

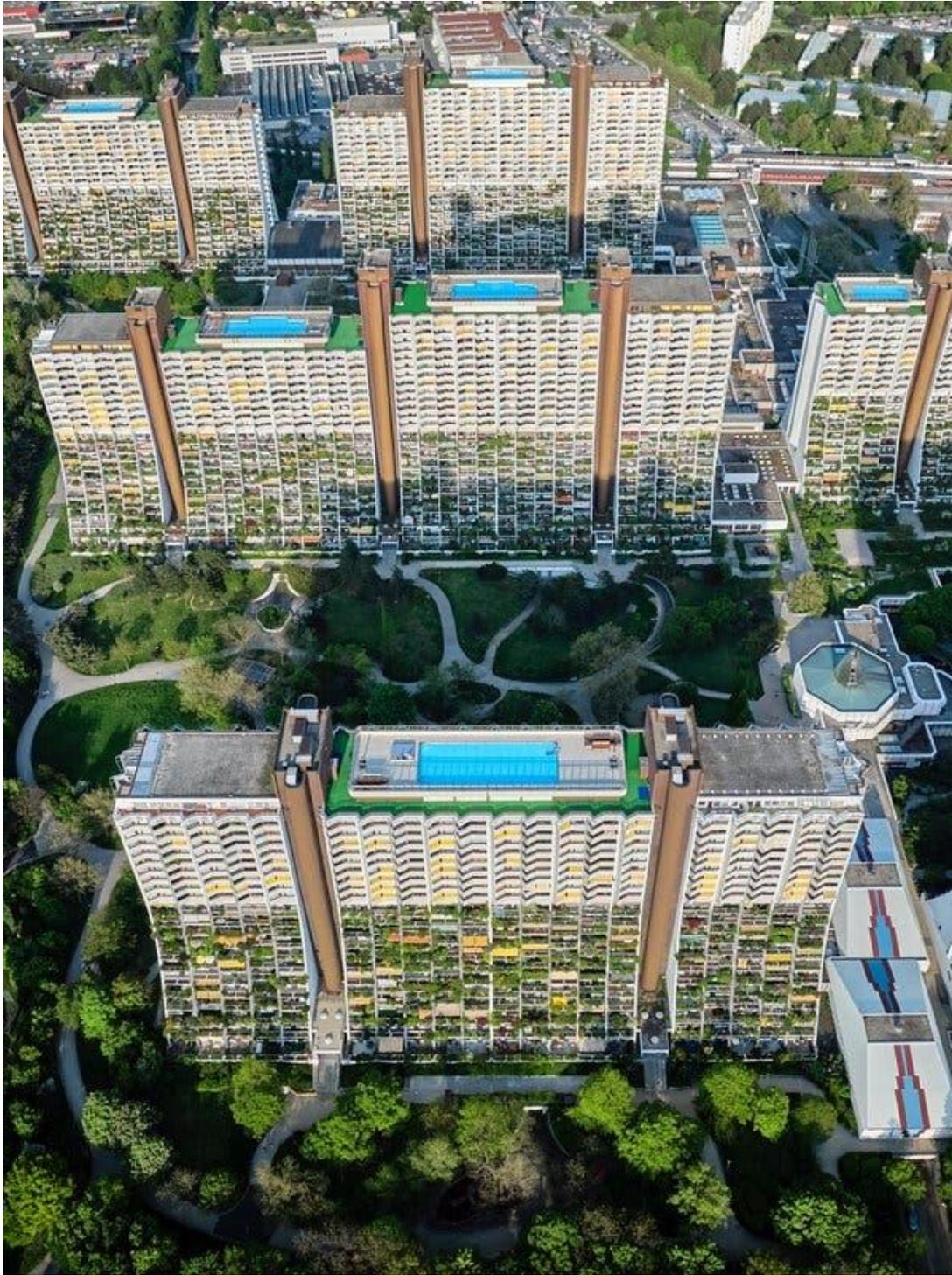
**Responses of Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson
To Downtown Alliance Questionnaire
For Salt Lake City Mayoral Candidates
October 11, 2023**

1. What is your vision for the Station Center neighborhood (200 South to 400 South; 450 West to 600 West)? What investments do you think the City should make in this area?

I envision this area (between the Rio Grande depot and the Intermodal Hub) as the premiere place for a new **Urban Village**, connected to the entire Wasatch Front and beyond by all forms of transportation—buses, commuter rail, light rail, bicycles, automobiles, and pedestrian.

Featured here would be five or more densely populated (10-25+ stories) **mixed-income non-market** apartment buildings (with ground-level restaurants, bars, art studios/galleries, and markets) with world-class design. It would all be **surrounded by open space, parks, playgrounds, an Olympic-size skating rink in the winter and, during non-winter months, kiosk restaurants and shops, with movable chairs and tables**—fashioned after Bryant Park in Manhattan.

Below are images of examples of the mixed-income non-market, housing-secure apartments that could be built in the Station Center neighborhood:



From Francesca Mari, (photographs by Luca Locatelli), “Imagine a Renters’ Utopia,” The New York Times Magazine, May 23, 2023, found at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/magazine/vienna-social-housing.html>.



Id.



“30 of the World’s Most Impressive Social Housing Projects,” found at <https://www.bestmswprograms.com/impressive-social-housing-projects/>.



Id.

Presently, the city is taking the failed approach of subsidizing *market* housing, by **giving many millions of public dollars to private profit-driven developers for building housing that is mostly unaffordable**, but which contains a relatively few units (mostly studios or one-bedroom units) that called “affordable,” usually at the 80% AMI level, but which is unaffordable to most people seeking to live in Salt Lake City. Tenants in such housing are usually housing-insecure insofar as they never know when the market will lead to rising rents that will be beyond their means.

To overcome the affordability crisis, which is directly related to the homelessness crisis in SLC, we must take a very different approach.

*The quest to provide what has come to be called “affordable housing” in America is hobbled by one fundamental reality. **Too much housing is in the market sector and too little is in a social sector permanently protected from rising prices.** The result is that supply and demand relentlessly bids up market prices. Government is required to provide*

deeper and deeper subsidies to keep rents within the bounds of incomes, so fewer and fewer people get any kind of help. This is true whether the form of public subsidy is tax breaks, direct subsidies, vouchers, or deals with developers to set aside some percent of units as affordable. In most cities, the median rent far exceeds what median incomes can afford. In cities with hot housing markets, homeownership is even further beyond reach for those who do not already own homes, exacerbating competition for scarce apartments.

Peter Dreier, “Why America Needs More Social Housing – Subsidizing market prices to make housing affordable is a losing strategy. There’s a better way—on display for a century in Vienna,” *The American Prospect*, Spring 2018.

The city should invest in—and borrow to build—**mixed-income non-market housing, the rents for which will be controlled by the city and not subject to the vagaries of the wildly shifting—rapidly increasing—housing market.** This is an evidence-based approach that many nations are successfully taking, with respect to housing for renters *and* owners. (For instance, 80% of Singaporeans own their homes, under a government 99-year lease program. In Vienna, 60% of people live in non-market—“social—housing.)

Removing the profit margin from housing, alone, is a major factor in achieving lower rents. So too would be treating affordable housing as a city’s responsibility in the public interest, just as cities do with respect to libraries, airports, roads, and municipal buildings.

A vital additional benefit would be that **the city would have the duty to ensure that the housing would be architecturally excellent,** just as Salt Lake City made sure stunning design would be incorporated in our Main Library. The public has a significant interest in a high-quality built environment, which could be achieved with non-market housing—and which is not now being achieved by most private developers who are building largely boxy, industrial-like, unaffordable housing of poor or mediocre design.

The design and construction of the non-market housing would be of high enough quality that it would attract many higher earning people as well as those who earn less. That would enhance the **mixed-income** aspect of the housing, which is of tremendous benefit to all. **Diversity in all its forms makes our lives and communities more creative, interesting, and empathic.**

2. What are the most important initiatives and investments you will lead to create a safe and welcoming downtown for residents, workers, employers and visitors?

The most vital initiative and investment leading to a safe and welcoming downtown at this time would be to **remove all homeless encampments from throughout our city by providing a humane sanctioned camp**, which, with professional outreach and case management, can be a **springboard for transitioning out of homelessness**. The details of my conclusions about what should be done to address the homelessness crisis in our city are set forth in answer to Question #4 below.

Our downtown in many areas is not currently safe and welcoming, nor is it perceived by most as safe and welcoming, for residents, workers, employers, and visitors. Actors from New York City, performing in a play at Pioneer Theatre, who were housed in a hotel downtown, requested that they be moved to a safer place near the University of Utah. On the day I am drafting these responses, I learned from Teresa Bowman, owner of Mid City Salon, that she is, sadly, closing her salon on 300 South between Main Street and West Temple because of numerous horrible encounters with untreated mentally ill homeless people, as well as criminals among the homeless population. They have driven away salon clients and employees alike.

Mid City Salon is joining the ranks of such terrific, long-term businesses as Southam Gallery and LatterDay Brides, who have left Salt Lake City because of unresponsiveness by city government to filth (including the frequent presence of human feces and urine), assaults, property destruction, public masturbation, and conspicuous illegal dangerous drug sales and use.

This is a city crisis. Although we need resources from many sources, including the state and county, churches, and the philanthropic and business communities, to help alleviate it, **the city's mayor is primarily responsible for ensuring that there is an effective plan developed and that it is effectively implemented**. Unlike the current mayor, **I will embrace that responsibility**.

[L]eaders of cities are the first and last line of defense in the battle, balancing the need to ensure safe and humane solutions for people without shelter with the need to maintain their city's quality of life for all inhabitants. . . . Those at the helm are left with the hard task of convening the many parties and hammering out solutions. An effective solution demands

that local actions among multiple agencies, government and nongovernmental, be coordinated—something mayors are uniquely positioned to do.

In each of the ten cities discussed in this book, mayors stepped forward to define the problem and craft the solution.

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Some mayors, however, refuse, or prove inadequate to, the task.

Linda Gibbs, Jay Bainbridge, et al., *How Ten Global Cities Take On Homelessness—Innovations That Work* (University of California Press, 2021), at 22 (emphasis added).)

We need to take an entirely different approach to crime and homelessness than what our city is currently doing. We must take the evidence-based measures that respect and promote the interests of residents, members of the homeless community, *and* businesses alike. Compassion must be exercised toward all as we pursue solutions that benefit *everyone*.

I worked downtown for decades. During the last few years of my law practice in the Judge Building at 300 South Main Street, I was distressed at how homeless people living on the street were completely ignored by the city and homeless providers, with **no outreach workers helping transition them out of homelessness and no one working to get those who needed it into treatment** for drug addiction or mental illnesses.

I was also upset that **those of us working in the downtown area were subjected frequently to conspicuous use of dangerous drugs** (one man shooting up heroin in broad daylight three mornings in a row on the bench a few yards from Main Street), **drugged-out bodies lying on the sidewalks**, including on Main Street, **human feces and urine, and daily screeching** by obviously untreated mentally ill people.

I pleaded with the mayor and a councilmember in a series of letters to provide help for homeless people and to provide safe **public bathrooms** (required by the international human right to decent sanitation), only to be met with a **maddening indifference toward unsheltered people living on our streets and toward those of us whose quality of life had badly deteriorated.**

We must end the sense of impunity created by the mayor and her Chief of Police throughout our city. Oftentimes, police do not even respond to 911 calls (as when Mid City Salon called for police assistance when a homeless man masturbated in front of a salon full of female employees and clients) or, when they do respond, they are often late (with an absurdly slow goal of 10 minute responses, which goal is usually not met) or do nothing, **explaining to business owners that they've been told by the mayor to simply tell the offenders to "move on."**

Because of the **almost total absence of enforcement of many laws, including drug laws, and the lack of any deterrence**, many people have been led to believe they can commit any number of crimes without any accountability. The best thing that can happen for most drug abusers is to be **arrested, then diverted from jail if they undergo effective drug treatment, with long-term follow-up.**

Generally, I favor a **restorative justice** approach, where the focus is on **problem-solving rather than on punishment.** Drug abusers could avoid having a record of a criminal conviction if they enter a plea of guilty, then the court holds it in abeyance until successful treatment and follow-up is pursued. Drug Court has been a tremendous success in pursuing that approach. **Just looking the other way, as our police do now at the behest of the mayor, is detrimental to the drug abuser and destructive to the community as a whole.** We should do all we can to get people with drug problems into treatment, demonstrating compassion for everyone involved, including residents and businesses that have suffered so much because of the widespread conspicuous dealing and use of dangerous drugs throughout our city.

3. Salt Lake City's Central Business District population will double in the next two years. How can the City enhance and expand green space and public spaces to support a healthy and vibrant downtown neighborhood?

I believe the city has made several significant mistakes at Gallivan Center, which could have far more green space and more adequate room for audiences if so many structures had not been built. Although parking is needed downtown, it was a particularly egregious mistake to take so much of Gallivan Center for a parking lot. We should learn from those mistakes. Open space is to be treasured and preserved, not covered with structures (especially parking lots). That's why I fought for years (successfully, thank goodness) to save the open space surrounding the Main Library, which was, according to previous plans, to be covered by housing.

We can add substantially to the downtown's green space by creating parks—even small historical pocket parks—at every opportunity. The city should work with current property owners and explore the possibility of providing parks in areas not in use now.

Large open spaces, including parks and playgrounds, would be included in the Urban Village described in the response to Question #1 above. (See the first photo in that response as an example.)

We should expedite the exploration of the advisability of the Green Loop and, if it is tenable, the timetable for construction and completion should be sped up significantly. The Green Loop has been under discussion since about 2016. Decisions should be made without unnecessary delay and we should move forward right away if it is to happen. We don't need more pop-up demonstration parks, surveys, consultants, and excuses for delay.

Town squares are often found in cities throughout Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere. They are **a social center of cities**, where people—families, singles, young and old—can mingle, get to know each other, and enjoy the community coming together in the town square. Such a town square could be created on a side street downtown and could be part of the plan for the Station Center Urban Village. Regardless of where it is located, **we should commit to creating a town square** and finding a means of people there enjoying music, relaxation, and having a beer or wine without embarrassing restrictions.

4. What is your plan for responding to the crisis of people living without shelter on the streets of Salt Lake City? Will you enforce no-camping ordinances? Please include your strategies for funding the initiatives that you propose.

An effective, evidence-based approach is outlined in detail here: <https://www.rocky4mayor.com/homelessness-crisis-response-plan.html>. That approach, which is **diametrically the opposite of the mayor's**, is to **immediately** (1) **eliminate encampments** in parks, neighborhoods, and the rest of our city by creating a **safe sanctioned camp**, remote from neighborhoods and businesses (at the closed Wingpointe golf course, for instance) with showers, meals, property lockers, and case management to **transition people out of homelessness**; (2) **provide outreach and case management for all homeless people** in the city, including those staying in shelters; and (3) **enforce the laws and divert people, as possible,**

to appropriate drug and mental health treatment. Then **provide adequate, humane shelter** for those who would otherwise be left out in dangerous weather conditions and **reverse the “scattered” shelter approach**, where people are far from other homeless services, such as the 4th Street Clinic.

Any time a shelter or homeless housing facility receives a permit from the City, a condition should be imposed for a publicly transparent means of providing regular management and operations data so that metrics of success or failure can be known and evaluated. We should do whatever is required to ensure that the placement of shelters or homeless housing will not undermine the quality of life for neighbors, as has occurred, for instance, in the neighborhoods of the Gail Miller Resource Center and the Magnolia.

We must insist that the County **provide adequate mental health and addiction treatment**, including **in-patient services**. Then we should **provide far more cost-effective (not expensive new construction, like the Magnolia) permanent supportive housing**, with **accountability** for tenants, respecting the interests of other residents and the neighborhood. Ultimately, we should **create a campus where all homeless services will be in close proximity to each other**—and at a location where businesses and residents will not suffer a deterioration of quality of life as a result of the services, as has occurred in the neighborhoods near the present “scattered” shelters.

We should also **invest in the protection of people on the verge of homelessness** from becoming homeless, including tenant emergency assistance, the provision of abundant mixed-income non-market affordable housing at all income levels (see response to Question #1 above), and coordination with jails, prisons, and health facilities so no one will be released without housing.

The elements of this proposal will be **financed by several people and institutions that will be excited to finally be able to contribute toward a coherent, evidence-based plan** that will move us toward significant success in reducing homelessness.

When I was mayor, Salt Lake City Housing Authority built the first supportive permanent housing facility, the 100-unit Sunrise Metro. Then many more supportive permanent housing projects were built in rapid succession, including Grace Mary Manor, Valor House (at the V.A. Hospital), Freedom Landing, Palmer Court (210 units). Among the financing partners for those projects were **private philanthropists** (e.g., Jack Gallivan and the George S. and Delores Doré Eccles

Foundation), **the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints** (contributing \$7 Million toward the purchase of an old Holiday Inn for Palmer Court), and **other governmental entities** (e.g., the Salt Lake County Housing Authority and federal government funds). After the flurry of building permanent housing for chronically homeless people, **Utah was known nationwide as setting an example for other states and cities who sought to eliminate chronic homelessness.** (See “Utah Reduced Chronic Homelessness by 91 Percent; Here’s How,” npr (All Things Considered), December 10, 2015; “The Shockingly Simple, Surprisingly Cost-Effective Way to End Homelessness,” Mother Jones, February 17, 2015. Although the results may have been partially a result of a change in determining who would be counted as being “chronically homeless,” **significant advances had been made in Salt Lake City—until the building of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless people came to a screeching, inexplicable halt** for nine years beginning in 2010. We need to once again commit ourselves to providing adequate supportive permanent housing on an aggressive schedule.

All levels of government, the business community, churches, and the philanthropy community will join together when we can demonstrate that great progress is likely in reducing homelessness when we pursue evidence-based, cost-effective solutions like those I have outlined. (Much of what I’ve found to work has been demonstrated by Haven for Hope in San Antonio. For a virtual tour of Haven for Hope, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FzFI6gPB0k>.)

Also, **the state and Salt Lake County receive funds to provide mental health services, which they have not been doing sufficiently.** They must be held to a higher standard and be accountable for providing the badly-needed mental health services for which they receive funding.

We should **divert people who have drug abuse problems from jail and prison to effective drug treatment programs** whenever possible. The costs of drug treatment will be less than continuing to incarcerate those people. Finally, people who are not incarcerated should have access to drug treatment on demand—which will be far less expensive than dealing with the ravages of drug addiction, including the costs to victims of crimes committed by drug addicts.

5. Please share your strategies for attracting and retaining employers and skilled workers to Salt Lake City.

We have already lost prospective employers because of **the homelessness crisis**, especially since **there is no coherent, evidence-based plan to resolve it**. One commercial real estate broker told me about a large company that was exploring a move to SLC. After two days in SLC, they said to him, “Why the **** would we move to Salt Lake City? We’re trying to get *out* of San Francisco.”

Parents seek, first and foremost, a hometown where their children will be safe and benefit from exceptional schools and programs. We should acquaint any potential employer or employee with **the extraordinary programs we have for young people**. First, any parent would be impressed by the **extraordinary after-school and summer program I created when I was mayor before, YouthCity**. It has made a real, positive difference in the lives of many thousands of young people and will continue to do so.

Also, **I will implement a city-wide childcare program with an enriched curriculum for all children pre-kindergarten**. It will be affordable to all, accepting vouchers from the Division of Workforce Services and charging those who do not have vouchers on a sliding-scale basis. It would be modeled on the outstanding, award-winning Stepping Stones program in St. George.

We should aggressively acquaint any potential employer with the diversity and creativity of our city. Already, most people have a stereotype of SLC that is probably not helpful in attracting new employers. We should do everything we can to **break the perception of that stereotype**, including introductions to leaders in the arts and culture community, the academic community, and the ethnic minority community.

We should be very proud, and show how proud we are, of many things in our city, including the fact that we have one of six national full-time opera companies and one of 16 full-time symphony orchestras. For a city our size, that is unique, but how many prospective new employers ever learn of that as they’re making their decisions?

As mayor, I will always be available to meet with potential new employers or employees to help acquaint them with our incredible community. (Before the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, our city was being maligned in the international press as a boring place with nothing to do. That was all reversed when, before the Games, I took a busload of reporters out on the town, showing them much of our exciting nightlife. Candus Thomson, “Not Quite Sin City,” October 31, 2001, *The Baltimore Sun*.)

Much can be done to encourage new companies, which began at the University of Utah, to stay in Salt Lake City and to hire employees from here. We should collaborate with diverse, creative communities in engaging with those companies. **The most creative cities attract the best new talent.**

It would also help to **encourage the Utah Legislature to stop passing legislation that drives new companies and employees away.** The abortion bills passed by the Legislature, which are cruel and dangerous to women, are repellants for anyone considering moving to Salt Lake City. The business community throughout the state should unify in a non-partisan effort to persuade the Legislature to do much better.

Unique places, like a major new town square or the Urban Village described in the response to Question #1 above, will help attract businesses and talented, skilled employees. Special, creative, welcoming, **community-building events and places are what matter most to people.** In that connection, **I will revive the free-of-charge three- or four-day Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival, which we produced, along with Jerry Floor, for seven years.**

6. How can the City best support the Utah Jazz’s long term residency in Downtown Salt Lake City?

We should first ask Ryan Smith. We can guess all we want, but **we should seek to know what Jazz owners want to see happen.** After all, none of us really seem to know why Gail Miller decided to move the Bees out of Salt Lake City. There is only speculation about what it might have taken to retain the Bees—but the most reliable information would be by having Gail Miller tell us. It’s unfortunate that she hasn’t done that so we could learn more about what might be done in the future.

I’m sure that **it would help if Jazz players and staff were more engaged in the community and presented** (as it appears Shaq O’Neal and Charles Barkley were not) **with the many exciting, unique, and attractive features of our city and the region.**

7. What is one of your favorite dishes from a restaurant in the Central Business District?

So difficult to choose, but at this moment: BTG’s Bar Bites, garlic shrimp, asparagus, and 5 Cheese Board – with a glass or two of Malbec.

8. What else would you like downtown property owners, merchants, employers and residents to know about your campaign for mayor?

As I've always done in my winning elections in Salt Lake City, we're running a cost-effective, vigorous grassroots campaign, which has raised sufficient funds to run a reasonable number of ads on digital media, streaming television, and network TV, but which is focused primarily on "retail" campaigning—walking door-to-door, getting out several hundreds of yard signs (reflecting overwhelming grassroots support), and speaking frequently before groups, large and small.

I'm not a political partisan and have the support of many members of both major parties as well as third-parties and independents. I have great long-term support of people in the business community who know that **I'm the person who will get important things done** for our community. And I have support from residents throughout our city, east-side and west-side, who are **incredibly dissatisfied with the failures of leadership in city government and the worsening problems of homelessness, crime (including police responses and refusals to even record illegal conduct), affordability, and poor maintenance of our streets and parks. I offer evidence-based solutions**, which will bring about major improvements regarding the homelessness and affordability crises in Salt Lake City.

I have always been an enthusiastic supporter of a vibrant, clean, unique downtown that is truly livable. **The prospect of leading our city to a recovery from the disastrous homelessness and affordability crises, with a commitment to promoting the interests of businesses, members of the homeless community, and residents alike is at the core of my passion**, and the passion of my many tremendous volunteers and supporters, to win this race and help lead us toward **a far better future**.