

**Questionnaire – City Council Candidates
Pflugerville Council of Neighborhood Associations**

Question 1	Omar Pena – Place 3	David Prout – Place 3
Why are you running for City Council?	Public service is a valuable way to serve and support our community. My involvement with the Pflugerville Community Development Corporation has been fulfilling for me and, I believe, beneficial to our city. Pflugerville is growing and changing and facing the challenges that come with that growth. As a member of our City Council I can have a direct influence on not just how our growth is managed, but also address the broader issues that affect our overall quality of life. I want to ensure our city remains a sustainable and livable community we are all proud to call home.	I have lived in Pflugerville for the past 5 and 1/2 years. I love Pflugerville. I think it is a great place to live. I live in the Windermere area recently annexed by the city. I am the first candidate to run for the council to reside in Windermere. I am motivated by a recent water bill totaling nearly 300 dollars to run for office. If elected to the council, I'd like to represent the interests of all citizens who are getting these bills.
Question 2	Omar Pena – Place 3	David Prout – Place 3
How will you actively stay informed about what neighborhoods and resident's concerns are before you vote on issues that impact them?	I spend a lot of time in the community, whether it's through Lions Club activities, exercising on the trails or Lake Pflugerville or just being out and about in our city. I am accessible and happy to meet with fellow residents to hear their concerns, answer their questions and find solutions to their problems. If elected to serve on our City Council, I will also utilize technology and social media as a means of interacting with my fellow citizens.	If elected, I'd maintain email communication with our residents. I would seek more openness and transparency on the council. I feel that taxpayers need to play a stronger role in the decision-making process. I would encourage active participation from people interested in causes across the political spectrum.
Question 3	Omar Pena – Place 3	David Prout – Place 3
What do you think are the most critical issues that Pflugerville will face in the next 5 years?	<p>Pressing issues Pflugerville faces now and in the near future are water, growth and taxes.</p> <p>Water Along with the recent issues regarding the Windermere Water Utility, we have experienced the impact of severe drought. As our population grows, we must be aggressive and forward-thinking in developing policies and strategies that ensure we have an ample and affordable water supply now and in the future.</p> <p>Growth Some forecasts indicate the population of Central Texas will at least double by the year 2040. We have to maintain, improve and be prepared to expand the city's infrastructure to ensure we accommodate the needs of our growing city.</p> <p>Taxes The current and prior councils successfully lowered property taxes for eight consecutive years. I wish to continue that trend, but not at the detriment of city services. The city must have the funds to maximize the quality of services while balancing revenue sources with the cost of maintenance, operations and debt. Balanced growth and a diversified tax base can help us decrease the burden on taxpayers while maintaining outstanding city services.</p>	<p>Every citizen should have the right to safe, affordable, clean drinking water. If elected, I would work with the other members of the Council to find a way for the city to purchase Windermere's privately-owned water utility. If Pflugerville were to own this water utility, the rates would need to match the current, reasonable, rates billed by the city.</p> <p>The town could also benefit from a thorough review of its' stormwater/wastewater runoff policy. Impervious surfacings allow wastewater to accumulate a concentrated level of pollutants that may result in increased pollution of our waterways. If elected, I would call for an assessment of road construction and its' impact upon our environment.</p> <p>Pflugerville has already doubled in size in the past decade. It makes little sense for the city to voraciously increase growth and annexation without taking the time to resolve some of the challenges it currently faces. If commercial interests are allowed to dominate at the expense of community interests, Pflugerville's quality of life could start to erode.</p>

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<p>Question 4</p> <p>What is your position on commuter rail and how it fits here?</p>	<p>Omar Pena – Place 3</p> <p>I think we all agree that something must be done to address the traffic congestion on our roads. Maybe light rail can be part of a solution. We must consider what our citizens' transportation needs are and find solutions that are convenient and best serve the most residents. It's quite a delicate balance; everyone wants to be near a rail station but no one wants a train track close by. Where would the tracks and stations be located? Does the route take people where they need to go? Are the hours of operation convenient? There are many questions that must be asked and answered. We cannot squander precious resources on a commuter rail if it's not the best use of our transportation dollars.</p>	<p>David Prout – Place 3</p> <p>I would solidly oppose commuter rail in Pflugerville at this time. The current proposed plans are too vague and seem to lack any citizen engagement. We would also want to consider environmental impact of a public works project of this magnitude. Lastly, I would point to the Austin example of how not to implement a rail system.</p>
<p>Question 5</p> <p>What is your position on having Pflugerville annexed into the Austin Community College taxation district?</p>	<p>Omar Pena – Place 3</p> <p>Students within the ACC taxing district pay \$62 per credit hour. Students outside of the district pay an exorbitant \$162 fee per credit hour. Annexation would result in a property tax increase of approximately \$0.095 for every \$100 of property value. If our property owners do take on an additional tax burden, will we have an ACC campus facility located within Pflugerville, or will students still have to commute to Round Rock and Austin? We are too early in the process and there are too many unknowns at this time for me to make an informed decision about ACC annexation.</p>	<p>David Prout – Place 3</p> <p>I would oppose it. However, my position is that the taxpayers should be allowed to decide. This is best done by placing a referendum before the voters at some point in the future.</p>
<p>Question 6</p> <p>Do you support or will you support and sponsor programs associated with "no kill" philosophies for the animal shelter?</p>	<p>Omar Pena – Place 3</p> <p>I do appreciate the "no kill" sentiment, and I understand that such facilities intend to only euthanize animals that are terminally ill or considered dangerous. But earlier this year the Austin Animal Shelter, a "no kill" facility, had to euthanize several dogs solely because of overcrowding. I believe we should avoid the "no kill" label because while it's a well-meaning policy, sometimes it's just not feasible. I encourage the Pflugerville Animal Shelter to continue their efforts of getting lost pets reunited with their owners and finding abandoned pets new homes through marketing efforts, the website and adopt-a-thons. On a personal note, our two rescue dogs allow us the pleasure of living in their home.</p>	<p>David Prout – Place 3</p> <p>I would not support the "no kill" brand. Our animal shelter has been able to handle the current volume of pets for adoption. "No kill" could mean more pets getting abandoned in Pflugerville by non-residents. I believe the facts do demonstrate that our "almost no-kill" shelter does a much better job in avoiding euthanasia than most of the "no kill" shelters in the neighboring city of Austin.</p>

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Question 7	Omar Pena – Place 3	David Prout – Place 3
How would you work to increase retail, restaurants, and other businesses in Pflugerville? And, how do you feel about tax incentives for potential new business - either from the Pflugerville Development Corporation or directly from City Council?	Incentives are an integral part of continued economic growth. Whether its lower cost land, buildings or cash outlays, incentives are part of what makes Pflugerville an attractive choice for commercial development. We need to attract development that brings higher paying jobs within the city. This will not only diversify our tax base, but will spur the development of additional residential, retail, and hospitality businesses, bringing more commercial tax income to the city.	Pflugerville is a great community. Our combined wealth and high quality of life should be perfect for most businesses to thrive and make money. I am skeptical of tax incentives. For any taxpayer funded business incentives, focus should be upon either a return on investment or a return on value to the taxpayer. If elected to the City Council, I would oppose taxpayer-funded incentives where risks are publicly subsidized while the profits are privatized. I would work to set a higher standard and a higher expectation for how our tax dollars are spent.

Question 8	Omar Pena – Place 3	David Prout – Place 3
If necessary, will you vote to take the Windermere Water Utility by eminent domain?	I am proud that our city has advocated for our citizens served by the Windermere Water Utility and reached a temporary agreement with the company. As that yearlong agreement nears expiration, the city must try to negotiate a longer-term solution. Condemnation proceedings can be lengthy and expensive. I would investigate the feasibility of other options, such as a private-public partnership, before pursuing condemnation. If all other options are pursued and deemed infeasible, I would support condemnation as a last resort.	If necessary, yes. Eminent domain is a choice of last resort. More importantly, the town needs to be taking steps and making the efforts needed to purchase the utility. Right now, we are in a holding pattern and waiting for some relief. The rates for the residents of Windermere are already too high and need to come down.

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Question 9	Omar Pena – Place 3	David Prout – Place 3
How would you prioritize spending city budget resources on police and safety, parks and recreation, city operations like utilities, streets, etc., long term capital improvements, new economic developments, and other needs?	<p>City Operations/Infrastructure & Long-Term Capital Improvements: Design and implement rehabilitation and maintenance programs that provide our citizens and businesses with quality streets, dependable and affordable water/sewage systems, efficient drainage systems, and attractive and usable city facilities. We must assess, prioritize and review necessary capital improvements and projects as our city continues to grow.</p> <p>Police and safety: Provide our police department with technologically advanced equipment, expand crime prevention and community-based policing initiatives, increase visibility of our officers in the community, and ensure we have adequate staffing.</p> <p>New Economic Developments: Attract, retain and promote new and existing commercial development. We need to aggressively pursue businesses that offer higher paying employment within the city limits to help diversify our tax base.</p> <p>Parks and recreation: Be proactive in meeting our residents' recreational needs. Our usable public spaces help support a sense of community and well-being and encourage healthy living.</p> <p>Other Needs: There are always other items that need to be addressed. From ensuring our city offers stellar customer service to adequately serving our growing senior population, there are always needs and issues the city must acknowledge, prioritize and address.</p>	<p>I would seek to prioritize city budget resources on public safety (including police), parks and recreation, utilities, and road maintenance. I would place lower priority on long-term capital improvements and any new economic developments funded by the taxpayer.</p>

Tom Anker, Candidate for Place 3 and Victor Gonzales for Place 5 declined to respond.

Please see the video of the Candidate Forum hosted by PfCONA on October 15, 2012 at <http://pfcona.org>.