



Dear fellow Raleigh citizens,

As former Raleigh mayors, we agree with [other civic leaders](#) that the first duty of our city's elected leaders is to keep people safe and secure, for that is the foundation of our collective health, prosperity, and success. The City Council should focus on the needs of Raleigh and leave international affairs to other governmental bodies better suited to address them.

Public safety must be the Raleigh City Council's top priority among many others, as the new nonpartisan group [Citizens for a Safe & Secure Raleigh](#) argues. When residents, workers, and visitors feel safe, we can make progress on jobs, housing, parks, transportation, and homelessness. But without public safety first, little else can move forward.

It therefore matters greatly who serves on Raleigh's City Council – making our laws, deciding public policies, and representing every neighborhood.

Our endorsements

As founding members of CSSR and former mayors with business experience and a love of Raleigh, we endorse these candidates for the Nov. 5 mayor and City Council elections:

- *Mayor:* **Janet Cowell.** Former City Council member, state senator, state treasurer, and CEO of Dix Park Conservancy, Cowell has demonstrated strong leadership. She emphasizes, “Keeping our community safe is the most important job of the mayor and City Council.”
- *At-Large:* **Jonathan Melton.** First elected in 2019 and re-elected in 2022, Melton serves as mayor pro tempore and chairs the Economic Development & Innovation Committee. A family law attorney, Melton advocates for better pay and benefits for first responders.
- *At-Large:* **Stormie Forte.** A Council member since 2000, Forte is vice-chair of the Safe, Vibrant & Healthy Neighborhoods Committee and a member of the Economic Development & Innovation Committee. Forte has worked in state corrections and health departments.
- *District A:* **Mitchell Silver.** A former Raleigh Planning Director, former New York City Parks Commissioner, and private-sector urban planning consultant, Silver led the development of Raleigh's Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Ordinance. Public safety, high-quality growth, and affordable housing top his Council agenda.
- *District B:* No endorsement.
- *District C:* **Corey Branch.** First elected to the Council in 2015, Branch serves as chair of its Transportation & Transit Committee and vice-chair of its Growth & Natural Resources Committee. A private-sector information technology manager, Branch prioritizes public

safety and economic development.

- *District D: **Jane Harrison***. First elected to the Council in 2022, Harrison serves as chair of its Growth & Natural Resources Committee and is a member of its Transportation & Transit Committee. The N.C. State affiliate faculty member, specialist in coastal economics, and supporter of small businesses is running unopposed.
- *District E: **John Cerqueira***. Making his first Council run, the organizational coach prioritizes public safety and balanced growth. As Cerqueira himself says aptly, “Fostering an environment where everyone feels secure and supported ... is essential for the city’s continued growth and prosperity.”

We are confident these candidates will prioritize public safety and understand that without it, investments in public spaces and housing will not make Raleigh a great place to live, work, and play.

A pivotal election

Raleigh is fortunate to have a capable and accomplished chief of police and a cadre of able and engaged police officers. However, Raleigh is at a crossroads. Despite its successes and accolades, our elected City Council hasn’t prioritized its most important job: keeping citizens safe.

As Raleigh continues to grow, so too will the potential for us to experience the headline problems so many of our country’s large cities are facing. Without safety, Raleigh cannot prosper.

Clearly, our City Council needs a stronger commitment to public safety. We believe these candidates will provide appropriate public safety staffing and compensation; superior police training, facilities, and equipment; leadership in working with community partners to address homelessness; and honor for officers who serve. We simply do not have a large enough police force to meet the needs of our growing city.

We urge you to help make Raleigh safer by voting for the candidates listed above. Encourage your friends and family to, as well. Let’s lift Raleigh together so our city can protect us all better.

Sincerely,

Nancy McFarlane, Mayor of Raleigh (2011–2019)
Smedes York, Mayor of Raleigh (1979–1983)