St. Louis City Mayoral Forum Transcription

Candidate Responses from the February 22 Mayoral Forum at the Sheldon

On February 22, 2017, CBN partnered with nine regional initiatives to host a two-hour mayoral forum at the Sheldon. Candidate responses are transcribed here.

Round 1

*Ruth Ezell:* Good evening, everyone. I’m Ruth Ezell from the Nine Network of Public Media, and I want to welcome you to tonight’s Mayoral Forum. We’re going to begin with brief opening statements from each of the six candidates. The order in which they will speak was chosen at random by drawing names from a hat. Ladies and gentlemen, you will each have one minute for your opening remarks, and our first speaker is Mr. Antonio French.

- **Antonio French:** Thank you. My name is Antonio French. And I am excited tonight, energetic, and optimistic about the future of our city. For the first time in a very long time, we have an opportunity in just 13 days to take our city into a different direction. After 16 years of our city moving into a direction where really only the haves have been served, and the have-nots have been left out, we now have an opportunity to make this a city where everyone can get the attention from our city government that it deserves. We need to have a city where every neighborhood, regardless of what side of Delmar it is on, gets the attention, the resources, and the development resources that we need to turn it into places where people want to live. And instead of moving out of our city, people are moving into our city. So I’m very hopeful. I know we’re going to hear a lot of good ideas tonight, a lot of questions based off the Ferguson Report. But I was down in Ferguson, so I know what people have been asking for, what people are demanding. After the last two years, people have been asking for a level of accountability, and we have not seen that yet. So as Mayor, I am committed to making sure we can do that in the City of St. Louis.

- **Lyda Krewson:** Good evening. First of all, thank you all so much for being here tonight. What that says to me is that you care deeply about who the next mayor is. I mean, you’re giving up a couple hours of your evening, and those of you watching at home are also giving up that time—so thank you for doing that. I’m Lyda Krewson. I’m currently the 28th Ward Alderman. I also am a CPA and the Chief Financial Officer for PGAV, an international architecture and design firm. Over the years, I have taken on the tough issues facing the City of St. Louis. I’ve spent my career doing that. I have taken on the big drug companies with the PDMP [Prescription Drug Monitoring Program] Bill, taken on big tobacco with being the primary sponsor of the smoking ban, and also the NRA—which we’ll talk more about in a little while. I think we need to elect the next mayor who is capable and qualified to take on the tough issues that are facing our city today. And there certainly are many. Job one—in my opinion—for the next mayor is neighborhood safety. And I look forward to speaking with you more about that over the course of this evening. Thank you.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Good evening. I first want to say Happy Birthday to my daughter Brittany, who turns 23 years old today. Family is very important to me. My wife and I have been married for 26 years. We made a conscious decision 25 years ago to move to one of the most challenging neighborhoods in the City of St. Louis because we wanted to make a difference in the lives of people in that community. I have a Master’s Degree in Business Administration; I put it to good use. Against all odds, we’ve opened two small businesses in my neighborhood. I’m a proud Army
veteran. I served 23 years honorably, serving my country both in the United States and abroad. I am hopeful and happy to serve as the Mayor of the City of St. Louis. I understand that serving as Alderman for the past 14 years that we have many challenges in the City of St. Louis. And I’m running for mayor because I’m guided by three principles. Number one: integrity. You can count on me and you can trust me. Number two: transparency. City Hall will always be open to you. And vision. I see a St. Louis as the destination place, where businesses are thriving, neighborhoods are stronger, and people are safe. I look forward to continuing the conversation. Again, thank you.

- **Tishaura Jones:** Yes, thank you for coming this evening. I am Tishaura Jones. I am currently the Treasurer of the City of St. Louis. I also served for two terms in the Missouri House. And as Treasurer, I took an office that did a lot of things poorly and turned it around to do a lot of things well. For example, we upgraded the entire parking meter infrastructure, opened the Office of Financial Empowerment, and created a children’s savings program for every kindergartener in a public school. I’m running for mayor because St. Louis needs to change, and I’m not afraid to say that. You’ll hear a lot more about what I think needs to be changed, but the things I’m most passionate about are education, looking at all of our policies and procedures through a racial equity lens, and criminal justice reform and public safety. I hope to earn your support this evening if you haven’t already decided who you’re voting for on March 7th. And thank you very much—I look forward to speaking with all of you soon. Thank you.

- **Andrew Jones:** Good evening. My name is Andrew Jones, Republican candidate for Mayor. I want to serve the City of St. Louis. The City of St. Louis is in desperate need of leadership change. For over 66 years, the City of St. Louis has plummeted: from over 900,000 people in the population of the City of St. Louis, we’re now down to 315,000 people. Something’s happened with policy; something’s happened with leadership that has put us in a position where we’ve seen retrogression at a level that is unprecedented for a city of our size. I’m saying leadership is absolutely needed. I bring that level of leadership from serving over two decades as an executive at an electric utility in Southern Illinois. I have an MBA from Washington University, a Master’s Degree in International Business as well, and a B.S. in Economics. I have a lovely wife and a fantastic family, and I’m dedicated through civic excellence to participate at a level to turn this city around and provide leadership that has been vacant from this city for years.

- **Lewis Reed:** Thank you. First of all, thank each and every one of you for being here tonight. I know you probably had other things on your schedule, but democracy requires that you be here. So I appreciate each and every one of you being here tonight. You know, I’ve been serving on the Board of Aldermen for a number of years now. But as a husband and a father of four and a person who grew up in poverty, I understand the challenges that many families across the city face each and every day. As a person and a father, also, and a husband, and a person who lost his brother due to gun violence, I understand the toll that gun violence plays on the family. And as a legislator, I’ve had an opportunity to create jobs and opportunities for people all over the city. An opportunity to create Business Districts and begin to pass laws to change families, and work to strengthen our public education system. But there’s still more work to be done. That’s why I’m running for mayor. I think St. Louis’ best days are ahead of us. Oftentimes they talk about the 1904 World’s Fair. That’s in our rearview mirror. Our best days are ahead of us. I’m looking forward to serving as your next Mayor of the City of St. Louis.

*Ruth Ezell:* Okay, we’re going to begin now with questions from our panelists. We’d like to welcome *Jason Rosenbaum* and *Rachel Lippmann* of St. Louis Public Radio and *Rebecca Rivas* of the *St. Louis American*. Now, the questions in general are going to focus on areas of concern that were raised in the 2015 report of the Ferguson Commission. Some of the questions are going to be directed at all of the
candidates; some of the questions will be directed at specific candidates. You will each have one minute to respond to the questions. And the first question comes from Rebecca Rivas.

Rebecca Rivas: Thank you, Ruth. This question is for all the candidates. We’re going to start with Andrew Jones. The Forward Through Ferguson Report places a lot of importance on using a racial equity lens. What is your understanding of a racial equity lens? As part of your response, please reflect on the privileges that you have been granted throughout your life and how you believe they have shaped your understanding of the world.

- Andrew Jones: Racial equity lens—I think at some point in the evolution and the progression of our society, we have to start at ground zero. I believe that most of the things that take place in this world at this particular point of time—particularly when you look at the fact that I am a constitutionalist; I look at human dynamics; I look at human distribution of equality across the board—and I don’t look at it through a special lens to provide any special provisions for any particular group at some particular point in time. We have to maintain a zero-tolerance for anything that’s inequitable, but certainly, I have benefited from the hard work of all citizens within the United States of America. There were laws called NINA laws—“No Irish Need Apply.” There were laws across the board for all types of immigrants and people who have come here lawfully and been full participants within our system, and they have benefited just like I have benefited from the hard work of African-Americans and every identifiable group here in the United States of America. My leadership will be based on equitable treatment for all human beings.

- Lyda Krewson: Thanks so much. I think I heard about three questions in there. The first one is, “What’s racial equity mean?” The second one is, “What privileges have I had?” And what is the third part of that question?

Rebecca Rivas: How do you believe they have shaped your understanding of the world?

- Lyda Krewson: Okay. Thank you. Well, certainly, racial equity is the concept that you would not be able to predict the outcome of health disparities or educational disparities or jobs based on someone’s race. And so racial equity is doing what is needed to level the playing field among all folks who have not traditionally had the same privileges that, frankly, I have had being born white. There is no doubt that in this country, over the last century and a half, it has certainly been an advantage to have been born white. It has also been an advantage to have been able to own properties. White people could own properties forever. And that has not been true of African-Americans. So certainly there have been many privileges attributed to me because I was born white. And I think that what we have to do as a city and, frankly, as a nation, is to level the playing field—to give the folks that have not had the opportunities that I have had a higher step, if you will, in order to make those outcomes not be predictable by race.

- Jeffrey Boyd: My understanding of a racial equity lens is everyone being treated fairly and equitably, and not looking at race as a major factor to make sure that we have a level playing field. Actually, I’m sorry, you do get race as a major factor when you are making decisions and policies that affect individuals’ quality of life. I have a unique set of experiences. I had an opportunity to serve my country for 23 years, and in the United States Army, we had to work together as a team. And it didn’t matter what race you were. It didn’t matter what ethnicity you were. The bottom line was, we had a job to do. And so it framed, for me, the conversation and the tenacity and the leadership that says, “Look: we’re all part of the same game. We’re all working to achieve a certain goal and a certain quality of life.” And so I’ve appreciated the opportunity I’ve had to serve my country with black, white, Latino, Hispanic, and different ethnic
groups and different racial groups, so that I have a deeper understanding of when you look at making policies and decisions based on a racial equity lens, that we can all win. And that’s what I’m looking forward to, and making policies based on that.

- **Tishaura Jones:** Yes, thank you for that question. Looking at all policies and procedures through a racial equity lens is the central part of my platform. And it’s also things that I’ve been doing in the Treasurer’s Office over the past several years. In my attempt to reduce the racial wealth gap by providing financial empowerment services to all citizens, and also by providing children’s savings accounts to children in public schools, because research shows that children with college savings accounts are three times more likely to go to college, and four times more likely to complete college. So always looking at all of our policies and procedures through that lens, and making sure that we are championing policies that lift all the boats in the tide. And my opinion is operating through a racial equity lens.

- **Antonio French:** Thank you. You know, over our history both as a city and a country, very often decisions have been made in government that have had disproportionate negative effects on African-Americans and people of color. As we have made progress over the years, one way of thinking was to say—and this was people who thought themselves progressive—saying that “I don’t see color. I see people as without color, and I make decisions based on that.” And what we know is that that is not any better—that you do have to see color. You do have to see how these decisions affect people and different communities. And so racial equity to me means making sure the decisions that we make in our city affect African-American communities, white communities, immigrant communities, foreign-born communities in fair and equal ways, and making sure that we are not causing negative effects. Now, I’ll add to that too that while the idea of the racial equity lens is now a popular thought, I would move beyond that in that we also need to look at class. That is something that we don’t think about very much in St. Louis, but it is just as divisive in our community. And so even among the African-American community, there are class divisions that we also must take into account.

- **Lewis Reed:** Well, thanks, Rebecca, for that question. You know, I think this is a major issue in the City of St. Louis. And it should be factored into everything that we do. I think we need to adopt a policy—not just the City, but also the business community—to begin looking at things through a racial equity lens. And here’s the point: if I’ve been starving all night, and you have eaten all night, and we come to the table and we want to split a loaf of bread, is it fair that we split that loaf of bread in half? It is not fair. It’s inherently unfair. So when we look through a racial equity lens, it gives us the opportunity to account for some of those things. And I think that St. Louis, we’re stronger—we obviously would be a stronger city because of it. And I think that through a more unified city, a city that’s more blended, a city that values all of its citizens—no matter where they come from, what their background is, what their race, gender, or anything is—we end up being a stronger city.

**Jason Rosenbaum:** All right. I will ask the next question, and it’s to all the candidates. One of the things I’ll never forget as a reporter is hearing the Reverend Starsky Wilson’s final speech at the final Ferguson Commission, where he said—and I’m paraphrasing here—“Tonight we eat burgers, not steaks.” That was a reference, perhaps, to the fact that the Ferguson Report has recommendations that need to be followed through at the state and federal level to be successful. How will you seek cooperation and work with others to check off those action items? I will start with Antonio French.

- **Antonio French:** All right, thank you. So let me say that we’ve had a lot of plans over the years. And we make a lot of suggestions about what we need to do as a region. It is difficult to implement these things, and that’s where the skill—that’s where the experience comes into play. In order to get a majority of a body—be it the Board of Aldermen, the State Legislature—
approve legislation that—in their mind—only improves the quality of life for a minority—is very difficult. And so what I’ve had to do over the years is work from a minority position to make sure we are passing legislation down there and always advocating on behalf of communities that don’t often have a seat at the table. I’m not always successful. Many times I lose. I tell you, one big vote is about the Paul McKee project. That project obviously no one looked at through a racial equity lens. When we start talking about latest proposals for stadium funding, $105 million for Scott Trade Center instead of going to the needs of the city—no one’s looking at that through a racial equity lens. But it is incumbent on people at these legislative levels and the mayor to fight on behalf of those issues.

- **Tishaura Jones:** Yes, thank you. Already in the Treasurer’s Office we’ve implemented three of the Calls to Action in the Ferguson Commission Report through expanding financial empowerment centers, our children’s savings program, and also funding the update of the North-South MetroLink study. And it’s incumbent upon the next mayor to have relationships at the state level. I am a former legislator and have great relationships on both sides of the aisle, especially with the Speaker and the Speaker Pro-Tempore and others statewide. But it’s also important to have relationships with other national organizations, because sometimes you can’t get anything done at the federal level, and it may take public-private partnerships in order to make that happen—so other organizations that fall within the same line of some of the things that are being recommended through the Ferguson Commission Report.

- **Andrew Jones:** History is replete with commissions. The Kerner Commission. Plenty of commissions. But today, we still hear laments about racial inequity. Historically, when people get better by developing their human capital, that’s when people turn around. We are moving in that trajectory, but I submit to each and every one of you that if we keep our eye off of the ball by focusing on things that do not move people toward developing their human capital so that they can be gainfully employed, people at that point don’t have time to worry about race when they can take their child to the zoo and do other things. This is a misnomer to a large degree. I would submit to anyone there and have extensive conversation about it. We need to focus on developing human capital, workforce development—we have peripheral, wraparound types of agencies; everything that you can think of in our country to move us forward. We’re doing a fantastic job at that, and we’re going to only get better. But we have to stay focused.

- **Lewis Reed:** Well, first you have to use the power that you have. As a mayor, you have the ability to issue executive orders. So the first thing you do is issue an executive order and begin changing your departments within city government. The second thing that you do is you reach out to the business community, because part of Forward Through Ferguson isn’t just government changing, but it’s also the business community changing. So you work to begin changing people within the business community. Then you take that and begin to build a coalition to address our state legislators. I don’t think that if we go up there flat-footed and say, “Hey, you know, can you adopt this report and put some things in play?”—we’re not going to be successful. We have to find our partners that are out there that will work with us, and we can do it by partnering with our business community—many of whom probably have friends within our House and our Senate.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Yes. In order to be successful at the state and federal level, I believe that we have to have great relationships. Success is built on relationships. I want to make sure as mayor that I have a great relationship with the governor and the state legislature’s leadership. I want to invite them to my neighborhood—neighborhoods that are distressed that look like mine, so that I can help them humanize our community. I represent a community where people feel that they have no value because there’s been a tremendous amount of disinvestment in our neighborhood. And I think that if I get an opportunity as mayor to bring that leadership to the
City of St. Louis, give them a tour of our community and show them the slum and the blight in the distressed neighborhoods, and help them understand that, number one, remind them: the City of St. Louis is an economic engine for this state. So goes St. Louis, so goes the State of Missouri. And the power of relationships is paramount. I want to make sure that I do everything within my power to connect with our leadership to get them to come here and be part of the St. Louis experience. The only way people can understand what’s going on in a community is to be within and part of our community.

- **Lyda Krewson**: Thank you, Jason. Thanks for that question. I will just say right now that I’m actually very, very worried about what is coming out at the federal level and at the state level, and what impact that is going to have on cities all across this nation. And of course, that means St. Louis as well. So I’m very concerned about that. I agree with some of the others that it is based on relationships, but let’s just think about where the funding comes from here for—policing. There should be and there are some federal and state dollars in policing. In health—our health department. In housing. In education. Private foundations through the Resilient Cities. I think it’s very concerning—we see that the state budget is being slashed, education is being slashed, particularly higher education. So I look forward—if I am lucky enough to be the mayor—to working with both the governor of the state, but also with our senators and our representatives to the federal government in order to try to bring those dollars back to St. Louis for all of us. Thank you.

**Rachel Lippmann**: All right, thank you. Next question is also for everyone. The new mayor will inherit a budget deficit that will total probably at least $20 million, and the budget must be balanced by July 1st. How do you propose to balance the budget? I’ll direct this question first to Lewis Reed.

- **Lewis Reed**: Well, the first thing I think we need to do is start out with zero-based budgeting and begin to go through every single department to identify those absolute critical needs, and begin to build the budget like that. I also would work with the Budget Director and take a look at his projections to see if indeed there’s any room to play within those projections, and if other things are going to be at play throughout the year that would allow higher revenue coming in.

- **Jeffrey Boyd**: Yes, well, first thing we need to think about is, what opportunities exist in our community for new revenues? What business entities are existing out there that we can attract to the City of St. Louis that would add to our general revenue budget? Also, what I want to do is I want to drill down on every department in the City of St. Louis, and make sure they are working effectively and efficiently. I want to know: what are their strengths, and what are their weaknesses? And I want to make sure that we take our strengths and maximize that in a way that minimizes our weaknesses. There’s a lot of opportunities right with this city government. We are not operating at an efficient level, and there are a lot of cost savings, and I want to drill down and find where the money is so that we can reallocate monies that deliver the best quality city services that we all deserve as citizens of the City of St. Louis.

- **Lyda Krewson**: Thank you. You never want to start out the year with a deficit, of course, and the City is required to have a balanced budget. But while $20 million does sound like a lot of money—and it is a lot of money—it is two percent of the City’s overall budget. The City’s budget is about $1 billion. About half of that is the airport and the Water Division, and about half of it is what we call general revenue. So that’s the services that you think about when you think of the City: patching potholes, paving streets, police, fire, correction, all of those things. So two percent is a manageable number. I think we do have to align our budget with our priorities. And we need to audit some of these departments. We need to figure out, what can we do without? And really, the solution to this is to grow our revenue. The solution always—it’s very hard to cut your way to profitability. We have to create a city that has new jobs in it, that has new construction.
We have some good opportunities before us, particularly with NGA, which will be coming online in a few years—and that’ll be a $1.75 billion construction project. So: growing revenue.

- **Antonio French:** Thank you. So I’ve sat on the Budget Committee now for eight years. So let me first say that that projection about a $20 million shortfall is based on third-quarter numbers, so we hope that it will not be that big based on fourth-quarter numbers. We have a sales tax increase that’s going to be on the ballot in April. I support this idea. It’s being sold as a MetroLink sales tax increase. I don’t think it is going to be enough to actually pay for MetroLink. But when you raise the sales tax, you also raise the use tax. The use tax money will give us an additional $4 million per year. Now, there’s a proposal that will also be on the ballot to send that money to a stadium—a soccer stadium. I oppose that. I mean, that money needs to go towards what it’s intended for. That money goes toward affordable housing, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, police, demolition of vacant buildings, and it can be possibly used—if there is an emergency case, we can use some of that money to fill our budget gap. But the last thing we need to do be doing is cutting City services, especially at a time when our neighborhoods are suffering. When the quality of life in our communities is suffering, we don’t need to be cutting those City services.

- **Tishaura Jones:** Yes. Everything needs to be on the table. Everything. But that also means, let’s meet with all of the citywide elected officials and see where we can combine our efforts. Because currently, we have several different IT departments, several of the same duplicative services that we all offer through our respective departments. And let’s see where we can combine our efforts there. Also: we can’t abate our way to prosperity. We have given away over $700 million in TIFs and tax abatements over the last 15 years, and that, I believe, has been a key factor as to why we’re looking at a potential $20 million budget shortfall now. And we have to take a look at all of our sources of revenue. When I got into the Treasurer’s Office, our laws hadn’t been updated since the 1960s. So I imagine that other City code looks just like that. So we have to take a look at where our revenue’s coming from and where we can make changes.

- **Andrew Jones:** There are always quantitative tools to be able to assess where we are budget-wise. And certainly we’re looking at driving efficiencies and effectiveness of the various departments. But I think we can’t escape the number that Tishaura just mentioned: the $750 million. We’re also looking at other fiduciary lack of experience and lack of responsibility in extending money and funding for projects and programs that certainly made no sense whatsoever from the Aldermanic Board. When you extend $16 million for a stadium for football that we had no control over coming back—that closes that gap by 4 percent. We have other ways to be able to do that with forensic auditing, things of that nature. But certainly, we have to look at fiduciary spending and accountability on that end—that we’re not wasting taxpayers’ money with frivolous initiatives.

**Ruth Ezell:** Thank you very much. We’re going to move on to the next area: justice. I believe, Rachel, you’ve got that question.

**Rachel Lippmann:** I do, thank you. This question is going to be directed to everyone. While none of the candidates up here yet have received their endorsement, the Ethical Society of Police, which is a union made up largely of black officers, has called repeatedly for Mayor Slay to fire the Chief, Sam Dodson. What is your view of their complaints of corruption, racism, and cronyism under Chief Dodson’s administration? And will you retain the Chief? I’ll direct this question to you first, Antonio.

- **Antonio French:** Yes. So yeah, I’ve publicly called—over two years now—for Chief Dodson to be fired. And if selected as mayor, I will fire Chief Dodson on Day One. We need a new police chief in this city. We need a new direction in the Police Department. We need somebody who
understands the importance of rebuilding this relationship with the community. We need somebody who has built trust, both with his own officers—his African-American officers and the white officers, frankly, who are also tired of him anyway. We need a fresh start. And we need to open it up for the first time to a national search, not be bound to anyone who is married to this old way of thinking in the Police Department. We need to open it up to get the very best, somebody who has experience dealing with a city the size of St. Louis, has experience dropping crime rates, and has experience maintaining this relationship that we have to rebuild with the community. Especially if we hope to start dropping this rate of unsolved homicides. A lot of that comes out of this broken relationship. So, yeah, we definitely need a new police chief. And in fact, the Ethical Society used the Civilian Oversight Board—which I created through my legislation—to issue a complaint this week.

- **Tishaura Jones:** Yes. Absolutely. And also, we need to fire Jeff Roorda from the POA [Police Officers’ Association]. But not only that—we also need a new Public Safety Director who has experience in reducing urban crime in cities of our size, and using all resources at the state, federal, and local level to do so. And then we—again, as we talked about looking at everything through a racial equity lens—we absolutely need to look at all of our public safety departments through a racial equity lens. That’s police, that’s the Fire Department, and the Corrections Department. And that will happen if I am elected mayor.

- **Andrew Jones:** I am proud to say that I am not a politician. Because in my work, I would have to make a thorough assessment on whether or not there is some level of incompetence, or that there’s something that he’s doing—some malfeasance; things of that nature. I certainly don’t have information in that regard, so certainly we would do an assessment. But the old saying applies, I believe, when you talk about how the fish rots from the head down. Now, we can talk about peripheral responsibility with others. But I believe the Mayor of the City of St. Louis has sat by and allowed most of the things to happen, because he’s in leadership. Everything starts with leadership. And I am definitely responsible if I am in charge of a department—and I’m in charge of multiple departments to take responsibility and to lead. He certainly couldn’t conduct himself that way. Roorda couldn’t talk to any personnel that I have in the manner that he’s talked to people. It’s about leadership, and leadership only. And if it’s devoid, you have most of the problems that we have in the city at this particular point in time: a vacuum of leadership across the board.

- **Lyda Krewson:** Certainly, 188 murders last year and 188 murders the year before is a heartbreaking number, I think, for all of us. What I think about when I think of the 376 families—that’s 10 or 20 or 30 people in each family whose lives are changed forever. And the number is important, but those people whose lives have been changed are the most important. Violent crime in our city is up. That’s just a fact. And I hope I don’t turn on the news or read in the paper again that crime is down. Because crime, if you add up all of the charges, may be down—but you cannot consider your license tabs being stolen the same as a murder of someone. So whoever the next Chief is will have to be on board with my public safety plan, or they won’t be the next Chief.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Yes. Well, certainly, leadership starts at the top. And the way the Chief has been operating is based on who reports to the Mayor and the current Public Safety Director. If I become mayor, what I want to do—because he’s a civil service employee, and I cannot go in and just fire him—I want to have a realistic conversation with him. “Do you really think that you can reduce crime? Do you really think that you can increase the quality of life of people in the City of St. Louis?” And if he cannot convince me of that, then I would ask him to consider seeking employment somewhere else. Crime is the highest priority. It’s out of control in the City of St. Louis. And we need to make sure that we have a leader in place as a Police Chief that’s going to
do something serious, make a serious impact on crime. We must bring crime down and make people feel safe. Otherwise, we’ll continue to have people exiting the City of St. Louis. As far as investigation and the complaint—I feel—and I would, on Day One, make sure that I listen to the complaint of the Ethical Society and have a full investigation done to see where we stand with those complaints, and make the appropriate action to make sure we resolve those issues.

- **Lewis Reed**: All right, thanks. You know, sometimes at these forums, it would be good if I didn’t know and understand the government, and understand how these things work, and how you can move, and what your powers are. It would be easy to say I’m just going to fire the Chief on Day One, because everybody cheers, because you’re like, “Wow, that’s good.” But the reality is that you really can’t do that. There’s some things that you can begin doing to begin changing that, but Day One—without seeing the personnel files and everything else—the Chief will win the lawsuit, and we’ll be left holding the bag and making him a millionaire. That’s just the way it works. But—has he done a good job? From my view, not seeing all the records and stuff, absolutely not. Is there room for improvement? Absolutely. When we have 188 murders, 188 murders, and then 170-some-odd murders, that’s a problem. When we move to these super-districts across town, which takes us away from the COPS [Community Oriented Policing Services] program of more community-based policing—now the police officers are bouncing around, and they never even have a relationship with our community. Seventy percent of our murders are left unsolved annually. That’s a problem.

**Rachel Lippmann**: Lyda Krewson, this is a follow-up question for you. Last week you demanded that the St. Louis Police Officers Association fire Jeff Roorda for his attack on a fellow candidate on Facebook. The union has ignored that call. As far as I know, Jeff Roorda remains an employee of the St. Louis Police Officers Association. Do you accept the endorsement in that race based on your call to fire Jeff Roorda?

- **Lyda Krewson**: Thank you for that question. If you follow me on Twitter or Facebook, you know what I said last week, which is that Jeff Roorda’s comments were vile, despicable, incendiary—I think I had a few other adjectives—and that I did not think he represents the men and women of the St. Louis Police Department well at all. And I did call on the union to fire Jeff Roorda. Jeff Roorda is a hired hand. He does not work for the City; he works for the union. I think they ought to take my recommendation, quite frankly. However, that will not cause me to not stand—that let me say it in the reverse. I will continue to stand with the 1200 men and women of the St. Louis Police Department who put on a vest every day, who respond to our calls for service, and I’m not going to not stand with those officers.

**Rachel Lippmann**: To follow up on that, if you believe that they are the voice of the City and they are remaining with Jeff Roorda as their spokesperson, does that then—is that a union that you still want to stand with?

- **Lyda Krewson**: I’m not going to negotiate with Jeff Roorda. The 1200 men and women of the St. Louis Police Department did not get to pick Jeff Roorda. So they’re out there doing their job every single day. I think it would be advisable for them, frankly, to also call on the leadership of their union to change their administrative person. I would advise them to do that. But that, of course, is up to them. I also want to point out one other thing: that I think any mayor who believes that they can reduce crime without working with the police department is sadly mistaken. We’ve got to have a good relationship with the men and women in the St. Louis Police Department.

**Rachel Lippmann**: Thank you. Rebecca, I believe you had some follow-up questions.
Rebecca Rivas: Yeah, I just wanted to follow up on Rachel’s original question. A few of you mentioned the Ethical Society’s complaints in your responses. I just wanted a quick show of hands. Could you raise your hand if you actually read the Ethical Society Report that was released last year? [Antonio French, Lyda Krewson, and Tishaura Jones raise their hands.]

Thank you.

Jason Rosenbaum: The next question is specifically for Lewis Reed. You told both Rachel and I on the Politically Speaking podcast that’s on St. Louis Public Radio that you want to “look how we’re measuring our officers.” What metrics do you believe define officer success?

- Lewis Reed: Well, one of the things—right now, we grade our officers based on arrest, and based on all these other things. But it’s clear that if we do not have our officers connected to our community, so the community begins working with them to get to the bottom of some of the crimes and murders that are happening across our city, we’re not going to see the ultimate success. So I think that we need to begin measuring them based on their relationships and how they’re building relationships with the neighborhoods across the City of St. Louis. And what has been the outgrowth of that? Has that helped them get to the bottom of some of the open murders across the city, so that we see crime dropping? Does that—has that helped them get to the bottom of some of the drugs and everything else that is happening throughout communities across the City of St. Louis? And we begin measuring them based on that and based on the relationships that they have.

Rebecca Rivas: Okay, this question is Antonio French’s question. You’ve spoken of cameras as an important crime-fighting tool. But there are concerns that rather than fighting crime, cameras simply put more surveillance into already over-policed communities. How do you balance their use with civil rights concerns?

- Antonio French: Yeah, I understand that. Listen, we have to drop the rate of homicide in the City of St. Louis. And what happens is that in the areas where people shop and tourists go, there’s cameras everywhere. In the areas of town where people get murdered, there’s no cameras. And that doesn’t make sense to me. And so when we installed surveillance cameras, the first program of its kind in the city, that—along with other tools we used—we dropped homicides by 80 percent. My ward, when I came into office, was the highest rate of homicide in the city. And we dropped that by 80 percent in 24 months. Number one, working with a police chief who actually knew what he was doing: Chief Isom. Number two, rebuilding trust with the community and giving hope to neighborhoods that had, for too long, felt like no one cared about those communities. And then, through support, implementing technologies to help be a witness when people were afraid to come forward. And so we have to start catching these guys who are committing the homicides and getting them off the streets. Right now, 60 percent of homicides in the City of St. Louis are unsolved. So when we let people get away with murder, guess what? They kill again.

Jason Rosenbaum: The next question is for Tishaura Jones. Decarceration, or removing people from prisons, will require the cooperation of the Circuit Attorney. Have you spoken to Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner about the role she can play in relationship with the next Mayor? If you think this is a good idea, what support will you provide as Mayor to her efforts at diversion?

- Tishaura Jones: Yes, I—we’ve been tough on crime for years. But what I’m proposing is being smart on crime. Being smart on crime means we stop arresting people for being poor, for being
minority, for being sick, or being on drugs. And absolutely I have spoken with the new Circuit Attorney. We discussed some ideas that I had when I did an op-ed about this several months ago, just to make sure she was on board with the things I was suggesting before I wrote them. And I do believe that there is an opportunity there to work together to help decarcerate and stop criminalizing people that I mentioned in those categories.

Rachel Lippmann: Thank you. Andrew Jones, this question is for you. On your website, you express support for the broken windows theory of policing. How do you define broken windows, and how would you want to see it practiced in the City of St. Louis?

- Andrew Jones: Broken windows by James Q. Wilson is a methodology to clean up neighborhoods so that people will build up their self-esteem in those particular neighborhoods, and they will be more engaged as citizens. And part of our platform is civic excellence. But when we go back—and that is a peripheral thing; that’s proactive policing—when I’m hearing that we’re being tough on criminals, we’re not being tough on criminals. I’ve disclosed before about 80 percent of the violent crimes in the City of St. Louis are committed by a very small group of people. This very small group of people are connected with narcotics. But one thing that I did in my outside investigation is to determine, “What is the Narcotics Division doing within the City of St. Louis?” We don’t have a Narcotics Division. We don’t have a Vice Division. So I’m an outsider, and I’ve figured this out, that you can’t do anything about these violent crimes from a very small group of people. The police feel like they’re handicapped; they can’t do anything about it because leadership won’t be behind them. And it’s all connected to narcotics. If we get this solved—and I’m saying we can solve it relatively soon—we can start working on the James Q. Wilson’s broken windows concepts.

Rachel Lippmann: Some of the criticisms that have come out about broken windows in the way that it is has been practiced is that it is simply a high-arrest program, and it’s [inaudible] less of a partnership. How will you ensure that it’s practiced in the spirit in which both Dr. Kelling and Dr. Wilson intended, rather than simply arresting individuals for narcotics?

- Andrew Jones: Well, what happened with the Supreme Court—they got on the New York Police Department about stop-and-frisk—unconstitutional. But there are ways to constitutionally stop-and-frisk. The police department there avoided stop-and-frisk. But there are constitutional ways to do this, and the methodology works. But if you are a person that is living in the North Side of St. Louis and you’re held prisoner there because no one’s doing anything about those people perpetrating crimes against them, I would ask for you to change positions with them. Those people suffer because they are held prisoner because of this very small, eclectic group who take them as prisoners and utilize them, and our police don’t do anything about it. But there are constitutional ways to get around that, so that we can also treat people decently, and not have them to be put upon.

[Response from Lewis Reed:]

- Lewis Reed: Yes. Even if you can find a constitutional way to get around it, that’s not something you would want to get around. Because—if part of the Forward Through Ferguson report is this whole notion of profiling and equity and things of that nature—and you know, I’m a father of four. I have two young sons that are—well, they’re 18 and 20 now, so they may be older than most of the people—some of the folks here, but still—when they leave the house every night, I worry about them coming home and making it back safe. But still, I don’t want them to fall victim because they’re being profiled, just because of who they are. And I think that therein lies the problem.
Andrew Jones: Do I have a response?

Rachel Lippmann: We’ll give you about 20 seconds to respond.

Andrew Jones: Again, when we’re talking about a constitutional way, I’m talking about within the means of expanding humanity. We’re not talking about beating people up or using profiling to badger people. We’re talking about using methodology to get criminals out of the street from harassing law-abiding citizens in those particular areas.

Lewis Reed: And I understand—

Rachel Lippmann: Are there any other candidates who would like to respond to Mr. Jones—to the statements that Mr. Jones has made? You can have about 20-30 seconds. I see Antonio over there who would like to respond.

Antonio French: Yeah. Listen. The only way we’re going to make these communities that he is talking about in the abstract—that I actually live in—the communities—the only way we’re going to make these communities safer is to rebuild this relationship between that community and the Police Department. And stopping people at random and humiliating them on the street is not a way to rebuild that broken trust.

Tishaura Jones: And we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. We need to focus on prevention methods and focused deterrence methods. Just as Mr. Jones said, they’re a small percentage of people that are committing most of the crime—then we focus on prevention methods for that population, and make sure that we’re providing the things that they need, so they can—so we can deter them from future crime.

Jeffrey Boyd: Yes. I certainly want to say that I wouldn’t support that method of making people feel safe. I live in a neighborhood where constantly young people tell me they’re being harassed by the police. And they’re just walking down the street. They’re just sitting on their porch. And that’s unacceptable behavior. And that’s what creates the divide that we have with citizens and police. And we just cannot do that. That is a fraught logic that I couldn’t possibly support knowing all the complaints that I get in my own community from the young people in my community. Because everybody that has dreadlocks and jeans and a white t-shirt is not a criminal.

Lyda Krewson: Thank you for the question. Certainly stop-and-frisk has been proven to be unconstitutional. This is not a methodology that we should employ. Two quick points: One is certainly there is a frayed, strained, broken, whatever your adjective is between many of our communities and the Police Department. And frankly, I think one of the solutions to that—part of the solution to that—is better training for our Police Department. Implicit bias training for every single officer, not just new officers. And I don’t mean two hours on a Wednesday morning. Thank you.

Rebecca Rivas: This question is for Lyda Krewson. On your website, you promise that you will find a way to fund your $34 million anti-crime plan. Please be specific: what ideas are you considering? Where will you find the additional revenue, or where will you cut expenses?

Lyda Krewson: Thank you for that question. Well, the Neighborhood Safety Plan that I have on my website—you’re welcome to look at it, lydakrewson.com—has, really, two parts to it. One part is prevention. Prevention means more recreation programs, more money for recreation. It means after-school jobs for kids. Summer jobs for young people. It means alternative dispute resolution. It means alternative sentencing. Let’s not take a young person who makes a mistake
and send them to jail and make them a better criminal. Let’s redirect that person. The second part of that plan is law enforcement. That means a more diverse police force. It means more police officers. We’re currently over 100 officers short. It means a better-trained police force. It means a better-equipped police force. All of those things do cost money. But I will tell you right now: part of the reason we are short officers is that in the City of St. Louis, our officers start out on Day One making $5,000 less the day they get out of the Academy than they would in St. Louis County. St. Louis County has another measure on the ballot. This gap is going to get wider. We have to find the money within the budget, through public-private partnerships, and through revenue enhancements.

**Ruth Ezell:** All right, I want to thank you. This is the end of our first round of questions from our panelists. We are now going to enter the first of two lightning rounds. The focus is going to be on issues that voters will be facing—they’ll be looking at on the ballot in March and in April. Some of the issues, in fact, have already come up in this discussion. So it would be very easy for you to quickly reiterate your views. We’re just going to go left to right on this.

**Lightning Round 1**

**Ruth Ezell:** How will you vote on the ½ cent sales tax increase for economic development?
- **Antonio French:** Yes, but keeping in mind that all of that money will not go to a MetroLink.
- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Yes, but I do think we should also redistribute the proportions that we’re considering for MetroLink to neighborhoods.
- **Andrew Jones:** No. Poor people can’t afford it.
- **Lyda Krewson:** Yes, but don’t be mistaken: the amount of money that is allocated to MetroLink is not going to be enough to do the match for MetroLink and build North-South, which we need to do.
- **Tishaura Jones:** No. I think we need to go back to the drawing board and come up with another proposal.
- **Lewis Reed:** Yes, absolutely—because we need a North-South MetroLink, and we need it to grow.

**Ruth Ezell:** Public funding for a major-league soccer stadium?
- **Antonio French:** No.
- **Jeffrey Boyd:** I don’t have enough data. I want to make sure that it actually creates jobs and brings revenue to the City—gives pay raises, delivers City services more effectively. And is it part of our overall strategic plan?
- **Andrew Jones:** MLS soccer has not turned a profit in 21 years of its existence. It should have never gone past the first person’s desk. No.
- **Lyda Krewson:** I think it’d be great to have MLS soccer, but I don’t think the City ought to own the soccer stadium.
- **Tishaura Jones:** No. We have 99 problems and soccer ain’t one.
- **Lewis Reed:** We have 99 problems and soccer ain’t one.

**Ruth Ezell:** New restrictions on payday lenders: will you vote yes or no?
- **Antonio French:** I’m going to vote no on that one, and I’ll tell you why. I don’t think it’s fair that we make that business ten times more expensive than liquor stores and real nuisance businesses in our neighborhoods. So I think that’s too high.
• **Jeffrey Boyd**: Yes. They are predatory lenders.
• **Andrew Jones**: No. Free market: they have an opportunity to conduct business.
• **Lyda Krewson**: Yes. I think we have way too many payday lenders. I don’t really like the $5,000 fee for a payday lender, because I wonder where that goes next. Does it next go to a business that you don’t like? But I will vote for it.
• **Tishaura Jones**: Absolutely. We need to get rid of payday lenders.
• **Lewis Reed**: Absolutely. But I think we’re going to be challenged. We may lose in court because of what Mr. French said over there.

**Ruth Ezell**: **Consolidating the Recorder of Deeds and Assessor’s Office and using the savings for police body cameras. How will you vote?**
• **Antonio French**: No. I think it’s completely dishonest to say that this is about body cameras. This is a political attempt to eliminate the office. We need body cameras, but that is not enough to pay for it. So people have been conned into doing that.
• **Jeffrey Boyd**: Absolutely no. I think it’s a fraud. I reject the fact that a state legislator like Senator Jamilah Nasheed gets on board and dictates to us what we should do instead of coming to talk to us about how we should govern ourselves.
• **Andrew Jones**: No. And if we were taking care of our fiduciary responsibilities, we would have had the money to pay for the cameras.
• **Lyda Krewson**: No, although I think both of those are good subjects to really, seriously consider. They’re not related, and they shouldn’t be in the same question.
• **Tishaura Jones**: No.
• **Lewis Reed**: Absolutely not, because it does not cover the cost of body cameras. It’s a ruse.

**Round 2**

**Jason Rosenbaum**: This goes to the four members of the Board of Aldermen. In the spring, voters will decide whether or not they want to use public funds to build a major league soccer stadium, and part of the stadium’s funding source dips from the same tax revenue used to fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Affordable housing advocates say that if the stadium initiative passes, there is no chance that the funding for affordable housing will increase or even be funded at its minimum level of $5 million annually. So for the four aldermen: please explain why you voted for or against the Board Bill that established the funding structure for the stadium, and how will your decision impact affordable housing opportunities?

• **Jeffrey Boyd**: Boy, that’s a good question. I don’t remember that finance package affecting affordable housing. If that got by me, I absolutely oppose that. For too long, for many years, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund has been shortened by the current administration. I believe we’re $2 million in the hole based on what they extracted from it by not funding it fully at $5 million. So if that’s part of the deal, I would absolutely be opposed to that particular bill. But that was not part of my understanding, that it would negatively impact the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
• **Lyda Krewson**: It does not need to negatively impact the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Frankly, the use tax, which is the source of revenue that this is coming from, has plenty of money in it to fully fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. We have been using it for other things. But this new piece of use tax is unrelated to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. We ought to fully fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and frankly, we ought to spend all the money every year that we budget there, because we don’t do that.
• **Antonio French**: I voted no, because I was fully aware that the money that the stadium would be using would normally go towards the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, demolition of vacant buildings, and the Police Department. And so it is a slap in the face for people who need better housing in the city, who rely on the Housing Trust Fund that we have not fully funded—and we’re going to take that money and give it to millionaires to build a soccer stadium at the same time we are closing a homeless shelter downtown. It makes no sense to me. I think it’s immoral, and we need to get our priorities straight down in City Hall.

• **Lewis Reed**: It will not dip into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The way the funding structure is set up there, like Alderwoman Krewson stated a little bit earlier, we have enough money in the fund to fully fund it. So it does not impact the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

*Jason Rosenbaum: Just to be clear, can you raise your hand if you voted to put the stadium measure on the ballot?*

[Jeffrey Boyd, Lyda Krewson, and Lewis Reed raise their hands.]

*Jason Rosenbaum: And raise your hand if you didn’t.*

[Antonio French raises his hand.]

*Jason Rosenbaum: I’d like to get the other two candidates’ say on this entire stadium situation.*

• **Tishaura Jones**: I have been consistently against using public funding for stadiums, and if I were on the Board, I would have voted no.

• **Andrew Jones**: Well, previously I mentioned that the MLS has not turned a profit. They utilize cities to get funds and raise capital. They did that. I sit on the Economic Development Commission for the City of Edwardsville and other commissions. And they tried it at the City of Edwardsville eight years ago. If the project doesn’t work, if it doesn’t pass muster with conventional financing, the economic development policy should be to pass it on and tell them to get their financing together. The project doesn’t make any sense, but we’re entertaining this stuff. And then we’re saying we’re broke.

*Rebecca Rivas: If you look at tax incentives through a racial equity lens, the barometer for success is whether or not these incentives have created a more inclusive and equitable city. Please critique yourselves on the tax incentive projects that you have been involved in or publicly supported or opposed. For aldermen, please talk about the board bills that you have written for TIFs and tax abatements. Again, the barometer is whether or not the incentives have encouraged gentrification and a stronger divide between the haves and have-nots.*

• **Jeffrey Boyd**: I am proud of my use in my community with tax abatement, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and historic tax credits on a state and federal level. We did a $34 million housing project in my neighborhood to bring affordable housing against all odds. I was told that it would never be done for 15 or 20 years. But we bundled these tax incentives together to create a $34 million housing development that has 112 new residential units and 7,500 square feet of commercial space between Martin Luther King, Cote Brillian te, Clara, and Burd Avenue. And we saved Arlington School that had been vacated since 1993. It was pigeon-infested and had drug activity and all kinds of illegal activity going on. They begged me to tear that building down, but I resisted, because I had hope and a vision that one day a developer would come and rehabilitate that school. And we have 22 loft apartments in that school as a model of what they’ve done in the Central West End and in the southern parts of the City of St. Louis. I am so proud of my use of tax incentives on that project. It gave us great hope in the 22nd Ward and one of the most distressed neighborhoods in our city.
• **Tishaura Jones**: As I said before, we’ve given away over $700 million in TIFs and tax abatements over the last 15 years. I often say that we give it out like Halloween candy. And 85 percent of that went to the Central West End and Downtown, and it’s absolutely led to gentrification of those neighborhoods—because thousands of African-Americans have moved out of those areas and can no longer afford to live in those areas. So going forward, I would support having a citywide plan with community input and attaching community benefit agreements to all large developments so we can make sure that we’re getting a return on our investments for any future developments that take our tax dollars, or when we use tax incentives for those developments. As Treasurer, I have publicly opposed the stadium—all of the stadiums, actually, for the last four years that I’ve been a local elected official.

• **Antonio French**: The largest TIF the City has ever done is this Paul McKee TIF. I’m the only alderman up here who voted against that, primarily because of how that community was treated. So I don’t understand how you can say you view things through a racial equity lens when you support legislation like that, or take money from Paul McKee. What he’s done in that community is a shame. That is development that is destructive, that moves people out, like much of the development that we’ve seen in the Central Corridor and some other areas. We might have seen these areas come up, but what happened to those poor people that used to live there? They don’t live there anymore. They’ve been pushed out. So the kind of development that we have to have in this city is one that includes the people who live in those areas right now, and brings more people in. We need more diverse communities—not just racially diverse, but also economically and class-diverse communities. Too often we think that bringing an area up means pushing people out. I don’t support that.

• **Lyda Krewson**: Tax incentives, whether it’s a TIF or tax abatement, is about half art and about half science. And our objective should be to give the developer as little incentive as possible without killing the project. Because if we kill the project—if the project does not happen—we don’t have those jobs, and we don’t have the development. I want to cite just a couple of projects: The Loop, for example. Fifteen years ago, there was no Pageant; there was no Moonrise Hotel; there was no Pinup Bowl; there was nothing in the Loop. That did have an incentive: ten years of tax abatement. They’re all paying taxes now. It did not displace anyone, because there was no one there. There were no businesses there; there was no one living there. Olive is another great example. So if you think about Olive—the 4300, 4400, 4500 blocks of Olive—there was no one living there 15 years ago. Those were projects that were tax abated. That would be the Field School, the Lister Building, 4448 Olive. There were no people displaced there, because it was all vacant, boarded up, with some ceilings and roofs falling in. And so I think that was a very good use of tax abatement in both of those locations.

**Rebecca Rivas**: I just wanted to follow up with a couple of the tax abatements that you have, in your past—some of them were just for individual homes. Do you feel that at all causes gentrification? Or what are the impacts of just having the tax abatement on an individual home that’s in a well-to-do area?

• **Lyda Krewson**: Yeah, I actually don’t think I have tax abated an individual home in the 28th Ward. I’d have to think back over 19 years. But that would be a very rare situation. It would have to be a house—I can think of one house now: the back was off of the house; the garage had fallen down. There are exceptions to this. And I tell you what: if you live on a block with vacant properties, there is nothing worse than having vacant homes unoccupied on your block. So nothing good happens in a vacant building. But by and large, the tax abatement that has been used has been used because the property was vacant, and no one was displaced as a result of it.
• **Lewis Reed**: As Alderman of the 6th Ward, I had an opportunity to use tax incentives to rebuild areas like the Gate District. I don’t know if any of you live in the Gate District, but it made a big difference in that area. And one of the things that we did when we went into the area—you can choose to do development *with* a neighborhood or *to* a neighborhood. And we chose to do development *with* the neighborhood. What that meant was that as we came down the block, we worked with individual homeowners who had lived in their homes forever, and made sure that they could take part in the coming up of the area. And it allowed them to stay in their home, and then gain the additional value from their home because we have rebuilt the entire neighborhood. So what the Gate District looks like now is one of the most integrated neighborhoods in the City of St. Louis. We have people of all races, nationalities; we have people of all income groups all living in the Gate District together. And it has been a huge success. We could do that all over the city.

• **Andrew Jones**: Well, again, I’m not a politician, but I am an economic development practitioner for multiple cities in Southern Illinois. I think what we’re doing here—we’re mixing tax abatements and TIFs as if they’re one unified policy. There’s a policy for residential application; there’s some merit there. But you’re looking at science—probably 99 percent of it, where you’re dealing with commercial and industrial. Smaller cities that I sit on the economic development commissions and boards with—we do not lead with any tax incentives. We do not have the intermodal properties that the City of St. Louis has: phenomenal infrastructure, a lot of things to attract businesses that want to make money. These cities don’t lead with it. Most practitioners in the best practices don’t lead with incentives. That is a last resort. We want to make sure by doing qualitative analysis that these projects, these initiatives, pass the muster of financial analysis. If they don’t, they should be round filed in the first trash can that you can see. And the city that is financially strapped like the City of St. Louis—we should not lead with financial instruments to attract them here. We have enough to attract them if we clean up the crime.

• **Rachel Lippmann**: A fourth of African-American families in the city spend more than 50 percent of their monthly income on housing. The need for affordable housing in the city is therefore overwhelming. As mayor, if you become mayor, how will you address the issue of affordable housing in the city?

• **Lewis Reed**: Well, the first thing we have to do is establish development zones. Take a look at all the Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) property that the City owns, take a look at our carrying costs, and roll those carrying costs up into a first-time homeowners’ program. When we establish these development zones within our city, we can work to bring renters in, and we can work to bring new homeowners into these development areas, and make sure that there are housing options available from the lowest all the way up to the highest in housing. I think that’s how we begin to make sure that we have areas that are integrated across the City of St. Louis, and we take care of affordable housing all at the same time. One of the things that we cannot do is repeat the problems of the past by continuing to warehouse poor people all within the same area. I think that that’s a problem. But if we do it in a cohesive and a planned manner, we can make a big difference in the lives of people.

• **Andrew Jones**: Again: I’m not a politician, but again, I work in those areas, working with community development corporations in Southern Illinois. What you’re trying to do in that particular region—you’re trying to integrate different stratas of income, class, and things of that nature. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t. But when it does work, it’s because you have a comprehensive plan. And what I need to know and see is the comprehensive plan for community development for the City of St. Louis. Every city that I work with has a comprehensive plan that they stick to the letter, and they know what fits their particular community. I don’t know if we know what fits our community in trying to get people to move
and get into areas where there is affordable housing. It is critical to have affordable housing. But you have to have the right strategic plan so you can have the right mix in order for it to work.

- **Lyda Krewson:** I think certainly there is a need for more high-quality affordable housing in the City of St. Louis—and, frankly, in our region. So we would need to spend more funds on that. There are funds allocated every year to affordable housing that are actually not spent. If you look back historically, the way affordable housing happened during the turn of the century—the 1910s, 1920s, 1930s—it was integrated housing. Mixed-use housing works the best. We don’t need to have all affordable housing in one area. Affordable housing should be mixed into all neighborhoods in the City of St. Louis. That’s the way it was originally developed, and it should be continued to be developed there. There are 25,000 vacant properties in the City of St. Louis. About half of them are owned by LRA. About 7,000 or 8,000 of those are buildings. We’ve got to figure out how to get people back into those LRA buildings that can be rehabbed—perhaps work with the community development housing corporations that already exist, and neighbors and small developers.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Over 25 years ago, my wife and I moved to our distressed neighborhood, and we transformed a four-family flat into a three-family because we were concerned about providing affordable housing for people. So for over 25 years, we’ve been providing affordable housing, and as landlords, we have never increased the rent. And we’ve had tenants as long as 10 and 15 years. But in the City of St. Louis, with thousands and thousands of vacant lots, there’s a great opportunity for us. There’s a great opportunity for us to transform all of our distressed neighborhoods, north and south. We need to package all of these LRA vacant lots and buildings and give developers a chance to bid on them and create mixed-used developments throughout the City of St. Louis. The City of St. Louis has been doing development so backwards. What we do is we wait for developers to hand us a proposal and decide whether we’ll fund it or not. We need to stop doing that. We need to plan our own development for our own success in our communities, and we have to include affordable housing as well as other mixed-income uses. And homeless has to be part of that conversation. So I have a plan I’ve been talking about for all of my campaign, and I look forward to implementing it.

- **Tishaura Jones:** I’m not afraid to say that I agree with a Republican. Mr. Jones was right when he said we don’t have a comprehensive citywide plan for development, and that’s exactly what we need. And it needs to include inclusionary zoning for affordable housing. I would include that on new projects, like the tower that’s going up on Kingshighway and West Pine—that would be nice if there was some affordable housing there. We need to rebuild the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and make sure that we can use those funds as creatively as we can to help small developers. Also: include community benefit agreements in new developments, stop focusing on large developers, and help our small developers get access to properties so they can rebuild and rehab homes.

- **Antonio French:** So the first the thing we need to do is fully fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and as mayor, I pledge that we will fully fund that every year. That has to happen. The second thing is when we give large incentives to developments in the nicer parts of town, the more affluent parts of town, we need to require that it has a certain percentage of affordable units so people can have economic diversity in these areas as we rebuild our city. And lastly, when it comes to LRA buildings, we need to make sure that we are getting these buildings off of our rolls and back into the hands of people who want to rehab these houses and live in them. And if that means giving it to them for $1.00 and also giving them some grants to help them do it, then that’s what we need to do. Because we need to get these buildings back occupied and off our rolls.
**Jason Rosenbaum: Forward Through Ferguson and For The Sake Of All** have called for policies that force developers to include low- and moderate-income housing within development projects with public funds. As mayor, would you move the city toward an inclusionary zoning policy that encourages or requires mixed-income neighborhoods? Why or why not?

- **Andrew Jones:** Well, I think this is a no-brainer. I certainly want to give people an opportunity. You want them to be able to lift themselves up, to be a part of a community where they can benefit just like everyone else within that community. And certainly, when I become mayor, I certainly will look at implementing that type of philosophy, because again—everyone should have an opportunity. I look at it through a human lens, and if we can get people opportunity to move in a particular area and take advantage of all the benefits that come from a growing, vibrant area, they should not be not permitted.

- **Lyda Krewson:** Absolutely. I think that goes to the way I answered the last question, which is that affordable housing ought to be in every neighborhood. All neighborhoods should be mixed-income. Mine as well. And there actually is affordable housing in my neighborhood. I think it’s critical to do that. And I would certainly fully fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and cause that to be a mixed-use neighborhood.

- **Antonio French:** The answer is yes, but I tell you, the problem with the current process is that it is completely developer-driven. The City does not have a strategy, a plan, for what we want to do with this city and how we want to build our neighborhoods. And so what we do is we wait for developers to present these plans, and it often follows campaign contributions as well—that’s where the incentives go. So what we need is a strategy for the entire city to make sure that we are growing our city for the first time in a very long time, and doing so in a way that makes it economically, racially, and class-diverse.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** I think Alderman French just kind of talked about what I wanted to do. I just said it in my past remarks. I think the City of St. Louis needs to take a comprehensive approach to the whole city, look at how we allocate incentives, and find all the opportunities to provide affordable housing and mixed-income housing.

- **Tishaura Jones:** I believe I answered this in my last response. Absolutely. I would include inclusionary zoning in every new project to make sure that we have mixed-income housing and affordable housing in new developments.

- **Lewis Reed:** Absolutely. And I’d also issue an executive order to make sure that each and every department understands that that is the will of that office.

**Rebecca Rivas: The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis recently ranked generational poverty, meaning families in poverty for at least two generations, as the greatest issue affecting low- to moderate-income households. What is your plan to address the growing concern? Which City resources would you leverage to address the issue?**

- **Lyda Krewson:** I think that most all of us know that generational poverty is a very, very serious issue, not just in the City of St. Louis, but in our country. Education, frankly, is the starting point to breaking the cycle of generational poverty. Congratulations to St. Louis Public Schools—three or four weeks ago, they were fully accredited. It does start with education. And then, frankly, it starts with opportunities for all to have a good job. There are very few things that a good job won’t cure. So we need to prepare people to have and obtain those jobs.

- **Lewis Reed:** Absolutely. You know, if we’re not creating jobs and opportunities for people throughout our community, we should not be surprised at the end of the year when we come back and we see our murder rate still at 188. But if we begin to reconnect people to our community and begin to create jobs and opportunities for them so that they can move into new careers, we can see a mass change across our city. So I absolutely would support.
• **Andrew Jones**: Well, again, I think if you remember earlier, I talked about how jobs cure just about every ill that we have in society. When you look at workforce development—and I do sit on a workforce development board for Bond County, Fayette County, and Madison County in Illinois—you’re looking at jobs that are not being fulfilled because people don’t have the skill sets, and they’re not attending the trade schools—things of that nature. We have to get people trained to be able to take on these career-wage jobs that are available. We have to do this. Therefore, I am absolutely for building initiatives, having private partnerships as well with the City, so that we can get people in positions so that they can take advantage of it—so we won’t have to talk about minimum wages. We can talk about career wages, and people can be full participants within the system, because if they do that, they will flourish and take off. And the last thing, since I have a little bit of time: when they talk about households, because I look at numbers all day long, that is a static picture, when you take a household at a notice. But I think we should look at some of the IRS numbers, and you will see that people are doing a whole lot better than what they report.

• **Antonio French**: I think it starts with two things: education and jobs. Education is key. Now, I know what it’s like to be poor. I grew up in a single-parent household. When my mom passed away, I moved in with my grandma, and we were still poor. And my mom and my grandmother always told me that the way to success was through education. I’ve reached the highest level of education of anybody ever in my family: I’ve got my MBA and my bachelor’s degree. And now I have opportunity. And that’s what we have to give every kid. The largest group of poor people in the City of St. Louis are children. And so if we don’t start making sure we give them the tools to be successful in life, they will continue that cycle. Now, also related is jobs. For the folks that are already adults, 18 and older, we have to make sure that they have jobs. Now, the truth is that 20 percent of our adult population in the City of St. Louis doesn’t even have a high school diploma. So we have to make sure we are getting them skills to be able to get better jobs, and also currently put them in positions where they can get jobs right now. That, to me, means investing in small businesses. Because it’s the small businesses located in neighborhoods that are more likely to give them a shot. And so as part of my crime plan, actually, it involves investing in small businesses in crime-ridden neighborhoods.

• **Tishaura Jones**: The City of St. Louis still continues to suffer from the legacy of Jim Crow. And as a result, we have a huge gap between haves and have-nots. The median wealth of a white family is $134,000—versus a black family is $11,000. And that’s why I’m so passionate about the work we’ve done in the Office of Financial Empowerment to help people make better decisions with their money. I also think that we need to expand our STL Youth Jobs Program to be a year-round jobs program, because that way it puts money into youth’s pockets, and helps them take of their family. And when we talk about education and jobs, we have to marry it with financial literacy, because a lot of us get our habits—good, bad, or indifferent—from our families. And we have to change that trajectory.

• **Jeffrey Boyd**: Yes. As a young man growing up, I surely understand what poverty looks like. I often tell people I’m allergic to poverty, because I didn’t like it—I didn’t appreciate it. But I had a great-aunt that taught me the value of an education, and she told me, “If you get a good education, then you don’t have to live this lifestyle, and connect with resources.” So what I believe is that we have to work with our public schools and make sure we’re preparing our children for jobs of the future. And we need to work with our institutions of higher learning to make sure that adults that want to be retrained and young people graduating from high school are entering into our institutions of higher learning to get the educational experience that they need to take advantage of these jobs, like in the high-tech industry and cybersecurity. We also need to make sure that trainee opportunities through our SLATE program are available. I took an
opportunity to go to the military to get training. It was a phenomenal opportunity for me. It made me a better adult. So I know the value of training and education. As mayor, I will make sure that our SLATE program is well-funded—where young people and people who want to change careers will have access to training opportunities so that they can have a better quality of life, and not have to be stuck in a cycle of poverty.

Rachel Lippmann: Thank you very much. Alderman Krewson, this question is for you. Your 2008 ordinance on panhandling has come up repeatedly during the campaign. It gave panhandlers one warning, and after that they could face fines of up to $500 and/or 30 days behind bars. Is this the most effective way to address the homelessness issue in St. Louis?

- Lyda Krewson: Thank you all. So in 2008 I was the sponsor of the panhandling ordinance, and this is what it says. Of course people can panhandle. But it implemented a program called Real Change. The Real Change program was a way to direct folks to services at the St. Patrick Center, at other homeless services or shelters. But it also said that you can’t panhandle someone when they’re at the ATM machine. That you can’t panhandle someone when they’re sitting in an outdoor café. That you can’t panhandle someone when they’re waiting for a bus, or approach them when they’re in their car at an intersection. I do think that it is reasonable to have guidelines on panhandling that do not infringe on anyone’s civil rights, but that also provide an environment where everybody is comfortable and not in fear of being panhandled while they’re taking money out of the ATM machine.

Rachel Lippmann: Thank you. I’m going to direct this question now to the other members on the panel. Do you support the City’s efforts to continue to push for the closure of the New Life Evangelistic Center? How would you improve services there if you would like them to stay open? Or how would you fill the gaps if it is closed? Antonio French, we’ll start with you.

- Antonio French. Thank you. Let me say this first, that when you go to Lyda’s ward, you cross the street, you cross Delmar, there is poverty. Now, what her philosophy is that they don’t want to see the poverty. They want to push it out of the neighborhood because it’s inconvenient to look at. Anybody wanting to be a mayor of a city that has as many poor people as St. Louis City needs to understand poverty. All right? So no, I don’t support the idea that in the same year we’re going to give $105 million to millionaires for a stadium, we’re going to shut down a homeless shelter. And no, I don’t support what Lyda says about putting padlocks on Larry Rice’s facility, because I know what that means. It’s not about Larry Rice. It’s about those families that don’t have a place to go. And if you’ve ever been poor, or you know about poor people, you know what that means to not have a place to go. And so I think it’s imperative that the Mayor of St. Louis, as poor as we are as a city, understands what it’s like for poor folks in this city. And, yeah, it’s inconvenient to look at. But that’s how we grow. We have to be a diverse city that appreciates each other.

Rachel Lippmann: We’ll return to the question in a second. Because Alderman Krewson was named directly, we’re going to give her 30 seconds to respond.

- Lyda Krewson: Thank you, I appreciate that. I’m going to tell you, I think the New Life Evangelistic Center is not providing services to homeless people to help them get back on their feet. We should use a housing first model for homelessness. You cannot possibly get your life together from the sidewalk outside of New Life Evangelistic Center, which is where you’re kicked out every morning, and you’re on the sidewalk. Yesterday, I was there. There were at least 60 or 70 people on that sidewalk. I don’t think that’s the best we can do for our most vulnerable population. And so I think we ought to have good homeless services, not
warehousing in a place that’s infected with bedbugs, bugs, and all kinds of violations. I also would take objection—I don’t think the Alderman has any idea how I grew up. So thank you.

Rachel Lippmann: Thank you, Alderman Krewson. Tishaura Jones, do you support the efforts to continue to push for the closure of New Life Evangelistic Center? How would you either improve the services or fill the gaps left behind?

- Tishaura Jones: I don’t support closing New Life Evangelistic Center without an option for other people to go to, and I think that’s cruel. However, I think we have a missed opportunity to work with Mr. Rice to improve the services that are there. Also, I think we need to be a little bit more creative in looking at how to—at homeless services. Denver and Albuquerque, for example, have a day laborers program, where they employ homeless people to clean up parts of the city, and then at the end of the day they give them access to social services to try to see why they’re homeless. And also, we need to recommit to the 10-year plan that we had to eradicate homelessness. I don’t know where that plan is, or where it’s lying—if it’s sitting on a desk somewhere and nobody’s looking at it. Let’s make sure that we pick that back up and work with the region to make sure that there are homeless services for the region, not just in the City of St. Louis.

- Lewis Reed: You know, I think the City has lost its way. I think when we take a look at this issue, it’s become an issue where they’re just focusing on Larry Rice, and not the bigger picture—the bigger picture being the homeless population within the City of St. Louis, and how we manage it, and what we do. We need to go out and measure so we understand what the homeless population looks like in the City. What percentage of them are homeless because of mental health issues, what percentage are homeless because of downturn in a certain marketplace, what percentage of them are chronically homeless. When we begin to do these things, we’ll have a better opportunity of addressing the real issue. But right now, it’s become an issue between Larry Rice and the current administration. I went down there during the holidays, over Christmas, to try to give sandwiches and blankets out to the homeless. And a police officer was sitting there, and I went up to him and I said, “You know what? There’s better things you should be doing with your time today instead of sitting down here at the holidays stopping people from getting blankets.”

- Jeffrey Boyd: Thank you. I like to consider myself a problem-solver. I think the City of St. Louis has a unique opportunity. I am extremely concerned about what would happen with the homeless population if they shut the doors come April the 1st. I think it’s unacceptable that we would just allow people to be out on the street. What I would want to do as Mayor is work with Larry Rice with this center, and see how we can work together to put it in a safe space. To make sure that all the cold violations are taken care of, and also that we can create wraparound services, life skills services, that we can provide to the homeless so that they don’t have to stay in his shelter. So they can move on to transitional housing, and move on to permanent housing, with the life skills. I want to partner with our faith-based community and other nonprofits that are experts in that field, to make sure that we really work with our homeless population and get them to permanent and supportive housing.

- Andrew Jones: I think it’s a relatively simple problem to address, particularly when we have foundational supports on the private side. We have eleemosynary concerns, we have philanthropic concerns that are more than willing to get involved. They need some level of direction, and we’re looking at a regional problem. I think that when you look at the collaborative efforts from our health districts, from the County Health Districts and the City Health Districts—they have a finger on this; they understand exactly what’s happening. And I think they will provide the necessary support to make sure that we don’t treat people like
animals—that we treat them as they are: human beings. And get them the necessary help that is there and exists. We just have to give them the proper direction.

**Ruth Ezell:** All right, thank you all for that round. We are now going to do our second lightning round. And the first couple of questions are going to be a little longer than normal, but the answers can still be brief. Here’s the first question.

**Lightning Round 2**

**Ruth Ezell:** From bicycle lanes to MetroLink expansion, and from trails to sidewalks, many transportation projects are discussed in the city. As mayor, what is the most important transportation initiative other than MetroLink expansion that you would pursue?

- **Antonio French:** Better bus transportation. Most people use buses. So bus transportation needs to improve in the City of St. Louis.
- **Jeffrey Boyd:** I would also say bus transportation. I think Metro should come with express service so that people can not take an hour and 45 minutes to get from St. Louis City to St. Louis County.
- **Andrew Jones:** I think the highest ridership is in North St. Louis. I think if we can make sure that we have the adequate buses, the state-of-the-art buses, I think that’s our primary focus. That’s the reason I’m not for MetroLink expansion.
- **Lyda Krewson:** Better bus service, more frequent bus service. Also—simple things: syncing the traffic lights, considering eliminating some of the one-way streets. Using some professional planning, traffic planning services.
- **Tishaura Jones:** I agree with everything that’s been said about expanding bus services.
- **Lewis Reed:** Expanding bus services, number one. But we also need to take a look at what we can do to be more renewable in the city. I think we should look at a car-share program. We have that downtown. I also think we should look at a bike-share program.

**Ruth Ezell:** On development projects that receive City support, should developers who fail to meet minority participation requirements be financially penalized?

- **Antonio French:** Yes, and I’ve introduced legislation to do just that.
- **Jeffrey Boyd:** I think absolutely, over a certain dollar amount. We couldn’t do that with people that are just doing two houses.
- **Andrew Jones:** I think we should not discriminate across the board.
- **Lyda Krewson:** Yes, absolutely. There ought to be clawback provisions for any incentives if the developer doesn’t meet the terms of the redevelopment plan. And that would include the minority participation goals.
- **Tishaura Jones:** Yes, absolutely. We should hold developers accountable when they don’t meet those goals.
- **Lewis Reed:** Absolutely. We should treat it as a breach of contract.

**Ruth Ezell:** Should the City spend about $100 million over the next 30 years to upgrade the Scottrade Center?

- **Antonio French:** No.
- **Jeffrey Boyd:** I’m not convinced it’s a good deal.
- **Andrew Jones:** Ditto.
- **Lyda Krewson:** I voted against that at the Board of Aldermen.
• Tishaura Jones: No.
• Lewis Reed: Yes. If we’re talking about creating jobs and economic activity, we have to invest, especially in our own property. We own the building. We can shutter it or fix it.

Ruth Ezell: Okay, that concludes the second lightning round. And we are now going to start on the final round of panel questions. It’s going to be the same format as the first two rounds. You’ll each have 60 seconds. The issue is education. Jason?

Round 3

Jason Rosenbaum: I want to be clear here that the Mayor of St. Louis does not have a lot of direct control over the education system, but they do have some things that they have to do, and they have the bully pulpit. One of the things that became very evident after Ferguson is our schools, especially in St. Louis and parts of St. Louis County, are still heavily segregated. And I want to know what each of you would do using the bully pulpit to convince more middle- and upper-class white residents—like myself—to send their children to St. Louis Public Schools.

• Lewis Reed: Well, the first thing you have to do as the mayor is you have to believe in the product that you’re selling. So I think it’s important, as the mayor, that we position our school system appropriately. We talk about the great things that are happening within our system, we talk about the advantages of people sending their kids to our St. Louis Public School System. We continue to work to provide more funding for them by working with the state and trying to get more funding through DESE (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). I know that’s a tough thing, but we have to approach it and try to get that done. I think we also need to understand what’s happening within the classrooms. You know, across the last ten years, I’ve had the opportunity to be involved with the rebirth of the St. Louis City Public Schools. And I’ve had an opportunity to really, truly understand what’s happening with the teachers and administrators. We have great staffing. And we have great kids going to our schools. And there are a lot of great success stories that we need to tell.

• Lyda Krewson: As I said earlier, congratulations to St. Louis Public Schools. I think it is absolutely critical that the public schools continue to get better, because while we have the best high school in Missouri at Metro High School, the schools are also uneven. And not all of the schools are good enough. Every single decision that we make about education ought to be driven by what is best for the kids. I also happen to support charter schools because I think they are educating 10,000 kids in the City of St. Louis today, and many of them are doing a good job. And of course, our parochial schools. Our city would have much fewer people here today had it not been for the role the parochial schools have played over many years in our city, educating our kids. Every parent wants the best for their kid. And every educational decision ought to be about not what’s best for the administrators, not what’s best for the teachers’ union, not what’s best for any individual, but rather what’s best for the kids.

• Tishaura Jones: As Treasurer, I started the College Kids Savings Account Program, which gives a college savings account to every kindergartner in a public school that’s district or charter. And we have a great partnership with district and charter schools. What I would do as mayor is continue that same partnership. Even though the mayor has no direct authority, that doesn’t mean that she can’t be a better partner. And then working with our school administrators to see what we can do to remove barriers to education for our children. For example, also in the Treasurer’s office, every year, we pick a school and do a community service project. We clean that school from top to bottom, work with the principal to see what he or she needs, and think
about what our school system would look like if more of us developed those partnerships with our schools, no matter where our children are sent to school. So I think that we as a community need to develop better partnerships with our schools, no matter where we send our children.

- **Andrew Jones**: Well, I think the problem can be fixed relatively simply by offering opportunities for choice. The biggest asset that most people have, their most sacred asset, are their children. And people hold onto and they cling to and they want the best opportunity for the enrichment and development of their child. If you have an opportunity to put your child in a school that fits them perfectly, whatever their needs may be, I think you should have an opportunity to enroll your child in that particular school. It’s very simple to me. School choice, market opportunities, and I think you will see that your children will flourish.

*Jason Rosenbaum:* I have to follow up there. How will that make the St. Louis Public Schools better if lots of people are using school choice options not to go to the St. Louis Public Schools?

- **Andrew Jones**: Well, school choice is what it is: a market opportunity. And again, when you’re talking about the City of St. Louis and its school systems, what you will find traditionally is that will force them to do a better job in training and educating their own children.

- **Jeffrey Boyd**: Our school system suffers from the same perception that our city as a whole suffers from. Now, everyone who lives in the City of St. Louis doesn’t live in a bad neighborhood. All City of St. Louis schools are not bad schools. My wife and I made the conscious decision and choice to send our children to St. Louis Public Schools. I’m a proud product of St. Louis Public Schools. My son, my oldest daughter graduated from St. Louis Public Schools; my youngest daughter is a junior at Metro, one of the top-performing schools in the State of Missouri. My grandbaby attends Washington Montessori. If you want to change a system, you need to be part of the system. And as mayor, I want to be out in the schools, inspiring these young children, attending the rallies at school to motivate them to achieve academic excellence. We can change our schools around if we all, as adults, are willing to partner with our school system in a meaningful and impactful way that changes lives of our children. And as mayor, I will set the standard.

- **Antonio French**: I think the first thing I would do is lead by example. I send my little boy to a St. Louis Public School, and I will continue to do that as mayor. I think it’s important to highlight that St. Louis Public Schools has many very high-performing schools. Now, you mentioned segregation in SLPS. One of the tragedies, though, is that the white students that go to St. Louis Public Schools are more likely to go to a high-performing school, and the African-American students that go to SLPS are more likely to go to an under-performing school. Now, that is something we have to fix. And as mayor, I will partner with SLPS to make sure we are raising up those schools that are struggling and that are low-performing in the city. We can also do that through support services through our Recreation Department to make sure that we have mentoring and after-school programs, including tutoring, in City facilities after school to make sure education can continue even after school hours.

*Rachel Lippmann: This question is for everyone. I’ll address it first to Andrew Jones. What educational innovations would you like to see brought to St. Louis?*

- **Andrew Jones**: Choice. That is the greatest innovation that you can have: that people will have an opportunity to give their child the best opportunity. When you look at curriculum with the State of Illinois or the State of Missouri, they utilize the best curriculums that are out there. When you look at teachers, teachers within the City of St. Louis, they are trained and certified teachers. We have to get more participation from parents, and we will absolutely get children involved at the highest levels if they have choice because it forces other institutions to match
them or they will not be incented by the monies. Because it goes back to old Adam Smith: when you’re in doubt, follow the money. And what you will do is you will force public schools to clean up the ones that are underperforming because they have to match others or they won’t get the money. It’s very simple: a market system could solve most of it. And it’s the most creative.

- **Antonio French:** So years ago, I was inspired by the Harlem Children’s Zone in New York. And one of the components of the Harlem Children’s Zone is that we have seen great success with kids, even if they go to a low-performing public school, through after-school and weekend activities. And so we started this five years ago in my ward. In my ward, we have places where kids can come. They get free transportation, free mentoring, free meals, free tutoring. And we’re seeing excellent growth in the areas of math, science, and reading. Now, it’s tough to keep the program going, and we need more support from more folks. But this can be a model for what we can do in other neighborhoods. It’s also a model for what we can do with our recreation centers in the City of St. Louis. They should be places where kids can come after school and continue their education through mentoring, through tutoring, and through enrichment activities. So as Mayor, I would make sure we beef up our recreation departments, partner with nonprofits to make sure kids have safe places to go to continue their education, even after school hours.

- **Tishaura Jones:** So I’ve already brought an innovative program to St. Louis Public Schools, and that’s through the College Kids Savings Account Program. It’s been touted nationally and locally as one of the most innovative programs in the country. But what I’d like to do is expand that program to other grades and also bring the Promise Program to St. Louis Public—or to our public schools, which gives the first two years of either community college, technical school, or vocational school to every graduating senior in the City. That gives our children a great first start as soon as they graduate, because sometimes our children burn through their Pell Grants by taking remedial courses, and then that gives them a start to a wonderful career no matter what they choose to do.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** I would like to see the school system create a fun curriculum. You know, young people are really into technology. And oftentimes, I know my own daughter, when I ask her how things are going in school, she just says, “Okay, it was okay.” But she was bored, for example. But I think we use technology and we create curriculums where it’s fun in school. Teaching financial literacy is something that should be done in high school so that when you graduate, you understand how to pay bills, and how do you invest in your future. So I think we need to be more creative and innovative in our curriculum so that we can really, truly prepare our young people when they graduate from high school for financial success.

- **Lewis Reed:** Well, one of the things I think would be great is if we had a stronger partnership between our business community and our schools. So if we had, for example, T-Rex, who’s downtown, and we had T-Rex have satellite sites throughout all of our high schools so that they can really begin—kids can really begin to understand what a science background would bring, and how to run a business, and those types of things. And you can begin to teach them that math and science and those things aren’t just something that you’re forced to learn, but there’s some good that can come out of it, and I think that we should do that. I think we should also look at an opportunity through distance learning to begin to work with a lot of people who are locked up and incarcerated in the City of St. Louis, so that when they come out, they have their high school education when they come out. I think we should do that.

- **Lyda Krewson:** Thank you so much. Last April, we all voted for a 20 percent tax increase for St. Louis Public Schools. You saw it on your tax bill in December. I think that is a real opportunity for St. Louis Public Schools to expand what they do. More social services in school, from little kids all the way up through high school. And not just for the kids, but also for parents. Whether that
is washers and dryers in schools, whether it is mental health services in schools, counselors in schools—and to set the expectation for students that they can learn and they can achieve. Because that is certainly the case. I also happen to think that more programs that take kids and expose them to other things—you know, over the years, the arts and some of those things have really been cut out of a lot of schools. And that is a life-enriching experience. And you only aspire to what you know about. So schools ought to be a place of expanding vision for kids.

_Ruth Ezell:_ Thank you very much. _We have one more set of questions. The issue is equal rights. If we can keep our answers brief, that would be a very helpful. Rachel, you have the first question._

_Rachel Lippmann:_ We’re going to go to Rebecca on this one. Changed things up on you—sorry, Ruth.

_Rebecca Rivas:_ Okay, _this is for all the candidates. Should the St. Louis Police Department help enforce violations of federal immigration law?_

- **Antonio French:** No. And actually, I introduced a resolution a couple of weeks ago that will ask the City Counsel [Council?] to come back and show us our options in becoming a sanctuary city, or at the very least, protecting the rights of our foreign-born population.
- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Absolutely not. I think our Police Department needs to spend our resources making our communities much safer than they are today.
- **Andrew Jones:** As Mayor of the City of St. Louis, I am a constitutionalist. We will enforce federal law, because the City of St. Louis will be penalized and punished if we don’t follow law. Is that something personally that I take solace in? Certainly not. But again, if we’re going to mete out justice equally across the board to everyone, we have to follow law. I am a constitutionalist, and I follow the law.
- **Lewis Reed:** Absolutely not. I tell you, our police officers have enough to do. I mean, absolutely not. [I’m] opposed to going out and rounding up people because they may think they are illegally here from Mexico, or whatever. I think that absolutely not. We have enough to do. We are faced with a crazy amount of crime in the City of St. Louis, and if we are using our law enforcement to enforce Trump’s rules, I think that that’s a mistake.
- **Tishaura Jones:** Absolutely not. Our staff has already been in contact with Mayor De Blasio’s office in New York to make sure that we’re following his lead, and other strong mayors across the country as they fight back against the Trump agenda on immigration.
- **Lyda Krewson:** Thank you. Absolutely not. Here’s the problem with this. So many problems. But one of them is, if you want to have a safer city, you have to have everyone who’s willing to report crimes. Otherwise, what you create is a group of people that won’t call the police, and they become victims, again. And so it’s not the job of the St. Louis Police Department to round up people who may not have the proper documentation. It’s the job of the St. Louis Police Department to try to keep all of us safe, and that includes immigrants—even undocumented immigrants—in our city.

_Jason Rosenbaum:_ Thank you. _I’m going to emulate Ruth here and do a lightning round question. I’m very powerful like that. Do you support the use of red light cameras, and would you work for their return in St. Louis? Lewis Reed._

- **Lewis Reed:** I don’t think we could—no. I don’t support the use of red light cameras. The original notion of red light cameras is that they’ll help to prevent traffic accidents, and we have not seen that.
- **Tishaura Jones:** No.
• **Lyda Krewson**: Yes. Here’s why. Because it all depends on how it’s enforced. You don’t need to have your police department out there enforcing people who run red lights. But you do need to enforce that. I oppose the tickets—which I’ve gotten one or two of these a few years ago—I oppose the tickets for the right on reds, because I think that was sort of predatory. But if you’re flat-out running a red light, it creates a very unsafe condition, and I think this is a pretty objective way to do that.

• **Andrew Jones**: Again: I agree with Lyda in this regard. But again, I’ve gotten red light tickets. I was in the wrong. Now, if this is constitutional, and it meets the merit of that, certainly we have to move forward, because that is what has made our country great: following laws. If we were angels, we wouldn’t need laws.

*Jason Rosenbaum*: Thank you. **And for full disclosure, I have gotten a red light ticket, but I beat it.**

• **Andrew Jones**: I paid mine.
• **Lyda Krewson**: I paid mine.
• **Jeffrey Boyd**: Full disclosure, I’ve never gotten one, and I don’t want to see it come back.
• **Antonio French**: No. I don’t think so. And I think we need more police doing traffic enforcement, which also is being in the neighborhood and building those relationships—so no. I don’t think we need machines to send tickets to your house.

*Jason Rosenbaum*: Thank you. **And with our last question, Rachel Lippmann.**

*Rachel Lippmann*: Thank you. **This question is for all the candidates onstage. Mayor Slay spoke out frequently in support of the LGBTQ community and was the first mayor to fly both the Gay Pride and the Transgender Pride Flags at City Hall. How will you continue to use the Mayor’s Office to advocate for the equality of the LGBTQ community? Tishaura Jones, this question goes to you first.**

• **Tishaura Jones**: We just did a forum last night where we were with the LGBTQIA community discussing their issues, and I have been—as a state legislator, I co-sponsored the Missouri Nondiscrimination Act every year. I’m also against Senate Bill 98, which is the Bathroom Bill. I think that’s going to hurt our economy. And I would continue to use the Office as Mayor to support the LGBTQIA community.
• **Jeffrey Boyd**: Absolutely I will use the office to support the LGBT community and be an advocate for their voice.

*Rachel Lippmann*: **How?**

• **Jeffrey Boyd**: How. By supporting their agenda, by making sure that we’re constantly having conversation, and being an ally to the community.
• **Lewis Reed**: Absolutely. You know, a lot of the things that you have to fight for as an African-American, some of those things also coincide with the LGBTQ community, and I think that when we’re looking at issues of justice, I think that we all should support those things.
• **Andrew Jones**: Again, I extend human rights to everyone. Last night during the forum, there was nothing that I saw within the LGBT community that would make me think that they should not get extended full rights and participation as citizens in this country. It’s a no-brainer. They’re citizens.
• **Antonio French**: Yeah, I absolutely support the LGBT community. These are our family, these are our neighbors, these are the people that helped build our community. And I will oppose any
legislation coming from Jefferson City or from Washington to divide us and to take back the rights that people have fought very hard for. I would also move to ban the so-called conversion therapy in the City of St. Louis. That is not something that we need to have here, and I would use the Office of the Mayor to do that.

- **Lyda Krewson:** Thank you. I think the Mayor’s Office has to support all groups of folks, and absolutely I support the LGBTQIA community. I would also support banning conversion therapy. But there’s one more thing. You know, a couple of years ago now, gay and lesbian couples can be married, and that’s great. But you know what can also happen to them? The next day, if that’s in the paper, or maybe it’s just on Facebook, they can also be fired from their job in the State of Missouri, just for getting married and being out. That has to change at the state level. And the Mayor ought to advocate for that.

*Ruth Ezell:* Thank you all very much. And now it’s time for the closing statements. And we’re going to do them in the same order as we did with the opening statements. *Antonio French.***

- **Antonio French:** All right, I appreciate it. Well, thank you for coming out tonight. You know, in 13 days, we have a clear choice on the ballot. We can go with status quo, or we can change our direction as a city. I think we finally need to have a mayor who understands the entire city. We have a very diverse city, both racially and economically. We have so many different people, so many different communities with so many different needs. I think it’s important that we elect somebody who understands these neighborhoods, who brings back these issues that are very diverse and very unique to many different parts of our community, and bring those back to City Hall, and enact policy that helps to bring up these neighborhoods. We have to start focusing on quality of life of the 315,000 people left in this city, and make this a place that more people want to move to instead of continually moving out. The top two reasons that drive people out of our city are crime and public education. So we have to start focusing on the quality of neighborhood safety. We have to start focusing on making sure we have a Police Department that is building relationships, not breaking those relationships. It’s not just training. It’s also accountability. That’s what people are asking for: accountability. And so as your mayor, I hope to do that. I’ll hope for your support on Tuesday, March 7th.

- **Lyda Krewson:** Thank you. Thank you all so much for being here tonight. I do appreciate the fact that you care enough about who the next mayor is in order to sit here and to listen to us this evening. I will also say this: I think there are three top things that the next mayor needs to do. Neighborhood safety: we talked a little about that. Certainly, economic development and jobs— not just jobs; careers. That means thanking the businesses that are here now and trying to create an environment where small businesses can scale up. That’s where the job growth in this country is. And then, finally, modernizing our government. We didn’t talk about that tonight, but I think that’s very, very key. Our city—the fight—the competition is not between Clayton and the Central West End or Hazelwood and Wildwood. The competition is out there. It’s between Nashville and St. Louis, and Kansas City, and Chicago, and all of those cities. We have to modernize our government if we’re going to be competitive in this world. I would say, select a mayor who has a history of accomplishment, a history of turning a neighborhood around, a history of development, a history of treating people fairly and of taking on the tough issues. I’d love to have your vote March 7th.

- **Jeffrey Boyd:** Yes, thank you again for being here. You heard a lot about what the candidates want to do. I want to tell you what you will not get from me. You will not get scandal. You will not get drama. And I will not embarrass you. I will not sit in the Office for ten years and do nothing to impact your quality of life. I will not take advantage of perks. I will be fiscally responsible and honest with your dollars. I will value all citizens from north to south, especially
our homeless. This is what you will get from me: a proven track record of accomplishments, and a commitment to real change. I’m Jeffrey Boyd. I stand on my record. And I ask that you vote for me for real change for the City of St. Louis as your mayor on March the 7th.

- **Tishaura Jones**: Thank you for coming tonight. This has been a wonderful opportunity for you to get to know us better. But as you’re getting to know us, I want to ask you to do one thing: take a look at all of us. Take a look at what we’ve done, what we’ve accomplished, things we’ve supported, things we’ve voted for. There’s a voting record to look at. And judge us. Somehow or another, over the last 15 years, St. Louis fell off the map, and I want to be the mayor that puts us back on the map in terms of growth, in terms of innovation, and in terms of taking care of its people, and putting people before projects and profits. I firmly believe that prosperity and justice are achievable for every family in St. Louis, no matter if they live in North or South St. Louis. And I want to be the mayor that takes us there. Thank you very much for coming. God bless you all. Goodnight.

- **Andrew Jones**: Our platform includes four component parts. Safety: eliminating violent crime. Economic development, community development, business development: number two. Number three: strengthening our schools and developing workforce initiatives to empower adults to get meaningful career jobs. And last but not least: civic excellence. The thing that drove me to want to run for this particular office instead of sitting on my political armchair quarterback position and saying that they should do this, they should do this, because I have the expertise to change and fix this. I said, “Let me get involved, because I am responsible to get involved, to try to help our city with some level of expertise that I think I bring to be your next mayor of the city.” And I think it’s important to remember: we’re not just talking 15, 16 years. We’re talking 66 years of continuation of policy by a very specific party that has put our city in this position. And if people are calling for change, they can’t deliver change. But Andrew Jones can. Vote for me in March.

- **Lewis Reed**: Well, you know, I’ve had an opportunity to serve for quite a while. And you know, during that time I’ve had an opportunity to get a lot of great things done. You take a look at the reaccreditation of our school system. There’s only three people in government that had a role in that. I’m the only person out on this stage that had a role in that. The Mayor had an appointee, the Governor had an appointee, and I had an appointee that went in and turned the system around. So I understand the public school system. I understand the value of it. And I understand that we cannot exist as a city without a strong public school system. I also understand addressing issues of public safety. As an Alderman of the 6th Ward, I was able to turn our entire community around and rebuild it from the ground up. And as part of my job as President of the Board of Aldermen, I had an opportunity to work end to end across the city in every single neighborhood in the City of St. Louis. Brought NextDoor to the city, so that now 40,000 people across the City of St. Louis are communicating with their neighbors and working together and rebuilding their communities. Brought Bike St. Louis to the City of St. Louis, so that now we have these bike routes connecting people all across the city and all of our major stops. All right. I’m out of time.

Ruth Ezell: I want to thank all the candidates, and I want to thank you for joining us. I want you to remember the Primary Municipal Election is March 7th; the General Election is April 4th. If you are registered to vote in the City of St. Louis, cast your ballots in both. My name is Ruth Ezell; I bid you goodnight.