

## Mayoral Candidate – LaToya Cantrell

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

**The growth of downtown has been vital to the overall growth and expansion of our tax base. Downtown has the potential to provide the economic and cultural offerings that many people are seeking across the country in terms of dense, urban living, with shops, restaurants and entertainment all within a walk away of your day. Additionally, downtown has the potential to continue to serve as the business hub of the city while offering these unique living opportunities. Finally, as a city, we need to grow our hotel room count in order to lure larger-scale conventions and other types of high-end hospitality business. Downtown is an ideal candidate for such growth.**

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?

**I am concerned that First NBC could have a large effect on development proposals in the pipeline, which could have a chilling effect on future development in the area. Addressing that issue will take collaboration with not only downtown stakeholders, but our financial lending community as well. I am well-versed in getting all parties to the table and accomplishing tough tasks while building consensus. That approach will be very important in getting us out of this mess.**

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?

**First, we need better coordination and communication between all city and business entities in the area, in order to increase enforcement of current laws and to prevent problems from falling through the cracks. We should be leveraging the work already done both by the DDD and business owners to get better lighting and provide a better sense of safety and security. Additionally, we should make sure that any city initiatives focused on Canal are targeted at both sides of Canal. It makes no sense to only work on making one side of the street clean and 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?

**I do believe the property owners should be repairing their sidewalks, but if we are going**

**to focus on that issue, then the city also will need to provide a renewed focus on its own maintenance issues.**

**I have repeatedly called for an infrastructure fund with revenue coming from rededicated sources. Infrastructure investment in downtown is only one of several applications of that revenue.**

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 have been an active participant in the development of the low barrier shelter, and I will continue to be so as mayor. We need to ensure that our initial work on getting the shelter up and running is done well, so that we can leverage initial success with more private funding to run the facility sustainably. I also want to make sure we are leveraging Medicaid dollars for substance abuse and mental health services that many of our homeless require. If we do those things, it will be easier to discuss other revenue raising initiatives, similar to what St. Tammany has done to combat mental health issues, but that is a conversation that first requires us to do more with what we have.**

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 do fully support this, and even as a Councilmember I am currently working to make sure that we do a better job of enforcing the laws on the books. We need to renew the faith of our people that we can properly govern our city, and enforcement of existing laws is one of the simplest and more effective ways to do that.**

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?

**Requirements aren't the problem; inconsistent and unclear rules and regulations are the problem. We need a citywide development plan and a reformed incentive structure, so that every developer knows on the front end what kind of incentives they can qualify for, and how long a process will take. If we can take some of the uncertainty out of the regulatory environment, it will make it easier for developers to invest in more projects**

**downtown.**

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?

**First, we need to do a better job of focusing our existing transit infrastructure on those who live and work in the city. Although making it easier for tourists to get to and from the city is important, we cannot function without transportation that connects our people to downtown in an efficient way.**

**I would like assess smaller, commonsense changes that could possibly be made to the system to improve it before calling on any larger types of investments. Additionally, we need to do a better job of partnering with neighboring parishes to create more of a regional transportation infrastructure. By doing that, we can connect more people to more jobs and more people to downtown.**

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?

**We should be leveraging the existing dollars that we already have to promote the city, to also promote our health facilities. I am specifically talking about organizations like the CVB and NOTMC, which already have the revenue needed to continue to brand and promote the city. Also, I want to make sure we are properly training the people we need to operate the world-class facilities we have created. That means doing a better job of coordinating with all of our colleges and universities, as well as ensuring that other training programs like the CTE in development by OPSB are teaching our residents the skills they need for jobs that will be available in the healthcare sector.**