

THE ISSUES: LEXINGTON MAYOR



RONNIE BASTIN
Born: Jan. 10, 1957
Residence: Refused to provide
Occupation: Retired policeman
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LINDA GORTON
Born: June 15, 1948
Residence: 605 Beechmont Road
Occupation: Retired nurse
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Candidates were asked to answer each question in 45 words or fewer.

I have 40 years of experience in people management and leadership — often in high pressure, life-or-death crisis situations. I have been responsible for more than half our government employees, and a \$200 million budget. I've improved government processes, saved money and led without scandal.

Mayors foster the climate that creates jobs. I will work closely with businesses, universities and the local community to help fuel Lexington's job creation machine. I will be committed to the sustainability and growth of these businesses, while making it easier to start businesses.

Lexington needs a mayor who can tackle crime, drugs and school safety problems head on from the first day in office. I have a crime plan, which encompasses crime prevention, school safety and root cause interventions. It can be viewed online at www.bastinformayor.com

As a fiscally responsible leader, I believe a city should live within its means. However, we have outstanding debts, and the need to bond for long-term planning. I support bonding for needed projects, if it does not negatively affect our city's strong bond rating.

Nearly any spot on the major thoroughfares in Lexington can become a choke point during rush hour. This is unacceptable. During my first week in office I will meet with local traffic engineers to assess needs and devise a plan to reduce traffic frustration.

Our city has a history of kicking the can down the road on our infrastructure needs (i.e. EPA consent decree and water condemnation). As mayor, I will prioritize infrastructure so we don't end up with major bills and more federal mandates.

I have a plan to hire 40 more officers over the next four years. The goal of this hiring increase is to ensure officers have the ability to fight crime, while also engaging in proactive crime prevention strategies.

I will support all of the social services and programs, which are working well in Lexington. This includes the Health Department's needle exchange. I'll also appoint a Director of Drug Enforcement and Prevention, increase the availability of Naloxone and invest in more drug treatment.

I will create incentives to help boost infill development while making it more affordable. We must end this "us vs. them," preservation/growth fight. I know people on both sides want the same thing — a Lexington that preserves our character and plans for responsible growth.

As mayor, I will continue to support the affordable housing fund. I will also work to support community partners like Habitat for Humanity, The Urban League, The Lexington Housing Authority and others who do great work with affordable housing.

We must establish boundaries for land that will never be developed, in order to protect Lexington's unique character. Then we must define "tipping points" based on housing and population density, traffic and crime to make plans to expand before critical mass is achieved.

I give Mayor Gray an "A." Under his leadership Lexington is more vibrant, our downtown is being revitalized, and we are in better financial shape. I will continue the work to keep Lexington's economy strong and make it a centerpiece for tourism, art and business.

As a 40-year law enforcement official I can safely say there is no one action that can lower the homicide rate. But there are coordinated strategies, included in my six-part crime plan, which address the many things we can do to reduce crime overall.

As a fiscally responsible mayor, I will provide leadership in the next four years to address the need for a new city hall, using a transparent and cost effective process.

QUALITIES
 Why are you the better candidate to be Lexington's next mayor?

JOBS
 What is one specific thing you would do or change to create more jobs in Lexington?

TOP PRIORITY
 How would you fix the most pressing problem facing Lexington?

DEBT
 The city spends more than 11 percent of its revenue to pay off debts. How much debt is appropriate?

TRAFFIC
 What is Lexington's most troublesome traffic spot, and how will you fix it?

INFRASTRUCTURE
 What is Lexington's most important infrastructure need in coming years and how will you fund it?

POLICE
 Do you support hiring more police officers to create a fourth police sector in Lexington?

DRUGS
 What would you do differently to reduce opioid and drug addiction in Lexington?

DEVELOPMENT
 What is one specific action you would take to encourage more infill and redevelopment in downtown and other areas?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
 How will you make housing more affordable for low-income residents in Lexington?

GROWTH
 Under what circumstances should Lexington's urban service boundary be expanded?

JIM GRAY
 What letter grade — A to F — do you give the overall job performance of Mayor Jim Gray?

CRIME
 What is one specific action you will take to reduce Lexington's murder rate?

CITY HALL
 Will you push for a new government center in the next four years? If so, should it be built by the city or through a private-public partnership?

My broad leadership experience, commitment to transparency, strong record as a consensus builder, and forward-thinking, inclusive policies make me better. I have the creativity and problem-solving skills to generate vision and guide our best human and financial resources into our boundless future.

I will create an expansive and collaborative team — representing key employers, developers, educators and others — to develop a strategic economic development plan for Coldstream Park, and to leverage Lexington's greatest assets — educated, skilled workforce, agriculture, biotech industries — to make us a high-tech, innovative hub.

I would immediately form a multidisciplinary and comprehensive team that would report directly to me to address the opioid/crime crisis, drawing on the expertise we have in law enforcement, health care, rehabilitation, social work and others locally, and connect to the best resources nationally.

Despite recent employee pension and capital improvement needs, I will shrink the ratio, so as to strengthen our resiliency should leaner times occur. Since our debt holders must be paid, we must ensure we don't face cuts in essential services or employee layoffs.

New Circle, especially between Nicholasville and Harrodsburg, though commuters point to many trouble spots including Nicholasville Road. Most are state routes, where the fixes — widening, etc. — reside. I'll be a strong advocate in Frankfort, while implementing smart signals, infrastructure modernization and pushing alternate transportation modes.

Modernization of Lexington's traffic structure (roads, traffic signals, public transportation, bike/pedestrian paths). Funding must be a mix of local, state and federal dollars to support growth and commerce and preserve quality of life. We must continue to promote clean transportation and opportunities for telecommuting.

I will respect the advice and expertise of our police chief and work with council to implement the best approach possible to balance public safety with fiscal responsibility. When our chief is ready to act on this expansion, we will have a plan in place.

We need a multi-pronged approach: police against traffickers; health care providers, social services, faith communities, insurers, families, schools, UK and other researchers to treat addiction — all coordinated within the mayor's office. With new federal opportunities available, we will engage in a multifront effort.

I will work with council to create incentives for developers to complete quality infill and redevelopment projects by boosting the Public Infrastructure Program to help defray the costs of building such things as needed sanitary sewers, sidewalks and roadways for qualified projects.

We must adopt a comprehensive housing policy to promote diverse housing stock that increases affordability while protecting neighborhoods; explore options to boost the Affordable Housing Fund; support the current voucher program; and broaden input from developers, Urban League and others to address shortages and gentrification.

I am committed to continuing to focus on responsible infill and redevelopment as our primary growth strategy to maintain the important balance between urban and rural that defines our community. Long-range growth strategy should prioritize efficient, equitable and strategic use of land inside the boundary.

I was honored to lead the council as vice mayor, alongside Mayor Gray, to achieve many great accomplishments in our time together. He brought dignity and respect to the mayor's office and represented Lexington well as a first-class city.

Reducing/conquering our opioid/drug crisis is the best way to halt the uptick in our murder rate, along with an educational plan to implement gun safety measures.

Though recent efforts failed, ever-increasing interest rates, building costs and current building maintenance costs make time of the essence from taxpayer view points. I will gauge the will of the council to move forward. Cost comparison favors public-private partnerships in every recent scenario.