

District 5

Liz Brink

Who the candidate is: Candidate for the District 5 City Council seat.

Platform: A sufficiently detailed public platform was not located.

What this could mean for you: A complete platform was not located, so the guide cannot explain how she would use Council powers. Ask her to state positions on the budget, tax rate, utilities, housing, public safety, transportation, parks, homelessness, and land use.

Experience and record to date: Her qualities, experience, and priorities should be confirmed directly through a questionnaire, interview, or forum.

David Weinberg

Who the candidate is: Consultant and owner of a strategy firm. He has contributed a substantial amount of personal funds to his campaign.

Platform: Public safety; resident participation in development decisions; parks; green spaces; transparency; review of costly projects; and restoration of public trust.

What this could mean for you: “Public safety” could change police, fire, EMS, prevention, lighting, or traffic-safety budgets. “Resident participation” could change notice, hearings, or how development plans respond to public input. Parks and green space require land, construction, and maintenance money. Transparency could mean open contracts, readable budgets, faster records, and conflict disclosures. Reviewing costly projects could lead to an audit, redesign, delay, renegotiation, or cancellation, each with financial effects. “Restoring public trust” needs measurable service, ethics, or response-time goals—not only a promise.

Experience and record to date: Professional strategy experience; capacity to finance his campaign; and a message centered on listening to residents and reviewing City spending.

Ryan Alter

Who the candidate is: Current District 5 council member; attorney; Harvard graduate; trained engineer; and former legislative employee at the Texas Capitol.

Service and term status: Elected in 2022 and serving his first four-year term. Under the regular two-consecutive-term limit, he may seek a second term if he remains eligible and qualifies for the ballot.

Platform: Increasing housing; reducing construction barriers; government efficiency; sustainability; services for people experiencing homelessness; parks; and infrastructure.

What this could mean for you: Housing action may include zoning, permits, public land, and subsidies; homelessness action may include shelter, outreach, or supportive housing; efficiency may involve audits and service redesign. Ask which actions he proposed, which the Council adopted, and what the results were.

Experience and record to date: Incumbency; legal and legislative experience; voting record; campaign organization; and available funds.

Council record: His public work includes housing, homelessness funding proposals, parks, sustainability, infrastructure, and City budgets. Separate measures he proposed from measures the full Council adopted, then check spending and results after adoption.

Farrah Abraham

Who the candidate is: Television personality, business owner, mother, and holder of a paralegal certification.

Platform: Assistance for independent workers; temporary support for veterans awaiting federal medical services; public safety; family planning; survivor support; processing of forensic evidence; and safe housing for older adults.

What this could mean for you: Some veterans’ health care is federal, while the City can fund navigation, temporary support, housing partnerships, public safety, survivor services, and programs for older adults. Ask which level of government has authority and whether the City would pay directly or through a partner.

Experience and record to date: Broad public recognition; business experience; ability to attract media attention; and an ability to communicate with independent workers, families, veterans, and older adults.

Weinberg and Alter compared

Issue	David Weinberg	Ryan Alter
Experience	Consultant and former conservation-group leader; challenger.	Current District 5 Council member in 2022.
Proposition I	Supports the proposed outside audit requirement.	Opposes it; has not yet approved a similar measure.
Parks and library bonds	Told KUT he supports the package.	Told KUT he opposes it.
Campaign emphasis	Resident input, public trust, parks and scrutiny of spending.	Housing support, transparency, and prevention of displacement.

Farrah Abraham and Liz Brink are also on the District 5 ballot. Abraham told KUT she supports Proposition I and wants stronger financial oversight. KUT reported that Brink did not respond to its interview request. That is the status of KUT’s request, not evidence that XTRA contacted her.

Sources checked October 15, 2026: KUT interviews, October 13: <https://www.kut.org/text/austin/2026-10-13/austin-tx-district-5-city-council-race-november-election> ; Weinberg campaign: <https://davidforatx.com/> ; Alter biography: <https://www.austintexas.gov/district-5>

District 8 — Open seat

Paige Ellis will not appear on the ballot after her petition to seek a third term did not contain the required number of valid signatures.

Jeffrey Bowen

Who the candidate is: Neighborhood activist and former 2024 candidate for mayor of Austin.

Platform: Public safety; cost of living; homelessness; and government accountability. Some available information relates to his 2024 campaign and must be updated for District 8.

What this could mean for you: His priorities should identify the City power involved—budget, tax, utility, land use, contract, infrastructure, park, or public-safety policy—and give a cost, schedule, and measurable result.

Experience and record to date: Recognition from a previous citywide campaign; experience with neighborhood issues; and familiarity with citywide campaigning.

Selena Xie

Who the candidate is: Austin–Travis County EMS commander; critical-care nurse; and former president of the Austin EMS Association.

Platform: Cost of living; public safety; infrastructure; the environment; resident services; and better communication between the City and the community.

What this could mean for you: Her priorities should identify the City power involved—budget, tax, utility, land use, contract, infrastructure, park, or public-safety policy—and explain which department or partner would carry out the work.

Experience and record to date: Experience in emergency medicine, public safety, administration, and labor-contract negotiations; and professional relationships with City employees and officials.

District 9

Rich Heyman

Who the candidate is: Holds a doctorate in urban geography and worked as a professor at the University of Texas at Austin for nearly 20 years.

Platform: Displacement prevention; protection of parks and public property; environmental protection; neighborhood participation; transparency; and limits on special-interest influence.

What this could mean for you: Displacement prevention may use housing funds, tenant help, public land, or development rules. Protecting

parks and public property may limit sale or development but can also affect revenue and housing. Ask for the proposed rule and its tradeoffs.

Experience and record to date: Knowledge of cities, development, and urban geography; education experience; and years of participation in Austin neighborhood issues.

Kai Huang

Who the candidate is: Candidate for the District 9 City Council seat.

Platform: No official website with a complete public platform or sufficient recent activity was located to confirm his positions.

What this could mean for you: A complete platform was not located, so the guide cannot explain how he would use Council powers. Ask for written positions on the budget, tax rate, utilities, housing, safety, mobility, parks, homelessness, and land use.

Experience and record to date: His qualities and priorities should be determined through an interview, questionnaire, or forum participation.

Katie Kam

Who the candidate is: Civil engineer, doctor, business owner, researcher, and Austin resident since 1983.

Platform: Fiscal responsibility; measurable results; public participation; transportation; safety; arts and culture; the environment; and collaborative decision-making.

What this could mean for you: Fiscal responsibility and measurable results require a baseline, target, cost, and deadline. Transportation and environmental work can involve street design, transit coordination, drainage, utilities, and capital projects. Ask which data she would publish.

Experience and record to date: Technical experience in engineering, planning, and research; long residence in Austin; and knowledge of City government operations.

Zohaib “Zo” Qadri

Who the candidate is: Current District 9 council member. He represents downtown Austin, the University of Texas, West Campus, Mueller, and other central neighborhoods.

Service and term status: Elected in 2022 and serving his first four-year term. Under the regular two-consecutive-term limit, he may seek a second term if he remains eligible and qualifies for the ballot.

Platform: Affordable housing; renter protections; public transportation; pedestrian and bicycle safety; the environment; services for people experiencing homelessness; labor rights; and representation for students and historically underrepresented communities.

What this could mean for you: Council tools include housing and zoning votes, tenant programs, street design, transit funding partnerships, climate and utility policy, labor standards in City contracts, and homelessness services. Ask what he led, what passed, and how implementation changed conditions.

Experience and record to date: Incumbency; voting record; political campaign experience; and recognition among students, renters, and central Austin residents.

Council record: His public work includes housing and land-use changes, renter issues, safer-street and transit measures, labor, homelessness services, and City budgets. Credit a result only after checking the Council item, vote, funding, and implementation.

Dave Thadani

Who the candidate is: University of Texas computer science student and young candidate.

Platform: Renter protections; landlord transparency; affordable housing; sustainable planning; student representation; youth participation; and government transparency.

What this could mean for you: Renter protections may include education, legal aid, notice rules allowed by state law, and data on property owners. Housing and planning involve zoning, permits, infrastructure, and affordability programs. Ask how student input would become a budget or policy action.

Experience and record to date: Ability to directly represent students and younger voters; technology knowledge; use of social media; and a generational message.

Austin candidate forums and voter dates

District	Date and time	Location
1	October 15, 6:30 p.m.	Asian Ame 8401 Came
3	October 1, 6:30 p.m. — past	Learning ar 5202 E. Be
5	September 17, 6:30 p.m. — past	South Aust 3911 Menc
8	September 21, 6:30 p.m. — past	Hampton B Convict Hill
9	September 29, 6:30 p.m. — past	City Hall, 3

City candidate forums and any announced runoff events are separate from the December 12 runoff election. Verify any forum time directly with the hosting organization before attending.

Forum questions: candidateforums@lwvaustin.org • 512-451-6710. Early voting is October 19–30. The deadline to apply for a mail ballot is October 23; check receipt requirements with your county. Election Day is November 3. The October 5 registration deadline has passed.

Sources checked October 15, 2026: City election dates: <https://www.austintexas.gov/clerk/november-2026-election> ; panel schedule: <https://www.austintexas.gov/communications/news/public-invited-attend-2026-austin-city-council-candidate-panels>

How this guide reports laws, budgets, bonds, and votes

This section is a guide to the record. It is not a complete list of every vote.

Texas lawmakers: A House or Senate member may vote in committee and on the chamber floor. The guide should name the bill, date, vote, and source journal.

Governor: The governor does not vote in the Legislature. The guide says whether the governor signed a bill, vetoed it, let it become law without a signature, or used a line-item veto in the budget.

Lieutenant governor: The lieutenant governor leads the Senate and controls much of its work. The office normally does not cast ordinary roll-call votes. The guide reports public support, referrals, rulings, and tie-breaking votes separately.

Attorney general and other agency heads: These officers usually enforce or challenge laws. They do not cast legislative votes in those jobs.

Bonds: A bond is borrowed money that must be paid back, usually with interest. The guide should state who placed the bond on the ballot, what it pays for, the total amount, the expected tax effect, and the final vote.

Budgets: A budget sets planned spending. A vote for the final budget does not mean a member supports every item. The guide should also check amendments and line-item vetoes.

Key 2025 Texas examples

- House Bill 2: The 2025 law adds \$8.5 billion for public education over the biennium, including teacher and staff pay. The governor signed it June 4, 2025. Signing, authoring and voting are separate roles.
- Senate Bill 2: Abbott signed the education-savings-account law May 3, 2025. Initial funding was \$1 billion for the 2026–2027 school year. It is often called a school-voucher program.
- State budget: The official summary of 2025 Senate Bill 1 reports about \$337.9 billion for fiscal years 2026–2027 after vetoes. It includes state, federal and other funds. The summary identifies a \$60 million veto of funding to administer Summer EBT in fiscal 2027. The governor cited uncertainty about future federal matching costs. These figures describe the enacted regular-session budget, not every later budget adjustment.
- Local bonds: For Austin, Travis County, school districts, and other local bodies, use the official bond order, ballot words, tax estimate, and meeting vote.

Sources checked October 15, 2026: Official SB 1 enrolled summary:
<https://capitol.texas.gov/billlookup/BillSummary.aspx?Bill=SB1&LegSess=89R>

Austin bonds in plain language

Proposition A asks voters to authorize \$260 million for parks and recreation. Proposition B asks for \$35 million for library facilities. Together they total \$295 million in proposed borrowing. Voters decide each proposition separately. Bonds must be repaid with interest; approval is not free money.

A yes vote authorizes the borrowing described in that proposition. A no vote denies that authorization. It does not automatically close existing parks or libraries. Readers should compare the project list, borrowing costs, tax estimate and maintenance needs. A household’s tax effect depends on its taxable value, exemptions and later tax-rate decisions.

Sources checked October 15, 2026: City public-engagement bond page:
<https://www.speakupaustin.org/q22408> ; election notices:
<https://www.austintexas.gov/clerk/november-2026-election>

Six questions for checking an accomplishment

1. What exact action happened—a vote, signature, court order, contract, grant, or completed service?
2. Is it finished, in effect, blocked, pending, or only proposed?
3. What changed for residents, and is there a measured result?
4. What did it cost, and which government or funding source paid?
5. Who else shared responsibility for the result?
6. Which official record confirms it, and when was that record checked?

Primary public-record sources

- Texas Secretary of State candidate and ballot records — <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/>
- Texas Legislature Online bills, votes, fiscal notes, and journals — <https://capitol.texas.gov/>
- Texas Ethics Commission campaign reports — <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/>
- U.S. House Clerk roll-call votes — <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes>
- Congress.gov bill text and actions — <https://www.congress.gov/>
- Federal Election Commission reports — <https://www.fec.gov/data/>
- Greg Casar official biography — <https://casar.house.gov/about>
- Lauren B. Peña campaign site — <https://www.lauren4congress.com/>
- Peña campaign policy pages were reviewed October 15, 2026. A full finance review remains pending.
- Greg Casar official House office, service metrics and community-project funding — <https://casar.house.gov/>
- City of Austin, Affordability Unlocked and other development incentives — <https://www.austintexas.gov/housing/development-incentives-and-agreements>
- Texas House member biographies and legislation — <https://house.texas.gov/members>
- Texas Senate member biographies, bills, and press records — <https://senate.texas.gov/>
- Texas Governor, signed bills and veto records — <https://gov.texas.gov/news>
- Texas General Land Office reports and program records — <https://www.glo.texas.gov/>
- Austin City Council agenda, votes, ordinances, and video — <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council>
- Austin City Charter and City Clerk election records — <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-clerk>
- Austin City Clerk elections and records — <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-clerk>
- Reuters, April 27, 2026, Supreme Court and Texas map — <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-supreme-court-formally-reinstates-pro-republican-texas-voting-map-2026-04-27/>
- Associated Press, April 27, 2026, Supreme Court and Texas map — <https://apnews.com/article/02b07b477b153f23ed5c387f2f9ae0c4>

Right of reply and corrections

Corrections and candidate responses may be added with dated sources. This edition does not claim that candidates were contacted by XTRA. Before publishing a contested allegation, preserve the underlying record and seek the affected candidate’s response.

Reporting scope and verification standards

Ballot names and offices were checked against the Texas Secretary of State and Austin City Clerk resources. Candidate proposals are attributed to the candidate or published campaign source. This edition does not claim to audit every campaign-finance filing, every legislative vote, every judicial biography or every city measure. Claims about individual education or licensure are included only when sourced and clearly attributed. Lack of independent confirmation is not evidence of false credentials.

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APPENDIX — OFFICIAL AUSTIN COUNCIL RELEASE DIRECTORY

The following appendix reproduces the separately finalized City Council directory, with officials and the five council districts on the November 3 ballot. It is included as a reference alongside the more detailed candidate profiles above.

AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL

Current officials, 2026 candidates and the budget vote

November 3, 2026 Election Guide • FINAL RELEASE • Verified October 16, 2026

Austin has a mayor elected citywide and 10 council members elected from geographic districts. Five council seats are on the November 3 ballot: Districts 1, 3, 5, 8 and 9. Other districts and the mayor are not on the regular council ballot this year.

Current Austin City Council

Budget vote: Austin's adopted FY 2026–27 budget, approved August 12, 2026. “For” or “Against” describes this one recorded vote, not a member’s position on every budget or tax question.

Who is on the 2026 City Council ballot?

District 1

Open seat — Natasha Harper-Madison

Candidates: Steven Brown; Alexandria Anderson; Amber K. Goodwin; Michael Nahas; Portia Riggins; Misael Ramos

District 3

Incumbent — José Velásquez

Candidates: Eduardo “Lalito” Romero; Brock Skinner; José Velásquez; Gavin Fernandez Jr.; Neha Shah

District 5

Incumbent — Ryan Alter

Candidates: Liz Brink; David Weinberg; Ryan Alter; Farrah Abraham

District 8

Open seat — Paige Ellis

Candidates: Jeffrey Bowen; Selena Xie

District 9

Incumbent — Zohaib “Zo” Qadri

Candidates: Rich Heyman; Katie Kam; Zohaib “Zo” Qadri; Dave Thadani; Kai Huang

Candidate names and ballot order checked against the signed City Clerk ballot drawing, August 26, 2026. City Council contests are nonpartisan.

What council members decide

Council members vote on budgets, taxes, city services, public safety, housing, transportation, parks, libraries and local rules. Voters can compare candidates’ written plans with documented public actions and ask how each proposal would be paid for.

Important voter dates

Early voting: October 19–30, 2026. Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026. Voters should confirm their district, polling place and personal sample ballot with their county election office.

Primary sources and records

<https://www.austintexas.gov/council>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/contact>

Official 2026 ballot drawing:

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=480041>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/clerk/november-2026-election>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/budget-excellence/city-budget>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/voterinfo>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/council/district-map>

XTRA NEWSPAPER | TEJANA GLORIA MEDIA provides independent, nonpartisan voter information. Inclusion is not an endorsement. This directory distinguishes current elected officials from candidates and records one specific budget vote without drawing conclusions about candidates’ motives. Corrections are welcome when supported by original public records.

Office	Current officeholder	Office phone	
Mayor	Kirk Watson	512-978-2100	A
1	Natasha Harper-Madison	512-978-2101	F
2	Vanessa Fuentes	512-978-2102	F
3	José Velásquez	512-978-2103	F
4	José “Chito” Vela	512-978-2104	F
5	Ryan Alter	512-978-2105	F
6	Krista Laine	512-978-2106	F
7	Mike Siegel	512-978-2107	F
8	Paige Ellis	512-978-2108	F
9	Zohaib “Zo” Qadri	512-978-2109	F
10	Marc Duchon	512-978-2110	A