



2023

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

VOTER GUIDE

WARD 9

MARCH 7TH, APRIL 4TH ELECTION DAY



Important Dates



Register to vote by 02/08



Request a mail in absentee ballot by 2/22



Vote absentee in person by 03/06

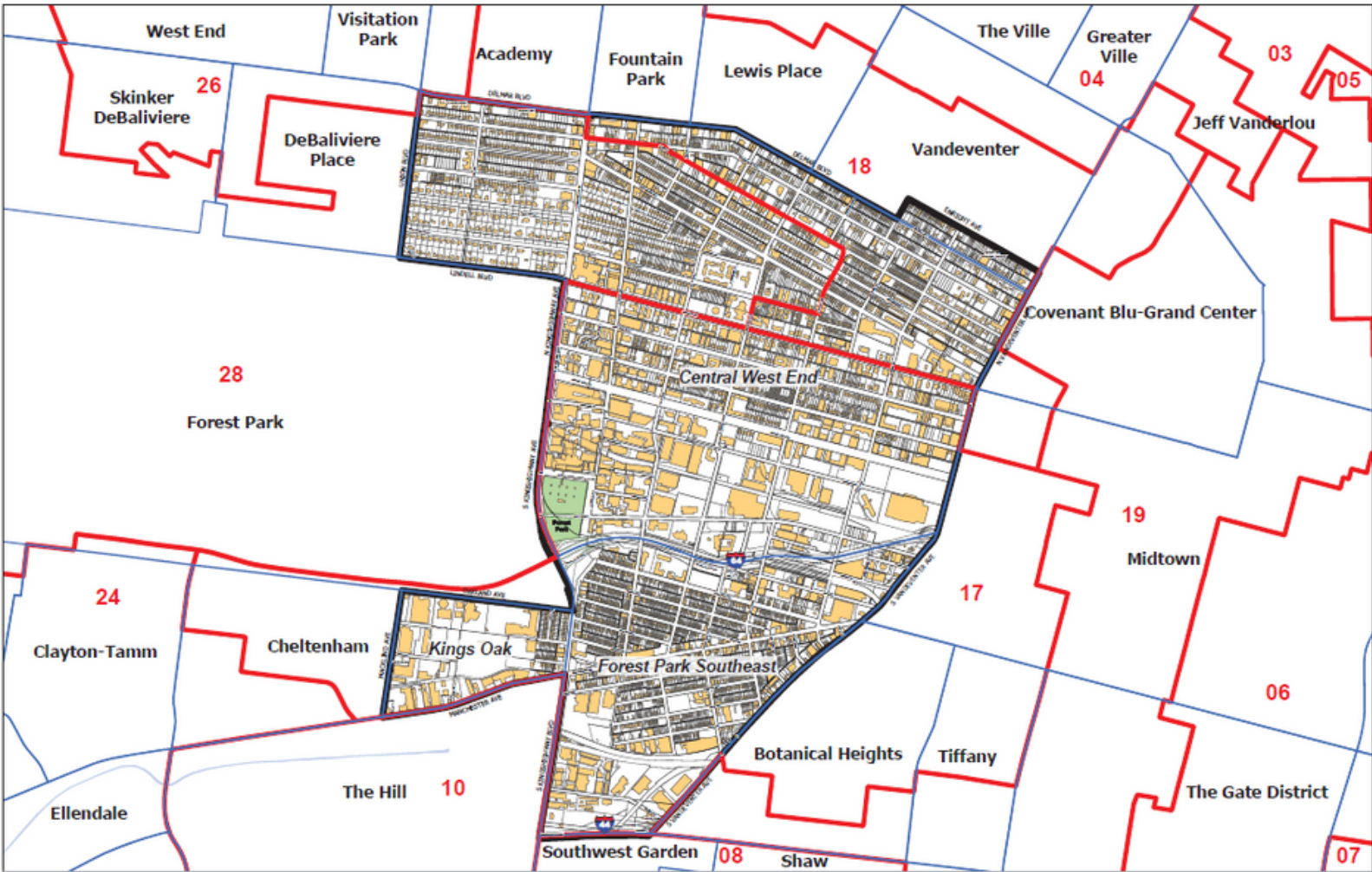


March 7th, April 4th ELECTION DAY


Role of the BOA

The Board of Aldermen is the legislative body of the City of St. Louis and creates, passes, and amends local laws, as well as approves the City's budget every year. There are now fourteen aldermen, after ward reduction, one from each ward in the City and a Board of Aldermen President.

**All candidates running for the Board of Alderman were sent these questions.
Answers are copied verbatim without any editing.**



Legend

-  WARD 9 2021
-  WARDS 2011
-  NEIGHBORHOODS
-  BLOCKS
-  PARCELS
-  BUILDING (updated March 2021)
-  PARKS

WARD 9

Adopted on 12/27/2021

City of St. Louis - Planning & Urban Design Agency



CITY OF ST. LOUIS
PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN
 AGENCY

This map was prepared for the City of St. Louis by the Planning and Urban Design Agency. The information contained herein is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contract. The preparation of this map was funded in part through a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Community Development Administration, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Map Printed: JUNE 2021 by AM
 MAP FILE: 21-01-0001-0001-Map

Voting Locations

Polls open from 6am-7pm

YOU CAN VOTE AT ANY LOCATION.

Buder Library

4401 Hampton Ave

Central Library

1303 Olive St

Friendly Temple Missionary Church

5544 Dr. MLK Dr

Hamilton Elementary School

5819 West Minster Pl

Missouri School For The Blind

3867 Magnolia Ave

Nance Elementary School

8959 Riverview Blvd

Newstead M. B. Church

725 Bellerive Blvd

Our Lady of Sorrows Church

5020 Rhodes Ave

Salvation Army Temple Corps

2740 Arsenal St

Schlafly Library

225 N. Euclid Ave

Woodward Elementary School

725 Bellerive Blvd

Voter ID Requirements

Show one of the forms of acceptable identification and sign the poll book to obtain your ballot:

- A nonexpired Missouri driver or non-driver license;
- A nonexpired military ID, including a veteran's ID card;
- A nonexpired United States passport; or
- Another photo ID issued by the United States or the state of Missouri which is either not expired or expired after the date of the most recent general election.

Ward 9 Candidates



Tina Pihl



Michael Browning



Michael Gras

Question 1

Please provide a 250-word introduction explaining why you feel that voters in your ward should elect you as their representation to the Board of Aldermen.

Tina Pihl

I humbly ask voters in the New 9th Ward to re-elect me to the Board of Aldermen because I have been a strong voice at City Hall for you as taxpayers, especially in the old 17th Ward.

I focus on issues affecting voters. I address problems through listening, understanding, working together, and utilizing my professional city planning expertise. I have over twenty years of equitable housing and community development experience with a master's in city planning from MIT and a bachelor's of architecture from Yale University.

My expertise is in how to make neighborhoods and cities THRIVE and not just survive. I use my city planning experience to implement the best legislative city planning practices for our ward and city, in order for our community to succeed. I strive to improve the quality of life for our families, seniors, youth, teachers, and city employees.

I have proven to have the courage to advocate for the community in order to change the trajectory of our economy and population decline and to mitigate the continued hollowing out of our urban edges.

I feel voters in our new ward should re-elect me because I do not waiver from my guiding principles of:

A = Accountability

C = Community

E = Equity

We can make the right decisions together when guided by these principles. Voters should vote for me because I have a solid track record in lifting up neighborhoods and keeping neighborhoods strong. I don't just talk about ideas, I implement them.

Michael Browning

Our ward needs an alderperson who will do the hard work necessary to be responsive to the people in their word, introduce legislation that moves the city forward, and address the longstanding systemic issues of St. Louis. I have knocked doors for Democrats from Oakville to Ballwin to the many neighborhoods of St. Louis City. I heard from voters in Wells-Goodfellow, Dutchtown, Hamilton Heights, and of course, the Central West End, Forest Park Southeast, and King's Oak. My policies have evolved from those conversations. I listen to people's needs, and then try to meet those needs. The reduction of the Board of Alderpersons is a great opportunity to reshape our government to better serve our people, but we need 14 alderpersons who are going to work hard for our people. I have proven that I am that person, and I am ready to continue the hard work to reach the best outcome for our city and our people.

Michael Gras

Ward reduction, hundreds of millions of dollars of federal investment and Rams settlement money, and new faces in several important City offices has presented a unique opportunity for change. It is more important than ever to elect smart, experienced leaders who can work with folks from all parts of St. Louis to build a city that works for all of us.

I'm running to be Alderman for the new 9th Ward because I am the only candidate in the race that has the perspective and experience for this crucial time in our City's history.

Question 2

What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of an Alderperson?

Tina Pihl

The most important roles of an Alderperson are to:

1. Advocate strongly for the residents we represent and mitigate the city challenges our residents may encounter.
2. Ensure that the citizens voice is heard, understood and included in policy decisions and legislation. This is paramount in what we do.
3. Invest the time to properly evaluate legislative policies that impact constituents, city residents and the city's workforce.
4. Make decisions with the guiding principles of ACE (Accountability, Community and Equity)
5. Hold ourselves accountable to the residents of the city with consistently ethical actions and practices.

Michael Browning

Between the workers at City Hall and the many local organizations doing the work, I recognize that I will not always have all of the answers. My job is to provide a platform for the community's voice and advocate for smart changes that work to dismantle the inequities in our legislative systems.

You deserve an alderperson and a city that shows up for you. We can do so much better by our residents, and as your alderperson, I'll work to give you the services and representation that you deserve.

Michael Gras

The most important role of an Alderperson is to advocate for the needs of their constituents and to ensure that their voices are heard in the city government. However, it is also crucial to recognize that in order to move the entire city forward, we must advance legislation that benefits all of St. Louis, not just our individual wards.

As an Alderperson, my role will be to listen to the concerns and needs of my constituents and work to address them in a timely and effective manner. This includes providing responsive constituent services, working to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and promoting economic development.

At the same time, it's crucial to also understand that the issues that affect one ward are often shared by other parts of the city. Therefore, it is important to collaborate with other Alderpersons and members of the city government to advance legislation that addresses the needs of the entire city. This includes promoting policies that foster equity, transparency, accountability, and growth for our residents.

That said, I do not believe alders should be in the middle of developer negotiations with the City or be responsible for infrastructure maintenance in their wards. For too long, alders have treated their wards like their own individual fiefdoms and that needs to change.

Question 3

What is your plan for maximizing community participation around legislative processes in order to make things more accessible and transparent in St. Louis?

Tina Pihl

We need to improve all aspects of how we legislate in St. Louis.

First, all meetings need to take place when the largest number of people can attend them – in the evenings and weekends. There should be multiple meetings. In St. Louis County, most municipalities have their council/alder meetings in the evening.

Second, residents and individuals need more time to review what is being proposed. At a minimum, there needs to be at least one calendar week given to people to review legislation before it can be voted on.

Third, individuals should be able to access city information not just through a computer or going to City Hall, but also through public library videos, podcast format audio information, and printed materials distributed.

Fourth, the method of receiving feedback needs to be as varied as giving information out – written, speaking, recording a voicemail on dedicated phone lines, and testifying in-person. And, written testimony should be read aloud during the meeting.

Fifth, childcare must be provided during public meetings, so people who are parents can attend and focus on the discussions.

Sixth, the City of St. Louis website should be upgraded to be more user friendly, intuitive, and transparent in searching and accessing information.

Lastly, we need a comprehensive vision for the city beyond the current silos and outdated city plans. We should develop and adopt a new, comprehensive, citywide master plan that maximizes community participation, and makes the legislative process more accessible and transparent to all.

Michael Browning

Effective community engagement is incredibly hard. Communicating around development projects, important legislation, general ward updates all may require different approaches. Reaching out to residents is not a one-size fits all strategy. As alderperson, I would work hard to engage people with non-traditional work hours, Disability and differing levels of ability, and technological access. The only way to reach that goal is through differentiating outreach: employing newsletters, building and neighborhood meetings, social media, door-to-door canvassing, and tapping into community structures to make sure messages reach people where they are.

This process needs to be intentional, and that intentionality also needs to extend to how we increase accessibility at city hall. I support accessibility-centered changes to the way the Board of Alderpersons conducts business, like using image descriptions across city social media, and increasing seating availability at public events.

One of the first bills I would like to introduce if elected is Board Bill 65 from the 2019-2020 session. It would require that all votes of the Board of Aldermen and their committees be recorded with a record of how each alderperson voted, and that record be posted to the city website. In addition, audio and video

of all government meetings (boards, committees, and commissions) should be recorded and posted online for future viewing, so residents can check what was said by whom in past meetings. This level of transparency is simple, but it is essential for accountability.

Michael Gras

My plan for maximizing community participation around legislative processes in St. Louis is to make the process as accessible and transparent as possible. One of the key ways we can do this is by providing for both in-person and Zoom hybrid meetings for committee meetings, which are the forum in our legislative process for resident input. This will allow residents who are unable to attend in person to still participate and have their voices heard, but still allow folks that might not be as comfortable with technology to show up and participate.

Additionally, we should have clear, standard, and well-publicized rules and procedures for residents to sign up to speak at committee meetings. Often, residents are not aware of how to participate or when meetings are taking place, so it is important to make the process easy to understand and navigate. As far as specific areas, we must increase transparency and accessibility by making our incentive process more open and transparent. Far too many residents don't trust our incentive process and believes it gives off off the impression of corruption. By making the process open and transparent, we will help increase the trust of the community on the legislative process.

Finally, as an individual alder, I will work to keep my residents as informed as possible about the happenings in City government and let them know of opportunities to participate in the legislative process. This includes providing regular updates on legislation and committee meetings, and encouraging residents to reach out to me with any questions or concerns they may have.

Question 4

TIF: Although TIFs and other sorts of tax incentives and credits are intended to be used to spur development in blighted areas, in St. Louis they are overwhelmingly used in wealthier areas. What should be done differently (please be specific)?

Tina Pihl

We must educate residents about TIFs, other tax incentives, and how they work, so that citizens can advocate for their communities and hold city officials and staff accountable.

On October 24, 2022, I partnered with the American Federation of Teachers - Local 420 to bring Good Jobs First, a national tax incentive watchdog group, to St. Louis to educate the public about tax incentives. Almost 150 individuals attended the forum.

I suggest the City of St. Louis consider the forum's recommendations:

encouraging residents to reach out to me with any questions or concerns they may have.

- Make TIF reform a litmus-test issue for public office
- Require public TIF hearings in the neighborhoods during non-work hours
- Robust online disclosure of proposals
- Coalesce with allies in Kansas City and other areas for state reform

- Show TIF diversions on property tax bills
- Incorporate anti-displacement measures
- Require significant affordable housing and community benefits on every TIF deal

Additionally,

- Tax incentive legislation should have all documents in their final form before passage by commissions, boards, or aldermen. Legislation should not be approved with incomplete data.
- Reform the City's campaign finance laws. Developers give large amounts of money to candidates without scrutiny. Rich developers peddle their influence and exploit a system that, while being legal, is not right.
- Independently audit TIF analysis and project performance outcomes.
- Improve transparency and accountability at St. Louis Development Corporation
- Curb the misuse of TIFs in wealthy areas. Developers should compete for a one-time pool of tax incentives in these specific areas.
- I will continue to hold educational public forums on tax incentives.

Michael Browning

We need to modernize our approach to development by addressing our city's over-reliance on subsidies while at the same time decreasing the barriers to building. An attorney shouldn't be required to navigate the St. Louis development process. All tax abatements and TIF's should go through a single body (instead of one of five). Ideally, abatements should only be approved by elected officials who are accountable to the public.

If subsidy is sought on a project, I will work to bring St. Louis Public Schools and other affected entities to the table. I will not rule out the use of incentives or TIF's because they can be a useful tool to enable needed development, but I will promise to use them judiciously with the input of the community and with an eye towards creating a good deal for the city. As we reform the process, I want to move it out of the hands of a single alderperson, where it has been a recipe for corruption.

Additionally, I want to explore alternate incentive mechanisms by learning from examples across the country – like zoning reform, permit waivers, pre-approved building plans, and community land trusts – and identify ways we can lower barriers for community members to become developers with a focus on bringing our vacant buildings back to life.

Michael Gras

We must bring more transparency to the TIF process. This can be done by creating an open system where everyone knows the rules, procedures, and expectations ahead of time. This will help to ensure that developers and community members are aware of what is expected of them and can make informed decisions about how to participate in the process. Additionally, it's important to bring accountability to these deals by creating systems where we can ensure developers are holding up their end of the bargain. This can be done by requiring regular reporting and monitoring of development projects, and holding developers accountable for meeting their commitments.

Tax incentives and credits, such as TIFs, are intended to spur development in blighted areas and to help revitalize communities. However, in St. Louis, they have been used to create inequity. We must find opportunities for development and investment in areas that have traditionally been neglected in the city. This is crucial as the problem isn't that we have been using TIFs in wealthy areas, it's that we haven't done enough investment in other areas. We must find opportunities to leverage these tools in all areas of our city, not just the wealthy areas.

Question 5

What role do you believe that Alderpersons should play in education in the City of St. Louis?

Tina Pihl

Our public schools are funded mostly with property taxes. When rich developers receive tax abatements, our schools, children, and teachers often suffer. Generations of school children are left behind and lost due to the lack of resources to effectively educate them. We cannot pay competitive salaries to our teachers because resources are not there.

Exacerbating the problem of educating public school children is that on any school day, over 4,000 school children are unhoused.

We must deepen our collaboration with the Board of Education and the American Federation of Teachers-Local 420 to secure resources needed for quality education.

We should support the moratorium on expanding charter schools until the hemorrhaging of our school closures stops, and the St. Louis Public Schools experience an increase in children receiving quality education.

Currently, 100% of PILOTs (real property tax payments) are captured by the TIF and are used to pay the bonds back. This real property tax is the tax revenue that normally would go to the taxing jurisdictions, such as the schools. Instead, it currently pays off the TIF bonds. Alderpersons could legislate that only 50% of the real property tax payments goes toward this debt repayment so that schools can see immediate benefit instead of waiting for 23-years from a maximum TIF. I would sponsor this legislation.

AFT-Local 420 and the School Board are empowered to make choices that best support students. As Alderpersons, we need to be cognizant of the direct and adverse impact of development incentives on school budgets.

Michael Browning

The Board of Education is an elected body, and should be the voice for the needs of public education in St. Louis. The Board of Alderpeople's role should be to avoid undermining the tax base, which SLPS draws the large bulk of their funding from. Otherwise, I am inclined to listen to the Board of Education on actual educational policy.

The Board of Alderpeople can, however, work on a number of issues that are connected to education. One area that I want to focus on is housing stability. I have read that 20% of SLPS kids are unhoused, and even more will transfer between schools multiple times in a year because of housing instability. This makes quality education extremely difficult, if not impossible. Tenant's rights, including just-cause eviction and a right to counsel (currently at the BoA), are vital to keeping people in their homes.

Michael Gras

As an alderperson, I believe that our role in education in the City of St. Louis should be limited. I am a strong supporter of our City's democratically elected school board, and I believe that they should be the ones in charge of all public schools in the City. The school board is elected by the people and accountable to the community and it is their job to make decisions about education for the city.

Relatedly, I also believe that charter schools do not have a place in our City. I support the continuation of the moratorium on new charters, and I believe that we should let the failing ones fail, while working to bring the ones worth saving under the purview of our democratically elected SLPS school board.

As alderpersons, our role should be to support the school board in their efforts to improve SLPS by ensuring steady funding through new development and finding partnerships that directly benefit teachers and students. This can be done by encouraging new development in the City and making sure that the revenue generated is directed to the schools, and by building partnerships with local businesses and organizations that can provide resources and support for teachers and students.

Question 6

How would you more effectively address intra community violence and harm in the city of St. Louis, and more specifically in your ward?

Tina Pihl

We cannot arrest and prosecute all people into better lives. We know that everyone needs strong nurturing. However, due to systemic racism, bias and discrimination, concentrated poverty, economic instability, limited healthcare access, education and housing, these health inequities create intra community violence and harm in the City of St. Louis.

Crime is a huge issue in the City of St. Louis. We need to move away from policing crime to preventing crime. These are tactics for very different problems to solve. Policing crime is reactionary. It addresses the acute wound. It solves the problem immediately, but often only temporarily. Policing crime does not address the symptom or the root cause of the intra community violence and trauma that takes days, months, years and decades to change.

I don't see more police or more prosecution as a way to deter crime at the root cause. Making sure people have access to resources and clear pathways toward compelling futures through good education, safe housing, a thriving wage and daily nourishing food, this will decrease our rampant crime. Someone who has a long and fulfilling life to look forward to, will be their own deterrent from crime.

I will continue to address intra community violence and harm through the harm reduction initiative I have launched in the 17th Ward.

Michael Browning

The city is in the best position to understand its community's needs, but it is often not in the best position to address those needs. We need the support of the state and federal governments to fund programs, provide housing, and implement programming to prevent violence. At the city level, we can: I agree with these points from the People's Plan:

- Provide funding for non-violent first responders, violence interrupters, and alternative crisis response and resolution, including the Cure Violence program.
- Ensure that local police are not being trained in military tactics, including through exchange programs with domestic or foreign military units.

I also believe that:

- State violence is violence, and understand that police killings and deaths in incarceration are every bit as violent as a street shooting
- Poverty is primary driver of intra community violence—implementing anti-poverty measures like Universal Basic Income will save lives

Michael Gras

Support violence interrupter programs: Programs that utilize trained community members, often with personal experience with violence, to intervene in potentially violent situations have shown promise in reducing violence in communities. I would support and advocate for the expansion of these programs in my ward and throughout the City.

Alleviate poverty: Economic insecurity can be a major contributor to violence in communities. I would support policies and programs that aim to alleviate poverty, such as increasing the minimum wage, providing affordable housing, and expanding access to education and job training.

Support youth programs: Young people are often at the highest risk of being involved in violence, whether as victims or perpetrators. I would support programs that provide positive alternatives to violence, such as after-school programs, mentorship, and job training.

Advocate against state gun laws: As an alderperson, I would use my expanded platform and voice to advocate against Republican state gun laws in Jefferson City that make it easy for individuals to carry firearms without a permit.

Question 7

One of the first bills proposed in this upcoming State legislative session included returning local control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department back to the state of Missouri. What is your stance on local control and pre-emptive attacks on local policy?

Tina Pihl

I believe the City of St. Louis must have local control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department. For over 150 years, St. Louis City and Kansas City were the only cities in the State of Missouri that did not control their own police departments.

Pre-emptive attacks on local policy are an overreach. It's anti-democratic. We need the citizens who live and work here to make the choices for the rest of us who reside and are employed here.

At the same time, we need more accountability from the police to the citizens they serve. I propose a wider reach for the Citizen's Oversight Board. For instance, provide the Citizen's Oversight Board resources and investigative powers. Give them the ability to appoint or seek out their own independent council. Provide them enough funding and power to hire investigators to research cases.

We also must END the practice of permitting the subsidizing of the Police Chief's income by any organization outside of the City itself. This is a conflict of interest. This is an unacceptable City practice.

Michael Browning

It is important that SLMPD remains under local control. This is a power grab by the outstate to wield authority over the economic engine of the state. Not only does local control of SLMPD facilitate coordination of police and other parts of city government, it enhances accountability.

The state government's encroachment on St. Louis governance (as seen with the \$15 minimum wage, state attacks on St. Louis police control, and broader state-wide issues like reproductive access) creates considerable barriers to justice, equity, and liberation. This is part of the reason why I knocked hundreds of doors last year for non-city Democrats, including Melissa Greenstein, Colin Lovett, and Ann Zimpfer, in the hopes of breaking the supermajority.

Michael Gras

I am strongly opposed to any efforts to take away local control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department and return it to the state of Missouri. Local control of our police department is essential for ensuring that the needs and concerns of our community are being met. It allows for accountability and transparency, which are crucial for building trust between law enforcement and the community they serve.

I firmly believe that the decision on how to police our city should be made by the community, through their elected officials, not by state legislators who may not be familiar with the specific needs and concerns of our community.

Additionally, these proposals are racist and are being used to undermine the voice and power of communities of color, who have historically been disproportionately impacted by policing issues. As an alderperson, I will be committed to fight against any attempts to take away local control of our police department and to stand up for the rights of our community.

Question 8

In what ways should the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department be more accountable to the residents of this city? How would you ensure that SLMPD achieves those standards of accountability?

Tina Pihl

The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department will be more accountable to the residents of this city through the Citizens Overnight Board. The Board would have the necessary resources and investigative powers to do their job. They would have the ability to appoint or seek out their own independent counsel. They would have enough funding and power to hire investigators to research cases. It is through the Citizens Overnight Board that we can ensure SLMPD achieves the standards of accountability.

Michael Browning

There is more that we can do to help police be more accountable to the residents of this city. I am the only candidate in the race for 9th Ward alderperson who is willing to talk about this honestly, even though the media is intent on misrepresenting the policy. In 2022, the Center for Policing Equity presented a report called Reimagining Public Safety in St. Louis. It included several good ideas like:

- Dispatching Community Service Officers. Using these unarmed people to respond to low-risk situations de-escalates potential opportunities for harm, and will save lives, officer and civilian.
- Establishing a review process for body-worn camera footage.
- Improving data collection of vehicle and pedestrian stops.
- Strengthening SLMPD policy on Taser and pepper spray use.

During my time talking to people in the 9th Ward, I have heard that these are policies most residents want. Despite attempts to characterize these policies as radical, they are common sense reforms that will save lives, which should be our highest priority.

Michael Gras

First, I am pleased that the City of St. Louis has finally passed a civilian review board that has subpoena power. This outside check on the department will help hold problem officers accountable for their actions and improve trust between the police and the community. I look forward to the COB getting underway and will support them however they need.

I also believe strengthening the role of community liaisons within the police department is crucial for fostering better communication and understanding between the police and the community they serve. By providing community leaders with a single point of contact that is responsible for a limited area, we can help bring the community closer to the police.

I am also encouraged that our new Police Chief purports to be a data guru. Collecting and analyzing data on police stops, use of force, and complaints will help to identify patterns of problem behavior and allow for targeted interventions.

Question 9

With the passage of BB 116, we will see the beginnings of a Universal Basic Income program for residents of the city. The current program outlines that you have to be a city resident, have a child(ren) under the age of 18 enrolled in the public school district, and not exceed 170% of the Federal Poverty Level. How do you feel about this Universal Basic Income? If you support UBI, how would you seek to expand this program to include those that don't fall under these current requirements? (I.E. Homeless, those city residents who chose to enroll students into city charter schools, etc.)

Tina Pihl

The Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a great program to lift people out of poverty. It is a program that I wholeheartedly supported when I voted on BB 116. The Next City article called, "Guaranteed Income Initiatives are Moving from Pilots to Policies" (December 2022) educated me about UBIs before I voted on this board bill. The article provided me with research that backed up the fact that these programs have been a success in cities across the nation.

I shared this research with my colleagues at the Board of Alder and they found it very helpful in their decision making process in supporting this program. As an Alderwoman, I am a proponent of using city planning best practices, as outlined in this article, in which an evaluative dashboard of UBI programs across the country is discussed.

This research shows how UBIs are becoming policies because there has been so much success in these pilot programs in the United States. I believe UBI is something we must implement to truly deal with the root causes of crime, poverty, and negative health and social outcomes. UBI is preventive medicine and crime deterrent. UBI has shown to increase public safety, reverse poverty and the negative social economic determinants of health.

I would seek to expand this program to include individuals and families that do not fall within the current criteria for our city program. I would grow it by obtaining funding through public-private partnerships with universities, hospitals, medical/health agencies and philanthropic organizations.

Michael Browning

Universal Basic Income is an effective means to lift people out of poverty. Pilot programs in other cities have proven this, and though it is not a direct cash payment program nor universal, the expansive child tax credit lifted 2.3 million children out of poverty. The more eligibility requirements that are added, the harder it is for people to access needed assistance. Universal basic income removes these barriers by making financial assistance a guarantee.

As a long term goal, the city should implement a program that uses tax payments as a starting point, similar to how the stimulus checks were distributed in the past couple of years. A central office can administer the program and accept requests that can be submitted online, through mail, or in person from anyone who is behind on their taxes. The information should be confidential, and kept private from law enforcement or the Collector of Revenue.

But the program cannot accomplish its goal if we don't advertise it effectively and make sure it reaches the people that need it. The central office at the city can actively seek out people in need by cross-referencing inhabited parcels with households that are registered in the program. For those not registered, the office can deploy door-to-door canvassers to inform people of their eligibility, with resources to sign up on the spot or sign up later. This can be a year-round effort, making multiple passes to reach people who may not have been home or answered the first time. For those who have addresses, mailers can be sent too. And for those without addresses, we can have city employees work with social workers to connect with people at unhoused encampments and shelters.

We have a lot of city services and resources that go underused in the city simply because we do not meet people where they are. Messaging is not free, but it is a necessary investment if we truly want to deploy city services, including universal basic income. It is not universal if anyone is missed because our city government did not reach out to them.

Michael Gras

I think is a concept that we should continue to explore. I do, however, believe that Universal Basic Income should be universal. If we do have an opportunity to expand this program on the municipal level, I would seek to remove all requirements and have it be open to every resident of the City of St. Louis. Much of the theory behind UBI shows that much of its benefits come when the income goes to all income levels, not just a specific set of the impoverished.

Question 10

What concrete steps will you take to alleviate homelessness in the City of St. Louis?

Tina Pihl

First and foremost, we must recognize that an unhoused individual is a human being experiencing a crisis. Providing this person with shelter and housing must be our top priority.

Concrete steps we need to take are:

1. Increase the funding we allocate to expanding homeless shelters in the city
2. Fund the construction and maintenance of more transitional and affordable and housing.
3. Provide a quality 24-hour homeless shelter
4. Create a better emergency management plan for the unhoused during severe inclement weather
5. Once someone is housed, we must ensure they have wrap around services, with ready access to drug addiction, job training, and mental health services of the highest quality.
6. This housing-first approach plays a significant role in preventing and reducing homelessness, rather than policing it as a crime.

Michael Browning

As a private citizen, I have volunteered at unhoused shelters, most recently at the Kennerly Shelter through the St. Louis Young Democrats. I have also worked with Homes4AllSTL, and advocated for a Tenant's Bill of Rights before and during my campaign for alderperson.

There is much more that can be done as a public official. The unhoused crisis is multifaceted, so I will touch on a few key policy points:

In the short-term:

- Opening publicly funded 24-hour shelters in multiple areas of the city. ○ This winter, two people froze to death. If it was not for volunteers, donations, and nonprofit organizations with staff who are almost ubiquitously overworked, even more people would have died. In the summer, we regularly have triple digit heat on the wet bulb index. The climate crisis disproportionately threatens the lives and health of unhoused people and will only worsen in the years to come. We need publicly funded shelters now.
- More public amenities, such as drinking fountains and publicly-maintained restrooms, measures that will keep unhoused people safer and respect their dignity and privacy.
- In the long-term:
- Focus on a Housing First solution, replete with wraparound services (policies that can support this will need to be evaluated after there is a better understanding of the implications of Missouri's new unhoused criminalization law.)
- Increase housing vouchers, which decreases unhousedness and housing instability, as well as allows people to spend more on food, healthcare, and education. Housing stability is especially important for child development.
- A strong Tenants' Bill of Rights, which, if not passed this session, I commit to working towards passing. If it is passed, I will supplement it with further legislation to strengthen it. I also support establishing an Office of the Tenant Advocate that is responsible for tracking tenant issues and ensuring tenant's rights. These measures will help stop people from becoming unhoused.

These are only parts of the solution to unhoused issues. We also need to address the fundamental housing shortage, poor quality of housing stock, and systemic development problems.

Michael Gras

One of the most effective ways to alleviate homelessness is to create more affordable housing options. I will work to leverage development in my ward and throughout the City to increase the supply of affordable housing. This can be done by working with developers to include a percentage of affordable units in new developments, and also by supporting the development of community land trusts and other models that prioritize affordable housing.

In addition to creating more affordable housing, I will also work to provide direct support to shelters and establish a stable 24-hour walk-in shelter. This will ensure that individuals experiencing homelessness have access to a safe and secure place to sleep at all times. We must provide funding and support to organizations in our community that provide services such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.

It's also important to explore other ways to provide emergency shelter to those who are unhoused during extreme weather events. I will be open to working with hotel partners in the community to provide temporary shelter during extreme weather conditions.

In addition to these steps,

I will also work to address the underlying causes of homelessness such as poverty, lack of job opportunities, and mental health and addiction issues. The solution to homelessness is not simple, and it will require a comprehensive approach that addresses the various factors that contribute to it.

Question 11

How do you plan to fund needed infrastructure improvements in the city, particularly in areas impacted by flooding?

Tina Pihl

We can fund the needed infrastructure improvements in the city through the \$250 million awarded to St. Louis City as part of the Rams resettlement deal, combined with the \$498 million the City received from the American Rescue Plan Act. This money can fund many of our long-deferred infrastructure improvements and the areas that were impacted by the flooding.

We must ensure these funds are used responsibly and effectively in the public's interest. We also must get input from the citizens.

Michael Browning

Regarding infrastructure, we need a complete overhaul of the ward capital system. Beyond the system's inequitable distribution of funds, the city needs a comprehensive plan managed by a planning department that has expertise on this subject. Alderpeople are not city managers. We shouldn't have to elect a traffic engineer or a planner to make the correct infrastructure decisions. Even if an alderperson can do this job, it doesn't mean they should. Our current ward capital system creates non-contiguous, patchy, poorly maintained infrastructure. Our people deserve better.

When it comes to flooding, we need to build sustainably. We know that flooding will only become worse with climate change. Some actions we can take include:

- Stop development in floodplains and other ecologically sensitive areas. We should be planning for decades when building, not short-term profit.
- When possible, employ porous pavement when redoing roads.
- Explore incentivizing the use of native plants in landscaping.
- Promote the MSD Project Clear Rainscaping Small and Large Grant Programs.

Michael Gras

To fund needed infrastructure improvements in the city, we must first and foremost take advantage of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that has been made available to us. We must make sure that we are effectively and efficiently utilizing these funds to address the infrastructure needs in our city, especially in areas that have been historically neglected. Additionally, leveraging development in a smart and strategic way can also help to build our tax base, which can then be used to fund infrastructure improvements. As for the infrastructure specifically related to flooding, we must work closely with the Metropolitan Sewer District to ensure that they are effectively addressing these issues and holding them accountable for their actions.

Question 12

What are some of your biggest priorities for ARPA spending?

Tina Pihl

My biggest priority for ARPA spending is to pay for a comprehensive master city plan. The City of St. Louis has not updated its master plan since the 1940s.

Second, we need to pay for pedestrian safety infrastructure improvements on the roads to make the city safe for people to bike, walk and drive.

And, much of it should go to everything we have been putting off doing for decades.

Finally, I believe we need more public input as to where the remaining funds are spent.

Michael Browning

Establishing an Office of the Tenant Advocate.

- Building a rapid bus transit system and/or North-South Metro line.
- Instituting traffic safety measures, like protected bike lanes, reflective pavement markers, repaved roads, speed humps, etc.
- Allocate funds to address deferred maintenance in our city's youth and recreational centers.

Michael Gras

My focus is on projects that promote equity, sustainability, and accessibility. I think we need to invest in our traffic and pedestrian infrastructure to promote the safety and accessibility of all residents. This includes making investments in our public transit system. Additionally, I believe that economic empowerment should be a top priority, and support the Mayor's efforts to create economic empowerment zones in historically neglected areas of our community. I'm also in favor of continued support for programs that provide assistance to the unhoused and vulnerable members of our community

Question 13

One of the greatest factors around increasing economic mobility in the region is through increasing public transit access. How do you plan to make public transit more accessible across the city?

Tina Pihl

Transportation is a complex quality of life issue that goes beyond bricks, mortar, and vehicles. Transportation is indeed at the center of our quality of life. What we do, how readily we do them and how much time it takes depends on our transportation system. A careful review of our public transportation system will indicate several areas in need of urgent improvements. In addition to streets that need quality repaving and the temporary fixes of tire-busting potholes, our light rail transit and bus systems need to be expanded to provide better access to working families.

More frequent bus services combined with a North-South light rail system within the City of St. Louis and downtown, with safe intersections and appropriate light rail stops, will go a long way towards the revitalization and repopulation of key sections of our city. These improvements will connect our residents and communities to commercial, cultural, educational, and entertainment opportunities that will have a dramatic effect on the economic mobility and quality of life of city residents.

Michael Browning

One of the factors that powered the growth of St. Louis in the early 1900s was the strength of its trolley system. This city wasn't originally built around cars but over time, we made policy decisions that leave current residents largely dependent upon the automobile. Today, we have a city built around cars instead of a city built around people. We are wholly dependent upon our cars as a means to work, see family, and have a life beyond one's residence. It doesn't have to be this way. We can have the public transit system that other cities do, but it has to be a policy choice.

A North-South Metrolink line is just the start. We should explore the adoption of a zero-fare system within city limits for buses and trains, similar to Kansas City. The East-West Gateway is spending \$52 million on turnstiles and policing for MetroLink even as their study concluded that it would largely be for show and not have an outsized impact on crime. This is money that could have been dedicated to raises for drivers and operators, something that is needed to help with retention and reverse the course of the removal of bus routes and stops.

Additionally, we should provide more seating and better protection from the elements at bus stops for those waiting. We also should explore a Rapid Bus Transit system with dedicated bus lanes, which is a far cheaper alternative than new MetroLink lines. But all of this requires a bus system that is dependable. Many bus routes make a stop at a certain intersection once every ninety minutes, which is not accessible or user-friendly. We need to fix the system before we spend millions to expand it.

We need to address bike and pedestrian safety as public transit issues, as they are alternatives to driving and are accessible to everyone if done right. According to TrailNet, in 2021, 178 people were killed and more than 14,000 people injured in traffic crashes in St. Louis City and County. We need to have protected bike lanes with dividers separating them from auto traffic (not just a sharrow painted on a regular lane of traffic) and designated bike paths. Paint doesn't protect people, and reckless drivers will ignore it. Additional infrastructure, like single-lane roundabouts, have been shown to increase pedestrian safety. Speed humps and raised crosswalks provide further protection. Divided roads with pedestrian islands have also been shown to increase safety, so when we rebuild intersections, we can add in these proven measures that save lives.

Michael Gras

As an alderperson, one of my top priorities will be to advocate for increased funding and resources for public transit in the city. This includes working with Bi-State and other organizations to secure funding for expanded access to the Metrolink and other public transit options. Additionally, I will push for the implementation of rapid bus lines that connect residents in all parts of the city to job centers and other key destinations. This can improve the overall mobility of residents and help reduce barriers to economic mobility.

Question 14

Issues of environmental racism affect many families in St Louis. How do you plan to address issues such as lead poisoning, food apartheid, illegal dumping, and air quality that leads to higher rates of asthma?

Tina Pihl

We must address these problems with a holistic framework and comprehensive, long range planning approach. We must expand childhood lead testing and fund programs to eliminate lead in our homes, rather than incentivizing further construction in the central corridor. We must enable homeowners to access funds and tax incentives to improve their homes and make them safe.

Critically, we need a Citywide plan for proper zoning to keep landfills and dangerous industries safe distances from our homes.

We can eliminate food deserts and end food apartheid by offering tax incentives where they're actually needed: in areas of disinvestment, especially on the Northside.

To address illegal dumping we can increase the number of trash pick-up days, provide additional dumpsters, and direct additional resources to the Refuse Department. Ultimately, however, the source of illegal dumping is population loss in North City. There simply are not enough people to keep an eye out for illegal dumping.

To improve the air quality in St. Louis and reduce rates of asthma, I suggest requiring all new construction to follow green building practices. We must also decrease our reliance on fossil fuels through the expansion of public transportation, including more frequent bus services, rapid bus transit, and the north-south expansion of Metrolink. We need mobility for all

Michael Browning

I believe we need to fully fund the building division and set a focus on improving current structures and making sure new structures are built to a standard. We should enforce legal action against landlords who refuse to engage in lead abatement for their properties. By working with the state and federal governments, St. Louis can obtain funding for this.

Food apartheid is a lack of grocery options in low income areas, or a lack of physical access to grocery stores. The city can try to incentivize the opening of grocery stores through tax abatement and other incentives, but if there isn't enough demand in the area, it will be difficult to keep them open. The other half of the equation is access, and we can do much more to create public transportation and walkable environments so that it isn't an absurd time commitment to go grocery shopping and then take public transit home.

Part of the reason why illegal dumping is so prevalent is the lack of legal dumping. We do not have enough sanitation employees, dumpsters are decaying, and our recycling program is currently limited to designated transfer points. While dumpsters are currently getting replaced, we have struggled to hire more sanitation workers. Our dumpsters are part of the legacy of the

Schoemehl administration, which decided to order custom dumpsters that require custom trucks not used in any other cities. Replacing all of the dumpsters at once is unfeasible at this time since we are already making replacements, but I would like to lay out a commitment that when they are to be replaced next, that we overhaul the dumpster design to save costs and improve service in the long-run. I would also like to have more street trash and recycling bins to incentivize proper disposal and reduce littering.

Finally, we need to further raise salaries to draw in more sanitation workers.

Another part of illegal dumping is evictions. You know your neighbors aren't throwing out three mattresses a month in your alley. Those likely come from cases where someone has been evicted and the landlord will take their belongings and dump them in a city alley so they don't have to pay for disposal. Instead of cameras to catch these illegal dumpers and higher fines to deter them, it would be better to make sure that people are not being evicted in the first place. If they are, the city's Office of the Tenant Advocate, or the equivalent, can assist someone in finding a new place and moving their belongings so that they don't end up in your alley. This is the humane approach, so that people don't lose their housing and their furniture all in one awful day.

Unhealthy environments directly contribute to and exacerbate asthma, which also affects Black children ten times as frequently as white children in St. Louis. Census tracts that border highways have significantly higher rates of asthma and health problems, which are disproportionately Black and Brown neighborhoods. Once again, the domination of the automobile in St. Louis leads to negative outcomes for our people. If we prioritize walkability and public transit, we can improve health outcomes for our residents.

Michael Gras

I will continue to support and advocate for legislation, such as BB 184, that strengthens our city's lead poisoning laws and provides resources for lead abatement.

I will work to improve access to healthy food options in neighborhoods that are currently considered food deserts by supporting initiatives that bring food to these communities such as community gardens and co-ops. That said, food deserts are often the result of poor transportation options. I think it's important to support traffic, pedestrian, and mass transit infrastructure so residents can access the resources that are already present in the community.

I will use my platform as an alderperson to advocate for stronger environmental regulations and enforcement of existing laws to hold polluters accountable and protect residents from illegal dumping and other environmental hazards that contribute to poor air quality. I will work with city department like health, environment and community development to create targeted programs that will help to address those specific issues.

Question 15

How will you use your position on the Board of Alderman to increase access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care including but not limited to abortion care, pregnancy, and postpartum support?

Tina Pihl

I have supported every board bill that has come before the Board of Alder that has ensured access to abortion resources, comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare and pregnancy and postpartum support. I will continue to support these vital services in my position. I will also remain committed to speak out for providing more access to these services.

In 2022, I proudly co-sponsored Board Bill 61 that created the new Reproductive Equity Fund in the City of St. Louis, which will provide resources for healthcare, support for pregnancy and abortion access and logistical support to help St. Louisans to get the healthcare they need and deserve in places like Illinois. I also supported allocating ARPA funding to increase the services at Family Health Care Centers in the city. This funding will allow for more individuals and families to be served.

I will also work to ensure that mothers receive prenatal care. Missouri ranks 44th in the nation for maternal and birthing person mortality. Prenatal care can decrease this morbidity rate and premature births. I would also like to ensure that everyone who can sign up for Medicaid gets signed up for Medicaid.

Michael Browning

Missouri is one of the most hostile states toward reproductive justice but there are ways that we can push back and create space for justice and equity.

- Implement a Reproductive Justice Package similar to one that was passed in Philadelphia. It included:
 - Prevention of workplace discrimination against employees for their reproductive healthcare decisions.
 - A law discouraging the use of any potential S.B. 8 copycat laws, permitting residents to countersue.
 - A law barring the disclosure of reproductive healthcare information if the information will be used for abusive litigation or harassment.
- Decriminalize sex work.
- End the police use of tear gas (which has been linked to miscarriages and infertility).
- Provide access to free contraceptives, teach students (and adults) comprehensive sex education, and do everything possible to fight disinformation about reproductive health and freedom.
- Guarantee time off work for city staff related to reproductive health, like paternity and maternity leave, but also time off for surgeries, consultations, family planning, and all of the related healthcare and personal care needs that go into reproductive health. We should have this throughout our country, but as an alderperson, I can work to make sure our city staff have these benefits.

Michael Gras

One of the things I am most proud of so far as alderman has been my co-sponsorship of BB61 which established the Reproductive Equity Fund for the City of St. Louis. I will always support abortion and other reproductive rights for women and people who can become pregnant and continue to use my position on the Board of Aldermen to advocate for policies that increase access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, including but not limited to abortion care, pregnancy, and postpartum support. This includes supporting funding for organizations that provide these services and working to remove barriers to access, such as restrictive state laws and lack of insurance coverage. I will also work to ensure that all residents, regardless of their income or zip code, have access to the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their health. Additionally, I will work to increase funding for education programs that promote sexual and reproductive health, and advocate for laws that protect the rights of individuals to make decisions about their own bodies.

Question 16

With more than 25% of renters in the city of St. Louis being rent-burdened, what is your plan to expand access to affordable housing and advocate for renter protections throughout the city?

Tina Pihl

A new plan for leveraging incentives to produce affordable housing needs to be implemented. I've already started this in the 17th Ward and now we need a citywide plan that mandates an affordable housing contribution with every project.

I have also proposed and I will ensure we follow through with a Nexus Study to start a commercial linkage program. This study will determine how much revenue can be generated from zoning changes, building permits and new developments with and without incentives.

The funds that are generated by this would be used to increase affordable housing, like in other cities that have instituted this program.

My plan to advocate for renter protections is through a future tenant bill of rights in which I spoke with Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia, some staff members at Action St. Louis, Arch City Defenders and Homes for All-STL.

I also have advocated for my constituents that are having landlord tenant issues and spoken out publically about the management at the Ely Walker Lofts and will continue to do so.

Michael Browning

We are dealing with a fundamental housing shortage in this city brought on by decades of poor housing policy. Fighting for stable/quality housing means advocating for the creation of more housing (at all levels) and putting in place strong tenant protections.

Housing Creation

Unpredictable development processes favor large developers over small ones, creating barriers to those that lack the funds or political connections to navigate our complicated system.

- Work with the Mayor's office and other alderpersons to create a modern city-wide development plan for our city, fostering a common understanding of our goals for St. Louis that can guide the use of incentives.
- Explore alternate incentive mechanisms by learning from examples across the country like zoning reform, permit waivers, pre-approved building plans, community land trusts, and more.
- Set clear expectations for development review with an eye towards streamlining the process for smaller developers, like home-rehabbers and infill projects.
- Address ethics reforms related to aldermanic powers for approving and denying projects.
- Regulate short-term rentals like Airbnbs to increase unit supply.
- Ensure that any discussion about funding affordable housing not only includes discussion of the cost to build but the cost to maintain them as livable units in the future.

Tenant Protections

- If it does not pass this session of the BoA, continue the push for passage of a Tenants' Bill of Rights that includes the right to Counsel in Housing Court, ensuring people aren't evicted illegally or without representation.
- Establish an Office of the Tenant Advocate that is responsible for tracking tenant issues and ensuring tenant's rights.
- Create a Rental Registration Program so that we know who owns our city's housing and negligent owners can't hide behind LLCs.
- Increase the number of building inspectors to ensure that code violations are reported and solved.
- Improve our neighborhoods by ensuring that landlords who violate renters rights are held accountable.

Michael Gras

I believe that we must leverage development to create more affordable housing and provide direct support to shelters and establish a stable 24 hour walk-in shelter to address the needs of the unhoused. Additionally, I support expanding protections for renters such as the right to counsel for those facing eviction. This will help ensure that renters have access to legal representation and can more effectively advocate for their rights. We also need to advocate for more supportive housing options for renters who are currently struggling with mental health and addiction concerns. With a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of renters, the homeless, and those who are at risk of becoming homeless, we can make a real impact on the housing crisis in St. Louis.

Question 17

Do you support the demand for a citywide reparations process? Please explain your position.

Tina Pihl

I do support a citywide reparations process because there is no way to undo the social and economic harm done to Black, Brown and Native American people. Reparations is the only equitable solution there is right now. I believe it would work well if the reparations were accompanied by a UBI program that has less barriers to entry than the pilot program we are establishing.

Michael Browning

Yes, I support reparations. I will be watching with interest the work of the Reparations Commission created by Mayor Jones through Executive Order #75 and would stand ready to assist with the implementation of recommended actions.

Michael Gras

I support the demand for a citywide reparations process. I believe that slavery was a horrific institution that caused immeasurable harm to Black people and their descendants. While the impacts of slavery continue to be felt today, reparations are an important step towards addressing the injustices of the past and creating a more equitable future. I believe that the City of St. Louis should lead the way in this regard, even if a nationwide reparations process is not yet in place. Without reparations, true equity cannot be achieved.

Question 18

What is your position on privatization as it relates to city assets? Please explain your position.

Tina Pihl

Privatization in general removes accountability, something I am not in favor of. I think some services need to be provided by the government to take away market pressures which lead us to the minimum tolerable quality. I also think we need to retain city assets as city assets, so we can use them to make the lives of residents better in St. Louis.

Michael Browning

I do not support the privatization of city assets. Studies and examples from other cities have shown time and again that it does not benefit the people. It only results in higher costs and less accountability.

Michael Gras

I am generally opposed to the privatization of public assets such as our airport and other crucial infrastructure items. I believe that these assets are vital to the well being of our city and should be managed and maintained by the public for the public good. Additionally, I am against Charter Schools, which I believe represent the privatization of our schools and can lead to a loss of accountability, equity and resources for our students and communities. However, I do support the City outsourcing some tasks such as grass cutting in order to provide services efficiently, since it can be difficult to hire and retain staff for certain jobs. I believe that outsourcing should be done in a transparent and accountable manner, and any contracts should be closely scrutinized to ensure they serve the public interest.

Question 19

What is your position on city/county reunification? Please explain your position.

Tina Pihl

This is a complicated issue. At the same time the majority of cities in the U.S. have this structure. I believe more research needs to be done about what the impacts would be on the City, the County, and other municipalities. If we can create a better city and county for all residents, I would be in favor of this.

Michael Browning

I would be a willing participant in conversations regarding the reunification of the city and county. The redundancy of services both wastes resources and inhibits us from planning comprehensively as a region. However, we need to be wary of any plans that would seek to disenfranchise Black and Brown communities, whether they are in the city or the county.

There are efficiencies that can be found with the consolidation of certain services. The recent merger of the St. Louis Public Library and St. Louis County Library catalogs is an example of some of the benefits. It is estimated that using a shared system will save the library over \$100,000 a year and patrons immediately took advantage of being able to tap into the expanded system.

Michael Gras

I believe that reunification presents opportunities to combine services and potentially improve the overall efficiency of government operations. However, I also understand that this process must be done in a way that is equitable and does not dilute minority representation in the city. Therefore, I would support a thorough examination of the potential benefits and drawbacks of any proposal, and ensure it is fair and just for all residents.