

**1. What are your top three goals for the city in the next four years (term of office)?**

First, continue drainage and road improvements in Wards 5-6. Even though the work has started, we have to complete the job so present and future residents will feel and be part of Bay St. Louis, and not just the annexed section. Furthermore, improved streets and drainage will attract new residents who will want to build. Second, rebuild the Police Department in two parts. Part one, we need a new police complex that is designed for law enforcement uses. Cleaning and patching the existing building will be a waste of funds and will not solve all the needs of the police department. By building a new police complex and equipping the department with proper equipment, we can ensure they are ready to handle the increasing population growth in Bay St. Louis. Part two, we need to revitalize the personnel. Morale and personnel shortages are being addressed by Chief Freeman, and he will need resources in order to succeed. My third goal, will be to continue economic growth in the real estate market, tourism, and commercial business growth. Presently, Bay St. Louis is the fastest growing city in Mississippi, but we have dozens of empty retail spaces along Hwy 90. Moving forward, we need to assist business development in Bay St. Louis. As the population grows, new developing markets will reveal themselves, and when they do, Bay St. Louis, must be ready and embrace these businesses.

**2. How would you foster cooperation between the City Council and Mayor?**

The mayor/council form of government is known as the strong mayor weak council form of government. The council's main function is to manage funds and approve all spending as outlined in the budget. Cooperation will only work if both the mayor and council understand their prospective jobs and act accordingly, and both branches of local government make effort to be more open to each other.

**3. What measures would you support to increase the city's revenue?**

Before we can look at ways of increasing the city's revenue, we need to be sure the budget is based on accurate tax collection projections. Having said that, I would support continued residential and commercial growth as a means of increasing the city's revenue. In addition, Bay St. Louis is an ideal recreational destination and should be marketed aggressively.

**4. List three ways you would foster support of and communication with the city's appointed commissions (Planning and Zoning, Harbor and Historic Preservation).**

The first and easiest way to ensure support and communication would include the sharing of each commission's monthly agendas. Currently, Planning and Zoning does not receive the Harbor commission or the Historic Preservation's agenda and vice versa. Second, the

chairs of the respective commissions should meet at least once a quarter to share ideas and emerging trends. Lastly, the Mayor and Council should be updated as to the findings of the quarterly meetings to assist in projecting the future of Bay St. Louis through a short briefing at the council meetings.

**5. What are your ideas for preserving our community's unique character while supporting residential and business growth?**

By improving communication between the three commissions, we can use information gleaned to assist the Mayor and Council so they can make informed decisions as to how best to move the city in a positive direction.

**6. What actions can the city take now to maximize benefits when it becomes a stop on the future Amtrak route?**

Depending on the scheduled stop times both East and West, Amtrak has the potential to be very beneficial to our tourism industry. Appropriate marketing would be crucial. To this end, it is very important that we maintain a local tourism presence to welcome visitors and make them feel at home in Bay St. Louis, A Place Apart.

**7. Should the city provide financial support to economic development organizations like the Hancock Chamber and Hancock County Tourism? Support your answer.**

We need an economic council that is tasked with improved development. The next City council needs to discuss this point and provide assistance if the budget allows. In the past, the City has provided financial assistance to the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce and Hancock County Tourism, both of which play a vital role in the success of our economic wellbeing.

**8. What importance do you place on proposed community amenities such as a swimming pool, additional bicycle paths and dog parks?**

Bay St. Louis currently has several miles of bike paths that follow our beautiful beach and extends into the City of Waveland. We have a splash pad, a dog park, miles of clean sandy beaches, several boat launches, a harbor, many newly paved streets and a down town that is very highly traveled. However, until the city can work its way out of the current financial shortfalls, such amenities such as swimming pools, additional bike paths, and dog parks are feel good amenities that we cannot afford at this time. At this

time, we have much larger issues that need to be addressed before these can happen. The city needs improved police and fire equipment, a new police station. Public works will need new mowers, and excavating equipment as well as other tools. The bottom line is this, Ad valorem and sales tax will have to greatly improve before we add to our list of accounts payable.

**9. What is your position on the possibility of the Hancock County Sheriff's Department managing the BSL Police Department. State the advantages and/or disadvantages you foresee.**

The Bay St. Louis Police department has a new chief who is well on his way to rebuilding the police department. Chief Freeman is highly respected and the officers are responding very well to his leadership. At this time, I do not see an advantage in the Sheriff's Office taking over the police functions. The Sheriff's office is a well-run department staffed with professional men and women. But the current Council and Mayor have made their decision on this issue and I agree.

**10. The number of golf carts on city streets continues to grow. How should golf cart use be regulated?**

As chairman of the Planning & Zoning Commission this very topic was discussed at length as we were trying to determine a proper path. Currently, golf carts are not legal to be driven on city streets for many reasons. First, the carts cannot be licensed by state statute because they do not have VIN (Vehicle Identification Numbers). VIN numbers have to issued at the factory and have all the standard safety equipment so a title can be issued. A bill has passed in the MS State Senate approving an ordinance that outlines the use of golf carts on public streets, but it has not come out of the House of Representatives and the current legislative session has ended. I would foresee it passing within the next year or two. But like every other vehicle they must have insurance, have all the safety equipment and should travel on less traveled streets.

**11. As the city grows do you think it should consider changing its present form of government? Explain your answer. *Note: The page on our Serve BSL website contains information and resources that might be helpful in answering this question.***

The current form of government has come under question as of late. Whether Bay St. Louis remains a Mayor/Council form of government or changes to either a City Manager like Diamondhead, or Mayor/Alderman form, as in Waveland. Much debate will be

**Gary Knoblock**  
***At-Large Council Candidate***

4 of 4

needed. I am willing to serve under the current form, but I support a term limits. The Mayor should be limited to two terms and council members to three terms. Ultimately, it will be the will of the people who decide which form of government that governs Bay St. Louis.