

City of Falls Church 2020 Candidates for City Council Special Election

Questionnaire Responses

*Questions Prepared by The Falls Church
Village Preservation and Improvement Society*



September 20, 2020

The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society
(VPIS) is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization that encourages civic engagement
and participation the democratic process

Table of Contents to Candidates' Responses

Responses are provided unedited and in alphabetical order based on the last name.

Candidates for City Council

	Page
Debbie Hiscott	4
Joshua S. Shokoor	8
Simone Pass Tucker	12
Sample Ballot	16

The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) is 501c3 organization, originally founded in 1885, that has a long tradition of civic activism. We do not endorse any candidates but host debates and provide questionnaires each election cycle to enhance interest and engagement of the citizens of the City. We consider a wide variety of questions and due to space limitations had to selected questions for candidates that were most topical and important this election cycle.

The people we elect to the City Council make those very important choices on the future of our community. There may be some minor variation in formats to accommodate the candidate's full answers without editing any words. The candidates responses are presented here in alphabetical order by last name. For City Council there are 3 contenders for 1 seat vacated by the untimely death of Daniel Sze. Election Day is Tuesday November 3, 2020, but the opportunity to vote early is being offered this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We very much appreciate the candidates' willingness to run for office and to take the time to respond to these questions. Thank you.

Sincerely;

Lisa Varouxis

President;
On behalf of the Board of Directors
VPIS.President@Gmail.com
www.VPIS.Org

Candidate Name: Debbie Hiscott (note: ballot reads Debora “Debbie” Schantz-Hiscott)

How long have you lived in the City? 24+ years

Why do you want to serve on the City Council? I am grateful for the more than two decades I’ve lived in Falls Church City and recognize it is a unique community that will continue to thrive only through collaborative and proactive effort. With that in mind, I am eager to serve as a leader on the City Council to ensure that Falls Church City not only retains what makes it special, but is sustainable into the future. My personal and professional lives are completely intertwined in the City of Falls Church. For the past 24+ years, I have lived, worked, volunteered and raised my family in Falls Church City and plan to stay and contribute to our community for the next 24+. For the last eight years, I have served as the Executive Director of the non-profit Falls Church Education Foundation (FCEF), working extensively with a volunteer board of directors, school administration and local businesses, to support programs and grants that benefit our public school system while also creating community. I am well-versed in the needs of City homeowners, residents, families and local businesses. I am eager to listen and put in the collaborative effort to continue to move Falls Church City forward. After raising my children here, (they are in and headed to college), I have time to devote to the role of City Councilwoman.



What past activities have prepared you for a seat on council?

My work and volunteer experience have always focused on team and community building, collaboration, compromise and progress. An excellent representative example is the annual FCEF Run for the Schools, which last year had over 800 runners. Preparing for the community event includes working with the city manager and staff to approve the course, the police, sheriff and public works offices to provide safety, the GMHS cross country team to work with city staff, the schools to provide mascots and encourage participation, the business community to provide sponsorship support, the Boy Scouts to provide on course water and the volunteers to provide registration staffing. With this year’s run moving to virtual, I look back on the past seven years’ events as the sole paid employee, and am thankful for all of the community participation and proud of all that has been accomplished and grown during my tenure. My volunteer work has furthered my experience including over a decade in Falls Church City Public Schools PTA leadership roles, coach of youth/HS basketball and lacrosse, board member of club lacrosse program, dive team representative and Women’s Commission member. Please see my website at www.debbiehiscott.org for more details.

Is there a civic accomplishment of which you are most proud? There are several civic accomplishments of which I am quite proud. The most recent is leading the effort to raise more than \$120,000 to support families in need during the pandemic. With the generosity of our business and community members, I worked with school social workers to disburse critical grocery gift cards and local restaurant gift cards to families in our community.

During my years as a volunteer with the Elementary and Middle School PTAs, I was a leader in creating several events that have become community staples. As the Elementary PTA president, I created the March Madness event which evolved into the current Hippo-Tiger-Giraffe games. I also began the school parent socials which allowed parents an opportunity to gather and meet one another without children in tow. These events have both grown in the past decade, and I’m proud that others have taken them on and made them even better. It is very important to leave a legacy for the next generation and encourage new people to get involved.

1. What are the top three issues facing the City, and how would you address them?

- Covid-19 health, safety and economic recovery
- New economic development at the site of the new high school.

- Maintaining the work of current City Council to include collaborative budgeting for top-notch schools and city services (stormwater, walkability, accessibility)

To address each of these top issues facing the City, I will work with the Fairfax County Health Department, the current City Staff and City Council members, Economic Development Authority, boards and commissions and the Chamber of Commerce to gather additional information and feedback. With data, community and business input, we will continue to develop plans to address critical needs that will ensure the health, vitality and financial viability of Falls Church City.

2. There has been a great deal of development along Broad and Washington Streets over the past 15 years. What would you propose to encourage commercial economic development that does not add residential units?

We have some new development without residential units on Fairfax St. and should encourage it wherever we can. We should also support continued renovation of existing commercial

properties, which has successfully brought numerous medical practices to the City. I do not necessarily have an issue with adding residential units. The mixed use development that includes apartments has been successful for the City - both financially and community-building. Mixed use residential dwellings may be opportunities to bring a diversity of citizens within Falls Church City, and also to allow "empty nesters" who have sold their homes to move into existing buildings and stay in the City. Additionally, apartments provide places for young people, smaller family units and a broader socio-economic population to live, work, play and spend their discretionary income in the City. This may create a demographically more inclusive population.

3. How would you work to preserve the City's affordable housing stock? Is 6% affordable housing enough?

There needs to be a multi-faceted approach to providing affordable housing, combining affordable dwelling units as well as accessory dwelling units, as such providing a mandatory percentage of ADUs is not likely to always be the right answer.

The current supply of affordable units is continually shrinking, even though the mixed use developments always have affordable units included. I am interested in what our neighbors in Arlington and DC are doing with allowing accessory dwelling units on single family lots. It will require a robust community conversation, but I want us to consider the idea of allowing residents in Falls Church to provide opportunities to house parents, other family members or additional affordable spaces. As we talk about investing in affordable housing, the City has to put financial skin in the game, by contributing funds towards affordable housing. We need to access state resources and apply for affordable housing grants available through the Amazon deal.

4. How do you envision the Falls Church of the future?

The Falls Church of today is much better than I would have imagined it when I moved to the Little City 24 years ago, thanks to the incredible dedication of hundreds of volunteers, staff, and leadership within the city. In 1996, we had two main dining options, when we first moved in – Red Lobster and Burger King. We now have literally dozens of restaurants and bars within walking distance of our home, ensuring that we keep our dining dollars within our borders. We have added many cultural venues such as Creative Cauldron and the Falls Church Arts and events like Concerts in the Park and Tinner Hill music festival. We have improved safety and walkability. We have improved our school facilities and passed a bond referendum for the new high school.

I would like to work on the City Council and with community members to continue this type of development far into the future so that in another quarter century, the next candidate will be writing of improvements that have taken place since 2020. To do so, we will require a mixture of mixed use buildings balanced with our own home-grown commercial enterprises, hopefully large and small.

5. The City streetscape plantings are important to the visual appearance of our City. What would you do to enhance the appearance of our City for citizens and visitors?

I agree that this needs work. It always falls to the bottom of the budgeting list of priorities. We were so fortunate to have Barb Cram dedicate so much of her volunteer time, talent and expertise to beautify our streetscape with flower baskets, banners and lights. As City Councilwoman, I would review the streetscape improvement plan to determine how we can make best use of investments that we have already made in these areas, whether it's volunteer corps working in tandem with city staff or additional budget. The VPIS Neighborhood Tree program is a great example of how effective a partnership can be. We should continue to work with developers on the amount of green spaces, type and quality of public space enhancement. Obviously with the financial impact of the pandemic, we will need to review all types of options.

6. The City has seen a decrease in tree canopy coverage and green space due to both residential and commercial development. What steps should the city be taking to increase tree canopy, pervious surfaces and open space?

The maturity of tree canopy coverage is helpful in balancing the decrease in tree canopy, however there needs to be continuous focus on additional plantings, increase in personal and commercial pervious surfaces and planned open space. My family values tree coverage and pervious surfaces as demonstrated by our environmentally friendly property filled with trees and our pervious rock driveway.

7. One of our City's greatest strengths is its small-town character, geographical size and relative walkability. What do you see as the primary impediments to enhanced walkability and bikeability and how would you address them?

Improvements have been huge in the 24 years since I moved into Falls Church City. I see opportunities to continue developing bike lanes, more sidewalks, dual tracking on the W&OD trail, improvements at the new high school site allowing more walking and biking to campus and buildings. I do believe that traffic calming, new sidewalks, bike share programs that are currently underway are going in the right direction, but of course we can continue to improve and augment these plans with additional improvements such as scooters. Although financially prohibitive as of now, I would also love to see our communication and power lines buried. This would make walking our current sidewalks much easier and greatly improve all sight lines not to mention prevention of power outages.

8. What are your thoughts towing from business parking lot and on the potential sale of the City owned parking lot to Insight for their development at Broad and Washington?

We've made slow, steady progress with increasing the number of public parking and business spaces within the city in the recent past (near CVS, across from Northside Social). Thanks to Letty Hardi and city staff for the increases we have well-marked public spots. That said, we

need to continue to work with multiple businesses and private owners to collaborate on increased parking, such as the agreements with the apartments across from Northside Social. We must continue to work with businesses to make best use of existing parking lots for maximum use, such as the Kaiser-Permanente lots used during non-business hours for parking near the State Theater. It will continue to be a tough conversation to sell current city spots for the Insight development, but a thorough review of the economic benefit versus the parking challenges needs to continue.

9. *“Empty nesters” and/or retirees are moving out of the city as property taxes make it too expensive to stay. What will be your approach to real estate taxes to allow the City to be favorable to people of all ages?*

As I, too, will be an empty nester as of 2021, this is an issue I care very deeply about. I am also concerned about seniors. Personally, I am realizing that Falls Church City is too expensive to move my own elderly parents here from upstate New York. We need to keep our focus on tax deferral / abatement for seniors, with continual assessment of results, and approaches to affordable housing. There is significant benefit to the community of the wisdom and experience an elderly population can bring to our community.

10. *What do you think can/should be done to help businesses and the City get through this Covid economic challenge?*

We need to stay up to date on how we can best enact health and well-being procedures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to continue to promote safety at all times. When our numbers decrease, we will be able to continue to open up businesses and schools much more quickly. The Chamber of Commerce has great training available and we should continue to provide information and assistance. We all need to continue to shop locally and understand the connection between our discretionary spending and the economic health of our city.

11. *Is there another issue, for which we did not ask a question, that you are passionate about?*

The other issues about which I am passionate are social justice and equity issues. This includes review of policies and procedures within Falls Church City to address equity of opportunity. I care very deeply about representation at City Council level and on boards and commissions. Women and minorities still tend to be underrepresented. I would advocate for conversations with the Boards and Commissions about conducting their business with an intentional equity lens and advising the City Council on policy and practice that can increase equity for our community.

Candidate Name: Joshua S. Shokoor

How long have you lived in the City? 33 years

Why do you want to serve on the City Council?

I am running for City Council because I believe it is my responsibility to contribute to the change I want to see in my community. Growing up in the Little City and attending Falls Church schools directly influenced the pursuit of my Master's in Public Policy and inspired my civic work. I want others who have a similar story as me – a second generation American, lower income background, and raised by a single mother – to share in the same opportunities I was provided. My unique voice on Council will help to ensure Falls Church is accessible and affordable for current and future generations, while representing the views and perspectives of all Falls Church families.



What past activities have prepared you for a seat on council?

- Currently a veteran on the Falls Church Housing Commission
- An author of the City's "Affordable Living Policy"
- Interned for the City's Department of Housing and Human Services
- Analyst for the Falls Church Housing Corporation

Is there a civic accomplishment of which you are most proud?

- Prior to my work on the "Affordable Living Policy", all affordable dwelling units (ADUs) in the City had covenants attached to them, allowing the units to expire, and become market rate after 15-20 years. The consequences of this policy will lead to the City losing almost all of its affordable housing stock. I pushed for a policy change, and contributed writing the policy document, ensuring that in every new development, future ADUs will remain affordable in perpetuity or for the life of the building. Because of this accomplishment, Falls Church will never lose any future dedicated affordable housing.

1. What are the top three issues facing the City, and how would you address them?

- The current and future losses of affordable housing.
- We as a community must negotiate with landlords to prevent future losses of affordable housing and prioritize a higher percentage of affordable dwelling units in every new development.
- The potential loss of revenue to the City and stress to small businesses due to the economic impacts of the Coronavirus.
- Once elected I will work to reinforce existing initiatives with the intent to focus consumer spending locally. Partnering with Falls Church businesses and instituting policies that are helpful, not harmful, will guarantee they survive the effects of the pandemic, while mitigating a decline in tax revenue.
- A lack of diversity and inclusivity are threats to Falls Church's vision of becoming a welcoming place to people of all backgrounds.
- There are currently no efforts underway to address this glaring issue. Increasing access and equity through housing is of course a major component, but we should also set-up a Racial Equity Commission to develop more inclusive policies and strategies to become a more welcoming community for diverse populations.

2. *There has been a great deal of development along Broad and Washington Streets over the past 15 years. What would you propose to encourage commercial economic development that does not add residential units?*

While I understand many current resident's concerns, I am in favor of increased density and development of more residential and mixed-use buildings. The development of more affordable housing and rental options, such as the ones offered in many mixed-use buildings, is critical to achieving a more welcoming community. Also, four out of the top five highest principle property taxpayers in the City are currently condominium or apartment buildings. These buildings can generate more property tax revenues in less space than single family homes. I am also in favor of creating additional tax revenues to meet the growing demand for City services. I believe Falls Church can greatly benefit from more commercial office space. We should redouble our previous efforts to introduce commercial real estate brokers to the benefits of our small town, including more affordable opportunities for office space, in comparison to other areas in the region. It also might be worthwhile to market the City to medical groups and practices to attempt to create a healthcare hub here in Falls Church. Kaiser Permanente is currently the second largest employer in the City, bringing in 395 potential patrons to local businesses every day, while generating property and businesses taxes for Falls Church. The City could try to replicate this successful arrangement, and reach out to existing medical groups, like Kaiser Permanente and PMA Health, and neighboring healthcare providers to discover ways to incentivize the growth of this industry within our City. An increase in healthcare workers and visitors to their practices will grow commercial revenue and provide a boom to local businesses.

3. *How would you work to preserve the City's affordable housing stock? Is 6% affordable housing enough?*

- Keeping families and seniors who wish to remain in the City is vital to maintaining a close-knit and engaged community. But affordable housing is also essential to increase access for new residents and families, and to guarantee teachers, City staff, and others who work around the City are able to live here. It will also enable children of Falls Church the ability to return as adults and continue to be a part of the community in which they were raised.
- The current standard of 6% allotted for affordable units is not enough. At the current rate, we will never replenish the affordable housing we have already lost. I have and will continue to push for a higher percentage of affordable rental units.
- Preserving the current affordable housing in the City is complicated and will require an experienced voice and someone prepared to do the work necessary to achieve this outcome. I have the private sector experience and public policy knowledge needed to prevent this impending displacement.

4. *How do you envision the Falls Church of the future?*

I grew up in a Falls Church very different from the City it is today. An Apple Bees, Red Lobster, fast food chains (Burger King, Pizza Hut, KFC, Roy Rogers, Long John Silvers, McDonalds, Taco Bell, etc.), large empty parking lots, and small shops were dotted along Broad Street. I like the progress we have made, and I believe we can revitalize areas with small boutique storefronts and simultaneously increase the development of multi-story mixed-use properties. It does not need to be an either-or proposition, but rather a strategy concentrated on growing small businesses and density complimentary with one another.

5. *The City streetscape plantings are important to the visual appearance of our City. What would you do to enhance the appearance of our City for citizens and visitors?*

I would continue the current process of beautifying downtown Falls Church. However, if the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we need to be more engaged in our community to work towards a united vision. Civic groups, other organizations, and residents can come together to create programs in an effort to maintain and enhance our City environment. Recognizing participants and groups who invest their time, through plaques and signs will highlight our community's unique citizen engagement.

6. *The City has seen a decrease in tree canopy coverage and green space due to both residential and commercial development. What steps should the city be taking to increase tree canopy, pervious surfaces and open space?*

The City has already done a lot to increase tree canopy, by requiring a 20% tree canopy coverage within 10 years on single-family developments. We can add to this work by requiring a minimum 15% tree canopy coverage on new mixed-use developments, and a minimum 15% requirement for open space and green space on future small area plans.

7. *One of our City's greatest strengths is its small-town character, geographical size and relative walkability. What do you see as the primary impediments to enhanced walkability and bikeability and how would you address them?*

I traded in my car for a bicycle two years ago and have not looked back. I was able to do this because our community has done a lot to become pedestrian friendly, but we can do more. A lack of bike infrastructure and narrow sidewalks are major concerns. We need to build more bike lanes, preferably with buffers to protect bicyclists from motor vehicles. Walkability can also be enhanced with the construction of new sidewalks, the repairs of existing sidewalks, the installation of streetlights, reflective crosswalks, and the employment of more traffic calming measures in the form of bump outs and speed bumps. I admire the work Council has already started by implementing the "Sidewalks and Streetlights" program within the FY21 Capital Improvement Program for the first time this year. I would continue to prioritize this work, and push for more local funds to be allocated to these projects.

8. *What are your thoughts on towing from business parking lots and the potential sale of the City owned parking lot to Insight for their development at Broad and Washington?*

While the towing of vehicles is a concern for residents and visitors alike, a recent study published earlier this year, by Walker Consultants, illustrated that aside from "periodic hot spots, there is not really a pressing parking problem" in downtown Falls Church. Strategies to improve parking in the City, should include better signage on parking spots, new on-street parking, increased shared parking arrangements with land owners and businesses, passenger loading zones for rideshare users, technology such as smartphone apps and magnetometers which highlight available parking, and the utilization of underused public parking spaces at City Hall and George Mason Square.

I would not be opposed to the sale of the City owned parking lot to Insight for the Broad and Washington project, if there is a temporary solution that alleviates burdens to neighboring business during the construction process, and if the developer plans to construct a parking garage on the premises.

9. “Empty nesters” and/or retirees are moving out of the city as property taxes make it too expensive to stay. What will be your approach to real estate taxes to allow the City to be favorable to people of all ages?

I would propose a more dedicated standard for tax relief for empty nesters and seniors, with the possibility to freeze increases to their tax burdens through higher property tax assessments. This is a problem not unique to our community, and we should look to policies enacted by other localities directed towards this issue to learn best practices. We should also study the policy of instituting a progressive property tax in Falls Church, that may or may not take into account income levels as a measurement for tax limits.

10. What do you think can/should be done to help businesses and the City get through this Covid economic challenge?

I would reinforce current initiatives to live, eat, and shop local in Falls Church. An increased effort towards highlighting consumer spending in our community will help ensure small businesses survive the pandemic and thrive for years to come, while mitigating a decline in the tax base for the City. We can also work closer with local businesses, to produce policies that will enhance these efforts, and generate more revenue for their enterprises. Our mission should be aligned to avoid policies that may damage these efforts. Continuing to provide rental assistance to current residents should also be a priority, so occupancy and the consumer population remains stable in the City, during the pandemic.

11. Is there another issue, for which we did not ask a question, that you are passionate about?

By most measurements, Falls Church is a segregated community, lacking economic and racial diversity. This year, we watched as our City came together to protest systemic racism and the practices of law enforcement witnessed across the nation. But the institutionalization of segregation and discrimination are almost always a product of local public policy. Our Little City can lead by example and become a beacon of change. We have made a great start with the Use of Force Committee and discussions of the school name change. We need to do more. As a second generation American, I can speak to the ugly reality of discrimination. On the City Council, my voice and unique perspective will help guide our City to a better future.

Candidate Name: Simone Pass Tucker

How long have you lived in the City? I have had the privilege of calling The Little City home for a cumulative 15 years, and attended every public school in the city.

Why do you want to serve on the City Council? I want to bring a fresh perspective to the City Council- as a young, Jewish member of the LGBTQ+ community, I know a bit about what it feels like to be unrepresented. More than just a new point of view, I hope to be a voice for those in Falls Church who don't yet have a seat at the table. If you have ever felt left out of or overlooked by local politics, please reach out to me at Simone@simone4fc.com. Together we can create a Falls Church that is truly inclusive, safe, and welcoming to **everyone**.



What past activities, have prepared you for a seat on council? I've served on the Friends of the Arts NC State Advisory Board at North Carolina State University, and represented my constituents as a student Senator for the 34,000-students. I have a wealth of experience in campaign, advocacy, and social justice work. I have been enthusiastically volunteering for candidates I believe in since my parents brought me along with them canvassing in 2008. I know the grunt work it takes to get elected. I have spent the majority of my adult years fighting for equality and equity with groups like Planned Parenthood, The Sunrise Movement, and J Street. I value hard work and ethicality above all else, and am committed to the city that made me who I am today.

Is there a civic accomplishment of which you are most proud? While serving on the Friends of the Arts NC State Advisory Board, I helped oversee the completion and opening of the Gregg Museum of Art and Design's first facility. The ribbon-cutting on that facility was the culmination of years of work by hundreds of people, involving cooperation between city, county, and student governments and several local advocacy organizations. Seeing it come to fruition was a very proud moment. In the City of Falls Church, I'm confident that our best and most exciting accomplishments are still ahead of us.

1. What are the top three issues facing the City, and how would you address them?

The top three issues facing us today are the three pillars of my platform; environmentalism, affordable living, and the livelihood of our small business community.

Our floodplain desperately needs addressing- stormwater fees ought to be proportionally graduated. Implementing green roofing on all possible flat roofs is another logical way to address our rapidly expanding floodplains. We need to implement renewable energy wherever possible- solar and geothermal- on public land, and on incoming private development. Rather than invasive species like bamboo, planting indigenous flora is a small step we can take to benefit our local wildlife.

Affordable living includes affordable housing units both for rent and for sale, better walkability, and overall more equitable opportunity for people of all financial backgrounds. Bringing in affordable units for sale rather than just for rent allows for greater upward mobility. Walkability involves crosswalks, distance from essential businesses and services, and access to transportation. The more walkable a city is, the less essential owning a car becomes- a huge barrier to cost of living for many, as well as an opportunity to improve our local environment. Allowing more mixed-use development and accessory commercial units (ACUs) brings essentials closer to every citizen.

With the influx of larger-scale development comes a storm for small business owners. While, on its face, development may be expected to bring in more customers to local small businesses, this is not likely the case. Large corporate developments, like the currently proposed Whole Foods, can only be

counted on to shift the business profile of the surrounding area *away* from locally-owned small businesses.

2. There has been a great deal of development along Broad and Washington Streets over the past 15 years. What would you propose to encourage commercial economic development that does not add residential units?

In order to make development work for the citizens of Falls Church, we need a change in perspective on the city council. Commercially-zoned real estate on a major traffic artery inside the beltway is an incredibly valuable and scarce resource, which puts the city in a great negotiating position to make demands of developers. Developers will always threaten to leave - that's their only leverage. It isn't particularly meaningful leverage, because, if a developer walks away from a project in one of our city's most valuable real estate plots, others **will** be willing to take their place.

With that in mind, city council needs to be demanding - requiring high percentages of retail space, green building practices, and walkable design with each new project. We must not repeat the mistakes of the 2008 financial crisis, in caving to developers' demands for more residential space. Revisions allowing more residential space were approved for several projects in that downturn, which put disproportionate strain on the school system and City services.

City council is always in the strongest negotiating position with developers. We need councillors who see that our city is in demand, and can afford to be selective. I will always put Falls Church first in negotiations with developers as your city councillor.

3. How would you work to preserve the City's affordable housing stock? Is 6% affordable housing enough?

No, 6 percent is not enough. Preserving existing affordable housing stock, and promoting new growth in affordable housing, can be done through smart development. This includes requirements for new ADUs and measures to protect existing affordable housing.

But measures focused on housing aren't enough. Smart commercial development can keep property taxes down by adding to the city's sales tax revenue, reducing the city government's dependence on property taxes. Diversifying the small businesses that fill our city can also help attract more diverse new residents. A city filled with people from all walks of life, at all stages of life, costs less to long-term residents.

4. How do you envision the Falls Church of the future?

We have a responsibility to maintain the small businesses that we have, and to make the local business environment one that supports them. But development can't be stopped. Our region is well into a second decade of steady population growth, and an attractive community like ours will always face the pressures of growth. With that in mind, we need a city council that recognizes that the route 7 corridor has incredible value to developers and only gains value with each new year of growth. That puts the city in a strong negotiating position to shape development in smart, sustainable ways that serve existing city residents, improve our quality of life, and attract diverse new neighbors.

Imagine if, instead of a new Tysons Corner, we made our community a green oasis with garden rooftops, living walls, renewable energy, and walkable spaces in place of heavy traffic. What if we only accepted development proposals with 40% commercial space, LEED gold-certified buildings, and space set aside for city residents to own thriving businesses? A "15-minute city" where local residents could meet all of their needs within a short walk. All of these things are within our reach, if we elect city councilors who are willing to demand them, as I am.

5. The City streetscape plantings are important to the visual appearance of our City. What would you do to enhance the appearance of our City for citizens and visitors?

City plantings should emphasize indigenous flora, which are lower maintenance and will crowd out invasive species. New programs focused on community gardens and green roofing can increase our greenspace, and make city residents feel invested in the local ecosystem. And, with many residents looking for additional income opportunities in the current economic slowdown, city government should look into creating short-term, gig-based earning opportunities for citizens willing to lend a green thumb for a few hours. Look into city that employed homeless population to help with city and landscaping maintenance.

6. *The City has seen a decrease in tree canopy coverage and green space due to both residential and commercial development. What steps should the city be taking to increase tree canopy, pervious surfaces and open space?*

Both our environmental preservation zoning code and the city's tree preservation and replacement guidelines are in need of an update.

Current regulations require new development to achieve only 20% tree canopy coverage after a period of 10 years. These requirements could be strengthened to benefit city residents, and a focus on indigenous species would mean more sustainable plantings.

While the state of Virginia does little to protect mature trees, cities have the right to pass their own regulations, and there's no reason we shouldn't protect our trees.

City council should drastically rethink how Falls Church approaches drainage and impervious surfaces. Requirements for green roofing and permeable driveway surfaces in new construction could lead to projects that actually improve our watershed, rather than simply try to slow down its degradation.

7. *One of our City's greatest strengths is its small-town character, geographical size and relative walkability. What do you see as the primary impediments to enhanced walkability and bikeability and how would you address them?*

I'm a strong proponent of the concept of "15 minute neighborhoods" as developed by the organization Strong Towns. Their recommendations focus on developing bike lanes and sidewalks, and beyond such simple measures, planning growth around the healthiest ways for local residents to use the built environment around them. Building bike infrastructure is simply one of the most cost-effective civic projects a city can undertake, and we all want to live in a Falls Church where people of every age are safe walking and biking to most of the places they need to go. That means connecting parks, businesses, and city services with a network of bike lanes and walking paths, and ensuring that future development of Routes 7 and 29 focuses on both pedestrian safety and efficient walking routes.

8. *What are your thoughts on towing from business parking lots and the potential sale of the City owned parking lot to Insight for their development at Broad and Washington?*

The most effective long-term solution to our city's parking challenges is to make all new development accessible safely and efficiently on foot. We don't want to be another Tyson's Corner, with traffic problems limiting everyone's quality of life.

But we must have parking, and that parking must belong to the taxpayers of our city. Selling public parking spaces to help a developer meet their parking requirements is a short-sighted decision that does not benefit our city in any way. Parking space is valuable, which is why developers want to buy it. Even though liquidating our assets is in the short-term beneficial, keeping our parking spaces and their growing real estate value will benefit the community far more in the long-term. Therefore, we should hold onto that value for our taxpayers. Falls Church should look to develop public parking garages in strategic locations that help visitors to our city park their cars and efficiently shop, visit local restaurants, and spend money in our community on foot in pleasant spaces. City council must

also aggressively weed out predatory towing companies, which line their own pockets at the expense of residents.

9. “Empty nesters” and/or retirees are moving out of the city as property taxes make it too expensive to stay. What will be your approach to real estate taxes to allow the City to be favorable to people of all ages?

There are two ways city council can keep real estate taxes as low as possible while maintaining the quality of our schools:

Focus on commercial development -- every dollar raised through sales taxes is a new dollar that long-time city residents don't have to pay in property tax. Attractive commercial development brings in outside money from Arlington and Fairfax County shoppers.

Diversify our city by broadening its appeal -- affordable housing, walkable spaces, and vibrant development of locally-owned restaurants makes our city an attractive place people at all ages and from all walks of life want to move into, rather than simply a city attractive to families looking for good schools. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many young adults back into our city, which gives us a new opportunity to engage with them and build a walkable city that attracts people at all life stages. By diversifying our taxpayers, we diversify demands of the city infrastructure, which will in turn reduce stress on our school system and demand for single-family housing.

10. What do you think can/should be done to help businesses and the City get through this Covid economic challenge?

Our city government does not have the financial resources to prop up local businesses in trouble from the pandemic, but we don't need to spend our own money on that. Not long ago, according to the Associated Press, the Small Business Administration (SBA) closed the first round of CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program funding with more than \$130 billion unclaimed.

What our city government *can* do is help our local businesses access federal funding. I propose that we create a temporary “small business concierge” office in city hall that helps local businesses apply for the federal disaster aid that is going unspent. Large corporations are already moving into our city. They don't need our help. But I've been going door-to-door, visiting locally-owned small businesses to ask what they need from city council, and it's clear that a liaison with the SBA could help save local businesses without requiring local spending.

11. Is there another issue, for which we did not ask a question, that you are passionate about?

My mission is simple -- If elected, I will focus on making our community more sustainable and establish Falls Church as a safe and welcoming place for everyone. People of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, income levels, and people with both physical and invisible disabilities belong in our city, and should feel welcome here. But diversity isn't an abstract goal. It's a solid financial strategy for a small city in a steadily-growing, sprawling region. Equity is an intersectional issue. In addressing our majority white, majority wealthy status as a city we need to look to the reasons this disproportionality has arisen, and what we can do to make Falls Church truly inclusive. This includes policy and social action across the board- environmental action, police reform, zoning laws, affordable housing, correct and respectful language surrounding identity, greater opportunity for upward mobility, walkability, and community building. Attracting a more diverse community will allow our City to grow in a sustainable way, without overstraining City services or the schools.

Sample Ballot

Commonwealth of Virginia, Official Ballot
City of Falls Church

Full Ballot

General and Special Elections Tuesday, November 3, 2020

Voting Instructions

1. Use a black or blue pen.
2. Make a clear mark inside the box to the left of your choice.
3. For a Write-In candidate, mark the box to the left of the line and write in the name.
4. If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

President and Vice President

Vote for only one

DEMOCRATIC PARTY
Electors for
Joseph R. Biden, President
Kamala D. Harris, Vice President

REPUBLICAN PARTY
Electors for
Donald J. Trump, President
Michael R. Pence, Vice President

LIBERTARIAN PARTY
Electors for
Jo Jorgensen, President
Jeremy F. "Spike" Cohen, Vice President

Write-in:

Authorized by the City of Falls Church Electoral Board
300 Park Ave., Falls Church, VA 22046 703.248.5085

Notice: Any committee, individual or group who has
SAMPLE BALLOTS reproduced by any means must
print thereon the appropriate authority statement
required by federal law.

For federal requirements, call the Federal Election
Commission at (800) 424-9530

The committee, individual or group must print such
Sample Ballots in a color other than white.

Member

United States Senate

Vote for only one

Mark R. Warner - D

Daniel M. Gade - R

Write-in:

Member

House of Representatives 8th District

Vote for only one

Donald S. Beyer Jr. - D

Jeff A. Jordan - R

Write-in:

Member

City Council, Special Election For unexpired term to end December 31, 2021

Vote for only one

Debora "Debbie" Schantz-Hiscott

Joshua S. Shokoor

Simone V. Pass Tucker

Write-in:

Read Both Sides of the Ballot

Sample Ballot

Commonwealth of Virginia, Official Ballot
City of Falls Church

Full Ballot

General and Special Elections
Tuesday, November 3, 2020

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

Question 1

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to establish a redistricting commission, consisting of eight members of the General Assembly and eight citizens of the Commonwealth, that is responsible for drawing the congressional and state legislative districts that will be subsequently voted on, but not changed by, the General Assembly and enacted without the Governor's involvement and to give the responsibility of drawing districts to the Supreme Court of Virginia if the redistricting commission fails to draw districts or the General Assembly to enact districts by certain deadlines?

Yes

No

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

Question 2

Should an automobile or pickup truck that is owned and used primarily by or for a veteran of the United States armed forces or the Virginia National Guard who has one hundred percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability be free from state and local taxation?

Yes

No



Read Both Sides of the Ballot