

**Candidate Questionnaire:**

Please limit your response to 200 words or less per item.

**1. Housing. High on the list of social concerns is the critical lack of affordable and low-income housing in Berkeley.**

a. What can the city council do, and what do you propose to do, to promote housing for Berkeley's low income and middle class people?

*As co-author of BPA's housing platform, I believe that those who have benefitted from the incredible increase in housing values should help fund housing for those less fortunate. As a member of the Measure U1 campaign committee, I am proud that Berkeley voters approved \$4 million/year for affordable housing. I support legislation to tax short-term rentals, insure the affordable housing fee is adjusted regularly for inflation and use a portion of the transfer tax for affordable housing.*

*Our greatest need is housing for low and moderate income residents, where we have fallen far below regional standards. Simply building more market rate housing or removing local planning controls will not trickle down to create affordable housing. We have to be smart and nimble in identifying/approving affordable housing, particularly along transit corridors. On the Housing Advisory Commission where I serve and on the Council, I will work to:*

- Streamline the permitting process for projects with significant amounts of affordable housing.
- Provide seed money to potential projects so they are ready when funding arises.
- Purchase existing rental housing and develop ownership opportunities.
- Evaluate publicly owned sites for suitability for housing.
- Build more student housing close to campus called for in the Southside Plan.

b. What has worked and not worked so far?

The Council began a discussion about regulating and taxing short term rentals; this legislation needs to be finalized. The Council made significant progress by placing U1 on the ballot. However, this funding is only useful if we are ready to use it effectively. The City was unprepared for available State and Federal funding because it did not have shovel ready projects for which it could apply. We need to move beyond long planning documents (like the Housing Element) to targeted lists of opportunities to pursue in the short and medium term. We need more staff resources in affordable housing and to work more closely with other public agencies such as BART to identify possible housing sites.

**2. Homelessness: Many people are at risk of becoming homeless especially with the high cost of housing. Already over 900 people in Berkeley are homeless.**

a. What could the City Council do, and what would you propose to do to improve services and provide shelter and housing for the homeless?

There is no simple answer to homelessness. Raids on encampments and destruction of personal property are inhumane, ineffective and expensive. They punish groups of people based on the possible illegal behavior of individuals.

The City moved quickly recently to increase shelter beds/warming centers and provide transportation between shelters and daily visits from staff. This emergency response is necessary but is not a long-term solution. I support the City establishing an authorized encampment with co-located City housing and mental health staff and behavioral ground rules. I will work with other members of the Council and the homeless community to identify a site/sites.

In the longer term, Housing First is the goal. We need to stabilize those without housing by providing them a safe place to live. Transitional housing for men at the Berkeley Way site will be a step forward, but the number of spots is too limited. Sites are needed as the locale for a “tiny homes” or other relatively inexpensive community. For some living on the streets, housing will be enough. For others, wrap around services are needed. For youth, re-housing may involve mediation with family or roommates, recognizing however that many youth have fled dangerous home environments.

b. What could be done to prevent homelessness and displacement?

The problem of homelessness does not occur in a vacuum; it is linked to our displacement crisis caused by rising rents, elimination of single room occupancies, and conversion of formerly rent controlled units. We need to stop loss of affordable housing through displacement through a combination of improved policies and enhanced enforcement. Some approaches include:

*Policies*

- ) Require rent controlled units be replaced one for one with permanently affordable housing.
- ) Prohibit conversion of rent controlled units to short term rentals.
- ) Create a City-maintained waiting list for affordable housing units, prioritized for those who live or work in Berkeley.
- ) Continue to limit conversion of rental units to condominiums and increase the conversion fee.
- ) Lobby for changes to state law to allow rent control for new housing ten years after it's built.

*Enforcement*

- ) Monitor Ellis Act evictions after they happen to insure evictions were legal.
- ) Regularly monitor habitability of affordable and rent controlled units to insure they are retained in the housing stock, with inspections paid for by the owners.

c. What can be done to improve relations between the Police Department and our homeless people?

The raids on the encampments escalates tension between the police and the homeless and should cease. Requiring the police to disrupt the encampments makes their mandate to pursue specific illegal behavior much more difficult. In other situations, they are asked to serve as social workers without the needed training. We need to return the police to their core role of protecting us from crime. As with the schools, we should respond to incidents with social workers first, using police as needed backup, in order to lower tensions and improve outcomes. The City's mental health department mobile crisis team is under-resourced and should be expanded to a 24 hour/7 days a week team.

**3. Police Accountability: We've received reports of, and observed Berkeley Police harassment of the homeless, people of color and the young.**

- a. What can the city council do, and what do you propose to do, to improve police relations with the community?

I started my career examining differential treatment of communities by the criminal justice system in Oakland and work today in courts throughout California. I have seen first-hand how the system engages in conscious and unconscious racial profiling. I support placing a measure on the ballot to enhance the powers of the Police Review Commission to investigate any case that also merits a Police Department internal investigation, share responsibility with the Chief to impose discipline in misconduct claims, and review department policies and propose changes to them. We also need better data to examine systematic issues of bias. More community policing – with foot and bicycle police – would improve community relations, particularly in the Downtown. Officers would get to know the merchants, residents and high school students and diffuse situations. As in Oakland, we should encourage neighborhood crime prevention councils (NCPs, now called the Coalition for Positive Change), which in turn could encourage in more restorative justice and mediation in the case of minor offenses.

- b. What types of training should be required of Berkeley Police?

Berkeley has a proud tradition as the first city to require police officers to have a college degree. Our police are generally well trained in responding to individual incidents. However, as is true in police forces across the country, the department needs more training in working with demonstrators/other large groups of people to insure peaceful protests and gatherings, as well as training on interactions with communities of color and the homeless.

**4. Given the Oakland warehouse fire:**

- a. What could the city do about / for renters living in commercial warehouses and other spaces not zoned residential?

The tragic Ghost Ship fire highlights the need to provide safe and affordable spaces for artists to live and work. Rising rents have forced artists out of Berkeley or into sometimes unpermitted and unsafe living situations. We do not want to lose our creative community.

The City should allow commercial warehouses and properties to conform to code without evicting tenants. Tenants also should have a right of first refusal to return after improvements are made. Regulations are needed to avoid having these properties issued a new Certificate of Occupancy once they comply, which would trigger a loss of rent control.

We also need a more effective housing code enforcement program. I support proposals by Mayor Arreguin and the Rent Board for a mandatory housing code inspection program, where every unit is proactively inspected, rather than only on complaint.

If elected, I will explore legislation to use the example of our PACE financing program, which allows property owners to pay back the cost of energy improvements on their property taxes over time, to finance safety measures.

Finally, we need to create more affordable live/work spaces for artists. As Councilmember, I will make affordable artist housing and work space a priority.

b. What should the city do about unpermitted in-law, basement and garage units?

I support last year's amnesty program under which unauthorized dwelling units can apply to be legalized, as has occurred in San Francisco and Los Angeles. There is a shadow economy of in-law units on residential properties in the city which represent an important stock of affordable housing but that housing needs to be made safe and to comply with applicable rent and eviction protections. I also support the Council's recent legislation to waive parking requirements if the unit is within a given distance of transit or tandem parking is available. However, better coordination of departments is needed; property owners indicate that the conversion process is overly complex, which will only result in driving these units back underground. As discussed above, a routine inspection program would help insure compliance. To protect existing tenants, landlords should be required to pay for the cost of bringing units up to code and not be allowed to pass the cost on to tenants.

**5. Alta Bates Hospital - What could the City Council do, and what would you propose to do, to prevent Sutter Health's planned closure of Alta Bates Hospital?**

I strongly support the City Council's 2016 Resolution to keep Alta Bates open. Its closure would reduce vitally needed health services, increase health disparities and reduce our responsiveness in natural disasters. Berkeley and other nearby residents should not have to face an additional 12 minute ride to the nearest emergency room, risking lives and putting additional strain on Berkeley's ambulance fleet and first responders. Sutter's proposal for a stand-alone emergency hospital without other medical facilities (e.g., surgery, laboratories) is inadequate and should be rejected. With \$14 billion in assets and opportunities to apply for state financing, Sutter's claim that they cannot afford needed seismic upgrades is laughable. We need to get Sutter to the table to find out the true costs of upgrading the hospital and consider intervention before state/federal agencies. I support resolutions introduced by now Mayor Arreguin to provide a zoning overlay allowing only hospitals and medical facilities where Alta Bates sits now and State legislation to define charity care and clarify the community benefit obligations of not-for-profit hospitals.

Ultimately, we need single payer health care to improve health outcomes, increase equity in provision of health care and reduce overall costs.

**6. District 4: What suggestions do you have for issues and problems in District 4?**

As District 4 includes the Downtown, the issues of development in Berkeley are front and center. Neighbors downtown are being squeezed by development that does not sufficiently consider setbacks, shadow effects, and traffic impacts. I will work to insure we have housing balanced across income levels and at reasonable scale in the Downtown and that we receive the community benefits promised to us in the Downtown Plan. Downtown is also the place where we can make significant environmental strides. I will advocate for:

- ) Adopting DeepGreen building energy standards at the individual facility and community level.

Kate Harrison, Candidate, District 4, Berkeley City Council  
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- ) Insuring our infrastructure funds are used to create more sustainability.
- ) Reducing environmental inequities represented by the absence of parks and recreational facilities in the district. Parks represent one of the City's largest green elements.
- ) Making better use of vacant lots for affordable housing, park facilities or urban agriculture. These lots are not only a blight on neighborhoods; they represent a significant lost opportunity.
- ) Managing traffic flows and reducing greenhouse gases from gas-powered cars, through improved signage about available parking, competitively pricing parking in garages and slightly further from Downtown, increasing pedestrian and bicycle amenities and increasing electric vehicle charging stations.

a. What can the city council do, and how do you propose to support small businesses in Berkeley?

Berkeley is a special city with unique character, which we are in danger of losing. Much of the loss of small, neighborhood-serving businesses is due to rising rents, leading to long periods of vacancies and replacement of unique businesses with anonymous chain stores, particularly in the Downtown.

- ) Recognize the economic engine of small and legacy businesses and non-profits. Create a legacy business program similar to that in San Francisco, which provides grants to businesses on the registry and to property owners who extend long-term leases to legacy businesses.
- ) Maintain vibrant storefronts by charging taxes or fees for long-term vacant properties and vacant lots in commercial areas, as in San Jose and Washington D.C. and as proposed in San Francisco.
- ) Attract and protect the arts, incubators and non-profits. The focus of our Economic Development Department needs to shift from attracting large developers to bringing in small, neighborhood-serving businesses, intellectual capital and the arts that make Berkeley what it is.
- ) Create dynamic streetscapes that draw residents and visitors. Follow through on the Streets and Open Space Plan's ideas for a pedestrianized street on Center and more pedestrian, bike and café amenities. Without these, the pull to patronize smaller businesses is diminished.

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