



HIGHLAND CITY

PRIMARY ELECTION

AUGUST 12, 2025

**VOTER
INFORMATION
GUIDE**

Highland City Candidates

Mayor: (General Election Only)

Brittney P. Bills

City Council: (Listed in Ballot Order)

McKaiden Carruth

Ron Campbell

Wes Warren

Liz Rice

Kristin Richey

Scott L. Smith

Corey Freeze





McKaiden Carruth

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Candidate Bio and Election Information: <http://bit.ly/HC-elections>

1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters with the goal of providing more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland City has done enough in response, or should the City be doing more?

I believe Highland has started to take some steps in the right direction, like exploring options for senior housing and small apartments above shops or businesses, but there's still more we can do. Like many Utah communities, Highland is facing the challenge of keeping housing affordable for young families, seniors, and longtime residents. The State is encouraging cities to be more flexible with housing options, and I think Highland can be part of the solution in a way that still protects what makes our city special. We could allow for things like small in-law apartments or backyard cottages, sometimes called ADUs. These give families more options without changing the overall feel of a neighborhood. We can also be smart about where we allow new housing, focusing on areas closer to main roads or businesses so we don't overwhelm our roads or open spaces. It's not just about building more; it's about building smart. I believe we can find a balanced approach that helps people stay in Highland while still honoring the values and character of our community.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

When faced with decisions, I'll start with resident outreach; through meetings, surveys, written comments, and understanding residents' concerns/questions. Pairing this input with staff's factual analysis (financial reports, infrastructure needs, legal guidelines) can provide direction on what our options are with data driven solutions that serve citizens. That way I can present clear and doable routes back to citizens instead of hypothetical wants. Then I feel the next step is discussing the options with fellow Council Members during Council Meetings, listening to what their findings were and conversations they had with residents. Ultimately, I'll weigh these dimensions; residents' needs, staff data, my own sense of what strengthens Highland, and Council consensus to reach a decision that is transparent, fair, and anchored in the public interest.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

My top concern is balancing Highland's growth with preservation of its character and quality of life. Our population is projected to reach nearly 24,500 by 2050. While we appreciate new housing and business, we must ensure our roads, water supply, parks, and schools keep pace. My solution involves three steps: **Data driven planning** – support staff-led general plan updates, water budgeting, and infrastructure assessments before approving new development. **Public engagement** – host open houses, use surveys, livestream Council meetings, and proactively seek resident input on major decisions. **Strategic zoning & development** – encourage commercial growth in targeted areas to diversify revenue (town center, Timpanogos Highway), while preserving low-density residential zones and robust green/open space. Through the combined efforts of solid planning, active public involvement, and measured development, we can maintain Highland's charm while responsibly preparing for the future.

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

As it stands for me, raising taxes is a last resort. There is a checklist of avenues I would like to ensure we have considered before landing on a tax increase. Such as; being mindful in our budget that new amenities require money to be put aside, and exploring options for grants our city might qualify for. I believe before we come to residents asking for more money it is our job to demonstrate we put in the work and research before asking for financial sacrifice.



Ron Campbell

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1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters with the goal of providing more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland City has done enough in response, or should the City be doing more?

Short answer, yes. Specifically, Highland has initiated three specific strategies that address affordable housing, and is in the process of updating those strategies. The first strategy is to create or allow for, and reduce regulations related to, internal or detached accessory dwelling units in residential zones. The second strategy is to zone or rezone for higher density for moderate income residential development in commercial or mixed-use zones near major transit investment corridors, commercial centers, or employment centers. And finally, the third strategy is to develop a moderate income housing project for residents who are disabled or 55 years old or older. Collectively, these strategies address the State's mandates sufficient for Highland to avoid State initiated penalties (withholding tax revenue) and fines. While I personally wish the State would not impose local land-use mandates on municipalities, they do and we are in compliance, and will continue to be.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

As a council member, I have the responsibility to make decisions that are in the best long-term best interests of the community. First and foremost, I will continue to actively seek out and welcome community feedback. Our city staff offer essential technical knowledge, legal guidance, and operational insights. I place a high value on our city staff expertise. Additionally, I bring my own principles, life experiences, and professional background to the table. I will use these to evaluate complex situations, but will always remain open minded and willing to reconsider in light of new evidence or compelling arguments. Lastly, I have found council collaboration to be a valuable tool to help me navigate through complex situations. While we may not always agree, I will strive to understand their viewpoints and work toward consensus where possible, with mutual respect as the foundation. Ultimately, I will continue to approach each decision with humanity, transparency, and a commitment to doing what's right for Highland's future.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

Long term, my greatest concern deals with our city's infrastructure. While we are close to complete build out, our infrastructure is aging and will, at some point, need replacing. We have budgeted for and are commissioning a thorough infrastructure study. Once the study is complete, we must make strategic plans for adequate funding for updating and/or replacing our city's critical infrastructure.

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

Highland has gone over 12 years without a tax increase. First, we need to continue that trend. We will soon, within the next three years, pay off all our bond debt. I have no interest in pursuing any additional bond debt in the future. While there is a strong community interest in building a 'community center' in Highland, this needs to be done with potential grants or a business/city partnership, not through a bond or tax increase. Second, we currently collect "fees" for such things as public safety, roads, etc. If the State bans municipalities from collecting these fees (which they have already discussed/ threatened over the past few years), a property tax increase will be necessary, but only for the amount needed to offset this reduction in critical revenue. Otherwise, no tax increase.



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1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters in order to provide more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland has done enough in response, or should it be doing more?

Yes, I believe Highland has done enough. In response to the state's questionable mandate, the city plans to allow detached ADUs, enable residential development in select mixed-use and commercial zones, and support a senior-restricted development (like Coventry) that provides higher-density housing for residents 65 and older. These measures satisfy our responsibility to affordable housing while preserving Highland's character and meeting state requirements. Ask me more about what we're doing as a Planning Commission and City Council to address this issue.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

Every decision I make starts with my own understanding of the issue—but never ends there. I believe in grounding decisions in facts, context, and engagement with those affected. I've attended City Council meetings for a decade, currently serve on the Planning Commission, and I'm well-versed in Highland's zoning & code. I've seen how good decisions are made by listening to residents, asking questions, and staying open to other perspectives—especially when they challenge my own. I don't believe residents should be passive observers of city government. I will create more space for feedback outside of formal meetings, so decisions aren't made in a vacuum. That includes better tools for communication and more proactive outreach. Our residents can and should be our greatest resource. Ultimately, I'll weigh resident input, staff expertise, & council dialogue alongside my own judgment—and make decisions that reflect both Highland's values & future. I'd love to talk about what you're seeing in your community.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

One of my greatest concerns is that Highland isn't yet a city you can safely and comfortably move through without a car. There are long stretches— even near our elementary schools—where sidewalks just disappear. There are gaps in our trail system, and many streets still lack bike lanes, shoulders, or safe crossings. That means kids walking to schools or parks, parents with strollers, or residents trying to connect to the Murdock Canal are often left with unsafe or incomplete options. We can do better. We already have the bones of a great system—we just need to finish it. That means completing Highland's sidewalk and trail networks, improving bike accessibility, and building safe crossings over Timpanogos Hwy —especially where it connects Highland Elementary, Town Center, and the future Highland Mains. Available grants can help fund these projects, and I know how to work with city staff & other partners to pursue them. I've been working on these priorities for years—and if elected, I'll keep working to make Highland safer, more connected, & easier to navigate for everyone. What areas do you know of that need these kinds of improvements?

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

There are several creative, responsible ways to fund needed capital projects without bonding or new debt. These include budget cuts, borrowing from enterprise funds or reserves, enabling commercial growth, and redirecting current bond payments once bonds are paid off in two years. Borrowing from ourselves interest-free can work—but we'd still need to replenish those funds. I would never support raising taxes without a clear need, broad resident support, and a sound plan. I'm also not comfortable using reserves without a repayment strategy, nor do I support irresponsible debt. That said, I *would* support responsible bonding—under the right conditions—for a project like a community center or library expansion. And here's the opportunity: since the city is already used to making bond payments, it's in a position—if residents choose—to redirect that same payment toward something meaningful. A center could serve all Highland demographics and support the Arts Council, Historical Society, Youth Council, library programs, senior events, and more. With meeting rooms, creator spaces, work desks and light fitness amenities, it could meet real needs—and sustain itself through usage fees and smart planning. As a Library Board and Parks Committee member, I've seen firsthand the growing demand for programs the city can't currently accommodate. Bonding is how smart cities get big things done. You don't fund capital projects by saving for years. The key is doing it responsibly—with transparency, resident input, and a clear return for community. I'd be eager to hear your insight on the issue!



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1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters with the goal of providing more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland City has done enough in response, or should the City be doing more?

Too many councils have caved to the requests of developers, and to the pressure of the State of Utah, who seem to have no regard for our city plan or vision, or the strain they are placing on our residents and our infrastructure with higher density housing. Because of the overbuilding on properties that were designed to be R-1-40 or larger lots, in addition to the significant increases in traffic we also face a strong possibility of needing to chlorinate our natural spring wells in the near future. This will mean that our existing infrastructure will need more attention, money, and design. Highland has more than met the legal requirements for affordable housing, and should uphold the city plan for lower density with the remaining land available to build.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

I have been present at 98% of city council meetings for the past 4 years. I have watched council members that seem uninterested and sometimes disrespectful to the concerned citizens that come to meetings to address their concerns. I believe that facts and not feelings toward a person, an issue, or an area of Highland should be heard, researched, and understood prior to making decisions and judgments about them. My personal opinions need to be set aside. My research, the city staff findings, and resident input are all important, and should be used in making decisions. The council should always represent Highland residents first, especially above the interests of developers and neighboring cities. Our job is to plan for and protect Highland residents' safety, quality of life, and property values.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

I actually have at least two major concerns. Traffic is one. We need traffic calming measures on Canal Blvd., 10400 North, 9600 North, and 6000 West, for a start. I would like to see the city install a combination of roundabouts and permanent speed bumps in addition to solar powered speed reduction signs and increased patrols.

The second concern, as I mentioned before, is that we now face a very real possibility of chlorination in our water, which our current infrastructure is not built to handle. Some homes have been built too close together and water and sewer lines will need to be redone. The expense of such a project may require a bond. Fortunately, the current existing bond for the city center will be expiring in 2027.

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

Property values in Highland are extremely high, which means our property taxes are also. Our tax rate is lower than all of our neighboring cities and most of the county, but that lower rate is multiplied by a higher property value. We have a significant number of long-time residents who are at risk of being taxed out of the homes that they love and have lived in for decades. I would be extremely cautious about taking on unnecessary bonds or debts that would further burden those residents. For all of the talk about affordable housing and senior housing, we should do better at not pricing our seniors out of the homes they already own. There has been talk for years about a recreation center and a community center. Unfortunately, those are projects that would require a bond. They are not profitable investments either, averaging only 80% of their total costs in revenues, and the balance of their maintenance and upkeep would be funded by taxpaying residents indefinitely. We also don't currently own land to use for them, and would likely pay a very high price in the current market to acquire land. If a bond becomes necessary, I would much rather have it be for necessary services like water, wells, or infrastructure than a recreation center that would likely not be a benefit to the residents that would be most heavily burdened by it.



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1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters with the goal of providing more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland City has done enough in response, or should the City be doing more?

I'm very concerned by the state's continued push for high density housing and the effect it will have on our community. This year at the legislature, SB 337, a bill giving land control to a state appointed committee was strongly opposed, only to be rebranded in an executive order by the Governor. This BUILD Coordinating Council will control housing, transportation, water, open space, etc. through an appointed group of "experts." This unelected council circumvents the legislature and the will of the people in their individual cities. It is a huge overreach of power and I am opposed to it. Cities must be able to have their own plans, with individual home ownership being the goal for citizens.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

As a lifelong conservative I'm committed to upholding the values that make our community strong- faith, family, and freedom. Listening to citizens is important as the City Council discusses decisions that shape the future of the community. I believe that being well informed by city staff and being respectful and kind in expressing opinions in the Council is the best way to collaborate effectively. Differing opinions in a group is normal, and respectful conversation to persuade is necessary. I can work together with others to solve problems and address concerns of citizens.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

As I have attended City Council and Planning Commission meetings, I've seen the work that goes into maintaining the city and supporting existing and future businesses. I'm concerned with land use and how we can preserve the rural character and small town feel of Highland. In the survey I read from last year, many citizens expressed concerns like "Stop messing with the general plan!" "Quit trying to change Highland!" And "Save our open spaces!" The **majority** of people who purchased homes here want that family friendly, small town feel protected through zoning. Maintaining open spaces and trails requires effort and I would suggest a "Day of Community Service", where on a particular Saturday morning there was an organized effort by the city, working with wards, stakes, high school teams, service clubs, and so forth, to beautify a few chosen areas of the city by removing dead trees, cutting back overgrowth, planting areas where needed, or fixing and painting fences. Citizens sign a waiver and participate for a few hours in community service, followed by hot dogs and music in the park. I would love to see that effort in our beautiful community.

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

Ensuring that the city can meet its obligations without excessive debt, prioritizing expenditures, making sound financial decisions and being fully transparent and accountable to citizens is important to preserving Highland for the next generation. In the survey, many citizens said "stop raising taxes and fees!" Several expressed concerns that when the city's bonds are paid off in two years their city bill will not go down but money will be used for other amenities. With the cost of services edging up every year, and the cost of living increasing regularly, people are concerned about the city spending too much and I agree.



Scott L. Smith

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1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters with the goal of providing more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland City has done enough in response, or should the City be doing more?

Unfortunately, 'affordable housing' has become synonymous with 'high density' housing. With land prices and the demographics of Highland, it is questionable if even high-density housing is truly affordable. Repeated surveys have shown that the majority of Highland residents favor lower density, larger lots, and an open, rural feel which I strongly support. The City has allowed higher density in the Town Center, Sky Estates, and 689 units in the Ridgeview Development south of Lone Peak High School. The City also allows attached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and is discussing detached units. Highland has more than complied with the goals of the State Legislature in this regard.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

We live in a Constitutional Republic where elected officials make legislative decisions. When voting on neighborhood concerns affecting several people (ex. road and traffic issues) I approach an issue as if I live there. I have tried to be a good listener. As a physician, I am always concerned about public safety. We have a professional, competent City Staff; their research and guidance are essential; however, the majority do not live in Highland. Council Members are Highland citizens and in addition to considering staff recommendations, need to make decisions balancing public input, common sense, and historical Highland values. I believe it is important to discuss all facets of an issue, avoid "group think" while valuing the opinions of all Council members; I will respectfully disagree at times.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

With continued growth, we need to address both culinary water and pressurized irrigation needs. Culinary water: We have five main wells and are already aggressively upgrading and lowering the depth to meet current and future needs. We are building utility reserves for future repairs. Irrigation water: new pumps are coming on line to tap into our share of the Murdoch Canal water. Meters are installed; public grants helped defer the cost. We will seek much citizen input when establishing fair and equitable usage fees. Upgrading the irrigation systems for public spaces is critical to maintain a beautiful and water-wise City.

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

There has not been a City property tax increase in Highland for almost 20 years. When property values increase, the County lowers the certified tax rate so that the portion of City property tax has not increased except for new growth. Unfortunately, both School Board and County property taxes have increased. In 2 ½ years, Highland will have all bonded (borrowed debt) paid off. We will be a debt-free city! At that time the monthly Road Fee of \$18.50 will sunset (expire). We eliminated the Open Space fee on 18 neighborhoods. The new Highland Family Park was built through donations, grants, land sales, and new growth impact fees. I am committed to keeping taxes and fees low.



Corey Freeze

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1. The State has become very involved in local land use matters with the goal of providing more affordable housing. Do you feel that Highland City has done enough in response, or should the City be doing more?

The housing shortage, often labeled a crisis, impacts Highland residents in varied ways. Longtime homeowners have seen their property values soar, doubling or more over the past decade, a boon for them but a barrier for new buyers. Young families and individuals struggle to afford homes in Utah's competitive market. Living in Southeast Highland's Ridgeview neighborhood, I'm fortunate to be surrounded by a diverse community of couples, families, and individuals, despite the high costs. To address these challenges, Highland should expand housing options for seniors seeking to downsize or afford a home. Affordable housing for essential workers, like teachers and public safety professionals, would strengthen our community by allowing them to live where they work. Highland permits accessory dwelling units (ADUs) like basement or garage apartments but should actively promote their development. Encouraging flag lots and the division of large 1+ acre lots, when proposed by property owners, could further increase housing diversity and accessibility.

2. When making a decision as a Council Member, you will need to balance public interest, resident input, information provided by staff, your personal opinion, and the differing opinions of Council Members. How will you consider these when making your decision?

Each source of input is valuable when evaluating city decisions, as respectful listening fosters greater wisdom and understanding. I prioritize the will of the people when it is clear. For instance, if Highland residents prefer stores closed on Sundays or support allowing alcohol in local restaurants, I would advocate for their preferences, even if they differ from my own. I approach decisions with a focus on the spirit of the law rather than its letter, prioritizing neighbors' property rights and freedoms over city interests whenever possible. When faced with a decision, I ask, "What would 100 Highland residents from across the city choose?" I am confident in leading with the majority's response.

3. What is your greatest concern about Highland that needs to be addressed, and what is your solution?

Highland is a vibrant community filled with kind, neighborly people who cherish their connections. However, its affluence can sometimes foster pride, creating divides between the "haves" and "have-nots," or long-time residents and newcomers. Some homeowners may look down on renters, while others resist change, clinging to a NIMBY mindset that opposes new development or higher-density housing. My approach is to unite Highland by celebrating every neighbor's unique value and fostering a sense of shared community. Over the past three years, I've met over 1,000 new friends in Highland, each enriching our neighborhood. People, not taxes, zoning, or amenities like parks and trails, are the heart of Highland, and they will be my focus.

4. Would you consider increasing taxes to improve or expand any public service or to add a new amenity? If so, what would it be? If not, please explain your position.

I am cautious about raising taxes, given the significant contributions Highland City residents already make through property taxes. However, I support exploring the development of a Highland Senior Center to provide a vibrant space for neighbors to enjoy meals, activities, exercise classes, and arts programs. Additionally, incorporating a Senior Day Care program could address the needs of residents balancing work and caregiving responsibilities for elderly parents.

Do you need to register to vote or update your voter registration?

Go to vote.utah.gov or you call the Utah County Elections Office at (801) 851-8128.

When will I receive my ballot?

Ballots will be mailed out starting July 22nd to all registered voters. If you do not receive your ballot by August 5th, call Utah County Elections at (801) 851-8128.

How do I vote?

- **Early Voting:** Early voting will take place at the Utah County Elections office located at 100 E Center Street, Provo, UT from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on August 4th to 8th, and August 11th.
- **Ballot Drop Box:** Drop off your ballot at any Utah County Ballot Drop Box beginning Tuesday, July 22, 2025 through 8:00 pm on Tuesday, August 12, 2025. For your convenience, there is a drop box located on the north side of the City Offices, 5400 W Civic Center Dr. Drop box locations throughout the county can be found at vote.utahcounty.gov/voting-locations
- **Vote Centers on Election Day:** Drop off your ballot at any Vote Center throughout the County on Primary Election Day, August 12, 2025 from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. For a list of Vote Centers go to vote.utahcounty.gov/voting-locations
- **Mail:** Mail in your ballot. **Note:** Due to new legislation this year, your ballot must be received no later than 8:00 pm on Election Day. We strongly recommend using either the ballot drop boxes or vote centers to ensure that your ballot will arrive in time.

Did you know you can track your ballot?

Go to vote.utah.gov to sign up to track your ballot.

