



2022 City Council Candidate Questions

Doria Summa Responses

EXPERIENCE

What experience with Palo Alto community issues would you bring to the council? Describe your personal experience with Palo Alto City government and recent issues that have come before public hearings at the city council or other board and commissions. What was your role? (For example, did you send an email, speak to the Council, lead a group of citizens, etc.?) How extensively were you involved?

For the last 15 years, I have devoted the majority of my time to working for my neighborhood and the city. I began working with the College Terrace Residents' Association in 2008 and was eventually elected President. I worked on the Traffic Calming Committee and Residential Parking Permit Committee. I served on the Development Center Customer Advisory Group (DCCAG) for which I volunteered as a citizen representative through PAN. I also was appointed to serve on the committee tasked with updating Palo Alto's Comprehensive Plan which sets the strategic vision for the city's future. I also served on the North Ventura Community Area Plan (NVCAP). For the past 6 years, I have served on the Planning and Transportation Commission and I am currently serving as Vice-Chair.

What are the top three goals you want to achieve in the next four years on the city council?

1. Balancing the need for more housing with neighborhood concerns.
2. Protecting parks and open spaces.
3. Ensuring that laws and regulations including zoning laws are applied equitably.

Which issue facing Palo Alto concerns you the most and why?

Managing growth and density while retaining the quality of life in Palo Alto.

What type of campaign finance reform, if any, would you support?

I support limiting personal contributions as long as in-kind contributions (so-called "dark money") is equally limited.

HOUSING

Where do you stand on the "one-size-fits-all" state unfunded mandates, like SB 9 and 10, that dictate land use and zoning in our City and why?

I am thoroughly against them.

What, if anything, would you do to protect existing rental housing and its tenants?

Almost 50% of our community is renters and they deserve better protection. I strongly support strengthening renters' rights. I support a renters' registry so we have good information about renters. The city should enforce the lease law.

What are your thoughts on limiting upzoning only for 100% affordable housing?

I fully support this.

Given the housing shortage, would you support Palo Alto taxing 'ghost houses' via a vacant home tax?

I support in principle but would need more information to understand how it would be enforced.

What ideas do you have for incentivizing housing construction over office construction?

A moratorium on office construction.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Residential satisfaction with quality of life in Palo Alto has steadily decreased in recent citizens surveys. How do you envision keeping true to the character of Palo Alto? How would you balance parks, local amenities, etc., as Palo Alto's population grows?

This will be my focus as a City Council member. We need to make sure as a city that we are investing in open spaces, parks and bike corridors and maintain a healthy retail presence within neighborhoods. This requires enforcing existing regulations and not providing exceptions without corresponding benefits.

What do you see as our most serious traffic issues and how would you fix them?

I would concentrate on public safety, particularly for children, bikes and pedestrians; especially at problem intersections.

Should businesses be responsible for reducing traffic and parking impacts? Should the businesses pay for the remedies and how? What is the City's role?

New businesses should be self-parked and pay parking impact fees. Existing businesses should be held to current restrictions – however, we need to support our businesses. The City's role is to enforce the rules and, in particular, to ensure that new business construction is fully parked on-site.

CITY GOVERNANCE

Would you make any changes to the balance of power between the city manager and staff and the elected City Council entrusted to carry out the will of the people? If so, how?

I believe that the City Council has the duty to provide oversight to the City Manager. In the past, this has not always been effective – I would support more active and direct oversight than has been the case.

Are you in favor of the Palo Alto Fiber project that proposes to build Fiber to the Home? Why or why not?

Clearly fiber to every home in Palo Alto is a worthy goal. I am still studying the options and want to ensure that the city is not engaging on an expensive project at citizen expense that could be better provided by existing providers or alternative methods of Internet delivery. But, again, I need to understand the options better before expressing an opinion.

If you had to prioritize funding either to upgrading our city's electrical grid to support phasing out gas including adding a second electric power line of electricity geographically redundant or having the Palo Alto Utilities provide a competing fiber to home service, which would you choose?

I am not sure at this point.

With the planned fiber expansion, should we fund more districts to be undergrounded?

Undergrounding is certainly more aesthetically desirable! I plan to study if there are advantages other than financial for not undergrounding.