

QUESTION 1:

What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of the Mayor of the City of St. Louis?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

The mayor sets the agenda and priorities of the city. It's important to have a mayor who understands the needs of the entire city so that those needs are reflected in our city's agenda. This hasn't been the case in many years. The mayor must also accept responsibility for outcomes and the overall quality of life for all of our neighborhoods. Again, something we have not seen in many years.

TISHAURA JONES:

The most important role of the mayor of St. Louis is to lead. The three most important areas to lead in are: Criminal justice reform and public safety, education, and racial equity. First, regarding criminal justice reform and public safety, the city must reject the false choice between being “tough” on crime and addressing the root causes of violence. St. Louis suffers from neighborhood disinvestment, poor mental health services, low officer morale, and strained community relations with law enforcement. My plan focuses resources on disrupting the small groups responsible for the large percentage of violent crimes through programs like focused deterrence while also diverting those with mental health problems and substance abuse problems out of our jails and into treatment centers. I will ensure police officers are treated like professionals by their city, are paid well, and are held accountable when they fail to meet the city's standards. Second, regarding education, millionaires and billionaires have received enough attention from city government. Elected officials have allowed hundreds of millions to be drained from the city through TIFs, sacrificing money for education and other city services. And, in order for the city to have the education system it needs, the city needs to start investing in its greatest asset: us. There is no better investment than in small businesses, workers, children, and families. While the mayor doesn't have direct control of the schools, it doesn't mean the city can't be a better partner. I will make sure that the schools get everything they need from the city. Finally, the mayor needs to lead in racial equity. A commitment to equity and inclusion goes beyond using buzzwords, and requires consistent commitment from leadership to confront uncomfortable topics. I am the only candidate who has implemented recommendations of the Forward Through Ferguson report, and as mayor, I will continue to incorporate a racial equity lens into governmental decision-making. I will expand economic opportunities to minorities, women, and immigrants. The city must ensure St. Louis is a welcoming place for everyone, regardless of race, class, disability, or sexual orientation.

NOTE: All answers are unedited and appear exactly as received.

QUESTION 1:

What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of the Mayor of the City of St. Louis?

JEFFREY BOYD:

Ultimately, the job of the Mayor is to improve the quality of life for everyone that calls St. Louis home.

LYDA KREWSON:

Leading the charge for a comprehensive city plan to address neighborhood safety, economic development for all areas of the city, modernizing government and improving equity across all demographics

That will require building strategic partnerships between public officials, the nonprofit community and civic leaders to work cohesively toward our shared goals for St. Louis.

LEWIS REED:

Technically, the mayor is the head of the executive branch of government and is over every service delivery and civil service department of the city and sits on numerous boards and makes hundreds of appointments to other boards throughout the city. As a leader, the mayor sets the overall direction and strategic course of the city and the tone of what kind of city this is going to be. A mayor is the main ambassador and sales person of a city and must know that city inside and out in order to present it in its most brilliant light to potential corporate tenants, young people, families, and small businesses. A mayor has the duty to promote policies that provide a safe and decent living environment for everyone who lives in our city. A mayor must bring opportunities to the city and not just wait for opportunity to knock on our door. The mayor sets the course of development in our city and the direction of where the resources go. It is the job of the job of the mayor to appoint people in decision making roles that will fairly and competently implement strategies to improve the living, learning and business conditions in St. Louis. The mayor is the developer of policies that affect the working and living conditions of all St. Louis residents.

QUESTION 2:

What sets you apart from the other candidates running for mayor?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I am the only candidate running that has a understanding of the needs of all the different parts of the city. I am just as comfortable on the street corners of north St. Louis at midnight as I am in downtown boardrooms. We need a mayor who knows what it's like to struggle to make ends meet while also understanding how to calculate the longterm ROI on major infrastructure investments.

TISHAURA JONES:

My vision for the city and my experience improving the lives of everyday St. Louisans set me apart from the other candidates. My vision can be found in my platform, which is displayed in full on my website www.tishaura4mayor.com. In it, I outline six policy points, which include several examples of programs that are having impacts across the country and across the world. I want to take programs like these, tweak them for St. Louis, and let them roll. St. Louis needs to change, but it doesn't need to reinvent the wheel. It's why I believe in implementing recommendations of the Forward Through Ferguson Report and the For the Sake of All Report - I don't believe in letting reports like these sit on the shelf and collect dust. I am also the only candidate who publicly denounced public funding of the NFL and MLS stadiums and who has been vocal about TIF reform. I am the only candidate who seems to understand how giving away tax incentives like Halloween candy have been crippling for the city's revenue outlook and credit ratings. Regarding my experience, I am the only candidate who has served in the State legislature. I have relationships on both sides of the aisle, relationships I can and will leverage to make sure that St. Louis gets as fair a deal as possible from legislation in Jefferson City. I am also the only candidate with experience revamping a city office. It is easy to talk about reform and change, but, through my work in the Treasurer's office, I have done both of those things. I took an office that was mired in corruption and backwards technology, and turned it around. I moved city employees to direct deposit, which caused hundreds of employees to become banked, dramatically updated the parking technology, improved investments and re-negotiated contracts, saving the city \$7.9 million, and most importantly, opened the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE), which helps people make better decisions with their money. The OFE provides free financial literacy classes, one-on-one credit counseling, and through it, I started the second ever municipal college savings program in the country. Every kindergartner in a public school, district and charter, now receives a \$50 college savings account when they start school. Research from Washington University shows children who receive a college savings account with less than \$500 are four times more likely to complete college than their peers without accounts. As mayor, I will continue to support and expand St. Louis' college savings program.

QUESTION 2:

What sets you apart from the other candidates running for mayor?

JEFFREY BOYD:

I am the only candidate with a comprehensive set of experiences that equip me for the complex challenges of this position.

My experience as a former military officer, housing developer, former non-profit executive, business owner, and a record as an Alderman who has completed development outside of the central corridor and downtown equip me to lead St. Louis into a season of growth. In addition, my personal experience and history with bringing my community together during incidents of violence give me the ability to help bridge communities all over St. Louis to help our city heal.

LYDA KREWSON:

Having served 19 years as an Alderman, I have an intimate understanding of what it takes to turn a neighborhood around. During my time as an elected official, I have worked to pass some of the most progressive legislation in the City while continuing to balance the interests of residents and businesses in the 28th Ward.

In my professional life I am a CPA and the CFO of an international architecture firm located downtown. The city has a billion dollar budget, and I know how to analyze and manage that process to reflect our city's priorities.

I believe the combination of these skill sets will make me uniquely qualified to lead the city forward.

LEWIS REED:

As President of the Board of Aldermen I have a seat or an appointment on numerous boards that are part of the executive branch of government. I have a deep insight into what the mayor's office can and cannot do, and what it currently should and should not be doing. I am the only candidate that has the experience to hit the ground running from day one. I am the only candidate who has had to legislatively weigh the concerns of the entire city and who has represented people from all across this community. I am the only candidate with a history of bringing diverse groups of people and diverse communities with different objectives together for a common cause. I am the only candidate who, as a ward aldermen, drove legislation and development to completely rebuild sections of my ward with complete community buy in. I am the only candidate that has the life experiences to begin to end some of the division in our city that holds us back.

QUESTION 3:

Name one thing you have done as a public official that you would now do differently.

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I have no regrets.

TISHAURA JONES:

When my office was in the process of revamping the parking meters, we engaged in a period of public comment. The community came together to give feedback and participate. If I could go back to the beginning of my term as Treasurer, I would make these times of public engagement much more frequent. When I'm mayor, I will employ citywide participatory budgeting and constantly work to engage the public.

JEFFREY BOYD:

I wish I would have fought harder against the reduction of the Board of Alderman. The reduction not only reduce the size but could potentially reduce its diversity.

LYDA KREWSON:

Knowing now that the Rams were going to leave no matter what, I would not have wasted energy and resources on efforts to keep them in St. Louis.

LEWIS REED:

Over the years, you learn from your mistakes, and of course, like everyone, there are things that I would do different. But I believe your question is regarding a public position, decision or vote. Some decisions you regret one day, and you appreciate the next. Sometimes it is a technical oversight or the implementation of the decision that you regret, and not the decision itself. I think what you have to do is always make the best decision at the time based off of the information that you have at the time. Generally, my values and the information that I have at the time is what will guide me when it comes to a public position, decision, or vote. It is hard to say at the time I would have done anything differently with the information I had, but there have been decisions that have not panned out.

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe that the City is currently doing enough to address the issue of individuals experiencing homelessness? If yes, please explain which of the City's current efforts you wish to continue in your administration and why you believe them to be effective. If no, please explain what you would do differently to address the issue.

ANTONIO FRENCH:

No. The current mayor has an adversarial relationship with many potential partners in our challenge of providing housing and jobs to all who want them. As mayor, I will work to rebuild those bridges and use local and federal resources to rehab vacant buildings to provide housing. I will also seek state and county partnership and resources to address what is really a regional problem.

TISHAURA JONES:

No, I do not think the city is doing enough. St. Louis has a homelessness crisis on its hands. The city bears the brunt of the region's homeless population and must recommit to the ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness and address the root causes of homelessness. As mayor, I will support a Homeless Bill of Rights that will decriminalize homelessness and keep St. Louis aligned with HUD regulations. Biddle House is an excellent resource for the homeless, and it's something the city is doing well, but it's not enough. The city needs good, quality shelters like Biddle House in more places, with more beds, and with more cooperation with groups like St. Patrick's Center to end the cycle of homelessness. Specifically, we need to open a shelter for women and a shelter for families, and each needs to provide intensive services. We also need to think creatively about how to provide the best possible services for the homeless. Denver and Albuquerque, for example, are addressing homelessness with a day laborers program. Through providing a day's work to the homeless, and the opportunity to be invited back the following day, people who would otherwise have a difficult time finding work are able to build employment histories and skills. Denver has even learned that the program reduces panhandling. Lastly, we need to do more to keep people in their homes by creating more affordable housing and providing interventions before someone becomes homeless.

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JEFFREY BOYD

Our job as a City is never done until every citizen has an opportunity to have quality stable housing. As Mayor I would ensure that the Office of Human Services allocate resources to expand the non-profit community services and collaborate with the faith based community. I believe better coordination would help increase the number who move toward overall stability.

LYDA KREWSON

We must do more. We must have a housing first strategy. Homeless folks need intensive services through the Continuum of Care. That means incorporating them into a network of support which will empower them to get off the streets permanently. As mayor, I will not accept anything less than a comprehensive plan to address the long term needs of our homeless population across the region, and I will work closely with the nonprofit sector and religious community to accomplish this shared goal.

LEWIS REED

The city is not doing enough to address the homelessness issue. It should be an imperative that we do a better job. Best practices call for a rapid re-housing approach and I believe there will be opportunity for the next mayor to work alongside the county in addressing some of the homelessness. I think the current administration's approach has become more reactive and political than purposeful and practical. There have been numerous plans unveiled that have not hit the mark. We have a clear understanding of who is homeless and why they are homeless to begin to address specific needs and circumstances.

QUESTION 5:

In many cities, urban renewal and economic development has been accompanied by widespread displacement of current residents--especially low-income black residents. How do you propose to improve the city while also preventing displacement?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I am the only candidate in this race who consistently opposed what Paul McKee has done to the people and property of north St. Louis. This is not how we should be doing development in our city. We should not be seeking to attract "more desirable" residents at the expense of current residents who have, frankly, been loyal and stuck it out even as it has appeared that city government abandoned their neighborhoods. We need to use our economic development tools such as TIF, tax abatement, CIDs, TIDs, tax credits and others to incentivize development in the neighborhoods those tools were designed to help. We can revitalize vacant and potential commercial areas without displacing people or destroying our cultural diversity.

TISHAURA JONES:

It's not only happening in "many" cities, it's happening here. McRee Town, Botanical Heights, and Shaw have lost over 50% of their black populations in the process of revitalization. Revitalization needs to happen thoughtfully. For starters, the city needs to stop giving away millions of dollars in revenue to wealthy developers, to receive little to nothing in return. Over the last fifteen years, the city has forgone \$700 million in revenue from tax incentives. Over 70% of these incentives have gone into the three most affluent wards of the city, and then displaced much of the low-income African American population. (I bet many of the people who work at Barnes can't afford to live anywhere near it.) This kind of unequal development must stop. My platform calls for community benefit agreements, inclusionary zoning, and equitable development. If the city gives tax breaks, it must demand developers include affordable housing and other community benefits that serve all residents of the area in which the project is being built in order to prevent this kind of displacement.

QUESTION 5:

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JEFFREY BOYD:

We can deter gentrification and improve our City by requiring major developments to include affordable housing in developments. Extensive community engagement is necessary to ensure that current residents are not pushed out of their homes by neighboring projects that drastically increase property values. To combat this, I will ensure that developments are required to adhere to contextual overlays that will prevent developers from manipulating property values and protecting current owners.

LYDA KREWSON:

I believe we must have a comprehensive, equitable plan for redevelopment across the entire city. As Mayor, I will work to make sure developers consider projects in neighborhoods that most need renewed commercial development while also expanding residential housing opportunities in some of our more distressed neighborhoods. I will also focus on redeveloping vacant lots and buildings which will strengthen neighborhoods without forcing current residents out, many of whom have been pillars of their community for generations.

LEWIS REED:

As mayor, you have control through The St. Louis Development Corp. to prevent this type of displacement at the onset of a development by effectively managing against it in the planning stage. When I was aldermen of the 6th Ward, I always planned development with the community. All too often, city's plan development to a community, instead of planning with a community.

QUESTION 6:

Do you believe that systemic racial disparities exist in St. Louis? Please explain your view, and provide specific examples as appropriate.

ANTONIO FRENCH:

Yes. Yes. Yes. Absolutely yes. I have been one of the most outspoken elected officials of the past decade on this issue. As a policy, our city has focused on building the central corridor while ignoring the needs of neighborhoods both north and south -- but especially black and poor neighborhoods. The way crime is dealt with in black neighborhoods versus how crime is handled in white neighborhoods. The way violent crime is handled when the victim is black and the crime occurred in a poor neighborhood versus if the victim was white and in downtown or CWE. Our city must value all our citizens equally.

TISHAURA JONES:

Yes, systemic racial disparities exist in St. Louis. The city continues to suffer from the legacy of Jim Crow and from deliberate public policy decisions like red-lining that denied African-Americans opportunities. Now, because of that lack of investment years ago, many African-American neighborhoods aren't considered desirable, which means grocery stores, banks, and other basic services have either left the community or refuse to relocate there. Lower tax base + fewer opportunities = more problems. There are several sources, such as the For Sake of All report, which detail the stark racial disparities in our region. As a snapshot, the unemployment percentage in St. Louis is 26% for blacks, 6% for whites, the higher education attainment percentage is 50% for blacks, 70% for whites, and the poverty percentage is 30% for blacks, 8% for whites. The median wealth for black families is \$11,184, while for white families it is \$134,008. Even today, since the city currently allows its three wealthiest wards to receive the most TIF money, it seems the leaders at the Board of Aldermen are continuing the same development patterns established after Jim Crow.

QUESTION 6:

Do you believe that systemic racial disparities exist in St. Louis? Please explain your view, and provide specific examples as appropriate.

JEFFREY BOYD:

There are well documented disparities in St. Louis that we are all aware of in our city. My focus is on tackling the root cause of the challenges, bringing everyone to the table and using the strength of our diversity to move us forward together.

LYDA KREWSON:

Yes. Those discrepancies are evident in life expectancy, employment opportunities, housing and criminal justice, just to name a few. The only way to address these disparities is to introduce systemic reforms applied through a racial equity lens.

LEWIS REED:

Yes. Racial disparity is very pervasive and the statistics show this very clearly. There was a health disparity report conducted that showed African Americans with lower life expectancy, almost third world infant mortality rates, and higher rates of disease. There is also an income disparity and a huge unemployment rate disparity. There is a service delivery disparity. North St. Louis deserves the same level of service delivery as the rest of the city, and when you drive around and look, you don't see that same level of service delivery. Over the years there has also been a disparity in representation. When you take a look at who gets appointed to certain boards and commissions, there is not a fair representation of the community at all. As mayor, I will make sure that everyone in the community is fairly represented by the decision makers that I appoint. This is the same thing I did with my appointments to Board of Aldermen committees. I made sure all of the major committees fairly represented the entire city.

QUESTION 7:

Are you concerned that the new classification of fighting in the Missouri Criminal Code will lead to the criminalization of students? What will you do to address this, as well as the school-to-prison pipeline more broadly?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I am. As mayor, I will work with my new police chief and the circuit attorney to determine how fights can be addressed under the local ordinance instead of the state law.

TISHAURA JONES:

I am concerned about this. And, because of my concern, my office spoke with the St. Louis Public Schools about the issue. They have assured us that they will not be changing any of their internal disciplinary practices in response to the revised Missouri Criminal Code. The mayor, current and future, needs to show leadership here. The city needs to make sure that all schools, district and charter, do not misinterpret the new law or enact policy changes criminalizing student conduct. When I am mayor, I plan to work with Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner to ensure prosecutors do not go overboard in charging juveniles. I fully support restorative justice programs and focused deterrence for juveniles to help end the school-to-prison pipeline. This is part of why I advocate for social workers in the police department. City funds need to go to support programming in the schools and not perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline.

JEFFREY BOYD:

I disagree with the current legislation. It conditions our students to be institutionalized and absent from the classroom setting. Instead I think it is important that we teach skills such as conflict resolution, de-escalation, and negotiation. These skills are critical to success in relationships and in the workforce. They should be taught at the earliest grades and continued throughout secondary education.

QUESTION 7:

Are you concerned that the new classification of fighting in the Missouri Criminal Code will lead to the criminalization of students? What will you do to address this, as well as the school-to-prison pipeline more broadly?

LYDA KREWSON:

I do have concerns about legislation with the ability to perpetuate the school to prison pipeline. While trying to improve safety in our schools is the right thing to do, this legislation has the potential to derail the trajectory of a young person's life. We have seen time and time again that exposure to the criminal justice system at an impressionable age can have tragic consequences. We should focus on preventative measures that promote a safe and welcoming environment for all students.

LEWIS REED:

Yes I am very concerned. These are the types of laws that have been selectively used to label individual African American children as inferior or unsuitable in some form or fashion. I have absolutely no confidence that this classification will be applied evenly throughout the state when it comes to race. My current appointee to the Special Administrative Board, Richard Gaines, is someone who is deeply ingrained in our community and we will work together to make sure our kids don't become labeled and packaged for the pipeline to prison. More broadly, we need to make sure that we address behaviors in our children in a manner that addresses the root issue as opposed to just punishing the action. We need to provide services directly to children to give them strategies to avoid falling through the school to prison trap door. We need to be aware of a law or adjustment in the guidelines that will negatively impact the future of our children and we must assert whatever control we have as leaders and decision makers to adjust against the tide of criminalization of African American youth.

QUESTION 8:

What plans do you have to address stagnant wages for workers and gross economic inequality in the city of St. Louis?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

City workers need and deserve a pay increase. Not just police officers and fire fighters, but all city workers. I will fight to see that they get that in my first term as mayor. I also support raising the state and federal minimum wage and will be a vocal advocate on both those issues. And the issue of job creation and economic development, especially in the long-neglected parts of our city, is a top priority for me.

TISHAURA JONES:

First of all, I am a supporter of a \$15 minimum wage (a living wage) and I am proud to have the support of CBTU and hope to earn the support of many more unions. While the efforts to raise the wage in the city are caught up in court, I will support the efforts that are currently underway to put raising the minimum wage on the ballot in the State of Missouri in 2018. I support requiring that living wages are paid to all employees once a development project is completed, not just during the construction, if the project is to receive tax subsidy. The city should also require labor peace agreements in any tax subsidies that are awarded to ensure the ability to unionize and bargain for higher wages. I also believe that you must be the change you want to see in the world, which is why I pay my hourly campaign workers \$15 an hour.

QUESTION 8:

What plans do you have to address stagnant wages for workers and gross economic inequality in the city of St. Louis?

JEFFREY BOYD:

To jump-start the economy in St. Louis I plan to create a panel of leaders in the industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, tech, construction and cyber security to re-brand St. Louis as the best place for growing companies to expand. I intend to be Mayor that gets out of City Hall and works tirelessly to attract businesses and living wage jobs to our region.

LYDA KREWSON:

I support measures like the earned income tax credit which gives families more flexibility to meet their financial needs. I also believe in phasing in an increase to the minimum wage because \$7.70/hr is not enough to live a dignified life, raise a family, buy a home, etc. We must take a coordinated regional approach to address the needs of workers who sustain our economy.

LEWIS REED:

I supported the increase in the minimum wage in the City of St. Louis and called extra meetings of the Board of Aldermen so that the legislation could pass. That wage increase ended up in court. I also support an increase on the state level as well. As mayor, you have to be the driving force around excitement about your city and you must bring work and money to your city. Wages are stagnant in St. Louis because activity and growth overall are stagnant. We must take opportunities whenever we can to insert into a development project certain agreements that will make sure workers are paid a fair wage.

QUESTION 9:

Should voters be concerned about campaign donations from wealthy corporate interests? How will you prevent campaign contributors from exerting influence over your agenda?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I work for the people. Always. No one controls me. Never have, never will.

TISHAURA JONES:

With large amounts of money coming from developers and law firms involved in TIFs, voters should be concerned about campaign donations from wealthy corporate interests. I believe that there is too much money in politics, in general, and I am in favor of aligning local campaign finance limits with the State and National level - \$2,700. This mayor's race is being contested under a system that has no limits - and when limits are proposed by ordinance in April, they will be set at \$10,000, still far higher than state and federal limits. More and more cities are moving to a publicly financed campaign model, where a tax is placed on corporate profits or high-end goods and each citizen receives a voucher that they can use to donate to the candidates of his or her choosing. I think St. Louis should look into developing such a system here. All of that said - individual candidates need to take the personal responsibility and be conscientious of who they take money from. When I was in the State Legislature, Rex Sinquefield sent me a check, I sent it back.

JEFFREY BOYD:

I am committed to serving the people of St. Louis. My principles of Integrity, Transparency, and Vision will not be diluted by the influences of any donor. Donations made to my campaign are reflective of individuals and organizations that share those principles.

QUESTION 9:

Should voters be concerned about campaign donations from wealthy corporate interests? How will you prevent campaign contributors from exerting influence over your agenda?

LYDA KREWSOON:

We all have a duty to make sure our elected officials represent the interests of the people. I will be a mayor for all St. Louisans, not beholden to corporate interests. That's the approach I've taken over 19 years as alderman and it's the approach I'll take as mayor.

LEWIS REED:

That's an easy question. I have no problem telling a donor that I represent the people of the City of St. Louis and that I make my decisions based on what I feel is best for them. The support of the community is much more important than financial support. I took a fairly large pay cut when I ran for city-wide public office. I did that to be of service to the community, and not for the benefit of anyone else.

QUESTION 10:

Do you support a cash bail system? Please explain.

ANTONIO FRENCH:

No. Cash bail systems provide an undue hardship on the poor, in effect, creating a dual system of justice -- one for the wealthy and one for the poor.

TISHAURA JONES:

This is another issue where the mayor can be a leader even if she does not have direct control of the bail system. Leaders need to make sure we are incarcerating people for their behavior and not just for being poor. The St. Louis municipal courts have established payment systems in which people can pay fines in small pieces, instead of being ordered to pay a large sum at once. It's a common sense policy. The next mayor needs to work with the court to improve their risk assessment model to make sure poor offenders are given alternate methods to cash bond. The city needs to connect those on bond with social services to reduce recidivism and investigate starting a community bond fund for non-violent offenders - it's less expensive, and more humane, to pay bond than jail someone.

JEFFREY BOYD:

I believe that bail should be set at a level appropriate for the offense but that pre-trial programs should be instituted to help judges determine if individuals facing charges can safely be released. People should not be locked up because they do not have the funds to pay the fee (for non-violent crimes) but instead be released and able to keep their employment so they can be responsible for the fee while awaiting trial.

QUESTION 10:

Do you support a cash bail system? Please explain.

LYDA KREWSON:

Continuing to jail individuals for minor infractions can lead to a vicious cycle for the individual including unemployment, displacement and other issues. The cash bail system is a regressive form of criminal justice in which poorer individuals are disproportionately punished and must be reformed.

LEWIS REED:

There should be a better measure of who stays confined awaiting trial other than how wealthy you are or how much cash you have at your disposal. The specific circumstances of a case, the level of evidence, and whether or not the accused poses a threat to the community should be major determining factors.

QUESTION 11:

What public policies do you believe will be most effective in addressing gun violence?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

Jobs and economic development in the 15 neighborhoods in our city that have accounted for the most violent crime over the last decade. As part of my comprehensive crime plan, I will focus the resources of our city departments on changing the characteristics that lead to high crime and violence in those neighborhoods.

TISHAURA JONES:

Policies and programs in the city will be more effective than any locally created laws. Unfortunately, there are very, very few (if any) gun laws that the city could pass that would not be immediately struck down by the state as being unconstitutional. To make sure gun laws are created that help St. Louis, the mayor of the city must have good relationships with Jefferson City legislators on both sides of the aisle. Due to my years at the State Legislature, I have formed those relationships and will leverage them in order to make sure urban areas, especially St. Louis, are taken into account when gun laws are considered. For example, I support Senator Nasheed's proposed legislation which requires reporting stolen weapons within 72 hours and my former colleagues in the legislature are very aware of my support for the bill. While St. Louis may not be able to create its own laws around guns, there is plenty the city can do. As mayor, I will use the national model of focused deterrence, which involves unifying the police, social service providers, prosecutors, faith organizations, and the community to combat violent crime. This model has been successful in places like Kansas City and Philadelphia, which uses a method called group violence intervention. This intervention uses targeted communication of the aforementioned groups working together with gang members to actively promote an anti-violence message in the community. Another method, called individual gun violence intervention, targets individual offenders to ensure they receive an anti-gun, non-violent message, including education around gun laws and punishment. Focused deterrence has been found to be highly effective in programs like Project Safe Neighborhoods in Chicago. The city can learn a lot from these programs, and as mayor I plan to bring ideas like these to fruition here. The city also needs to make sure that it is addressing the root causes of crimes in order to prevent gun crimes by making sure it provides services from those suffering from mental health or substance abuse issues.

QUESTION 11:

What public policies do you believe will be most effective in addressing gun violence?

JEFFREY BOYD:

We must do more to stop the recidivism of first-time gun offenders. I am committed to working with law enforcement and state and federal agencies to get guns off the streets.

I've been personally impacted by gun violence. I lost my nephew 18 months ago and the shooter was never caught. It is possible that this/these individual(s) has hurt other families.

LYDA KREWSON:

Our city must implement common sense gun regulations that make sense for the urban core. Unfortunately, we live in a state that does not support our efforts to reduce gun violence, which is why I have introduced to bills to reduce the number of guns that get into the hands of criminals. One bill would ban assault weapons in the city of St. Louis. Another bill would require all gun owners who leave a weapon in their vehicle to place it in a lock box that is affixed to the vehicle. It also requires gun owners to report gun theft.

The new law to allow effective January 2017, allows anyone over 18 to carry with no permit, background check or training- that eases access to guns. As Mayor, I will promote efforts to reinstate background checks for sales and transfers.

LEWIS REED:

We are going to have to reach our young people directly and teach them different ways to solve conflict. I think a weapons ban is just "feel good" policy that will not do anything to stop the level of violence that we see. We have to go directly into the neighborhood and talk directly with the community and work hand in hand to reduce the numbers of shootings that we are seeing. We have to take an accurate measurement of the programs we are funding and determine what is working and what is not. We have to show our youth that we care and that government is here for them and that this is their community as much as it is anyone else's. We must provide direct access to services so that we address people's issues before they become disconnected from society. We must provide opportunities for youth to work, learn, or otherwise be successful at something other than violence. Also, we have to provide the resources necessary to solve the murders that are occurring in our community and end the retaliatory cycle that we are in. Citizens have to know that they live in a neighborhood where murderers don't go free. Many people in our community carry guns because they feel that they are personally and solely responsible for their own safety. We cannot accept the fact that people are living in neighborhoods that are not safe. I will make it a priority and a promise to reduce gun violence.

QUESTION 12:

Do you believe that mass incarceration is a problem in the City of St. Louis? If so, what would you do to address it?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I believe our city has too quickly and unnecessarily entered young people into the criminal justice system. Add that to the fact that a quality education is not being provided to all of our children and we have created a multigenerational crisis that leads young people down a path of hopelessness and violence. Both my comprehensive crime plan and my economic development plan call for transforming the conditions of our city's worst neighborhoods and providing more opportunities of youth. Also, working with our new circuit attorney, I hope to keep all but our most violent youth out of the criminal justice system and offer more restorative justice opportunities as an alternative to incarceration.

TISHAURA JONES:

Yes. It's a big problem. It's part of why I have advocated for closing the Workhouse. As mayor, I will make sure we are punishing people for bad behavior instead of for being sick, poor, homeless, or black. The city spends \$254 million a year repeatedly arresting the same people, trying them, and incarcerating them. If the city can reduce the number of people cycling through the system, it will save a lot of that money. Not to mention it will also be a more humane, more sustainable place to live. As mayor, I will work to decriminalize substance abuse and other mental health issues that often result in arrests instead of treatment. Other communities that have invested in mental health service interventions have seen dramatic reductions in their jail population and realized significant cost savings. Decarceration efforts also need to make sure people who have served their time are able to get jobs. This means more employers need to ban the box. You never know, it might be the smartest decision your company makes! It certainly helped my office save the city a lot of money.

QUESTION 12:

Do you believe that mass incarceration is a problem in the City of St. Louis? If so, what would you do to address it?

JEFFREY BOYD:

Mass incarceration is a major problem across the entire country. We must continue to help non-violent offenders with options such as treatment and training to help them re-direct their potential to a achieving a better quality of life.

it is also important that we work with state and federal partners on social justice reform to ensure that every person is treated equitably throughout the process.

LYDA KREWSON:

In my first budget, I will recommend that the City provide resources (up to \$2 million per year) for a challenge grant to city prosecutors. The funds will be available for programs that prosecutors choose to implement that 1) create alternatives to incarceration and felony convictions for youthful, non-violent offenders or 2) expand the use of drug-courts or provide opportunities for individuals who are not yet hardened, dangerous criminals, to avoid incarceration and find another path.

LEWIS REED:

Yes. It is a problem for the entire country with our for profit prison industry. We need a thorough review of who we have confined and why, and release someone (with monitoring) if they are not a threat to the safety and property of others. That is a determination that will have to be made on an individual basis. We must also more thoroughly integrate mental health services into the intake process so that we identify someone with more of a mental health problem than a criminal activity problem.

QUESTION 13:

How do you plan to address the tensions between police and the community?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

The black community has demanded a system of fairness and accountability and has not gotten it yet. Police accountability is a priority for me. This not only helps insure equal protection under the law for all, but also will lead to a more professional and productive police force. Police need the community in order to be effective at catching murderers and other violent offenders. The sooner we rebuild that trust, the sooner we can start reducing our high rate of violence in St. Louis.

TISHAURA JONES:

Reducing violence cannot come without the buy-in and trust of the community. The city must be intentional about reforming policing systems to heal the divide between police and community. Healing this divide can and should be addressed in many ways, like focused deterrence, social workers in the police department, police stations that provide social services and other community benefits, decriminalization of substance abuse and mental health issues, limits on police use of force, implicit bias and racial profiling training, more power to the Civilian Oversight board, and about a million other things. The city needs a public safety director from outside the current system who has experience with crime in urban environments, someone who can work across all departments, think creatively and efficiently, and engage the police and the community in an effort to improve these tensions.

JEFFREY BOYD:

I have been roughed up by the police even while serving in the role of Alderman. As a former U.S. non-commissioned officer in the military I also understand how situations can escalate very quickly. This unique perspective allows me to see the relationship between the police and the community from both sides. As a result of this negative experience I have been able have open dialogue with the leadership of the police force. I understand both the risks of service and very valid frustrations of the community first-hand. As a result, I am the only candidate best positioned to bridge the relationship with community and police.

As Mayor it will be a top priority to reorganize the police department in a way that allows police officers to do more foot and bike patrols throughout the neighborhoods. I believe it is important to maintain and increase 2 person patrols. I would pursue community policing strategies that reduce response time and increase officer engagement with the community. (Continued on next page)

QUESTION 13:

How do you plan to address the tensions between police and the community?

JEFFREY BOYD:

(Continued from previous page)

I would also support increasing assignment terms so that residents can build a relationship with their neighborhood law enforcement and know their assigned officers. The more positive interactions with our police department, the more a sense of camaraderie can develop. The community should be partners with the police department to fight crime, gun violence and drugs. Building trust is essential to achieving these goals. To determine the effectiveness of these programs, I would also create key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure improvement of community satisfaction, response times, and engagement with each district within the force.

LYDA KREWSON:

For the better part of 2 years now, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department has been operating about 120 officers below their authorized force of 1,300. The City's efforts to hire additional officers have been slow, experienced officers are stepping down, and the department faces a growing shortage of experienced officers that is approaching crisis level. We have insisted that officers help to fill the gap by working mandatory overtime, creating additional fatigue in an already stressful position.

The heavy reliance on mandatory overtime makes it difficult to provide additional training for officers. Increasing the force size will allow the department to expand the training regimen for officers to help them make optimal decisions in their work while also focusing on their own wellness. Our efforts to streamline and improve the hiring process must be swift and sure, so that we can build a police force that respects the diversity of our population in all ways.

Additional officers, training, and equipment, are essential to rebuild trust between our communities and law enforcement.

I will also call for an additional \$1 million in anti-violence, community based conflict resolution and mediation programs.

LEWIS REED:

First thing we need to do is go back to the smaller districts. By going back to more and smaller police districts, officers will have more of an opportunity to be integrated into the neighborhood.

That will form the structure for better community oriented policing. We need to have regular forums and meetings between the community and police and incorporate what we learn from those in our operations. We must make it a priority to build a relationship between our police officers and the community.

QUESTION 14:

Critics of the Real Time Intelligence Center say that it has proven an expensive way to stop relatively few crimes, and that it threatens the privacy of citizens who are not suspected of committing any crime. Would you advocate for a de-emphasis of mass surveillance and more robust policies that provide a level of oversight of police surveillance programs?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I am a supporter of public surveillance cameras. Used effectively (which it is not currently in St. Louis), it can help catch violent offenders and make neighborhoods safer. I have seen this firsthand. I also know that, despite the opposition of a vocal minority, most people living in neighborhoods that experience high rates of violence are demanding cameras to be installed there quickly. In fact, they resent that more affluent areas are getting them faster. But I do agree that the policies of the city need to be more transparent.

TISHAURA JONES:

Yes. The research on the efficacy of camera systems is mixed, at best. Most research has shown that cameras tend to displace crime, rather than prevent crime. The city must use every public safety dollar in the most effective way. There are guidelines for cities provided by organizations, such as the Washington Institute for Public Policy, that detail the "return on investment" (eg. Reduction in crime) of expenses made for public safety. This should be one matrix that is used to determine if any expense is worth the resources, or if there is a better solution out there. All of that said - A decision to expand the Real Time Intelligence Center must first be viewed through a racial equity lens, another pillar of my platform. History shows that people who are poor, minority, part of the liberal left, or of a religious minority are most likely to be impacted through government surveillance programs. This means that any camera systems that are implemented would need to have strong policies in place to ensure that these systems do not have adverse effects on the civil liberties of St. Louisans, specifically those who are most disenfranchised. Such policies would need to be codified, to ensure that they are not easily changed, and debated in the public sphere to create a balance between creating a sense of safety, protecting civil liberties, and making the most effective use of limited government resources.

JEFFREY BOYD:

Our job as a City is never done until every citizen has an opportunity to have quality stable housing. I am committed to improving the perception and reality of safety in our city. I am open to studying new strategies from across the country that help reduce and/or solve crime.

QUESTION 14:

Critics of the Real Time Intelligence Center say that it has proven an expensive way to stop relatively few crimes, and that it threatens the privacy of citizens who are not suspected of committing any crime. Would you advocate for a de-emphasis of mass surveillance and more robust policies that provide a level of oversight of police surveillance programs?

LYDA KREWSON:

Cameras have proven to be an important part of solving crimes. Their effectiveness of crime prevention is debatable but they are a critical tool in law enforcement. The centerpiece of my campaign is neighborhood safety. With violent crime on the rise in St. Louis I believe we must be strategic in the focus of our law enforcement to reverse that trend.

I also believe civilian oversight is an important aspect of law enforcement which can serve as way to build trust with the public. When law enforcement has the trust of the public, they are able to exercise their discretion more freely - which is exactly what we ask them to do.

LEWIS REED:

I think that oversight and privacy are key, but we do have a responsibility to use whatever advances in technology that are at our disposal to solve violent crimes. But they have to be used within reason. There has to be a way of determining what is recorded, when and why. We do not want to live under mass surveillance. But the technology is here whether it is your neighbor with a drone or an official government device. According to a report published a few years back, only 11% of homicides in the City of St. Louis resulted in a conviction. That is unacceptable to me and to the families of those victims and we must use what we can to allow us to solve future violent crimes.

But we cannot use those statistics to go overboard and infringe upon the right to privacy. We have to maintain a balance between privacy/freedom concerns, and giving law enforcement the best chance to solve violent crime. I think the process of determining that balance needs to include the community and be open, public and transparent

QUESTION 15:

Many cities are moving towards Inclusionary Zoning and requiring new multi-unit developments to include affordable units. Do you support requiring all developments receiving city tax incentives (TIF, abatement, CID, or TDD) to set aside a specific percentage of units for affordable housing? If so, what percentage?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

I think that should be determined on a case-by-case basis as the characteristics of many of the incentives listed in your question (TIF, CID, TDD) are very different from project to project.

TISHAURA JONES:

I firmly support Inclusionary Zoning and have made it a part of my platform for increasing equitable development. All developments receiving TIFs must come with community benefit agreements, like affordable housing, youth centers, senior centers, minority and women participation, and more. For multi-unit developments, I would like to see between 20 and 30% affordable, depending on the number of units - and I would like to see longer terms of affordability.

JEFFREY BOYD:

In order to ensure that quality workforce housing and affordable housing are available for every family at every price-point, I believe Inclusionary Zoning is one strategy that can help the city offer a variety of options to St. Louis families. The percentage would be sliding based on the size of the project.

LYDA KREWSON:

All projects that receive city incentives should provide a community benefit- in some cases that benefit will include affordable housing.

LEWIS REED:

I think inclusionary zoning is something that can help us maintain the character of our city and aid in preventing gentrification. I think percentages and incentive packages should be based on the project and determined in conjunction with the surrounding community and in a way that makes sure the city gets the utmost benefit from the project's completion. Giving a percentage would be an easy answer, but each project will have different percentages it can meet and different aspects of benefit to the immediate area and also to the city as a whole. On a whole, city development planning needs a complete overhaul and inclusionary policies will definitely be a part of that overhaul.

QUESTION 16:

Would MetroLink expansion -- and public transit in general -- be a priority for you as Mayor? If so, how do you propose expansion would be funded?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

Yes. The only way it's going to get funded is with regional, state, and federal partners. We can't fully fund it with city sales tax alone.

TISHAURA JONES:

MetroLink expansion is one of my main priorities. A few months ago, in my capacity as Treasurer, I budgeted \$2,000,000 in reserve parking funds to pay for the study update needed to start the process for applying for federal funds for MetroLink expansion. The city must receive federal funding in order for this project to happen. I also outlined the ability of the city to start with what is called a "Minimum Operating Segment" (MOS) in an op-ed I wrote for the St. Louis Post Dispatch. A MOS allows the project to be completed in more bite sized chunks, and helps the city arrange necessary funding. In order to receive federal funds, the government needs to see full commitment from the city, which is why I also support the half cent sales tax that may appear on the April ballot. As mayor, I will not only make the North-South Metrolink a priority, but will also focus on transit oriented development around this proposed line.

JEFFREY BOYD:

Every major development in St. Louis must be a piece of an overall strategic growth plan for our city and involved a detailed impact on transit and transportation. The amenities that we would like to see in St. Louis cannot have their expected impact on our economy if complete streets, bike ways, bridges, roads and mass transit options are not aligned.

As Mayor I believe we must collaborate with local, regional, state and federal agencies to secure funding and expansion.

QUESTION 16:

Would MetroLink expansion -- and public transit in general -- be a priority for you as Mayor? If so, how do you propose expansion would be funded?

LYDA KREWSON:

It is important for the growth of the city and connecting people to jobs. I support expanding the metrolink and a more robust bus service for residents. Any expansion will be complex and will require regional collaboration, and state and federal involvement.

Diverse transportation opportunities are key to folks having access to good jobs.

LEWIS REED:

Metrolink expansion would be great for the City of St. Louis and surrounding region. Any city on the move needs a top rate public transit system. It will increase development and will also make access to work and healthcare much easier for residents along the line. The cost of the proposed 17 mile metrolink expansion is estimated at \$60 million to \$80 million per mile. Currently, including the sales tax being proposed by the Board of Aldermen, there is no source pinpointed to pay for it in its entirety.

Federal funding will be essential, as was the case with the first metrolink routes in 1993 were mostly built with federal funds.

QUESTION 17:

Since the greater St. Louis area served as ground zero for what later became the Movement for Black Lives, how has this national discussion around racial inequality and institutionalized racism informed your agenda?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

As you know, I was at the center of the events of 2014 and 2015. But I've been advocating for these policies long before Ferguson. I been woke long before young people were calling it woke. While the national attention to our issues has been helpful in many ways, the fact is that locally the agenda still has not progressed sufficiently. That is because we still have many people in very critical positions who still don't get it. That's why this mayoral race is so important. What also has not changed is the low rate of voter involvement. Unless and until black voters in St. Louis stand up and hold officials accountable, I fear the agenda will stay stagnant for many more years. Diverse transportation opportunities are key to folks having access to good jobs.

TISHAURA JONES:

Addressing racial inequality and institutionalized racism is at the center of my platform. We need to move beyond just talking about racism and into actually doing something about it, like implementing the calls to action listed in the Forward Through Ferguson and For Sake of All reports. Addressing racial inequality is something I have always been passionate about, long before Ferguson became a household name. My office has worked to address the racial wealth gap through financial education and reducing the number of unbanked and underbanked African-American households. Every policy, every program, every dollar spent in the city of St. Louis needs to be looked at through a racial equity lens.

JEFFREY BOYD:

As a city leader for the past 14 years, the principles equality, fairness and justice have always guided my approach to serving St. Louis. My hope is that St. Louis becomes a recognized a city that has rebuilt a sense of community and becomes a model for other cities to follow.

QUESTION 17:

Since the greater St. Louis area served as ground zero for what later became the Movement for Black Lives, how has this national discussion around racial inequality and institutionalized racism informed your agenda?

LYDA KREWSON:

All decisions I make as Mayor will be viewed through a racial equity lense. For our city to succeed, we must ensure that all residents have opportunities to affordable housing, quality education and good jobs.

LEWIS REED:

It has provided the environment to have these discussions with less push back and more cooperation. As an African American male with four children I have always been aware of racial inequality and I have always taken opportunities to address it or reset the reality of it. I was the first African American to be elected President of the Board of Aldermen and I have always pushed policies and lived my life confronting these issues. One of the first major board bills we worked to pass when I became President of the Board was a workforce inclusion ordinance. That same board bill had been tried many times prior to my becoming President of the Board. When I got in office, I set the tone that we will pass a workforce inclusion ordinance, and it happened with a large majority of aldermen voting for it. This movement has provided an environment where more young people are energized and that it what this community needs. We in leadership need the ideas of young people so that we can take those ideas, along with our experience and positions, to implement changes. The movement also provided an environment where those who have benefitted from inequality have to take note and address the concerns of the community. There is now an appetite from universities and focus groups to provide resources to effectively study and provide detail of the inequality that exists. With that data in hand, we can directly address the problems and measure the effectiveness of the intended solutions.

QUESTION 18:

Describe 3 things that are most crucial to achieving public safety in the city of St. Louis.

ANTONIO FRENCH:

1. Jobs and economic development in neglected areas
2. Police reform and accountability
3. Full staffing and better entry pay for new police officers

TISHAURA JONES:

The three things that are most crucial to achieving public safety are to develop strong police/community relationships, to provide adequate funding and resources to address the root causes of crime, and to be smart on crime by utilizing strategies that work. Reducing violence cannot come without the buy-in and trust of the community. The city must be intentional about reforming policing systems to heal the perceived and real divide between the police and community. As I said in an earlier question, I will work to limit police use of force, provide meaningful opportunities for police-citizen relationships, strengthen civilian oversight of the Police Department by supporting the addition of subpoena power to the current civilian oversight ordinance, provide implicit bias and racial profiling training, and hire a public safety director from outside the current system who has experience with crime in urban environments, someone who can work across all departments to make safety the number one priority. Second, the city must address the root causes of crime: mental illness, substance abuse, and lack of economic opportunity. As mayor, I will make sure that we are funneling money that is currently used to repeatedly arrest the same people into programming that helps these people get on their feet. That most certainly includes programming for ex-offenders. St. Louis is also in the middle of a heroin epidemic. Cheap heroin has a stronghold on our community. It is not a problem that we can arrest our way out of. As mayor, I will work to expand access to substance abuse services and the decriminalization of some crimes committed as a result of drug seeking behavior. This includes support for the Gloucester Model, which creates safe places at police and fire stations for drug users to turn in their drugs without fear of arrest and be placed into treatment and putting social workers into police departments. Third, being smart about crime by utilizing strategies that work will make sure that the city is putting its money into programs that actually reduce crime. Focused deterrence, as I said in an earlier question, is at the center of my criminal justice and public safety platform. It's imperative that the next mayor work with Jefferson City to make sure that laws that are created there do not negatively impact St. Louis' ability to prosecute crimes and protect itself. The city will do better if it employs smart ideas that have already been proven successful elsewhere.

QUESTION 18:

Describe 3 things that are most crucial to achieving public safety in the city of St. Louis.

JEFFREY BOYD:

1. Having a Mayor who understands the role of the police and the frustrations of the community.
2. Partnering with state and federal agencies to complete targeted operations aimed at getting guns off the streets.
3. Fully staffing the police department with officers that are well trained and reflect the diversity of our community.

LYDA KREWSON:

As I have mentioned, we must invest more in our law enforcement in a way that allows them to do their jobs more efficiently and strengthen their relationship with all communities.

Invest more in youth and recreation programs for young people

Create better educational opportunities for students across the city.

LEWIS REED:

- 1) A city initiated youth outreach program that goes directly into neighborhoods, gets the attention of our youth, and provides them with activities in which they can excel, identify, & build self-esteem and that provides a bridge between service organizations and the community.
- 2) A city that is more vibrant with job opportunities and economic opportunities
- 3) Neighborhood environments that invoke safety, which will include reducing the number of vacant buildings and overgrown lots in our neighborhoods, better lighting, neighborhood resource centers, and positive interaction between the community and the police department on a daily basis.

QUESTION 19:

Should St. Louis be a Sanctuary city? Why or why not?

ANTONIO FRENCH:

Yes. I will fight to defend the rights of all St. Louisans from unconstitutional attacks from a Trump administration, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or immigration status.

TISHAURA JONES:

Yes, St. Louis should be a Sanctuary City. Part of what makes St. Louis so appealing is its diverse immigrant community. Attracting and retaining immigrants is critical to regional growth. Immigrants should be looked at as an asset, and not as a burden. The city must devote resources to helping new Americans feel at home in St. Louis. Becoming a sanctuary city is part of my platform, which you can find at www.tishaura4mayor.com.

JEFFREY BOYD:

St. Louis has always been a welcoming city. As Mayor I am committed to helping any immigrant on their path to citizenship in accordance with the Federal law.

LYDA KREWSON:

Immigration is critical to the health and future of St. Louis and I welcome immigrants with open arms to the region. I would not want to risk federal funds by becoming a sanctuary city, but in my heart I know St. Louisans will join me in welcoming immigrants to St. Louis.

LEWIS REED:

I think St. Louis City police officers have more than enough on their plate than to be heavily involved in determining the immigration status of individuals in the City of St. Louis.

QUESTION 20:

Do you support a city/county merger? Please explain.

ANTONIO FRENCH:

No. The last thing St. Louis County needs is a 91st municipality.

TISHAURA JONES:

I support letting the people vote on a city/county merger. If you're asking me if I would vote "yes" on that initiative, I would. Before that vote takes place, the city needs to improve its relationship with other municipalities. It needs to find synergies, find ways to become more efficient by working together. There are places this is already happening, like with the Zoo-Museum-District and the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, but there are so many more steps to take, like merging the Health Departments, perhaps. Regardless, trust and relationships must be built first in order to bring this to fruition.

JEFFREY BOYD:

There are examples of cities such as Indianapolis/Marion County (IN), Louisville/Jefferson County (KY) and Nashville/Davidson County (TN) that have benefited from a merger. I think it is worth studying and bringing a resolution to the people for a joint vote.

LYDA KREWSON:

Our fragmented government structure makes the way we provide services to our residents very expensive. We must align our services and resources with the county so we can save money and spend more on the city's priorities.

LEWIS REED:

A city county merger, as proposed, is a political impossibility the way things currently stand. Some things we can do as a region to save resources and work better together would include forming collaborative agreements where the city and county work together on certain regional issues. If we can find opportunities to work alongside the county and save taxpayer dollars and provide better service to our constituents, we should do it, and let the public know what benefits that collaboration brought.

APPENDIX:

We invited other mayoral candidates not included in this debate to complete the Pre-Debate Survey. We received responses only from Jim Osher, who is running as a Republican candidate.

QUESTION 1:

What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of the Mayor of the City of St. Louis?

JIM OSHER:

To bring together a community, bring spirit, with Vision for a better tomorrow using all resources available in a common sense way for the future of St. Louis.

QUESTION 2:

What sets you apart from the other candidates running for mayor?

JIM OSHER:

I have a business that's operated at Jefferson and Cass for over 25 years, I have worked with many of the people in St. Louis of all races and income levels and feel I know something about the heart that makes each of us who we are.

QUESTION 3:

Name one thing you have done as a public official that you would now do differently.

JIM OSHER:

I have not been a public official. However I feel that I would speak more directly with the people in a more heart felt honest way that is not as sugar coated. I also feel that there are three sides to every story with the one that the public hears, not being the closest to reality.

QUESTION 4:

Do you believe that the City is currently doing enough to address the issue of individuals experiencing homelessness? If yes, please explain which of the City's current efforts you wish to continue in your administration and why you believe them to be effective. If no, please explain what you would do differently to address the issue.

JIM OSHER:

I think that the issue with homelessness has not been addressed in a way that it should be. I am not involved with all the details or the Reverend Rice particulars however it seems that the story heard is more about looking at blame and not creating solution.

I feel very deeply about homelessness and feel that mental health has a lot to do with it, and that there should be better facilities that are more humane and create a better atmosphere for living.

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APPENDIX:

We invited other mayoral candidates not included in this debate to complete the Pre-Debate Survey. All responses are unedited.

QUESTION 4:

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JIM OSHER:

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I think the city has done some with the new facility that's been put in place at the old Rat control building however just the idea of the previous use seems apualing.

However I am sure it's not that way at all and it's probably a bright spot in fighting this problem and from my understanding they have counselors to be able to help solve the deeper issues of the problem.

Most southern cities in Florida etc. offer a free bus ride out of town or a ticket to the local jail. At least St Louis does a much better job. And takes a stab at addressing the problems

I think the new Salvation Army is a bright spot in homelessness. I also think sometimes people just prefer to be homeless and be treated as such. However more sanitary conditions, bathroom, bathing, toiletries and other nesseeities should be offered in a way to be more humane.

I have talked to homeless people and even offered help and for some it's just a preferred way of life and I respect that.

QUESTION 5:

In many cities, urban renewal and economic development has been accompanied by widespread displacement of current residents--especially low-income black residents. How do you propose to improve the city while also preventing displacement?

JIM OSHER:

I think urban renewal is a must. I have heard it said that a rising tide lifts all boats.

I think that there's plenty of housing to acomidate many many more people in the city.

When we bring in more people it lifts the tax base to provide more services for everyone. I think the idea of more residents, more incomes, brings a better way of life.

Diversity is what this country is all about and from my understandings of different social welfare issues it's actually a solution to many of the ongoing issues that's been a drain on this city.

APPENDIX:

We invited other mayoral candidates not included in this debate to complete the Pre-Debate Survey. All responses are unedited.

QUESTION 6:

Do you believe that systemic racial disparities exist in St. Louis? Please explain your view, and provide specific examples as appropriate.

JIM OSHER:

I do think there are racial disparities in this city. Much of it has to do with the Delmar divide which is actually a key platform of mine which is to break the divide so people won't be judged from such which I think is wrong. Many people that were displaced from the NGA eminent domain site were treated wrongly and I suspect it has to do with the assumption of educational levels as well as the cost to be able to defend the way they were treated.

QUESTION 7:

Are you concerned that the new classification of fighting in the Missouri Criminal Code will lead to the criminalization of students? What will you do to address this, as well as the school-to-prison pipeline more broadly?

JIM OSHER:

I think that bullies should probably be dealt with at a younger age rather than an older one. I am not that familiar with the new law however it's not right to fight in school and can lead to more problems at a latter stage in life. I think fighting distracts from what people are suppose to be doing and education should be the number one priority of this city. I also think that to be expelled from school is not the answer for improper acting out. There are probably other issues that are the cause and that the fighting is probably more of a symptom of other issues from either the home or the surrounding area.

I think that we as a society should put the emphasis on school 10 fold from where we are now, with troubled kids, I think that a high school equivalent should be a requirement of many types of probation. Much of this can be done online and we are not taking advantage of technology like we should because of the reduced cost and its ease of availability. We should double down on the pathways into the libraries and out of the court houses.

APPENDIX:

We invited other mayoral candidates not included in this debate to complete the Pre-Debate Survey. All responses are unedited.

QUESTION 8:

What plans do you have to address stagnant wages for workers and gross economic inequality in the city of St. Louis?

JIM OSHER:

The issue is gross under education from what I have seen as an employer. Most of the problems with underemployment is an issue with supply and demand. The low demand for unskilled workers is getting worse everyday. The reason is technology. If we pay parking lot attendants \$25 per hour then they will be replaced within weeks because of these wages, by automation.

We need a work force that can work, and diagnose problems with these machines, not simply make change for a Big Mac and fry order.

This type of job should be only used as a stepping stone and not as a retirement plan.

This city, state and country needs to triple down on education. I go to Xiamen China once a year. It's about the size of greater St. Louis

The last time I was there they added a university extension that was larger than downtown. It was designed specifically to teach teachers how to teach.

They have a massive educational program that's incredible. If we don't do something soon we will be in real trouble as a country.

QUESTION 9:

Should voters be concerned about campaign donations from wealthy corporate interests? How will you prevent campaign contributors from exerting influence over your agenda?

JIM OSHER:

I am simply using my own money to run for Mayor.

I am running for one reason only. To make this city a more diverse more educated and create a better life for everyone.

I am sure that money influences many of the decisions and I am not a fan of it. not even a Rams fan when it came to a \$17 mill outlay for the Rams proposal which could have spent in better areas.

They were already clearing the land on the western end of LAX airport for the relocation while they were planning the downtown option in this city

That appeared to be an inside job...

APPENDIX:

We invited other mayoral candidates not included in this debate to complete the Pre-Debate Survey. All responses are unedited.

QUESTION 10:

Do you support a cash bail system? Please explain.

JIM OSHER:

If you are talking about prison bail. I think there are probably better ways.

From my understandings of the prison system and having hired hundreds of guys from the system I can tell you the stories are across the board and most of the problems go back to proper education as well as early childhood.

Cash bonds with a 10 percent insurance fee is probably the Best way. My understanding is the new Circuit attorney's office is now hitting the bond amounts hard and filling up the jails which is a real shame. There are many individual issues and not sure what the real answer is

QUESTION 11:

What public policies do you believe will be most effective in addressing gun violence?

JIM OSHER:

I am not sure how to handle all the gun violence issues. With all the guns on the street I am not sure what one can do. We have sent a lot of people to prison that have simply been scared because of all the guns and felt safer with one so you are kind of screwed either way. At least now you don't go to prison unless you are a felon with a gun, from my understanding. I also wonder if we could change our education policies in St. Louis and make the entire city a school zone with no guns allowed

QUESTION 12:

Do you believe that mass incarceration is a problem in the City of St. Louis? If so, what would you do to address it?

JIM OSHER:

I do think it's a problem.
I still go back to education
We need to figure out ways to incorporate technology into lower cost learning and figure out ways to incentivize young people into the libraries as young kids. And out of the lines at the court house...

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QUESTION 13:

How do you plan to address the tensions between police and the community?

JIM OSHER:

I think this is all about respect.

A person must respect a police officer. A police officer also has to understand that you get what you give and just like a Doctor has to take classes on bedside manners I also feel that it's not a bad thing for a police officer to have the same type of courtesy training. Most of the officers I know seem to be very courteous. I also realize they are not all that way and as most people we are all different.

I think there are some real trust issues between citizens and the police. The body cams may go along way if implemented correctly.

My friend that was an officer used to keep a pen and a paper in his pocket and when voices started going up he would write down on the paper that the conversation was being recorded and it often deescalated the problem

QUESTION 14:

Critics of the Real Time Intelligence Center say that it has proven an expensive way to stop relatively few crimes, and that it threatens the privacy of citizens who are not suspected of committing any crime. Would you advocate for a de-emphasis of mass surveillance and more robust policies that provide a level of oversight of police surveillance programs?

JIM OSHER:

I think we need all the help we can get. I am not a big fan of such and feel like it's a violation of civil liberties however I do understand the needs to be able to deter crime. I would also have to do more research to better be able to answer the question.

APPENDIX:

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QUESTION 15:

Many cities are moving towards Inclusionary Zoning and requiring new multi-unit developments to include affordable units. Do you support requiring all developments receiving city tax incentives (TIF, abatement, CID, or TDD) to set aside a specific percentage of units for affordable housing? If so, what percentage?

JIM OSHER:

I like the idea however as a small business person more regulation is a hassle. It could be that if someone doesn't want to include them they could possibly offset some of the tif money for such however I would need to do more research.

QUESTION 16:

Would MetroLink expansion -- and public transit in general -- be a priority for you as Mayor? If so, how do you propose expansion would be funded?

JIM OSHER:

I am a big fan of the north south metro route. I would not have a problem with more sales tax however we need to be careful as a society not to keep piling on the sales tax. When I started in business here the rate was 6.25 percent and the rate has gone up 50 percent. The more we can get from the Feds the better. This will also be very helpful for the work forces to be able to get to work from affordable housing areas and create more revenue for the state, Feds. and city governments so they should all participate in the funding for sure

APPENDIX:

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QUESTION 17:

Since the greater St. Louis area served as ground zero for what later became the Movement for Black Lives, how has this national discussion around racial inequality and institutionalized racism informed your agenda?

JIM OSHER:

This was a terrible thing that happened to St. Louis as well as all the parties involved. It has hurt this city economically as well as socially and divided us even more. It's actually one of the reasons I am running for Mayor to be able to bring this city back together
I understand the issue from both sides...

QUESTION 18:

Describe 3 things that are most crucial to achieving public safety in the city of St. Louis.

JIM OSHER:

Education, drug abuse. Lack of jobs x 10

QUESTION 19:

Should St. Louis be a Sanctuary city? Why or why not?

JIM OSHER:

I have no problem with this city being one.
I feel it will be very hard and that the borders are already being closed from personal information I already know.
The Feds are already proposing cutting off federal funds for sanctuary cities. The city will either starve or comply.
It's a matter of politics that I don't believe in.
The diversity has made this country great and it's because of this that we became so great.

QUESTION 20:

Do you support a city/county merger? Please explain.

JIM OSHER:

I do not know all the facts to be able to give an informed opinion at this time