

Bloomington Mayor

John Hamilton (D)

John Turnbull (R)

1. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking? (100 words)

HAMILTON: I have the deep hands-on experience and progressive vision to help lead Bloomington forward. I'm a Bloomington native who, with my spouse Dawn Johnsen, raised our children here. I successfully led two award-winning state agencies for Governor Frank O'Bannon, responsibly overseeing environmental protection and family and social services, with thousands of employees and billions of public dollars. I founded an award-winning nonprofit organization and community development bank to promote economic justice and opportunity. I served on the school board, chaired the Sustainability Commission, chaired the Shalom Community Center, and have energetically supported political and progressive causes for decades.

TURNBULL: Senior level manager for City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation as Division Director of Sports. Directly manage 11-14 full-time employees and hundreds of part-time. Responsible for 3 million plus in revenue collection and expense management. Extensive experience with "New World" the city's financial software. Worked with most all department heads. B.A. Economics, DePauw University. Masters, Indiana University. Former banker with Merchants National Bank. Sales with NCR Corporation, Dayton, Ohio. Born and raised in the extremely diverse community of Albion, Michigan (40% African American, 10% Hispanic, 50% White) that was heavily manufacturing but has steadily declined.

2. What role should the city play in addressing homelessness and the need for affordable housing? (125 words)

HAMILTON: I believe we should focus on solutions, better coordinate services, and refine our approaches. The recent demise of Martha's House is a reminder that we need to come together and rethink our strategies; my service as President of the Shalom Community Center board has helped identify some of that collective effort. Many people suffering from homelessness are working and earning wages, but not sufficient to afford adequate housing. Many suffer from addictions or mental health issues. The city can help coordinate our responses. One first step is attracting federal funding to pay for a second Crawford Homes which focuses on helping people who are chronically homeless and disabled get help with 'housing first.' We've seen that saves lives and local money too.

TURNBULL: Since the states have retracted from mental health and addiction services, it has left a huge void for a population that has little family support and service support.

I believe our most effective role is to keep directing homeless to mental health, addiction, and services that can improve their overall health condition. Without health, they cannot provide basic needs.

Affordable housing in this case really means free housing and shelter for a population that is unemployable until they can get, or if they can get healthy. I am only in favor of this if it a broadly supported facility by multiple agencies (private, state, federal, etc.).

3. What approaches will you take to foster economic growth? (125 words)

HAMILTON: We need economic health and sustainable prosperity to grow and spread among all the people of our community, locally, and in the region. For many businesses, lack of available capital is a major obstacle. I will seek to lower that barrier by leveraging city assets to attract private loans and investments to help the local economy flourish.

We must nourish the culture of creativity and our highly educated workforce, to help grow new businesses. I am committed to a 21st century infrastructure for our community, including a city-wide high-speed broadband fiber network for homes and small businesses. We also should assure that the downtown Certified Tech Park is focused on sustainable jobs, and continue strongly supporting the vibrant arts and culture that enliven Bloomington.

TURNBULL: “Fostering” economic growth is the best terminology for the municipal city role in the economy. Making sure the core services are done well and efficiently “fosters”. 80% of the budget is police and fire protection. You cannot have economic growth without stable and safe environments.

The Mayor can foster growth by establishing a culture of business friendly. Being responsive, clear, concise, and simple. This Mayor will also remind the city council to be more practical, more real, more responsive to more than the ‘squeaky wheel’ which does not always represent the majority. Aesthetics fosters growth as well and I am in favor of no panhandling, no street vending papers, and a clean downtown.

4. What would you propose to better serve the social needs of senior citizens? (125 words)

HAMILTON: Affordable housing, accessible transportation, diverse activities, and a welcoming community are cornerstones. And beneath it all we need the social safety net that protects seniors and their families from health, financial, or other crises. We have a great array of organizations and institutions that serve seniors and are supported by seniors. My administration will work to coordinate such services better, and improve efficiencies. We must consider more downtown resources for seniors. We must expand and coordinate public transit systems in the county. I also will create a Senior Fellows program, recruiting seniors to serve our community through year-long city government fellowships. In addition, I will open up City Hall with regular listening sessions, to hear what else can be done.

TURNBULL: The office of Community and Family Services, in city hall, would be vital to my administration. They can greater promote senior service providers and connections. The Twin Lakes Recreation Center is an excellent senior social site with healthy activities (shameless promotion).

I recognize transportation is often an issue with seniors, and I am a big fan of the bus system. I would be open to discussions and modifications if access or bus routes need to be modified.

5. What other concern do you find important and how would you address it? (125 words)

HAMILTON: A major challenge ahead is building a 21st century sustainable, local economy while protecting Bloomington's unique character and our way of life. Our state and community have seen good-paying manufacturing jobs depart. Our share of national income has declined. We must work together to reverse the trend.

Several components are critical to address this challenge: 1) strong public education – as mayor I will work energetically to support our local public schools, including with the upcoming referendum; 2) affordable housing – my campaign website outlines several steps we can take; and 3) 21st century infrastructure including city-wide broadband and modern green infrastructure for energy and water.

Finally, collaborating requires an efficient, open government, and I will bring strong management experience and throw City Hall's doors wide open.

TURNBULL: I got involved in this race because the point of the Mayor's job is often lost. It is not about Republican or Democrat, it is about delivering core services. Democratic dominance will remain in the city council.

We are in an explosive growth period. IU, our greatest influencer, will be 50,000 students soon with upward demographics and international mix. I-69 is coming soon. We can put growth where we want it, we can make it look how we want it to look, we can influence it.

This town will look better if I am mayor. Greater set backs and plazas, smarter architecture, clear building codes, no panhandling, no crows taking over downtown.

6. What possibilities do you see for the use of the hospital site on Second Street? (125 words)

HAMILTON: We need to think hard, listen carefully to each other, research best practices from around the country, dream big, and identify realistic options. We have time, and we should be deliberate. Our core north-south axis has the Certified Tech Park, the Hospital site, the Convention Center, and the planned Switchyard Park all in motion. It is an exciting time to think about what kind of built community we want to leave future generations, and what activities will enhance quality of life for current and future residents. The city-established advisory committee is one important process. IU Health's commitment to the community is essential and demonstrated in their major new local investment. All options for re-use should be on the table.

TURNBULL: I see real possibilities with that site; the B-line trail, and the Convention Center property all flowing very nicely with real synergy. We must remember the hospital owns the property and can decide the matter.

My prediction is that this site will have some satellite IU Health services on a small scale. There is a real opportunity to upgrade the housing so there is a nice mix of upper, mid-level, and lower level housing.

I would pull in the large “players” in Bloomington to gauge interest as the infrastructure there is great. MCCSC, Cook, IU, IU Health, County Government, Ivy Tech, senior living providers. Those type of agencies and the current focus group is a great group to keep engaged.

7. What policies would you promote to protect the environment and conserve energy? (125 words)

HAMILTON: Public leadership is key for a more sustainable community and economy. I am committed to putting solar panels on top of city hall. We need more investment in green infrastructure that treats surface and rainwater as a resource, not a cost. I support conservation/volume pricing in our water system. I support publishing much more information: reporting on carbon emissions, solid waste management, pesticide use, and more. I support disclosing energy use of major buildings to encourage conservation. We should research establishing financial tools to help individuals and enterprises invest in sustainable improvements, including solar, composting, local food and more. And we also need more trails, more sidewalks, more public space, and more connectivity to encourage walking and biking, including with more county and regional coordination.

TURNBULL: The office of Economic and Sustainable Development does a fantastic job of studying and implementing energy and environment wise moves by the city. I intend to continue that effort headed by Jacqui Bauer.

One of the most significant savings we can do is manage our “peak load” usage of energy. It can be a complicated matrix, but there are automated systems and unautomated systems that can balance and alternate your building draw on energy. This can result in large savings particularly when you consider we run some very large operations like ice rinks, office buildings, water treatment, etc.