

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: **Jerry Ingersoll**
2. Office sought: **Corvallis City Council, Ward 7**
3. Campaign website and social media accounts (if applicable): **ingersollforcorvallis.org**

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

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

I love Corvallis and I want it to continue to be the special place it is. Corvallis has given much to me and to my family. Service to others has been my career and is my life's work, and I want to give back to my home community.

If elected, I hope to bring my experience in collaboration to bringing the Council together to speak with one voice, focus on the City's needs, and serve all residents. I hope to bring my experience in management and budgeting to addressing the City's budget gap and keeping Corvallis a vibrant and affordable place to live.

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.

I just retired after 38 years of public service in the US Forest Service. As Forest Supervisor of the Siuslaw National Forest, I conserved the forests between Corvallis

and the Oregon Coast. I was honored in the *Gazette-Times* (4/13/18) for “Keeping the Peace: Diplomacy and Collaboration.” As National Director for Forest Service Job Corps, I led a staff of over 1000 with an annual budget of \$ 170 million, providing trade training and education to under-served youth across the country. Amelia and I raised three children here in Corvallis, all graduates of Corvallis High School. My platform is organized around “Integrity, Experience, Community.” I believe that my experience as a professional leader in the civil service provides me with knowledge and skills that I could apply to serve the City of Corvallis and to connect residents with the dedicated staff who serve them every day.

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*?

Council meetings and work sessions are open, scheduled in the evenings, and recorded for later viewing. Council representatives hold regular listening sessions at the Library on weekends. These are all good starts. And yet naturally the Council still mostly hears from those who have the privileges of time and access to take part, and from organized groups with strong feelings and constituencies. I would focus on three initiatives:

- a. I would emphasize local communication, holding in person Ward meetings at least monthly, distributing a monthly electronic newsletter, and seeking out other opportunities to connect directly with Ward 7 residents. The City Council is accountable to voters through wards, and direct personal engagement with residents is possible at the Ward level;
- b. I would focus on the work of the City. There are many great issues at the national, international, and even state level that divide us. At the community level, we have our best hope to come together as members of a common place and a shared experience without political division.
- c. I always seek to provide a safe space for civil discourse of all types, including (especially) with those with whom I disagree. As a Federal civil servant, I am experienced in working with those of different lived experience, values, backgrounds, and opinions. I listen with respect, empathy, and curiosity, always crediting the speaker with positive intent. I believe that it is my place to serve and connect community residents rather than to lead them. This isn't about me, but about service.

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.

My professional work in the Forest Service has been all about bringing people together. Today, almost no difficult action can be taken on Federal lands without the threat of appeals, litigation, or civil disobedience. Initiatives from one party are typically reversed by the other party after every election. The only way to get things done is to include everyone, provide them real agency, and to work together at the local level – to share leadership and to seek out common values. I first joined Federal service under the second Reagan Administration and served under seven very different subsequent Presidential Administrations, learning to find common ground across political differences.

On the Siuslaw National Forest, I brought loggers, environmental groups, Tribal governments, and local landowners together around a program of old growth and salmon habitat restoration, stewardship, and collaboration. I brought off-highway vehicle enthusiasts and non-motorized users of the Oregon Dunes together around a shared love of the dunes. I helped friends of Marys Peak organize to care for its unique botany despite an early Forest Service misstep at the radio site on the peak.

I am committed to service to *all* residents. As a public servant, I am a registered non-partisan voter in respect for this commitment and the non-partisan office for which I am running.

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. The City government must adopt a sustainable long-term balance between revenues and expenditures. Current spending is increasing faster than revenue, creating a structural budget gap. Resolving this over the long term must include some combination of cost controls, economic growth, cuts in services, and/or increases and broadening of the tax base.**
- b. From a community standpoint, the greatest challenge facing Corvallis is affordability – especially the cost of housing. The cost of housing is a core contributor to everything from the declining population of students in our schools (because housing is unaffordable for young families) to our carbon footprint (because so many people commute in to Corvallis) to homelessness**

(because housing is too expensive for many in the community to afford). Controlling costs and expanding affordable housing are key priorities for me.

- c. The City has come a long way toward expanding housing and reducing regulatory burden on development to encourage economic development, but it can still do more. Collaborative planning with the University and the business community can assure a bright and sustainable future for the town we all love.**

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

At the heart of the structural budget gap is the fact that projected costs of City services are increasing faster than projected revenues, year after year. Cuts in services cannot solve this problem alone; as long as costs keep increasing faster than revenues, further cuts would be required. New taxes cannot solve this problem alone; as long as costs keep increasing faster than revenues, further taxes would be required and the burden on residents would continue to increase. Action must be taken to align the rate of cost increases with the rate of revenue increases. We must make hard choices to control costs, expand the revenue base, and prioritize core services. Ultimately, Corvallis residents deserve a City government that continues to provide outstanding service with a sustainable cost profile at a rate that residents can support and afford. These are hard choices that cannot be made by Council alone. I pledge to refer any proposals for new taxes to voters for their decision.

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

Federal policy will continue to affect Corvallis. City managers have done very well in prioritizing core services, adopting conservative fiscal policies, and taking advantage of State and Federal funding opportunities when they present themselves, as witnessed by Corvallis's excellent bond rating. Nevertheless, we're headed for some lean years in which residents who depend on Federal programs may lose coverage just as the City's resources are constrained.

No single "silver bullet" can solve this problem locally because its origins are national. However, the best hopes for local sustainability involve collaboration, sharing, and community building among City, County, and State governments, the University, the business community, and other local organizations. None of us can do

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>

this alone; together, we can do quite a bit. Setting priorities and sharing leadership will matter even more. Not every level of government needs to provide every service on its own.

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)?

Corvallis is a welcoming, inclusive community, which generally does a good job of treating all residents with respect and being conscious of historic patterns of discrimination and exclusion. However, as this community becomes less and less affordable, it also risks becoming a privileged bubble. Good intentions are not enough. Sustaining diversity for all requires Corvallis to address affordability.

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?

No data centers are proposed within the City of Corvallis, or, to my knowledge, in Benton County. I would certainly have concern with any proposed development that required massive water and power consumption and offered few jobs. But this is not an issue before the City Council, or likely to be. The City has plenty of critical, local issues for a part-time volunteer Council to address (housing, revenue gap, affordability), without becoming distracted by issues beyond the Council's jurisdiction. I would focus my efforts on doing the City's work.

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 has no Flock / ALPR contract, and none is proposed or under consideration. I would oppose such a contract if it were brought before Council, but I believe that such a proposal is quite unlikely. I do not believe that regulation of private technology on private property would be a good use of scarce Council or City resources. We have plenty of work to do on City business.

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)?

Each day, 20,000 people commute in to Corvallis from surrounding communities for work. Many of them would live in Corvallis if they could. Schoolteachers, police officers, service workers, and families with children live in surrounding communities because of the cost of Corvallis housing. The best thing we can do to reduce our carbon footprint and help with climate change is to create more affordable housing in Corvallis so that our workforce can live where they work.

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

The City and Benton County are doing good work to provide shelter and to designate campsites for Corvallis residents experiencing homelessness. These services must continue, and I support them. The best thing we can do to reduce homelessness is to provide more affordable housing. The City has made major strides toward encouraging multi-family housing, and should continue to do so.

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 strongly support changing City Council service to staggered 4-year terms, as proposed. The City needs a Council with more long-term continuity in order to set sustainable long-term vision, and recent turnover (at least 6 of 9 Council members will turn over this year) makes it hard to make critical strategic decisions affecting the community and City government. I think this is clear from the current discussion of taxation and infrastructure development.

I believe that term limits are unnecessary and counter-productive given the excessive turnover on Council already, and I have mixed feelings about increasing the size of wards. However, I believe that staggered 4-year terms are so important to sustainable leadership for Corvallis that on balance the proposed charter amendment would be a step forward, and I support it.

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

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/>

SECTION 6: YOUR CAMPAIGN

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

Frankly, I'm new to the whole idea of campaigning and some of the apparatus of slates, coalitions, and parties still makes me feel a bit uncomfortable. I've spent my career in non-partisan service to all, and there's something about asking for support, donations, and endorsements that feels different than the ideal of service. I like my "opponents," I've met with them individually, and I believe that they too are deserving volunteers motivated by high ideals.

All that said, I would certainly accept the help of anyone who wishes to volunteer.

SECTION 7: CLOSING

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

I believe in an ideal of non-partisan Council service to all Corvallis residents and building bridges across divides. I'm not seeking an endorsement at this time. However, I deeply appreciate the service that Indivisible is providing in hosting a candidate forum for all who would seek to serve this community.

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: /s./ Jerry Ingersoll Date: 8/12/26