

City Council District B Candidate – Seth Bloom

1. How would you describe the current role and potential for Downtown?

Our Downtown area is home to some of the biggest attractions New Orleans has to offer: the Superdome, theatres like the Saenger, Joy, Orpheum and Civic, world-class restaurants, art galleries, and our convention center and riverwalk areas.

I will work to continue to expand the appeal of the Downtown Development District. Having a world-class convention center and adjacent entertainment district is absolutely vital to increasing our city's reach to be contenders for large-scale events. I also believe new developments like The Shop in the CAC will stimulate the growing entrepreneurial ecosystem, create jobs, and instill a new vitality into our Downtown Area and our economy.

2. What do you feel are Downtown's most pressing challenges and how would you approach working with the DDD and Downtown stakeholders to address them?

Public safety, as it is in all parts of the city, is the primary concern. Certainly all areas of our city, not just the tourist areas, need to be kept safe. However, it is important that New Orleans keep those visiting our city safe from harm and make national headlines for the many positive aspects of our hospitality and cultural industries. I would support the incoming Mayor in any effort to create a comprehensive plan to address public safety in areas of heavy foot traffic, including the DDD. I also believe an increasing homeless population is a growing challenge that must be addressed. Chronic homelessness must be approached holistically and compassionately, which is why I am in favor of the low-barrier shelter proposal, as well as any other initiatives that would adequately address the needs of this population.

3. Things like getting asked for money when walking home at night, or encountering drunk people engaged in a verbal or physical altercation, create a sense of disorder that negatively impacts our stakeholders' perception of safety and livability. The DDD public safety team addresses these issues to the best of its ability, but especially in the Canal Street corridor significantly more City resources are needed to address the problems. How do you plan to address quality of life issues Downtown?

The public safety issue in our city is multifaceted and complex. It is my goal to ensure that those struggling with debilitating addictions and mental illnesses be treated with dignity and compassion as patients, not prisoners, and offered a chance at real and lasting success. At the same time, I will work to ensure that special attention be paid and resources allocated to vigorously fight violent crime and habitual violent offenders to ensure our entire community is kept safe.

4. How do you propose to address and prioritize the need for additional public infrastructure investment Downtown, such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and streetscape

improvements, which is critical to grow the New Orleans' economic & the job engine?
Do you believe property owners should be required to repair sidewalks?

Simply put, citizens' tax money should be used to directly improve their quality of life. Issues of infrastructure, such as floodwater management and road improvements, are essential. It is evident that our city's crumbling infrastructure problems have real consequences, not only with issues like flood damage, but also with earned negative publicity that negatively affects our perception on the national level. In the DDD specifically, I know that having walkable streets, free of debris and hazards, with functioning traffic signals and good lighting, is essential. As your councilmember, I will create solutions to problems affecting our quality of life not only in District B, such as in the DDD, but throughout our community. I will eagerly accept ideas and feedback from leading experts in water management, engineering, urban planning, and other relevant fields, and will seek to approve budgetary proposals that demonstrate a strong grasp on the issues and have a comprehensive plan for real solutions. I am in favor of creating incentives for developers who demonstrate well-researched plans adopting and integrating water management best practices.

5. What short term and long-term strategies do you propose to address concerns about Downtown's homeless population? How do you plan on working with the DDD as a partner to support the expansion of the Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) on the second floor of the former VA hospital site and the successful coordination and operation of the Low Barrier Shelter?

I would absolutely support working with the DDD for solutions to homelessness in our city. I have repeatedly said that our city currently lacks coordination, communication, and cooperation. The DDD should be working in concert with law enforcement, shelter options, city officials, nonprofit groups, the New Orleans Mission, and any other group that has an interest in alleviating the issues of chronic homelessness.

6. The DDD has worked with the City to craft sound sanitation, zoning and other city codes. However, the DDD still hears complaints that existing sanitation, zoning and other regulations are not routinely enforced and that permits are sometimes improperly issued to businesses which are non-compliant. Do you commit to enforcing all sanitation, zoning & building codes? Do you support giving a City Sanitation Ranger, paid for by the DDD, full authority to issue citations for code violations?

I hear from neighborhood residents and groups often on issues of repeated zoning variances on the same property, and the sentiment that city officials do not listen to zoning concerns. As your council member I am absolutely committed to open and transparent hearings on issues as they arise, understanding that each neighborhood, and even each city block, has a unique character. Any variance that threatens to detract from the quality of life of the area should be looked at with heavy scrutiny, and the history of the business should be taken into account. I will hold bad actors accountable for repeated violations that dampens the

enjoyment of the area by residents, businesses, and tourists alike. I would support a deputized sanitation ranger to assist in the code enforcement efforts of the DDD.

7. Offering housing at a variety of price points is important to the economy of Downtown. Imposing requirements that the market cannot bear, however, can chill investment and constrain supply even further, exacerbating the affordability problem. How do you propose to encourage more affordable housing development in a way that will encourage developers to participate?

I agree that imposing stringent restrictions often can lead to decreased development interest. My goal, rather than to create legislation that may de-incentivize developers and cause them to take their plans to other cities, is to create incentives to entice and attract development that is integrated into the fabric of our city's identity. I will work to proactively seek solutions with the mayor's office and housing authority to create RFPs and solicit creative and innovative ideas.

8. What improvements to transit (including a Downtown transit terminal), bike & pedestrian facilities, on-street parking, and other elements of a comprehensive mobility system do you propose?

I absolutely support increased public transit for citizens, especially since it is utilized primarily by our hospitality workers. In my discussions with constituents and stakeholders, I have heard how difficult a commute on public transit can be for those who work late shifts in tourism areas and have to travel home at off-peak hours. I will support a close look at existing routes on RTA lines, and call for public input on creating new options. I also support the city's bikeshare program, and would advocate for increased publicity and incentives for residents and tourists alike to utilize shared bikes as the city rolls out its plan for 70 shared bike terminals with a fleet of 700 bicycles.

9. Recent investments in state of the art medical facilities and the presence of Tulane and LSU medical schools Downtown create a rare opportunity to make the New Orleans' Academic Medical Center a pillar of the economy by attracting patients from outside the region to leading edge medical care. How would you support the development of an Academic Medical Center in New Orleans?

New Orleans is home to many world-class universities, and we should be seeking to retain the brilliant minds that graduate from our schools every year, and the city needs play a role in encouraging graduates to keep their talents here. With the addition of our new University Medical Center and the creation of a medical corridor in New Orleans, New Orleans' medical schools should attract medical professionals, students, professors, and, of course, patients seeking the best care. I would seek to incorporate input from professionals, academics, and researched studies to implement a comprehensive plan to create a hub of medical training in New Orleans to become leaders in medical advancement. I will advocate for the continued

growth of UMC's academic training programs for doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals to achieve this goal as well.