

Candidate's Name: **Randi Shade (running for City Council Place 3, challenging Jennifer Kim)**
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1. What environmental accomplishments or activities of yours are you most proud of?

I am most proud of having been the co-founder of the Austin Clean Energy Initiative, because I believe Austin is a natural home for clean energy innovation and should be recognized as a national center of the renewable energy sector. If I'm elected to the City Council in May I will continue to work diligently toward that goal. I'm also proud to be running a "green campaign" for City Council by using recyclable signs and campaign materials, carpooling whenever possible, and purchasing carbon credits with campaign funds to offset our energy consumption. These are small gestures, but they are illustrative of my environmental priorities.

2. Petroleum-based plastic bags are a major threat to our environment, creating greenhouse gas emissions during their production, polluting our oceans and many of our local waterways at the end of their use, and threatening wildlife. Americans use an estimated one billion bags each year and estimates are that fewer than 2% of these bags are recycled. It is likely that major retailers in Austin will soon announce a voluntary program to reduce the use of plastic bags. Would you support a mandatory ban on the use of plastic bags by major retailers if this voluntary program fails to demonstrate a reduction in the number of petroleum-based plastic bags used by major retailers in Austin by 50% or more by June 2009?

Support.

I support efforts to reduce the use and waste of petroleum-based plastic bags in Austin and around the country and world. It think it is unacceptable that we have created a 3.5 million ton garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean that is twice the size of Texas and comprised almost entirely of plastic. I am hopeful that other retailers will follow the lead of Whole Foods and voluntarily eliminate plastic bags (and ultimately paper bags, too, which are equally concerning from an environmental perspective) from their stores in favor of reusable bags.

3. The City of Austin owns 16% of the South Texas Nuclear project, and in February, city council rejected an invitation to invest in the proposed doubling of nuclear reactors at the STNP. How would you vote on any invitations for Austin to invest in this or in other nuclear power plants in the future?

Oppose.

I am against the City's involvement in the expansion of the STNP, and supported the City Council's decision not to pursue it. Until science and industry create a cost-effective and safe way to generate nuclear energy, I am opposed to it.

4. Do you believe that the City of Austin should build, or help build, an additional coal-burning power plant to meet future energy needs?

Oppose.

Given the dire situation we face in terms of ongoing global climate change, I think it is unconscionable to build new coal-burning power plants.

5. At the direction of city council, Austin Energy has set a goal of producing 20% of its electricity from clean, renewable sources by 2020, and has funded a solar energy program with rebates for home owners and businesses. What specific programs would you want to see Austin Energy implement in order to exceed this goal and remain among the nation's leaders in clean, renewable energy?

To move us forward in the renewable energy sector and to help meet Austin's future energy needs, my decision-making on the City Council would always prioritize the generation and distribution of renewable energy over coal or nuclear. I would push to continue to improve and expand the city's residential and commercial energy efficiency programs to help us conserve more. I would also work directly with Austin Energy, community groups, researchers, the Texas Renewable Energy Industry Association and Clean Energy Incubators to promote strategies and economic policies that help renewable energy entrepreneurs succeed in our community. I will also explore the role of Chief Sustainability Officer and find ways to make sure sustainability planning is taken seriously from an operations perspective Citywide, from department to department.

6. The State of Texas has set a goal of average water use of 140 gallons per day for urban residents. The City of Austin recently approved a plan for water conservation that reduces water consumption by 1% per year for ten years; however, this reduction would still not get the city's water use down to the level recommended by the state. Do you support additional water conservation measures to allow Austin to reach state's recommended level? If yes, what measures?

Support.

Austin is a community with active and involved citizens concerned about protecting the environment, but we can always do more to educate consumers on efficiency. To that end, I would encourage our residents and businesses to increase voluntary water reduction efforts and would also expand education and outreach programs to teach individuals how to reduce water use. We should also explore expanding efforts like the Free Toilet Program and WashWise Rebate program to encourage consumers to purchase water-efficient utilities and products.

7. The Austin Water Utility is planning to build Water Treatment Plant with a capacity to treat 50 million gallons per day at the beginning and expanding this capacity to as much as 600 million gallons per day. The AWU estimates that ratepayers will experience an increase of 12-15% in their water bills. Do you believe that Austin needs to build a new water treatment plant? If yes, where would you want to see the new plant sited?

Unsure.

I cannot commit to a position on the construction of a future water treatment plant without knowing more than I do now about the facts and assumptions that underlie the debate, and particularly about the disagreements I've heard regarding Austin's projected water usage over

the next decade. If I'm elected, however, I will commit to make it a top priority to ensure that Austin is pursuing a smart and effective long-term strategy on water conservation and on the related timing of construction of water infrastructure. If the City's decision is ultimately to build a new water treatment facility to meet projected demand, I believe the plant must be sited in an environmentally suitable location (i.e. not the BCCP) in proximity to Lake Travis and at a high elevation (in order to save both energy and money associated with pumping treated water into our water service grid).

8. Will you support a clear role for the City in setting a state water policy that assures adequate water is left in the rivers to protect fish and wildlife and to protect coastal bays and estuaries?

Support.

Our rivers and springs are drying up at an alarming rate, and it's impacting our coastal bays and estuaries. We must take steps to preserve these water sources to protect fish, wildlife and ecological sustainability.

9. Given the environmental hazards associated with the Waste Management Landfill in northeast Travis County, and given the limited capacity of the BFI landfill in the same area, what is your long-term plan for disposal of the City of Austin's solid waste?

If elected to the City Council, I would champion an expansion and streamlining of residential recycling programs to help Austin achieve the important goal of zero waste. I would also explore efforts to increase recycling among businesses. There is an obvious relationship between our success at implementing a zero-waste initiative and the necessity of investing in future municipal infrastructure like landfills. Whenever possible, I'd rather be successful at conservation and waste reduction efforts. Convenience and public awareness are also essential for success on the path to zero solid waste, so I will also ensure public outreach and broad community involvement are parts of any implementation plans.

10. Do you support the City of Austin building its own landfill on city-owned land near Webberville?

Unsure.

I don't have enough information yet to say for sure whether or not Austin needs a new landfill, or if so, when. I do know that one possible outcome of our current community debate over landfills could be that we end up being served by only one privately-operated area landfill, which I think is concerning in that it exposes the City and taxpayers to the possibility of monopolistic price-gouging. But, as with water conservation and the construction of water infrastructure, I'd rather be successful at waste reduction strategies than build another area landfill.

11. Last year, the Capital Area Metropolitan Transportation Group (CAMPO) approved a \$1.45 billion toll road plan, with the proviso that excess toll revenues be used with the toll corridor where they were generated. What kinds of transportation projects would you propose that these excess revenues be used for?

Given the reality that toll roads are part of Austin's transportation equation, we must make sure that every dollar spent on tolls in Austin stays in Austin. I would propose that excess toll

revenues go toward public transportation (bus and rail), creating HOV lanes, and supporting pedestrian and bicycle projects.

12. CAMPO's Transit Working Group is currently considering rail alternatives for the Austin region, with the possibility of recommending that a referendum on additional passenger rail be placed on the ballot in November 2008. Do you support adding additional passenger rail in the region? If yes, what activity center would you like to see these additional rail lines connect and where would you like to see the rail lines run?

Support.

We now have more than 1.5 million residents in the greater Austin metropolitan statistical area, and if history is any guide (and it should be), we can expect that number to double in the next 25 - 40 years. In fact, a Census Bureau report released just last week showed Austin among the top 10 fastest-growing cities in the nation (Houston, San Antonio and Fort Worth were also among the top 10). Without a doubt, one of the biggest challenges we face in Austin today is taking the necessary steps to ensure that our local and regional transportation infrastructure will be sufficient to accommodate that population increase, and I believe religiously that passenger rail must be a central component of our long-term multi-modal solution. While I recognize that every commuter will ultimately make his or her own choice about how to get around the city or region, I believe our overarching priority must be to create a robust, multi-modal transportation network that discourages single-occupant vehicles, and I believe a passenger rail system offers the best hope of that. I strongly supported both the 2000 and 2004 rail referendums and will also support a rail referendum in 2008, if the CAMPO Transit Working Group is able to bring a proposal forward in time for the November election. In terms of local connectivity, we should be focused on serving areas that are currently the biggest traffic generators, such as UT, the state government complex, major employers, the airport, and entertainment districts (downtown, South Congress, etc.), as well as on those areas that are about to come online as dense residential neighborhoods, like Mueller and the Triangle. Regionally, rail should serve those urban nodes and "activity centers" that we can expect to experience the most dramatic growth moving forward, such as Buda and Kyle to the South, Manor to the East, and Pflugerville, Round Rock and Leander to the North.

13. If elected to city council, what additional environmental programs would you seek to initiate?

I will actively promote all City policies that reduce waste, reduce water and electricity use, and accelerate the use of green technologies and conservation. As noted above, I will also explore the role of Chief Sustainability Officer and find ways to make sure that sustainability planning and implementation is taken seriously in every City department. In general, I believe we should continue buying as much land as possible over the Edwards Aquifer and unfailingly protect what we already have. I will be an advocate for strict enforcement of the SOS ordinance and will work to advance policies that result in the reduction of pollutants flowing into the Barton Springs watershed and other urban watersheds. See also #9 above. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these questions, and I hope to earn your support and endorsement in this important election.