



CHARLESTON CANDIDATE SURVEY

NAME: Clay Middleton
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PRIORITIES: What are your top three priorities and why?

We need to make Charleston affordable, accessible, and livable for all residents. I believe the biggest challenges facing our community are infrastructure, housing, and education.

I think addressing our aging infrastructure needs will contribute to solving flooding, housing, public transportation, climate change, and other related issues. We need to create infrastructure to address our growing population, business corridors, transportation, and future needs. We also must ensure educational achievement gaps are closed in order to create a local workforce with livable wages and address the intersection of poverty and privilege that exist in our backyard.

DEVELOPMENT: Taxpayers complain a lot about too much development changing the character and nature of Charleston. What specifically would you do to make sure overbuilding stops and doesn't kill the tourism goose that laid our golden egg? Or would you continue things as usual, and why?

Why choose? It's possible to be the #1 tourist destination, and the #1 place to live. But we have to prioritize the needs of all residents to make that happen. Overdevelopment continues to force people out of their homes and neighborhoods. It has closed too many small and minority-owned businesses. Charleston didn't plan for life after gentrification. I'm all for progress, but Charleston doesn't need a developer in City Hall for another four years. As Mayor, I would be intentional about balancing future development with maintaining our natural habitat, addressing infrastructure gaps, and creating equitable community benefit agreements.



FLOODING: Seas are rising. What specifically would you do about flooding to protect property throughout the whole city?

Older and low-income neighborhoods experience flooding at a disproportionate rate due to poor infrastructure, older, clogged pipes, and small ditches. As Mayor, I would use stormwater drainage fees to clean ditches regularly and replace small, outdated pipes across the city.

I would appoint a City Infrastructure Coordinator to manage federal funding and the implementation of said flood-related projects; improve urban climate infrastructure informed by local communities, and oversee private sector vendors to ensure the achievement of flood prevention metrics. I will continue to work with the Army Corps of Engineers and include previously excluded stakeholders in the decision-making process.

UNION PIER: What will Union Pier look like in five years and how will you work to make it fit in with Charleston and not become an overdeveloped monstrosity?

This property will take more than five years to develop. We have to get the planned unit development right first. The incumbent took the city out of the driver's seat by not providing clear parameters, leading a Union Pier task force, and excluding Union Pier from the 2020 comprehensive plan. Among other things, this highlights the current void in bold, servant leadership. As Mayor, I would replace some members of the Union Pier Stakeholder Advisory Committee to ensure others are truly part of the decision-making process that will inform the planning consultant and the Riley Center.