingham Port Authority and spur economic development in the area.

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

Councilor Hilliard always advocates for minority participation in contracts that come before the City Council and has worked to promote and highlight minority businesses in District 9. Councilor Hilliard believes that District 9 should be a focus area for the City when it comes to incentives for community revitalization.

- 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?**

Councilor Hilliard believes in working with any and all stakeholders who bring programmatic ideas to the table to address these issues—churches and pastors, youth programs, athletic and arts programs, non-profits, and community groups. It is going to take all of us working together to strengthen neighborhood watch efforts and set our young people on a path for success. Investing in education like what we have done with the aviation program, Build Up Ensley, and the boxing program gives our young people an alternative path to follow in life. We also have to work with programs that are providing resources and helping offenders gain employment when they come home, as well as programs that support families needing help with mental health, finances, and other issues that contribute to crime.

- 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?**

Addressing the blight in our neighborhoods and keeping things clean so that District 9 can be open for business is one of the most critical public services. Councilor Hilliard has been committed to keeping a constant, open line of communication with the Mayor, his colleagues on the Council, as well as neighborhood officers to adhere to the needs of the community and make sure these issues are addressed.

Compared to other districts, District 9 has led on all fronts when it comes to reporting citizen concerns and getting them resolved—getting vacant lots cut, getting housing code violations and inoperable vehicles addressed, as well as blighted property condemnations and demolitions. In 2020, 49 blighted structures were demolished, and 3,126 overgrown lots were cut and cleared.

Councilor Hilliard also wants to create a Home Ownership Incentive program for families that want to locate in District 9 and help to invest in the community.

- 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?**

Councilor Hilliard has always supported policies to address equality and social justice in the areas mentioned above, as well as when it comes to income inequality. He has helped to distribute more than 10,000 boxes of food, turkeys, and school supply items to those in need within the community. Councilor Hilliard promotes minority and women-owned businesses in his District and supports investment in training programs that help these businesses network and grow. Councilor Hilliard supports progressive and inclusive policies that will help to advance District 9 and the City of Birmingham as a whole.