

1. How do you plan to involve young professionals in the decision-making process in Lincoln?

Young professionals are the future of Lincoln and must be given opportunities to participate in the life and governance of our city. If elected to the city council, I will work with organizations like LYPG to make sure those opportunities are available, particularly by getting young professionals involved in city boards, committees, and commissions. As a mother of seven children, I have spent most of my life as a listener and consensus-builder; I am approachable, teachable, and I look forward to working with each member of the Lincoln community that wants to be involved in their government.



Mary Hilton

2. How will you approach economic recovery in Lincoln in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Lincoln is a resilient city, but COVID-19 has devastated many of our businesses. As a council member, I will work to ensure that businesses have the support they need to stay open in a safe fashion and return our city to economic vibrancy as quickly as possible. As a believer in the free market, getting unnecessary government interference out of business is my goal. Ending business-killing mandates is important to a healthy local economy. Lincoln's entrepreneurs must be free to run their businesses, keep their doors open, and sell the products and services their customers want.

3. Lincoln is facing a housing crisis. Access to entry level homes and apartments is practically nonexistent for recent graduates. What is your plan to address this?

Access to safe, welcoming, and affordable housing is essential, and Lincoln will not be able to reach its full potential so long as this remains an issue. As a member of the city council, I would support policies to incentivize housing developers while protecting the rights of property owners and tenants.

High taxes and expensive regulations are partly to blame for the high cost of housing in Lincoln. Working to lower the tax burden and cutting building code regulations that go beyond necessary safety measures will help to ensure that housing is available at all price points. I also believe that affordable housing happens when the local economy is flourishing and when people can work and afford to pay for their own homes and apartments.

A specific policy goal to make Lincoln affordable is to allow Sanitary Improvement Districts. By limiting the debt that SID's can incur and ensuring that good engineering and solid board management happens with each SID, we can safely promote the natural growth of our city. It is estimated that for each house that is built, two jobs are created in the local economy. Omaha has successful SID's, and so can we.

4. Young professionals see equality as a top concern. If elected, how would you ensure equity and inclusivity in the city?

I view Lincoln as a friendly and safe place for everyone. It is my wish that we become even more so. As a member of the City Council, I will be hearing many of the concerns of our residents, and my goal is for everyone to be treated fairly and with respect; that every member receives equal protection under the law.

5. Discuss your approach to budgeting. What will you prioritize, and why?

My campaign theme is "Back to Basics." The City Council, as the legislative body, must work early and hard with each department to ensure that essential city needs are being met. As I have listened to citizens door-to-door, their top concerns are high taxes and street maintenance. Pot-holed, unsalted, and poorly funded and maintained roads are a direct result of misplaced budget priorities.

Though vehicle owners pay wheel tax, motor vehicle tax, and gas tax, yet streets have not been fully funded in decades. Citizens feel betrayed. Streets are a need in which taxes are intended to fund. City council must use its investigative and budgetary powers to get it done without increasing taxes. My background in accounting and municipal auditing provide me the skills and discernment to dig into budgets and work with those who will carry them out; but it is my passion for good, basic, and limited government that will drive me to deliver good government to taxpayers.

Jim Geraghty of National Review once wrote, "There is always some aspect of government that can be trimmed, rethought and eliminated." It comes down to stewardship of the people's money. Our local government needs to be efficient, and it is the responsibility of the City Council to audit each department, identifying inefficiencies that create waste. Checks and balances at City Hall ensure that the citizens' hard-earned money is focused on city needs.

6. What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in Lincoln?

My family and I live on Hunts Drive, which is part of the bigger neighborhood of Salt Valley View. When my husband and I were looking for a home in Lincoln 17 years ago, we were attracted to this neighborhood because of its peace and family atmosphere, plus it had the one house that fit the budgetary and size needs of our family. We enjoy living as friends with our neighbors, and I am currently serving as the neighborhood association's president. We love the wildlife in Wilderness Park and frequent many of its bike and walking trails. Some of our favorite spots in Lincoln are the Sunken Gardens, the Rose Garden, and Pioneers Park.

7. If Lincoln's flag were to be redesigned, what traits and aspects of Lincoln would you like to see symbolized?

To be honest, I do not believe that I had ever seen (or at least remember seeing) Lincoln's flag before researching an answer to this question. While the current symbolism of the flag is understandable in featuring the capitol, university, and agricultural importance of our city, I believe that a new design might be able to capture more of Lincoln's uniqueness, history, and creativity. We have many important landmarks that could be included, but since we are named after Abraham Lincoln, I would like to see the Lincoln Statue as part of the design.