

# Berkeley Progressive Alliance/Berkeley Citizens Action Candidate Questionnaire--2018 Election

Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> Endorsement Meeting  
North Berkeley Senior Center

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Candidate for What Office: City Council District 1

*Please return questionnaire to BPA by Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup>*

## 2018 Questions for Candidates for Berkeley City Council

### I. General

A. Why do you think you'd make a good councilmember?

I am a person with multiple disabilities who has lived here for well over half my life. During that time, I have been a Berkeley renter in a rent controlled apartment twice, a TIC/condo conversion owner, and a small business owner. I can empathize with a wide variety of interests and have had a long history of negotiating between contentious parties, from my work in the Arizona State Senate, to my NGO work here and in China, and finally during the 9 year operation of a fair trade import business I started with a partner. I have also been an activist for the unionization of California College of the Arts, medical marijuana, and a number of other progressive campaigns. By leveraging many of the advantages I have, I managed to mitigate my disadvantages to not only survive with my unorthodox living situations, but live well, and even save a modest amount. I believe that applying the same process I've used to make our situation more tenable to the deeply entrenched problems the city is currently facing could make us a model for cities across that state, and that in putting forth bold proposals, we can also obtain grants from large non-profit corporations instead of relying on for-profit developers to make housing more affordable for a significant number of people in the extremely low to low income categories.

B. What are the key issues that you think the City Council should address?

Housing and city planning, militarization of the police force (along with prejudicial policing and the brutalization of homeless people), and serious environmental concerns (particularly around the sewers and aquatic park, but also in terms of how much more the city could be doing to be a leader in reducing emissions). I realize that some progress has been made on item 3, but we could be doing it in a much smarter way that would also bring sustainable power as Portland has through the use of hydrogenerators in any new water pipes).

C. Do you support the <https://berkeleyprogressivealliance.org/about-us/>

**Berkeley Progressive Alliance's mission statement** and progressive agenda?

<https://berkeleyprogressivealliance.org/about-us/> Yes \_\_\_\*\_\_ No \_\_\_

\*I support your mission statement, but believe that some bold proposals about the execution of those plans would make them even more effective.

1.) Is there anything you would add? Yes  No \_\_\_

What would you add? \_\_\_ Please see attached \_\_\_\_\_

2) Is there anything you would **not support**? Yes \_\_\_\*\_\_ No \*

Which Items would you not support?\_

I can't answer this as a yes or no question, because I believe we share identical goals, but that with the rent control, eviction, and condo conversion tweaks I am suggesting, we could get more people below the median income into PERMANENT housing with less expense and contention on all sides.

D. Will you obtain public financing for your campaign? Yes  No \_\_\_

E. Do you support the candidates for Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board chosen at the Tenant Convention on April 22? Yes \_\_\_\*\_\_ No \_\_\_

\* I believe we can work together to strengthen housing options for extremely low to low income people, but I also believe this involves getting a good number of them into permanent housing arrangements not involving rent. I would need to speak with them personally to see if we could start generating more successful policies than the ones currently in place, and to see if there would be openness to and acknowledgement of the needs of elderly and disabled homeowners who also can't afford to be displaced or whose care and housing are sometimes compromised by pitting them against renters, creating a situation in which two groups in different states of precarity are set against one another. I believe that we could, given that we have shared goals of keeping extremely low- and below-median people in their homes, and that a more holistic approach to our problems will allow us to set up situations where affordability isn't just limited to the tiny number of people that developers grudgingly offer space to at an inadequately reduced price.

F. Whom do you support for State Assembly AD15?

My inclination is for Beckles, but I believe Poindexter makes a very important point about the UBI, and I'd like to talk to her about possibly incorporating that into her platform.

## II. Housing and Displacement

A. Do you support placing a City of Berkeley **bond measure** on this November's ballot dedicated to funding below market affordable housing construction and acquisition in Berkeley? Yes \_\_\_\*\_\_ No \_\_\_

\* Again, reading the supplement I am sharing, implementation would be key. I would like to know how the City would be spending the money as I don't think it has a good plan in place. I want to see more homeless people and people at risk in permanent housing, and current

neoliberal policies have failed miserably at this.

Pathways looks like it will actually lead to further gentrification, and more construction without a range of true affordability (30% of income for housing). That could and should change before November. This is a vital issue, and must be funded. I just want to make sure we're doing it right before we go shooting money at a losing proposition. We can't just use San Francisco's Navigation Centers as a guide: homeless people who are given temporary housing are frequently kicked back out in 30 to 60 days, with no leads to better housing. While they were gone, their tents and belongings were disposed of, and they had to start over from nothing, sometimes among people they didn't know. This is traumatic, and potentially very dangerous, particularly to children, women, the elderly, and the disabled. The services proposed are not new, and not sufficient for demand. The tradition started under the Bates/Maio regime of favoring above mean-income renters doesn't fit with the rhetoric of housing the homeless, and the article makes a credible case that the Arreguin administration isn't diverging from this path. I believe that Mayor Arreguin has honorable intentions, but I also believe that following what looks to be a failed policy tried across the Bay isn't going to help, at least not without serious modification. However, I remain hopeful that the spirit of this Administration is much more open to collaborative efforts and new ideas, and should we be able to work together to make proposed programs more efficient and effective, I would gladly embrace the bond measure. <http://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/04/13/opinion-arreguins-pathways-project-is-berkeleys-pathway-to-gentrification>

I would also like to explore the city's relationship with the university in greater detail and see how we could get them to take more responsibility for adequate housing for students, and for their impact on city resources.

B. Would you support a graduated increase in the City of Berkeley **property transfer tax** on homes with the proceeds dedicated to the Housing Trust Fund?

Yes\_\_\*\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

This was already in my statement, great idea.

C. Do you support building below-market rate permanently affordable housing on the **North Berkeley BART** parking lot? Yes\_\_\*\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

D. What proportion of any housing built there should be below market rate and at what level(s) of affordability?\_\_\_\_\_

I think we have to have numbers that are at a minimum proportional to each of the first four underrepresented categories, and ideally, it would be at 30% of each of those income thresholds to allow enough money for food, medical care, transit, etc. To get there, I think we're going to have to get very creative with our execution. I have outlined several possible avenues in my supplemental statement, as well as below. I myself am in the low category right now, so I feel like I have a good grasp on what's actually doable for low-income residents. We manage to live well on an absurdly small amount of money because we have housing that fits closely to that percentage, and that was only possible through a condo conversion. I hear all the

time about how these things can't be developed because banks only want to invest in luxury and high returns, but that seems to me like a lack of effort to procure effective funding. Marin Community Bank would be a great place to look to. They regularly fund "risky" properties such as TICs, and are willing to work to make local home ownership possible. I believe that the right proposal could also pull in non-profit funding and support as well, but only if it truly served the interests of the underserved. I also believe that private developers can make a profit without having to make a killing, and that padding the margins they insist on will only further impoverish the community as a whole. Partnerships with major non-profit entities to create model programs is an even better idea, because we could be at the vanguard for creating a social justice model for housing nationally. I support this, but only if the terms "affordable housing" are more than the lip service they have been in other new construction, and the building stays in reasonable proportion to the surrounding houses. We would also need to put in underground parking for BART or we would end up discouraging ridership by people who drive to the station.

Alameda County Income Limits for Income Categories (extremely low, very low, low, etc.):  
<http://www.dublin.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10539>

E. Do you support **land value capture**? Yes  \*  No  \*

\* This would depend greatly on the specifics of the proposal. Are we talking about Special Assessment Districts? Transit Increment Financing? Traffic Development Impact Fees? I favor keeping the burden on developers, many of whom don't live here and are only looking to cash in to the maximum extent on a place that isn't their community. I would have to look at the specifics of other proposals as I fear too many extra fees and taxes on long-term, low-income and/or disabled homeowners could lead to displacement.

1) Whenever upzoning occurs, should the City ask for a share in the increase in value that results from upzoning? Yes  \*  No  \*

The City should only target developers for an increase in value from upzoning. Many West Berkeley residents are already very unhappy about the way development has been handled along San Pablo avenue, particularly those west of it and just immediately east. They already don't feel heard, and some are fearing displacement from changes in zoning, as well as additional congestion that's sure to arise from inadequate parking in new construction. This is part of what fractures communities. Many fear negative impacts on their own home values, and not a small number of these are long-term residents of limited means, like myself. Forcing more vulnerable people out over these issues is really too much, particularly when many are already unhappy about what they see as a threat to the fabric of the community and their children's ability to play safely outside with increased traffic due to people driving around in circles for parking forever (because transit still isn't adequate here for the amount of increased density and parking for these buildings is laughably bad).

Asking us to pay for more affordable housing and the additional necessary transit is something a lot of us can support through other mechanisms, even if the overall result is more dense than we had hoped for when we moved here, because we do care about affordable housing availability and the environmental friendliness of having more

transit. These are things that can mitigate the disappointment of watching a neighborhood change in a way we otherwise couldn't support. Making permanent housing for people of below median income will enhance our community in ways that current proposals will not, and ensuring that the "retail" space is filled with community enhancing tenants is also key to turning around perceptions about how things have been done. Asking us to pay more for something that doesn't feel like a benefit to us and is likely to negatively impact our home values would be another thing.

F. Berkeley has a rich history of being a community that is economically and racially diverse. What do you think the city could do now to stop the displacement of African Americans and other people of color?

I've already outlined some of the measures I would take from a purely economic standpoint, and within those guidelines, one possibility I'd like to explore is to establish a proportional quota for particularly threatened groups that would maintain those percentages. I would also add the too rarely mentioned disabled community, who are often left out entirely in planning for new housing. An exception was the building that displaced CIL, but I suspect that CIL wouldn't have been nearly so willing to move if that wasn't the case.

(<http://www.berkeleyside.com/2015/12/14/berkeley-zoning-board-approves-new-units-on-telegraph-shattuck>)

Disabled housing availability shouldn't depend on what a developer can gain from it alone. That being said, this is an issue I would have to further discuss with staff lawyers to ensure that the wording for any minimum quota proposals are fully legal and avoid unnecessary legal fees, and the weighted lottery system I mentioned in the limited equity section would also ensure that we have more diversity in new housing. I will discuss another creative option in the section on limited equity cooperative housing. Again, I would need to talk to the city attorney to ensure that the proposal is in full compliance with relevant laws, but it's a good start for discussion.

G. What should the City Council do to put some teeth in code enforcement, particularly regarding residential rentals?

I think this is an extremely complex question, because I think that code in Berkeley needs serious reform. There is an ideal, and there is safe, but not the last word in standardization. I have a neighbor who used to be an inspector for the City, and he told me that code enforcement used to involve inspections with a master carpenter, who would allow exemptions for properties deemed safe but not to the letter of the code, especially in Victorians, converted water towers, and other unorthodox structures for which the letter of the code isn't always even possible without complete demolition (especially in terms of things like ceiling height, or having a larger step up into a bathroom to allow for plumbing under the floor). That doesn't mean that these buildings can't still be safe. I would add that in cases where the letter of the code would involve crippling costs but the building is already deemed a safe habitation, the City might consider incentivizing upgrades instead. Particularly in rent controlled buildings with small landlords, making policy punitive will only limit peoples' willingness and ability to rent out their places. We need to be safe, but we also need to be realistic

about what's doable to keep our vibrant housing stock intact and increase availability of affordable housing options.

H. Do you support **SB 827**?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_x\_\_

**SB 827** gives commercial property owners and developers a windfall increase in density without requiring any community benefit in return and without adequate protections against demolition of existing housing. SB 827 would allow construction of 7 story buildings (55' plus a 35% density bonus) on residential streets in much of South, Central and West Berkeley, with even greater height allowed on commercial corridors (85' plus a 35% density bonus). It would have little impact on the hills.

Developers need to invest in the community in return for any and all "density bonuses." These have not benefitted us in terms of affordability, racial and economic diversity, accessibility, or community arts resources in the past, in spite of promises made. Turning Berkeley into a yuppie housing warehouse while driving out a diverse spectrum of people, mom and pop businesses, and community arts is robbing Berkeley of its character and desirability as a place to live, piece by piece. If we are going to have even more density than we already have (as one of the densest cities in the country), we must have diversity and we must have decent transit and cultural amenities to go with it. I would also like to see these proposals impact the east side of the city and the hills, as we all have to share in the kinds of changes that can be difficult, not just those in traditionally less well-heeled areas. This is, of course, not an issue in the hills, where that building can't occur, but since they are escaping change they might not enjoy and the rest of us aren't, we should explore the possibility of them paying a higher percentage of the burden of increased costs for all the extra necessary staffing and services that these plans require than the rest of us (or perhaps even all of whatever developers and non-profits aren't covering), with exemptions again for long-term residents who may not be able to afford it, such as the elderly in the hills). Shared pain is the only way to get everybody to fully evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages as a community. Also, we shouldn't force out people in small buildings to do any of this, so rezoning that places any fourplex or single family home in the way of eminent domain is a non-starter without the express consent of the owner.

An owner that agrees to vacate for new construction should be paid a fair market rate for their home, and that value must reflect the quality of materials and effort put into making a house a home. If the project is going to be demoed anyway, we should allow these people to have a demolition sale and/or save materials from the building for their next home. If they have no interest in that, the city should allow any of these homes to be salvaged by Habitat for Humanity or a cooperative creating tiny homes for the underserved. Finally, these individuals should be given first option in any resulting new co-housing construction, commensurate with their income. Generosity in the face of displacement will lead people to fear less and collaborate more, which is also a community-building essential, and this goes for displaced renters as well.

I. Do you think 7-story buildings should be permitted in areas zoned R-1, R-2, R-

Please see my comments above, but I have not seen any proposals so far that would work for me, and mega-developments without truly affordable housing are really useless in alleviating the housing crisis. They only serve to make the community less livable as they have been done so far, with large numbers of vacancies and the myth of “affordability,” which isn’t really the case for low income people and is offered in insufficient quantity. I should add, that if former Mayor Bates had pushed something like the high line-like proposal that was on the table for downtown, where there would be rooftop gardens and elevated walkways, there would have been a lot more support for these proposals, because they would have been seen as enhancing the community as a whole. I think we can rectify this by taking veto power out of the hands of deep-pocketed developers and their allies in city government and seeking funding for projects through partnerships with large non-profits, such as the Ford Foundation, who have a stated goal of fighting economic injustice and literally building institutions and infrastructure. We could easily start a conversation with them in the link provided here, and present them with some of the solutions I will further illustrate below as model programs that could be implemented in other cities facing affordable housing crises:

<https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/>. Ford is not the only game in town, and is only being used as an example. I have not contacted them yet, so I don’t know if there would be an invitation to submit a proposal or not. I have connections with people who award local grants as well, and will be talking to them soon about what possibilities might exist to support the vision of permanent housing for extremely low to low income people.

Latest version of SB 827 can be found here:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180SB827](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB827)

J. What should the City do to support limited equity cooperative housing in Berkeley?

I’m glad you asked! I covered that in my attached statement, but basically, condo conversions done properly are a great resource here, and a fantastic way to get limited income people into permanent housing. I have done it myself, and have a lot of ideas on how to make the process better for below median income people. If developers of new construction balk at the many ways their empty density bonuses could be remedied, we could provide a pathway to condo conversions for people on limited incomes.

Also, it seems to me that the City hasn’t historically been coordinating with other organizations who are working on innovative proposals, nor listening to individuals like myself who have had to go non-traditional routes to make things work (I attempted to address these concerns with Linda Maio many times over the years, and she just didn’t even want to consider anything that countered the neoliberal grand plan put forth by the Hancock/Bates administrations. Again, we are able to live well, but only because I was able to procure this TIC and convert it. Otherwise, I doubt we would be able to live here at all. We need ingenuity and cooperative efforts that benefit a lot of people rather than just the few who stand to profit from gentrification.

We could also use grants to obtain some of the sites earmarked for “luxury” housing and put tiered by income (from the lowest to 20% below median) limited equity housing in their place.

Units would be awarded to qualified applicants via a lottery system, with members of underrepresented groups getting an extra “ticket” for each qualifying factor for at least half the units. For the other half, we should factor in people in the same income brackets who have a history of being active participants in bettering the community and or people in the arts and healing professions, who enhance our community and are paid too little to otherwise live here, regardless of race, gender, or gender preference, again by lottery, and again, with extra tickets given to people in qualifying categories. The affordable housing fund could support purchase of these units at a level that allows people to live there without spending more than 30% of their income on housing through grants and loans tied to the property through a lien, to be paid back with modest interest upon sale. Sale of a given unit would be limited to someone who had an income not exceeding whatever the then-current, identical category of housing’s income is at the same level (i.e., if you bought from the low-income bracket, you could only sell to someone else in the low-income bracket at the time of sale). This would allow the growth of equity in the investment, and also ensure that there would always be diversity in well-located, clean, safe housing stock. Retail space in these units would go to social service organizations, community arts, and mom and pop businesses providing interesting and innovative services at more affordable prices. The corporatization of retail space, empty retail space, and over-priced “boutique” services geared only towards more affluent people are already overrepresented here. This would maintain the character of the city and provide outlets for the increased economic diversity we would see here. Again, this is a rough idea, and I would want to work out the specifics with non-profits and the city attorney to avoid unnecessary legal hassles.

### III. Health Care

A. Do you oppose Sutter Health’s plans to close **Alta Bates**? Yes  No

B. What would you do to ensure that Berkeley has a full service hospital and emergency room located nearby for the long term?

Well, first off, the protest in front of the hospital is only useful in so far as bringing publicity to the issue, but isn’t really useful in swaying Sutter by itself. Nancy Skinner introduced a bill last October to address this issue by requiring the approval of the Attorney General before non-profit hospitals would be allowed to close. Although the bill was crafted around the Alta Bates closure, this problem is not unique to Berkeley and we are already seeing bigger influxes of patients at Kaiser Oakland as a direct impact of this policy, which puts already underserved Kaiser patients at great risk as well. Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo has already closed. One source cited low Medical reimbursements as their reason, but really, this amounts to saying that poor patients don’t deserve the same chance at life as more wealthy people. Another cited the relatively low number of patients who they see needing that level of critical care, according to the medical group itself.

The reality is that this is a symptom of the larger problem of healthcare in this country. Though Summit (and Kaiser, for that matter), claim to be non-profits, some of their employees in upper management profit to an obscene degree, which is also part of the larger and growing problem of income inequality, and the people in decision-making capacities making the decisions that

protect their own bottom lines over the interests of the public.

The Skinner bill was vetoed by Jerry Brown, who has not acted in the best interests of the people of the state on a wide variety of issues (fracking leaps to mind as well). As local government officials (should I be elected), we have to stop treating our local issues as if they exist in a vacuum. Our focus should be on talking to our natural allies—other locales in California facing the same problems, for example—and forming coalitions to challenge the Governor. Barring that, we could go the messier referendum route, but City Council and the Mayor should be working as a team with local government leaders from other cities to pressure the Governor for support; they should be very, very public about it, and make it uncomfortable for the Governor to say no.

C. Do you support enacting single-payer healthcare in California? Yes  No

#### IV. Addressing Climate Change

**Background:** Berkeley’s Climate Action Plan found that natural gas and electricity used by buildings accounted for 53% of greenhouse gas emissions in Berkeley, while gasoline and diesel burning vehicles accounted for 47%.

A. Do you support the California Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan goal that “All new residential construction will be zero net energy (ZNE) by 2020”?

Yes  No

(see <https://www.capath2zne.org>)

Yes, as long as we include appropriate exemptions for emergency housing until we have adequate funding to do it all. We should not sacrifice emergency housing for this, but we must make developers do their fair share, as that’s where the big money is. As I will talk about below, Elon Musk might be a potential exchange partner with the City, under the right circumstances, for electric vehicles for the City fleet. Perhaps we could also get bulk discounts on some of the solar roofing he has and set up a program where Berkeley residents could get solarized roofing tiles on their roof at a below market price based on volume through the city. From what I’ve read, solar on every rooftop is one of the easiest ways to attain ZNE, and the easier the City can make it for people to install solar, the more successful it will be. The permits process for this should be cheap or free, and the process should be streamlined and easy. Inspectors should limit inspections to the proper installation of the panels and publicly state that they will not be going after any existing problems the property may have if they don’t directly affect solar installation and safe electrical hookups. This will go far in encouraging compliance.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/elon-musks-solar-roof-tiles-153442877.html>

B. Should Berkeley require ZNE in new residential construction beginning in 2020?

Yes  No

C. What should the City Council do to encourage use of alternative modes of transportation?

1. See about getting bulk discounts for a fleet of Lithium Ion battery powered electric bikes. The savings could then be passed on to local residents, and charging stations could be provided at

key locations around campus, libraries, etc. After a couple of years and under the same model, obtain replacement Lithium Ion batteries so that residents could afford to keep the bikes going after the rechargeable batteries had to be replaced. These really help on inclines, and would make biking easier for people. If Berkeley were to work something out with any one of many manufacturers for a volume discount, it would be easier to get people to do it. A potential deal should be negotiated, then made public for the interested parties to sign up. Once it is clear that interest is sufficient for the City to make the deal without losing money, it should be done.

2. Charge an extra tax for every car after the first two registered to residents of a given Berkeley single-family household, and apply the funds towards e-bike program. Additional funding can also be obtained through grants.

3. Offer prizes donated by local businesses near transit to people using public transit on a random basis. This could be part of a Bay Area-wide campaign which could be conducted in conjunction with other local governments. Staff from the contest would position themselves at various transit hubs and determine “winners” by say, picking a turnstile and approaching the 10<sup>th</sup> (or whatever number is chosen for the day) person who comes through at a given time. That person would be told they won the prize and handed an envelope with a gift certificate from whatever business was giving something away that hour, preferably near the stop in question. A public service campaign would go media-wide and in BART stations.

D. Should the City establish a system of shuttles connecting different neighborhoods and commercial areas? Yes  No

1) If so, how could this be funded?

It should be part of the payback developers would be required to make for density bonuses. It could also be part of a special assessment to people in the hills who aren't paying for the density increases in the ways that other parts of the city are.

E. Should the City replace its fossil-fuel powered vehicles with electric vehicle? Yes  \* No

Yes, but I would have to look at the complete budget to prioritize where the most bang for the environmental buck would come from. I also think that rather than an outright purchase, we should explore cooperative situations where the city would offer very favorable terms for an electric car dealership in the area off Second St. Perhaps not the best location for housing due to its proximity to the freeway, railroad, and Pacific Steel Casting housing, but might benefit from a business seeking to take those toxins out of the environment.

## V. Police and Community

A. Do you support the Berkeley Community United for Police Oversight charter amendment to create a new Police Commission Yes  No  \*

Why or Why Not?\_

While I agree that we need to conduct serious reform of unequal policing and overturn the appalling decision to militarize the police and participate in federal spying efforts, I

don't think this is the way to go for several reasons. First, this is an unelected body with no oversight that is able to control its own budget. It is also a political entity chosen without the debate and consent of the larger community. If Bobby Seale and the lawyer representing the family of Philando Castile can't support it, then there's already something seriously wrong with it. Moreover, as important as it is to hold police accountable for every wrong act, there have been very few reported incidents in Berkeley year to year. These issues could be much more effectively and efficiently addressed through a special investigation model of independent oversight. While it can be difficult to find impartial investigators, the "pro" v. "anti" police bias of potential investigating experts could be mitigated through a process akin to jury selection to find the best balance, and after the first group was chosen, we would have a proven slate we could use or modify for the next incident. The group pushing BCUPO could be incorporated in the process for choosing investigators, as should the community advisory board. This investigational entity would then have power as an independent third party evaluator of complaints, as well as serving as the third party reviewer of data, as mentioned in the recommendations. This would cost a lot less and still allow for independent oversight, as well as cost control.

Text of proposed charter amendment, item 27 on the March 27 Council agenda, can be found here: [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2018/03\\_Mar/City\\_Council\\_03-27-2018\\_-\\_Regular\\_Meeting\\_Agenda.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/03_Mar/City_Council_03-27-2018_-_Regular_Meeting_Agenda.aspx)

B. Do you support the recommendations in the Police Review Commission Report **To Achieve Fairness and Impartiality**, including those related to data collection and analysis, racial disparities and body cameras?

I do, and it's essential that they are implemented, especially the recommendations regarding use of force, response times, crime trends, and supervisory reports.

Please see note above.

Text of Report, item 26 on the Council agenda, can be found here: [https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2018/03\\_Mar/City\\_Council\\_03-13-2018\\_-\\_Regular\\_Meeting\\_Agenda.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/03_Mar/City_Council_03-13-2018_-_Regular_Meeting_Agenda.aspx)

## VI. Homelessness

- A. Would you support a \$5M parcel tax for homeless services including shelters, navigation center and rapid rehousing? Yes \_\_\_ \* \_\_\_  
No \_\_\_ \* \_\_\_

Again, I wrote a lot about this in my attached statement, but the current "plan" for homeless services is very flawed and needs serious revamping. I support seeking more funding for homeless services, but only if the City spends them

effectively rather than modeling on a program that isn't currently working. The vague platitudes and citation of what many have found to be disastrous policy in San Francisco tells me we are barreling down the wrong track, only to be able to say we're trying **something**. That's not good enough. We need a better plan first. Luckily, there are a lot of easier and cheaper solutions that would be far more humane, and give people a shot at a decent life and dignity. Pathways isn't ready for primetime yet and will likely lead to further gentrification. Let's get more specific before we start asking for money.

Another thing we really need to do, and this is a recurring theme, is to get the outside help and coordination that would support our efforts and make them infinitely more achievable, including from other localities facing the same issues, and from state and non-profit funding. This is a really great example:  
<http://fox40.com/2018/04/11/big-11-mayors-rally-behind-1-5b-bill-to-aid-homeless-communities/>

In a bipartisan effort, these 11 mayors are asking for \$1.5B in funding from the state, and the coalition will have so much more power than any one of them alone would. There are articles on this coalition going back to February, and I would urge the Mayor to get onboard with them, and with some much more specific proposals that will allow anyone whose encampment would otherwise be destroyed while they are temporarily housed and then turned out again to have a more permanent place to stay. Would the San Francisco Navigation Center project work better with the funding these mayors have asked for? It might, if we can be honest where the failures are in the current system, plug the holes, and stop favoring policies that serve gentrification. It might also if we can get people into permanent housing, rather than just booting them back into the street after 30 to 60 days. We can only do that with an honest assessment of what we're dealing with, and that include acknowledging what has clearly not worked. If San Francisco could make their navigation Center more humane and successful, so could Berkeley, but it will take more than is on the table now.

Also, the City desperately needs to send mental health experts into the field, and we need to see if we can get severely mentally ill people into proper care rather than expecting them to deal with a situation that the most mentally healthy among us would have difficulty coping with.

B. How should the City Council respond to encampments of homeless people?

Homeless encampments are a public health hazard to both the homeless residents within and other residents of Berkeley, and it is scary when they are near freeway exits and someone stumbles out into the road as cars are pulling off

the highway. That said, we can't criminalize homelessness, and we can't simply roust people without giving them a place to go. There has to be an interim solution until longer range plans can be more fully explored and implemented, but for now, moving them to the ironically named Tom Bates playing field might be the best if less than ideal option. I don't relish the location, as it is so near fumes from the freeway, but it is at least out of harm's way, and the loss of a field might help to motivate people to take more positive steps out of the crisis rather than just pretending it doesn't exist. The area on the south side of Aquatic Park could also be cleared of weeds and set up with a few stacking, insulated metal units. The aforementioned pod units, modified to stack, could work with the presence of good common shower, bathroom, and laundry facilities.

It would also be good to explore how we could get more emergency overnight housing for a lower price that's safe, and where more vulnerable members of the population could sleep without fear of attack or sexual assault. I find myself thinking of Japanese capsule hotels, where the bed is a lockable, heated pod. These could be locked from the inside, with master keys available to security staff; emergency staff (fire and ambulance); and police. We could get safer bedding and more of it this way. A common area with support services would be available during the day, as would restrooms, lockers, laundry services, and showers. The lack of facilities for homeless people to keep themselves clean and free of contagion is also a major problem, and providing them in adequate number will cut down acute problems with lice, scabies, and other risks. This is just a brainstorming idea and needs further research.

Some cities also coordinate with places of worship for shelter space, and the city could certainly approach many of our places of worship with this idea as well. Here are several examples of how it's becoming increasingly common around the country:

<http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201801/churches-literally-answer-call-shelter-homeless-31271>

<http://www.churches-united.org>

<http://www.valleynewslive.com/home/headlines/Local-Churches-Helping-Homeless--364810741.html>

When speaking to one of my neighbors, she suggested allowing all that long-unused retail space in those "density bonus" buildings to be used as temporary shelters at night. There are many possibilities for what to do with that space to benefit the community, but leaving it vacant should not be one of them.

We might also consider gymnasiums at local schools during school breaks, when the facility isn't otherwise being used. It could possibly used year-round if the area could be cleaned and cleared before the kids arrive for any early morning

practice, but I think we would have to limit this to summer, winter, and spring breaks.

We can certainly toss around other ideas for temporary housing, but I think this is a problem that once again must be solved not alone, but with other cities who are having the same issues, both through the coalition of 11 mayors noted above, and neighboring cities (notably Oakland). Since the Albany Bulb has often been a site of encampments in the past, it might also provide a decent setting for temporary tiny housing with an onsite public bathroom and shower.

Homelessness knows no city borders. This is not just a city problem, but a larger local, regional, and state one. If we continue addressing it alone, we will be spinning our reinvented wheels and giving up the efficiency that a larger coalition would give.