

# 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 believe there are three key qualities needed for the next city councilmember for District 1 to be successful: (1) experience serving the community; (2) an ability to think critically about policy and budget issues; and (3) a commitment to the future of the community. As a Commissioner on the Housing Advisory Commission and the Community Health Commission, I've served my community by championing affordable housing and preventing the closure of Alta Bates Hospital. With a Master of Public Policy degree and experience working at the state and local level, I have demonstrated the ability to think critically about policy and budget issues. And finally, as a new mom and a first-time homeowner, I am deeply committed to the future of our community.

B. What are the key issues that you think the City Council should address? The City Council must continue to look for innovative solutions to the shortage of affordable homes and seek to aggressively combat the displacement of low-income families and communities of color.

- **Local Density Bonus.** I would like to see the City Council consider a local density bonus, which would allow developers of market-rate housing to build higher-density housing in exchange for having a greater portion of their units offered at affordable prices.
- **City-Owned Land.** I am also interested in seeing the City Council move forward on a Community Land Trust and Small Sites Program in which land is owned by the city and affordable housing can be provided in perpetuity.
- **Homesharing.** I also support the creation of a Homesharing Program, in which the city provides funding to a community-based organization that works to connect aging homeowners with individuals seeking home-sharing arrangements.

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

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

What would you add? \_\_\_\_\_

I support the spirit of the Berkeley Progressive Alliance mission statement. For affordable housing, I would want to ensure that whatever fees are levied on new development wouldn't make projects

infeasible. For policing, I support oversight but am concerned about the effect on recruitment and retention that an independent police review commission would have.

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

Which Items would you not support?\_\_\_\_\_

I support the spirit of the Berkeley Progressive Alliance mission statement. For affordable housing, I would want to ensure that whatever fees are levied on new development wouldn't render projects infeasible. For policing, I support oversight but am concerned about the effect on recruitment and retention that an independent police review commission would have.

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

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

This questionnaire is requested prior to April 22nd. I will be able to answer this question verbally during the endorsement meeting on April 29th.

F. Whom do you support for State Assembly AD15?\_Buffy Wicks\_\_\_\_\_

## 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\_X\_ No\_\_\_

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\_\_\_

Right now, the cities of Berkeley and Oakland have the highest property transfer taxes in Alameda County at \$15 per \$1,000 of a home's purchase price. With Berkeley's median home value currently hovering around \$1.2 million, this means that the current city transfer tax is about \$18,000 on average, split between the home buyer and seller. My support of a higher city property transfer tax would be based on whether the tax was progressive, levying the greatest burden on homes selling for \$2 million or more. I would also be interested in exploring the feasibility of a special tax on homes purchased by all-cash buyers.

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

As someone who owns a home within a 10-minute walk of the North Berkeley BART station, I'm deeply invested in the conversation that the community is currently having about the possibility of creating homes on the site. Any proposed changes at the North Berkeley BART parking lot must take community input into account. During the recent North Berkeley BART housing forum, I was heartened to hear community support for creating permanently affordable housing at the site. As the District 1 councilmember, I would want to bring our community together to develop a plan for the BART site that prioritizes affordable homes and a sense of community that we can all feel proud of.

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

I would seek the highest proportion of below market rate homes that would be feasible and still allow the development to move forward.

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 \_\_\_  
Berkeley faces the challenge of needing to fund improvements to our deteriorating infrastructure, such as our roads, sidewalks, and marina.

To the extent that public investments, such as public-works projects and zoning changes, lead to higher land values, it makes sense to recover some of this land value and reinvest it in public goods such as infrastructure, affordable housing, and economic development.

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

In principle, this seems like a worthy goal. However, in practice, it will be important to consult with experts to determine the most effective way to structure this type of land value capture. Berkeley homes have increased in value over a long time horizon, but homes can also lose value - as we saw during the financial crisis in 2009.

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 remember when Berkeley High School was named the most diverse high school in America in 2000. Diversity is our strength, and I believe the city should seek to use a Community Land Trust and Small Sites Program in order to create permanently affordable housing.

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

Lack of enforcement leads to tenants living in substandard housing, and leads to the deterioration of rent controlled buildings, allowing the landlord to apply for a demolition permit on the grounds that it is no longer financially feasible to repair the building."

The city can educate tenants about their rights and could potentially create a hotline for tenants to report code enforcement issues. This would enable the city to focus code enforcement efforts on buildings with the most violations.

H. Do you support **SB 827**? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**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.

I support the concept of locating new homes close to transit hubs like BART stations and bus stops. I see this as a matter of inclusion and equity. We can strive to be a more inclusive community by creating more homes of all shapes and sizes in order to meet the needs of low-income and middle-income residents. We can strive for greater equity by enabling more people

to have better access to public transit. And in so doing, we can create a cleaner, greener city with fewer cars and greater use of public transit.

- I. Do you think 7-story buildings should be permitted in areas zoned R-1, R-2, R-2A and R-3?  
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

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)

With the recent defeat of SB 827 in the Senate’s Transportation and Housing Committee, I would like to see the state come together to develop a consensus bill that will achieve the goal of creating more homes close to existing transit hubs in a manner that gives some measure of control to local jurisdictions to determine the type of projects that are allowed.

- J. What should the City do to support limited equity cooperative housing in Berkeley?  
Limited equity cooperative housing needs subsidies, below-market interest rates, tax breaks, and other monetary assistance to get started. The city could potentially look at ballot measures that would raise revenue in order to fund this type of program.

### III. Health Care

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

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

I would reach out to other hospital systems, such as the University of California or Stanford.

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

As someone who recently gave birth, I was very fortunate to have access to high-quality, affordable prenatal care. I believe that everyone—regardless of income or legal status—deserves access to high-quality, affordable health care. I am committed to fighting for universal health care. Unfortunately, I don’t see a pathway for the current federal administration to grant the state of California the flexibility needed to enact a viable single-payer system at this time. I would therefore support an interim step of creating a public option on the Affordable Care Act health care exchange marketplace until we have a federal administration that would be more supportive.

### 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\_X\_ No\_\_\_

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

- B. Should Berkeley require ZNE in new residential construction beginning in 2020?  
Yes\_X\_ No\_\_\_

C. What should the City Council do to encourage use of alternative modes of transportation? The city can provide a local density bonus for housing located close to BART stations and bus stops. It can also ease parking requirements for new developments.

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

This is a concept that is worthy of further study. I would want to know if there are travel patterns that deviate from existing bus routes that would be well-served by a shuttle system.

1) If so, how could this be funded?

If it's determined that a shuttle system is appropriate, then I would explore funding options that included everything from user fees to a tax increase.

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

Yes, over time, as the City replaces its fleet of cars, it should look to replace them with electric or hybrid vehicles.

## 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\_X\_\_\_

Why or Why Not?\_ Police oversight is important, but I'm concerned that the Berkeley Community United for Policy Oversight charter amendment would exacerbate the challenges that the police department is experiencing related to recruitment and retention.

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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? Yes

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\_\_\_

Homelessness is a complex problem that requires sustained attention at the local, state, and national level to address adequately. I believe the city of Berkeley must do everything it can to provide support and services to individuals experiencing homelessness on our streets while at the same time recognizing that we as a city cannot wage this fight alone. I support the call by the 11 big city California mayors seeking \$1.5 billion in state funds to address homelessness. Investments in temporary supportive

services, such as shelters and navigation centers, must be matched with an equal commitment to permanent supportive housing.

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

The City Council must balance the rights and dignity of individuals experiencing homelessness against the greater welfare of the community. The city should not resort to criminalizing homelessness, but must also respond when encampments threaten public health and public safety.