

## 8 Questions for Phoenix Candidates – General Election 2020

The Arizona Green Chamber is a non-partisan organization that is working to improve Arizona's future by promoting sustainability-minded companies, products and services. We would like to gain a better understanding of your position on a variety of issues that affect our members and Phoenix. Thank you in advance for providing your thoughts on the questions below by returning this questionnaire to [info@azgreenchamber.org](mailto:info@azgreenchamber.org) by September 18, 2020.

**1. Issue: enterprises and citizens. What do you think are the best policies to inform and incentivize businesses and citizens to adopt energy upgrades, sustainable transportation, and other green infrastructure practices?**

We must continue to develop and deliver programs and incentives that demonstrate value and deliver direct, tangible results for residents and businesses. Just as important, residents and businesses must be included in the planning and vision-setting processes to ensure we have a current and full understanding of their primary challenges and concerns, as well as to promote a sense of ownership and pride in implementing sustainable practices.

I support the expansion and replication of several programs currently underway that demonstrate the cost-benefit of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other sustainable practices to residents and business owners. For example, the City of Phoenix's South Phoenix Village Single-Family Infill Redevelopment Project develops single-family houses that are built with the highest standards of energy efficiency, promoting density and energy savings and involving residents in sustainable practices at the most intimate level of their lives—their homes.

Similarly, the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization programs provide grant opportunities to improve the curb appeal of commercial property, in tandem with utility programs that subsidize energy efficiency improvements for residential, commercial, and industrial customers. These programs provide financial incentives to curtail demand, especially during the utilities' peak times, resulting in joint benefit to the utilities and the customers.

The Green Business Leader Program currently certifies 100 businesses, recognizing improved waste diversion, energy and water conservation, and sustainable purchasing. I support further exploration of opportunities to expand this program, including potential to establish a revolving loan fund to aid businesses in their reduction of energy and water consumption, waste, and transportation emissions.

The continued expansion of our light rail system is imperative for residents and their employers. While we are actively expanding our light rail system through the South Central and Northwest extensions, we now face the new threat of decreased ridership due to public health concerns. We are actively developing sanitization and social distance protocols, as well as marketing materials, to ensure the recent trend of lower ridership does not persist.

Lastly, policies like the Walkable Urban Code downtown and in transit corridors are essential to drive sustainable urban design and promote green infrastructure implementation. Residents and businesses benefit from denser, more dynamic urban environments that allow for multi-modal transit options such as walking and biking.

**2. Issue: water. Given the current strain on water resources due to a 20+ drought in the watershed that supplies the Central Arizona Project, what policies, strategies or incentives would you either pursue or support, if elected, to ensure our long-term water supply?**

Phoenix has a strong legacy of water conservation. Already, the city reuses nearly all wastewater on crops, wetlands, and energy production. Through banking water, repurposing wastewater, and implementing efficiency and conservation practices we can ensure prudent use of our most precious resource.

While water that is delivered to residents comes from renewable surface water supplies, Phoenix has banked millions of acre-feet of water to be saved for the future. I support continued creative regional collaborations, like our water-sharing agreement with Tucson, to conserve water and protect against drought and a changing climate.

To prepare for the potentially drastic changes in surface water availability and the ability of reservoirs to recover from drought, the city is preparing to adapt demand management strategies and bolster future infrastructure capacity. Water infrastructure improvements, like the Drought Pipeline Project, will provide more flexibility to move water to where it is needed. Infrastructure improvements like the pipeline project can be financed using sustainability bonds through the recent development of the Green and Sustainability Bond Framework, resulting in cost savings and promoting increased investment in sustainability projects.

Further, I support the continued efforts of the city-wide Internal Water Efficiency Task Force that monitors water used in municipal operations, resulting in a decrease of more than 46 million gallons of water. The Water Conservation Ad Hoc Committee also provides valuable insight from residents and representatives of the non-profit, private and public sectors. The ad hoc focuses on identifying strategies for long-term culture change among residents and entities. We must continue to identify, develop, and implement incentive programs to continue this positive trajectory.

Lastly, we must promote solutions-multiplying solutions such as green infrastructure and low-impact development solutions (ie. bioswales, curb cuts and extensions, permeable pavement, harvesting basins etc.). Green infrastructure solutions promote storm water filtration and control, self-sufficiency of trees and greenery, and mitigation of the urban heat island effect. A Green Infrastructure/ Low Impact Development handbook was created by the ASU Sustainable Cities Network and the City of Scottsdale. Our Planning and Development Department is currently

working to incorporate its tools and recommendations into their review and approval process, and our Streets and Transportation Department is including eight out of ten of the handbook's recommendations in an update of the street design guidelines. I support further integration of these design guidelines, as well as exploration of potential incentive programs.

**3. Issue: renewable energy. If elected, what policies, strategies or incentives would you pursue or support to encourage the growth of renewable energy jobs? What policies, strategies or incentives would you pursue or support to encourage the use of renewable energy by citizens?**

Achieving a net-zero energy grid by 2050 will require an economy-wide transition and alignment. Renewable energy jobs are already rapidly expanding, but long-term policy implementation to provide certainty to the market as well as workforce development strategies are essential mechanisms to encourage this trend. At the end of 2019, Arizona ranked 6th nationally for solar jobs at 7,777, and the Phoenix metro area held nearly 90% of those jobs. While this is a point of pride, Arizona should be leading the nation in solar jobs.

At the state level, I voiced my support for updated energy rules. Since 2006, the Renewable Energy Standard and Tariff (REST) has delivered significant benefits to Arizona utilities, companies, and residents in the form of avoided energy and generation costs, water savings, pollution reduction, technology cost reductions, and new jobs. Expanding REST to require 100% clean energy by 2050 with interim targets for 2030 and 2035 would help our state build on this success. By enabling investment in renewables and energy efficiency, the REST and EEES can drive economic and clean job growth.

Municipal operations are responsible for nearly 4% of Phoenix's total GHG emissions from electricity use. As a major consumer of electricity, the city can leverage its purchasing power to procure 100 percent renewable electricity for municipal operations. Ways to accomplish this action include, but are not limited to, using power purchase agreements and partnering with local utilities on renewable energy projects.

City-owned property should continue to be evaluated for site options for RE projects, including brownfields, retired landfills, and water services sites for both solar and hydropower electricity generation.

**4. Issue: waste and recycling. A number of Valley municipalities have had to limit, or even altogether abandon, recycling efforts due to the inability to find third party companies willing to handle and process recycled materials. If elected, what policies, strategies or incentives would you either pursue or support to address this situation?**

I'm proud of the overwhelming community support of the solid waste fee increase that was approved by the City Council in February—Phoenicians understand the value of recycling and investment in a circular economy.

Our current waste diversion rate is above the national average at 36%. COVID-19 has presented additional barriers to achieving our interim goal toward zero waste of 40% diversion by the end of 2020. I remain committed to finding solutions to meet this goal as quickly as possible. There are technological, policy, and education strategies that can be implemented.

Technological solutions, such as the implementation of optical sorters that more effectively capture plastic and paper, as well as anti-wrap disc screen that prevents bags from clogging the system, allow us to process more recyclables to be processed as commodity recyclables.

I am also proud that our community recognizes the essential role of composting services in reducing waste and promoting regenerative food systems. Food waste diversion is another key area for further investment that not only reduces waste sent to the landfill but also reduces methane emissions. Our state-of-the-art compost facility currently processes up to 55,000 tons of compost per year and has the potential to expand to process up to 220,000 tons of compost.

Lastly, I support Reimagine Phoenix and the continued efforts of the Resource Innovation Campus and Public Works Department to explore and develop market solutions for recyclables.

**5. Issue: heat mitigation. The entire Valley has seen a steady rise in the last few decades of higher average temperatures during the summer months. If elected, what policies, strategies or incentives would you either pursue or support to mitigate the human and economic impacts of increasing heat?**

Effectively managing and mitigating the effects of extreme heat is an essential factor in becoming the most sustainable desert city on the planet. Long-range strategies for urban heat island mitigation and immediate resources and strategies to support residents in the extreme heat of our summers are equally important and must be pursued in tandem.

For immediate heat relief, we have a strong foundation in place through our participation in the Maricopa Association of Governments Heat Relief Network. Churches, businesses, and public facilities serve as heat relief sites in which residents can access water and a place to cool down. This network must be expanded. Planning should begin in the Spring of each year to identify existing gaps and opportunities in preparation for the summer heat.

Due to COVID-19 and resulting closures of the heat relief sites, the City of Phoenix Convention Center opened its doors to individuals experiencing homelessness to rest during the day and receive meal services. Additionally, the city partnered with St. Vincent de Paul and the Human Services Campus to install shade coverings. I aim to identify additional collaborations and strategies to develop a stronger safety net for individuals vulnerable to extreme heat.

Mid and long-term strategies are essential to mitigate the urban heat island effect and its impacts on health and quality of life. Strategies must include materials used in the built environment, tree plantings, manufactured shade, and prioritization of historically underinvested neighborhoods that lack adequate shade and green space.

Phoenix's Heat Ready initiative encompasses these mid and long-term strategies and coordinates efforts between city departments and external partners. Phoenix is lucky to have ASU, a heat research powerhouse, as a partner in informing heat mitigation projects and tracking metrics of effectiveness.

The Tree and Shade Master Plan set the goal to achieve a 25% tree and shade canopy by 2030 and is supported by over \$5 million in annual funding. Trees are incredibly important and should be viewed as public health infrastructure, offering a multitude of benefits including shade, heat mitigation, carbon sequestration, and contributing to better local air quality. I aim to identify additional funding mechanisms and to explore the value of establishing a tree administrator, as recommended by the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission, to drive tree plantings to achieve the tree and shade canopy goal.

Through walkshed mapping tools and based on community input, we must prioritize tree plantings in commonly traversed pathways, transit corridors, and neighborhoods with higher temperatures. Parks and green space also offer essential health benefits, and I will continue to ensure historically underinvested communities are prioritized in the placement of new or expanded green space.

**6. Issue: carbon emissions and air pollution. What policies, strategies or incentives would you pursue, support or incentivize to reduce carbon emissions and help clean the air?**

The largest emitting sector in Phoenix is the stationary energy sector, which includes residential and commercial buildings, manufacturing industries, agriculture, and electricity transmission and distribution energy losses. Expansion of renewable energy projects and energy efficiency policies and incentives are crucial to reducing these emissions.

More than a third of GHG emissions in Phoenix come from vehicles. Along with expansion of public transit options, promotion of alternative fuels and electric vehicles is essential to reduce emissions. Currently, 62 percent of fuel used by the city fleet is alternative fuels, and electric vehicles are being transitioned into the fleet when feasible and cost effective. Electric vehicle charging stations are an important component to increasing EV use in municipal operations and across the city. I support regional coordination to plan EV infrastructure implementation.

I also support the continued investigation of opportunities to transition other vehicles, like ground support equipment at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, to electric options using funding mechanisms like federal grants. One example of a federal-local partnership that results in tangible action to reduce emissions is the city's use of federal DERA grants, received through

the EPA Cleaner Trucks Initiative. Through this initiative, the City of Phoenix is purchasing ultra-low NOx CNG trucks to replace older, polluting units in our fleet. These trucks deliver the essential services of trash and recycling pick-up, and now their service delivery contributes to our emissions reduction goals and cleaner air in our community.

Along with replacement of fossil fuels with alternative fuels and electricity, mechanisms to capture waste gases like methane are important to improving local air quality. We've seen great success in projects like our partnership with Amaresco at the 91<sup>st</sup> Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant. Amaresco treats, transfers, and sells the captured biogas as a renewable energy commodity, expected to result in emissions reductions roughly equivalent to taking more than 70,000 cars off the road for one year.

Another important component of trip reduction is the promotion of compact urban areas within the city that provide the resources and services residents depend on, allowing residents to live, work, and play in walking or biking distance. Plan PHX, the general plan updated each decade, calls for the development of compact, self-sufficient centers within each of the 15 villages and I support continued promotion of this model. Similarly, I am pursuing development of an employment corridor in Southwest Phoenix to provide jobs and resources. Expanding opportunities on the west side will mitigate the cross-city trips currently taken by residents in the West Valley seeking employment opportunities in the East Valley.

**7. Issue: resilient energy hubs. Some Valley governments have adopted plans to address the human risks of rising temperatures. One idea is to create "resilience hubs" at fire stations, community centers, schools and churches that are outfitted with solar panels and battery storage. In the event of an emergency that compromises the electrical grid, these resilience hubs will ensure that first responders and evacuees have access to electricity and cooling. If elected, would you advocate, support or incentivize a similar concept?**

The City of Phoenix is currently working to install microgrids in water and wastewater treatment plants that serve the City's redundancy needs and utilities' long-term energy goals. In times of crisis, this capability is important to the continued operation of water and wastewater treatment plants. Once the crisis is resolved, the microgrid can then be reconnected to the traditional grid. This is also useful if energy generation in the surrounding community is disrupted and can provide resilience and stability to the grid.

I recognize the immense value in increasing grid stability and resilience and support further exploration of opportunities to develop community energy projects, including microgrids.

**8. Issue: healthy food systems.** Sustainable access to healthy, sustainable, abundant, sources of food have risen to be a critical issues for all levels of society. Solutions have included increased access to farmers markets, encouraging urban agriculture, reducing food waste, government coordination with local farmers, the creation of detailed food security plans, the dedication of personnel to improve access, and more. What is your point of view on the related issues of food security and reducing food waste?

PlanPHX emphasizes the importance of residents having access to healthy food and sets measures for access within a quarter mile. Engaging children and youth in healthy food education, as well as increasing educational opportunities for residents to learn more about growing, cooking, and the national value of healthy eating were primary feedback points we heard from the community.

The Local Food Action Plan approved by the City Council in January provides a detailed roadmap to develop healthy food systems that support local famers, enhance food security, and promote healthy and sustainable food sources and diets.

Businesses that produce, process, distribute, and sell local and healthy food should be recognized as integral to the economy and encouraged to grow and thrive in Phoenix. Coordination with internal and external economic development professionals is needed to evaluate the potential of the food system as a local industry cluster. Opportunities should be provided to connect food production businesses with available land. Phoenix has the potential to be an agricultural technology innovation hub, with a focus on farming that is water efficient, restorative, and adaptable to the arid climate and high temperatures.