



Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you running for Mayor?

I was born and raised in Flint and I know we can do better than this. I was blessed to have a great education through the Flint public schools. Today, I live in Flint with my wife and two young kids as do my parents and my grandmother and it's just not right for a place to have the kind of suffering and the lack of opportunity that Flint does now.

Flint has a strong history of change. A century ago Flint changed the world by putting it on wheels. Eighty years ago we changed the world again when workers banded together for the right to bargain in their own interests for respect and economic justice. I know that working together we can change Flint again. We can create good paying jobs in the city, strengthen our neighborhoods, and ensure every student has a great school from pre-school through graduation.

What is your vision for the city and your plans for improvement?

My vision for Flint includes a diverse economy with good paying jobs, strong neighborhoods in all parts of the city, schools that provide a great education for all students preschool through college, and a 21st century City Hall. We need to diversify our economy and create jobs, but that won't happen if we continue to do things the same way we always have. We need to have a bold plan of action. My plan starts with getting the city open for business by cutting the red tape and making it easier to operate, and also cleaning up abandoned properties to be redeveloped.

I will also reorganize city services into neighborhood ward teams. My administration will be run by qualified professionals who mirror the diversity in this community. I will also work closely with City Council. The days of the old battles are gone. We need change in Flint.

What specific steps will you take to work effectively with City Council?

We can no longer afford to keep fighting the battles of the past. I am not running for mayor to settle old scores or restart old conflicts. We have to come together as a united city. The old divisions of black vs white, young vs. old, and north end vs. south end must come to an end. The future has to start today. As mayor, I will work with the city council to serve all citizens.

I will do this by meeting with each of the council members individually. I will work with them to be leaders in the neighborhood plans and the ward teams. With my approach, council members will roll up their sleeves and help provide and direct city services. Together, we will ensure that every part of the city is being served equally by City Hall.

What will be the first thing you do on your first day?

On my first day in office I will hang a big "Open for Business" sign on the front window of city hall. We need to send the message to the rest of the world that Flint is ready to get back to work. We will put all the necessary business forms online and cut through the existing red tape so that businesses can get started quickly, and thereby start employing Flint citizens and start contributing to our tax base.

Later in the day, I will also meet with every available council member and identify how we can work together in the first week and month. This has to be a joint effort with myself, appointed staff, all city workers, the council and the whole community.



What will you do to fix Flint's budget crisis?

Budget cuts need to start at the top. Flint's city government is top heavy and that needs to change immediately. I will appoint fewer mayoral appointees than provided for by the city charter and I will combine job duties for existing positions where appropriate. There are also cost savings we can achieve by adjusting schedules to reduce overtime and cutting wasteful outside contracts.

I will also hire a grant writer to work with all of the city agencies and partners. This will bring in much needed additional funds for programs for kids, safety, neighborhoods and development. This my approach, start with my own staff, then go to cost savings, then grant funds. Personnel will be reduced as a last resort. Stimulus funds will help in a few areas but we can not become dependent on these revenues.

What will you do to bring jobs to Flint?

The 21st century economy never sleeps. I will cut through the red tape at city hall and make sure that all necessary forms to start a new business in Flint are available 24/7 on the city's website. I will work with the city council to pass comprehensive legislation to streamline the new business process in Flint. And make it easier for businesses to get through the regulation and zoning process. I will work to establish neighborhood business centers that provide resources to local entrepreneurs. I will fight to ensure that Flint gets its fair share of the federal stimulus package and that Flint's voice is heard in at the state capitol in Lansing. It takes cooperation from the public sector and businesses to get real economic development and new jobs.

What are your plans for improving Flint's neighborhoods?

We have dozens of unique neighborhoods that make up Flint. Each one has its own challenges and assets. I believe that every neighborhood in Flint can be a great place to live, work, and play and because of that I'm committed to ensuring that every neighborhood receives the full attention of City Hall. I will open a police mini-station in every ward and giving police the tools they need to fight crime in all parts of the city. I will bring together representatives from every city department, the city council, the Flint schools, and concerned community members into a neighborhood action teams that will track every citizen complaint or request for services and make sure that every problem is addressed in a timely fashion.

What will you do to promote education and partner with the schools?

As a product of the Flint school system from kindergarten to 12th grade and through my parents who were both teachers, I believe that I can be an effective champion for the Flint schools from preschool through college. I will visit Flint's classrooms on a regular basis to speak with students and inspire them to work hard, achieve their dreams, and give back to their community.

We also need to explore new city school partnerships to tackle the problems plaguing our city. I believe that there are ways that the city government and the schools can work together to maintain the parks that are adjacent to many of our schools and also incorporate the existing school's security staff with the police department.

I will also create a youth advisory board that will give the students of Flint a voice in current city policies and allow them the opportunity to become part of the solution to Flint's challenges.