

Sierra Club Alamo Group Questionnaire
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Questions for 2007 San Antonio City Council Elections

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1. What environmental goal(s) would you actively pursue as a city council member?

Stop use of non-ecological pesticides on public property, including parks and city landscaping; require all landscaping planted by the city be of native species; establish green building standards for all new development, residential and commercial; implement sustainable practices already proven to be efficient by other municipalities.

2. Is your campaign being primarily funded by contributions from the development community?

No, and I plan to examine the candidate contribution reports due on April 12.

3. The provision of vested rights via grandfathering laws and their interpretation favors the development community and has often prevented environmental protection. Prime examples are the Water Quality Ordinance and the Tree Preservation Ordinance. What is your view on grandfathering? Are there any changes to current grandfathering procedures you would advocate?

The public health and welfare of Texas residents must not be superseded by vested private property rights. I would advocate changing the procedures to guarantee that this priority is always maintained in order to ensure the quality of life for all residents.

4. What do you feel are the best water supply options for SAWS? Would you favor a tiered water supply fee with lower rates for low water users?

The best option for SAWS is to evaluate our existing resources and to mandate that development maximizes clean recharge of our aquifer and stays within the bounds of sustainability. Yes, I support tiered fees for water use.

5. Do you believe that if energy conservation is given a higher priority by CPS that it can replace the need for a new coal-fired power plant? Explain your views.

Yes, I believe conservation methods will prevent the need for a new coal-fired power plant. Austin instituted such methods and achieved such a goal. We can also explore newer technologies, such as Gasifier and Solar, to diversify our renewable energy sources.

6. Do you have any plans or ideas that would increase, diversity, or make more environmentally responsible the transportation options for the San Antonio area?

Yes. Numerous municipalities around the world have implemented low emission public transportation models that we could consider. Development planned on sustainable-community-based economic models would reduce the need for vehicle use and create a pedestrian and bike friendly city. In addition, I would seek to engage the business community to provide employees with options to reduce rush hour traffic, e.g., telecommuting, alternate work schedules, etc.

7. Should the city be doing more to increase open space and parks in all areas of the city? If so, what specific programs would you propose to accomplish this objective?

Yes. First, we must ensure that green space is included in long range plans for development in SA as a vital component of a healthy city. We can complete programs already proposed and started by Bike SA and others that will create off-road bike/pedestrian trails joining green space around the entire city, allow community residents to create green spaces on public lands in conjunction with competent naturalists to ensure culverts and drainage are properly maintained, encourage vegetative roofs, make green space a requirement for all city funded development projects, etc.

8. What are 3 things that you would do to offset the urban heat island effect in SA?

1. Facilitate discussion between the environmental and business communities to improve and then enforce a functional Tree Ordinance
2. Educate residents and business owners on the benefits of vegetative roofs and other cool roof technologies

3. Provide incentives for development which minimizes impervious cover and maximizes green space

9. Do you believe that the hope of promoting new jobs or gaining future revenues is the only considerations for granting tax abatements? Should tax abatements be given for development on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone? Explain your views.

No. Tax abatements should be avoided whenever possible and must be restricted to agreements wherein the corporation follows various criteria that benefit residents and the environment, including: livable wages, smart energy practices (zero net energy use/carbon neutral), infill, minimal environmental impact, employee commuting options (alternative schedules, telecommuting, car/van pool programs, bus passes, etc), landscaping, ecological facility maintenance and custodial operations.

10. The San Antonio area has been near non-attainment of air quality standards under the Clean Air Act. What measures do you support to improve San Antonio air quality for its citizens?

Chances are we will be in non-attainment after this summer. I support: diversification of energy production to include more non-polluting renewable sources; increase in public transportation; development that provides easy access for pedestrians and bicycles; energy efficient practices in all government buildings and public education to promote the same in the private sector; enforcement of the tree ordinance and creation of more green space (see other answers above); voluntarily opt-in to inclusion of recapture hoses on fueling station pumps; etc.