

SOUTH IRVING TASK FORCE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
CITY COUNCIL ELECTION\DISTRICTS 4, 6, AND 8 plus a BOND PROPOSITION
No Irving ISD Election-all candidates unopposed
ELECTION DAY SATURDAY MAY 4EARLY VOTE APRIL 22-30**

The South Irving Task Force is a private group of individuals who live, work, or have interests in Irving South of 183. The SITF reviews conditions in the subject area and makes assessments regarding those conditions.

The South Irving Task Force asked all candidates in the City election the following questions. Answers appear in the ballot order of the candidates.

- 1. What experience or involvement do you have that would illustrate your qualifications for the position you are seeking?**
- 2. What is your position on a new City Hall?**
- 3. What is your position on a congregate shelter for the homeless in Irving?**
- 4. What are your proposals for revitalizing South Irving, including the Old Downtown area?**
- 5. What are your recommendations for increasing the affordable housing inventory in Irving?**

DISTRICT 4

David Gutierrez

1. Every aspect of my life has given me knowledge, experiences, involvement in community affairs, education and training in public relations. I was born in Saginaw, Michigan, and have lived in Irving since 1987. I graduated from high school in Dallas. I served in the Viet Nam war and retired from the armed forces after 21 years of service. I have a B.S. from University of North Texas in Denton with a major in Biology and minor in Chemistry. I served as a chemist for 15 years. For 37 years I have owned a local woodworking, repair and maintenance business. I have contributed 30 years to various organizations such as: President Irving Chapter LULAC, City of Irving Health Board, President of Irving Sister Cities, Irving Veterans Memorial Park Committee, Dallas County Metrocare Services Board, Planning and Network Advisory Committee with North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, Chair of the Irving Hispanic Community Forum, and President of Irving Chapter Pan American Golf Association which has provided \$8000 in scholarships to Irving students and is partnering with John R. Good Elementary and has provided 6 bicycles to students.
2. Years ago, I went through the Las Colinas Leadership program that took us through the daily operations of our City Hall, I witnessed at that time the need for renovation. At one time workers had plenty of room to work comfortably. Due to an increase of employees and city growth, workers now have to work in much smaller cramped work areas with little or no privacy. City Hall is also not in compliance with the American Disabilities Act. I feel for every year we delay either building a new City Hall or renovating our existing could cost the taxpayers more money than the \$200 million that is now being proposed. We have to realistically review the inevitable increase in our future economy and respond responsibly to this need now. None of us enjoy tax increases but we either pay now or pay much more in the future. Irving City Council has already voted to put this item to be voted on by the citizens of Irving on the May 4th election of 2024. We own property in South Irving and I vote yes to keep City Hall in South Irving. If the citizens vote to build a new City Hall the City will eliminate the land expense. I would also like to gather more information on the cost of renovating the old City Hall and the possibility of renovating the Fire Administration building to accommodate City Hall needs.
3. In my past campaigns for an elected position, I have advocated and will continue to advocate for housing for our homeless in the City of Irving. I was involved in one of our bond committees where we voted for an animal shelter (\$1.6 million). Why not a shelter for our homeless in Irving!!

4. I propose a night out (a Fiesta night out) with businesses, food trucks, restaurants, night bars, and music to be open late at night, in order to attract more people and businesses to the Old Downtown area. I propose more policing in areas where crime would be more evident. I propose improving infrastructure on the east side of Loop 12 and I would want contractors that cut the grass by the highway to pick up trash prior to cutting the grass. Perhaps through grants we could beautify existing business buildings and homes.
5. Affordable housing is recommended for the Development and Preservation of our community. This is greatly needed in Irving. I would work with the City Manager and City surveyor to find land where we could build affordable housing. In order for our local businesses to flourish and to attract new businesses we must continue to build affordable homes in all of Irving. This approach would add to our City's revenues also. In addition, building affordable homes would prevent Irving ISD from closing well-established neighborhood schools. I will investigate and learn more about the assistance programs offered in Irving.

Jesus Martinez

1. My experience in advocacy, community involvement, and being fluent in Spanish make me a strong candidate for positions involving community engagement, policymaking, or advocacy roles. My role on the Building and Standards Commission demonstrates my commitment to ensuring safety and quality standards in our community. Additionally, being an Army veteran highlights my dedication to service and my ability to work within structured environments. My fluency in Spanish opens up opportunities for me to connect with and represent diverse communities effectively. These qualifications collectively showcase my ability to listen, take action, and advocate for the needs of our community, making me a valuable asset in various roles within government, nonprofit organizations, or community leadership positions.
2. My position on the question of a new City Hall is that I believe we can save taxpayer money and preserve the historical significance of our current City Hall by opting for remodeling instead of constructing a new one. This approach would ensure we maintain a sense of history while avoiding any tax hikes that could burden our citizens. Reallocating future funds saved from building a new City Hall, we can invest in infrastructure and new developments that will benefit the community as a whole.
3. I'm against establishing a congregant shelter for the homeless in Irving. It's crucial to focus on solutions that tackle the root causes of homelessness and uplift our community, rather than centralizing the issue in one location, which might strain City resources. Moreover, feedback from our citizens, including residents in our district, opposes it, citing concerns about potential legal issues for our city. Instead, we should collaborate with charitable organizations, churches, and law enforcement to implement comprehensive strategies that offer support and assistance to the homeless population while addressing broader underlying issues.
4. First, I'll advocate for preserving the historical heritage of South Irving, particularly in the Old Downtown area. This can be achieved through adaptive reuse of historic buildings, promoting heritage tourism, and implementing zoning regulations that protect historical landmarks.

Secondly, we should create more economic opportunities by attracting businesses that provide shopping and dining experiences. By offering diverse retail and culinary options we can keep residents in our district, thereby growing our local economy and preventing them from going to neighboring cities for their needs.

Last, we should prioritize the creation of friendly spaces where available, such as parks, public squares, and pedestrian friendly streets. These spaces not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also serve as gathering points for community events and activities, fostering a sense of belonging and pride.

5. My recommendation is to promote free-market solutions and reduce government intervention. Instead of relying solely on government-funded housing programs, we should incentivize private developers to build affordable housing through tax breaks, regulatory relief, and streamlined permitting processes. This would encourage competition, bring the cost down, and ultimately expand the availability of affordable housing in Irving while promoting individual liberty and economic prosperity.

Darryl Plunkett

1. Having been a resident of District 4 for a significant part of my life (35 years) and witnessing its growth and changes, I bring a unique perspective to the table. For the past 25 years, I have been operating a business in Irving. My professional journey includes a 13-year tenure as Vice President/Branch Manager for Guaranty Bank and 12 years as a financial advisor with Edward Jones. This extensive experience in finance, coupled with my deep understanding of the local community, would allow me a diverse background and expertise currently underrepresented on the council.

Positions held:

Board of Directors Irving Lake Assn.- 2 years; President 1 year

Current Vice President Constellation Club Board of Governors

Campus Improvement Committee- Brandenburg 4 years. Stipes 4 years

Irving First Methodist Church- Finance Chairman 3 years, Chairman Church Council 3 years

Irving Arts Board Grant Committee 2 years

2. Due to my position as a financial advisor, I am prohibited from providing advice regarding bond proceeds or the issuance of municipal securities to any municipality or obligated person. An obligated person is any person or entity legally committed to support payment of all or part of a municipal bond issue.
I am deeply committed to the democratic process and respect the decisions made by residents. Suppose most of our community votes to fund construction of a new City Hall in the Heritage District. In that case, I will work tirelessly to ensure the city is committed to the project.
3. Homelessness is a complex issue that extends beyond Irving's boundaries. With its regional implications, it requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. I recognize the efforts of the nonprofits in Irving, particularly during harsh weather conditions, in providing overnight shelter for our homeless population. We must continue to work together to address this issue effectively. The National Coalition for the Homeless has recommended moving away from large congregant shelters. A shelter should be removed from residential neighborhoods and retail businesses if it is built.
4. I am fighting for the heart of Irving!
I hear people ask where Irving's middle is, which is currently located around Hidden Ridge and MacArthur. But that doesn't tell the entire story. There are around 270,000 residents in Irving, and 156,000 of them live south of Highway 183. That would be 60% of the population. The measure of a city is not its buildings; it is its people.
Irving is a large body, but the heart of our history lies in the Heritage District. The improvements made on Irving Boulevard have started the redevelopment process. Several investors have purchased buildings and will begin developing the area once completed. I would meet with the developers and establish a cohesive plan for them to work together. I also encourage residents to support new businesses when they open. The only way to keep growing new retail is to help them.

5. This is the biggest dilemma facing every city in America. South Irving was a great area in which to buy a starter home until recently. Today, only 37% of all homes in Irving are owner-occupied. During past downturns in the market, and with the cost to borrow at all-time lows, investors and corporations started buying up residential housing.
I want a public-private collaboration between Irving ISD technical trades and a retail builder to infill in neighborhoods. The students would have a place to learn their trades and we could create a supply of new houses. We could apply for grants to help with down payment assistance. The grants should stipulate that the house be owner-occupied for five years before being sold or rented out, or some of the grants would have to be repaid with the sale proceeds.

Susan Motely

1. My qualifications are reflected in my decades of experience as a community advocate, lawyer, and long-time resident.
I am President of the Irving Heritage Society, Secretary of the Veterans Memorial Park Committee, past President of Irving League of Women Voters, recipient of Irving NAACP President's Award and a 2023 Irving High Spirited Citizen. I also served on Irving Park Board and Irving Advisory Committee of Disabilities.
I'm a 27-year lawyer with experience in private firms, non-profits, and government. Daily, I listen, learn, evaluate, strategize, negotiate, collaborate, and persuade-all skills that will help me represent others.
I have lived in Irving for 35 years, 20 of them in South Irving, I graduated from Nimitz, returned after law school, and raised my kids here These roots will help me better serve Irving residents.
2. I question the need for it, especially with the projected \$200 million expense (without demolition costs) and property tax increase that will result. I made comments at the February 8, 2024 City Council meeting about the decision on whether to place the proposal on the ballot (see https://irvingtx.swagit.com/play/02092024-501_at_item_28), expressing my belief that the City Council should carefully consider whether to place the proposal on the ballot because it would increase property taxes. Now that the Council has placed it on the ballot, I question whether a new City Hall is the right priority right now. I am still considering my position but am leaning towards voting "against" Proposition A. Even if the bond proposal does not pass, the City must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination based on disability in all programs, activities and services of state and local governments.
3. I understand a "congregate" shelter to refer to a location that offers temporary overnight sheltering in a way that groups people together in a common area filled with bunks, cots, or mats rather than in a more private sleeping area. I would need more information on such things as cost, financing, tax impacts, and best practices before taking a position on such a shelter in Irving.
On a somewhat related topic, in a recent work session (available online at <https://irvingtx.swagit.com/pplay02082024-506> see item 3) City staff provided an update on available funds that could be used in conjunction with a non-congregate shelter, where sleeping areas would be more private. It is a shame no consensus existed on putting those funds to use. While it would not solve homelessness in Irving, it might help, yet many (but not all) of our existing leaders seemed not to want to use available funds for this.
4. Before I suggest new proposals, I want to express how excited I am about recent progress made in South Irving and in the Old Downtown area, such as many park improvements (e.g. Heritage, Oak Meadow, Keeler, and Southwest), new townhomes and apartments, façade improvements to various businesses, construction at the old central fire station and on Irving Blvd., and the opening of the new(ish) Albertson's and Starbucks. I also look forward to the new, future pool at

Senter Park, a park I visited often with my 4 youngest kids. I appreciate the City staff members and programs that made many of these things happen

If feasible economically, I propose the City also consider building and staffing a recreation center at Southwest Park, and possibly developing a public garden and offering a Farmers Market at or near Heritage Park (perhaps something like Grand Prairie has done-see [vendor-application-general-information.pdf](#) for more info).

5. I was raised in Irving apartments, a rental home, and a mobile home in Irving, and I am very interested in increasing affordable housing in Irving, but need to learn more about the problems that limit it before recommending policy solutions to solve it. At this stage of my learning, one recommendation is this: if this has not been done, I recommend the City do an inventory of all properties it owns, identify any vacant or underutilized properties in that inventory, consider whether such properties might be suitable for affordable housing projects, and if so, that the City consider selling or leasing these properties at a reduced cost for the purpose of encouraging low-income, affordable housing on public land.

Gustavo (Gus) Garcia

1. Over the past seven years, my service to our city has included Park and Recreation Advisory Board where I've had the privilege of contributing to such projects like the renewal of Irving Golf Club, enhancements at Senter, Oak Meadows, Keeler, and Mustang Parks and the expansion and improvement of Heritage Park, the City's Bond Task Force and Charter Review Committee.
2. The City of Irving has not managed our taxpayer funds well and as such has left city hall needing much repair and updates. Now they want to put forth a bond that will be a two-cent tax increase if passed. What is the plan should the bond fail? Will they turn around and build in the northern part of the city? That would disenfranchise South Irving citizens. Citizens shouldn't face a tax increase for the city's lack of prioritizing funds.
3. We have a homeless problem and need a better solution. The current inclement weather shelter is just a stop gap. We need a facility where services can be provided to these individuals and families to assist them through their difficult situation and help them get back on their feet.
4. We need to stay true to the character and values of the region. Las Colinas has taken on a character of its own and it doesn't reflect true Irving. Before letting developers run amok, we need to hear from the community on their thoughts.
5. We should provide tax incentives for developers willing to build fewer homes on small plots of land rather than focusing on large developments. We should also increase our support of and work with groups like Habitat for Humanity and Operation Finally Home, who both work to build single family homes on existing lots.

DISTRICT 8

Dennis Webb

1. I have lived in the city limits of Irving for over 42 years. I have lived in the Bear Creek Community for 60 years. My institutional knowledge about the city is an asset to any leader.

An Irving council member is a critical position of leadership. That means as a leader I serve the citizens of the Irving community and represent them in State, National and International affairs. I believe in servant leadership. I've demonstrated that commitment through the many organizations I have been part of. I have been part of the formation of the Bear Creek

Development Corporation, Bear Creek Community Church, Grand Prairie Firefighters Association. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of Irving Ambucs, Sowing Seeds of Joy Mission training ministry, Many Helping Hands Homeless Ministry, Baylor Scott and White Hospital Irving Board of Directors, and the Irving City Council where I have served for 11 ½ years. My experience is in a variety of areas, and that and my current city council tenure qualifies me for the position I am seeking to be re-elected to.

2. As a sitting member I voted to put a Bond Proposition on the May election to fund the construction of a new city hall. According to State law I am not allowed to advocate for or against the bond proposition. I would like to share thoughts on the 50 year-old facility but I respectfully have to decline to ensure I don't violate the law prohibiting my advocacy by statements that can be interpreted for or against a new city hall.
3. I have been associated with homeless ministry for over 25 years. The church I pastor served with the Union Gospel Men's homeless shelter in Dallas for many years. Through Bear Creek Church I have connected with the homeless population through feeding, sheltering, clothing, counseling, and other homeless services.

Our nation is experiencing a crisis of homelessness and the city of Irving is not immune from it. I have watched the number of homeless people increase in Irving over the years. Especially concerning is the increase of homeless families living in cars, churches, extended stay hotels, with relatives, and on the streets. There are organizations that work with this population to transition them from homelessness to permanent housing. However, the way to ensure these efforts are successful is a fixed location for these families to live and for the advocates to meet them.

A *non-congregate* shelter can help provide that need. Homeless individuals, especially families will have a temporary and safe location to live. It also allows service organizations helping with housing to know where to meet them.

The stigma of a homeless shelter where homeless people are hanging around or loitering has been attached to these facilities. A *non-congregate* shelter provides a place inside a building with the amenities of a home where homeless will live and not loiter outside. Cities can't continue to send their homeless housing needs to Dallas. The homeless prefer to stay in areas such as Irving where they feel safer and less visible as opposed to the density of larger cities.

At the heart of the issue is will we do all we can to support family values?

I support a *non-congregate* shelter in Irving.

4. The revitalization of any area in my opinion requires at least three components. First, there must be a vision of what the revitalized area is to look like. The vision must be realistic and must have the buyin of all stakeholders (residents in that area and city leaders, and business owners). All stakeholders must be willing to adjust to the changes that will precipitate the revitalization.

Second, the infrastructure in the area must be able to support the revitalization vision. That includes water, sewer, street, utilities.

Third, the demographics in the revitalized area must be able to support new business as part of the revitalization. Business decisions are not made by the city, but by business owners based on their feasibility of success. Cities can only provide limited incentives and those incentives might not be enough to drive a business decision to locate there.

In respect to South Irving and Old Downtown specifically, the question of vision must be made clear. What areas of revitalization are needed or wanted. Until that question is answered there is no blueprint to work from. The question that needs to be addressed is what the geographical area is that is deemed South Irving.

There have been millions of dollars of infrastructure already invested by the city in South Irving (south of 183). Most of that infrastructure investment people don't realize because it is water, sewer, drainage, and street infrastructure.

5. As it pertains to Irving, Texas, we need to define what the income population is to be targeted. Affordable housing has different meanings to each of us. When we know the target income levels, we can then recruit affordable housing agencies to partner with the city to accomplish the goal.

We need to develop an affordable housing strategy for the targeted goal (no more consultant studies) and begin to implement it. Some of that is happening now but there needs to be an accelerated effort to bring affordable, attainable and work force housing to Irving. Community Housing Development Corporations need to be engaged more for solutions. The affordable housing inventory cannot be increased without a willingness to increase density, use financing mechanisms such as Tax Credit, city land subsidies, and multi-family facilities. Without that willingness affordable housing efforts are doubtful to be effective.