



Williamson County Election – August 5, 2010  
Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Christopher R.C. Bosen

Office/District: Williamson County Commission – Fifth District (Including Eastern Brentwood, Nolensville, Triune, Arrington, etc.)

1. What is your motivation in seeking election to the Williamson County Commission?  
How does your background and/or experience qualify you to hold this position?

After the birth of our son, my wife and I chose to move our family to Williamson County because, beyond other places we considered, the area offered exactly what we desired: an excellent public school system, a wonderful quality of life, and a community where our family could establish roots.

I was motivated to seek this office primarily because of the challenges facing our school system economically. I believe we must find ways for education funding to keep pace with population growth without sacrificing quality or increasing debt. As the body that determines how our tax dollars are allocated, the County Commission is solely responsible for how our schools are funded. Unfortunately, the current Commissioners passed a budget for fiscal 2010-2011 that projects \$22 million more in spending than in revenue, cuts reading specialists and other programs from our schools, increases class sizes, and indefinitely postpones building repairs and technology upgrades in our classrooms. I believe the education system we offer in Williamson County has served as an economic engine that has played a key role in bringing corporate headquarters and other businesses to our area. I believe that our education system has helped keep property values relatively stable during this down economy -- people want to be here and send their children to school here. I also believe we must be vigilant in ensuring that our history for quality education endures. Neglecting our education system has an impact on our quality of life that, in my opinion, is fiscally irresponsible in much the same way a homeowner neglecting their home's foundation can have catastrophic effects on their investment. I don't want to see that happen in Williamson County.

My background as a journalist required research and digging to find the facts – qualities that are beneficial when reviewing documents such as a budget line-by-line to find ways to save money and reduce debt without sacrificing quality services. Beyond that, the most important characteristics I possess are an eagerness to serve by listening to other 5<sup>th</sup> District residents about their concerns (please contact me via phone, [votebosen@gmail.com](mailto:votebosen@gmail.com), [VoteBosen.com](http://VoteBosen.com), or in person), a desire to find fiscally responsible ways to resolve our economic challenges, and a willingness to ask difficult questions whenever necessary.

2. What should be the top priorities of the Williamson County Commission over the next several years? How would you address and/or fund these priorities?

(1) Education: Our education system is the foundation on which our County has built its economic prosperity – we cannot afford the long-term consequences that short-term neglect will produce. The trend of larger class sizes and cuts to reading specialists evident in the 2010-2011 budget concern me. In addition, indefinitely postponing building repairs and critical technology upgrades are not qualities of an improving district.

(2) Fiscal Stewardship & Debt Reduction: Our current County Commissioners approved a budget for fiscal 2010-2011 with \$22 million MORE in expenditures than in revenues. That same Commission has allowed our per-capita debt load to grow by \$1,600 on every Williamson County resident over the past decade. That trend must end. The entire County budget should be reviewed line-by-line to find expenses that can be cut and/or redirected. As an example, I do not believe in this economic climate of cutting reading teachers that spending \$35,000 to hire a consultant to put together a strategic plan for our schools was the wisest use of taxpayer dollars – it was a luxury we could not afford at this time.

(3) Revenue from New Growth: Revenue generated by new construction must fund the necessary infrastructure of schools, roads, safety, and parks. Population is expected to grow by 25,000 by 2014 and failure to properly adjust impact fees on the new development could force us into greater debt and higher property taxes. The booming development of the past few years has not funded the necessary infrastructure even with the associated increase in sales tax revenue. That's why we find ourselves in our current economic situation. There is a balance that can be struck in setting those fees in such a way as to not hinder wise development – people want to be here because of our quality of life, but that quality has a cost that new development, I believe, should be willing to pay for financially.

3. What is your vision of residential and commercial development within the unincorporated portions of the County over the next 5-10 years?

I believe the unincorporated portions can take their cue for development from their surrounding communities. Again, the prospect of having choices in terms of types of housing and development is exciting to me. Whether a person is searching for condo-style living in walking distance to restaurants and shopping, small-lot residential living, large-lot estate living, expansive ranch living, or living on a family farm, they should be able to find that in Williamson County. By preventing uncontrolled commercial sprawl we can offer those options and still retain the rich character that distinguishes Williamson County from every other place not only in Middle Tennessee, but also around the entire country.

4. Williamson County has realized tremendous success in terms of economic development and corporate recruitment efforts over the past several years. How would you propose to continue and/or enhance these efforts?

I believe the best thing County Mayor Rogers Anderson does in this area is take the portion of property taxes that go to our public schools off the table in terms of tax

incentives when recruiting businesses. While the companies want tax breaks and incentives, they often also are drawn here because of our public school system. Because they understand the value of those schools, they also understand why cutting into that portion of the property tax is not an option in the incentive packages assembled by County officials.

5. Do county governments within Tennessee need broader taxing authority granted from the state legislature? Does Williamson County? If so, what specific revenue-generating options would you support?

I believe that the necessary taxing authority is already in place in Williamson County – using it wisely in areas such as adequate facilities taxes and impact fees on new development, however, is what’s required to generate the revenue needed to fund the required infrastructure. The current Commission has not done that for the past several years.

6. Under what circumstances should local governments exercise the power of eminent domain? Is there a need to limit or expand this power on the federal or state level?

I don’t believe that eminent domain should ever be viewed as a “power” by elected officials – seeing it as a “power” is what has caused problems in these cases around the country. I believe that fair market price should be paid to land owners to acquire property – government should not be allowed to just take property; they should pay for it the same way a private buyer would be expected to. Well-planned development and planning for the future can often preempt the reasons eminent domain has been used elsewhere.

7. How important is the development and preservation of diverse housing options within Williamson County? What role, if any, should county government play in this effort?

We need more diversity in terms of housing options throughout the County. The affordable options available in areas such as Nolensville and elsewhere are vital and unquestionably necessary in our County. Affordable housing in Franklin and Brentwood has been an issue for several years as property values in those areas have risen and zoning restrictions have been maintained. I think it’s very unfortunate in Brentwood, as an example, that the overwhelming majority of the men and women who serve in uniform in the Brentwood Police Department and Brentwood Fire Department cannot afford to live in Brentwood because there aren’t suitable housing options.

8. Do you have issues or concerns regarding the County’s current sign ordinance? Please explain.

One direct issue I believe should be addressed in light of U.S. Supreme Court rulings is in regards to whether or not allowing some temporary signs in public parks while prohibiting others is a violation of First Amendment Freedom of Speech rights. The Supreme Court has ruled that public parks are protected as traditional public forums in regards to free speech. Apparently, however, some current County Commission members believe it’s acceptable to allow temporary commercial signs in public parks while prohibiting temporary signs such as political campaign signs since they enacted just such a resolution according to one current Commissioner. However, I do support the

restrictions on temporary signage in other public right of way areas due to the aesthetic impact they create.

9. How should elected officials in Williamson County balance the need between economic development and the protection of our natural resources and the environment?

I do not believe that anyone living here currently, nor the people who will move here in the coming years, want to see our environment radically and irreparably harmed or altered. The rural character that exists even alongside our main business sectors is what many people desire. Flooding like we saw this May was mitigated somewhat in areas of the County because of wise zoning and development standards – without that balance in place there would have been even greater loss than the devastation we experienced. We should continue to find ways to blend our development into the existing landscape to maintain our character.

10. Should Williamson County government advocate or promote initiatives aimed at improving environmental sustainability? If so, where should these efforts focus?

I believe that the County's model of making environmental options available rather than mandated has been a good one. The volunteer-based and County-supported Keep Williamson Beautiful organization, for example, provides a variety of services and presents the Living Green Expo at The Factory in Franklin (coming up August 28 this year). Lewis Bumpus, Williamson County's Solid Waste Management Director, I believe has been a strong advocate around the County for what is available and possible for sustainability. There is value and positive economic impact to be realized from some of the steps available to our County already.

11. Other Comments

I believe that Abraham Lincoln's government "Of the people, by the people, for the people" works best when we the people get informed, get involved, and -- most importantly -- vote. In May's Fifth District primary, only 394 ballots out of 13,465 registered voters were cast – less than 3 percent voter participation. I'm working day and night to ensure that Fifth District residents understand the importance of this election for our schools, our economy, and our quality of life, and I'm asking to earn their votes by sharing what I believe in print, in person, and at [VoteBosen.com](http://VoteBosen.com). Thanks for taking the opportunity to get informed about my candidacy and this critical election. I hope I can earn your vote on August 5.

## **Contact Information:**

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