

POSITION 1

Participant	Melanie Kebler	Justin Livingston (Incumbent)
<p>Q1 - What is your current occupation?</p>	<p>Attorney. Currently transitioning into opening my own practice in 2021.</p>	<p>Managing Principal Broker</p>
<p>Q2 - What previous government or other public sector experience do you have, especially in Bend? What have been your major accomplishments in this work?</p>	<p>Deputy District Attorney, Lincoln and Yamhill Counties, 2008-2013 Victims' Rights Attorney, Oregon Crime Victims Law Center, 2013-2020 Appointed member, Deschutes Local Public Safety Coordinating Committee 2019-present Appointed member, Oregon Commission on Judicial Fitness and Disability 2019-present Board President, Camp Fire Central Oregon Board Member, Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation</p> <p>I have spent my career working for the public and since moving to Bend I've become involved with public service here on the local and state level. I am proud of serving my community to promote public safety, protect the rights of victims, and work for a fair and ethical judicial system. I also grew up in Camp Fire's clubs and programs, and I enjoy giving back to the organization that helped me grow my love of the outdoors and my commitment to community service.</p>	<p>Bend City Council: Record levels of funding towards street maintenance without a regressive gas tax; Investments to improve the transportation network, including the Empire & Murphy corridors. Successful in receiving a \$60.4m INFRA grant from the federal government to improve N Hwy 97 around Cooley Rd. Built the foundation to make a wider variety of affordable housing, including the largest Affordable Housing project ever to be built in Bend will break ground this fall/winter. City of Bend Affordable Housing Committee Bend Street Maintenance Funding Committee Board Member and Land Use Chair, Old Farm Neighborhood Association</p>
<p>Q3 - What do you see as the top three land use challenges to the residents of Bend?</p>	<p>Missing middle housing for people making 80%-120% of the Area Median Income, planning for smart growth that brings prosperity to everyone in Bend, creating walkable complete neighborhoods through proper investment in our transportation system and building codes.</p>	<p>Not having a 20 year supply of land as required by state law Increasing density Infrastructure</p>
<p>Q4 - What changes in City policies do you support to address these challenges (Q3)?</p>	<p>I support code changes that allow a diversity of housing types to be built in Bend, and policies that lower the barriers to getting those homes built. We desperately need more housing in Bend to keep up with demand, or our already high average median price of a home will continue to be unattainable for most people who live and work here. As we fill in the land available in Bend, I want to push for new neighborhoods that support our environmental goals, allow mixed use and corner stores as well as have work and school nearby, and that fit with our transportation system plans. I support investment in infrastructure and redevelopment plans that will make it feasible to build more, and different types, of housing all around Bend to meet the continued need.</p>	<p>We have to start a new UGB or Urban Area Reserve (UAR) process by the end of 2021. This isn't a change in policy, but a requirement of the 2016 UGB adoption. At this point, a UGB expansion makes the most sense to ensure a 20 year supply of land with a UAR in the following biennium to look out 50 years for how & where Bend will grow. Increasing density beyond what is currently allowed in existing zoning or up-zoning should occur in the Opportunity Areas established in the 2016 UGB. The purpose of these areas was to increase density where it would have the least impact on existing neighborhoods. We should continue to fulfill that commitment. Adequate infrastructure plays a large role in being able to accomplish the goals in the Comprehensive Plan. When the City doesn't adequately invest in infrastructure, it shifts the burden to housing & often kills projects by making them financially unviable.</p>
<p>Q5 - What can the City do to retain the character and livability of existing neighborhoods as Bend grows?</p>	<p>Change has been a constant over Bend's life as a city, and it can be hard to adjust to the rapid pace of change that we have experienced in recent decades. I want to continue to get the perspective of all our neighborhoods around town through equitable public input and through the neighborhood associations. We are going to continue to grow as a city because Bend is such an attractive place to live, work, and play. To accommodate that growth, I believe we will need gradual density increases in the future, and this may mean changes for many different neighborhoods. If we can spread more gentle changes across the city, instead of freezing some parts of town and seeing big changes in others, then the impacts on current neighborhoods will be lower. Gentle changes means gradually adding a corner store, or a neighborhood pub, or a duplex or quadplex to neighborhoods while we make our trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes connect so we can open up different areas of town to become more livable, new, diverse neighborhoods.</p> <p>Livability, to me, also means affordability. Bend is not affordable for many people who would like to live and work here. Our local businesses have trouble hiring health care workers, teachers, and other professionals whose presence would benefit our city because even if there is a job here, there is no appropriate and affordable housing available. I want to change that and I think as our city becomes more affordable we will attract a diversity of viewpoints, businesses, and neighbors that will benefit everyone in our community.</p>	<p>Place increased density in areas that have less impact on existing neighborhoods. A good example is the Opportunity Areas in the UGB plan, like the Central District. We should also focus our transportation improvements to make sure the right traffic is on the right roads to limit neighborhood cut through traffic.</p>

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Q6 - People often move to Bend to escape density, but Oregon land use laws generally result in increased density over time. To address this conflict, what is your vision for how Bend should look after 10 more years of development?	<p>I think we have to come to terms with the fact that Bend is no longer a small town, it's a little city. Cities like Bend will continue to be dynamic and grow because of the attractiveness of living here, so we will need to plan in smart ways for that growth so we can be a sustainable city in the future. Spreading out into our surrounding areas will create additional issues of increased traffic from people who have to drive into the core of Bend, financial liability for the City to maintain longer roads and sewer infrastructure, and negative environmental impacts. A gradual increase in density and modest Urban Growth Boundary expansions are the best way to create a dynamic thriving community with better public transportation, interesting new commercial districts, connected paths and trails, and complete walkable neighborhoods. After 10 more years of development Bend should and can be a beautiful welcoming place to live.</p>	<p>The answer is similar to question 5, we should place higher density zoning in areas that minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods. It also benefits more intense development to be near other amenities & services at or near the core of the city.</p>
Q7 - For incumbents, what do you think has been your most significant contribution towards solving land use problems in Bend? For challengers, what would you do differently?	<p>We need to actively continue to reduce hurdles to building different housing types in Bend. I support the HB 2001 amendments that will be coming before Council soon to allow these new housing types in traditionally single family only zoned areas. I support removing or eliminating barriers like parking minimums or large setbacks. I support other small homes being allowed, like microunits and tiny homes. I am supporting the transportation bond in November to provide a much overdue investment in our transportation infrastructure. We need a wide swath of voters in a high turnout election to tell us whether the bond is the way they want to move forward on solving transportation safety and connectivity in Bend.</p> <p>I also think we need to look at improving our tree code in Bend to try to find the balance of preserving more old growth trees while not causing costs that are too burdensome as we try to increase the number of homes available here.</p>	<p>Formation of the Neighborhood Leadership Alliance, so we could have better communication channels to our Neighborhood Associations. Leading the effort as Chair of the Bend Urban Renewal Agency to establish a new Urban Renewal District in Bend's core to start investments in public infrastructure that supports more intense development where it limits impacts to existing neighborhoods.</p>
Q8 - What are your ideas to improve housing affordability in Bend (beyond the measures already taken)?	<p>There are many different aspects to housing affordability in Bend, and we need to attack the problem from all angles. In addition to my above comments, I support reviewing the City's System Development Charge scheme to find a fair balance for fees for smaller homes vs. large single family homes, and I want to work with Bend Parks and Rec make sure they continue to exempt affordable housing from their SDCs. We need to continue to collect affordable housing fees and lobby hard for state and federal dollars to help us fund more affordable housing projects and support land trust groups.</p>	<p>Allowing more diversity of housing types, while respecting integration into existing neighborhoods. Removing barriers to development in codes. Streamline permitting process. Invest in infrastructure to reduce offsite development costs. Increase land supply through another UGB expansion & a subsequent UAR.</p>
Q9 - A current proposal before the City Council to provide more affordable housing would allow Micro-Unit Developments (SROs) as small as 150 s.f. with a private bath and no kitchen, but a common kitchen for every 10 units. What is your opinion of this concept and how should the Council respond?	<p>I believe we need many types of housing for the many different types of people who live here. Microunits may not be for everybody, but they could fill a niche for some people trying to find a place to live here in Bend. I think of them like a home with roommates who each get their own bathroom. Microunits and tiny homes can also be an asset for the City when we work to address how to house the unhoused population here in Bend. I think Council should adopt the microunit code and allow them in all zones in the city. A large amount of land in Bend is zoned RS. By restricting these units from RS zoning, we are severely restricting any interested developer's ability to create and invest in this new housing type. I support restricting microunits from being used as short term rentals as the idea here is to create long term affordable housing for residents of Bend.</p>	<p>My recommendations, at a recent Council meeting, for changes to the Micro-Unit code are as follows: Initially limit to RS zoning only in Opportunity Areas, but allow throughout the city in the RM, RH, ME, MR, MU, MN, & HB3450 commercial zones. Tiered parking requirements. The base would be 1 stall per unit with reductions for proximity to transit, commercial amenities, & storage for alternative transportation.</p>
Q10 - What effect do you think short-term rentals in Bend have had on the availability of affordable housing? What would you do about this, if anything?	<p>I think short term rentals contribute to the lack of longer-term rental housing in Bend, but I would like to see a further study on this to determine just how much of an impact it is, and which housing types are being used as STRs. The City has to continue to audit STRs in Bend and make sure they are complying with our regulations. We should also be careful when deciding whether to allow new housing types to be used as STRs, as again this could take away from housing availability for residents. We do have to keep in mind that tourists do come to Bend and contribute to our economy, and if we restrict STRs too much it could hurt our ability to receive revenue into the city's general fund from tourism.</p>	<p>I suspect STR's have little impact on rental inventories once you remove resort properties like Mt Bachelor Village & people that wouldn't convert to long term tenancy because its really a 2nd home from the equation. A lot of the houses used for STR's just wouldn't be affordable long term rentals. Plus there are the STR permit holders who don't really rent their property out, but are a place holder to prevent their neighbors from having one. The number of professional investors in the STR market I believe is a relatively low number.</p> <p>The larger impact to rental inventories are people selling their long term rental properties to people who occupy them as primary residences due to increased state regulations on landlords. Thus removing that property from the rental pool.</p>

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<p>Q11 - How familiar are you with Bend's Community Climate Action Plan? To help achieve the goals of that Plan, do you favor adopting measures requiring all new housing have solar power?</p>	<p>I support the Community Climate Action Plan and encouraged our Council to pass it. As far as requiring solar, we need to look at whether, at this time, it will be cost-prohibitive to building housing at the numbers we need here in Bend. I would support looking into requiring electric appliances, which are better for the environment than natural gas appliances. Additionally, we could require houses to be pre-wired for solar, so if owners want to convert it's easy to add later. As solar, wind, and other renewable energy technology becomes cheaper in the future, we can move towards a requirement of solar on new homes in Bend.</p>	<p>No! More regulations on housing will not help housing be more affordable.</p>
<p>Q12 - Increasing the density of housing developments (more units on smaller lots) often results in urban heat islands (partly due to tree removal), increasing energy consumption and pollutant emissions, and compromising human health and comfort. How would you address this problem? For example, to encourage more shade, would you require the preservation of older trees on the development site?</p>	<p>I actually don't agree that denser development is overall worse for the environment. When we sprawl outward and require people to drive further to get into town, we are increasing car emissions and harming our environment. When we build dense neighborhoods close to amenities, we can have a big impact on reducing those emissions. We do need our housing of all types to be built in sustainable ways. This includes implementing a green building code and promoting things like cool roofs, low water yards, preservation of large trees, and more street trees all over Bend as it develops. Even high-density developments can and should include green spaces, as well.</p>	<p>This is a consequence of Oregon's land use system, intended or not. Increased density to protect farms & forests from urban sprawl comes at the cost of our urban tree canopy. I would LOVE for everyone to be able to have a ¼ or ½ acre lot with large Ponderosa Pines if they so choose, but unfortunately that type of development pattern is a thing of the past. Preserving large older trees in the city is quite difficult with small lots, onsite storm water requirements, & the nature of excavation in Central Oregon. One way to help this would be to have alternative design standards in the development code, so developers could choose different right of way widths & roadway cross sections to allow for things like multi-use paths instead of sidewalks. A meandering path could allow for more preservation of existing trees & improve neighborhood character.</p>
<p>Q13 - In the process of permitting new developments, Bend does not currently take into account fire evacuation. In what ways should Bend take into account the need to evacuate in the event of wildfire?</p>	<p>I believe the fire department and building engineers have to take into account fire safety concerns for every new building and development in Bend, and they should be taking evacuation routes into consideration. This is one reason why we should encourage a connected grid pattern in new developments and in our transportation system, instead of dead ends and cul de sacs that can cause evacuation problems.</p>	<p>One of the current Council goals is a 'Wildfire Resiliency Plan'. I expect this plan to include recommendations for how to evacuate neighborhoods in the event of a wildfire, amongst other recommendations. If not, it should.</p>
<p>Q14 - The City is allowing thousands of housing units to be built with few provisions for handling the additional vehicles on the road. Yet, the public rates traffic congestion as a top current problem. How should the City address the pace of development to balance growth and road capacity?</p>	<p>Building more housing units does not necessarily have to result in more traffic if we build dense, complete neighborhoods close to shopping, school, and work. That said, it's clear that over the years we have not invested in keeping our transportation system caught up with our growth. I support the transportation bond to invest in projects that will increase safety and connectivity for everyone getting around town, and I will prioritize transportation projects that make it safe for people who walk, bike, roll and take public transit, so that there are fewer cars on the road for those of us who do drive.</p>	<p>It is a delicate balance between allowing development to happen, so SDC revenue can be realized when permits are pulled vs not letting development get too close to the infrastructure capacity. I have spent my 4 years on Council advocating for increased investments to improve the transportation system. Which has resulted in the current 5 year capital improvement project list with almost \$75m worth of projects including spending about \$45m in the current biennium.</p>
<p>Q15 - How should the City do more to involve citizens in changes to the development code?</p>	<p>Standing resident advisory committees are a great way for people in Bend to get involved with changes happening at the City level. The Bend Urban Renewal Advisory Board did some great work advising on the code changes that have resulted in the Core Area Plan and the Bend Central District. I want to lower the barriers to participation on these committees and rethink our public engagement and public comment processes. We need to make it easy for anyone in Bend to engage with their Councilors on City issues, whether it's on a committee, at a meeting, an open house, a neighborhood get together, or other creative ways we can gather public input.</p>	<p>Communication. Especially for significant changes to code, the City should be holding informational meetings in the effected areas of the City. Similar to what was done for the Core Area TIF plan, Septic to Sewer, & Transportation System Plan. For less significant code changes, engaging our committees for feedback. Its also important to have engaged neighborhood associations with experienced Land Use Chairs.</p>

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<p>Q16 - The GO (general obligation) bond for transportation projects on the November ballot allocates only 4.2% of the funds to public transit, yet reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips is an important goal. Would you allocate more of the GO bond funds to support public transit? What other ideas do you have for getting people out of their vehicles?</p>	<p>Public transit is one of many ways to help people make the choice to get out of their car for trips around town. I support investment in public transit and the money allocated in the bond is a good start. We need to continue to look for ways to leverage state and federal dollars to improve our local public transit system. We can also work with Bend Parks and Rec and other partners to invest in connected trail projects to make it pleasant and safe to walk, bike, and roll around town. And finally, by building complete neighborhoods with amenities close by, we can help people enjoy life in Bend in a place where they can easily walk, bike and roll to do shopping, get a bite to eat, grab groceries, or enjoy a pint.</p>	<p>Its important to keep in mind that the GO bond can only be used for capital projects. It can't be used for operational type expenditures. The bond project list has \$9m for transit infrastructure. The City also subsidizes Cascade East Transit (CET) by \$1.5m annually from the general fund. When you include all of this with the more than \$3m annually they are starting to receive from the new transit payroll tax, CET will be receiving more money annually than they ever have. Which will improve the entire system.</p> <p>The bond projects include rapid transit lines north/south on 3rd St & east/west on Greenwood & builds mobility hubs around the city to allow Cascades East Transit to shift away from their current hub & spoke model. This new model along with the rapid transit lines will allow for shorter head times, increase frequency, & increase reliability. The mobility hubs also help address the last mile that transit users struggle with by having a variety of transportation modes (ride share, bike share, scooters, etc.) to take you the last distance to your destination.</p> <p>I don't believe government should be social engineering people out of their cars. We should be giving people a variety of safe options to design their trip to fit their needs.</p>