

Indivisible Benton County — Candidate Questionnaire November 2026 Midterm Election

Thank you for your interest in an endorsement from Indivisible Benton County. **Please complete this questionnaire and return it to voter@indivisiblebc.org by Aug. 12.** Responses will be reviewed by our candidate research committee, and excerpts may be shared with our members.

Please do not use generative AI (artificial intelligence) when completing this questionnaire. We would much rather see grammatical errors in answers that reflect you personally than perfect writing that doesn't originate from your own thoughts!

Please reach out to voter@indivisiblebc.org if you have any questions about the questionnaire or our endorsement process.

SECTION 1: CANDIDATE & CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

1. Full name: Steve Clark
2. Office sought: Corvallis City Council, Ward 1
3. Campaign website and social media accounts (if applicable): clark4ward1.com

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

4. Why are you running for this office? What do you hope to accomplish if elected?

I am running to actively and effectively contribute to community needs as a member of the city council. I do not believe that the city council has sufficiently addressed many significant community needs. These include:

- **Reducing the high cost of living in Corvallis.**
- **Providing more affordable and available housing.**
- **Improving the vitality and safety of downtown Corvallis.**
- **Addressing with other governments and non-profit organizations the causes, needs and impacts of houseless.**
- **Providing for greater jobs and economic opportunities in the community. Too few younger community members can find work and remain in employed in Corvallis.**

5. Describe how your prior experiences (such as public service, community organizing, professional expertise, volunteer work, schooling, family responsibilities, etc.) have contributed to the knowledge and skills you will use as a city councilor.

As an Oregonian, former newspaper publisher for more than 4 decades, a university administrator for 12 years, and as a Corvallis area volunteer, I have actively collaborated with others to contribute to the community and our state. I have worked to advance personal freedoms and liberties in editorials that I have written and with organizations in which I have worked. I have worked to protect and advance our state and local environment, and also to contribute progress to environmental justice issues.

I will use my career, volunteer, leadership and life experiences; my commitment to collaborating, listening and learning; and fairness and good judgment to make decisions that address and advance priority community needs.

Here are several examples of my experience:

- **I just completed service as co-chair a 40-person city of Corvallis task force to provide goals and strategies for a more vital, accessible, environmentally sustainable, safe and livable downtown. This strategy was presented to the City Council on July 20.**
- **I have championed environmental and social justice at OSU and throughout my professional publishing career.**
- **I chaired the Collaboration Corvallis committee on transportation from 2011-13 that recommended expanded community transit, pedestrian corridors and improved safe parking districts around the OSU campus.**
- **I led efforts to greatly advance free transit on the OSU campus, expand free transit in the Corvallis community and grow free transit connecting LBCC in Albany, the Corvallis transit center and the OSU campus.**
- **As an Oregonian, I led efforts in the business community to adopt legislation to create the Oregon Big Look Task Force to protect and advance the state's land use system and policies for the 21st Century. I was appointed to serve on that Task Force by Gov. Ted Kulongoski and successfully bring recommendations to the Governor and 2009 Legislature.**
- **I served on the Tri-Met board of directors and advanced transit service for Portland suburban and smaller communities served by Tri-Met.**
- **I chaired Transit Choices for Livability in the mid 1990's, a Portland region-wide committee that resulted in recommendations to the Tri-Met Board to advance transit services for underserved people and underserved people.**
- **I chaired a task force for Oregon Gov. Kitzhaber to create strategies and funding to provide transit services to aid rural Oregon communities and rural residents in having ways to travel to medical services and other support services located miles away.**
- **In 2006-09, I co-chaired a committee appointed by Gov. Kulongoski to advance broad-base support among diverse stakeholders to invest in a resilient and more sustainable state by working within local communities, cities, counties and across the state. These**

efforts resulted in adoption of significant legislation to increase gas and weight mile taxes and fees. I worked to listen to and bring about support from diverse stakeholders, including the environmental community, transit agencies, bike community, pedestrian mobility advocates, police and public safety agencies, ODOT, cities, counties, the freight community, the accessibility community, resilience advocates, and economic development agencies.

SECTION 3: ACCESSIBILITY, TRANSPARENCY, & ACCOUNTABILITY

6. How can the City Council and Mayor ensure that the Corvallis city government is transparent, accessible, and accountable to all constituents, *especially historically underrepresented voices*?

The city council must not only hold public meetings and provide easy access to all public records. The council as a whole, and city councilors individually also must actively engage with community members – within their respective wards and community wide – in listening and in discussions about community needs and priorities, strategies, actions and investments. This collaboration must publicly engage with other governments, businesses, non-profits, OSU, LBCC, and local schools. Community engagement should prioritize listening to, engaging with and learning from members of historically underrepresented communities.

In addition, if you are running for Mayor: How will you ensure that advisory boards, commissions, and committees are representative of Corvallis' population, range of experiences, and perspectives?

7. How will you approach working with people, both on the Council and in the community, with different political views, personal experiences, or approaches to decision-making than you? If possible, provide an example of a time (at a job or school, or within a community, political, non-profit, or other organization) when you disagreed with someone yet worked together towards a solution.

As you look at my professional and public service experiences and leadership, you will see that I have spent a lifetime engaging with others, learning from others and collaborating with others to improve our state and local communities. These examples involve continuing social issues, such as gay and lesbian rights; land use, conservation and environmental matters; broad-based transportation solutions involving all forms of transportation; public safety, economic issues; and educational issues.

I will share again an example that I offered earlier, which involved bringing together many separate interest groups and individuals that historically did not agree with each other and who often opposed each other in seeking transportation solutions. Here is that example:

- In 2006-09, I co-chaired a committee appointed by Gov. Kulongoski to advance broad-base support among diverse stakeholders to invest in a resilient and more sustainable state by working within local communities, cities, counties and across the state. These efforts resulted in adoption of significant legislation to increase gas and weight mile taxes and fees. I worked to listen to and bring about support from diverse stakeholders, including the environmental community, transit agencies, bike community, pedestrian mobility advocates, police and public safety agencies, ODOT, cities, counties, the freight community, the accessibility community, resilience advocates, and economic development agencies.

SECTION 4: VALUES & PRIORITIES

8. What are the top three issues you would prioritize if elected? What actions/policies can the City implement to address these issues?

- A. Reducing the local cost of living, including municipal fees that often are regressive for low- and middle-income members of the community.
- B. Creating and delivering on strategies to provide more affordable and available housing, including housing for families, low- and middle-income earners; and families with children. This includes, but is not limited to middle housing and ADUs.
- C. Improving downtown Corvallis' vitality and safety for all community members, while working to address the causes, impacts and service gaps of houselessness.

Corvallis is a municipality that relies too heavily on residences as the source of property taxes and fees. We need to strategically and actively begin now to expand commercial as well as small, medium and light industrial jobs and workplaces. OSU can be an excellent partner through the university's research and innovation development. Having places to work will create and retain jobs, which will expand employers' property tax and service fee contributions to the city.

We must create a broad-based strategy for housing that includes "middle housing" as emphasized by the state of Oregon, but also affordable single-family housing and affordable mixed styles of housing, such as condos for sale and housing downtown. This will require a collaborative action plan involving the city, landowners, builders, financial companies, the school district, major employers, and most definitely, OSU.

A priority is improving downtown. This will require implementation of the recommendations of the Downtown Vitality Strategy Task Force.

9. How would you approach Corvallis' current budget gap while honoring the Corvallis Strategic Plan?¹²³

The city's FY 2026–28 two-year budget should be balanced by controlling currently funded expenses and reviewing whether funding for current services, facility needs, and strategic priorities can be modestly reduced or delayed for a time.

Meanwhile, the City Council must fully engage with the community and employers on current city financial needs and shortfalls, including revenues and expenses and strategic city priorities. And discuss how to best achieve sustained budget financial stability and fund needed public facilities in the long term.

10. How could/should city government address the trickle-down effects of decreased federal spending?

Through careful budgeting and being aware of what is taking place nationally. The city must be actively involved in Oregon legislative issues and national federal funding issues, by being actively involved in the League of Oregon Cities, and by routinely and actively engaging with and lobbying members of Oregon's federal delegation. Councilors and the mayor should also testify and communicate directly with federal leaders and agencies in Washington, D.C. And communicate to local voters what is taking place and why.

SECTION 5: SPECIFIC POLICIES

11. What role do you believe our local government should play in protecting the rights of marginalized or vulnerable community members (e.g., immigrants, LGBTQ+ residents, people of color, people with disabilities)?

City Councilors and the Mayor represent all community members. And should seek to advance the rights of marginalized, underrepresented community members, and the rights and needs of those with disabilities.

¹ <https://www.klcc.org/politics-government/2026-06-17/corvallis-city-council-still-considering-new-taxes-weighs-other-options>

² https://gazettetimes.com/news/local/government-politics/article_21949038-0be4-5f95-856b-f76dc7b80de1.html

³ <https://www.corvallisoregon.gov/mc/page/strategic-plan>

12. What is your position on data center development in the Willamette Valley, including considerations like energy and water use, tax incentives, and community input in the permitting process?

There should be a 90-120-day moratorium on any incentives for and the approval of locating new data centers in the valley until the city council, county commissions and the legislature review and provide for local and state data center policies. Developers of data centers and their owners should fully pay for power and water requirements for these businesses. Data centers should be in full compliance with the city's comp plan and land development code.

13. Albany recently canceled its contract with Flock for Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs). Proponents of ALPRs, and other forms of mass surveillance technology, focus on public safety benefits such as solving crimes and finding kidnapping victims. Opponents emphasize the potential for, and history of, harms due to errors and misuse of data. What is your position regarding use of ALPR's and/or other forms of mass surveillance by the City? Should the City regulate use of this technology by private residents and companies within city limits?

The city of Corvallis does not use Flock. I would oppose the use of Flock in city of Corvallis by the city itself. Proponents and opponents of the use of ALPRs, community members, businesses and the city should publicly engage in understanding and discussing the risks and benefits, if any, of ALPRs.

14. What role, if any, do you believe local government should play in addressing climate change (e.g., emissions reduction, sustainability planning, enhancing resilience to extreme weather)?

The city should continue to emphasize and incentivize green energy production and utilization, as well as the use of renewable energy in city facilities and new developments and remodeling. This will require extensive collaboration and investments in the local power grid by power providers. The city should continue to emphasize multi-modal transportation alternatives and investments, such as bike lanes and storage facilities, transit and safe walking corridors in the community and downtown. Resilience takes many forms, including building resilience to withstand future catastrophic earthquakes and flooding.

15. Based on January 2025 "Point in Time" data, Benton County had a total homeless count of 550, with 244 unsheltered in Corvallis. What is the City doing right to reduce homelessness and/or its impacts on the City? What could the city be doing differently? ⁴

⁴ <https://communityservices.us/2025-point-in-time-count-shows-shifting-trends-in-tri-county-homelessness/>

Continued collaboration with service providers is critical. The Benton County crisis center needs to be fully staffed and operated beyond its current limited operation. The CORE team involving the city police department and the county sheriff's office needs to be funded beyond where it is currently: one team of employees working 8 to 5 Monday through Friday. City, county, state and federally elected officials need to lobby for additional and ongoing federal and state funding to provide housing and needed services for those who are homeless. We must understand of those who are homeless, who many are individuals; how many are with partners, spouses and/or children; how many are with pets that they will not be separated from; how many are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and not able to utilize available sheltered housing; and how many choose to live outside of a fixed residence. Knowing these numbers and cases will enable further collaborative public and non-profit solutions to be considered and implemented.

16. Corvallis voters will be deciding on reforms to the City Council in November. Do you support or oppose these reforms, and why? ⁵

I support four-year terms. I think term limitations are not a requirement or a problem needing to be solved based on the history of the Corvallis City Council. I think that a 9-member city council is too large of a body to be effective. Yet, I want to see whether having 6 wards that are 50 percent larger than is the case today will dissuade some candidates from filing for office. I also think that it is essential that creation of boundaries for six wards carefully take into account -- and still serve -- the unique neighborhoods and communities of interest that prevalent throughout Corvallis.

SECTION 6: YOUR CAMPAIGN

17. What volunteer support would be most helpful to your campaign between now and November?

An endorsement; assistance in canvassing and placement of lawn signs.

SECTION 7: CLOSING

18. Is there anything else you'd like our chapter to know about your candidacy that wasn't covered above?

I am committed to listening and learning from others. I will serve in this position as if it were my full-time job in support of the community. I will continue to build collaborations with others to get things done for all members of the Corvallis community.

⁵ <https://www.klcc.org/politics-government/2026-07-22/corvallis-ballot-measure-city-council-terms-seats>, <https://corvallisadvocate.com/corvallis-voters-to-decide-city-council-reforms-this-november-heres-a-deeper-look/>

Thank you for your consideration of my candidacy and qualifications.

Steve Clark

As a candidate in the race for city council in the city of Corvallis, 2026, I pledge to run a positive campaign, without resorting to negative attacks against fellow candidates.

Candidate signature:  Date: 8/4/2024