

KUER / PBS VOTER GUIDE
2023 MAYORAL QUESTIONNAIRE
ROCKY ANDERSON RESPONSES

What's your elevator pitch for why voters should choose you as Salt Lake City's mayor?

I have proven experience, a solid record of achievement, and a driving passion to improve health, safety, and quality of life in our city. In all I've done, I build great teams, set goals, and achieve them. We'll be accessible, transparent, and non-political.

The city will build mixed-income non-market housing, providing thousands of affordable units of housing. We'll preserve and expand open spaces.

We'll never leave unsheltered people in the freezing winters without available shelter. We will create far more supportive permanent housing for chronically homeless people, as many of us did together when I was mayor.

We will eliminate encampments in public places. We will enforce drug and other laws, diverting people from jail to treatment. We will again institute broad restorative justice programs.

The SLCPD will once again respond quickly to emergency calls and police will de-escalate encounters.

We'll implement a 24/7 childcare system. As when I was mayor before, we'll vastly improve our streets, coordinate road construction, and improve our parks.

We will once again make SLC an international climate protection leader and aggressively take effective air quality measures.

Affordable housing [continues to be a struggle](#) for Salt Lake City residents. What should Salt Lake City do to address housing affordability for both renters and potential home buyers?

Renters should not be constantly insecure about unaffordable rent increases. Many people are now homeless in SLC because of rental increases. Also, our city's housing—rentals and owner-occupied—has become unaffordable for most people.

Millions in public funds have been provided to profit-driven private developers, most of whom build primarily unaffordable housing. I would end those subsidies.

The city, without a profit motive and committed to providing truly affordable housing, should build thousands of units of beautiful, environmentally sustainable

mixed-income non-market housing, surrounded by parks, as in many nations, including Vienna and Singapore. The housing costs in Vienna average 25% of income, while average SLC rent costs 50% or more of renters' income. Over 80% of Singaporeans own their homes, which are sold on 99-year leases.

Mixed-income non-market housing could be many stories high, where housing does not currently exist. Imagine housing for many hundreds of people between the Rio Grande depot and the intermodal hub, with surrounding open spaces. Such housing could relieve the current pressure to significantly alter the character of many neighborhoods.

What kind of housing do you believe should be expanded in Salt Lake City? How would you approach zoning regulations to address growth and housing density?

Mixed-income non-market housing (housing owned or controlled by the city or a non-profit and rented or sold below market rates, with protections against rising markets) should be built in areas that will not require the elimination of current housing. Much of the area within Salt Lake City, not currently zoned for residential use, would be suitable for large mixed-income rental and co-op or owner-occupied (perhaps on a long-term lease, as in Singapore) housing.

That is where our focus on affordable housing should be, particularly with the use of any public funds. The present approach of subsidizing market housing—which is subject to ever-increasing market increases in rent and sale prices—has been a disaster, leading to a largely unaffordable city for most people. To the extent we can eliminate the profit margin in housing, we can make housing much more affordable and available for people at all income levels. We can also substantially help to protect against homelessness.

Several places in the U.S. are catching on to the tremendous advantages of non-market housing. Seattle voters recently approved an initiative requiring social housing.

What investments should Salt Lake City make to help people get out of, and stay out of homelessness?

We should join with other governmental entities, the business community, and philanthropists in committing to significant joint investments in supportive permanent housing, with the goal of eliminating chronic homelessness within four years. (The timid 2-year goal, signed by the current mayor, is a reduction of only 5% of the unsheltered population!) During my prior term as mayor, many of us, together, were on track to eliminate chronic homelessness, becoming what national analysts said was an example for what other cities and states should consider. Tragically, there was an end to creation of permanent housing from approximately 2010 until 2019. Then, an

incredibly expensive new-construction housing facility, the Magnolia, was built, badly undermining quality of life in the neighborhood.

We should commit to more purchases and renovations of old hotels, following the cost-effective model of The Point, which now houses about 200 people in two former hotels on North Temple, around 2300 West.

We should implement rental assistance programs to help keep people in their current housing and coordinate with jails, prisons, and hospitals to make certain no one is released to homelessness.

Do you support the creation of [legal homeless camps](#)? Does Salt Lake City's current plan go far enough to help the city's unhoused population?

Homeless encampments in our parks, neighborhoods, and elsewhere throughout our city have horribly undermined the quality of life for residents and businesses, and continue the cruel treatment of unsheltered people. Everyone is suffering under the status quo. The encampments are a sign of the failure of leadership regarding our homelessness and affordability crises during the past four years.

We must provide an alternative place for unsheltered people to exist. The current mayor has no plan to eliminate encampments. The costly, vicious, traumatizing, unconstitutional police raids and confiscations of property belonging to homeless people, simply moving encampments from one place to another, continue in lieu of an effective, coherent plan by our current mayor.

I vigorously favor a sanctioned camp, remote from neighborhoods and businesses (at the closed Wingpointe Golf Course, for instance), where unsheltered people will have showers, decent bathrooms, property lockers, meals, and case management workers to help them transition to treatment, jobs, and/or housing. This is an evidence-based approach, far different than the chaos these past four years under the current administration.

What are your plans as mayor to ensure lower crime rates and help Salt Lakers feel safe?

Police often do not show up at all following a 911 call, or they arrive far too late. When they do finally show up, they often explain to local business owners or residents that they've been told by the mayor not to do anything other than tell the offenders to just move on. Incredibly, drug laws are not being enforced. (That's why crime figures are so much lower.)

I will make certain police respond to Priority 1 calls within 6 minutes or less, as they did when I was mayor. We will end the present sense of impunity so many have—thinking they can do whatever they want, including the conspicuous use and sale of dangerous drugs, without enforcement of the laws. We will re-institute and expand the

problem-solving restorative justice programs I implemented when I was mayor, and, after arrests for such things as drug offenses, divert people from jail to treatment.

Police will no longer be diverted to the labor-intensive police raids on homeless encampments, since encampments will be eliminated. (See above.) Our police leadership will be changed so that police can do their jobs and everyone in our community will be confident they are there to truly serve and protect everyone.

If it were only up to you, how would you reimagine Smith's Ballpark and the surrounding neighborhood after the Salt Lake Bees leave?

If I could be assured it could happen (and I believe that, with the right leadership, it could), I would aggressively recruit another AAA baseball team to continue the approximately 150 years legacy of professional baseball in SLC. Regardless of whether a professional men's baseball team could be brought to SLC, I would favor utilizing the Ballpark for women's sports as well, which has long been neglected. We could be a model for the rest of the nation in providing a world-class ballpark and stadium for women's sports. I'd also like to utilize the ballpark for arts events, music concerts, and other community-building events, affordable to everyone.

I favor transforming the parking lot to the north of the Smith's Ballpark for an architecturally outstanding mixed-use development that would include mixed-income non-market affordable housing for people of all income levels, as well as public gathering spaces, including a sort of town square, where people of all sorts, including families and singles, could mingle, have a drink, and enjoy music and other entertainment—as in town squares throughout much of the rest of the world, including almost every major town in Latin America.

What role should Salt Lake City play as an epicenter of arts and culture? As mayor, how would you support that?

Salt Lake City IS the epicenter of arts and culture, which should be supported and expanded in every way possible. Our cultural offerings are extraordinary, with one of six full-time Opera Companies and one of sixteen year-round Symphony Orchestras in the nation. Our modern dance, ballet, and theatre companies are world-class and the variety of music offered almost constantly is exceptional.

I will bring back the Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival, which will again be free of charge to everyone, as we did for 7 years when I was mayor before. Arts and culture are vital for their own sake, and they also provide many opportunities for all of us to mingle and build a stronger sense of community, particularly when attendance is free or low-cost. I'd like to see a program that supports greater diversity at performances at the best outdoor venue I've ever seen, Red Butte, and at all other arts and cultural venues.

I opposed the mayor and City Council's 4.9% property tax increase, especially when voters were urged by the administration to—and did—vote for a multi-million dollar Parks, Trails, and Open Space bond. Our parks have been poorly maintained by the administration. The foothills debacle—starting and stopping trail development because of a poor, truncated, non-collaborative planning process—has wasted millions of tax dollars and caused consternation among people on all sides of the trails-development issue.

To what extent should economic development in Salt Lake City be pursued to moderate the tax burden on residents? In what other ways can the city keep taxes low?

I opposed the mayor and City Council's 4.9% property tax increase, especially when voters were urged by the administration to—and did—vote for a multi-million dollar Parks, Trails, and Open Space bond. Our parks have been poorly maintained by the administration. The foothills debacle—starting and stopping trail development because of a poor, truncated, non-collaborative planning process—has wasted millions of tax dollars and caused consternation among people on all sides of the trails-development issue.

Good, careful management and supervision, with hands-on oversight by an engaged mayor, would make all the difference, without wasting millions of dollars and getting far less for the investments.

Fiscal responsibility should be a major part of a mayor's job, with a view to not increasing the tax burden on residents. When I was mayor before, we never raised property taxes, we built up the reserve fund substantially, and we made sure our streets, parks, and trails were well maintained. I will not raise, and may decrease, property taxes and will insist on an end to reckless spending, including the 64% increase in two years for the Mayor's Office budget requested by the mayor.

As mayor, how would you work to ensure UDOT's plans to expand I-15 do not unduly affect west side residents?

I would aggressively challenge the expansion of I-15, much as we did successfully in ending the first illegal plan for the Legacy Highway, resulting in the improved Legacy Parkway. The expansion or addition of highways is not an answer to—but is, rather, a cause of—greater vehicle congestion, more sprawl development, destruction of housing, and more dangerous pollution.

We need leadership that is not always looking to just "be at the table" while Salt Lake City's short- and long-term interests are harmed by the Utah Legislature. We need strong leadership that can work from a position of strength with legislators, and particularly legislative leadership, to work out the best possible solutions, taking into account the impacts on the future of our city and its residents.

Any expansion of I-15 will adversely impact the air quality, particularly for residents on Salt Lake City's west side. That cannot be tolerated and requires courageous, solid leadership to bring about better results. Expansion of I-15 now will just mean more expansions in the future, which will bring with it the destruction of west side housing and more dangerous air pollution.

Just for fun: What do you think of the 9th & 9th whale? What is your favorite “unique” feature of Salt Lake City?

Of course, everyone has had their first impressions of the whale. And all are valid, as with subjective impressions of art of any sort. My first impression was, "Wow! What a quirky, colorful addition to our city's arts installations! That's no doubt going to make a lot of people irritated, if not downright mad." It's often the nature of art to inspire, irritate, and/or stimulate those who are exposed to it. I enjoy seeing the whale, if for no reason other than to celebrate unique art in a city that has too few public art installations—which I intend to change as mayor again.

My favorite "unique" features of SLC are, collectively, the preserved vintage signs, such as the costume shop sign on 1100 East incorporated in the apartments that have replaced my all-time favorite costume shop, the Snelgrove's ice cream cone on 2100 South, and the Diamond Lil's sign. I lament the loss of so much of the charm in our city, such as the recent destruction of the Broadway Blvd. shops to make way for another big unaffordable apartment building. The preservation of the old signs signal an appreciation of some of what has made Salt Lake City such a unique, charming place.