



2024 City Council Candidate Questions

Anne Cribbs Responses

EXPERIENCE

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

I started at Palo Alto's Parks and Recreation Department in 1984 as an hourly worker, was promoted to full-time, then supervisor, and then superintendent. I left the recreation department in 1991 to join Gary Cavalli in Cavalli and Cribbs. I am now serving my third term on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

I had a major role in creating and supporting many community activities like the May Fete Parade, Black and White Ball, Recreation Foundation, Palo Alto Jazz Festival, Moonlight Run, Chili Cook-off, Grand Prix Run Series, Meet Me at the Plaza (Friday night entertainment at City Hall), TGIF in the Parks, Dogs Best Friend Fun Run, Cal Ave Art Festival, Cubberley Black Box Theatre, Masters Games, Japanese Cultural Festival, Baylands Clean Up days with EPA and PA, Willie McCovey League, Senior Golf Tournament at PA Muni, Junior Golf Tournament at PA Muni, Rapps Triathlon in Rinconada Park, The Run Club Stanford Centennial Parade, World Cup 94 Community Celebrations and the Soccer Center, Stanford Athletics Kids Club, New Years Eve Celebration, at Neiman Marcus, and a few more.

I served on an earlier Cubberley task force and I have a continuing interest in making Cubberley a vibrant community center for all ages.

GOALS

What do you see as the biggest problems facing Palo Alto and how would you address them?

Our biggest problem is our inability to get stuff done. We must speed up the processes for the City's projects and speed up permitting and inspection of business and homeowner projects. There are numerous examples of how project review and permitting are done more quickly in other Peninsula cities and we could learn from them.

My priorities are to work on three major challenges facing Palo Alto—1) meeting our adopted housing goals, 2) meeting our adopted environmental goals and 3) helping create exciting activities to attract people to our Downtown and Cal Ave centers and throughout the city. These priorities are connected and would improve our quality of life and fill our vacant retail spaces

Do you have any interests, such as ties to Stanford or other entities that would cause you to recuse yourself on issues that are before the council? If so, what are they?

No.

HOUSING

What does the term “affordable housing” mean to you?

I prefer the goal of increasing housing affordability. I understand the traditional meaning of affordable housing as units reserved for low and moderate income residents, usually through a combination of subsidy funding. But I am also concerned about the affordability challenges facing many middle income families, especially workers critical to our schools, health care and public safety. Therefore I support meeting ALL of the city's adopted housing goals across income categories.

Four proposed developments along El Camino will create about 1100 new housing units, with only 15-20% of these being below-market-rate housing.

- **How are we to meet HCD's requirement for low-income housing by requiring only such a low percentage?**

We should provide incentives for building the housing we need and want. The city's adopted housing element identifies sites to meet our low and moderate income housing goals. Assuming we meet our goal for market-rate housing, that includes 15-20% BMR units. I understand that we cannot meet our goals if housing does not make economic sense for applicants and I do not support raising the BMR% unless we add additional incentives for applicants.

I am also aware that failure to meet our housing goals by adopting barriers to housing will lead to penalties and loss of local control as well as potential lawsuits. I believe we can meet our housing goals through aggressive implementation of the programs included in our adopted housing element.

- **How do we ensure units will include a range of bedrooms, so they are feasible for families?**

The best chance for a variety of housing sizes is collaborative negotiation with applicants to make sure that the proposed housing actually happens. Let's listen to our residents and our potential residents to find out their preferences and then balance these desires with feasibility. We must build in flexibility as needs will change over time.

The city's housing element has almost 2000 houses in the San Antonio corridor. What is the most significant (new) policy that will increase housing in Palo Alto? Other than in the San Antonio corridor, where else should we look for housing?

I support developing the San Antonio Area Plan to address both the needs and challenges of creating these housing units with the necessary amenities and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans.

In addition to the El Camino and San Antonio area housing sites, I strongly support developing housing near services, shopping and jobs in the northern areas of Palo Alto like Downtown and around Cal Ave.

Our new housing should be broadly distributed throughout the city.

ADUs are proving more popular than expected. We need to be aware that the needs are different in each neighborhood. Detached ADUs are a special problem in flood zones since the bottom floor may have to be close to the top of "privacy" fences. We can streamline the design, permitting, and inspection process for ADUs by providing a limited number of plans that could be adopted by those who choose them.

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

I support eviction protections, resources to help renters deal with landlords, and the rental registry. After implementation of the rental registry, we can add more protections if needed.

I am not in favor of rent control at all. I have seen the excesses and cheating in San Francisco..

RETAIL

What is your position on ground floor retail? Should it be eliminated? Should permitted uses be revised? And should any changes apply to just downtown and Cal Ave or neighborhood centers as well?

We should actively utilize the recent findings and recommendations of the consultants examining our local economy and retail uses.

I support policies that incentivize retail serving neighborhoods throughout the city. For University and Cal

Ave my vision is an area with local serving retail, neighborhood services, activities and gathering places. To do this I support allowing alternative activities to fill our vacant retail spaces—activities that bring customers and cannot be done online. I do not envision Downtown, Cal Ave, or the neighborhood centers as competing with Stanford Shopping Center or Town & Country. I support housing near services, shopping and jobs to support local businesses and reduce the need for car trips.

What are your ideas to help local small businesses, especially those that serve neighborhoods, to survive and thrive?

As listed above, I would add customers through additional housing, policies to fill the vacant spaces with services and activities that attract people to come, visit and hang out. Spaces must be clean, safe, and pretty.

My experience in creating and supporting activities throughout my career in Palo Alto will be a big advantage in achieving these goals.

Given that there are many empty retail business locations, would you support a retail business vacancy tax for properties that have been vacant for more than 1 year?

I do not support a vacancy tax at this time. I prefer to remove obstacles by simplifying and speeding up the application, review and approval process.

COMMUNITY LIFE

What two things would you prioritize to make Palo Alto and its neighborhoods more livable?

I would prioritize more parks with bathrooms and more whimsical places to sit and chat.

What is your vision for the Cubberley site?

I was part of the first Cubberly Master Plan in 1991. Since then there have been at least 2 other Master Plans, with the community taking part. I believe the City will soon reach an agreement with PAUSD. I'm excited that working together, we will be able to create a Community Center, to serve the entire community.

The gym, a public private partnership, could be the first structure in the new Cubberley. First the gym, then, the next step is a bond issue in 2026. to finish the community center.

Do you support any housing on the Cubberley site? If so, housing for whom?

I am NOT in favor of housing at Cubberley at all. The site contains much of the last park land available in Palo Alto.

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

The City wants people to use their cars less, yet not everyone can or wants to travel by bicycle and we have few public transportation options. How would you reorient traffic in our city?

We need to evaluate the Palo Alto Link and consider publicizing and expanding this service as well as adding shuttles to connect dense housing areas to jobs, trains, schools, doctors, and shopping areas.

I support the needs of people who must drive and also the desires of residents who want businesses and activities they can walk or bike to. I support more housing in locations where residents can walk or bike Downtown and around Cal Ave. I also support the privately funded BMR teacher housing project on El Camino and additional housing on El Camino near services, shopping and jobs. If an additional parking garage is found to be needed Downtown, I am willing to consider it.

In addition to Palo's Alto's plan for the San Antonio/Charleston area, Charleston Plaza in Mt View is planning a development that will bring hundreds of vehicle trips to the same area, which is already severely stressed. What mitigation measures can and should be done?

Applicants should submit transportation demand management plans for their proposals and the city should address traffic mitigation in the San Antonio Area Plan. These are solvable challenges. If our adopted sites are turned down for housing simply because neighbors complain, the city faces a loss of local control, monetary penalties and potential lawsuits. We have adopted a housing element that plans for housing in this area and it is our obligation to work hard to make this happen.

Regarding Grade Separation, what is your personal design preference (underpass, hybrid, trench, etc) for each of the three locations?

It is past time to make decisions to help cars, trucks, and bikes get across town. I lived on Military Way in Barron Park. Two of my children biked across El Camino and Alma and the East Meadow railroad crossing to JLS. I worried every day. We must move forward to build safe crossings for all with no more delays.

Since traffic volumes will continue to increase, even by modest amounts, cumulative traffic numbers mean we must plan for the future as cities build housing up and down the peninsula.

Let's design the crossing at Charleston first. Lessons learned there can improve our choices at other crossings. Waiting for gridlock will make construction more painful. Additional money poured into consultant fees will not get us to a perfect solution. The shot clock is running; let's score!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Anything else you'd like the residents to know?

I love Palo Alto - the community, the weather, the beauty of the Foothills. the Baylands, the neighborhoods. I feel so fortunate to live here.

My superpower is bringing the community together to get things done. I believe in a collaborative approach with decisive action. If we work together we can build a better tomorrow, starting now. A vote for Anne Cribbs is a vote to stop talking and start taking action