

Candidate for 6th District at Large Andrea Bough



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- 1. Each candidate brings a passion for office and special skills to help them succeed. Describe what drives you most to run for office, your qualifications and skills, and why we should elect you versus your opponent. Include any current endorsements.**

For nearly two decades, I have been active in civic and community activities in Kansas City and have worked with municipalities in my legal practice. What prompted me to run for City Council now is my daughter's (and son's) future. My daughter just completed her sophomore year in college. I want to ensure that Kansas City is and remains a great place to live, work and raise a family not just for my family but for all of Kansas City's families. As an attorney practicing in the area of land use and development, former small business owner, wife and mother, I will draw on each of these experiences to provide a reasoned and balanced approach to the decisions that face the City, through consensus building to address the complex issues that face our City. I understand the importance of ensuring that all are afforded a safe place to live, access to quality jobs, and the opportunity to succeed regardless of where one lives. I have received the endorsements of Freedom Inc., Southland Progress, Carpenters Regional Council, AFL-CIO, Building and Construction Trade Council, IBEW Local 124, IAFF Local 3808, FOP Lodge 99, SEIU MO/KS State Council, LaRaza Political Club, Greater KC Women's Political Caucus, and several other current and former elected officials.

2. If elected, what will your top 3 priorities be in your first year of office? Name 3 things you plan to accomplish during your term.

When elected, I am committed to (1) continuing the progress that the City has made; (2) effectively and efficiently delivering basic city services, including, trash pick up, infrastructure improvements and street repair to all areas of the City; and (2) addressing neighborhood issues, such as affordable housing and violent crime, as well as the root causes of those issues, access to mental health, living wage jobs, transportation, education, job training. As the Council addresses these priorities, I will do so through inclusion, transparency, and accountability.

The three things I would like to accomplish are working with the Mayor and Council to (1) reduce the rate of violent crime, (2) evaluate the way in which our City delivers basic services, and (3) develop a comprehensive housing plan that includes the transportation needs of our citizens.

3. Over the last decade, Kansas City has experienced so many positive changes, but the murder rate and number of violent crimes are still major issues. What suggestions do you have for reducing crime in Kansas City?

Lowering violent crime is one of my, if not the, highest priorities. We must implement a multi-faceted approach to address violent crime that includes looking at more immediate solutions but also the root causes. First, we must provide more officers on the streets for greater engagement with the community to stem the unacceptable violence in our City. We also need to encourage the community to work with police to deter and solve crimes that have been committed by building better relationships. One way to accomplish this is to increase the TIPS Hotline reward for homicides to encourage those with information to come forward so that when a crime has been committed it can be solved.

As we address public safety and violent crime, part of the discussion must include access to mental health, living wage jobs, job training, affordable housing and transportation. Prevention and early intervention must be addressed and not simply retribution and incarceration. We must continue to encourage restorative justice programs and conflict resolution in our schools so that our children learn ways to avoid violent resolution of problems.

- 4. The limited availability of affordable housing and limited access to public transportation options make it challenging for low-income residents to find stable housing and employment opportunities. Likewise, employers describe difficulties filling jobs and finding stable employees because housing, transportation and distance to work. How do you propose to increase affordable housing and access to employment opportunities in Kansas City?**

Our housing policy must include a comprehensive plan on how we approach housing and how our transportation and job creation goals align with our housing goals. I support a comprehensive housing policy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the (1) creation of approximately 5,000 units focused around transit, schools and jobs, (2) expansion of the minor home repair program, and (3) creation of energy efficient/weatherization programs to reduce utility costs. These programs would benefit low- and middle-income housing units and seniors, and help stabilize declining neighborhoods. Economic development tools and/or projects are an option in funding these programs. However, we must do a better job in defining what “affordable” means and how we use these tools to promote a housing plan that benefits those in need.

As with addressing violent crime, however, we must also address root causes, such as homelessness and mental health, living wage jobs, access to job training, drug addiction, and prior criminal convictions. And, we must ensure that those who are struggling to pay rent are not victims of predatory slumlords.

- 5. Many citizens are still confused about what the approved GO Bonds will fund, how moneys are being used, when improvements are expected, property owner responsibilities in the interim, and whether there are still shortfalls in funding. This has led to unrealistic expectations, mis-information and frustration. How would you propose to educate the community, and improve communication and transparency about projects and schedules?**

The citizen engagement process should not end once a project like the GO Bonds are approved. Instead of asking its citizens to come to City Hall for the answers (either the website or in person), the City should provide better communication TO its citizens. This can be done in a variety of ways, but should include City staff and City Council members making themselves available to neighborhood and community organizations to discuss the progress and answer questions. It can also be accomplished through regular email/newsletter communications, social media and other forms of communication that reach out to citizens.

As an attorney who has represented clients before city councils, I understand the importance of keeping my clients informed during all steps of the process. I also think it is part of the duties of a council member to keep the public informed of the decisions that are being made, but also the implementation process as well.

- 6. The condition of roads, curbs and sidewalks is a major issue for the City. Developers and property owners often cite infrastructure as a major issue impacting property values, development feasibility and decisions about private investment. Likewise, the perception of well-established centers like Brookside or re-emerging corridors like Troost are impacted by crumbling infrastructure. How would you propose to prioritize infrastructure for established and emerging areas versus infill or new infrastructure? What ideas do you have for additional funding to address shortfalls?**

The effective and efficient delivery of basic services, including infrastructure, is a major policy issue of mine. The funds generated from the GO Bonds, discussed above, need to be allocated in an equitable manner where each area of the City receives its fair share and where critical infrastructure investments, such as roads, are needed and consistent with what the voters approved. It is vitally important that the Council have a structure in place where there are priorities for our City that meets the needs of our residence and neighborhoods. There must be a balance between ensuring that established neighborhoods receive the maintenance and repair that is needed, while newer areas are supported as well.

In certain circumstances, economic development tools could be used to fill the funding gap to provide infrastructure needs. The Troost Community Improvement District is an example of a tool that can be used to improve infrastructure needs of a community.

- 7. Illegal dumping, neglected properties, and deferred maintenance are major issues. The City's limited resources often mean these issues go unaddressed for long periods impacting the surrounding community. How do you propose to deter bad actors and improve enforcement?**

As we re-examine our delivery of basic city services, we need to reassess bulky item pick up. In the last Citizen Survey, less than 24% were satisfied with the City's efforts to clean-up illegal dumping sites. The City needs to work with neighborhood organizations to determine the best way to stem illegal dumping. Collectively, our City needs to do better at increasing codes enforcement specifically on absentee landlords and repeat violator offenders. An important aspect of this solution, too, is to work with our neighborhoods to solve these issues, and with the passage of the Healthy Homes Ordinance, the City's Health Department has the resources to help ensure that properties are safer for our residents. Our City needs to employ an approach that is collaborative with the homeowner, property owner, or business owner so that minor infractions do not mushroom into major violations which during the process the resident is hit with multiple citations. For example, when senior citizens have a health issues and is unable to care for their property, the issue should be handled in a way that collectively and positively for the neighborhood, the resident, and our City as a whole, without resorting to a punitive process.

- 8. Vacant, abandoned, and run-down buildings and housing can attract crime and destabilize surrounding areas. Likewise, the vacant lots left behind after demolition can have the same impact. What do you propose to address vacant/abandoned, run-down buildings / housing and to stabilize the surrounding areas?**

Many of the ways in which I would address vacant/abandoned, run-down buildings/housing and how I would stabilize surrounding areas have been addressed above. I would like to see a comprehensive housing policy that includes (1) a home repair program that is intended to stabilize declining neighborhoods; (2) a program that rehabilitates structures to provide affordable housing; and (3) builds actual affordable housing on vacant lots. Increasing codes enforcement specifically on the absentee landlords and repeat violator offenders, and providing better access to bulky item pick up will also help stabilize our neighborhoods.

- 9. The delivery and cost of basic City services including sewer, water, trash collection, and snow removal affect us all. What suggestions do you have to improve and maintain city services without major financial impacts to residents?**

The delivery of basic City services is a core and fundamental function of our City. It is important that the City Council as a governing body manage these key City services while balancing the respective costs to the residents and businesses of our City. The City must address the rising water and sewer bills. The Consent Decree between the City and the EPA has resulted in a burden on our residents that cannot be sustained. While the City has been negotiating a modification to secure relief for the projected increases in water and sewer bills, the City must make an assessment as to what options are available to afford relief to residents until a modification is available.

With respect to other basic City services, the City must effectively and efficiently deliver basic City services to its citizens. It must do so by reviewing the operations, adequately staffing the departments and providing adequate funding. While the City Council should not micromanage the departments, it should work with the City Manager to establish priorities.

- 10. Tax incentives have helped spark new investments but have come under scrutiny for use for high-end projects and projected impacts to taxing districts. At the same time, real incentives can be warranted in distressed areas or for rehabilitation where development and reinvestment are challenging. Would you propose to modify tax incentive policies, and if so how? If so, how would you help ensure investment in distressed areas like Troost Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard, and 63rd Street is encouraged and what incentives or other tools would you support using?**

I do not support the current initiative to impose a cap of 50%, precisely because I think it would inhibit the City's ability to attract more investment in distressed areas like Troost Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard and 63rd Street.

- 11. A lot of resources are dedicated to attracting large companies, but statistics show that Kansas City's small businesses create more new jobs and have a more financial impact on the local community. How will you help foster and support small businesses, and minority and women owned businesses, in addition to working to attract major employers? Any suggestions on how incentives or resources might be better weighted toward small businesses?**

As a former small business owner of a retail store on 63rd Street just west of Main, I understand how difficult it is to start and operate a small business. Around 2013, Councilman Scott Taylor helped form the Special Committee on Small Business to focus on cutting red tape and streamlining City services related to doing business in the City of Kansas City, Missouri." Certain recommendations were made as part of that committee and changes implemented. We need to continue to examine if we, as a City, are creating an environment that works with small businesses to encourage and support them.

First, we must find ways to empower small business owners and minority- and women-owned businesses to open and expand businesses by giving them the tools they need to succeed. We can incentivize projects that provide good quality jobs and community benefits. The City can also work with the business and civic communities to provide funding sources for small businesses, like Lead Bank's program for the KCI Airport project. The Central City Economic Development Sales Tax is one way in which the City can provide access to capital and support existing businesses. "

- 12. The 1/8th Central City Economic Development Sales Tax is intended to help a portion of the City's distressed neighborhoods and commercial corridors but doesn't include several fringe areas just outside the sales tax district like Troost Avenue or Marlborough Heights. What incentives, programs or support do you propose to help other distressed areas, or areas on the fringe? Do you support the creation of similar districts or use of other tools, and if so, how would you fund them?**

The City has available several economic development tools that can help in distressed neighborhoods, including LCRA tax abatement, Tax Increment Financing, and CIDs. Depending on the type of development, one or more of these tools could be used to encourage development in distressed areas not within the current boundaries for the Central City Economic Development Sales Tax.

Where appropriate, I would support an increase in taxes to fund an urgent need that cannot be met by other resources. My first priority would be to fund it through existing sources, but if an urgent need exists or arises, I would not rule out a tax increase."

- 13. Community Improvement Districts have helped improve several KC areas including commercial districts and neighborhoods through cleaning, security, added maintenance, promotion and other efforts. However, the use of CIDs has come under scrutiny when used for single properties or when controlled solely by development interests. Do you support the use of CIDs, would you propose any limits or conditions, and if not supported, what other tools would you propose be used to achieve improvements?**

I have been involved in the formation of several Community Improvement Districts and am well aware of the benefits that they can provide to a community. I am also aware, as with any economic development tool that is not used for its intended purpose, that CIDs can be misused. Numerous municipalities in surrounding communities have implemented policies and procedures to ensure additional oversight. I would support a policy for the implementation and use of CIDs that might include a City staff person on each Board of Directors and use of Development Agreements to address the development of infrastructure and improvements. However, such a policy should be implemented only after input from stakeholders.

- 14. Many projects like redevelopment of City property at 63rd and Prospect require long-term support and coordination across multiple council districts. How do you plan to work with other council members to address these types of issues? Do you have any suggestions on how to energize stalled projects like at 63rd and Prospect?**

Collaboration with other Council members is key to ensuring that the City continues to move forward while addressing the issues that face the City. In my legal practice, collaboration is very important to ensuring that a project or transaction is completed. I do not come to the City Council with an agenda, but plan to work collaboratively with the new Mayor and Council to set priorities that address the issues that impact all of Kansas City.

Energizing stalled projects is difficult, but one step is to continue to work with developers to identify the impediments to moving forward and ways in which public/private partnerships can close those impediments. It appears that some progress has been made to begin development, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Council to ensure that progress can be made.

- 15. Kansas City's population has been affected by the limitations and perceptions of public education. Alternatives and improvements are helping change that perception. Although the City has limited authority, what are some ways you would propose to help foster improvements and collaboration around education?**

It is important that the City Council work with the school boards and administrations of all the school districts that are within the boundaries of Kansas City to improve education for its citizens, but its equally important that we allow the schools to take the lead in establishing educational policy. I think the City's role is to support and encourage and to be a partner with our schools. And, as the school districts develop a plan or plans to

address early childhood education, the City can be a partner in that plan. The City's primary role is to deliver basic services and address violent crime and affordable housing so that our school children can have stable environments in which to learn. The City can continue to partner with our schools and civic and business communities to provide internships to our students to further their educational opportunities.

16. Elected officials have to balance time needed to make change, with need to engage the community and be available to constituents. Likewise, there has been recent frustration over limited public engagement in some major projects and initiatives. How would you propose to remain available to constituents and to work with organizations like ours, area neighborhoods, and other major stakeholders if elected?

My goal is to ensure that the constituents of the 6th District and all of Kansas City are kept apprised of the activities at City Hall and are included in the decision making process. As the City Council makes important decisions that impact neighborhoods and residents, we must ensure that the community and constituents are engaged in the process. The proposed Public Engagement Ordinance is an example of ways in which we can better ensure that the public is allowed an opportunity to participate in certain projects. As Council members, we must also ensure that there is communication to the community and constituents on issues and policy decisions that do not go through the normal planning process.

Monthly meetings held by Council members in the District, such as those that currently occur within the 6th District, are one way to share updates and to keep constituents informed. Attending meetings of other organizations are another. I plan to use various other methods of communication, including weekly email updates to constituents, to continue to keep them informed on the events that have occurred in the City and remain responsive to their needs.

17. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you or how you would serve?

As noted above, I intend to serve by inclusion, ensuring that all stakeholders are at the table when decisions are made, and through transparency and accountability. I will also serve, as I have run my campaign, with integrity. I will use my experiences as an attorney, former small business owner, wife and mother to bring a reasoned and balanced approach to the decisions that face this City.

I have been honored to serve on Mayor James' transition team, chaired the Mayor's Commission on Ethics Reform, and served on the most recent Charter Review Commission. I have worked with numerous organizations, like Sheffield Place, a transitional living facility for homeless mothers and their children that works to address the issues that lead to homelessness before the leave the safety of the facility, and have served on the boards of various organizations.

Most importantly, from an early age, my parents, my father who was a school teacher and social worker and my other who was a USDA employee, taught me the importance of social justice, public service and giving back to the community.