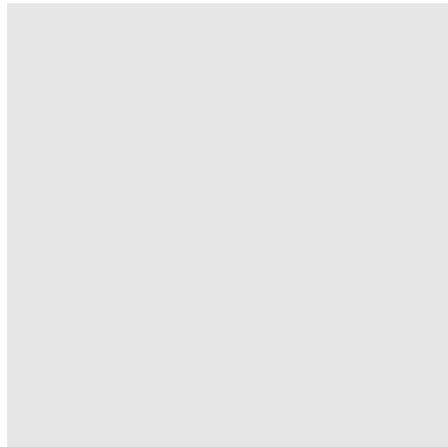




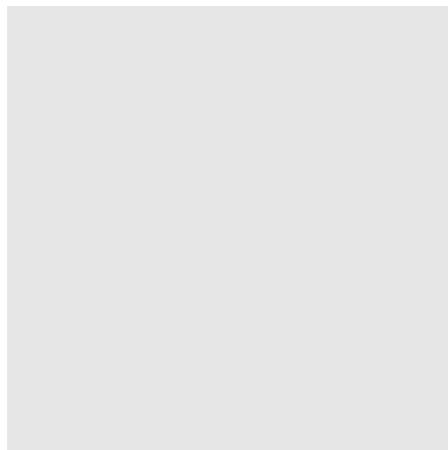
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## Questions for the candidates: What are the city's top priorities?

By Randy Petersen [rpetersen@postbulletin.com](mailto:rpetersen@postbulletin.com) Jun 30, 2018

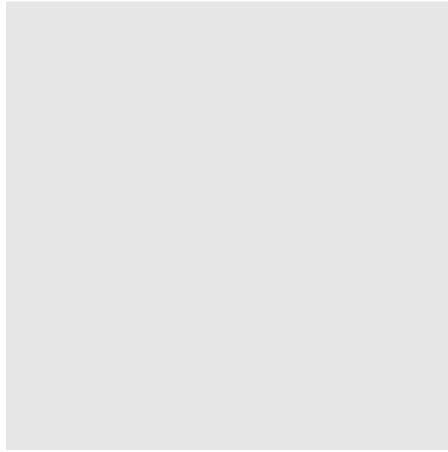


Shaun Palmer

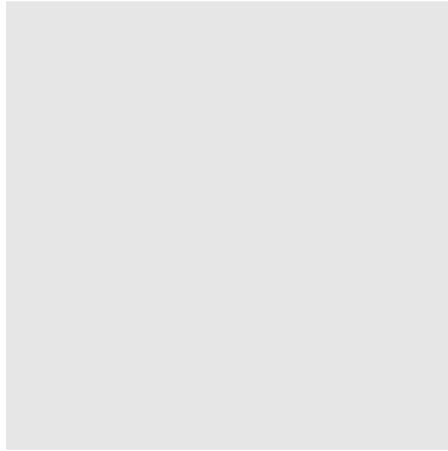


Judy Hickey Ward 5 candidate.

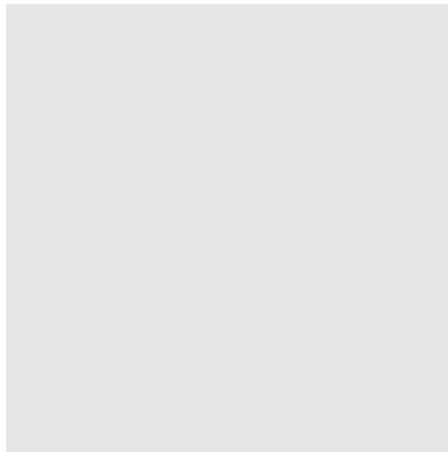
Contributed



Byron Clark



Mike Walters



Brittney Marschall  
Contributed

The Rochester City Council is working on strategic planning, with the goal of setting short-term and long-term priorities for the city.

We asked council candidates in Ward 5 what they see as the top priorities for the city in the next three to five years.

Here's how they responded:

### **Shaun Palmer**

Housing — Rochester needs to provide a commitment to the middle class and workforce housing needs in our community.

Transportation balance is needed on transportation and enough parking for employees and visitors downtown, while providing rapid bus service and bus lanes to all of Rochester. We should also change the way we deal with transportation for commuters into

Rochester.

Destination Medical Center — the DMC plans need to work for everyone in Rochester, there needs to be a real concern for the average person in Rochester.

Parks Department — We need to provide enough resources for the Parks Department to properly serve Rochester. For years, we have underfunded the Parks Department, and we need to change the funding mechanism to work for all of us.

### **Judy Hickey**

Rochester City Council needs to address the following priorities:

Improve communication between city government and the residents. Better effort needs to be made to inform citizens in an effective and timely manner of plans and policies that are in development that affect residents.

Rochester City Council approved the P2S Comprehensive Plan in April 2018. A review and incorporation of related planning document needs to occur, which will allow citizens to better navigate through these many overlapping documents.

Oversight, proper planning and implementation of the proposed Destination Medical Center projects and thorough examination of the related long-term cost of such projects to the city's budget.

Careful review of the city's budget as the Comprehensive Plan is implemented, focusing on controlling the growth of city government.

### **Byron Clark**

I consider the next three to five years as a short-term priority list. There are many priorities we need to address, but given this space allotment, I will only speak to one.

Transportation will be a bigger factor than it is today. For bus transit to be successful, we will need to ensure that it is convenient. Bus ridership often trails investment in transit. This could be an upfront liability for the city and it may never break even. The addition of bus rapid transit routes will make it more attractive to riders and could make a difference.

Weekend and evening routes will also have to be improved. Convenience and affordability are key if we want it to be successful part of overall plan.

### **Mike Walters**

Mindful that our actions now impact the next generation, in the next five years we should:

- Tackle the accessibility and affordability challenges that come with projected growth, including shortages in housing and child care. The primary question I'm hearing from people is, "Who is all this growth even for?" The council must answer that question.
- Get our financial house in order. Past growth has raised the cost of city services — especially roads and utilities — faster than the tax base grows to pay for them. We should reverse this trend by implementing the land-use plan and by reforming the TIF process.
- Dedicate new parkland. The people coming here will need parks, and this investment cannot wait until after they arrive. Existing parkland-dedication rules should be strengthened.

### **Brittney Marschall**

**Focus on high-quality services** — For our community to thrive, the city council must focus on efficient delivery and accessibility of vital services including transportation within and beyond our borders, affordable housing and public safety.

**Build excellence in city government** — There is a powerful desire for transparency of city actions. This is a call for accountability and community influence needing to be addressed. The City Council needs to continue to build an environment that rewards excellence, encourages innovation and welcomes participation in government processes.

**Create a future we all benefit from** — As a council member I would focus on creating a bright and sustainable future for all by addressing affordable housing and transportation challenges, energy independence, protecting natural resources and fostering economic vitality.

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## Randy Petersen

Local Government Reporter

Randy is the Post Bulletin's local government reporter, covering the city of Rochester and Olmsted County, as well as Destination Medical Center efforts. He joined the Post Bulletin staff in 2014.