

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

**Sunday, April 29th Endorsement Meeting
North Berkeley Senior Center**

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Candidate for What Office _____ Berkeley City Council, District 1 _____

Please return questionnaire to BPA by Thursday, April 19th

2018 Questions for Candidates for Berkeley City Council

I. General

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

A good councilmember listens to the needs of their constituents and works to make Berkeley a place we can all call home. A good councilmember identifies gaps in services and failures in good government and makes sure they're fixed. A good councilmember stands up for Berkeley values, like inclusion and equity, and works every day to live up to our reputation as an innovative and progressive community that believes a better world starts at home. Berkeley is a city of firsts. A good councilmember has the vision and temerity to imagine what should be and, working together, makes it so.

Through my lifetime of public service, I have striven to be someone who listens, seeks to understand the complexities of issues, and acts in a way that leads toward sustainable solutions to the challenges brought before me. I have developed a track record of being responsive and responsible to community members. Indeed, many longtime activists have billed me as the "go-to person" on the boards and commissions that I serve.

Should I have the honor of being elected to this seat, I intend to bring my reputation of being a thoughtful, responsive, and accessible public servant to the fore. The issues that our District 1 community faces are complex, but the solutions to them are within reach - if we use the collective input and expertise of our neighbors and community members to solve them. As a Councilmember, I will facilitate the dialogue that will make it possible for us to together ensure that Berkeley is a place that we can all call home.

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

All the issues before the council are too numerous to list here, but at the top of the agenda has to be tackling our City's housing affordability and homelessness crisis, defending Berkeley residents who under attack from federal overreach under the Trump Administration, and ensuring that our city resources are wisely spent on investments that improve and transform lives. Protecting tenants and homeowners has long been a priority of mine, and that will continue should I have the honor of serving on the City Council.

In District 1, I also want to immediately bring the community together to develop consensus solutions on improving air quality near the I-80 Corridor, stopping the transport of oil and petroleum coke by rail through our community once and for all, and supporting the many incredible nonprofits and small businesses who call District 1 their home so that our residents can avail themselves of their services for generations to come.

In addition, sustainable infrastructure - which includes both the kinds of infrastructure that does not meet the eye (such as hundred-year-old underground pipes and sewers) as well as the kind that does (crumbling sidewalks that are out of ADA compliance and that desperately need to be repaved and made wheelchair accessible, including in my own neighborhood) - is a major priority of my campaign.

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 believe the Berkeley Progressive Alliance should consider adding language that supports our status as one of America's first sanctuary cities. In these trying times nationally, we continue to stand up to the Trump Administration through such mechanisms as divesting from any vendors that contract with the federal government for the purpose of contributing to the border wall.

2) Is there anything you would **not** support? Yes No
Which Items would you not support? _____

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

I was an active proponent of the campaign to establish public financing in Berkeley, presenting it before numerous organizations. I believe everyone who wants to serve, regardless of income level, should have a chance to compete and make their voice heard. Through my years of advocacy fighting for Berkeley values, I have been blessed to develop a large enough base of grassroots support that I do not need to utilize this tax-funded system to support my campaign. Nevertheless I fully support the ability of other candidates, including those in my race, to do so. I think this measure is important in that it has led to the democratization of City Council elections and leveled the playing field for candidates – just as it should be.

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

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

I have not yet made an endorsement in this race in light of the close working relationships I have with many of the candidates running. I am leaning towards voting for Jovanka Beckles (whose endorsement I am proud to have earned) or Dan Kalb in June. My vote will depend on which of these candidates provides the best combination of an unapologetic progressive orientation and a proven track record of achieving meaningful and lasting reform.

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

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

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? ___

Ideally, 100% of the housing would be affordable, at least for very low income households (those who earn 50% of the Area Median Income or below). I have been in preliminary conversations with BART Board Directors and the affordable housing nonprofit community about this concept.

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

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

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?

Berkeley indeed has a rich history of being an economically and racially diverse community. Sadly, the percentage of African Americans living in Berkeley has declined from nearly 40% in the 1970s to about 8% today. I see the impacts of gentrification and displacement - particularly in West and South Berkeley - on a regular basis, with craftsman homes built a century ago for working-class families now listing for between \$1 and \$1.2 million, while an unprecedented number of

families are being displaced out of South Berkeley, leaving a void in our collective fabric. To call this unacceptable is a gross understatement.

On the Rent Board and as Chair of the Housing Commission, protecting existing tenants from unlawful evictions has been a top priority of mine. I helped craft policies such as the Tenant Protection Ordinance, which provides victims of landlord harassment the ability to pursue a private right of action, and Measure AA, passed overwhelmingly by Berkeley voters in 2016, which places a moratorium on owner move-in evictions of households with school-age children and nearly quintupled the buy-out compensation to families forced out of their homes.

We must do everything we can to preserve and expand our City's affordable housing stock. I was a principal architect and campaigner for the similarly successful Measure U1, which ensures that every year nearly \$4 million will be available for housing solutions, such as the creation of new and maintenance of existing below-market rate units, low-equity housing cooperatives, tiny homes, and other solutions to the housing affordability crisis that our community faces.

My efforts were also instrumental in securing the endorsement of the City of Berkeley and California Democratic Party for AB 45, Assemblymember Tony Thurmond's bill to expand opportunities for teacher housing. Now that it has been signed into law, I am in discussions with the Berkeley Unified School District to maximize opportunities to provide such housing in Berkeley to educators and classified staff in our schools.

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."

Over the last decade and most recently through the 4*4 committee (which is comprised of four members of the Berkeley City Council and four members of the Rent Board), I have been a leading voice in support of beefing up the Rental Housing Safety Program.

This includes efforts (now underway) to enhance the number of inspectors on the City's payroll, increase the Rental Housing Safety Program fee so that the program can be fully funded, move from the existing system of self-certification (because how many property owners would freely admit that their buildings may not be safe?) to one that prioritizes annual inspections, and synchronize annual inspections with additional opportunities to address enforcement of other Berkeley ordinances (e.g., the Smoke-Free Housing Ordinance, Soft Story Ordinance, etc.).

After nearly ten years and under a new progressive majority on the City Council, my efforts are beginning to bear fruit. As a City Councilmember, I would be in a position to do even more to continue the positive changes that are now starting to occur.

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. 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

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

Limited equity cooperative housing in Berkeley is an important element of the much-needed “missing middle.” I have been a firm supporter of this form of housing for nearly two decades. As a UC Berkeley student leader, I represented the Berkeley Student Cooperatives (formerly known as the University Student Cooperative Association) to the ASUC, Cal’s Student Government, and worked to secure additional funding for this cooperative structure. After graduating, I continued to support cooperatives, including through my service on the Savo Island Limited Equity Housing Cooperative Board.

As the Chair of the Berkeley Housing Advisory Commission, I have ensured that the commission’s priorities align with the Council’s - namely that the small sites cooperative model is a top priority within the suite of housing affordability solutions that the City Council has directed the city staff to work on.

As an alternate to this commission’s U1 subcommittee, I am working to recommend that a quarter of the projected \$4 million per year of Measure U1 revenues be allocated toward the small sites program. Small sites are a primary opportunity to create new limited equity housing cooperatives, as they tend to include parcels that are too small to accommodate more traditional below-market rate housing structures.

Through the Housing Trust Fund Subcommittee of the Housing Advisory Commission, my efforts were also instrumental in securing hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding for the maintenance and renovation of existing limited equity housing cooperatives in Berkeley.

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?

I reject Sutter's disingenuousness in trying to shut down this much-needed hospital - the birthplace of Berkeley - on every front. Possible strategies to ensure that Berkeley continues to maintain a full-service hospital and emergency room include, but are not limited to, redoubling our efforts on the statewide level to require "not-for-profit" hospital operators to justify the need for closure (this bill failed last year, but is likely to be introduced under a new governor); supporting the creation of a hospital overlay zone; and engaging in an inside-outside strategy (continued negotiations with Sutter while supporting community efforts to bring attention to this important issue through rallies and teach-ins). I have participated in rallies to save both Alta Bates and Doctors' Hospital in West Contra Costa, participated in the Save Alta Bates Summit earlier this year, and have proudly distributed Save Alta Bates signs in District 1 (including one in front of my residence) over the past several years.

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>)

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?

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

Yes, but only it contributes to a race to the top and not a race to the bottom among shuttle drivers (i.e., the system should be able to accommodate unionized labor, such as through AC Transit), and only if it doesn't disrupt services critical to Berkeley residents who depend on bus services to work and meet basic necessities.

1) If so, how could this be funded?

This is an intriguing idea, especially for key District 1 commercial districts that don't have easy BART accessibility. The Emery-Go-Round, for example, is largely

funded by serviced businesses and managed by a non-profit. The Broadway Shuttle, operated by AC Transit and managed by the Business Development Division in the City of Oakland's Economic & Workforce Development Department, with support by several business collaboratives, is also a model worth exploring.

I am in the process of speaking with AC Transit Board Members (three of whom have endorsed me) to explore a free shuttle system with Berkeley's business community and other key stakeholders. Additionally, as Chair of the Zoning Adjustments Board, I have overseen an effort over the past year and a half to require applicants of major development projects in West Berkeley to pay into a fund that would support a shuttle service once an appropriate and labor-friendly operator can be found.

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

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? _____

A few weeks ago, I was in Sacramento at a water conference when I heard about the terrible tragedy that befell that community when an unarmed young black man was shot in cold blood multiple times. At that point it did not matter to me one bit whether I would be late to my Zoning Board meeting as I was leaving the city because freeway onramps were shut down. Whatever slight discomfort I felt while sitting in traffic could not in the slightest even begin to compare to the void that yet another family will now have because their son, grandson, and/or sibling was killed by the police in vain, or the children that will not have the opportunity to grow up with a father. Not a single day has gone by that I don't think about Stephon Clark or the many other black men and women who have perished while in police custody or on the streets by the bullets of a police gun. BLACK LIVES MATTER.

Maritessa and I hope to one day soon start a family, and if we do, I will be the father of a child or children of color. I want them to grow up not having to worry about interacting with the police, or tell them that they can't "look" or "act" a particular way if a police officer walks by. We are so far from that ideal nationally at the present time, but we can begin to lead by example here in Berkeley.

This example has already been set for us once before, under the leadership of Mayor Gus Newport and Vice Mayor Carole Kennerly. No one can be "above the law," not even The Law. For these reasons, I support criminal justice reforms, like ending the cash bail system, as well accountability among our city leaders and those who are sworn to oversee the equitable enforcement of laws. I also support innovative ways

to improve and model a collaborative relationship between the police force and our community. We can also do much more to increase diversity on the force and enhance de-escalation training.

I am not confident that a 19-page ballot measure as currently proposed is likely to pass in the 2018 election because of its potential to confuse voters and the litigation that would be likely to follow if the Police Review Commission had direct hiring and firing authority over the Police Chief.

However, I believe the fundamentals of what is in the measure can - and should - be adopted by Council action. Though I have not yet had an opportunity to see the specifics, I support the concept of Councilmember Harrison's attempt to craft a police reform measure that maintains the priorities of this ballot measure and increases its likelihood of adoption.

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

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 No

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

VI. Homelessness

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

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

We need lasting and compassionate solutions to help Berkeley's unhoused community. Working with encampment leaders, the City needs to identify locations that balance the dignity of shelter without harassment and the safety and peace of mind of campers and their neighbors. It helps everyone to have on-site hygiene facilities and ready access to services like home and job placement, basic medical care, and mental health and substance treatment services.

At the present time, we know that there simply aren't enough shelter beds to accommodate our homeless population. That's why I've been strongly supportive of the Berkeley Way transitional housing project, tiny homes, and emergency shelters,

and I strongly opposed the sit-lie ordinance and the forced removal of RVs from the West Berkeley Marina.

As a member of the Berkeley Homelessness Task Force, I provided a series of recommendations to the Berkeley City Council two years ago. Several of these recommendations have recently been acted upon, but there is so much more that has to be done. Every night, Berkeley's District 1 is where over a quarter of Berkeley's nearly 1000 unhoused community members go to sleep. I will not rest until all of them have a place that they, too, can call home.