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MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Note: Naomi Pete is not a Democrat and was not interviewed because The BDC can only endorse Democratic candidates. Logan Bowie did not respond to interview requests.

Adena Ishii

Note: Mayoral candidates were interviewed by the board of the Berkeley Democratic Club. These oral interviews are transcribed for length and clarity, not content. Full interviews available on our [YouTube](#) channel. To ensure fairness and equitable time, seven questions are highlighted from the interviews.

1. Why are you running for Mayor?

I'm running from there because it's time for a reset at City Hall. We've had two city council members leave stating that our local government has become broken and toxic. While our council members fight each other, we aren't focusing on our problems. I bring a fresh perspective— I'm someone who knows that it's important that we unite Berkeley around common sense solutions. I'm focused on housing and homelessness, public safety, and infrastructure. I've been a leader in our local community as president of the League of Women Voters here as the youngest and first woman of color in over 107 years. I was appointed to the Soda Tax Commission by both former mayor Tom Bates and current mayor Jesse Arreguin. I've worked on a number of measures in this city and I know the issues very well. I live here in South Berkeley with my family and I look forward to your questions to learn more about your club and see what you all are focused on. Thanks for having me.

2. What are your top issues you would like to address?

When it comes to **housing and homelessness**, I'm someone who has experienced housing insecurity so I understand the importance of policy but also making sure that we are actually implementing that policy. In Berkeley, we need to build affordable housing in every Berkeley neighborhood. I'm a supporter of missing middle housing, the upzoning, and building on our BART stations. I also know that when it comes to homelessness we need to make sure our shelters are safe and accessible. I'm sure you all know about the shooting that happened at one of our shelters. If people don't feel safe being in the shelters they're not going to want to go to them. We need to make sure we're providing them with the right support services as well, including mental health.

When it comes to **public safety**, I believe we need a balanced approach— investing in our social services, mental health youth programming, as well as making sure our police and fire departments have the appropriate tools necessary to keep us safe. I've actually done a ride along with [the] fire [department, and] with police. I've done a sit along with dispatch and our Homeless Response Team.

When it comes to **infrastructure**, I want to make sure that both our streets, sidewalks, and transportation systems are safe and accessible. I'm someone who is supporting Measure FF

because I know that it's more than just paving our streets and making sure they're smooth. We also need to make sure we're allowing for safety. When it comes to infrastructure, we should also be looking at climate change and how are we preparing our city. [TIME EXPIRED]

3. What is your vision for improving and enhancing Berkeley's Downtown?

I've spent a lot of time talking to business owners. Many of the business owners have told me that when there are more people who are living downtown, they are going to have more foot traffic which will allow them to have more business. Even though some folks disagree with me, I know that there are families and young professionals that are living in these buildings.

I also know that with our small businesses in downtown Berkeley one of the things that they're really concerned about is homelessness. Unfortunately folks who are having mental health crises and leaving trash and human waste on people's doorsteps. We need to make sure that our streets are clean and that we're providing support for these folks so that they can have the right support they need and they have a place to go that's not just downtown in front of someone's shop.

Public safety is another piece of this so increased lighting is always a great option. A lot of folks don't actually know about parking in Downtown. They are concerned about how to access it. We have BART, public transportation, increased bike racks and also the parking—so making sure folks know about that and that we're supporting, as a City, the transportation there and also the events that are happening. These events have brought a lot of life back into the downtown and we need to encourage that. As we are building more housing downtown and they are going to be revitalizing a lot of the businesses on the ground level and more folks move in downtown, things will look very different. It's really important that we have a downtown that we can be proud of here.

4. Currently, absent Council direction to the contrary, city staff are continuing to follow the Martin vs Boise standard of offering shelter in every instances before closing an encampment. According to city staff, they do not have the authority to enforce on dangerous encampments which constitute a public health hazard or even a fire hazard. Do you believe that continuing this approach is the right policy, especially persistent and dangerous encampments?

I have spent time at some of these encampments, visiting them with our Homeless Response Team and also shadowing HAC, the Homeless Action Center. I know that [District 1 City Council Member] Rashi Kesarwani brought forward something to the Council that will be heard in the next week. It is important that we are paying attention to health and safety. I do know that some of these encampments can be dangerous.

At the same time, I think that we need to make sure that it's tailored narrowly enough so that we can't just say sweep all these encampments. I have some concerns about the way that we are treating encampments in our city currently. Even though I know we say that we are offering shelter first, I have spoken to many folks who have had their belongings thrown away and that

includes medication, money, [and] personal documents. That's important because if we want people to get off the street, we need to make sure we're not throwing away their documentation. It makes it much harder for them to access housing. Personally, we need to be focusing on making sure that we're finding them shelter or a safe encampment site or safe parking site and putting our energy there because I know that sweeps can also be quite expensive. In speaking to many officers in the Berkeley Police Department, some of them are uncomfortable throwing away people's belongings. Of course, there are some things that are just trash that are in encampments. Also, it's very difficult for folks to go through and figure out what is actually important [to encampment residents] or not. I think if we are doing sweeps we need to be thinking more thoughtfully about how we are moving folks because people can also just return to the same exact spot. Then we're not really solving anything. So [the City needs to be] focusing on making sure we have shelters and places for people to go more than focusing on moving people with sweeps.

[see video for follow up question on Harrison corridor encampments]

5. Do you support efforts to end exclusionary zoning and what does that mean to you? What if any restrictions on new housing do you feel are appropriate in the Berkeley hills in and in other neighborhoods in Berkeley that have a particularly exclusionary history?

I absolutely believe that we need to get rid of exclusionary zoning in the city. I'm a big supporter of [ending exclusionary zoning] and I've been following missing middle [housing legislation] as it's been going through Council. There are many folks who came out from District 6 and District 5 who were unhappy with changes to housing [policy]. They stated that they were concerned about fire danger in the hills. I recognize that fire danger is absolutely a concern. There are many folks who will be unable to get down from the hills during a fire and that would be an absolute horrible disaster. At the same time, I think that many folks don't realize that the number of units that would actually be created up in the hills is actually a lot smaller than they expect. Many folks I've spoken to have talked about high rises and thousands of people moving up into the Berkeley Hills. That's not actually what we were talking about there so I think it's important to make sure that folks understand what does it actually look like? What is the impact of making changes? I am interested to see what the evacuation plan looks like and have more information to know what the actual impact on the hills with more housing; but generally I am supportive of allowing more housing to be built and not having too strict restrictions because I think it does it does really show how we have continued to discriminate when it comes to housing.

6. Automated License Plate Readers and surveillance cameras have helped Berkeley Police catch serious criminals, including recently nabbing a driver who ran over and seriously injured a child on Alcatraz. Do you support Automated License Plate Readers and hot spot cameras to prevent crime and catch criminals if they comply with the surveillance ordinance and public works retains control over the cameras?

Yes absolutely. I also followed that issue very closely. Alcatraz and Dover is actually a very dangerous area and I used to live on Alcatraz and Adeline, just a little bit below that, and I know that people just go flying by there. When I heard about that hit and run, unfortunately, I wasn't surprised. I think that there are some seriously dangerous streets in our city and having those License Plate Reader cameras is a benefit. The fact that they [Berkeley Police] were able to catch that person using [automated license plate readers] was a huge success story for using those cameras.

[BDC mistakenly repeated a question about top issues she wanted to address. Please see video to listen to Ishii reiterate her policy priority areas]

7. Do you have anything else to add?

I'm running because I really think we need to reset at City Hall. We have had a lot of drama, for lack of a better word, on our City Council. I think it's important to have someone who can come in and work with people. I'm someone who has a proven track record, having worked in non-partisan politics for over a decade and bringing people together across differences to get around common sense solutions. I think that's really important currently. One of my opponents left City Council. What is it that we are saying to support someone who has left our city, had us pay for a special election, and wants to come back and be Mayor in a city where we know that the mayor does not have that much more power than a city council member.

I think that one of my biggest concerns for the city (even though of course I'm focused on housing and homelessness, public safety and infrastructure) is our staff. I think that staff is one of our major concerns in our city. It is really going to impact how we get things done. I have spoken to so many staff who are very concerned about the direction of our city. [They] want to make sure that we have a Mayor who is going to support them in doing the work that they are supposed to be doing and allowing them to do their jobs and not interfere in a way that is going to prevent them from doing [their] job. We need to create a stable environment where we can show the city that we have strong leadership, that we are focused on the important issues, and that we're not going to get distracted by drama and infighting. I think that's really essential.

Sophie Hahn

Note: Mayoral candidates were interviewed by the board of the Berkeley Democratic Club. These oral interviews are transcribed for length and clarity, not content. Full interviews available on our [YouTube](#) channel. To ensure fairness and equitable time, seven questions are highlighted from the interviews.

1. Please introduce yourself and why are you running for Mayor?

I grew up in Berkeley and raised my own family just a few blocks from my childhood home. I think most people know that literally from grade school to the City Council, I have been very devoted to this community. I want to say that I will never, ever quit on Berkeley or on my obligations to you. In Berkeley, I've been a leader for the schools, for the libraries. I've served on the boards of Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, the zoning board, the Commission on the

Status of Women. I'm running to continue Berkeley's legacy as a pace setter for equity and environmental action and transform Berkeley into a resilient 21st century city that supports strong community, thriving local commerce, robust civic engagement, active transit, health, equity and joy.

2. Tell us about your top issues and your priorities that you want to address.

I have five priorities: house people, care for people, revitalize our common home, help save the planet, and advance equity to fulfill the promise of Berkeley. Housing people— I want to continue creating housing at all levels of affordability. I'm a huge champion for affordable housing and I have some very ambitious ideas around that. I want to focus on creating new ownership opportunities, achieving our fair housing goals, and, of course, continuing to end unsheltered homelessness which is something I've done a lot of work on and am very passionate about. Caring for people— that is ensuring the health and safety and the well-being of all Berkeleyans, that includes all the public safety issues from policing, making sure we have a strong well-trained and well overseen police force. Saving Alta Bates hospital or another full service acute and emergency care hospital, earthquake and fire preparedness, but also a special focus on children and seniors. We have an aging population, people with disabilities, etc. Revitalizing our common home— we need to transform Berkeley into a safe and vibrant city that prioritizes community gathering, open space, local commerce, and active transit. We have a 19th century city that we have underinvested in for a long time and I think we need to make major investments in transformative change for how we take care of the physical plant of the common home that we share together. Obviously help save the planet—we need to continue our efforts to fight climate change and restore the environment and equity and the promise of Berkeley an equitable future where everyone thrives.

3. What is your vision of improving and enhancing Berkeley's Downtown?

If I could wave my own magic wand, I would stop it from being basically a super highway that takes us past the downtown and make it into a vibrant attractive destination. That means pedestrianizing it to the greatest extent possible [and] adding street life. I think the one silver lining of the pandemic is that we all learned that being out dining and shopping in the streets is actually incredibly pleasant. I would like our downtown to be so fabulous, so beautifully designed, and attractive, landscape seating, places to walk, kiosks, street fairs, street musician really truly lively and vibrant so much so that people all over Berkeley would say, "hey, let's just go downtown and stroll. It's so lovely." So I really have a very transformative vision for the Downtown. Our arts organizations are struggling [and] I tried sort of a Hail Mary at the last minute. When I understood that our arts organizations in the downtown, many of them are facing critical economic crises, I tried to pull together a measure so that we could support them. They are pulling out of the pandemic more slowly than some of the other businesses and organizations. We have to invest in the arts. If we don't do that, I think that we will no longer be the vibrant, cultural community that I think is what attracted most of us to living here.

4. Currently, absent Council direction to the contrary, city staff are continuing to follow the Martin vs Boise standard of offering shelter in every instance before closing an encampment. According to city staff, they do not have the authority to



enforce on dangerous encampments which constitute a public health hazard or even a fire hazard. Do you believe that continuing this approach is the right policy, especially persistent and dangerous encampments?

First of all, I do not want persistent and dangerous encampments. I think that the general idea of Martin vs Boise is a good idea and it is the first thing that we should pursue but I absolutely think that we need to have the authority to address more problematic encampments. We need more tools to do that. I think the line of cases that came down in interpreting and expanding Martin really tied our hands are just actually sort of absurd. So I'm pleased that we have a little more leeway now but I want to be super clear: I actually met with the city attorney about this for an hour this week. We have all the authority that was provided by the recent Supreme Court ruling. We are not no longer constrained by Martin or by those cases. So we have all that authority now. There is nothing that stops our staff from exercising all of it. *[Editor's note: city staff issued a [memo](#) stating that they did **not** currently have the authority.]*

Obviously, the City of Berkeley is never going to move to an enforcement-first model. I don't support that and by the way, it doesn't work. We have reduced unsheltered homelessness by 45% using the policies that we have in place which are working. Clearly, we have a few locations at encampments where those policies aren't working. I welcome the opportunity to have a stronger hand as a last resort when our humane, housing first, services-first approach hasn't yielded the results that we need. We need people to accept housing and services and not continually impact specific locations. I am glad that the city has more leeway to address very problematic encampments.

[see video for follow up question on Harrison corridor encampments]

5. You have not supported the automated license plate readers, surveillance cameras, or supported residents to voluntarily give BPD access to their security camera footage. Can you explain why you didn't support these measures to ostensibly deter and prevent crime?

I think there's a little mistake in there. I certainly have never opposed having private individuals share their camera footage—not sure where that came from, but that's incorrect *[Editor's note: Hahn did not support. [Link—Item 22](#)]*.

I support the responsible deployment of technology, including surveillance technology. My problem is that the city does not have, in my opinion, a responsible balanced set of policies that strike the right balance between the utility of surveillance and the intrusion into civil liberties. Doing that is something I would like to do as Mayor. I also know that the back end policies about how we store, use, who has access to all of that surveillance footage are not tight enough. So I support the use of technology, just like I support all reasonable balanced uses of police powers, but that has to be carefully balanced against civil liberties. I don't think this city is anywhere near to achieving that. To be a little more specific, we have no criteria for how we select a location where we deploy surveillance technology, we have no process for reviewing that location after a reasonable amount of time, we don't have any criteria for evaluating what we consider the utility

to be (*Editor's Note: location determination and review explained on p. 77 of [Surveillance Ordinance](#)*). So we can take a billion images and over a year, one or two were useful. Do we think that that's the proper balance? We have to have a rational way to decide how and where we're deploying these technologies, for what reason to evaluate after a reasonable amount of time and also to harvest and remove that if we find that it does not meet our utility standard. So I absolutely support it but I just don't think we have in place what I think we need to to strike that civil liberties utility balance.

[see video for follow up question on surveillance]

- 6. I think there is broad agreement in Berkeley that housing is too expensive and too hard to find for all but for the very wealthy. Over the course of your tenure on the City Council and Zoning Adjustments Board, you have at times expressed skepticism toward new housing and its impact on overall housing affordability. Such skepticism has included seeking to exempt the hills from providing equitable zoning as well as having once described efficiency units as having insufficient space for people to be intimate. *[Editor's note and correction/apology: In 2024, Hahn did seek to exempt the hills in 2024; however, in 2021 she introduced legislation with Kate Harrison to [only upzone \(build more housing\) the hills— non-redlined areas— in 2021](#)]. Has your position on housing evolved? If so, what is the policy that you would champion as Mayor that you think would represent a break with your past positions on new housing?***

You're pointing to a few very small exceptions and you're missing the bigger picture of my record on housing. I was on the zoning board for almost seven years. I said yes to thousands of units of housing. I abstained on a few and said no on a few and out of thousands of units of housing, I think that that's a reasonable record. I have appointed a strongly pro-housing Zoning Board member, Shoshana O'Keefe. We have calculated it together— we literally have said yes to more than 10,000 units of housing. So that's my record on housing.

On zoning, I have voted in favor of every single upzoning that has come before the City Council. I want that record to be straight. Regarding the hills, the fire and earthquake hazards in those areas are real. They are not fake, manufactured issues that are being put forward in order to thwart added density. We already know that about 500 people— that is what studies have shown— will not be able to escape from the high hills in case of a catastrophic fire, which is a likely outcome. Unfortunately our housing goals and our public safety goals are in tension in the very high fire hazard severity area. I do have an idea about how to resolve them in a way that is equitable and that is unit neutral. That is something that I plan to bring forward. To explain that, fire doesn't care if there are two units or four units or a single family home. Fire just burns a certain amount of material, whether it's trees and shrubbery or actually buildings themselves. I think we need to put a cap on the total amount of built structures that you can have on a parcel in the hills and probably a cap on the number of bedrooms as sort of a proxy for how many people might be able to live on that parcel. Anyway, I think we can resolve this tension in a way that doesn't favor single family housing but also addresses the real fire safety needs and that is something that I'm committed to doing.

7. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

We have done better than most communities during and in the wake of the pandemic. Places like Oakland and San Francisco had huge shortfalls in their budget and have really struggled with huge deficits. I'm incredibly proud that we have been able to weather the pandemic and come out of the pandemic with balanced budgets without any cuts to services or reductions in workforce. I am incredibly proud of how we have responsibly navigated that and this huge economic impact that we've had because of the pandemic.

I always hope that we have additional funds available for our innovative ideas. launching new ideas and programs. We are not just a city that putt putts along. We really pride ourselves on pushing the envelope on innovative policies and programs. That's how we have reduced homelessness by 45%. We didn't have the money this year to fund the kinds of innovative things that in the past we've been able to fund.

Kate Harrison

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1. Why are you running for Mayor?

I am running for Mayor to work with you to create a livable climate forward City with Urban amenities. I stand for safe streets for kids and us, providing cost-effective mental health, health, homeless and public health services, enshrining economic and racial equity and creating an accountable and open city government. I have proven leadership and management skills gained during my work on the council and my years of experience in government. Cities change all the time. Berkeley needs a mayor who looks forward to change and is prepared to lead us through it while preserving what makes us special as one of the countries healthiest and most lively small cities.

As a longtime resident of the diverse Shattuck corridor and the former District 4 councilmember, I have a unique vantage point on how to create a livable, modern city. I brought people together in coalitions to pass legislation. I do not shy away from issues and do not abstain to avoid the hard votes. I cast, for example, the tie breaking vote on allowing ADUs in the hills without parking and refusing to pave Hopkins Street without safety and environmental improvements (*Editor's note: Harrison was absent 9/19/23 when the Council deadlocked on ADU parking in the hills. She was not the deciding vote when it returned on 10/3/23 but voted in favor*). I listen and work with our business community and residents, for example, to create our Hope Center. I look forward to working with you. Without this leadership we will be in an endless cycle of competing ballot measures, as we see this year.

2. Tell us about your top issues and your priorities that you want to address.

I have a lot of priorities but the top three for me are 1) building an accessible, affordable, and transit-rich city. 2) public safety for all and 3) climate equity.

In terms of an equitable city, we need to invest resources if we want to have affordable housing and we want to have a city that everyone wants to be in. However, we cannot rely entirely on the residents of Berkeley. I'm looking forward to working with regional partners and insisting that we get our fair share. The way that funds are allocated to Berkeley is unfair. We're not receiving what we are due and we are also not adequately evaluating our services for their cost-effectiveness. So, as we worked toward an accessible city that's transit rich and has affordable housing, we have really to be tough on understanding what is happening with the numbers and that is something I excel at.

A climate equity approach. It's great that I can afford solar panels but we have many residents in Berkeley that do not have these resources. I established the Climate Equity Fund which allows low-income homeowners and tenants, using union labor, to get improvements made to their environment. Also, I'd like to expand that to include fire safety improvements. We've done a lot of work on earthquake safety but we have not attacked the twin crises of climate and fire safety.

Finally, real public safety for all. That includes making sure we have an adequate police force but also that we are not wasting resources on things that they are not in the best place to do. We want them to fight crime, essentially. We are slow in adopting the unit that's supposed to deal with mental health crises. We have not expanded our work in BerkDOT. We've really not moved forward on the promise of trying to see who the best people are to do the job cost effectively, while leaving our police intact to deal with crime I worked with our department to create a program to etch catalytic converters with VIN numbers so when they are stolen we could know when we found them who was behind that. We've seen a big decline in those thefts. I work with our Downtown Business Association on making our downtown safer and more livable. I'll continue that work while insisting that we have the people to do the job they are best suited for.

3. What is your vision of improving and enhancing Berkeley's Downtown?

We're in a period right now of growing pains. There's a lot of new building going on, but I just want to say that I don't think the Downtown was all so fabulous in 2000. I think what we are doing now in creating a more lively downtown is a real plus for the city; however, in the meantime, we're losing a lot of our small businesses. So one of the things I'm very focused on is how do we provide security for those businesses so they don't get forced out. For example, Missing Link was forced out of Shattuck because there is going to be a housing project— all to the good—but in the meantime, there's an empty hole and there's crime on my street, and a drug den, frankly. So we have to think about the vitality now as we move towards the future. I worked with the DBA [*Downtown Business Association*] on a lot of beautification efforts for the downtown—trash corrals, making BART plaza better, doing seating, creating a business damage fund so when people are vandalized, we can help them recover from that. But we need to focus both on housing and retail at the same time. They need to be integrated together. I'm also a little

concerned we're adding residents without some of the necessities of life like a good grocery store in the Downtown. We don't have that. I live in D4 [*Editor's note: Downtown*]. We have no grocery stores, except in the very northern end. We don't have the things that make a city a city. We are not becoming Manhattan, we're kind of becoming a suburb with apartment buildings because we are not building the other things. I consider that the city's responsibility to set that direction, not the responsibility of an individual building developer. But we need to do the long range planning. We need to step back and say "what do we need to make this a vital city and someplace where people really want to live?"

- 4. Currently, absent Council direction to the contrary, city staff are continuing to follow the Martin vs Boise standard of offering shelter in every instance before closing an encampment. According to city staff, as of yesterday, they do not have the authority to enforce on dangerous encampments which constitute a public health hazard or even a fire hazard. Do you believe that continuing this approach is the right policy, especially persistent and dangerous encampments?**

I'm not certain that is completely true because we have closed encampments in the last two years under the Boise regime [*Editor's note: city staff issued a [memo](#) stating why they did **not** currently have the authority.*] I think, though, what we're finding is we're closing encampments and putting people in living situations where they are not going to stay. So, while I like the hotel model, it is cost-effective for us because we get money from the state and county, but people are not staying there because they have no ability to cook, live their own lives, have visitors, etc. So we see on San Pablo, this huge problem of people in the hotel there, spilling out on the street, creating crime, and going back to living in these encampments. So, as quickly as we are cleaning them up, they are being re-created. We need solutions like the Hope Center, which is in Downtown, Jordan Court, which is in my district, and things that have real permanency to them with services.

At the same time, I'm completely in favor of closing encampments that are dangerous. We had this one on Milvia Street where we closed that encampment under the Boise regime. So I'm not sure why it's being said they don't have that authority. I think clarifying that authority would be really helpful. I think it's not that they don't have it but there have been so many statements of what we are doing that it can be confusing for staff.

[see video for follow up question on Harrison corridor encampments]

- 5. In this and past campaigns you have spoken of yourself is a pro-housing candidate and even said at public hearings and meetings that you like and support tall buildings. However, at a 2017 candidate forum, you said you did not support tall building at BART stations and at a [Livable California meeting](#) boasted about having been the only council member who didn't support increasing the city's housing capacity and proudly noted it had made you a local pariah. How do you reconcile these opposing positions as well as your absence during the city's council's vote to end exclusionary zoning.**



First of all, people evolve and I think we have seen that with Mayor Arreguín. This was in 2017, right? I had barely gotten into office at that point. We have had more building downtown. I haven't objected to any of these tall buildings [*Editor's note: Harrison has supported [one](#) out of three [Downtown projects](#) appealed to the City Council in 2019 and 2024*]. Height is not the issue that I concern myself with. I'm totally fine with the BART project except that I would have liked to see more building separation on the buildings on Sacramento, to be frank. I think it's kind of a wall of buildings and I don't love that. We have seen a change in people's attitudes toward housing. And I don't think referring to a 2017 comment is very helpful.

What we need to do is look at the record—I voted for the ADUs [Accessory Dwelling Units] in the hills when there was a massive objection by the two councilmembers that live in the hills. They were using parking as an excuse not to do it. I am in favor of the multifamily z... housing everywhere in the city. I have it on my block. Look where I live—next door to me is an apartment building, next door to that is a house with two cottages, and there's another house, and there's an apartment building. That's the city I like living in. That density is really attractive to me. So, the sort of gentle densification is great. The tall buildings downtown are not a problem. The only problem is, as we are waiting for them to be built, as I said, we are ending up with a sort of shell in some parts of the downtown that are creating crime and other problems, which we need to rectify. I think that would be my response. People do change. I'm a good listener. I learn things. I changed my position on surveillance cameras towards supporting them when my opponent did not. You find out things when you get into office.

- 6. Given that the exclusionary housing vote was in 2021, as was the Livable California meeting, since you say you have evolved, will you commit to opposing [Livable California](#)'s future anti-housing stances and to affirmatively support as mayor the efforts to end exclusionary zoning across the city?**

Yes. I have never been a member of Livable California because I think that they have serious problems in terms of their proposed ballot measure they were trying to do, etc. I don't like that approach at all. I think every city needs to figure this out while building the needed housing.

[SEE VIDEO FOR BUDGET QUESTION]

- 7. Automated license plate readers and surveillance cameras have recently helped Berkeley Police catch serious criminals, including recently nabbing a driver who did the hit and run and seriously injured a child. Do you support automated license plate readers and hotspot cameras to prevent crime and catch criminals so long as the city complies with the surveillance ordinance and Public Works routines control over the cameras?**

Thank you for those conditions because those are the conditions I care about. I helped write the surveillance ordinance and then I helped write the policy that allowed us to buy ALPRs and these and these cameras working with the police department and their union. As long as we

are protecting data from being sent to places like Texas, which frankly are going to send agents here to crack down on gender assignment surgery, crack down on people seeking choice rights. I don't trust their police. I trust our police. So the data retention policies that I wrote which keep data for minor traffic things, like you're in a 72-hour parking zone for longer, for only a limited period are really important to me. I don't want to build a record of somebody if they are a bad parker or keep parking illegally. We need to be careful about how we use the data but I think the data can be really useful. I voted for the pilot of the surveillance cameras. Councilmember Hahn did not [*Editor's note: Hahn supported the [pilot program in June 2023](#) but [both Harrison and Hahn did not vote in favor of the surveillance cameras in 2024.](#)*] I think we need to see how those are being effectuated and are they working for us. That's where I'm at at this moment is seeing how we can put them at entrance and exit points. I'm not in favor of putting surveillance cameras just where there are homeless people. I will say that I think there's sometimes an effort to do that and I think we should be thinking about serious crime when we are talking about these cameras.

[See video for answers about the Pedestrian and Bike Plan implementation and closing.]

COUNCIL CANDIDATES

District 2

Terry Taplin

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running to continue my work on housing affordability, community safety, climate resiliency, and economic justice. These past four years, I have worked closely with neighborhoods and community leaders in my district to elevate West and South Berkeley's priorities and needs and delivered historic investments. The Berkeley City Council needs leaders with an unwavering focus on pragmatic solutions to local problems and the ability to work collaboratively with staff, colleagues, and community stakeholders to advance the city's goals and place municipal service above all else.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

In addition to my four years of City Council service, I previously served as Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission and worked as an instructional assistant at Berkeley City College and a research assistant at Saint Mary's College. I am also a caretaker for my disabled mother, who lives with MS and diabetes.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to



address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

Housing affordability: affordable housing zoning overlay; social housing pilot study; first-time home buyer's assistance.

Community safety: EMS triaging to divert low-acuity calls for service; expanding community policing units like the bike force to commercial districts across the city;

Climate resilient infrastructure: a fiscal policy directly tying excess equity to critical capital improvement projects that advance the city's Climate Action, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Plans.

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

I am proud that we avoided layoffs and supported community organizations with a proven track record of successful recreational equity and economic justice programming for young people.

I am disappointed that we had to close the deficit by borrowing from the pension trust, pausing worker's comp, and severely reducing the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department's capital improvement budget (and other department cuts) while maintaining several high-expense, non-essential, duplicative, politically motivated line items.

5. Given the current vacancy rates, the police department relies heavily on overtime to meet minimum staffing and coverage needs. Do you support filling vacant police officer positions and hiring additional community service officers to ensure adequate staffing and patrol coverage, if a staffing analysis confirms the necessity? Additionally, please describe your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley.

Yes. I have a comprehensive and multipronged approach to crime that includes prevention through community investment, intervention through the fostering of partnerships between the community and law enforcement to break patterns and cycles of crime with a focus on resources, services, and community policing, modern tools for the investigation and resolution of crimes with strong use policies with built-in protections for privacy right and civil liberties.

6. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?

- YES
- NO

7. Do you believe that there is too much market-rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

- YES
- NO

8. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ?

Check all that apply.

- 16 story buildings downtown Yes
- ≥7 story buildings in Priority Development Areas

It is fundamentally inequitable to have one set of density standards for “priority development areas” vs high-resource corridors

- ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the Housing Element’s assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing.

It is fundamentally inequitable to have one set of density standards for “priority development areas” vs high-resource corridors

- Fourplexes only in neighborhoods outside State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones Yes
- Fourplexes only outside Berkeley’s Fire Zones 2 & 3.
- Fourplexes only in formerly non-redlined areas
- Fourplexes everywhere

(OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL YES/NO QUESTIONS–TAPLIN)

9. Do you support the homeless services tax (W)?

Yes

NO

10. Do you support the library tax (X)?

- YES
- NO

11. Do you support the parks tax (Y)?

YES

• NO

12. Do you support the soda tax (Z) ?

- YES
- NO

13. Do you support Council’s amendments to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (BB)?

- YES
- NO

14. Do you support the citizen’s initiative to amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (CC)?

- YES
- NO

15. Do you support the citizen’s initiative “Fix the Streets” (EE)?

- YES
- NO

16. Do you support the citizen’s initiative “Safe Streets”? (FF)

- YES
- NO

17. Do you support the Large Buildings Fossil Free Tax? (GG)

- YES
- NO

18. Do you support the Healthy Buildings Ordinance? (HH)

- YES
- NO

19. Do you support the recall of District Attorney Pamela Price?

- YES
- NO

Jenny Guarino

Jenny Guarino did not complete the questionnaire.

District 3

Deborah Matthews

1. Why are you running for office?

South Berkeley needs an advocate who keeps the needs of residents and small businesses front and center in the council members' minds. I am that advocate. I am committed to leading Berkeley to support South Berkeley as a vibrant district in our city and not observe its continued historical decline in economic investment and public safety. With 30 years of advocacy under my belt, I am ready to use my leadership to serve as a Council Member. My commitment extends to delivering low-income and missing-middle income at the Ashby BART and city-wide. The Missing Middle initiative will create opportunities through supply for more affordable homes, lower rents, and homeownership. I will encourage our Mayor and Council to provide laser focus and community investment/intervention programs in our neighborhoods with the goal of

reducing violent crime and drug activity that plague the community. This will provide greater excellent public safety throughout our city.

2. What relevant experience prepares you for this role?

I am the first African American Woman to serve as President of the Berkeley Democratic Club in its 90-year history. I received a State of California Recognition Award, presented by Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer. This recognition is a testament to my leadership and dedication to serving our community.

- I received an Amazing Woman's Day Conference Leadership and Producer Recognition, which empowered Bay Area Women in Leadership, presented by California Senator Nancy Skinner and Berkeley Councilmember Susan Wengraf.
- City of Berkeley, Chair, Zoning Adjustment Board
- City of Berkeley, Chair, Housing Advisory Commission
- City of Berkeley, Vice Chair, Planning Commission
- South Berkeley Now! Co-Founder
- EAH Housing California & Hawaii, Advisory Council
- UC Berkeley, Wesley Foundation Housing, Board of Directors
- Berkeley Cooperative Federal Credit Union, Board of Directors
- Downtown Berkeley YMCA, Board of Directors
- Oakland And the World Enterprises, Board of Directors/ Officer
- The Suitcase Clinic, Chef for Unhoused

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

Public Safety- Violent crime is on the rise in South Berkeley; we must target drug activity and turf wars that leave our community with little hope and fear for their safety. Community policing, early intervention programs, mental health services, and walk-in addiction treatment programs.

Low and Missing Middle Housing- While Berkeley has added 1,000 units of housing, the need for low-income and middle-income housing continues. We must continue to build to meet the needs of our residents.

Infrastructure Climate Action

Our city is effectively implementing practical fire safety guidelines to protect our beautiful Berkeley hills and its residents. Our streets are underway with upgrades that have been deferred for many years. I recommend creating comprehensive maintenance plans to protect the new street upgrade assets and build on organizational resilience, credibility, and long-term sustainability of our wildfire prevention programs and emissions goals.

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?



I am proud of the *increased budget for the Berkeley Police Department*. While many folks have supported defunding the police, our civic leaders grasp the mission and need to protect and serve our residents. The City of Berkeley needs additional BPD officers to eliminate the increased budget cost of overtime pay. This will reduce officer fatigue, time away from their families, and stress on the job.

Disappointed by the Housing Trust Fund, I would like to establish increased revenue to offer low—and middle-income housing development projects more significant financial support to fast-track housing development. I would also implement down payment programs that will additionally provide financial support to residents who qualify as first homebuyers. Studies have shown that urgent financial support is needed for homeowners facing immediate foreclosure to prevent long-term homelessness.

- 5. Given the current vacancy rates, the police department relies heavily on overtime to meet minimum staffing and coverage needs. Do you support filling vacant police officer positions and hiring additional community service officers to ensure adequate staffing and patrol coverage, if a staffing analysis confirms the necessity? Additionally, please describe your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley.**

I have addressed this question in response #3 Public Safety.

- 6. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?**

YES

7. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

NO

8. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units? Check all that apply.

16 story buildings downtown

≥7 story buildings in [Priority Development Areas](#)

≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the [Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing](#).

Fourplexes only in Neighborhoods outside [State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones](#)

Fourplexes only outside [Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3](#).

Fourplexes only in formerly **non-redlined areas**

Fourplexes everywhere

Chip Moore

Chip Moore did not complete the questionnaire.

Ben Bartlett

Ben Bartlett does not seek Berkeley Democratic Club endorsement and didn't participate in the interview process or complete the questionnaire.

District 5

Nilang Gor

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running for City Council to address GHG emissions associated with consumption of meat and dairy and get money out of political campaigns along with several other priorities that I want to address through partnering with Berkeley residents. As a long time activist in District5, I have observed Sophie Hahn neglecting constituents like myself who are holding her accountable for failing to address public interest. She fails to implement her championed policies due to lack of collaboration with City Manager/Staff and constituents. Therefore, I am running for City Council D5 to increase civic engagement in local politics. I ask for people's vote to serve the community with empathy, facts and progressive solution-oriented approach.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

Since 2016, I have demonstrated my commitment to Berkeley and a sustainable future through a variety of ways, including:

- Serving as a Berkeley Homeless Commissioner, appointed by Kate Harrison, and supporting policies and programs in support of our unhoused community
- Distributing food and supplies to Berkeley's unhoused community with Consider The Homeless as a long-term food delivery volunteer and volunteering with Downtown Streets Team in Hayward, San Jose and Berkeley
- Advocating for policies that address Berkeley's methane emissions through a gas ban and several plant-based policies by speaking out at City Council meetings, having one-on-one meetings with Councilmembers and by mobilizing community members
- Partnering with Former Councilmember Kate Harrison to launch the Plant-Powered Carbon Challenge
- Raising funds for Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Climate Literacy programs like the U9 Climate Conference and the Elementary Plant-based Curriculum Advocating for healthy and sustainable BUSD cafeteria meals.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

- One Health approach: Berkeley is part of a global community. Our well-being is interdependent on fellow human and non-human animals, and our shared environment. This interconnected relationship is the basis of the One Health approach. While the environmental movement has progressed significantly in the past few decades, animals are almost never recognized in our social and environmental movements because we fail to recognize our interdependence. In recognition of One Health, Berkeley Council has adopted several Plant-based Procurement policies in recent years. But none of these policies have been implemented. My priority is to work with Berkeley Councilmembers and City Staff to implement these policies.
- Money in Berkeley Politics: Public Financing continues to use public dollars to support campaigns rather than using it for social and environmental issues. I want to address the issue of Money in Politics by taking no donations for this campaign and instead rely on free public forums and volunteers to reach Berkeley voters.
- Democracy: I want to strengthen democracy in Berkeley by
 - Scheduling open office hours
 - Responding to emails
 - Making policy decisions based on public opinion
 - Scheduling community meetings to collaborate and discuss issues and concerns

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

For eight years, I have been working with the City Council as a community activist on issues related to our unhoused community, public health and environmental crisis. I have also served in the Homeless Commission. It is my knowledge that many of the services and programs for our unhoused community are underfunded. We don't provide support to encampments for sanitary/safe life and then immediately, jump on citing and clearing the encampments quickly concluding that these encampments impose safety risk on the residents. For public health and mitigating climate change, the Council has adopted procuring healthy and climate-friendly food procurement policies. But lack of funding is one of the reasons why these policies are not being implemented. I am aware of these budget related issues and therefore, I am doing my part of running the campaign without taking public tax dollars (public financing) as well as corporate money.

5. With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently.

Considering these changes, as a last resort, should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered?



Please select all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard:

- YES
- NO

Fire Hazard

- YES
- NO

Significant Public Nuisance

- YES
- NO

Please explain.

[Editor's note: none selected]

Issuing citations to remove encampments are based on incorrect knowledge that residents impose risk to themselves and the community. Encampments arise out of human fundamental needs and can be supported with services for safety and sanitation. But we fail to provide these crucial services and jump to extreme actions like issuing citations. If elected, I will resist such citations and instead focus on collaborating with the community based organizations and neighbors to provide services to these encampments until housing options are allocated.

6. What is your vision for enhancing the vibrancy and appeal of Solano Avenue, while also stimulating economic development in the area?

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

7. What is your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley?

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

8. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?

- YES
- NO

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

8. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

- YES

9. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.

- 16 story buildings downtown
- ≥7 story buildings in **Priority Development Areas**
- ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the **Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing.**
- Fourplexes only in neighborhoods outside **State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones**
- Fourplexes only outside **Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3.**
- Fourplexes only in formerly **non-redlined areas**
- Fourplexes everywhere

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

Todd Andrew

1. Why are you running for office?

As both a homeowner and tenant, I've lived in this historic city of potential for 25 years. I was proud to raise two children through Berkeley public schools, to coach their youth sports, and encourage their academic, artistic and moral development. But after being deeply involved in local policy and politics for six years, I've learned we're falling short of our aspirations. Community surveys show a pattern of declining satisfaction with local services and direction. I want to help turn this around with what I've learned from my service and in my many conversations with neighbors and fellow leaders. They want our government to focus on its core responsibilities like public safety, fixing our streets and critical infrastructure, maintaining our parks, and sound priorities for our public funds. I want everyone to know we can do this - we can build a brighter day for Berkeley!

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

In 2019, as a result of local political and policy experience and leadership, I was appointed to the Homeless Commission and the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board, where I currently serve as Chair.

As a 17-year tenant in a rent-controlled Berkeley apartment, a 7-year owner in a Berkeley home prior to that, a tenant in three other cities, having been a Realtor for 21 years, and a member of several housing and transportation advocacy groups, I have a unique, well-informed, and valuable perspective on housing.

As someone who grew up in a financially challenged working-class family, and who has never fully recovered financially from the Great Recession, I bring a unique perspective to a city like Berkeley where income and wealth disparities are large.

With this personal, professional and avocational background, I am ready to hit the ground running on behalf of District 5 and Berkeley residents on Day One.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

We need to fulfill our solemn duties and core municipal responsibilities: streets and other critical infrastructure; public safety in all its senses; and sound stewardship of our public funds.

Our unfunded infrastructure liabilities total \$2+ billion, including basic responsibilities like complete streets, sanitary and storm sewers, public buildings like fire stations and parks, and our waterfront, but also extend to investments in disaster preparedness and climate change. We no longer have a choice -- we MUST allocate more funding to these core responsibilities than we have in the past.

I would like us to explore assigning a certain amount of revenue from new buildings to core infrastructure. This may have the ancillary benefit of helping to overcome resistance to new housing on the part of some community members.

On public safety, let's not oppose or overburden common-sense and proven measures like ALPRs and other technology.

On disaster prevention and response, let's make sure we're evaluating FF measures on an ongoing basis and staying in constant touch with regional bodies and state officials on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

On street safety and trauma prevention, let's continue to move forward in a collaborative effort with BFD to modernize our approach.

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

I want to see more revenue from our General Fund dedicated to core municipal responsibilities.

5. With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently.

Considering these changes, as a last resort, should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered?

I need to study Councilmember Kesarwani's proposal for the Sept 10 council meeting, but something tells me I will find much to appreciate.

Please check all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard:

- YES
- NO

Fire Hazard

- YES
- NO

Significant Public Nuisance

- YES
- NO

Please explain.

6. What is your vision for enhancing the vibrancy and appeal of Solano Avenue, while also stimulating economic development in the area?

I was gratified to see Councilmember Hahn seek restoration of the Solano Avenue Revitalization monies postponed due to COVID. I understand the allocation still exists, though the Office of Economic Development lacks the staff to tackle it.

With some exceptions like the Peets and Zachary's parklets, the streetscape hasn't changed in many decades. Pedestrians have very few places to feel at home and to gather; I suspect urban design pros would suggest widening the sidewalks and other measures.

The BID Advisory Board considered lights, both for the holidays and continuously lit on the roofline or in trees, but the necessary electrification is lacking. We will explore solar-powered lights, and kinetic art, but operate within a budget of \$25,000-30,000 per year.

The Housing Element modification to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing in resource-rich corridors like Solano will also help revitalize the area and provide new sources of support to our small businesses.

7. What is your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley?

Eyes on the street and increased patrols are proven, including neighborhood crime watches and increased foot traffic. I believe we can increase the sentinel effect through a variety of methods that don't always involve a badge and a gun.

I'd like to see us explore an "ambassador" model in the neighborhoods on a pilot basis, like some of the business districts. In some cases, they have had to incorporate a security component, but we can start with the original model to increase eyes and feet on the street – drawn from the neighborhoods themselves, wherever possible.

I'd also like to see the mayor and council focus on staffing up BPD so every officer can once again be trained in de-escalation techniques, and we can expand bike patrols to the neighborhoods rather than just business districts. This will have a beneficial effect on the budget, too, since overtime is very expensive.

8. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?

- ✓ YES
- NO

9. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

- YES
- ✓ NO

10. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.

- ✓ 16 story buildings downtown
- ✓ ≥7 story buildings in [Priority Development Areas](#)
- ✓ ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the [Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing](#).
- ✓ Fourplexes only in neighborhoods outside [State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones](#)
- ✓ Fourplexes only outside [Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3](#).
- ✓ Fourplexes only in formerly **non**-redlined areas
- ✓ Fourplexes everywhere

I support an "all of the above" strategy on housing and a comprehensive look at housing policy in risk zones. If the number and proximity of structures, people and cars are the issue, then let's look at it not just in terms of the impact of new housing but the existing circumstances as well.

BPD Chief Sprague's memos on ADU's and Middle Housing in the hills called out important issues, including the precarious nature of **current** conditions and **existing** structures. We need to take this seriously and examine the possibility of pre-evacuation on Extreme Fire Weather days under **current** density and conditions. This mindset will provide a clearer view on additional housing in the hills, especially considering new housing is much more fire resistant than existing stock.

Shoshana O'Keefe

1. Why are you running for office?

I was born and raised in Berkeley, and have lived here most of my life. I'm running because I've always felt called to community service, and I've especially felt called to serve Berkeley, a place I love like a member of my family. From working as an immigration attorney, to helping build thousands of new homes on the Zoning Board, to teaching the next generation as a Berkeley high teacher, service to Berkeley has always been central to my life. And I'm excited about the ways I can keep making a difference for our community on the City Council.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

In addition to being a lifelong Berkeley resident and alumna of our schools, I have served on the Zoning Adjustments Board since 2013. I'm currently the longest serving member, and I served as Chair and Vice Chair for two years each. I also served on the Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission from 2013 - 2018. I served on the Berkeley High School Site Council as a faculty member from 2019 - 2024, and the Malcolm X Elementary School Site Council as a parent member from 2019 - 2021. I am a licensed attorney and member of the California State Bar. I have two children, both of whom attend or attended Berkeley schools. I have worked as a teacher at Berkeley High School since 2018.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

My legislative agenda has three main components. The first is housing. I intend to tackle the affordability crisis head on by encouraging more building at every level of affordability everywhere in Berkeley, especially areas well served by transit. The second is bicycle infrastructure. I'd like to see our wonderful Bicycle Boulevard system expanded and improved. Traffic calming measures and stronger discouragement of vehicular traffic on these roads could make these streets the ideal way to travel car-free anywhere in the city conveniently and safely. Lastly, as a Berkeley teacher, I want to leverage my strong ties with and understanding of the School District to improve the relationship between the city government and BUSD. I want to look for ways that the two governmental bodies can work together to support our community's youth, providing childcare for out of school time, affordable enrichment programs, and funding programs to benefit our most vulnerable and high needs kids.

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

I was glad to see increased funding for the police department, as public safety has been an issue of increasing concern for the citizens of Berkeley lately. I know the department has suffered from low morale and staffing shortages, which makes it harder for our officers to do their jobs and can create a feedback loop leading to more job dissatisfaction. We have to stop this cycle and revitalize our police force, giving them the resources they need to succeed at looking after our community's safety. I was disappointed that the increased funding to IT

services was so modest. On council, I plan to push for a major increase in our IT budget to ensure our government is using maximally secure technological infrastructure. Better information systems will also help with recently reported issues of low staff morale, and allow for easier collection of data that will in turn help us run our city better, and increase clarity and accountability to voters and decision makers.

5. With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently. Considering these changes, as a last resort, should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered?

Assuming that among the services that have been offered are opportunities to be housed in some way, yes. But if by “no shelter spaces available”, you mean the inhabitants do not have another option of where to sleep, then no. That wouldn’t make any sense.

Please select all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard:

- YES
- NO

Fire Hazard

- YES
- NO

Significant Public Nuisance

- YES ?
- NO ?

Please explain.

The first two are straightforward. When the expectation of the government to provide safety to all of its citizens is in conflict with the civil liberties of encampment residents, then safety must come first. I maintain that the residents must be treated with dignity and respect and have their rights preserved as much as possible while still addressing the safety threat. Regarding the third, the term “significant public nuisance” is too vague for me to say yes to. The bar for this would have to be very high. Things like partially blocking a sidewalk or driving away business would not rise to a level to justify a citation (although other interventions would still be called for), but if there was some sort of ongoing significant disturbance that infringed on the ability of the public to meaningfully use the area, then yes, as a last resort.

6. What is your vision for enhancing the vibrancy and appeal of Solano Avenue, while also stimulating economic development in the area?

We should revitalize the Solano area through public realm investments such as sidewalk widening and a traffic redesign, allowing additional space that could be used for play areas, outdoor cafe seating, and a pedestrian arcade. I would also like to capture the new life and excitement created by the opening of the Oaks climbing gym, which is already bringing lots of visitors from other parts of the city and beyond. We should look at discount programs to encourage Oaks patrons to stay in the area and spend their money at the local restaurants and stores. I am very happy to hear the Oaks is hoping to open a taproom, which will create further opportunities for synergy with the nearby businesses.

7. What is your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley?

I want to fully fund our police department and continue with the effort to diversify our response to different kinds of crises, saving armed police officers to respond to incidents where they are truly needed. This includes expanding the Specialized Care Unit and funding violence prevention programs like Project Ceasefire. I would also like to see the police be granted higher tech tools to help them be more effective at crime prevention and investigations. Of course all new tech needs to come with restrictions to protect privacy and civil liberties, but in general I want to embrace new developments in public safety tech.

8. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?

- YES
- NO

9. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

- YES
- NO

10. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.

- 16 story buildings downtown
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- Fourplexes only in formerly non-redlined areas
- Fourplexes everywhere

(OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL YES/NO QUESTIONS—O’KEEFE)

1. Do you support the homeless services tax (W)? YES
2. Do you support the library tax (X)? YES
3. Do you support the parks tax (Y)? YES
4. Do you support the soda tax (Z) ? YES



5. Do you support Council's amendments to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (BB)? YES
6. Do you support the citizen's initiative to amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (CC)? NO
7. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Fix the Streets" (EE)? YES
8. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Safe Streets"? (FF) NO
9. Do you support the Large Buildings Fossil Free Tax? (GG) NO
10. Do you support the Healthy Buildings Ordinance? (HH) NO
11. Do you support the recall of District Attorney Pamela Price? Undecided

District 6

Brent Blackaby

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running for Berkeley City Council to take action on our most pressing challenges – including wildfire safety, streets & infrastructure, crime & public safety, and housing affordability. I've lived in District 6 for 20 years. I have deep roots here and have built many strong relationships here. My partner Larry and I are raising our two kids here, sending them to Cragmont Elementary. As a dad, I'm even more committed to making Berkeley a place where everyone can live and thrive.

Berkeley residents are losing trust in their local government. "More of the same" won't solve this problem. I will bring new leadership, fresh perspectives, and a spirit of innovation to the City Council. With a renewed focus on transparency and accountability, and a commitment to solving problems, we can restore trust and effectively address Berkeley's most pressing issues by rolling up our sleeves and getting things done.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

I will bring innovative ideas and a fresh perspective – informed by years of practical problem solving experience, relationship building, and a can-do attitude as a civic leader, small business owner, and pioneer of progressive digital politics – to get things done for the people of Berkeley.

As a national digital organizing leader and co-founder of Trilogy Interactive, I helped raise more than \$100 million for progressive candidates & causes and helped elect more than 20 Democrats to the U.S. Senate, including Elizabeth Warren and Barbara Boxer. I want to apply that same creativity, organizing capacity, and innovation to the challenges facing Berkeley.

I chair the Cragmont Elementary School Site Council. I co-founded Make Our Schools Safe, working to improve campus security at every Berkeley school, & was appointed to the Berkeley

School District's safety committee. I also serve on the Berkeley Police Accountability Board, providing citizen oversight of the Berkeley Police Department.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

FIRE SAFETY

I will work with key stakeholders to reduce flammable vegetation in the Hills. I will also encourage residents to create more defensible space around their homes, creating new financing programs to increase participation. I will ensure clear evacuation routes are established, communicated, and maintained.

STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION

I will strengthen the City's commitment to street repair and safety, prioritizing streets and sidewalks in most urgent need of repair. I will work with AC Transit to increase frequency of bus service in District 6, so we can reduce reliance on cars. I will also push for traffic calming measures on Marin Ave and other dangerous streets in District 6 while red-stripping curbs on narrow streets to enhance safety.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

I will be a champion for building more housing at all price points -- affordable housing, "missing middle" housing, and market rate housing -- especially near transit stops and along key arterials that can support greater density. I support rent stabilization and other common-sense tenant protection measures to help make housing affordable to all Berkeley residents, but will also seek fair solutions that will encourage small landlords to make more existing ADUs and in-law units available.

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

I'm pleased to see that, as part of this year's budget, Berkeley continues to support a variety of valuable community organizations related to the arts, education, and health -- and that Berkeley will require those organizations to report back on how those funds were spent. That is a big step forward on transparency and accountability.

However, we must do more across all of city government. As I saw first-hand while reviewing the BPD budget as a member of the Police Accountability Board, I'm most disappointed that departments did not set clearer goals and metrics which Council and the public can use to measure performance. We need more accountability and transparency across the board. I will push to set clear City priorities and create a dashboard of key metrics that Council can review at each meeting, showing progress against each of those priorities.

5. **With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently.**

Considering these changes, as a last resort, *should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered?*

Please select all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard:

YES

Fire Hazard

YES

Significant Public Nuisance

YES

Please explain.

I support the Encampment Policy Resolution, a balanced and compassionate approach to addressing homeless encampments in Berkeley. The proposal continues our “Housing First” approach by prioritizing providing shelter spaces, mental health support, and essential services to those experiencing homelessness. It ensures that individuals are given every opportunity to access the resources they need to transition to stable housing. However, it also recognizes the need to protect public health and safety. As a last resort, if an encampment poses significant health or fire hazard risks or presents a significant public nuisance, the city should have the authority to issue citations and remove the encampment. This measured approach ensures that all other avenues are exhausted before enforcement action is taken, ensuring fairness and dignity for the unhoused, while also addressing legitimate concerns from the community regarding health, safety, and public space. We must balance compassion with the need to maintain public order and well-being.

6. **Given the current vacancy rates, the police department relies heavily on overtime to meet minimum staffing and coverage needs. Do you support filling vacant police officer positions and hiring additional community service officers to ensure adequate staffing and patrol coverage, if a staffing analysis confirms the necessity? Additionally, please describe your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley.**

The Berkeley Police Department should be well-resourced to protect our community. But like most police departments nationwide, BPD faces a critical staffing shortage. Pending results of the Citygate staffing analysis, which will update our understanding of how many resources BPD



needs to meet service expectations, I do support hiring more officers and improving retention of existing officers. I also support hiring additional community service officers to meet service levels, especially in functions where sworn personnel are not required. On the City Council, I will push to expand modern approaches for effective policing like the Specialized Care Unit (to address mental health crises), Project Ceasefire (working with community groups to prevent gun violence), and targeted use of ALPRs & fixed surveillance cameras (to deter and solve crimes), all while providing vigorous civilian oversight and transparency to keep the department accountable to all residents.

7. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?

YES

8. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

NO

9. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.

- 16 story buildings downtown
- ≥ 7 story buildings in [Priority Development Areas](#)
- ≥ 5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the [Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing](#).
- Fourplexes only in Neighborhoods outside [State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones](#)
- Fourplexes only outside [Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3](#).
- Fourplexes only in formerly **non**-redlined areas
- Fourplexes everywhere

(OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS YES/NO QUESTIONS BLACKABY)

1. Do you support the homeless services tax (W)? **YES**
2. Do you support the library tax (X)? **YES**
3. Do you support the parks tax (Y)? **YES**
4. Do you support the soda tax (Z) ? **YES**
5. Do you support Council's amendments to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (BB)? **NO**
6. Do you support the citizen's initiative to amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (CC)? **NO**
7. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Fix the Streets" (EE)? **NO**
8. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Safe Streets"? (FF) **YES**
9. Do you support the Large Buildings Fossil Free Tax? (GG) **NO**
10. Do you support the Healthy Buildings Ordinance? (HH) **NO**
11. Do you support the recall of District Attorney Pamela Price? **NO**

On BB vs CC:

Berkeley has one of the strongest rent stabilization systems in the country. I support rent stabilization, because it's fair to tenants and helps us build a strong, stable community for the long-term. That's great for Berkeley. I also support tenants' right to organize, to negotiate with landlords for improvements and other needs. I also support funding rental assistance programs to help tenants stay in their homes when they're facing tough times economically. And I support increasing the supply of rental housing in Berkeley, so more people can find affordable places to live and we keep rental payments reasonable. That's why I don't support Measure BB. It discourages small landlords of 1-2 units -- many of whom live in my district -- from putting their ADUs and in-law units on the market. It also discourages homeowners from renting out their homes. This hurts affordability and availability of rental housing, at a time we need it the most. I also don't support Measure CC, because it weakens some tenant protections. I would rather be voting on a measure that purely focuses on tenants' right to organize and rental assistance programs. I think there is broad agreement on those issues, and we could work together to pass it.

On EE vs FF: I prefer Measure FF because it provides more funding for streets & sidewalks repair, as well as safety improvements in accordance with existing street, pedestrian, and bicycle plans. I wish we could have arrived at a consensus measure before the election, and not have had competing measures on the ballot. However, ultimately it is vitally important that one of these plans passes. I prefer FF, but I would also be comfortable with EE because some funding is better than no funding.

Andy Katz

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running for Berkeley City Council to bring my deep experience over 25 years in public service and city government to solve critical challenges affecting our public health and safety, aging infrastructure, and our environment and quality of life. I've led our public water provider to adopt a proactive wildfire prevention strategy as our elected EBMUD Board Director. I've

secured the cleanest water in the country and tripled the rate of pipeline replacement. As our Councilmember, I will fight to prevent wildfires, save local hospital services, and fix our streets. I helped negotiate Berkeley's minimum wage increase and advanced affordable housing. I'm working closely with Mayor Jesse Arreguin and other leaders to Save Alta Bates Hospital. As a labor, consumer rights, and environmental attorney, I've sought justice for hundreds of people against abusive corporations and insurance companies. We've seen significant turnover in our city leadership, and now, more than [WORD COUNT EXCEEDED]

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

I've represented Berkeley as our elected EBMUD Director for the last 18 years, & bring a record of accomplishments fixing our infrastructure, & experience in governance & finance, focused on public works. That includes tripling the rate of pipeline replacements, & developing a facilities plan for wildfire prevention, while managing a \$1 billion annual budget as Chair of the EBMUD Board Finance & Administration committee. I've also served as a member of the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission, Chair of the Community Health Commission, Chair of the Labor Commission, & Chair of the Zoning Adjustments Board. As an environmental leader, I served on the Steering Committee to help launch East Bay Clean Energy / AVA, the agency delivering 100% renewable electricity for Berkeley residents. I worked as a nonprofit public health advocate in Sacramento for a decade, served as the Chair of Sierra Club California & have represented Sierra Club at the United Nations climate talks since 2009.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

Fire Safety -The neighborhoods of District 6 are all within or adjacent to the wildland-urban interface. That means our homes and our lives are exposed to a much greater risk of wildfire due to flammable vegetation so close to where we've built our community. We need to be vigilant about vegetation management, starting with invasive species, and supporting Fire Department services to facilitate the transition to removing hazardous trees and brush both within City limits & in Tilden Park. I have helped make EBMUD a leading example, pushing for a comprehensive tree and brush removal plan, and accelerating eucalyptus removal from critical facilities. On the City Council, I will also push for additional incentives for home hardening, and measures recommended by the evacuation study.

Saving Hospital Services – Berkeley needs a full service hospital equipped to handle life-threatening emergencies, and to support the medical care needs of our aging community and our birthing mothers. When Sutter Health announced plans to close Alta Bates, having already closed the cardiac and stroke units, I developed a plan to keep hospital services in Berkeley, to ensure Berkeley isn't stranded within a hospital desert. The next steps involve completing a feasibility study that I helped design, [WORD COUNT EXCEEDED]

4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?

This year's budget, led by the voters' adoption of Measure GG, allowed the Fire Department to establish a robust Wildland-Urban Interface program, with stepped up vegetation inspections, and paramedic staffing. The Department also completed facilities assessments and was able to fund some basic measures for workplace safety and wellness. The budget also included a major increase in mental health staffing, which is important to address crisis situations through appropriately trained clinical personnel before involving police. This year also marks the opening of the West Berkeley Family Wellness Center, and this year's budget ensures that the African American Holistic Resource Center will become a reality. I was most disappointed by the City Manager's report that, despite Public Works being the largest funded department in the City of Berkeley, and streets being the largest portion of the Capital Improvement Program, that the General Fund contribution for streets rehabilitation was only increased by [WORD COUNT EXCEEDED]

5. With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently. Considering these changes, as a last resort, should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered? Please select all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard: YES

An encampment should not pose an imminent health hazard to neighboring residents and businesses. Temporary sanitation facilities for encampments were a necessity during the pandemic emergency, but post-emergency we should look to improving service delivery through the Pathways Project and Project Homekey, and full-service transitional housing that can be more efficient and integrated with social services.

Fire Hazard YES

An encampment should not pose a fire hazard to neighboring residents and businesses under any circumstances.

Significant Public Nuisance YES

These less urgent circumstances should rely on integrated social services to abate the nuisance and find transitional housing for the unhoused before resorting to warning, citation, and removal. Citation and removal does not eliminate the citywide or regional problem, and sudden enforcement could make the problem worse for another resident or business down the street or across town, and cause elevated stress for the unhoused, leading to further tensions in the neighborhood and community. The City should take these risks into consideration, and coordinate with available beds and services, when prescribing timeframe for citation and removal.

6. Given the current vacancy rates, the police department relies heavily on overtime to meet minimum staffing and coverage needs. Do you support filling vacant police officer positions and hiring additional community service officers to ensure adequate staffing

and patrol coverage, if a staffing analysis confirms the necessity? Additionally, please describe your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley.

Yes, the Police Department should fill vacant police officer positions to reduce overtime, and utilize community service officers to ensure adequate staffing and patrol coverage. Strategic deployment of traffic enforcement may also help with patrol coverage. Studies show that patrol coverage visibility reduces crime, alongside regional-scale but community-based measures that address the needs of communities in distress. Through my work for Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, I saw first-hand how interventions like Project Ceasefire and investments in youth opportunities and support for the re-entry population can help prevent crime. I will push for Berkeley to use these tools to improve public safety, and smarter use of resources, such as specialized mental health crisis units.

8. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning? YES

9. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated? NO

10. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.

I support zoning for housing along North Shattuck, Solano, and College Avenue, maintaining a mixed use retail component where appropriate to support new residents obtaining goods and services locally. Zoning along these corridors is an important part of how Berkeley's Housing Element supports affirmatively fair housing, as is the siting of the recently built Jordan Court affordable senior housing in District 6 on Spruce and Cedar.

- 16 story buildings downtown
- 1 ≥7 story buildings in Priority Development Areas
- 1 ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing
- Fourplexes only outside Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3.

The Fire Zone 2 boundary should be based on the science-based risk of structure-to-structure spread of fire, and evacuation risk.

(OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL YES/NO QUESTIONS) ANDY KATZ

1. Do you support the homeless services tax (W)? **YES**
2. Do you support the library tax (X)? **YES**
3. Do you support the parks tax (Y)? **YES**
4. Do you support the soda tax (Z) ? **YES**
5. Do you support Council's amendments to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (BB)? **YES**
6. Do you support the citizen's initiative to amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (CC)?
NO

7. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Fix the Streets" (EE)?
It's important that one of the street measures passes. We've have waited too long for needed revenue.

8. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Safe Streets"? (FF) **YES**

9. Do you support the Large Buildings Fossil Free Tax? (GG) **NO**
I helped develop the concept to initiate the Just Transition Electrification Program, and the City should develop a local revenue source to accelerate electrification.

10. Do you support the Healthy Buildings Ordinance? (HH) **NO**
I support a facilities evaluation to integrate ventilation upgrades into the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

11. Do you support the recall of District Attorney Pamela Price? **NO**

DA RECALL PROPONENTS

[▶ DA Price Recall Proponents BDC Board Interview 2024](#)

DA PAMELA PRICE OPPOSING RECALL

[▶ District Attorney Pamela Price BDC Board Interview 2024](#)

BALLOT MEASURES

MEASURE W**

Measure W (Homeless Services Transfer Tax) Proponents' Questionnaire Answers

(ballot question and specifics on p. 3 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club endorsed!

1. Why should voters support Measure W?

Measure W will continue providing the funds Berkeley needs to successfully address our homeless crisis. Since the inception of this transfer tax, on only the top 1/3 of property sales/transfers, Berkeley rehoused more than 1,500 people and reduced unsheltered homelessness by an unprecedented 45%. With these funds sunseting soon, and partner agencies concerned about their ability to sustain programs they've established to meet pressing needs, it's important to reauthorize - and enhance - what's already an exceptionally successful measure. With the threshold for application of this tax resetting every year, it only applies to high-dollar commercial, multifamily, and home sales, most Berkeleyans will never pay it. No impacted community in the Bay has registered the success Berkeley has achieved, as a direct result of funds provided by this revenue stream. Vote Yes on W to continue our important work serving and rehousing our homeless neighbors.

2. Although the funds from this measure have historically been treated as a special tax, with proceeds going directly to homeless services, it is technically General Fund money. How will you ensure that these funds remain dedicated to homeless services, especially in the face of potential future budget deficits?

The Homeless Services Panel of Experts, established by the original Measure (P), remains in place and will continue to make recommendations to the City Council for use of these general funds. The Council has been true to the promised uses of these funds - even during the economic crisis of the pandemic years - and will continue to keep faith with the people of Berkeley.

3. Will Measure W be used to sustain existing programs or to create new ones?

Funds from Measure W will continue to be used for a variety of successful programs and initiatives to meet the challenge of homelessness in Berkeley. As needs and best practices evolve, existing programs funded by the original measure will be continued and adjusted, and new programs may be initiated. We will also continue to leverage funds from this measure to obtain County, State, and other available funds to address homelessness; we've already received \$40M from outside sources to supplement local dollars - funds that would not have been accessible without "local match" dollars provided by this measure. The end goal for use of

Measure W's continued and additional funds will be sustained - to successfully rehouse and meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors, experiencing homelessness.

Measure W (Homeless Services Transfer Tax) Opponents

1. Why should voters reject Measure W?

OPPONENTS DID NOT RESPOND TO BERKELEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB QUESTIONNAIRE.

2. Proponents state that the previous iteration of this tax—[Measure P— significantly reduced street homelessness by 45% and overall homelessness by 21%](#). Why do you oppose the alteration and extension of this measure if it is correlated to a reduction in homelessness?
3. If Measure W is not passed, a projected [~\\$15 million shortfall](#) is expected in Fiscal Year 2029. How do you propose the City should either ramp down services or address this financial gap if the measure does not pass?

MEASURE X** (no formal opposition filed)

Library Tax Measure X Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 22 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club endorsed!

1. Why should voters vote for the library tax?

Vote Yes on X to keep our libraries well-staffed, well-stocked, and open on nights and weekends; to fix long-deferred maintenance and technology needs; and to keep popular youth, educational, and cultural programs going. Without additional funds, the Library will be forced to cut hours, reduce staff, shrink collections, delay much-needed upgrades and repairs, and decrease youth and other public programs.

2. Why is the existing special tax insufficient for maintaining library services?

The Berkeley Public Library's main source of revenue is a dedicated tax fund that was established on an ongoing basis through the Library Relief Act in 1980. While this funding is very important, it has not kept pace with the rate of inflation in the Bay Area, and the costs associated with operating a library—both materials as well as staff. Although the Library has had successful bond measures to expand and retrofit the Central Library and branches, these did not cover essential deferred maintenance projects. The Library has not raised the tax rate beyond what can be adjusted by the Consumer Price Index and Personal Income Growth measure, since the tax was established more than 40 years ago.

3. How will the proceeds of this tax be allocated?

The top three spending priorities include: keeping neighborhood libraries well-staffed and in good repair; maintaining weekend and evening hours; and increased afterschool reading, homework help and tutoring. Vote Yes on Measure X to keep our libraries strong and vibrant.

www.BerkeleyLibrariesYesOnX.com

MEASURE Y** (no formal opposition filed)

Measure Y–Parks Tax Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 34 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club endorsed!

1. Why should voters vote for an increase in the parks tax?

Due to storm damage, drought, old age, and lack of funding, there are 10,000 empty tree spaces in Berkeley's parks and right-of-way that need replanting. Many of our landscaped medians are in a sorry state. Approximately \$91M is needed to fund key capital improvement projects in the 250 acres of Berkeley's parks and the waterfront. Adequate career staff needs to be hired to do the work.

Berkeley's waterfront parks and facilities are similarly stressed. Maintenance and improvements at the waterfront were historically funded by revenues generated by Marina hotel, restaurant and berth leases. But since 2008 these funds have been increasingly insufficient due to the failure of much of the original infrastructure and, more recently, decreased revenue due to COVID-19. The revenues are no longer adequate to cover waterfront capital needs and maintenance. As a result, staff has been reduced and waterfront maintenance and capital improvements have been deferred.

2. Why is the existing tax rate insufficient?

Currently, property owners (except those of very-low income) are assessed 22.1 cents annually per building square foot. Considering deferred major maintenance, needed new capital investment and facilities and inflation, existing Parks Tax revenues are simply not adequate. Accordingly, a modest increase to approximately 26.5 cents a square foot is proposed. Moreover, the projected additional \$3.6M in annual revenue can be leveraged to attract third-party contributions. For example, from 2000-2024, \$129M in non-City funds for our parks, camps and waterfront was generated by grants and donations to match or leverage Berkeley taxpayer funding.

Berkeley is a highly diverse community with a rapidly growing population. And, with a density of approximately 11,500 persons per square mile, Berkeley is among California's most dense cities. The maintenance and improvements that Berkeley deserves will not happen on its own. It's our turn to contribute to Berkeley's parks legacy.

3. How will the proceeds of this tax be allocated?

Every dollar of Parks Tax will be set aside, dedicated and leveraged to maintain and improve Berkeley's much-loved and much-needed parks, waterfront, trees and right-of-way landscaping.

We can all argue about how to deliver the most effective and efficient government services, but we can all agree with the simple proposition that PARKS ARE EQUITY IN ACTION. Berkeley needs and deserves first-rate parks, a renewed urban forest, and locally-biodiverse landscaping

that brings joy to everyone. Our parks, waterfront, trees and landscaping are a precious legacy which we have inherited and that we all enjoy daily.

MEASURE Z** (no formal opposition filed)

Measure Z (Sugary Beverages Tax) Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 45 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club endorsed!

1. Why should voters support Measure Z?

Measure Z is a simple extension of the already existing 1-cent per ounce tax on wholesale sugary drink distributors that was passed by 75% of voters in 2014. This distributor tax has raised nearly \$12M and has supported norms-change through engagement and education to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks, while increasing the consumption of water. A renewal of the existing tax helps support vital programs including the Berkeley Public School Gardening and Cooking Program, dental screenings, health screenings, and education programs run by community-based organizations.

The citizens' commission put in place to oversee the use of funds and make recommendations to the City Council has done diligent and transparent work to ensure equity. It speaks volumes when the City Council has unanimously approved each funding cycle recommendation from the commission!

2. How has Berkeley's soda tax affected the health of the Berkeley community?

The sugary drink distributors tax has positively affected the health of the Berkeley community!

- *Consumption of sugary drinks has gone down, water consumption is up, and obesity rates for Berkeley's kids have decreased.*
- *It helps pay gardening teachers in all 17 BUSD schools so kids of all ages can participate in Cooking and Gardening Programs.*
- *It has supported over 77,000 health and dental screenings for low-income community members.*

Partial list of funded organizations and programs:

- *Healthy Black Families – "Thirsty for Change" program and classes on healthy food selection and preparation for parents*
- *Berkeley YMCA – diabetes prevention program*
- *YMCA of the East Bay – Early Childhood Education nutrition teaching*
- *Berkeley Youth Alternatives - youth training in urban gardening, produce handling, and nutrition education.*
- *Multicultural Institute - Outreach and education to day laborers on hydration and the perils of sugary beverages*

3. If the soda tax is successful, it will generate less revenue because fewer people will be consuming sugary drinks. How do you envision the future and the sustaining of programs created by the proceeds of this tax?

The tax has worked effectively, and tax revenues have already decreased by approximately 30% due to decreased sales. Programs have already had to adjust and are seeking supplemental sources to continue activities. Additional funding is necessary as the soda industry continues to barrage our children with advertising. Advocates and the commission can bring additional focus to ensuring that all the appropriate taxes are being collected and that this is done in the most cost effective manner to seek additional benefit from the tax measure. That said, the City Attorney has advised against increasing the tax at this time as this would likely result in legal challenges due to preemption laws that a simple reauthorization would not. Reauthorization would secure existing funds and allow advocates to explore options for modifying the tax in the future.

MEASURE AA (no formal opposition filed)**

Measure AA (GANN Limit) proponents

(ballot question p. 58 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club endorsed!

1. Why should voters support Measure AA?

A vestige of the Proposition 13 era, State law requires voters to reauthorize the expenditure of previously approved taxes every four years. Measure AA was placed on the ballot by a unanimous City Council. THIS MEASURE DOES NOT RAISE YOUR TAXES. It is a formality required by State law to continue spending proceeds from taxes Berkeley voters have already approved.

If Measure AA does not pass, the city will lose tens of millions of dollars in voter-approved tax revenues every year. This will have significant negative impacts for everyone in Berkeley - forcing our public libraries to close, fire stations to be shuttered, reductions in park maintenance, the elimination of services for the disabled, and crippling our wildfire prevention efforts.

With your YES vote this measure will allow Berkeley to continue these important, voter-approved services. Vote YES on Measure AA.

MEASURE BB

Measure BB (Mayor Arreguin, Councilmembers Bartlett, Tregub, Hahn, Lunaparra-Sponsored Rent Stabilization Ordinance Amendments)

(ballot question and specifics on p. 63 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club opposes Measure BB

1. Why should voters support Measure BB?

Measure BB (the Berkeley Tenant Protection and Right to Organize Act) was placed on the ballot by the City Council as a compromise between tenants and property owners. It is based on recommendations from the Rent Board based on their experience of where Berkeley's tenant protections are falling short. BB has a number of important provisions for the Berkeley community, including protections around eviction in response to over 70 eviction notices being filed against low income seniors at Strawberry Creek Lodge, some for as little as \$10 of rent. Additionally, Measure BB updates and modernizes the Rent Ordinance for current standards, and increases readability for the public.

2. Explain why you think these changes help tenants.

- *Tenants in low income or senior housing often face the same problems that tenants in private housing do. This is because many income-restricted properties are now owned or managed by for-profit companies. BB expands the rent ordinance to cover these tenants.*
- *Standing up to corporate games. The Right to Organize makes it easier to form a tenant union and collectively bargain, which can help hold landlords accountable. A building tenant union can also protect Berkeley's many tenants who lack the time, money, or knowledge to advocate for themselves.*
- *Rising utility costs. In older buildings on a single meter, tenants who pay a percentage of the bill can face higher bills even if they save energy, if others in the building are wasteful. BB would limit increases in pass-through utility bills unless tenant has an individual meter.*

3. Explain why you think these changes are not too burdensome on property owners.

BB is written to focus on big property owners. The Right to Organize applies only to 10+ unit property and property run by a management company. There is no change to the current language in the rent ordinance that exempts golden duplexes, single family houses, and ADUs.

- 4. Explain the reasoning behind requiring that a tenant be in arrears by an amount equivalent to one month of fair market rent, rather than the actual rent paid, before an owner can issue a three-day notice?**

This was done because the tenants who have the lower rents are the ones at greatest risk of homelessness if they are evicted. This policy gives these tenants more time to apply for housing retention programs that can get them back current with rent. Basing the standard on fair market rent rather than actual rent means wealthier tenants in more expensive units can't abuse the rules, while providing additional protections for low income tenants. This change is identical to one adopted in the past few years in Oakland and Los Angeles.

- 5. Can you explain how Measure BB impacts the process of establishing fixed-term rental agreements compared to current law?**

Tenants already in leases cannot be forced into year to year leases after the first year lease. Right now all tenants and this is mostly an issue for all of the students are forced to sign leases for a full year. This leads to students forced into lease that they cannot satisfy or lots of subletting over the summer leading to 10 students sleeping on the floor and problems with load parties.

Measure BB Opponents' Responses

- 1. Why should voters reject Measure BB?**

Measure BB fails to provide incentives for small owners of single-family homes or duplexes to rent out their available units. Berkeley has a substantial number of secondary units built after WWII, many of which could be brought to the rental market. However, Measure BB includes provisions that make it even more difficult to end a tenant-landlord relationship when issues arise. This creates hesitation among property owners, particularly those who would be sharing the property with their tenants. People are understandably reluctant to enter such close arrangements without a fair and reasonable process for ending the relationship if things go awry.

- 2. Explain why you think this measure does not help tenants.**

This measure ultimately harms tenants by reducing the number of available housing units. Increasing the supply of rental units and expanding Berkeley's housing options directly contributes to greater affordability. A diverse range of housing options and price points is essential. Homeowners who rent out backyard cottages, for example, are more likely to rent to fellow community members—like teachers, firefighters, or city workers—often at rates lower than those charged by large corporate-owned properties.

Measure BB imposes additional regulations on small owners. Historically, when regulatory demands increase, the number of community-owned properties decreases. When small owners get frustrated with those demands, they choose to sell their properties. They sell to buyers with deeper pockets who can absorb the risks—typically larger corporations. This shift results in

more corporate-owned housing at a time when we should be working to retain our small owners and foster the relationship between small owner and tenant.

3. Explain why you think these changes do not help small property owners.

When a single-family homeowner learns that reoccupying their house after renting it out for a couple of years could cost them over \$27,000, they are unlikely to rent it in the first place. This hefty amount represents a relocation fee that must be paid to the tenant if their tenancy is terminated through no fault of their own.

Measure BB does not provide any alternative to that scenario, nor does it further instill confidence in a single-family home or duplex rental owner.

4. Why do you think this measure affects owners of Accessory Dwelling Units (backyard cottages, in-law units)?

Measure BB introduces a new requirement when a tenant violates the lease. The owner must prove the violation "caused actual injury to the landlord" in order to terminate the tenancy. Often, the issue isn't a major violation, but rather one where the owner and tenant simply don't get along—whether it's disagreements over yard use or late-night noise. Proving that loud music "causes actual injury" can be challenging, leaving the owner stuck with the tenant until the tenant decides to leave.

When a small property owner learns that legally terminating a tenancy could involve hiring a lawyer at a cost of \$15,000 and taking 4 months or more, they are more likely to hesitate and not rent out their backyard cottage or converted basement.

5. Explain the reasoning behind the opposition to tenant protection in relation to large utility bill increases.

In Berkeley, rent control restricts how much an owner can increase rent each year. The "allowable increase" is determined by applying 65% of the Consumer Price Index. This cap on rent increases also applies to any services included in the rent, such as water and laundry facilities.

Price controls like these prevent owners from covering rising costs. If water rates increase due to rate hikes, owners are not permitted to pass those expenses on to tenants. They must bear the cost alone. The longer the tenancy, the more likely the owner faces financial gaps.

When tenants are shielded from rising utility costs, they have less incentive to conserve. The most effective way to encourage conservation of electricity or water is to make individuals responsible for the cost of their consumption. Measure BB prevents owners from holding tenants accountable for the utilities they use, reducing the incentive to conserve.

MEASURE CC

Measure CC (Citizens' Initiative to Amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance) Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 108 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club opposes Measure CC

1. Why should Berkeley voters support the citizens' initiative to amend the current Rent Stabilization Ordinance?

Berkeley voters should support Measure CC if they want to create a practical solution for increasing housing affordability. By voting for Measure CC, they help ensure that their children, friends, and other community members have the opportunity to enjoy all Berkeley has to offer, by incentivizing small property owners to make secondary units available.

Voters should support Measure CC because it establishes a dedicated housing fund to cover rent payments. During the pandemic, for a three-year period, rental property owners could not evict tenants for non-payment. Duplex owners in particular, were heavily impacted, as they were more likely to rent to tenants who were living paycheck-to-paycheck and thus more prone to default during COVID.

The city previously allocated \$1m+ for rent relief, successfully helping nearly 1,000 Berkeley residents stay in their homes. To ensure ongoing aid, Measure CC allocates \$1.2 million annually. It's funded by taxes on large corporate landlords.

2. Can you explain how more lenient rules for terminating tenancies might affect housing security for renters? How does this measure benefit tenants?

Measure CC does not introduce "more lenient rules" for terminating tenancies. In fact, it adds a new requirement for landlords that is not present in current law. Measure CC stipulates that landlords must provide tenants with at least 60 days' notice before the end of their lease. This gives tenants more time to decide if they want to extend their lease for another term.

The measure provides crucial financial assistance to tenants during emergencies or crises. Many tenants are just one unexpected event away from being unable to pay rent, which increases their risk of eviction. Such evictions can contribute to housing instability and potentially lead to a rise in the unhoused population.

Measure CC establishes a fund specifically designed to support tenants before they reach the point of eviction.

3. Explain how you think the current rent stabilization rules are too burdensome for duplex and single family property owners.

They aren't necessarily burdensome but rather confusing, complex, and punitive. The prospect of a small owner with just one rental unit—such as part of a duplex—facing jail time or fines for not strictly adhering to the law is intimidating. Most small owners aim to be fair to tenants who

live on the property with them and strive to maintain safe and habitable conditions. However, when the responsibility of being a landlord carries risks they can't afford, they are less likely to become rental housing providers.

4. Measure CC exempts all owner-occupied duplexes from rent control. Why is this part of the measure? What happens to current tenants who enjoy rent control in a duplex?

Measure CC will only affect new tenancies created after November 5, 2024. Current tenants in rent-controlled units will continue to benefit from rent control. For properties with no more than two units where the owner lives in one as their primary residence, any new tenancy after November 5 will not be subject to rent control. This means that if the owner chooses, they could increase rent to cover rising costs. This is especially critical in properties where utilities like gas, electricity, and water are not separately metered. In such cases, the owner will have the flexibility to adjust the rent annually to account for increased utility usage by the tenant.

5. Explain why you believe that Measure CC's tenant right to organize provision is better than Measure BB's right to organize provision?

Measure CC agrees – tenants should (and already do) have a right to organize. However, current law does not mandate that an owner must meet with the tenants if they make that request.

Measure CC is clear and straightforward. If two-thirds of tenants in a building request a meeting with the owner to discuss concerns, the owner must engage with those tenants in good faith. This measure establishes a process that previously did not exist.

However, Measure BB introduces a punitive element. It permits the Rent Board to determine whether the owner has "conferred in good faith" with the tenants. If the Rent Board finds that the owner did not act in good faith, it can reduce the tenant's rent-controlled rent or mandate a rent refund. These actions would be based solely on the Rent Board's judgment of the owner's conduct with the tenants.

Measure CC Opponents' Responses

1. Why should Berkeley voters reject the citizens' initiative to amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance?

Measure CC takes money away from Berkeley affordable housing funds, and puts it directly in the pockets of landlords. Its so-called "Rent Relief" program is not means tested - in fact, there are no regulations in Measure CC for how the money would be distributed, leaving the details to an unelected committee. There are no safeguards to make sure it goes to tenants and owners with a genuine need, versus the politically connected. CC also pulls the rug out from under many Berkeley tenants, who would suddenly find themselves at risk of high rent increases and/or no-fault eviction. It also weakens the ability of the rent board to protect tenants.

2. Explain why you think the current rent stabilization ordinance is a better option to protect tenants than Measure CC.

Measure CC takes away protections from current tenants. Some units would either immediately become exempt, or could become exempt due to a change - even a partial change - in ownership. Tenants in these homes would be at risk of eviction even if they have paid rent on time and followed all the rules. Measure CC would also put up onerous barriers to the Rent Board reducing a tenant's rent when they provide evidence of uninhabitable conditions, like mold, rats, or broken windows.

3. Explain why you think the current rent stabilization ordinance is not too burdensome for small property owners.

Berkeley's rent ordinance has been in effect for over forty years. There have been adjustments over time, but at this point, people who buy property in Berkeley should know what they're getting into. While there are many regulations, small property owners also have seen large increases in market rent and property value throughout this time. Renting housing is a business, and compared to other small businesses like a restaurant, renting housing is still a simple process.

4. Could you clarify how Measure CC addresses tenant rights regarding holding landlords accountable for making necessary repairs?

Measure CC's "right to organize" provision was written to be intentionally ineffective, as it exists to counter Measure BB's Right to Organize. CC's language requires a 2/3 supermajority of tenants to join to be able to form a union, and contains little language empowering such a union to do anything.

5. Can you explain the concerns or potential impacts associated with Measure CC's proposed rent increase allowance from 7.0% to 7.1%?

It would cause rents to go up even more in times of very high inflation, when tenants on fixed incomes would already be struggling. In this time of rising rents, why raise allowable rent increases at all?

MEASURE DD (no formal opposition filed)

Measure DD (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) proponents' responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 138 [here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club opposes Measure DD

1. Why should voters support Measure DD?

Measure DD will keep Berkeley factory farm-free and continue Berkeley's legacy of leading the way on social and environmental issues.

Measure DD prohibits Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), commonly known as factory farms. Voters may be surprised to know that, until recently, there was a CAFO in Berkeley (see below question). Passing Measure DD will ensure no other CAFO is established in Berkeley.

CAFOs in the Bay Area and across California have been exposed for widespread animal neglect and abuse. CAFOs are also a leading cause of pollution and pose a serious risk to public health. In 2017, Berkeley banned the sale of new fur despite not selling any. By 2019, California had done the same. Berkeley has always led the way on important issues. Passing Measure DD will set an example for other places to also evolve away from factory farming.

2. Are there concentrated animal feeding operations in Berkeley? If so, where? If not, why should voters support this if none exist?

Until June 2024, there was a CAFO in Berkeley. The EPA classifies facilities that confine over 500 horses as large CAFOs due to their impact on the environment, water quality in particular. The stables at Golden Gate Fields, located within city limits, confined upwards of 1,400 horses. Thousands of horses died and the facility polluted the Bay with coliform bacteria.

Volunteers started collecting signatures for this initiative in early June 2023. In mid-July 2023, Golden Gate Fields announced they would be shutting down, which they did this past June.

Voters should support Measure DD to ensure no other CAFO takes Golden Gate Fields' place and to encourage other cities and counties to pass similar legislation in order to protect animals, the planet, and public health.

MEASURE EE

Measure EE--(Citizens' Initiative--Fix the Streets) Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 144 [here](#); City's impartial 9212 analysis [here](#).)

Berkeley Democratic Club opposes Measure EE

1. Why should voters vote for Measure EE?

Berkeley has been underfunding its streets for decades. In 2022, the City Council adopted a resolution increasing funding for the streets, but additional funding is needed help the city catch up. We developed a measure based on the September 21, 2023, report of the Public Works Director on costs. Measure EE carefully defines what would be funded—fixing the streets, sidewalks, and paths.

2. Measure FF addresses the same issue—paving the streets and sidewalks. Why is your measure better than the other measure?

Measure FF does not provide full funding for sidewalks and does not specify what much of the funds could be used for.

Measure EE is specific about what will be funded, provides for independent oversight, requires monitoring of outcomes, and requires regular reporting so the public knows how the money is being spent.

3. What are the oversight mechanisms and requirements for the measure?

We carefully worded the oversight mechanism in the measure to ensure that both the oversight body and its responsibilities were clearly delineated. The measure requires an independent oversight commission, workshops in different districts with poor streets, careful monitoring and audit of results, and an annual report on progress. You can find the details in the measure, Section 7.11.040 on our website: <https://www.berkeleyansforbetterplanning.org/our-measure>

4. How does the tax interplay with current paving allocations from the General Fund?

While the measure would establish some policy direction, the City Council has authority to spend the remaining more than \$17 million each year.

5. How is pedestrian safety addressed?

Measure EE provides full funding for repair of the sidewalks and paths and provides funds for the high priority pedestrian projects in the Vision Zero Plan to match contributions by Alameda County.

Measure EE—Opponents’ Responses

- 1. Why should voters vote against Measure EE, especially if it will allocate more money to fixing Berkeley streets, sidewalks, and pathways?**

Berkeley’s streets will get worse under EE, according to an impartial City analysis. Measure EE raises less money than FF - and it’s not enough to fix our streets. We can’t pave more streets with less money. EE also requires a wasteful and inefficient approach to repaving, by neglecting preventative maintenance and only prioritizing failed streets.

Voters have no guarantee this money will be spent as promised. EE’s authors left a multi-million dollar loophole in the measure: the City Council can reduce funding for street paving and still collect most of this tax. There’s no guarantee the Council won’t cut millions from the paving budget and use this tax to plug the gap.

Measure EE does not guarantee a dime in safety improvements for kids or pedestrians. What little money is available can’t be spent on Safe Routes to Schools, improving 911 response times, or addressing reckless speeding on neighborhood streets.

[MEASURE FF**](#)

Measure FF (Citizens' Initiative—Berkeley Citizens for Safe Streets) Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 144 [here](#); City's impartial 9212 analysis [here](#).)

Berkeley Democratic Club endorses Measure FF

1. Why should voters vote for Measure FF?

Measure FF is the only measure expected to maintain or improve our streets. It generates over \$100 million for street and sidewalk repair, plus another \$55 million for safety improvements, to protect kids and seniors and improve emergency response times.

Measure FF will make our streets safer for kids and pedestrians. Measure FF requires the City to implement critical safety features like bulb-outs, raised crosswalks, and safety flashing beacons when doing repaving, so we don't just fix our streets only to tear them up again later.

Measure FF has the strongest oversight provisions of any measure, requiring Council to maintain 100% of existing paving funding, establishing an expert oversight body, and requiring regular audits.

That's why Measure FF is endorsed by the Berkeley Firefighters, Sierra Club, Building Trades, Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, Mayor Jesse Arreguín, a City Council supermajority, City Auditor Jenny Wong, and the entire School Board.

2. Measure EE addresses the same issue—paving the streets and sidewalks. Why is your measure better than Measure EE?

Measure FF will deliver more than double the funding for street paving, safety improvements, and environmental enhancements as Measure EE - at only a small additional cost to homeowners (about \$1.50 per week).

Measure FF is the only measure expected to maintain or improve our streets, according to an impartial City analysis. Berkeley's streets will continue to degrade without a significant infusion of funds. Measure FF delivers.

Measure FF has the strongest oversight and accountability provisions of any measure, requiring the City Council to maintain 100% of existing paving funding, establishing an expert oversight body, and requiring regular reporting and performance audits.

Measure FF guarantees over \$50 million for safety improvements to protect kids and seniors, including Safe Routes to Schools, improving 911 response times, and traffic calming citywide. Measure EE doesn't guarantee a penny - and what little money is available can only be spent on a handful of streets.

3. What are the oversight mechanisms and requirements for the measure?

Measure FF uses a triple oversight system to provide accountability from the public, from staff/Council, and from the City Auditor.

First, FF establishes an independent Citizen Oversight Committee, with 4 City Council appointees required to have expertise in relevant fields, and 3 more appointments made by the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission and the Environment and Climate Commission. The Citizen Oversight Committee prepares an annual, independent report on progress and performance.

FF also requires the City Manager to prepare an annual report of performance metrics, outcomes, and accomplishments that reflects all City street, sidewalk, and safety funding. This includes streets paved, changes in pavement condition, safety projects implemented, fatal and severe traffic crashes, changes in mode choice, and more. This report is submitted to Council and the Oversight Committee.

Lastly, FF requires - and fully funds - regular performance audits by the City Auditor.

4. How does the tax interplay with current paving allocations from the General Fund?

Measure FF requires the City Council to maintain 100% of the existing paving funding. For any year in which Council fails to meet this full obligation, Measure FF is suspended for the following two years. At the same time, this requirement has provisions in place to accommodate a natural disaster, financial crisis, or loss of external funding - the ultimate goal is to hold Council accountable, not suspend funding at the times we need it most.

In contrast, Measure EE simply allows the Council to reduce the existing budget for street paving while continuing to collect the tax, albeit at a reduced rate. There is nothing preventing Council from reducing street paving funding on a permanent basis and just turning around and using funds from Measure EE to backfill the General Fund instead.

5. How is pedestrian safety addressed?

FF requires the City to add safety features when repaving. FF doesn't specify projects in advance - instead, it relies on a citywide public input process, similar to Measure T1, to determine community priorities. The only requirement is that safety features are consistent with City plans or policies, like the Pedestrian Plan, Complete Streets policy, or Safe Routes to Schools.

FF's funding has flexibility to meet Berkeley's needs. FF can fund crosswalk enhancements, like flashing beacons, raised crosswalks, and bulb-outs; as well things like speed cameras, traffic calming, and road diets to help prevent dangerous speeding. It also funds improvements to emergency response times through traffic controls and emergency access lanes. FF funds safety citywide, not just on a handful of streets (like EE), to keep all residents safe.

<https://www.yesonff.com/>

Measure FF Opponents' Responses

1. Why should voters vote against Measure FF, especially if it will allocate more money to fixing Berkeley streets and infrastructure?

Measure FF does not provide full funding for sidewalk repair. Many of the injuries that occur are caused by poor sidewalk conditions. Further, people with disabilities rely on sidewalks to get around the city. Berkeley was where efforts to provide equal rights to those with disabilities began, we should keep our promises to people with limited mobility.

MEASURE GG

Measure GG (Citizens' Initiative–Large Building Fossil Fuel Tax) Proponents' Responses

(ballot question and specifics on p. 172 [here](#); The City of Berkeley's impartial [9212 report](#))
Berkeley Democratic Club opposes Measure GG

1. Why should voters support the citizens' initiative taxing large buildings?

A tax on the owners of large buildings for their methane gas usage will ensure climate-friendly and resilient buildings in Berkeley. The funds raised would support green upgrades for homeowners, renters, and businesses (including those subject to tax), reducing Berkeley's greenhouse gas emissions, lowering energy costs, and improving local air quality. Berkeley has a long history of climate leadership but is far behind on its goals. In order to meet our 2030 goals – a fair share of emissions reductions required by the Paris agreement – we need to cut emissions by 50% relative to 2023 levels in just 6 years! While EVs and dense housing address transportation emissions, we have no similar measures to reduce emissions in buildings, which account for 43% of Berkeley's total emissions. Measure GG fills that gap. See this report for more details: <https://tinyurl.com/ffbkgg>.

2. Carbon taxes are generally designed to be cross-sectoral and broad-based to incentivize lower overall emissions. Critics argue that this measure instead would just lead businesses to relocate, and many business owners have stated during public comment that they might have to cease operations in Berkeley. How do you respond to these concerns?

Berkeley has a history of developing policies that quickly spread regionally and beyond. We expect a similar result from this measure. Regional regulations prohibiting the sale of gas space and water heaters take effect in 2027 and will require Bay Area cities to provide funding and technical support to businesses and residents. Measure GG provides a model policy to meet those needs. We believe that business concerns are exaggerated based on the data. A number of the businesses and nonprofits cited by opposition will have tax-to-revenue ratios in the tenths of a percent, which will not by itself cause relocation. Of course, there will always be exceptions. Instead of rigid spending requirements, Measure GG defines spending priorities, allowing the City to support businesses facing financial challenges. These businesses can then both do right by the climate and control their costs. GG also provides for Council amendment.

3. The City's impartial [9212 report](#) stated that there could be a potential loss in sales tax, transient occupancy tax, and short-term rental taxes, if a building became or remained vacant and it's unclear whether the initiative-specified funding will be sufficient for City hiring to support the Fossil Fuel Free Buildings Just Transition Fund (approximately 10% of tax revenues). Do you agree with this assessment? Please explain.

Given Measure GG's typical tax rate of \$0.58/sqft (in line with existing property taxes), the risk of ancillary tax revenue loss due to vacancies is overstated. On the flip side, the local costs of business-as-usual methane use in absence of GG are substantial. Studies demonstrate higher asthma rates in homes with gas appliances and estimate that electrifying all appliances in the Bay Area would avoid over \$1.2 billion in healthcare costs annually. The hiring analysis incorrectly assumes that staffing for City programs grows proportionally with program size and that initial costs for program design repeat annually. In fact, the data shows a clear trend where staffing costs proportionally decrease when larger programs are implemented over multiple years. Anecdotal evidence agrees: representatives of the building trades stated that the existing City-run electrification pilot could triple in size with little additional staff overhead.

Measure GG Opponents' Responses

1. Why should voters vote against Measure GG?

Measure GG is a dramatic, unsustainable tax that hurts hundreds of Berkeley nonprofits, small businesses, hospitals, faith institutions, schools, and renters by nearly tripling natural gas costs almost immediately — costing tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and making it impossible for many to stay in Berkeley. It puts Berkeley institutions like Berkeley Bowl in jeopardy, and hits Berkeley's only hospital with an unaffordable, unsustainable tax increase almost immediately. Renters will face rent hikes or displacement as a result of the unintended consequences of this measure, which was written without community input. For many, it will take years to transition off natural gas, and GG does nothing to help them in the meantime. It just hurts.

2. Measure GG is intended to combat global warming. Can you share your reasons for opposing this measure?

Berkeley leads the nation on climate action and we're making big progress in reducing natural gas usage. Berkeley's nonprofits and small businesses are eager to transition off natural gas in a way that ensures corporations pay their fair share, but without harming nonprofits, small businesses, and renters. The nonprofits impacted by GG include numerous environmental organizations at the David Brower Center.

Measure GG doesn't help nonprofits or businesses electrify before the tax goes into effect, and for many, the technology for transitioning doesn't exist yet. Many building owners will pass the cost of the tax on to small business and nonprofit tenants, who have no control over buildings' heating and cooling systems. Those that do electrify may find PG&E can't serve their increased electricity demand. Businesses that leave will lose access to our clean electricity grid, and force Berkeleyans to drive further for goods and services, worsening—not reducing—emissions.

3. Measure GG includes some exemptions. Why do you feel the listed exemptions are not sufficient?

The City's own 9212 report on Measure GG concludes that "none of the non-profit properties subject to this tax would qualify for this exemption." (Page 25) The authors of the measure claim that the City Council may exempt a nonprofit-owned building by a two-thirds Council vote, but only if the nonprofit's annual revenues are under \$1,000,000. However, this applies to virtually zero buildings in Berkeley—which nonprofit owns a building larger than 15,000 square feet and also has annual revenue under \$1 million? Nonprofits, such as the YMCA, David Brower Center, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Berkeley Playhouse would all pay this tax. City staff and leadership are already working with nonprofits, small businesses, PG&E, and property owners to transition to a zero-emissions city. The No on GG coalition is eager to join them, and to do this in a sustainable, effective, Berkeley way. www.NOonGG.org

MEASURE HH

Measure HH– (Citizens’ Initiative for Healthy City Buildings) Proponents’ Responses

(ballot question p. 185 [here](#); The City of Berkeley’s impartial [9212 report here](#))

Berkeley Democratic Club opposes Measure HH

1. Why should voters support Measure HH?

The Public Works Department concluded the standard in this measure: “is essential for enhancing indoor air quality and reducing the risk of airborne disease transmission.” Measure HH protects infants, children, seniors, the public, and workers from wildfire smoke, toxic pollutants, and infections with common sense air quality standards in municipal buildings that pay for themselves. To protect occupants, the measure requires the City to achieve minimum air quality. These standards were developed by the White House and ASHRAE, a respected global engineering standards organization City-owned and leased buildings, e.g., libraries, senior/recreation/permit centers, health facilities are not adequately ventilated. City data shows COVID-19 outbreaks remain frequent, negatively impacting the public. At least one City employee died of COVID likely contracted at work. Many more developed long COVID. During wildfires and heatwaves, City buildings become dangerous and unfit as designated disaster shelters.

- 2. No revenue source was included in this citizens initiative and the [city’s impartial 9212 report](#) stated “The estimated cost range for facility assessments alone is \$2M - \$4M, with additional hard and soft costs anticipated for system upgrades, Staff training, and ongoing maintenance... Unknown costs associated with tenant improvements to existing City building leases, monitoring, and building management associated with the requirements are likely to far exceed existing budget allocations for facility maintenance.” Why was no revenue source identified, and what areas of the current budget do you believe should be cut to fund this ordinance if it passes?**

There is no need to cut funding. We respectfully disagree with the City’s estimate, which is provided without evidence and not informed by recent research. The City has a capital budget and excess equity every year. A small investment in the thousands of dollars—not millions—would save Berkeleyans thousands to millions per year! Clean air costs \$1 per year per additional cubic feet of filtered air per minute. For an average office building, that’s only \$500 per year. Clean air pays for itself and saves the City money; it is the fiscally responsible policy. Senior economists at Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security specializing in cost-benefit analysis of public health policy [found](#) that each COVID infection costs society (including the City) \$1,900 and the standard in this measure could save up to \$62,000 per room annually! There’s also City savings from avoided sick leave, workers’ compensation, and health care.

Measure HH Opponents' Responses

1. Why should voters reject Measure HH?

Measure HH is an unfunded mandate with no source of city funding identified.

A recent City report found that the cost of "adopting the Healthy City Buildings Ordinance are significant." The report couldn't even evaluate the full cost of implementation due to its immense scope. The estimated cost of facility assessments alone would total at least \$2-4 million dollars, with additional unknown hard and soft costs for facility upgrades.

Measure HH would force the City to sacrifice these important services to fund expensive and unnecessary new indoor air quality systems in all city-owned buildings.

Vote No on Measure HH. Tell proponents to go back to the drawing board and work with city leaders to come up with a more sensible and less costly plan.

2. This measure aims to enhance indoor air quality and reduce the risk of airborne disease transmission. Why do you believe this approach is not adequate?

The City of Berkeley follows strict COVID protocols, increases ventilation in buildings and installs and maintains air filtration systems. Also, Berkeley's effective efforts throughout the pandemic resulted in the lowest COVID-19 case rates of any city in the country. Yet despite these efforts, Measure HH was put on the ballot without any consultation with city leaders.

Berkeley currently owns 95 different facilities, some of which are historic landmarks. Measure HH imposes stringent air quality standards for all city-owned and leased property. It would force tenants who lease city buildings, including non-profits, to install and maintain expensive HVAC systems, even if unnecessary and infeasible. Measure HH creates civil penalties and a right to sue the city, potentially costing thousands in lawsuits.

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Note: Norma Harrison is not a Democrat and was not interviewed because The BDC can only endorse Democratic candidates

[Jen Corn**](#)

Berkeley Democratic Club endorses Jen Corn.

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running for School Board because I believe in Berkeley kids, Berkeley families, Berkeley teachers, and Berkeley public schools. I am proud of the years I spent working as a teacher and principal in BUSD and grateful for the education my two children have experienced here. As a lifelong K-12 educator, I am uniquely positioned to be able to anticipate how the school board's budget, program, and policy decisions will impact schools and classrooms. My thirty years' experience as an educational leader have prepared me to review data and assess the impact of programs and initiatives, set priorities and make tough decisions, and steer our district toward our vision of Excellence, Equity, Engagement, and Enrichment for all our children.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

I have been an educator for thirty years. I worked with Partners in School Innovation and the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative before earning my teaching credential in 2000. I began teaching in a Spanish bilingual classroom in Oakland Unified, and then I transferred to BUSD in 2005 to teach at LeConte Elementary (now Sylvia Mendez), where I taught in both Spanish two-way immersion and English-only settings before becoming the Literacy Coach at Rosa Parks Elementary. I became principal of Oxford Elementary in 2011 and moved to Thousand Oaks Elementary in 2013, where I was principal for five years. In 2019, I began working in my current role as a central office administrator in OUSD, where I am Director of School Improvement. I have also raised two children through BUSD schools, K-12th.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific proposals or projects would you introduce or augment to achieve these goals?

My first goal is equity, accelerating the achievement of students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are learning English. I believe that the most effective way to interrupt long standing inequalities in our public schools is to focus on core classroom instruction. In particular, I am looking forward to the adoption this year of a new elementary literacy curriculum. As a former teacher and principal, I am prepared to help guide the adoption



process and the implementation of the new curriculum, and to review data to monitor the progress of our implementation.

My second goal is belonging: ensuring that Berkeley schools are inclusive, anti-racist, and LGBTQ-friendly communities that truly partner with families to promote wellness and belonging for all students. I am particularly concerned about strengthening partnerships with families, particularly in middle and high school.

Third, we must ensure stability by recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and classified staff, while also ensuring a balanced budget. Teacher and staff recruitment and retention depends upon competitive compensation and benefits, but also on ensuring that our staff are well-supported and respected for their expertise.

4. What are you proudest of OR most dismayed at [in the passage of this year's budget](#)?

My biggest concern about the budget is that there does not seem to be a strategic plan that is transparently communicated to the public. School budgets are complicated, with multiple revenue streams, some of them restricted to funding specific kinds of investments that serve certain student groups. This year's cuts seemed driven largely by an understandable desire to inflict the least pain possible—freezing unfilled positions, for example—rather than a clear, coherent vision for how to allocate our resources most effectively in order to meet our goals. The season of budget cuts is not behind us, as Covid-era funds are drying up and enrollment is still down from its pre-Covid levels. As we prepare for more potential cuts, therefore, I believe we must start early to have hard conversations as a community about our priorities, so that budgeting season is guided by clear agreements about our goals and priorities.

5. How, as a school board member, can you encourage transparency and dialogue with BUSD stakeholders around difficult issues that have activated the larger community ([Gaza](#), curriculum decisions, [religious intolerance](#))? What skills and capabilities do you bring to improve these dynamics?

As a former principal in BUSD, I have extensive experience leading diverse Berkeley communities of educators and families through challenging times and difficult conversations. I have a proven track record as a good listener and a clear communicator. While our community has had some painful conflict over the past year, I remain confident that we in Berkeley are more aligned than not, in terms of our core values and our hopes for our children and our schools. I believe it's important for elected officials to meet with all stakeholders, on all sides of an issue, and to work to find common ground that always centers the learning and well-being of our children.

6. The school resource officer has sometimes been a source of debate on campus but a committee recently recommended [to expand school resource officers on](#)

Berkeley High's campus. Do you believe it should be expanded, disbanded, or stay the same? Please explain.

The movement for police-free schools aims to ensure that schools are places of learning and community, where student well-being is not negatively impacted by the presence of law enforcement officers on campus. I fully support these goals. However, as a former principal in Berkeley, I had occasions when I was required by Education Code or state law to call in police, and I know first-hand that it makes a tremendous difference when the officer who responds has training and experience working with children, and/or existing relationships with school staff, children, and families. The BHS committee uncovered a similar dynamic. Having a trained officer who knows the community leads to more positive experiences when law enforcement must be called. That said, I share the concerns of board members who have questioned whether the SRO must be armed on campus, and would like to continue to explore creative solutions.

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I am proud to be endorsed by many local Berkeley elected leaders, as well as both the Berkeley Federation of Teachers and the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees. I would be honored to be endorsed by the Berkeley Democratic Club.

[Laura Babitt**](#)

Berkeley Democratic Club endorses Laura Babitt

1. Why are you running for office?

I'm seeking re-election because, since joining the board, I've driven significant progress through effective collaboration, oversight, and budgeting. We've reduced the achievement gap for K-2 students by 19.5%, made Vote 16 a reality, expanded reusable options in our cafeterias, and enhanced our sexual harm prevention programs. We've also increased gender-neutral bathrooms, delivered the largest pay raises for educators, and I led the effort to redirect \$27M from a parking lot project to modernize schools and expand STEM & CTE programs, all while resolving BHS staff parking issues in collaboration with the city. These accomplishments address long-standing challenges for BUSD, & there's more to accomplish. I've demonstrated that we can achieve equitable outcomes, balance our budgets, and fulfill BUSD's mission to enable and inspire our diverse student body to achieve academic excellence & make a positive contribution to our world. I'm running to continue making these vital improvements not only said, but done.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

Before joining the board, I spent 10 years as a dedicated parent advocate, serving on the BSEP Parcel Tax Oversight Committee, as Chair of the Parent Advisory Committee, and on the Supt.

Budget Advisory Committee (SBAC), among other roles. This extensive involvement gave me a deep understanding of the School District's strengths and areas for improvement, which has enabled me to drive significant progress in less than four years, even amid the challenges of COVID-19. Additionally, I am the only board member that brings over 30 years of progressive experience in finance, accounting, and operations management. This expertise has been crucial in navigating the \$3-\$7M in budget cuts we've implemented and will continue to be vital as we work to balance our budget and optimize our financial resources effectively.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific proposals or projects would you introduce or augment to achieve these goals?

Four years ago, Berkeley voters elected me to the school board on a platform of putting kids' needs first, driving equity and achieving fiscal accountability. I'm proud of what we've achieved together thus far – and there is more to do. I will continue to:

- 1. **Implement outcome-oriented budgeting:** Align every dollar with our district's vision and ensure it leads to measurable student success. This includes improving our math and reading curricula, our afterschool programs, and management of our facilities.*
- 2. **Enhance accountability structures** so that our programs/special education services are implemented with fidelity. We must improve clarity on roles and responsibilities, refine and standardize employee and program evaluations, and reduce bureaucracy to ensure effective implementation of services and programs.*
- 3. **Promote inclusive, safe environments:** Ensure every student, no matter their race, religion, gender, ethnic origin, or identity, feels safe at school and in the community. I co-authored BUSD's "Hate-Motivated Behavior" policy approximately one year before BUSD's rise in Antisemitism and Islamophobia. Addressing bullying, harassment, and implicit bias is essential to ensure every child can learn and thrive in our schools.*

I will continue to build on our achievements and drive meaningful change in Berkeley Unified.

4. What are you proudest of OR most dismayed at [in the passage of this year's budget](#)?

I'm proud of our progress in using budget pillars—Equity, Transparency, Excellence, Engagement, Sustainability, and Stability—to guide our resource allocation. This approach ensures data-driven decisions rather than responding solely to major advocacy movements. Our SBAC committee, which includes union and parent leaders, played a crucial role as thought partners in this transparent process, resulting in minimal impact on current employee positions. Each department contributed by freezing open positions, combining oversight roles, timing

voluntary retirements, and rebalancing school site enrollments to minimize classroom disruptions. As we face further budget cuts, I'm optimistic about how our investments in technology will streamline operations and create efficiencies. I am also pushing for more savings through a new cost-saving initiative, hiring in-house legal counsel.

- 5. How, as a school board member, can you encourage transparency and dialogue with BUSD stakeholders around difficult issues that have activated the larger community ([Gaza](#), curriculum decisions, [religious intolerance](#))? What skills and capabilities do you bring to improve these dynamics?**

Engaging with the community is one of my strengths. I am one of two board members that convenes regular office hours, I actively promote & attend BUSD's listening sessions, & I act to address our constituents' concerns. My strong interpersonal & meeting facilitation skills led me to host my own town halls during COVID when parents felt unheard in district forums. Before joining the Board, as PCAD leader, I united all BUSD parent advocacy groups to focus identify our common goals for our children. Instead of being pit against each other, we were able find that we all wanted differentiated learning techniques used in our classrooms. This collaboration led to advocacy for enhanced professional development, recognition of varied learning styles, and the ensuring that our children were seen in the classroom, not just present. This year, BUSD's #BerkeleyTogether initiative continues this commitment of community-building & finding common ground through courageous conversations and engaging events.

- 6. The school resource officer has sometimes been a source of debate on campus but a committee recently recommended [to expand school resource officers](#) on Berkeley High's campus. Do you believe it should be expanded, disbanded, or stay the same? Please explain.**

As a parent of Black children, I believe having a familiar officer on campus is far better than having one we don't know. This aligns with a core value of the BLM movement, which emphasizes the importance of officers building relationships within the community they serve. The School Resource Officers (SROs) at BHS exemplify this approach; students frequently share their achievements and homework with them, while SROs stay connected with parents and are aware of students' challenges. Their presence also ensures immediate response in emergencies, potentially saving lives. This perspective, supported by a diverse committee of community members, educators, and parents, led to the recommendation to expand the program. Given that our education code still mandates police involvement for certain offenses, it's crucial to have officers we know, have trained, and have established relationships with, rather than ones we don't.

- 7. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Thank you BDC for your endorsement in 2020. I hope I've made you proud by fulfilling my campaign promises made during unprecedented times. Our schools re-opened with a Covid-19 gold standard of excellence, we enhanced needed mental health services, I've partnered with

the city to align our resources/outcomes for youth, made vote 16 a reality, and fostered a data-informed, kids-first culture. I promised “Leadership for Changing Times”, and most of these accomplishments highlighted throughout, I proactively championed while I was President or Vice President of the Board. While I am endorsed by Mayor Arreguin, all but one city council member, current and former board members, a host of educators, parent leaders, and community organizers; I’ve proven that I am everybody’s advocate, and no one’s puppet. This is why I have accomplished in four years what others have not in 14+. For more information, visit www.laurababitt.com. Please Vote Laura!!

Ana Vasudeo

1. Why are you running for office?

As the current Berkeley School Board President, I am honored to seek re-election with the endorsement of the Berkeley Federation of Teachers, the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees, & State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond. During my tenure on the Board, I have worked hard for our students and schools. I established a Berkeley Unified Safety Committee and created the position of Districtwide Safety Coordinator to keep our schools safe. I advanced public health by expanding COVID-19 testing in Berkeley schools and throughout the state. As board liaison to the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP) Committee, I believe firmly in fiscal transparency and accountability. As the parent of a student with disabilities, I will focus on expanding support and resources for students with disabilities and uplifting the voices of their families. I believe that there’s more work to be done to close the opportunity gap for our most vulnerable students.

2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

I have served on the school board for 4 years and currently serve as School Board President. Additionally, I also serve on the Board of the California Latino School Boards Association, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring Latino/a/x students have the best educational opportunities and resources available to succeed. CLSBA is committed to ensuring educational needs for all Latino/a/x students by working with educational organizations and empowering current and future Latino/a/x School board members. I have also attended School Board Governance trainings with the California School Boards Association. I have professional experience leading Safe Routes to School programs in the Bay Area.

3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific proposals or projects would you introduce or augment to achieve these goals?

1) Ensuring fiscal transparency and accountability Berkeley Unified School District, like many school districts throughout the state, faces a challenging budget cycle in which we will likely

need to make cuts in the upcoming school year. I will continue to work closely with our district committees, such as the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee, to ensure that the voices of labor partners, staff, and our various affinity groups guide how we prioritize spending.

2) Closing the Opportunity Gap for our most vulnerable learners Closing the Opportunity Gap is a critical task of our district, one that just became harder given our budget cuts. I will work to ensure that we keep equity at the center of our budgeting decisions and continue to fund our equity-based initiatives, such as our district's Latinx Resolution.

3) Maintaining Safe Schools I've been working with parents from various sites to properly fund safety investments in our buildings to keep our education workers and students safe. During my tenure on the Board, I established a Berkeley Unified Safety Committee and created the position of District-wide Safety Coordinator to keep our schools safe. I hope to be re-elected to continue to fund critical safety investments for our facilities.

4. What are you proudest of OR most dismayed at [in the passage of this year's budget](#)?

I'm proud of our commitment to fund improvements in literacy in BUSD and more specifically, of our district's commitment towards literacy coaching, professional development, and curriculum adoption and assessments. By focusing on improving literacy in the district and directing investments towards this goal, we are ensuring that all our students will be able to meet key educational milestones. I'm saddened by the fact that we still have not completed the district's strategic plan, especially given then difficult budgetary situation that we will find ourselves in next year. Strategic plans are a best practice according to the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and can provide an important roadmap for how we spend our limited dollars most effectively and for the benefit of all of our students. I'm hoping that by the end of this school year, BUSD will have a completed strategic plan to guide our budget priorities.

5. How, as a school board member, can you encourage transparency and dialogue with BUSD stakeholders around difficult issues that have activated the larger community ([Gaza](#), curriculum decisions, [religious intolerance](#))? What skills and capabilities do you bring to improve these dynamics?

I pride myself in listening to diverse perspectives & keeping our students' needs at the forefront of our decision making. I'm a big believer that finding common ground & articulating common values is important in any community conversation. Ultimately, I do trust Berkeley teachers to teach Berkeley students. I also trust our superintendent's professionalism & poise in representing the school district at the national level in her testimony before congress. I've been saddened by the personal attacks on our teachers in the past few years, both around these issues locally & from federal right-wing forces around trans & queer youth & ethnic studies. These are difficult conversations, & I know that there will be differences of opinion, but the bottom line is that all members of our community - teachers, parents, staff, & students - must be

treated with respect. I will not tolerate racism, transphobia, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, or homophobia in our schools or at our School Board meetings.

- 6. The school resource officer has sometimes been a source of debate on campus but a committee recently recommended [to expand school resource officers](#) on Berkeley High's campus. Do you believe it should be expanded, disbanded, or stay the same? Please explain.**

I trust the recommendations made by the committee looking at this issue in 2021 that the school resource officer has had a positive impact in Berkeley Schools. However, creating a culture of safety in all of our schools requires a multi-pronged approach. I'm proud to have drafted our district's Safety Resolution which calls for updated safety plans, the creation of a district wide safety taskforce, and the hiring of a safety coordinator for the district. I have worked with our BUSD Make our Schools Safe parent group (MOSS) to meet with Berkeley's Police and Fire Departments and discuss ways in which we can have better collaboration on professional development opportunities for our district's administrators. We need to work on all of the issues above to create a culture of safety and not rely just on one solution.

- 7. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I've proudly served Berkeley Unified School District for four years and I would be honored to earn the BDC's endorsement for my re-election.

[Abdur Sikder](#)

- 1. Why are you running for office?**

I am a parent of middle school child and as an educator, I like to serve to the Berkeley School Board.

- 2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?**

I have several years of experience to work as a Board member of a Berkeley non-profit, worked many years as a university computer science teacher and a financial consultant. I am an elected computer science department representative to California Faculty Association.

- 3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific proposals or projects would you introduce or augment to achieve these goals?**

Parents - Teacher's engagement:

Recruiting and retaining high quality teacher:

Incorporating ethical education in the school curriculum:

- 4. What are you proudest of OR most dismayed at [in the passage of this year's budget](#)?**



[CANDIDATE DID NOT ANSWER]

5. How, as a school board member, can you encourage transparency and dialogue with BUSD stakeholders around difficult issues that have activated the larger community ([Gaza](#), curriculum decisions, [religious intolerance](#))? What skills and capabilities do you bring to improve these dynamics?

We need to encourage open dialogue among stakeholders more often to create an environment to have religious tolerance.

6. The school resource officer has sometimes been a source of debate on campus but a committee recently recommended [to expand school resource officers](#) on Berkeley High's campus. Do you believe it should be expanded, disbanded, or stay the same? Please explain.

I suggest it should be expanded to make it available to all students equally.

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

We need to push politicians to approve more fund for our school. It is our children's right to have a nice classroom and all necessary resources for high quality education.

RENT BOARD

Alfred Twu

Right to Housing Rent Board Slate

- 1. What do you think are current problems that tenants and property owners face in the City of Berkeley and how do you propose to fix them? Please give specific policy proposals.**

Mold and habitability problems. Now rents are leveling off or going down in older buildings, the risk of cutting corners on maintenance is higher. This is especially a problem where tenants don't know their rights, lack the time, money, or language skills to use them, or are afraid to use them. Having a clear process for tenants to organize a tenant union and collectively bargain would protect more tenants from slumlords. I also support having posters in building entrances similar to labor rights posters in workplace break rooms.

For small property owners, it's unpredictability - most of the time, when tenants pay rent on time, it's profitable, but if someone doesn't, it's a problem. There are products such as rent guarantee insurance where for a monthly fee, the insurer pays rent if the tenant doesn't. This can help landlords have predictable income, and policies can be made to encourage using them.

- 2. Recent Rent Board and Council deliberation has revolved around Golden Duplexes (a duplex that is exempt from rent control because an owner lived in the property in December 1979), Accessory Dwelling Units, and/or owner-occupied duplexes with rent control. Tenant advocates want to increase regulation with respect to evictions and rent levels for duplexes, while property owners advocates want to allow on-site owners greater flexibility to control the property they live on with their tenant. What is your stance and why? Do you believe Golden Duplexes should retain their current exemption from rent control?**

Duplex units are often larger units that are popular with families. Having protections helps avoid the situation where children have to switch schools and move away from their friends. While I understand owners' desire to have more control of who they live with, the flip side to control is housing discrimination.

I feel a path forward is to phase out the exemptions when property is sold. It is likely that this issue will gradually fade away as property is sold anyway, as duplexes are worth more when sold to two homeowners than to a single owner renting out one half.

- 3. Many residents of Berkeley have been [mailed erroneous notices](#) by the Rent Board. How do you propose fixing the data gaps and communication errors?**



The 2023 erroneous notices were the result of an error made during a major data migration, and were quickly followed up with correction emails and letters. Now that data is in the new system this should not happen again. As a further backup, notices should contain information on who to contact if someone feels they received it in error, and a longer grace period be provided for phasing in new fees so that people don't get stressed out.

- 4. The demolition ordinance passed in 2024 requires any demolition of rent controlled housing to be replaced with subsidized Below Market Rate housing, a significant change from previous practices. Recent estimates have shown that one unit Below Market Rate housing costs ~\$700,000 to build. How do you envision this provision of the ordinance will affect future development and do you think it should be amended?**

This isn't a barrier to development when the new building is much larger than the old one, which should be the goal anyway. For example, if a duplex is replaced by a 20-unit building, the new building would be providing at least 2 BMR units due to both Berkeley's existing inclusionary ordinance, as well as a desire by the developer to use the Density Bonus.

There is no need to amend the Demolition Ordinance, however, it is important that Middle Housing allows more apartments per lot - at the minimum 5, to allow use of the Density Bonus, and ideally 10+.

- 5. The recent Rent Board Tenant Convention included a supplementary questionnaire by a co-sponsoring organization for potential candidates. These questions asked about particular policy choices including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Israel, reducing police budgets, decriminalizing drugs, continuing exclusionary zoning unless even small projects are required to include subsidized Below Market Rate housing, supporting free transportation etc. The supplementary questionnaire also asked potential slate members if they would run with DSA-backed candidates Jovanka Beckles and Nikki Bas. Do you believe these topics are relevant to the Rent Board's role in the City of Berkeley? Please explain.**

Rent Board members on the 4x4 committee work with City Councilmembers on housing policy. Zoning, policing, drugs, and transportation are all related - for example, Berkeley's transportation demand management program includes free transit passes for residents in new buildings, and we have laws regulating smoking in multifamily buildings. On the zoning question I indicated on that questionnaire that I disagreed on requiring all small projects to include BMR housing.

While some of the questions are outside the Rent Board's immediate role, it is not unusual for organizations to ask candidates where they stand on a variety of issues, as candidates often run for higher office in the future.

Carole Marasovic**

Rent Board Candidate (no slate)

Berkeley Democratic Club endorses Carole Marasovic

1. What do you think are current problems that tenants and property owners face in the City of Berkeley and how do you propose to fix them? Please give specific policy proposals.

Focused on protecting tenants from displacement, as Chair of the Homeless Services Panel of Experts, I have consistently recommended sufficient funding for housing retention monies so that tenants retain their apartments and landlords receive the monies due them. I support continuing that funding.

Small property owners who keep their rental prices reasonable and reasonably respond to their tenants' needs merit having their concerns heard, their input incorporated and responded to with a reasonable application of the Rental Stabilization Ordinance.

Berkeley is an aging community and seniors and persons with disabilities need to remain in their homes. Accommodating disabilities mitigates displacement which includes enforcing disability laws such as the City elevator ordinance and identifying where the Fair Housing Act can be applied.

[WORD LIMIT EXCEEDED]

2. Recent Rent Board and Council deliberation has revolved around Golden Duplexes (a duplex that is exempt from rent control because an owner lived in the property in December 1979), Accessory Dwelling Units, and/or owner-occupied duplexes with rent control. Tenant advocates want to increase regulation with respect to evictions and rent levels for duplexes, while property owners advocates want to allow on-site owners greater flexibility to control the property they live on with their tenant. What is your stance and why? Do you believe Golden Duplexes should retain their current exemption from rent control?

Golden duplexes & ADUs should be exempt from rent control & good cause evictions. There are thousands of properties with multiple units throughout Berkeley, many rented out at substantial profit, where tenants need their rights protected & that is where the focus should be. Golden duplexes & ADUs, owner-occupied, are small in number by comparison & have unique circumstances.

The primary concern of owner-occupied golden duplex owners seems to be not the rental amount but that they will be required to have a tenant on their property indefinitely with whom they are incompatible so that the homeowner's quality of life is jeopardized.

Listening to one owner-occupied golden duplex owner provide public comment at a Council Land Use Committee meeting, I was struck by his comment that when there is only a thin wall

separating you, that if the golden duplex exemption were removed, it was the equivalent of forcing someone to stay in a marriage.

[WORD LIMIT EXCEEDED]

3. Many residents of Berkeley have been [mailed erroneous notices](#) by the Rent Board. How do you propose fixing the data gaps and communication errors?

As with any systemic errors, before the issues can be resolved successfully, one needs to identify how the issues arose. The system needs to be closely evaluated by an IT expert as to whether there is outdated information, cross information and why these mishaps are occurring.

Notices and retention of data are critical and it is critical that they be reported accurately. If the data is not reported properly and notices are improperly issued, the consequences could be major.

4. The demolition ordinance passed in 2024 requires any demolition of rent controlled housing to be replaced with subsidized Below Market Rate housing, a significant change from previous practices. Recent estimates have shown that one unit Below Market Rate housing costs ~\$700,000 to build. How do you envision this provision of the ordinance will affect future development and do you think it should be amended?

As a strong supporter of preserving rent control and supporter of below market rate housing to preserve economic, and other, diversity in the community on the face of it, I support the demolition ordinance.

I understand that the costs of labor and materials have greatly increased. Thus, I am open to hearing the impact of the demolition ordinance on future development and whether the ordinance should be amended or phased in differently.

While the ordinance is needed to protect tenants' rights to affordable rent and compensate for the loss of rent-controlled units, we want to insure that it is implemented so as to not be prohibitive by hampering further development including affordable housing. That said, any amendments must consider below market units, rent control and other strategies to maintain the character and diversity of the community.

5. The recent Rent Board Tenant Convention included a supplementary questionnaire by a co-sponsoring organization for potential candidates. These questions asked about particular policy choices including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Israel, reducing police budgets, decriminalizing drugs, continuing exclusionary zoning unless even small projects are required to include subsidized Below Market Rate housing, supporting free transportation etc. The supplementary questionnaire also asked potential slate members if they would run with DSA-backed candidates Jovanka Beckles and Nikki Bas. Do you believe these topics are relevant to the Rent Board's role in the City of Berkeley? Please explain.

The Rent Board has a statutory mandate which it should abide by not exceed. These questions, with the exception of possibly taking a position on the below market rate housing issue, exceed the Rent Board's mandate.

In addition, delving this deep into every position on every possible perspective on issues unrelated to housing that a Rent Board candidate might have, in order to insure complete allegiance, does not lead to electing independent critical thinkers capable of thorough, fair, judicious analysis of individual facts.

Xavier Johnson

Right to Housing Rent Board Slate

1. What do you think are current problems that tenants and property owners face in the City of Berkeley and how do you propose to fix them? Please give specific policy proposals.

Long term tenants are facing big challenges and pressures from property owners seeking to get rid of them to increase rents on new prospective tenants. Costa Hawkins creates a pressure on existing tenants leading to increased instances of harassment and failures to make repairs. The solution is to continue to work to repeal Costa Hawkins and to make sure tenants know their right to petition habitability issues with their rent board.

2. Recent Rent Board and Council deliberation has revolved around Golden Duplexes (a duplex that is exempt from rent control because an owner lived in the property in December 1979), Accessory Dwelling Units, and/or owner-occupied duplexes with rent control. Tenant advocates want to increase regulation with respect to evictions and rent levels for duplexes, while property owners advocates want to allow on-site owners greater flexibility to control the property they live on with their tenant. What is your stance and why? Do you believe Golden Duplexes should retain their current exemption from rent control?

I believe that we should not provide exemptions for golden duplexes, ADUs, or owner occupied duplexes. At the end of the day the nature of the property doesn't alter the importance of housing as a human right over profit. Providing these protections in these spaces ensures stable long term housing. In addition there are processes in place for removing tenants who violate the law or their leases.

3. Many residents of Berkeley have been [mailed erroneous notices](#) by the Rent Board. How do you propose fixing the data gaps and communication errors?

We need to continue outreach to the community and ensure due process in the gathering of information. I believe we can work with the outreach team of the rent board to ensure property owners are getting the communications they need through email, mail, and their addresses of

record for the properties they own. We should provide incentives to the correction and completion of accurate information where possible.

4. The demolition ordinance passed in 2024 requires any demolition of rent controlled housing to be replaced with subsidized Below Market Rate housing, a significant change from previous practices. Recent estimates have shown that one unit Below Market Rate housing costs ~\$700,000 to build. How do you envision this provision of the ordinance will affect future development and do you think it should be amended?

With property owners and developers making record profits, I believe there is enough money being invested into housing to cover the costs of protecting sitting tenants from development. The alternative is long term tenants being evicted with no where to go other than homelessness and dependence.

5. The recent Rent Board Tenant Convention included a supplementary questionnaire by a co-sponsoring organization for potential candidates. These questions asked about particular policy choices including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Israel, reducing police budgets, decriminalizing drugs, continuing exclusionary zoning unless even small projects are required to include subsidized Below Market Rate housing, supporting free transportation etc. The supplementary questionnaire also asked potential slate members if they would run with DSA-backed candidates Jovanka Beckles and Nikki Bas. Do you believe these topics are relevant to the Rent Board's role in the City of Berkeley? Please explain.

I believe we are all in a movement for justice that requires shared goals and cooperation across issue areas to ensure a just and equitable society. I believe it is laudable that the tenant convention takes a holistic look to who they select for their candidates. While we may not see eye to eye on every issue, most of the issues are connected in some way and we need to remain informed and connected across issue areas.

Avery Arbaugh

Right to Housing Rent Board Slate

1. What do you think are current problems that tenants and property owners face in the City of Berkeley and how do you propose to fix them? Please give specific policy proposals.

Affordability and accessibility are central to the difficulties faced by tenants and property owners. The majority of affordable and rent-controlled housing in Berkeley is older, being built before 1995, and doesn't meet modern accessibility standards, we need to create strong incentives to upgrade older buildings to be accessible for seniors and disabled renters, and find ways to help people stay in housing that meets their needs. Additionally as climate change makes Berkeley less livable, we need to upgrade the habitability and cooling systems of buildings, and create

new habitability rights for tenants. Reworking the incentive systems of weatherization, sustainability, and rooftop solar programs to give landlords incentives to improve the sustainability and climate resilience of rental units could help with achieving this.

2. Recent Rent Board and Council deliberation has revolved around Golden Duplexes (a duplex that is exempt from rent control because an owner lived in the property in December 1979), Accessory Dwelling Units, and/or owner-occupied duplexes with rent control. Tenant advocates want to increase regulation with respect to evictions and rent levels for duplexes, while property owners advocates want to allow on-site owners greater flexibility to control the property they live on with their tenant. What is your stance and why? Do you believe Golden Duplexes should retain their current exemption from rent control?

I am not in favor of exemptions for Golden Duplexes, larger units such as duplexes are commonly occupied by families, and finding space for a full family with a limited income is difficult. Families in duplexes deserve the same eviction rights and displacement protections that other renters have citywide.

3. Many residents of Berkeley have been [mailed erroneous notices](#) by the Rent Board. How do you propose fixing the data gaps and communication errors?

While the issues in data migration which caused many of the erroneous notices in 2023 have been resolved, we should put more efforts into outreach, including incentives for response, to update our data systems and make sure other erroneous communications don't occur in the future.

4. The demolition ordinance passed in 2024 requires any demolition of rent controlled housing to be replaced with subsidized Below Market Rate housing, a significant change from previous practices. Recent estimates have shown that one unit Below Market Rate housing costs ~\$700,000 to build. How do you envision this provision of the ordinance will affect future development and do you think it should be amended?

The benefits of preserving the affordability of Berkeley's housing stock through the current version of the demolition ordinance are worth the potential disincentivizing effects on future development which, especially in combination with market incentives such as density bonuses, which can still be applied in cases relevant to the demolition ordinance, will not be significant.

We need more housing in Berkeley, but it is more valuable to reduce market barriers such as exclusionary zoning than it is to reduce the protections for rent-controlled and affordable housing and protections for the tenants who rely on this housing to live in Berkeley.

5. The recent Rent Board Tenant Convention included a supplementary questionnaire by a co-sponsoring organization for potential candidates. These questions asked about particular policy choices including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Israel, reducing

police budgets, decriminalizing drugs, continuing exclusionary zoning unless even small projects are required to include subsidized Below Market Rate housing, supporting free transportation etc. The supplementary questionnaire also asked potential slate members if they would run with DSA-backed candidates Jovanka Beckles and Nikki Bas. Do you believe these topics are relevant to the Rent Board's role in the City of Berkeley? Please explain.

Rent Board Commissioners play an important role in developing housing policy in general through the 4x4 Committee with City Council. Questions such as drug criminalization, zoning, and transportation are increasingly relevant, as we try to integrate our housing systems with transit systems, and recognize the role of built environments in causing, or preventing, crime.

While some of these questions aren't directly related to the role of a Rent Board Commissioner, I do think it can be fair to ask more general policy and political questions before lending support to candidates, especially given the propensity of former Rent Board Commissioners to run for higher office.

Andy Kelley**

Rent Board Candidate (no slate)

Berkeley Democratic Club endorses Andy Kelley

1. What do you think are current problems that tenants and property owners face in the City of Berkeley and how do you propose to fix them? Please give specific policy proposals.

Rising housing costs are #1. Too many tenants are only a missed paycheck or two away from being unable to pay rent. At the same time, many small and low-income property owners are struggling to maintain the upkeep of their properties with raising costs for materials, contractors and changing standards.

The City should create a zero-percent loan program to help small property owners maintain habitability standards especially for older units with higher costs which would allow larger one-time expenses to be spread over many years.

Rent Relief Fund – The City should establish a rent relief fund for tenants temporarily unable to pay their rent in whole or in part to provide bridge funding while they get back on their feet. This would allow time to recover from illness, lost wages, or life transitions, without displacement or adding pressures to the homeowner.

2. Recent Rent Board and Council deliberation has revolved around Golden Duplexes (a duplex that is exempt from rent control because an owner lived in the property in December 1979), Accessory Dwelling Units, and/or owner-occupied duplexes with rent control. Tenant advocates want to increase regulation with respect to evictions and rent levels for duplexes, while property owners advocates want to allow on-site owners greater flexibility to control the property they live on with their tenant. What is your stance

and why? Do you believe Golden Duplexes should retain their current exemption from rent control?

Both tenants and homeowners deserve housing security and to be able to establish themselves in our community and age in place with dignity. That is the reason why many homeowners are choosing to build ADUs, either to move into when they retire and rent their house as a source of income, or to move in a family member or caretaker. These homeowners are concerned a long-term tenant would prevent that planned retirement. I believe there must be a middle ground that incentivizes homeowners to build desperately needed ADUs while securely planning for their future and providing tenants reasonable protections as well. If eviction protections are expanded to ADUs, the Just Cause should include provisions for caretakers, retirement, injury, loss of mobility etc. The same can be said for golden duplexes, the terms should be set on lease signing or sale of property not whether an owner resides on site.

3. Many residents of Berkeley have been [mailed erroneous notices](#) by the Rent Board. How do you propose fixing the data gaps and communication errors?

These 2 mailings were unfortunate and I have spoken with our Executive Director on how to avoid the problem happening again in the future. The first was caused by an error made by a third party vendor during the Rent Board's recent database migration and digitalization of paper records. This was a much needed modernization which will improve our efficiency, reduce costs, and streamline services in the future, but an error during the process resulted in errant mailings being sent. Staff has corrected this issue.

The second mailing was around Measure MM registration requirements, which the City has contracted the Rent Board to enforce. This impacted a group of approximately 2,500 property owners who may or may not be subject to Measure MM but had yet to register exemptions. Staff will conduct additional outreach as these properties continue to be reclassified.

4. The demolition ordinance passed in 2024 requires any demolition of rent controlled housing to be replaced with subsidized Below Market Rate housing, a significant change from previous practices. Recent estimates have shown that one unit Below Market Rate housing costs ~\$700,000 to build. How do you envision this provision of the ordinance will affect future development and do you think it should be amended?

The study referenced here found the median cost of constructing a BMR unit in Alameda County in 2022 was \$713k. By comparison, UC Berkeley's Turner Center Market Rate Pro Forma estimates a cost of a market rate unit in Alameda County to be \$637k -- a difference of \$76k -- as the true additional cost, which may potentially be offset by reduced fees or tax credits. As Keith Carson's appointee to and Vice Chair of the Alameda County Planning Commission, these are the tradeoffs we have to consider in our zoning every day -- how to incentive much needed housing without displacing current residents. I believe the updated Demolition Ordinance is an effort to do this and supported it. Reducing community concerns around displacement will help projects avoid protracted appeals to advance faster and save on staff and financing costs. Its impacts should be monitored and evaluated as we get new data.



5. The recent Rent Board Tenant Convention included a supplementary questionnaire by a co-sponsoring organization for potential candidates. These questions asked about particular policy choices including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Israel, reducing police budgets, decriminalizing drugs, continuing exclusionary zoning unless even small projects are required to include subsidized Below Market Rate housing, supporting free transportation etc. The supplementary questionnaire also asked potential slate members if they would run with DSA-backed candidates Jovanka Beckles and Nikki Bas. Do you believe these topics are relevant to the Rent Board's role in the City of Berkeley? Please explain.

I'm proud of my record serving these past 4 years on the Berkeley Rent Board and thankful to Berkeley Democratic Club for your past support. I believe the most important role for the Rent Board is to improve our outreach to tenants and small-property owners rely on our services the most. The Rent Board has a specific mandate to administer the Rent Stabilization and Eviction for Good Cause Ordinance and that has been my primary focus. As an independent candidate, I am proud to have broad community support including from Mayor Jesse Arreguin, Councilmember Terry Taplin, East Bay Regional Parks President Elizabeth Echols, Senator Loni Hancock, Supervisor Keith Carson, the Berkeley Firefighters Association, SEIU 1021 and the Building and Construction Trades of Alameda County. With your support I will continue to work to build a more affordable Berkeley for us all to call home. www.andykelly.org

Dominique Walker

Right to Housing Rent Board Slate

1. What do you think are current problems that tenants and property owners face in the City of Berkeley and how do you propose to fix them? Please give specific policy proposals.

Energy efficiency and habitability issues affect tenants and landlords. We have to work with the rent the city to come up with incentives for landlords that don't put the weight of the cost onto tenants. There is a way to do this and we have to work together to figure out policy-wise what that looks like.

2. Recent Rent Board and Council deliberation has revolved around Golden Duplexes (a duplex that is exempt from rent control because an owner lived in the property in December 1979), Accessory Dwelling Units, and/or owner-occupied duplexes with rent control. Tenant advocates want to increase regulation with respect to evictions and rent levels for duplexes, while property owners advocates want to allow on-site owners greater flexibility to control the property they live on with their tenant. What is your stance and why? Do you believe Golden Duplexes should retain their current exemption from rent control?

We need to protect tenants. Golden Duplexes should not be exempt from rent control, I believe that all rental units should have rent control and tenant protections.

3. Many residents of Berkeley have been [mailed erroneous notices](#) by the Rent Board. How do you propose fixing the data gaps and communication errors?

The Rent Board is in the process of a tech update. I am currently the Chair of the Budget and Personnel committee, we recently approved a budget that includes an update to our registry system that would reduce errors resulting in a more efficient system.

4. The demolition ordinance passed in 2024 requires any demolition of rent controlled housing to be replaced with subsidized Below Market Rate housing, a significant change from previous practices. Recent estimates have shown that one unit Below Market Rate housing costs ~\$700,000 to build. How do you envision this provision of the ordinance will affect future development and do you think it should be amended?

The demolition ordinance is how we will retain housing low-income housing in Berkeley. I do believe that there is a way to lessen the cost and I think that something that should be considered, but replacing demolished units 1:1 is only fair and the least we can do for Berkeley. Berkeley has heavily displaced our African-American and low-income community as it continues to build housing, this is a start.

5. The recent Rent Board Tenant Convention included a supplementary questionnaire by a co-sponsoring organization for potential candidates. These questions asked about particular policy choices including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Israel, reducing police budgets, decriminalizing drugs, continuing exclusionary zoning unless even small projects are required to include subsidized Below Market Rate housing, supporting free transportation etc. The supplementary questionnaire also asked potential slate members if they would run with DSA-backed candidates Jovanka Beckles and Nikki Bas. Do you believe these topics are relevant to the Rent Board's role in the City of Berkeley? Please explain.

I believe that the above-mentioned questions are important to voters. I think it's important to know how the candidate you're going to endorse feels about genocide and police, injustices that are outside the Rent Board. All the injustices and systems of oppression are interconnected and it is uber-important to determine how you feel about tenants and rent control.

BART BOARD

Victor Flores

- 1. BART had to make big cuts during the pandemic and revenue has dropped significantly due to remote work. Because so much of BART's budget is fixed costs, service would have to be cut unless there are new forms of revenue. Do you believe the BART board needs to embrace a new model of funding that doesn't primarily rely on fares? Do you support having a measure to fund BART?**

The pandemic necessitated severe budget cuts for BART, drastically reducing its revenue as more people opted for remote work. Given the majority of BART's budget is tied up in fixed costs, further service cuts are inevitable unless new revenue streams are identified. The BART board must embrace a funding model that doesn't primarily rely on fares. My plan to diversify and grow our revenue includes implementing the Hong Kong MTR Corps Rail Plus Property policy and creating a Community Hub program to activate each station consistently to make them destination points. Introducing a measure to fund BART is critical to give us breathing room. A dedicated tax or public funding initiative can provide the steady financial support needed to maintain and expand services; however, no guarantee that it will pass. As a BART Director, I have the relationships and experience to work with various stakeholders to find a path forward on regional funding measure as well as the new policies and programs that will make BART self-sufficient.

- 2. Please explain your view of Transit Oriented Development. Do you believe that Transit Oriented Development builds ridership? What factors will you weight when determining whether to approve a TOD project?**

BART can and should build as much housing as possible. When BART makes a real estate decision, it is done under the assumption that it will be there for 100+ years. Building communities around transit hubs support sustainable living and boosts ridership. When evaluating TOD projects, I will consider accessibility, affordability, and the potential to create vibrant, mixed-use communities. It's not just about increasing the number of riders; it's about enhancing the quality of life for those who depend on BART. We can create thriving neighborhoods that benefit everyone by integrating housing, retail, and recreational spaces around transit stations. Once we are investors in our developments, we will also capture some of the values that can feed back into transit operations and reserve some funding to create an affordable housing trust fund.

- 3. How do you feel about BART's policing? Do you support crisis intervention and unarmed officers?**

Safety on BART is a pressing concern that cannot be ignored. Effective policing is essential, but it must be balanced with compassion and understanding. While BART Police have made great improvements over the years, we still have a lot more work to do! I support crisis intervention and unarmed officers like our ambassadors, who are trained to de-escalate situations involving mental health issues or substance abuse. This approach promotes a safer, more welcoming environment for all riders. A major focus of mine is to also bring SEPTA's Hub of Hope model to provide resources to our unsheltered community using BART to protect themselves from the elements. We must work towards a policing model that prioritizes the safety and dignity of everyone who uses BART.

4. Many riders have expressed concern with their safety on BART due to dangerous behavior or drug use on BART. How will you address those concerns?

We must hold people accountable, including those exercising the state's power. Accountability can take many different shapes, not just arrest and incarceration. I believe in working with our staff, community members, and public safety staff to identify diversion programs and other forms of accountability to ensure that people will not engage in dangerous behavior or use harmful substances on our trains. Regardless of one's position on the legality and use of substances, I believe we can all agree that public spaces should be accessible to everyone, including our most vulnerable, such as children.

5. BART recently updated their parking policies. How do you envision parking policy in the future for BART especially as parking pricing has stayed relatively level while BART fares have risen?

BART's parking policies need a forward-thinking approach. As fares have risen, parking prices have stayed relatively level, creating an imbalance. We should prioritize accessibility from alternative modes of transportation and implement dynamic pricing for parking spaces as we transition some of those spaces into more human-centered and revenue-generating uses. By diversifying our revenue sources and making our stations more attractive for people to spend time at, we can begin to wean the system away from having riders pay for every increase of costs.

Dana Lang

Dana Lang did submit her questionnaire

