

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: Andrew Struthers
2. Office sought: Mayor, City of Corvallis
3. Campaign website and social media accounts (if applicable):
<https://www.struthersformayor.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/struthersforcorvallismayor>
<https://www.instagram.com/struthersforcorvallismayor/>

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

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

I decided to run in this year's mayoral election because of the conversations I have been having over the last couple of years. Members of our community are frustrated, businesses are asking for support, and we have seen issues over recent years that get the city away from doing city business to help our community. I want to be a mayor who is listening to our community and businesses, and working to find solutions with the City Council and city staff.

One of the issues I consistently hear is why our elected officials are not responding to me, or why are they working on issues that do not impact our city. Corvallis is at an inflection point and there are going to be tough decisions to be made in the next year, and decisions that need to be made to help the city move forward in the next three to four years. Corvallis needs to make significant progress in housing and economic development, supporting workers and working families to provide services and attract new businesses, and ensuring

we have shovel-ready land. For me this is not about providing lip service to what we know needs to happen, but facilitating so that it does.

What I want to accomplish as mayor is having the relationship and influence that can help move Corvallis forward into the future. For many in our community there has been a loss of trust with our local government, and I want to work to restore that trust. I want to have City Councilors and myself having regular meetings, like ward meetings and informal meetings with the mayor. I want the community to see their elected representatives in the community and meeting with them.

Corvallis has a great opportunity to take steps forward in economic development, housing issues, environmental issues, and many others, but there will need to be tough City Council and community discussion. I want to do the work to help lead our city into the future.

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 was born and raised in the Albany area and am a graduate of West Albany High School. I moved to Corvallis to attend Oregon State University in 2006, where I earned a bachelor's degree in finance and business information systems. I am married and have two children, a nine-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son. My daughter did attend Letitia Carson Elementary School, but with the school closure will be attending Mt. View Elementary. The recent school closure has been a hot-button topic with many parents, and I understand how this is impacting their families.

Along with my kids being in school, I also volunteer coaching Little League softball with our local program. I am consistently having conversations with other parents or hearing their discussions about the issues within Corvallis and how they are impacted. There are a lot of concerns about the future they see here and whether they can afford what Corvallis is becoming.

I started serving the city by being on the Budget Commission from 2016-2018 as a citizen member, then was elected to the city council for two terms (2019-2022), representing the northeast part of the city (ward 9). I also ran for mayor in Corvallis in 2022, losing only by 34 votes in the first mayoral rank-choice election. After the loss of the 2022 election and leaving the City Council, I was appointed to serve on the Planning Commission for Benton County, where I currently serve.

I have worked at Oregon State University since September 2012 as an IT Consultant, originally hired by the Department of Recreational Sports, and then in recent years consolidated into a Student Affairs IT department.

As a representative employee, I am a proud member of SEIU 503. I have served in a variety of roles; including steward, sub-local president, and a delegate to SEIU 503's biennial general council. I currently serve on SEIU 503's board of directors representing all higher education workers (seven public universities in Oregon). I have spent time attending worker rallies, lobbying in Salem on behalf of workers, and attending strikes; specifically the Benton County AFSCME strike and the Coalition of Graduate Employees strike.

With all this experience, I have an understanding of how the decisions of the city and city council impact everyday residents, workers, working families, and seniors. I want to bring this experience and understanding to the leadership of the mayor in Corvallis. I want the city and city council to focus on the business that will help improve the lives of those who live here.

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*?

I believe for the City Council and Mayor, it begins with being out in the public and being present. City Councilors should host frequent ward meetings that are posted to the city website, social media, and other outlets so the public can speak with them. The mayor should have something similar where the whole city can speak with them, and not just once a year or in a government corner. If I were mayor, I would like to see hosting a public sit-down every other month at minimum, whether it's at a business, city building, school, or other public location. Staff would not need to be there, but it would simply be a conversation between me and those who come. It would be informal and not need to be scripted.

Additionally, when I was a city councilor, I used a tool called Calendly. This tool would connect all my calendars, work, family, and city council, and allow anyone to schedule a meeting when I was free based on some criteria. If mayor, I would bring this back as it would allow the public to have direct access to me as mayor to schedule meetings.

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?

If elected mayor, I would start by ensuring fair representation by giving anyone who applied a short interview with me. This would allow me to get to know the individuals better and how they fit within our community. I would also schedule regular check-ins with the chair of the boards, commissions, and committees to understand how they are functioning and where we may need to make improvements. This will help me when there are vacancies to know what we are looking for in new appointments.

Additionally, I do not believe the mayor should be solely responsible for consideration of appointments. While the mayor does make the appointment, they can take information from multiple sources, including city councilors or city staff. There is one key piece to this, though, and that is community organizations and what they believe may be best as well. I want to hear from our strong community organizations and advocacy groups on what they feel is important in appointing a new person, or what they feel may be lacking. An outside perspective would be helpful for any mayor to understand specific issues.

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.

The first approach I always take when working with new individuals is meeting with them, getting to know them, and understanding where they are coming from. I find that it is easier to get to know individuals one-on-one or in small group settings over a meal or drink. Get to hear their stories of what they have experienced, especially if dealing with specific issues.

If elected Mayor, the first thing I would do before taking office in January 2027 is to have at least one, if not two, sit-downs with each of the Councilor-elects. Understand what their views and approaches are going to be on Council. Also discuss priorities and how they may fit into a timeline and agenda for the Council. Having a working relationship with all Councilors is important, even if we do not always agree politically.

As for working with the community, it comes to meeting everyone where they are. Whether that is setting up one-on-one meetings, group meetings, attending events where I am asked to speak, or simply hosting small forums. I always want to hear from everyone in the community and listen to what is important to them. Corvallis is an intelligent community, and we have many experts in different fields. I consider myself a lifelong learner, and there are areas where I know I can learn more from our community. When I disagree with someone, I will share that, and I am willing to work to find a solution we can share in together.

I can give three examples of where I have had to disagree with someone and work to find a solution.

I am a strong member within the union SEIU 503 and have served on the biennial general council since 2018. In 2024, I was appointed to serve on the Union Operations Committee to review resolutions that would go before the full general council for consideration. There were many resolutions that dealt with IT-related issues that I felt either should not pass or needed fixing for a variety of reasons. As someone who works in IT, I was able to bring that

experience to the committee and authors and work with them to amend the resolutions so they would be more passable, or to understand why they should not be moved forward.

When I served on the City's budget commission in 2017, we were given a small amount of money, about \$109,000, that was unallocated, and we were asked where this money should go. The budget commission debated for several hours, made motions, and had a lively discussion. I was able to work with some of the budget commissioners during one of the recesses to find a breakdown that would gain the vote of the majority. Part of this was that no one was happy with the outcome, but it was clear that there was a consensus for a decision versus fighting for one's priority.

Final example is when serving on the City Council, we were asked to consider an increase to the city's street maintenance fee in one large lump sum. Some of us were concerned about the affordability impacts on residents, while others felt the increase was justified to do all at once. So, working with Councilors during the meeting, I recommend a multi-year stagger of the fee increase, which the Council eventually agreed to. What helped is pushing on the issue of affordability for those who are low-income or seniors on fixed income, and how decisions need to be made keeping all residents in mind. This is the same approach that I will push for in all future discussions; we need to keep an affordability mindset and consider how we are approaching decisions in a consensus manner.

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?

There are many issues facing Corvallis that are my top priorities, and they are all interconnected and affected by one another.

The first is the affordability issue that has continued to become a problem in Corvallis year after year. Corvallis is still known as the number one rent burden city in Oregon, and that is unacceptable. You continue to see increases in city utility fees that directly impact low-income and seniors the most, especially those on fixed income. You also see workers and working families with kids impacted by the inability to shop in Corvallis. For new families, I call this the car seat challenge; nowhere has been identified to me where a family can buy a car seat. This is compounded by families and workers having issues shopping for shoes, clothes, and other essentials; you are not putting more cars on the road to drive to other cities to do their shopping, and this becomes an environmental issue now.

The next issue is housing, and it plays into the first issue. Corvallis needs to see a significant increase in its housing supply, not simply the small projects that we are seeing happening now. There are barriers within the city that can be either removed or reviewed. The city council should do a thorough review of all development fees, system development

charges, and policies to ensure that planned housing developments do not take years to complete. The city council should also look at setting clear and objective standards that, if a development meets them for housing, then it will be approved.

The final issue is economic development and the growth in business support and paying jobs Corvallis needs to see. For nearly eight years now, I have been an advocate of the city annexing its own airport industrial complex, allowing for new taxes and business to come into the city. Right now, for any business to come into the industrial area, it needs to work through both city and county regulations. Additionally, I want to see the city take more steps to have land that is shovel-ready for new projects. Especially with Oregon State University being awarded \$160 million over the next ten years of semiconductor research and development, we should be working to keep that research and what comes out of that in Corvallis to help increase our own economic growth.

Increasing our economic growth with new businesses and supporting the ones we have here will help us increase our tax base and provide more opportunities for shopping for families and workers. By increasing our housing supply, we will be able to meet demand, which will help stabilize the increasing costs and rent in Corvallis. All this will help bring the affordability issue front and center to help address those who are on low-income, fixed-income, or just trying to get by daily.

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

The first thing to acknowledge is that the budget gap could potentially be solved in a combination of options and that no one way will probably solve the problem.

One of the options I have heard about and that probably has some merit behind it is the concept of eliminating positions in the budget that are known not to be filled or may not be filled within a particular budget year or budget cycle. While the expense is on the budget, it may not actually be realized, which would be a cost saving up front and could do some harm in the short term but could help provide minor relief in the long term. This is a difficult option to see jobs being eliminated, especially if they are union jobs.

I know there is a discussion for a potential new employee and income tax; I am a bit concerned that this could have the opposite effect, even if it's a short-term fix. There could be a sunset on these types of taxes; it is hard to see any government entity giving up a new

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>

tax once it has been implemented. Additionally, with the need for economic development in Corvallis, this may hamper that growth.

One area that unfortunately needs to be looked at is whether there are cuts in certain services that will not harm the city and our residents. We are unfortunately seeing this with other major employers in Corvallis, and while it's not something I would advocate for, I would understand the need to review whether any cuts are possible.

Well, the current local option levy that is paid through property taxes is not up for a few years, it may be necessary to review it and have conversations within the community about the need to put it to a vote to raise it higher to increase funding.

Ultimately, all options need an in-depth community conversation about where we are and why there is a deficit. Our current and future city councilors and mayor should already have been helping explain how this happened and what justification there is for raising new taxes or revenues for the city. These decisions should not be made in a siloed vacuum without community understanding and input.

This type of budget issue is why I am pushing for more economic development that will bring in new businesses and increase the tax base for Corvallis.

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

The city can start by ensuring we have shovel-ready land for new economic projects that will bring in new revenue and support those who live here through shopping opportunities or new jobs. Expanding on the needs of our community, and with new revenue dollars, ensuring we are providing the necessary services to our community.

Oregon State University has already been awarded \$160 million over the next ten years for semiconductor research and development. Through this partnership, the group is expecting there to be 180 new firms and upwards of \$6.5 billion in GDP growth in the state and region. Corvallis should be talking about this now and working to be ready for this type of growth and working to keep even a small percentage of all this local.

One area that I've recently heard as an idea to work regionally within our area is the expansion of agri-tourism, specifically with the wine and food industry. Corvallis is at the center of a hub of this industry, and how can we be working throughout the region to ensure we are bringing in new tourism, which brings in other tax dollars, but also supports all our local businesses.

Finally, and not the last option before the city, is working more directly with the League of Oregon Cities and the National League of Cities to ensure lobbying efforts are targeted and productive. In Oregon, I have been up to Salem the last few years to help lobby on behalf

of workers through my union, and I want to turn that type of energy into lobbying on behalf of Corvallis and cities throughout Oregon. The issues Corvallis faces are also faced by other cities in Oregon and even across the country.

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)?

The main role I believe local government plays is ensuring that everyone feels welcome in our city. Local elected officials work with city management and staff to ensure that policies and practices are not hindrances or barriers to marginalized or vulnerable community members. Local elected officials work with our local law enforcement to ensure that their practices and policies are in line with community expectations, are followed, and that individuals can be held accountable when necessary.

Additionally, when there are attacks in our community on marginalized and vulnerable community members, it needs to be called out for what it is. Community members need to see that their local government officials are not just going to give something lip service, but also stand for what they mean and our community values.

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?

I know there are small data centers in the Willamette Valley and in Corvallis. These data centers are small and support business operations, whether it's for web hosting, being an internet service provider, or hosting servers for businesses. These typically are smaller in footprint and do not require the same type of water and energy consumption you see with the larger ones that are regularly in the news now.

As for Willamette Valley and Corvallis, I do not support the full large scale, typically AI, data centers for development. With the amount of agricultural land, farmland, and limited waterways, I could not support these resources being diverted away from being a public benefit to a limited use like large scale data centers. That is not to say the smaller more sustainable data centers are not workable, but these ones you see in the news, like Salem is still with, should not be in our community.

The tax incentives, not just for data centers, but discussed in general need to meet a public and community benefit. If the city is going to be giving up tax revenue for a specific development for ten or twenty years, then the company or development receiving the incentive needs to clearly show how we will benefit. Corvallis should not simply be giving away tax incentives and not be expecting anything back in return.

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?

One thing I want to distinguish is that there is a difference for me between automated license plate readers (ALPRs) and your simpler license plate reader/recognition (LPR). This is primarily because ALPRs are what you are seeing used with Flock and AI technology, while LPRs are your more basic style camera that reads a license plate and provides information to the user. LPRs are usually in a closed-circuit system that does not connect with other camera systems.

An example of how LPRs are being used is for parking enforcement in paid working lots. If Corvallis or other places like Oregon State University are using LPRs to help read license plates to ensure vehicles are paid for parking, then to me that would be an appropriate use of the technology. Especially if that is the only thing that it is used for and the parking information is not shared with other systems.

I do believe that businesses and residents have the right to have cameras to help protect their property or ensure that, if something does happen on their property, they have a way to show what happened. That does not mean I believe that they need to have the more advanced ALPRs.

Cities like Corvallis should not be implementing these Flock ALPR-style cameras to track individuals within their city. When in public, individuals should feel safe; they are not being surveilled when they are moving throughout their community and tracked via AI. Though I do believe that for city property like businesses and residents, there should be cameras to ensure safety and, if needed, follow up on any potential issues.

For Corvallis, there should be some regulation allowed for cities to limit what type of ALPRs and LPRs are being used. However, because this is such a broad issue, it needs to be addressed at the state level so all cities are following the same regulations and protecting all our communities.

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)?

There are several things the city can do to address climate change while ensuring it meets the needs of the community, residents, and businesses.

The first is looking at our transit system, bikeways, and other forms of transportation to ensure it is supporting alternative modes of transportation. As someone who likes to take the bus in Corvallis, it is regularly difficult to do as the frequency and timing are not suitable for working families. For me, driving to work versus taking the bus can be upwards of a 40-minute difference. This is real time, especially when a lot of working families have other responsibilities within their family and have limited time to complete tasks or get their family to where they need to be. Building up our transit system so it is effective, ensuring bikeways are easy to navigate, and removing the burden from needing more cars on the road will help.

Another aspect of removing cars from the road is better transportation systems between cities, like Adair Village, Albany, Philomath, and Lebanon. Corvallis has an estimated 20,000-30,000 individuals who commute into Corvallis daily to do business, go to school, or go to work. By increasing shared transit systems between cities and promoting carpooling, we can get more vehicles off the road. Additionally, expanding housing options in Corvallis can help by reducing travel times for those going to school or work in Corvallis.

One issue that can be looked at from an environmental standpoint is food waste. I remember that during my time on the Corvallis City Council (2019-2022), I had conversations with YouCAN (Youth Climate Action Now), and they were advocates of the City's food waste program. I believe that Corvallis, working with businesses and Republic Services, could implement a food waste collection program. What cannot happen is Corvallis simply implementing a policy and expecting it to be supported. I believe that elected officials need to build strong relationships with businesses and have conversations to help implement policy, specifically a food waste program. As part of those conversations, they can include timelines for how and when things will be implemented. For example, the first year of the program is voluntary, with some form of incentives for early adopters. Then, by year two or three of the program, it becomes mandatory with no incentives. Then, look at enforcement and continual education for new businesses.

These are just a few thoughts on how Corvallis can be looking at addressing climate change locally, and there is more that can be done. For me, addressing climate change is a lens to be considered when addressing policy or making changes within land use planning. It is not something that can be addressed just by saying we are going to address climate change. We need to make real progress in Corvallis for its future, while also knowing that we need to be considering climate change as we move forward.

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

I believe the city is doing a good job of starting to coordinate with local partnerships like Benton County and the Community Services Consortium. Unfortunately, homelessness is not a problem the city is going to be able to solve on its own, and having partnerships is ideal. I also believe the city, by having a guaranteed amount for social services on the last local option levy, shows not just the city's commitment but also the residents of Corvallis. I know the city has helped with transitional housing being built and being a partner to help move things forward.

Areas where the city can do better include communicating what it is doing and educating the community on the work it is doing. Finding ways to build on private and public partnerships to support the building of housing, jobs, and support services. Ensuring conversations are helping in key city areas like downtown to explain what the plans are to support those that are homeless but also businesses. Finally, I would like to see the city and its leaders be in Salem advocating for more support and coordinated effort statewide to address homelessness. Corvallis is not the only city in the state that has this issue, and there need to be systems in place to help support anyone who needs it; Corvallis needs partners statewide to make that happen.

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

For the upcoming charter amendment reform changes, I did have some mixed thoughts. I have always been a proponent of the 4-year staggered system. I even advocated for this during my time on the city council, as well as in my previous role as a charter review committee chair. As for the term limits, I have no issues with what has been proposed and would support them.

As for the question on reducing the size of the Council from six to nine, I have not been fully sold on the need to do this. Well, I agree nine city councilors is a lot to manage; I do not know if six is the right answer for Corvallis. I may have been able to accept it if the proposal would have been seven; six feels off for Corvallis.

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/>

Part of my concern for the reduction is what has happened to the northeast part of Corvallis over the last year, which is the area I have represented, though I have heard from others they have reservations about moving to six as well. So in northeast Corvallis, the school district recently closed Letitia Carson Elementary School and Cheledin Middle School, and without seeing any projected maps, you may be continuing to do damage to this part of the city by removing its one direct representation. Without a draft map to review, you may be seeing what is now Ward 9 absorbed into other wards as part of the map-drawing process.

The reason I raise this is that the northeast, Ward 9, area of Corvallis is one of the more low-income parts of the city and is most directly impacted by city decisions.

I personally would have liked to see the question of ward reduction and four-year terms separated, as they are clearly two different questions and impact the community at large in different ways.

SECTION 6: YOUR CAMPAIGN

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

For me volunteer support would be helping with canvassing and phone banking. As well as individuals talking with the neighbors, friends, and family in Corvallis. I am always open to doing small home visits, that have a small group of individuals, and we have a conversation about Corvallis and the election. I find that having conversations one-on-one or in small group settings are a great way to learn about myself, but also what people really care about and seeing what solutions we can come up with. The biggest piece of this is just the organic nature of having conversations.

I would also appreciate folks who are able to host yard signs to help increase visibility of my campaign. Finally, like all campaigns, fundraising and donations help can help reach out voters, especially for getting out the vote and education. With Corvallis mayoral election being another rank-choice, education on how it works will be important. So, every dollar, even if its \$5 goes a long way to make that happen.

SECTION 7: CLOSING

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

For closing thoughts, I just want to share that I truly care about our community and its future. As father, I have seen and communicated with many about the concerns about affordability in Corvallis and where the future of our city is going. There is real sentiment that I have already heard in our community that the city needs to get back to the busy of the

city and do the work for the community here. There is a lot that needs to happen in the next three to five years for Corvallis to make real progress for its own future, and I want to help lead those conversations and discussions. For me the Mayor is the face of the city, they are the one people are looking to for answers and expect to help carry our community. They should be constantly meeting with individuals, businesses, staff, city councilors, and others to help advocate and influence the future of our city.

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: Andrew St Date: 8/11/2026