



2020 City Council Candidate Questions

EXPERIENCE

What experience with Palo Alto community issues would you bring to the council?

PAT BURT

Past experience:

- Environmental leader
 - Santa Clara County Pollution Prevention Committee
 - California EPA Pollution Prevention Task Force
 - Vice-Chair, Sustainable San Mateo County
 - California EPA Comparative Risk Project
- Neighborhood Lead
 - President, University South Neighborhoods Group
 - Co-founder Community Center Neighborhood Group
- Planning and Transportation Commission for nine years
- City Council Member 2008-2016 and Mayor in 2010, 2016
 - Chair, Finance Committee;
 - Chair, Policy and Services Committee
 - Chair, Council Rail Committee
 - Chair, City/School Liaison Committee
 - Chair, San Francisquito Creek flood protection agency
 - Representative, Santa Clara County Emergency Preparedness Council
 - Chair, Peninsula Cities Consortium on Rail
 - Chair, Advanced Water Recycling Committee

Since leaving the Council in 2017, I have played an active role in advocating publicly through op-eds, advocating to and advising council members, addressing the council, including through joint letters of community leaders and former mayors.

REBECCA EISENBERG

Over the past 8 years, I have spoken on behalf of community groups including the PTSA, PTAC, BLM, Vote16, PNQL, Palo Alto Dog Owners, neighborhood groups, parent groups, and climate action groups. I usually spoke at meetings, but also often emailed: City Council, PTC, ARB, HRC, Park & Rec, SCC Board of Supervisors, SCC Planning Commission.

Issues include:

- **Transparency & Integrity** of City Council Meetings & Processes (e.g. conflicts of interest, limiting closed session; allowing community members to speak with video, giving equal time at meetings to community interest)
- **Elimination of policies that further racism**, including police reform, and opening Foothills Park.
- **Fiscal responsibility to residents** (e.g. diversifying the tax base to include largest businesses).
- Against budget cuts to **services for seniors, children, the disabled, vulnerable populations, and public school students.**

- In favor of **environmental protection**, including green energy and transit.
- In favor of **affordable housing** creation and **tenant protection**.
- **Against overreaching by wealthy private interests**, including use of residential land for commercial purposes, and abuse of goodwill by commercial developers, private schools, & telecom companies.
- On behalf of **public safety**, e.g anti-vaping, for protected bike lanes & pedestrian bridges, against traffic that creates risk to seniors on foot and children on bikes.
- On behalf of protections for **workers and working families**, including a living wage, childcare, transit, better-funded education, better transit, and protection against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, familial status, religion, ethnicity, national origin, language, age, and disability.

In conclusion:

This November, Palo Alto voters have a clear choice: they can vote to keep things the way they are -- to continue with housing strategies that have created a lot of office parks but virtually zero affordable housing, to continue to protect a police department actually puts our African American and Latinx community members at risk of racial violence, and that refuses to follow the laws that govern its own actions, and to continue to allow wealthy private interests, huge landlords, and commercial developers to have outsized airtime with city leadership, while community members continue to be silenced.

If you like things as they are, you have current and former city council members and commissioners to vote for.

If you were mad about the \$42 million of budget cuts, defunding Children's Theatre, library hours, firefighters, the small number of city programs that the city used to have for teenagers, and even KZSU, if you think that the city council should have given residents a say in whether or not Tesla and Palantir should be asked to pay at least as much in taxes as our residents pay, and if you are tired of having to condense your passionate plea to save ancient trees, or your local library branch, or the lowest-paying service jobs in the city, or the right of all people regardless of race to enter Foothills Park ...

If you are ready for a change, vote for me.

I appreciate your consideration.

LYDIA KOU

- Co-authored emergency colleagues' memo to protect and preserve tenants being evicted from the President's Hotel and also during a time gap between the passing of AB 14—and its start date.
- Co-authored colleagues' memo to address RVs and to find a safe location for their parking.
- Initiated and advocated for noise monitors to be installed in Palo Alto to track airplane noise.
- Initiated getting a BLM mural.
- Guided the Palo Alto Youth Council to be more policy-oriented.

ED LAUING

I have served for ten and a half consecutive years on the Parks and Recreation Commission (7 years) and now the Planning and Transportation Commission (3.5 years). This service put me directly in the ring on critical issues in the city like open space, parks and playing field improvements, environmental preservation, teen health, housing, parking, and many other land use issues and resident services. I have been intimately engaged with council members and commission colleagues and staff, as well as the public, on all of these areas and made many informed recommendations to council.

In those capacities I have had direct influence in the development of the updated Comprehensive Plan, the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan, and the Urban Forest Master Plan as well as comprehensive cost-recovery policies.

STEVEN LEE

I have had the privilege of serving Palo Alto as a human relations commissioner for the past three years working to make Palo Alto more welcoming, inclusive and responsive to all members of our community. I worked with our PTA and parents, students, service providers like ACS, and community groups to address our teen vaping epidemic. I worked with our CAC parents to improve the accessibility of our city programs and facilities to people and families of all abilities. I will bring 16+ years of local public service to the council - serving on local commissions and boards since I was 15 years old. During that time, I have worked with neighborhood associations, council members, city staff, service providers and other stakeholders to collaboratively find solutions to community issues. I currently am a member of the Midtown Residents Association Steering committee, where I help plan our annual ice cream social, emergency preparedness initiatives, and improve communication between residents and our city.

RAVEN MALONE

I review the agendas every week and speak during public comment, support people who choose to comment, as well as advise others who also wish to engage.

GREER STONE

I have been intricately involved in Palo Alto City government for nearly a decade. Today, I chair the Midtown Residents Association, the city's largest resident's association. I currently represent Palo Alto on the Santa Clara County Human Rights Commission as the vice-chair. Previously, I served as the chair of the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission. I am also a Block Preparedness Coordinator for my neighborhood. I frequently advocate for positions on behalf of our community in front of City Council. Most recently, I wrote a letter to City Council urging them to take immediate action by demanding greater public participation in the Plan Bay Area 2050 and Final Regional Housing Need Determination. I raised concern that the determination was made without public participation, lack of transparency, and without taking into consideration the uncertainty in job and housing demand in a post-Covid-19 world. We still do not know the full allocation here in Palo Alto. I have also spoken in front of Council numerous times before. I objected to the loss of housing at the President's Hotel, the approval of the Audi dealership in the Baylands, and against the removal of the Downtown Office Cap.

GREG TANAKA

- As City Council Finance Chair, I worked to eliminate excess spending, frequently being the lone vote against excessive staff raises.
- I worked to minimize city tax & fee increases while ensuring funding support for critical priorities, such as for safety and youth.
- I worked to add more parklets, the development of these parklets encouraged outdoor dining. This allowed businesses to operate through the pandemic and enhanced customer experience. I have championed this development and worked hard to ensure its success. Also, I supported the street closure of both California and University Avenue. This encourages walking and for people to patronize local businesses. Especially during the pandemic, sidewalks do not allow residents to sufficiently practice social distancing.
- I was directly involved in pension reforms which accounted for the unfunded liability. I allocated funding to prevent unfunded liabilities from increasing. On the issue of unfunded pension liabilities, I have used my office hours to reach out to Palo Alto residents to gain their perspectives.
- I also worked for small business grants. This helped 50 businesses which were incredibly important during the COVID-19 recession. The unprecedented challenges that have been brought as a result of the pandemic are one of the many issues I will address if re-elected.
- I also voted yes on the development of Wilton Court. This was an affordable housing project for disabled residents of Palo Alto. This extended compassionate and safe areas for those in Palo Alto who are developmentally disabled.

Palo Altans have consistently expressed concern about increased traffic and congestion on local streets and ever-harder-to-find parking, as well as the growing impact of development on both issues.

As Planning Commission Chair, I championed the popular Cal. Ave. Streetscape Project. As President of the College Terrace Residents' Association, I led the creation of Palo Alto's first Residential Permit Parking Program. I also led the successful traffic program in the neighborhood. I recognize the concerns of Palo Altans in addressing the congestive traffic in the city and will continue to work to bring comprehensive solutions.

As a parent with kids at Paly and Greene, I understand the needs of working families and the critical importance of our schools, parks, and cultural community. As a homeowner, I know the importance of affordability, diversity, and public safety reform. And as CEO of a small retail technology company, I fully empathize with the challenges faced by our home-grown business community.

CARI TEMPLETON

I'm running for City Council to make the promise of Palo Alto available for everyone in our community. My experience prepares me for this work in a variety of ways.

As first Commissioner and now Chair of the Planning and Transportation Commission, I've worked with Planning and Transportation staff on the PTC itself, as well as the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP), and prior to that, the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP). I learned about different projects and operations work our staff takes on to run this city. I also worked at Google for over 10 years on numerous projects: I ran a global customer service team for Google Analytics, managed projects with hundreds of team members and tens of millions of dollars in budget, ran the online communications for Nest, and more. I was brought into most of these projects to turn them around, and I'm happy to share that each turnaround was successful. I have also participated in activism at the local, county, state, and national levels, with a primary focus on Medicare for All. Finally as a parent of kids (now aged 10 and 12), I have learned that nothing prepares you as well to make the most of what you have like being a parent.

So, to summarize how all of these experiences prepare me to be an effective City Council Member: I bring proven leadership experience at City Hall, strong communication and budget management skills, a robust regional and statewide network, and the resourcefulness needed to advance our community's goals. I will bring a thoughtful, measured approach to Council, relevant experience on land use policy and on recovering from crises, a record of promoting underrepresented community voices, and a dedication to our community's values.

During my tenure on the Planning and Transportation Commission, I have had the opportunity to review development proposals, transportation plans, program and policy initiatives, and more, that prepared me for work on Council. We heard and recommended on housing (affordable housing combining district, RHNA updates, and BMR program), environmental sustainability (Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan, CEQA updates, and Sustainability and Climate Action Plan), infrastructure (Newell Bridge Replacement to prevent flooding, EV charging accommodations in parking lots), and major projects (Cubberley Master Plan and the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan/Fry's Site redevelopment). In addition, I have participated in emails and public comment on the Human Relations Commission and City Council on several matters over recent years, including police reform and land use

AJIT VARMA

In these unique times, we need a Palo Alto city council that has a diverse set of skills to solve the new problems we are faced with. We need people who have a background and connections in different fields that have a different perspective. I bring that to the Palo Alto City Council. I love our city and want to ensure we are the best city to live in for us and our children. If we stand still we will get surpassed by other cities. I have extensive experience in technology and working with small businesses. I've led product and engineering teams that have built some of the leading products at leading companies including Google, Square, Facebook and WhatsApp. I'm an engineer by background and am trained to find new solutions. We have many people on city council with experience in thinking the same way and we need to help them with someone who brings new ideas.