

Candidate: Jenori C. Burroughs

District: 5

Homelessness and panhandling continue to be significant problems in the City of Pensacola. What are your solutions to these pressing problems that impact the business community?

Addressing homelessness and panhandling in Pensacola requires a comprehensive strategy that considers both immediate needs and long-term solutions.

Here are several strategies that could help mitigate these issues and positively impact the business community:

1. **Supportive Housing Initiatives:** Implement programs that provide shelter for unhoused individuals, combining housing with access to supportive services such as mental health treatment, substance abuse counseling, and job training. This helps unhoused individuals stabilize their lives and reduces their need to panhandle.
2. **Outreach and Engagement Teams:** Create specialized outreach teams composed of social workers, mental health professionals, and law enforcement officers who can engage with unhoused individuals on the streets. These teams can connect individuals with available resources and services, including shelter, healthcare, and employment assistance.
3. **Collaboration with Nonprofits and Community Organizations:** Partner with nonprofits and community organizations that specialize in homelessness services. These organizations often have expertise and resources that can complement city efforts, such as providing emergency shelters, food assistance, and case management.
4. **Panhandling Regulations and Alternatives:** Develop and enforce regulations regarding aggressive panhandling while also exploring alternative programs such as "work-for-pay" initiatives or designated panhandling zones where individuals can panhandle legally and safely.
5. **Public Awareness and Education Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate residents and visitors about effective ways to help unhoused individuals (e.g., donating to established charities rather than giving directly on the streets) and to dispel myths and stereotypes about homelessness.

6. **Business Community Involvement:** Engage the business community in solutions by fostering partnerships, offering incentives for businesses that hire individuals transitioning out of homelessness, and encouraging corporate social responsibility initiatives that support homelessness prevention and support programs.

7. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Collect data on homelessness and panhandling to better understand the scope of the issue, identify trends, and measure the effectiveness of interventions. This data-driven approach can guide future policies and resource allocation.

8. **Long-term Housing Solutions:** Invest in affordable housing initiatives and work to address systemic issues contributing to homelessness, such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, and insufficient mental health services.

By taking a comprehensive approach that includes immediate relief measures, supportive services, community engagement, and long-term solutions, Pensacola can make meaningful progress in addressing homelessness and panhandling while fostering a more supportive environment for its business community.

What role should the City Council play in addressing the shortage of workforce housing in the City of Pensacola?

The City Council of Pensacola can play a crucial role in addressing the shortage of workforce housing through several avenues:

1. **Incentives and Funding:** The City Council can provide financial incentives such as tax breaks, grants, or low-interest loans to developers who build workforce housing. They can also advocate for state or federal funding to support affordable housing initiatives.

2. **Partnerships with Developers and Nonprofits:** They can collaborate with developers and nonprofit organizations specializing in affordable housing to identify suitable land, streamline the approval process, and secure funding.

3. **Community Engagement and Education:** Engaging with the community to raise awareness about the importance of workforce housing and addressing any concerns or misconceptions that may arise.

4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of their policies and initiatives to ensure that they are achieving their goals and making adjustments as needed.

5. **Advocacy:** Advocating at the state and federal levels for policies and funding that support affordable housing initiatives and workforce housing specifically.

By taking an active role in these areas, the City Council can contribute significantly

to addressing the shortage of workforce housing in Pensacola and improving housing affordability for residents.

What would your Five-Year Plan for the City of Pensacola look like?

Creating a comprehensive Five-Year Plan for the City of Pensacola would involve setting clear goals and strategies across various areas to foster sustainable growth, improve quality of life for residents, and strengthen the local economy. Here's an outline for such a plan:

1. Economic Development and Business Growth which involves diversifying the economy to attract high-wage industries with strategies such as: Industry Focus, Small Business Support, Workforce Development and Infrastructure Investments.
2. Housing and Urban Development to address housing affordability and urban revitalization with Affordable Housing Initiatives, Mixed-Use Developments and Homelessness prevention.
3. Infrastructure and Sustainability to enhance infrastructure resilience and promote sustainable practices with Infrastructure Upgrades, Renewable Energy and Climate Adaptation.
4. Quality of Life and Community Development by Improving amenities and cultural offerings to enhance quality of life through Parks and Recreation, Arts and Culture and Public Safety.
5. Governance and Civic Engagement by Fostering a transparent and accountable governance and engaging residents in decision-making thru Transparency and Accountability, Community Engagement and Business Collaborations.

By focusing on these strategic priorities and implementing targeted initiatives, the City of Pensacola can position itself for sustainable growth, enhance its attractiveness as a place to live and work, and improve the overall well-being of its residents over the next five years.

Which industries and jobs should the City of Pensacola be focused on in business development and growth efforts? Be specific.

In focusing on business development and growth efforts, the City of Pensacola should consider industries and jobs that align with its strengths, regional advantages, and potential for sustainable growth. Here are several specific industries and jobs that could be prioritized:

1. **Aerospace and Defense:** Leveraging Pensacola's proximity to military installations like NAS Pensacola and Eglin Air Force Base, the city can attract aerospace companies, defense contractors, and related manufacturing and technology firms. This sector includes jobs such as aerospace engineers, technicians, cybersecurity specialists, and logistics managers.
2. **Healthcare and Biotechnology:** Given the importance of healthcare services and research, Pensacola can develop its healthcare sector further. This includes attracting hospitals, medical research facilities, biotech startups, and health IT companies. Jobs in this sector range from doctors, nurses, and medical technicians to biomedical researchers and data analysts.
3. **Tourism and Hospitality:** Building on Pensacola's coastal location and historical attractions, investing in tourism infrastructure and services can boost the local economy. This sector includes jobs in hospitality management, event planning, tour guiding, culinary arts, and hotel operations.
4. **Maritime and Shipping:** With its strategic Gulf Coast location and port facilities, Pensacola can foster growth in maritime industries such as shipping, logistics, shipbuilding, and marine services. Jobs in this sector include maritime engineers, port operations managers, logistics coordinators, and marine technicians.
5. **Information Technology and Software Development:** Promoting Pensacola as a tech hub can attract IT firms, software developers, cybersecurity companies, and digital media enterprises. Jobs in this sector include software engineers, web developers, network administrators, cybersecurity analysts, and digital marketers.
6. **Advanced Manufacturing:** Encouraging advanced manufacturing companies to establish operations in Pensacola can create jobs in fields such as robotics, 3D printing, advanced materials, and precision machining. This sector offers opportunities for production managers, industrial engineers, quality assurance specialists, and skilled technicians.
7. **Education and Research Institutions:** Supporting the growth of educational institutions, research centers, and training programs can cultivate a skilled workforce and attract knowledge-based industries. This includes jobs in teaching, research, administration, and educational technology.
8. **Renewable Energy and Sustainability:** Emphasizing renewable energy projects, sustainability initiatives, and green technology development can position Pensacola as a leader in environmental innovation. Jobs in this emerging sector include renewable energy engineers, sustainability consultants, environmental scientists, and energy efficiency specialists.

By focusing on these specific industries and fostering a supportive business

environment through incentives, infrastructure development, workforce training programs, and strategic partnerships, Pensacola can enhance economic diversification, attract investment, and create high-quality jobs for its residents.

Candidate: Phil Nickinson

District: 1

Homelessness and panhandling continue to be significant problems in the City of Pensacola. What are your solutions to these pressing problems that impact the business community?

The most important part of addressing homelessness in Pensacola is to remind ourselves that there's no singular fix. It's a problem that requires a holistic approach that's neither quick, nor easy, and it'll require a sharing of expertise, resources, capabilities, and a diversity of funding. Homelessness and panhandling are citywide issues — not just downtown concerns — and we can't just move the issue from one place to another.

The business community is correct to be concerned about panhandling and homelessness and should be prepared, should the City decide from a legislative aspect to assist in funding solutions that aim to create an atmosphere of housing security for all — from single adults to families with children. Frankly, we're all stakeholders in this, whether we own businesses or not.

Safe, secure shelters with access to social safety net resources, transitional housing projects that help adults and families begin a journey to stable housing, affordable workforce housing options — all of these are part of the answers we

need to pursue as a community.

Neither homelessness nor panhandling can be “solved” from a punitive standpoint alone. Funding a Continuum of Care, shelters and treatment options are paramount. There’s a place for ordinances, too, whether they’re new or newly enforced. But those things all must work in concert, or the natural friction will keep any of them from truly making a successful and humane impact.

What role should the City Council play in addressing the shortage of workforce housing in the City of Pensacola?

There’s an obvious throughline from housing (and workforce housing) to the issues of panhandling and homelessness. Studies have shown that it is easier than we might care to imagine to become transitionally or episodically unhoused.

Pensacola has a major opportunity with the redevelopment of the Baptist Hospital campus to address workforce and attainable housing. That’s a start. It also should look for other opportunities to designate (or redevelop) areas that could be similarly suitable. And we need to get creative in that endeavor. It might mean using old land in new ways, which could be a tough pill for some to swallow. But we’re not making new land in Pensacola — we need to find ways to make better use of what we have.

Partnering with a land trust appears to be a good place to start. The trick, of course, will be to maintain attainability amidst the movement of the overall market as price and demand continue to push against each other.

Housing should remain a top priority for the city. If you can’t afford to live here, the rest of the economic engine will sputter.

What would your Five-Year Plan for the City of Pensacola look like?

Five years from now I want to see a city that my college freshman daughter would like to return to if she wants to. I would like to see a robust supply of starter homes that are actually attainable on 2029 wages. I want to see a diverse community with an economic ecosystem that offers opportunities for young people, professionals, entrepreneurs, and others who want to start a career in a community that is safe, offers great public amenities, and has a strong public education system. It is also a

community where residents know what the city's priorities are and understand the data being used to drive decisions.

Over the next five years, I want the City to invest in infrastructure that supports this big goal while keeping an eye on the future. That infrastructure includes stormwater improvements that address the reality of the deficits we face now with an eye on setting aside funding to support future needs. Roads that are as safe as they are inviting to the families who use them. Connectivity (both wired and wireless) that provides the speed and bandwidth needed to survive and thrive in a digital future. Gas and electrical that meet 21st Century needs, not just coming up to 20th Century standards.

Parks should be a place people actually want to visit — not just a space with a few trees and a sign. If they're under-utilized, they should be repurposed. Our athletics facilities must be able to support the demand our families have of them now and prepare for future growth.

We need to ensure that Pensacola International Airport remains the destination of choice for so many along the Gulf Coast and can support those who live here, those who visit for holiday, and those here on business.

All of these things feed into the next. And this all has to be done with the understanding that we're going to see a generational shift in the next couple decades. We must prioritize accordingly and be willing to make adult decisions about our financial priorities based on data rather than emotion. The mayor's office has shown creativity and diligence in pursuing and winning outside funding to help address priorities, something I expect in five years will be continuing. Clear, frequent communication with the public about what the city's priorities are and what steps Council as a legislative body is taking to meet those priorities is key to helping residents understand how their tax dollars are being used.

Which industries and jobs should the City of Pensacola be focused on in business development and growth efforts? Be specific.

Pensacola is world class in so many ways and public-private partnerships remain the key to ensuring that in the future. A couple of these partnerships illustrate just the kind of collaborations the city needs to support and continue.

Still in its infancy in this community, ST Engineering is enhancing the economic utility of our airport infrastructure and is doing so in a way that is mindful of the surrounding community. Collaborative projects like the Washington High Aviation Academy and the A&P Mechanics School are great examples of collaboration to create a talent pipeline harnessing resources we already have — and growing a talented workforce right here at home.

The Institute for Human and Machine Cognition downtown has continued to expand and is adding a biomedically focused research hub that will benefit the area (the world, really) for decades to come. Combine that with cybersecurity endeavors at the University of West Florida and we're on the cusp of being a pre- and post-graduate hub for technologies that will guide the future of the world. (Yes, that's hyperbolic. And, yes, it's also true.)

We absolutely must activate the old Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant land and at least some of the remaining parcels at Maritime Park. Too much time (and revenue) has been lost already in building what could be an urban waterfront that stands up to any other in the country. The Bruce Beach Park project is an important step in ensuring that public access to the water remains a feature of this waterfront — but we must harness the momentum this project has created and finish the work of bringing this part of downtown into the future. It won't survive on its own, though.

All of that still requires the business infrastructure needed in daily life. Banks. Realtors. Health care. Lawyers. Retail. Homebuilders and redevelopers. One group supports the next, and we all benefit.

Candidate: Jennifer Brahier

District: 1

Homelessness and panhandling continue to be significant problems in the City of Pensacola. What are your solutions to these pressing problems that impact the business community?

This is a multi-faceted problem which demands a multi-faceted solution. It is also important to note that even though the City should play a pivotal role, this cannot be accomplished without partnerships with the County, nonprofits, and religious organizations (to name a few).

First, the City Council has already initiated several strategies to address these issues. We have funded a number of nonprofits to help provide emergency shelter. We have added specialists to the police department to address people in need. We must continue to help at risk people navigate the daunting paperwork for ID's and to receive benefits they are already owed. We have recently passed ordinances to prohibit panhandling in intersections and blocking sidewalks. We have partnered with the Downtown Improvement Board to add Police Officers downtown to help address issues and have initiated a program to help unhoused get bus tickets home after we have been able to correspond with family members who verify they will help the person in the destination city. According to downtown business owners, these efforts are becoming noticeable and homeless issues are on the decline.

As for the future, we still need a low barrier shelter to address the most resistant unhoused. This goal demands partnerships with the County and clarity from the State on their new laws overseeing sleeping on public lands and rules governing shelters. It should also be noted that until we start preparing those who have been incarcerated with job and life skills, these people will continue to rotate between incarceration and homelessness.

What role should the City Council play in addressing the shortage of workforce housing in the City of Pensacola?

Affordable housing is another issue that demands a multi-faceted approach. There is no one thing the City Council can do to affect any real change, but there are several strategies that may improve housing issues.

First, supply and demand- if our supply is low, the prices will be high. On this front, it is still estimated we have a significant housing shortage. Thus, we are looking to simplify the land development code to enable builders' clarity in navigating the permitting process while trying to add to our supply- after all, time wasted is an added expense of the home. It also may be beneficial to allow more "garage apartment" type residences in single family home neighborhoods.

Another strategy we are trying is a partnership with the Homebuilders Association and a land trust. The City is donating the land, the homebuilders are building at cost, and the land trust will keep the property affordable for those within the 60-120% AMI in perpetuity. This initial pilot will involve three properties which will

hopefully be featured in The Parade of Homes this fall. If successful, we can add in another property that may allow for twelve townhomes, and then we can look to add more properties at the old Baptist Hospital property.

Finally, it may also be necessary to offer incentives to developers willing to renovate old buildings and/or use infill lots for multifamily facilities. There are currently issues for smaller builders to get these jobs off the paper because of unexpected utility costs in, for example, converting an old, deserted church to apartments. ECUA demands a different type of connection for a church than for apartments. This added cost can be the difference between affordable housing and market rate.

What would your Five-Year Plan for the City of Pensacola look like?

My first goal would be to stay the course on many of the initiatives enacted over the last few years. Next, I would ensure our facilities and the City are in tip-top condition. Repair infrastructure, straighten up signs and poles, and implement a plan for undergrounding utilities so that we can implement a plan for street trees which would improve stormwater issues and resiliency after storms. I would then make sure that repair and maintenance costs are fully planned for and funded in the budget. We would also need to continue strategies which encourage affordable housing and move the needle towards our renewable energy goals. Finally, we need to encourage and help companies start up and stay here so that our children can afford to stay and thrive in Pensacola.

Which industries and jobs should the City of Pensacola be focused on in business development and growth efforts? Be specific.

STEM jobs, such as engineers for developing extreme sailing vessels, implementing next generation energy (more wind turbines, solar, and other unknowns). All medical professions, including research. Improving teaching opportunities to ensure the best quality education, which will encourage families to live here.

Candidate: Broughton

District: 5

Homelessness and panhandling continue to be significant problems in the City of Pensacola. What are your solutions to these pressing problems that impact the business community?

The solution to ending homelessness is to create housing opportunities and to support organizations that have proven successful in helping our homeless community. We can alleviate panhandling when people have fair access to employment opportunities. During my time in office, I supported housing and housing organizations that address homelessness. I will continue to support initiatives that have record of proven success. Since panhandling is a reflection of a city's economic state, we have to ensure that our workforce creates opportunities for all economic levels.

What role should the City Council play in addressing the shortage of workforce housing in the City of Pensacola?

I voted to allow the City to address the shortage of workforce housing by creating more of it. After attending a trip to New Orleans sponsored by the mayor's office, we saw how land trusts can keep housing affordable for workers and are bringing a version of that to our town. The City is also partnering with Habitat for Humanity to create more workforce housing that also saves our historic charm as we grow.

What would your Five-Year Plan for the City of Pensacola look like?

My Five-Year Plan will be based on our findings from our the Pensacola 2035 survey. Plans include areas that will have a direct impact on residents in District 5. We have taken great effort to ensure everyone has a chance for their voices be heard and I plead with everyone in D5 to submit your thoughts to <https://www.pensacola2035.com>

Which industries and jobs should the City of Pensacola be focused on in business development and growth efforts? Be specific.

The city should focus on industries that can improve our quality of life, not just ones that make a profit for businesses located far away. Businesses rooted in our local and regional economies, like healthcare, education, and tourism, should be our

priority to attract more targeted industries like cybersecurity and other technologies.