



2020 City Council Candidate Questions

HOUSING

Given that some neighborhoods are closer to the train stations and to services than others, how would you balance the recommendation by housing agencies to concentrate growth in those areas with the livability of those neighborhoods?

PAT BURT

The residential growth near train stations should be designated for the core areas near the stations; the downtowns and along El Camino. That development should be coupled with RPP to assure that parking does not overflow into the neighborhoods. The business tax should fund a citywide TMA that would subsidize transit passes for low income workers who are the ones who drive the most, but can't afford a rail pass. With electrified Caltrain, that service will be even more efficient at frequent.

REBECCA EISENBERG

I am not able to parse this question. I have tried.

I think what it might be asking is how to mitigate harmful effects of placing housing near transit? I do not think that there are harmful effects of putting housing near transit?

Or, does this question ask whether it's nicer to give new residents an opportunity to live in houses or townhouses with yards, away from busy streets? Yes, I do think it is nice to provide that option.

I also do not understand the reference to housing agencies here -- HUD?

Here is what I can say: putting housing near transit is a fantastic way to help wean our communities from reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. We need to wean our culture from single occupancy cars in order to save this planet. A saved planet is definitely a more livable planet!

LYDIA KOU

Unelected regional bodies and Sacramento have no business, in my opinion, usurping local zoning and housing decisions. City governments and residents need to fight against this takeover. We, on the local level, should not be left to react to poor, top-down, one-size-fits-all decisions.

ED LAUING

This is a very important issue. "Context" in housing production is often ignored by state laws and some municipal codes. As I have been saying for years on land use issues, "one size does not fit all". As I indicated above, today the only "high quality transit" is Caltrain which is virtually dysfunctional. We have to evaluate the reality on the ground of this supposed "high quality transit." It is not high quality just because a train line runs through our town.

STEVEN LEE

I don't see the two as mutually exclusive as long as we listen to neighborhood concerns carefully, mitigate impacts and plan accordingly. Density along transit corridors makes a lot of sense, it helps take advantage of all of the synergies of being near public transit. We can mitigate parking concerns by putting in place a residential parking permit program to ensure that there isn't a substantial increase in parking or traffic issues in these areas

while also encouraging the use of public transit, and bike & pedestrian routes. Having dense housing within walking distances of services makes for a much more livable and vibrant neighborhood.

RAVEN MALONE

Increasing Caltrain service will significantly reduce traffic in Palo Alto and the Peninsula and reduce the climate impact of commuting. New housing near transit, jobs, and services makes sense. That new housing also provides a stronger customer base for local community-serving-retail and restaurants. In order to maintain quality of life for residents, we should make sure to maintain and improve residential permit parking programs (RPP) so that new housing doesn't create competition for street parking.

GREER STONE

Increased housing development near transit centers makes sense for a variety of reasons, but it should not be the only location in the city where new housing should be built. Housing should and must be dispersed around the city to better mitigate impacts on traffic, city services, schools, and other consequences of new development.

GREG TANAKA

It is critical when development projects can impact residential neighborhoods that their perspectives are heard and the cumulative impact of projects is truly understood. In general, I've only supported such projects when there is neighborhood support.

CARI TEMPLETON

The goal of any development should be to improve the livability of surrounding neighborhoods. For example, growth may mean additional vitality, services, and amenities for neighbors, in addition to new neighbors. It must be the goal of our civic process to ensure an optimal outcome for all concerned, whenever possible.

AJIT VARMA

I don't think these strict rules are the right recommendations for Palo Alto. Some areas close to train stations are great for development but others are not. We also have many areas in Palo Alto that are close to busy streets and are great for development that are not near train stations. We need to intelligently grow into the areas that make the most sense for Palo Alto.