

SDIAE and NLCA BoC D3 & Super D7 Forum Questions

1. As a Board of Commissioners candidate, how do you plan to influence current SPLOST II activities and decision-making to ensure that your constituents benefit from your campaign priorities? For example, what infrastructure projects would be necessary, and how would you address the changes needed for seniors?

As a Board of Commissioners candidate, my plan to influence SPLOST II activities and decision-making is to advocate fiercely for projects that align with my campaign priorities: enhancing infrastructure, supporting seniors, and ensuring environmental justice. I will work to ensure that SPLOST II funds are allocated equitably, particularly in historically underserved areas like South DeKalb, and that projects directly reflect the needs of our communities.

For infrastructure, I will push for prioritizing road repairs, improving pedestrian safety, and expanding transportation options that connect underserved neighborhoods to economic hubs. Specifically, this means advocating for projects that reduce commute times, enhance walkability, and provide safer streets for all residents. Ensuring that funding is distributed based on population will help correct long-standing imbalances and deliver the resources necessary for these critical improvements.

Supporting seniors is a top priority, and I will advocate for investments that directly enhance their quality of life. This includes upgrading senior centers, expanding accessible transportation tailored specifically for seniors, and improving sidewalks and crosswalks to be more senior-friendly. I will work to ensure that SPLOST II funds are used to create safer, more accessible environments for our aging population, allowing them to age in place with dignity. By focusing on these targeted infrastructure and senior-centered improvements, we can ensure that SPLOST II truly benefits all of DeKalb County's residents.

2. Do you believe South DeKalb (Districts 3, 4, 5, and 7) should receive a population-based allocation from the transportation category of the County's unincorporated distribution? Please explain.

Absolutely. South DeKalb deserves its fair share of transportation funds based on population, just like every other part of our county. This is about fairness and making sure our investments reflect the real needs of our communities. South DeKalb is home to a significant portion of our county's population yet has consistently received less investment in infrastructure. A population-based allocation would directly address these long-standing disparities by ensuring funds are distributed based on where people actually live and depend on these services. This approach aligns resources with actual demand and ensures that critical needs like road maintenance, pedestrian safety, and public infrastructure are adequately funded. It's time we allocate resources in a way that truly supports South DeKalb, reducing commute times, improving connectivity, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. Let's invest in our people, our economy, and our future.

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3. How do you plan to recognize and address the presence of environmental racism in your prospective Districts?

Environmental racism is a pressing issue in DeKalb County, especially in areas like South DeKalb where communities face higher exposure to pollution from nearby landfills and industrial sites. I plan to start with a comprehensive environmental audit in partnership with local organizations to identify the most affected areas and involve residents in decision-making through town halls and listening sessions. This will ensure that those impacted by environmental racism have a direct voice in shaping our policies.

To address these issues, I will advocate for stricter regulations that enforce environmental protections, establish buffer zones around industrial facilities, and prevent the placement of hazardous sites near residential neighborhoods. I will also push for comprehensive environmental impact assessments for new developments to safeguard vulnerable communities. While supporting initiatives like the DeKalb Green New Deal, which promotes green infrastructure and clean energy, my primary focus will be on practical, community-driven actions that directly tackle the pollution, safety, and health concerns affecting our neighborhoods. By leveraging local, state, and federal resources, we can make meaningful progress toward a cleaner and more equitable DeKalb.

4. How will you ensure the DeKalb County budget meets District needs and what will you do to ensure financial transparency?

Meeting the needs of our districts starts with engaging the community and understanding their priorities. I will implement a robust strategy that includes regular town halls, surveys, and district-specific meetings to gather direct input from residents about their budget priorities. This community feedback will guide my advocacy to ensure that funds are allocated to critical services such as infrastructure, public safety, and community development. For transparency, I will champion the creation of an open data portal where residents can track budget expenditures and project progress in real-time. Many counties and municipal governments offer this feature to their citizens. This would be complemented by quarterly financial reports along with the current public budget hearings where community members can ask questions and hold officials accountable. By making budget decisions transparent and involving the community every step of the way, we can build trust and ensure that public funds are used wisely and equitably.

5. How will you ensure equitable land use and zoning practices within our communities?

My policy agenda for District 7 will focus on enhancing service delivery, promoting sustainable development, and protecting vulnerable communities. For unincorporated areas, my priority is to improve public safety, infrastructure, and constituent services by advocating for better resource allocation and more efficient government operations. I will collaborate with the cities within District 7 to develop a coordinated approach that benefits both incorporated and unincorporated areas, ensuring a holistic and inclusive government strategy.

To promote sustainable development, I will propose policies that protect our environment while supporting responsible growth. This includes implementing environmental impact assessments

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for new developments, increasing green spaces, and improving air and water quality throughout all neighborhoods. My approach will ensure that environmental benefits and burdens are equitably distributed, particularly protecting communities historically affected by environmental injustices. Additionally, I will address the critical issue of gentrification by advocating for affordable housing, stronger renter protections, and community land trusts to preserve long-term affordability and prevent the displacement of elderly and low-income residents.

Addressing South DeKalb's transit challenges is also a key focus of my agenda. I will explore local mass transit options to provide a better return on investment for residents who have seen limited benefits from decades of contributions to MARTA. By leveraging state and federal funds, I aim to develop a direct commuter bus network that works along with MARTA and directly serves our communities, enhancing connectivity and access to economic opportunities. This approach ensures that our transit infrastructure supports all areas of the county, not just those in the north.

7. What are your top priorities for long-term community growth?

My vision for long-term community growth focuses on sustainable infrastructure, affordable housing, and improved public transportation. Developing green spaces and promoting clean energy projects are also critical to building a healthier, more resilient community. Investing in sustainable development will help create vibrant neighborhoods that offer a high quality of life for everyone. Another key priority is enhancing educational and job training opportunities in emerging sectors like technology and clean energy. Many of these goals could be achieved by working in collaboration with the DeKalb County School System. By equipping our residents with the skills they need for future economies, we can foster economic mobility and ensure that growth benefits all members of our community, not just a select few.

8. How will you keep communication open with constituents?

Open communication with constituents is a top priority for me. I will maintain multiple channels of communication, including regular newsletters, social media updates, and community meetings. Establishing satellite field offices where residents can access information, provide feedback, and seek assistance with county services will be key. Additionally, I will create an online platform where constituents can voice concerns, ask questions, and stay informed about local issues. Engaging directly through town halls, listening sessions, and digital tools like surveys and virtual meetings will ensure that all voices are heard, even those who may struggle to attend in-person events.

9. What criteria will guide your approval of key appointments within DeKalb County's government?

When it comes to key appointments within DeKalb County's government, my focus will be on transparency, experience, and dedication to the public interest. I will prioritize candidates with a proven track record of ethical behavior and community involvement—those who are not only qualified but also aligned with the needs and values of DeKalb residents. Diversity and inclusion are also crucial; our appointments should reflect the diversity of our community and bring a

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variety of perspectives to the table. This approach ensures that decisions made at the county level are inclusive and consider the needs of all residents.

10. How would you, formally or informally, seek to reform the DeKalb County SPLOST Oversight Group to enhance resident engagement and improve oversight of SPLOST projects in your district?

To strengthen the SPLOST Oversight Group, I would propose adding community representatives to the board and making meetings more accessible and widely publicized. Additional community representation on the Oversight Group would give residents a direct voice in monitoring SPLOST projects and providing feedback on priorities and implementation. Informally, I would engage with residents through town halls and workshops focused on SPLOST projects, educating the community on how funds are being used and gathering input on future initiatives. By fostering a transparent and inclusive oversight process, we can ensure SPLOST funds are managed responsibly and align with the community's needs.

11. How will you ensure municipal departments meet community needs?

Ensuring that municipal departments meet community needs begins with accountability, transparency, and a commitment to continuous improvement. I will advocate for Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that define performance metrics and response times for each county service, setting clear standards and ensuring departments meet community expectations. Automated feedback systems will also be introduced, allowing residents to provide immediate input on county services to identify successes and areas needing attention.

We will conduct regular performance reviews using both data-driven metrics and direct community feedback to evaluate departmental effectiveness, highlight strengths, and address weaknesses. Community Feedback Forums will give residents a platform to share their concerns directly with county leadership. Workforce development will be a priority, focusing on ongoing training, performance incentives, and career opportunities to ensure a skilled and motivated team that meets community needs.

Transparency will guide this approach, with public reporting on SLA performance and community feedback fostering accountability. Promoting inter-departmental collaboration and leveraging technology will streamline processes and improve service delivery. By cultivating a culture of continuous improvement and proactive problem-solving, we will create a responsive and accountable local government that meets and exceeds the needs of our community.

12. How will you collaborate with other government entities to address community issues?

Collaboration is key to addressing the complex challenges facing our community. I will work closely with local, state, and federal officials to leverage resources and expertise, particularly in areas like public health, transportation, and environmental protection. Strong partnerships will allow us to create comprehensive solutions that tackle the root causes of these issues. I will also advocate for regional planning initiatives that bring together neighboring jurisdictions to address shared challenges such as traffic congestion, housing affordability, and economic development.

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By working together, we can ensure DeKalb County remains a vibrant and inclusive place to live, fostering long-term growth and prosperity for all our residents.