



2018 City Council Candidate Questions

TRANSPORTATION

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?

PAT BOONE

This is a great question, I hope was asked to previous Council candidates because this issue should have been discussed a long time ago.

As we move forward, I believe we need to build more near transportation hubs versus neighborhoods. Schools are a big deal, we don't want overcrowding - Council should be working closing with the School Board to ensure they can handle the influx of new students.

On the environmental, less fossil fuels are always better, and I believe and endorse protecting our open space at all cost.

ALISON CORMACK

Businesses bear some responsibility, as do the people who live here, so it's reasonable to expect both businesses and Palo Altans to participate in mitigating the effects of traffic and parking. The city's role is to identify the problems and help craft solutions.

TOM DUBOIS

Yes. Businesses need to help pay their fair share of the impacts caused by commuters. We are one of the few cities without a business tax. It's time we have one. The largest companies have the largest impact and I think we should work with Cupertino, Mountain View, and other nearby cities to design a tax that is scaled based on the size of impacts an employers causes with exceptions for small businesses.

ERIC FILSETH

Primarily, yes. Somebody has to pay for these things. Since the problem is primarily produced by businesses, they should primarily pay for it, not the Community at large.

Development impact fees, commuter parking permit costs, headcount and other direct business taxes, even hotel taxes are all mechanisms of generating mitigation funds from businesses.

CORY WOLBACH

Should businesses be responsible: Substantially yes, especially large employers.

Should businesses pay? Substantially yes. How? I suggest a system where they can pick from three options:

Option 1: Large employers can implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans. With TDM plans, they provide opportunities and work with their own employees to get them out of cars. These TDM plans can be voluntary or can be required by the city as a condition of approval of a project, as part of a conditional use permit, etc.

Option 2: Instead of doing it all on their own, large employers can participate in and contribute to the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA). In a TMA, multiple employers combine resources to achieve economy of scale to get employees in a job-center out of their solo cars. They can provide transit passes, create a bigger pool of employees for carpooling, run vanpools, encourage biking, etc. Even with limited resources, in its first couple years PATMA has already made progress reducing commuter trips in our Downtown, and it is time for PATMA to expand to more of Palo Alto. PATMA's counterpart in the Stanford Research Park is called SRPGo.

Option 3: When large employers do not effectively implement a TDM plan, nor adequately contribute to PATMA or SRPGo, then the employer should provide funds to the city to support our transportation programs. This could be implemented with an employee headcount tax.

The point is that large employers should address their traffic impact, either on their own through a TDM, collaboratively through PATMA or SRPGo, or by paying the City directly.

What is the City's role? The City should set the framework, encourage collaboration, and enforce.

Residents and commuters alike suffer relentless frustrations arising from traffic and parking. These are problems of prosperity, and not unique to Palo Alto. Other places with high jobs-housing imbalances face similar challenges. This isn't amenable to a quick or easy fix, and will require all of us to work together to make things better.