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BGR MEDIA RELEASE

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BGR Surveys Reveal Candidates' Views on Key Issues for New Orleans

Today, the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) releases the answers of mayor, City Council and sheriff candidates to BGR's surveys about important public policy, governance, and financial issues in the October 11 primary election in New Orleans.

The surveys place candidates on the record about how they would address these challenges if elected. BGR's goal is to help voters make informed decisions.

BGR developed the survey questions based on its in-depth body of research. The mayor and City Council candidate surveys tackle City government performance, public safety, infrastructure, financial management, and other topics. Candidates for sheriff answered questions related to the Orleans Parish jail, the sheriff's primary responsibility. BGR provided background information summarizing relevant BGR research on these topics.

Most candidates completed the surveys (88%, or 38 of the 43 remaining candidates for mayor, council and sheriff). Candidate answers and BGR issue summaries are [available here on BGR's website](#). Voters can access PDF reports and an interactive online format searchable by name or policy issue.

"We are grateful to the many candidates who participated in this project and commend their commitment to public service and the voters," BGR President and CEO Rebecca Mowbray said. "Across the board, candidates recognize the urgent need to improve City government and the Orleans Parish jail management, priorities shared by BGR and citizens alike."

BGR begins each Candidate Q&A report with BGR Survey Insights. These give readers an overview of key themes in the candidate responses. They highlight areas of consensus and disagreement. Overall, the following themes stood out across the mayor, council, and sheriff survey responses:

- **Top Priorities to Fix.** Mayor and City Council candidates most frequently point to infrastructure, the Sewerage & Water Board, and the City's permitting process as priorities for improvement.
- **City Financial Management.** Mayor and City Council candidates show broad support for adopting a five-year City financial plan leading to a structurally balanced budget. But candidates have a wide range of views on sustaining the City's General Fund reserves – its primary financial cushion for emergencies. Only some candidates support a reserve level at or above the minimum of 17% (or two months) of the General Fund budget recommended by national experts. These experts also recommend higher levels of reserves in disaster-prone communities.
- **Public Safety.** Mayor and City Council candidates typically express reluctance to provide more funding to the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), which is the largest single department in the City budget. They instead urge greater accountability, performance checks, and regular audits. There is, however, broad support for investing in community-based public safety initiatives beyond NOPD. Examples include recreation, youth programs, and mental health services.
- **City-Sheriff Cooperation.** Most candidates for mayor, City Council and sheriff support developing a cooperative agreement between the City and Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office to improve strategic coordination on the Orleans Parish jail and sustain progress on reforms.
- **Better Jail Performance.** Candidates for Sheriff will pursue greater compliance with federal court mandates. But they stress the need to address maintenance, staffing, and jail population issues.
- **Paying for Streets.** Increased funding to help close the budget gap for annual street maintenance is a common refrain among mayor and City Council candidates. They also want better project planning and coordination.
- **Sewerage & Water Board.** Many candidates for mayor and City Council want better oversight of the Sewerage & Water Board. But they have a wide range of views on governance reform. Some want greater accountability, while others call for more substantial changes, such as consolidating the agency into City government.
- **Stormwater Fee.** Many candidates for mayor and City Council would consider a stormwater fee, but they want clearer information on how the fee would be fairly applied with transparency and accountability.
- **Affordable Housing and Economic Development.** Many candidates want to see effective, accountable use of the Housing Trust Fund, as well as other initiatives to improve housing affordability. Many also call for better use and oversight of economic development subsidies.

This is the first time that BGR has produced its Candidate Q&A election reports in an interactive, online format by candidate and issue. This year's Candidate Q&A reports feature more hyperlinks to relevant BGR research and events. Further, it is the first time BGR has included high-level summaries of candidate responses that highlight for voters the major themes of discussion in the election.

"It is our hope that this information is educational to both voters and candidates. We welcome your feedback as we strive to improve local government and facilitate citizen engagement in the greater New Orleans area," Mowbray said.

[Click here](#) to access all 2025 Candidate Q&A survey reports.

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BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policymaking and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information, call (504) 525-4152 or visit BGR's website, www.bgr.org.

BGR is a proud member of the [Governmental Research Association](#), the national organization for governmental research professionals. The GRA began in 1914, with the realization that effective policymaking requires good information, not just good intention. The GRA is home to independent organizations providing this information — trusted, objective, non-partisan, and practical research and data to local and state leaders.