



2026 City Council Candidate Questions

Bryna Chang Responses

Experience / Vision / Goals

In the last four years what issues in Palo did you take a leadership role in that you are most proud of and what was the result?

As Chair of the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and as a commissioner since 2020, I have led or played a central role in some of Palo Alto's most consequential recent decisions. The accomplishments I am most proud of include:

- **Housing Element:** I helped lead the commission's review and recommendation of Palo Alto's state-mandated Housing Element — one of the most complex and consequential planning documents the city produces. Getting this right protected Palo Alto from Builder's Remedy exposure and preserved our ability to direct where density goes. As part of the three-person PTC Housing Element Ad Hoc Committee, I worked with city staff to define the specifications for the El Camino Real Focus Area, so that Palo Alto could accommodate state-mandated housing goals in a relatively transit-rich area, with minimal impact to low-density residential neighborhoods. **Result: Housing Element certified by CA state with policies that have led to significant housing development and has at times incentivized developers to move away from undesirable Builder's Remedy projects while preserving neighborhood character.**
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (granny units):** I recommended objective standards and policies that incentivized homeowners to build ADUs that respect neighbors' privacy and streamlined ADU approvals. **Result: Palo Alto has successfully implemented California's ADU laws and ADUs have become one of the most popular ways homeowners can realize financial benefits while also providing new housing.**
- **Renter Protections and Rental Registry:** I supported the commission's recommendation to establish a Rental Registry program and extended Palo Alto's renter protections beyond what was required by the state, including lowering security deposits, requiring just cause for evictions, and extending relocation assistance. I believe in data-driven policy — the registry will give us the information we need to understand whether additional protections are warranted. **Result: Rental registry is now operational and renter protections were adopted by City Council.**
- **Environmental Protections:** I led efforts to strengthen Palo Alto's dark skies protections, tree canopy ordinance, stream corridor protections, and bird-friendly building standards, without creating onerous requirements for homeowners. **Result: Updated tree ordinance and new dark skies and bird-friendly buildings ordinances adopted by City Council; updated stream corridor ordinance to be considered by City Council.**
- **Active Transportation:** I recommended that Palo Alto adopt the **Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan** that unlocks federal funding to target improvements for high injury corridors and protects pedestrians, seniors and students with infrastructure designed to prevent severe injuries and deaths. I helped update the new **2026 Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Plan** and pushed for safety improvements including protected bike lanes on East Meadow between Alma and Middlefield, improvements to the JLS path, and safer pedestrian crossings at dangerous intersections.

- **Retail Protection and Revitalization:** I successfully advocated against the conversion of retail space at Town & Country to medical offices, protecting neighborhood-serving business. I served on the PTC Retail Revitalization Ad Hoc Committee, which resulted in an updated retail ordinance that will reduce retail vacancies on University Ave. and California Ave by broadening the definition of retail and relaxing the most onerous zoning requirements, while still preserving retail elsewhere in Palo Alto, such as Midtown, El Camino Real, and Charleston Center.

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

No.

Though I formerly worked for Stanford University — as Director of the MBA Program Office, Acting Director of the Public Management Program, and as a lecturer at the Graduate School of Business, I no longer hold a position at Stanford. I have no ties to developers or other entities that would create conflicts of interest.

What do you hope to accomplish in the next four years on Palo Alto City Council?

My four primary goals are:

1. **Fiscal responsibility** — Restore structural budget balance by identifying efficiencies, scrutinizing major cost drivers including personnel costs and deferred maintenance, scrutinizing consulting contracts, and ensuring the city lives within its means without gutting core services.
2. **Thoughtful, infrastructure-matched housing growth** — Continue implementing our 2023 housing element which guides new housing to appropriate locations — commercial corridors, transit nodes, and underutilized sites. Critically, we must expedite the Downtown and San Antonio Road neighborhood planning now, before even more projects are approved, so that permits can be approved efficiently and new neighborhoods have the same walkable retail, parks, and bike lanes that the rest of Palo Alto enjoys. We must implement the Cal Ave plan and if Measure J passes, begin redevelopment of Cubberley. We also need to start laying the groundwork for the next housing element, which will include persuading Stanford to include housing in Stanford Research Park. Finally, we must ensure Stanford's next General Use Permit does not transfer infrastructure and public service costs to Palo Alto.
3. **Environmental protection** — Advance Palo Alto's climate goals, adopt the PTC recommended updated stream corridor protection ordinance, protect the Baylands and areas west of Foothill Expressway from environmentally destructive and unsafe densification, and push for long-overdue flood control solutions.
4. **Open, responsive, and accountable city government** — Make City Hall more transparent, responsive, and accessible to every resident — not just the most organized and vocal interest groups. This starts by **reopening City Hall**, which closed during the pandemic. We must also address the highest areas of resident concern, including **addressing the OSV challenge and Flock camera/privacy concerns**. (see later questions for more detail)

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

First, **retail preservation and neighborhood commercial vitality**. Palo Alto's neighborhood commercial centers are the heart of neighborhood life. I will prioritize enforcement of the Retail Preservation Ordinance, creative solutions for vacant parcels like the Philz/Bill's lot, and requiring ground-floor retail in new mixed-use projects. The City must perform outreach to help merchants organize themselves and then hold regular meaningful discussions with the merchants and other business organizations. I would like to establish regular roundtable meetings with the Chamber and local business leaders so that merchants have a genuine platform to raise issues and shape city policy, but this would be most effective if the business organizations have already identified common ground.

Second, **safe streets for all users**. Too many streets remain dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially students and seniors. Following the newly adopted 2026 Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Plan (BPTP), I will prioritize budget for quick hits and addressing the most dangerous intersections, and collaborating with VTA to boost bus routes and ridership — more riders means more frequency, creating a positive cycle that further encourages transit use.

Housing, State Mandates, Local Control, Growth & Infrastructure

State government has increasingly limited cities' discretion over housing policy through laws including SB 79, the Housing Accountability Act, Density Bonus Law and other legislation. Palo Alto must simultaneously meet state housing requirements, accommodate substantial new housing and preserve the qualities residents value about their neighborhoods.

Where do you think the City should accommodate significantly greater housing density, and where—if anywhere—should it resist or seek to mitigate state requirements?

Density belongs along commercial corridors and near transit — El Camino Real, California Avenue, University Avenue, and San Antonio Road, and areas near Caltrain stations. These areas are walkable, bikeable, and have good transit access, making them appropriate for density in a way that can genuinely reduce car dependence. Density also belongs in our GM/ROLM (General Manufacturing and Research, Office and Light Manufacturing) zones where the parcels are much larger and can accommodate the greater efficiencies of scale for affordable housing. Furthermore, converting office and manufacturing to housing reduces Palo Alto's jobs:housing imbalance.

For the future, I also support collaborating with Stanford to develop additional housing in the Stanford Research Park and Stanford Shopping Center areas — proximity to major employment makes that housing attractive to nearby workers and could meaningfully reduce commute traffic.

Palo Alto should try to mitigate against state requirements that would place density in low-scale residential neighborhoods far from transit and services. We should especially avoid increasing density west of Foothill Expressway and east of 101, where development would increase wildfire risk and have greater environmental impacts. The most effective tool we have is a legally compliant, state-approved Housing Element — one that proactively directs density where we want it, rather than ceding control to developers through Builder's Remedy. We must also do comprehensive area planning now for growth corridors — San Antonio, Fabian/Transport, and El Camino — that integrates housing with retail, parks, bike infrastructure, and safe school routes from the outset, before sites are developed and those opportunities are lost.

How should Palo Alto ensure that housing growth is accompanied by appropriate infrastructure, transportation, parks and other public services?

Growth without infrastructure is displacement in slow motion — and our experience with the Fry's/North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan teaches us that we cannot wait until after development begins to plan for community needs.

I will insist that development review include honest assessment of cumulative infrastructure impacts. Specifically: I will negotiate aggressively with developers for developer-funded amenities including parks, retail, bike infrastructure, and school transit improvements. I will push for rapid completion of our area plans, since projects are already being approved that impact our ability to plan for San Antonio. I will advocate for VTA collaboration to plan transit service for new neighborhoods now, so that transit is available when residents arrive rather than years later. And I will push to bring back the city shuttle or collaborate with Stanford to extend the Marguerite shuttle to better serve key corridors.

Palo Alto has a significant number of truly affordable deed restricted housing units that were built over decades for households making between 30-60% AMI. Currently, most projects are at such high AMIs that most families in lower income brackets need the subsidy to reside in Palo Alto. As a councilmember, what solution would you put forward to create truly meaningful affordable housing in Palo Alto.

We cannot meet our HCD affordable housing goals through inclusionary zoning alone. Much of our low-income housing will need to come from 100% affordable projects developed in partnership with nonprofit developers, supplemented by ADUs. Palo Alto's Measure K provides some funding, but we must develop additional revenue sources and develop philanthropic sources of funding.

Public subsidies must be reserved for households that genuinely need them — primarily those earning below 80% AMI, with priority for households at 30–60% AMI. I oppose the misallocation of limited affordable housing funds toward market-rate units.

I would also address the often-overlooked problem of naturally affordable housing: the Housing Element upzoning was targeted at older buildings, which house most of Palo Alto's less-expensive naturally affordable units. New market-rate development will replace this stock with more expensive housing. We must be honest about this tradeoff and work to ensure that the net effect of our housing policies does not harm the very residents we are trying to help. When the city helps fund affordable developments directly, we have more control over unit sizes — and I will push to ensure that city-funded projects include family-sized units, particularly three or more bedrooms, where FAR exemptions and other incentives can help make larger units financially viable for developers.

Palo Alto's Fiscal Solvency & the Future of Retail

Palo Alto entered FY 2026–27 facing a substantial General Fund deficit and adopted reductions affecting staffing and services, including library operations.

What do you believe are the underlying causes of Palo Alto's structural budget challenges? Describe your approach to balancing the City's budget over the next five years. Which services should be protected from cuts? Where would you reduce spending, increase revenue, change employee costs, defer capital projects or find efficiencies? Please be specific.

Palo Alto's structural deficit reflects several converging pressures: rising personnel costs including pension obligations that have outpaced revenue growth; declining sales tax and business tax revenues as retail has eroded; deferred infrastructure maintenance that compounds over time.

My approach:

- **Scrutinize personnel costs** — the largest share of the city budget. I have the financial background — MBA from Stanford, experience running complex organizations — to actually read and interrogate these numbers, not just accept staff summaries. We have already reduced expenses by not filling some open positions and may need to continue doing so by attrition.
- **Scrutinize consulting contracts** — many projects seem to recreate the wheel with the bulk of the report focusing on “existing conditions.” We should examine which consulting contracts we can eliminate or reduce. Our RFPs need to make clear we want consultants to build on existing work, and we should benchmark with other cities to make sure we are hiring consultants with demonstrated results in neighboring cities, at comparable rates.
- **Protect core services** — public safety, libraries, parks, and services for vulnerable residents should be protected from cuts wherever possible. Libraries in particular are community anchors that serve residents across income levels.
- **Grow the revenue base** — by preserving and growing retail sales tax revenues, supporting responsible commercial development, and ensuring Palo Alto's business tax rates are competitive with surrounding cities. Until Palo Alto passed its business tax in 2022, we were one of the few cities in Santa Clara County without one — and the rates levied on large corporations should be reconsidered to ensure they are paying their fair share. We should also consider whether hotel development because hotels generate TOT tax revenue for the city.
- **Prioritize neighborhood planning now** — so that housing development can move efficiently through permitting, generating new property tax revenue without requiring costly delays and re-work.

- **Defer or restructure capital projects** — prioritizing projects with the highest safety or liability exposure and deferring those that can wait without material harm; make purchases now for capital equipment that has long lead times and are expected to increase in price so that we can lock in today's pricing (we have done this with some of our electrical utility upgrades already).
- **Find efficiencies** — through technology (for example, our city staff needs to make better use of AI), shared services with neighboring cities, and rigorous program evaluation.

The loss of community serving retail is a source of frustration to many residents. What if anything would you do to retain and encourage retail in Palo Alto, particularly in Midtown, the burned-out Philz and Bill's lot, Edgewood Plaza, Charleston Plaza, Town and Country, San Antonio Road, and along El Camino?

I would:

- **Enforce the Retail Preservation Ordinance**, while selectively relaxing some requirements, as I worked to do on the Planning and Transportation Commission Retail Ad Hoc Committee. The recently adopted updated (in June 2026) retail revitalization ordinance has made a number of changes that should reduce vacancies and increase vibrancy, including:
 - Expanding permitted uses to include other resident-serving businesses — not just traditional retail. A yoga studio or a children's activity center is more beneficial to a neighborhood than a tech office, even if it generates less foot traffic than a coffee shop.
 - Removing increased parking requirements for change of use
 - Allowing bars and business with < 50 outlets on Cal Ave
 - Allowing neighborhood serving offices (e.g., therapists, tax accountants) that still generate foot traffic to use the rear portions of the large retail spaces, so landlords can right-size retail space fronting retail corridors for today's smaller retail footprints.
- **Conduct Outreach** — Have our new economic development city staff member perform outreach to help merchants organize themselves and then hold regular meaningful discussions with the merchants and other business organizations. I would like to establish regular roundtable meetings with the Chamber and local business leaders so that merchants have a genuine platform to raise issues and shape city policy, but this would be most effective if the business organizations have already identified common ground.
- **The Philz/Bill's lot** — push for a community-serving mixed-use solution with ground-floor retail. This site has sat vacant too long, and perhaps some incentives are needed to speed up redevelopment.
- **Midtown, Edgewood, Charleston, and neighborhood centers** — meet regularly with merchants to understand barriers to retail tenancy firsthand, and explore city tools like facade improvement grants or tenant recruitment assistance. I will personally visit local businesses on a regular basis.
- **California Avenue** — the streetscape redesign is long overdue and a source of frustration for merchants and residents alike. We need to implement the Cal Ave plan that has been developed and if elected, I will request regular written staff updates with clear milestone timelines and hold the process accountable to completion.
- **El Camino Real and San Antonio Road** — require ground-floor retail in all new mixed-use development as a condition of approval.
- **Vacancy tax** — I would investigate this carefully before implementing. I want to understand the unintended consequences, ensure permitted uses are appropriate, and consider details like whether pop-up tenancies should reset the clock. The ideal outcome is a retail environment that makes a vacancy tax unnecessary — but if targeted enforcement and incentives are insufficient, I would be open to exploring it.

- **Housing as a retail driver** — increasing the number of nearby residents through thoughtful housing development increases foot traffic and supports local retail.

Transportation

Growing numbers of people, including teens and children, ride personal electric mobility devices such as e-bikes and e-scooters on the city's streets, sidewalks, and trails in ways and at speeds considered dangerous.

At an April 2026 City/PAUSD discussion, Palo Alto police reported six collisions involving e-bikes and e-motos at PAUSD campuses in March 2026 alone, one involving major injuries. Police also reported increasing violations by student e-bike riders.

If you concerned about this issue, as a councilmember, what measures would you propose to make Palo Alto's streets, sidewalks and trails safe while not discouraging encouraging alternative transportation modalities?

This is an urgent safety issue, particularly near schools. Six collisions at PAUSD campuses in a single month demands a serious response.

I would propose:

- **Speed and equipment standards** — work with PAUSD and the city to establish clear, enforced standards for e-bike speeds near schools and on shared paths, including geofenced speed limiting where technically feasible.
- **Education** — expand Safe Routes to School programming to explicitly include e-bike safety training, including for students who missed foundational bike safety education during COVID.
- **Infrastructure** — separate fast e-bike traffic from pedestrians on heavily used paths by widening, striping, or physically separating lanes where possible.
- **Enforcement** — coordinate with PAPD on targeted enforcement near school campuses during arrival and dismissal times.
- **Parent and community engagement** — work with PTAs and school site councils to establish community norms and parental accountability.
- **State advocacy for licensing** — actively lobby our State Assemblymember and State Senator to require state-level licensing for Class II and Class III e-bikes. These vehicles can reach speeds comparable to motor vehicles, and ensuring operators are properly licensed is a necessary step for broader public safety.

The goal is not to restrict e-bikes — they are a valuable, climate-friendly transportation option — but to ensure they are used safely, particularly around children.

Palo Alto has spent years studying how to separate streets from the Caltrain tracks at its rail crossings. The projects involve enormous costs, difficult engineering choices and potentially major impacts on nearby neighborhoods.

What outcome do you support for Palo Alto's rail crossings, and what tradeoffs are you willing—and unwilling—to accept regarding cost, neighborhood impacts, road closures, eminent domain, construction disruption and urban design? At what point should the City decide that a particular grade-separation alternative is simply too expensive?

We need to be realistic about what is and is not possible for grade separation at Palo Alto's four rail crossings given that funding is the major barrier. At a minimum cost of ~\$500M per crossing, it would require ~\$2B to achieve complete grade separation throughout the city. Discussion about grade separation has often made it seem like it is imminent and that it could be achieved in a matter of a few years. In reality, even if we had fully engineered plans today, the construction time alone for one grade separation is 4-5 years.

Currently, it appears that we have enough Measure B funds to complete one crossing. Beyond that, unless the state or federal government provides funding, it seems unlikely that we will be able to achieve grade separation at more than one crossing. I believe we should prioritize the grade separation at the crossings that have the most traffic and accidents/deaths, which means the priority would be Charleston, Meadow, Churchill, and then Palo Alto Ave. This means that likely, the underpass at Charleston would be our one funded crossing for the foreseeable future.

At the same time, at-grade crossings are dangerous, and only become more so if ridership and service frequency increase. Palo Alto needs to do what we can to make sure we have plans ready should funding materialize. This means that if we can secure grant funding to continue designing plans for crossings at all four crossings, we should continue to do so. In the meantime, we should aggressively pursue options that increase safety and quality of life, such as quad gates and cameras/sensors for increased safety and quiet zones to eliminate train horns.

Tradeoffs I am willing to accept: construction disruption over a defined period; some road configuration changes if they produce a meaningfully better long-term outcome; the use of eminent domain if it results in a meaningfully better outcome in terms of reductions in cost, construction time, and construction disruptions.

Tradeoffs I am unwilling to accept: Dividing our city with a wall or berm along the tracks; disrupting our current traffic flow for an undefined period of time without defined benefits; solutions that create worse pedestrian and bike conditions than exist today; lack of transparent communication to our residents regarding likelihood of grade separation at all four crossings.

Homelessness and Vehicle Dwellers

Palo Alto faces competing concerns surrounding people living in RVs and oversized vehicles on public streets, including the welfare of unhoused residents, neighborhood and business impacts, sanitation, public safety and the private use of public space.

What should Palo Alto's policy toward vehicle dwellers be? Describe the combination of enforcement, parking regulation, safe-parking programs, shelter, services and housing that you believe would be both humane and workable?

A humane and workable policy requires simultaneous action on enforcement, services, and housing:

- **Change our parking ordinances so that they are enforceable:** Our current prohibition of parking in one place for more than 72 hours is not enforceable because it requires proof that a vehicle has been in one place for 3 consecutive days. To protect bike paths, improve dangerous views for drivers, allow space for ingress and egress into business and residential driveways, and prevent hazardous materials from going into waterways and city streets, Palo Alto should update its overnight parking ordinance to prohibit RV parking from 2am-5am.
- **Cost-effective signage for new regulations:** Rather than posting signs on every Palo Alto street, our parking restrictions can be noticed with fewer signs at all entrances to Palo Alto.
- **Income-verified RV parking permits and safe parking:** Any new ordinance prohibiting overnight RV parking should be paired with an RV permit program so that RV dwellers who qualify can park in designated areas not adjacent to homes and businesses or designated safe parking spaces. These permits should also require that RV dwellers agree to a good neighbor policy.
- **Transitional Services:** RV parking permits should be paired with services such as robust case management, mental health counseling, substance use services, and employment assistance.
- **Develop Deeply Affordable Housing:** We must prioritize deeply subsidized housing at 30–60% Area Median Income (AMI), even if this means fewer affordable housing units at higher income levels. Without this housing stock, transitional housing cannot work because there is nowhere for individuals to move afterward.
- **Foster Regional Collaboration:** Homelessness cannot be solved city by city. Partner with Santa Clara County to coordinate services, secure regional funding, and expand safe parking and shelter capacity.

Climate Goals and the Municipal Utilities

Palo Alto has ambitious climate goals and a municipally owned utility, giving the City unusual ability to influence electrification and energy use.

How aggressively should Palo Alto pursue building and vehicle electrification? How should the City balance climate goals against affordability, reliability, consumer choice and the financial consequences?

Palo Alto's municipally owned utility is one of our greatest assets in the fight against climate change. Our utility already provides 100% carbon-free electricity, which means electrification in Palo Alto produces lower emissions than in most California cities. As a Planning and Transportation Commissioner, I have already worked to remove barriers to this transition by updating zoning ordinances to simplify residential heat pump and energy storage installations. On City Council, I support pursuing aggressive electrification goals pragmatically and urgently to meet our "80x30" climate targets, centered on these key pillars and caveats:

- **Affordability:** Transition incentives and rebates must be scaled to income. We must ensure that transitioning away from fossil fuels remains financially accessible for lower-income residents and renters so no one is left behind by upfront costs.
- **Reliability via Grid Modernization:** Grid reliability must be maintained as extreme heat events increase demand. We must accelerate our Grid Modernization Master Plan, ensuring Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) upgrades transformers, substations, and distribution lines so grid capacity never becomes a bottleneck for residents installing EV chargers or heat pumps.
- **Consumer Choice and Streamlining:** Where possible, I prefer incentive-based approaches over mandates for existing buildings where retrofit costs can be substantial. On City Council, I will focus on cutting red tape by establishing a predictable, expedited "one-stop" permitting process for panel upgrades, solar, and storage, making it easier for residents to opt-in voluntarily.
- **Ending New Fossil Fuel Expansion:** We should recognize natural gas as a necessary transition fuel to maintain system reliability, but we must stop investing in new long-term natural gas infrastructure projects that risk becoming stranded assets.
- **Comprehensive Transit Approach:** True vehicle electrification requires reducing vehicle miles traveled entirely. This is why I will continue to champion the expansion of safe, connected active transit infrastructure, bike lanes, and pedestrian corridors to make walking, biking, and e-bikes viable daily alternatives to driving.

Ultimately, our pursuit must be comprehensive and responsible—matching our ambitious climate frameworks without outpacing grid readiness or financial feasibility.

As City policies encourage people to turn off the gas, an unintended consequence is that gas prices rise for those who retain gas. Some of the residents can't afford the steep cost of transitioning away from gas. How should the city address this conundrum?

This is a genuine equity problem. As more residents electrify, fixed gas infrastructure costs are spread across a shrinking customer base — pushing prices higher for those least able to afford conversion. To protect fixed-income seniors, renters, and lower-income households, I support:

- **Targeted Transition Assistance:** Implement a city-funded transition assistance program for low- and moderate-income residents, expanding CPAU's on-bill financing and incentives to directly subsidize upfront heat pump, panel upgrade, and induction stove installations.
- **Tiered Utility Protections:** Establish tiered utility rate structures and clear financial hardship waivers that protect low-income gas customers as gas prices rise, ensuring they are not penalized while relying on gas as a transition fuel.

- **Proactive Outreach:** Direct an accelerated outreach and enrollment campaign for existing rebate programs, which are currently underutilized by the very households most in need.
- **Transparency and Honest Communication:** Maintain honest, clear communication with residents regarding the cost trajectory of natural gas so families have the predictability they need to plan ahead.
- **Affordable Transportation Alternatives:** Recognize that reducing emissions cannot depend solely on the ability to purchase an expensive electric vehicle. We must invest heavily in affordable transit options and robust walking and biking infrastructure to provide low-cost, zero-emission transportation alternatives for everyone.

We must carefully evaluate who bears the costs and who receives the benefits of our climate programs, ensuring that the alternatives we ask our community to use are genuinely available, practical, and affordable to all.

To date, 28 years have passed since the 1998 flood event of record and little to nothing has been done at the Pope-Chaucer bridge to prevent creek overflows into the Crescent Park and Duveneck/St Francis neighborhoods. How would you determine what the hold-up has been at SFCJPA, what would you do to expedite implementing a solution, and how would you assure CPNA and DSFNA residents that help is on the way?

I have already spoken to Crescent Park and Duveneck/Saint Francis citizen leaders who have been advocating for flood protection since before 1998 to educate myself on the issues, and if elected, I would also request a briefing from staff on the current obstacles to progress given that the Reach 1 project (downstream of CP and DSF) was completed in 2019.

I strongly support completing the San Francisquito Creek Reach 2 project, including replacement of the Pope-Chaucer Bridge. Measure S, approved by more than 70% of voters in 2020, committed Valley Water to helping provide roughly 70-year flood protection for about 3,000 Palo Alto properties. I know how important providing this flood protection is to the neighborhoods of Crescent Park, Duveneck / St. Francis and parts of Midtown closer to 101 and that as climate change worsens the risks of flooding only increase. The Newell Road bridge project just broke ground this May, and Pope-Chaucer bridge is the next step once the Newell Road bridge is completed. It is unfortunate that neither has been completed in time to prevent flooding this super El Nino year.

To move the project forward, Palo Alto needs to press for three things now, and I will support our current JPA representative, Vice Mayor Greer Stone, in doing so:

- 1) a strong new Executive Director to fill the vacant position at the JPA,
- 2) a closer working partnership with Valley Water, and
- 3) a firmer City of Palo Alto commitment to advancing the design and securing funding.

The JPA is currently taking three alternatives to about 15% design before selecting a preferred project and completing a supplemental EIR. With the project now estimated at more than \$120 million, this funding must be raised from Valley Water, the state, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, and other sources.

I also support the Valley Water's current effort to take a leadership role in addressing the flooding risk from San Francisquito Creek rather than having the effort dispersed across the JPA.

To keep the public aware of progress, I would have the city create a webpage dedicated to the current status of Reach 2 and San Francisquito Creek flood protection efforts, the way it does with other projects. I would communicate transparently with CPNA and DSFNA residents about what is actually blocking progress and what a realistic timeline looks like

Public Safety, Technology and Civil Liberties

Palo Alto's use of automated license plate readers has generated debate over the value of technology in solving crimes versus privacy, data sharing and government surveillance.

What principles should govern Palo Alto's use of surveillance technology? Discuss where you would draw the line between legitimate public-safety tools and unacceptable government surveillance, and what oversight, transparency, warrant, retention and data-sharing rules do you believe should apply?

The principles I would apply are:

- **Proportionality:** Surveillance tools should be proportionate to the safety benefit they provide
- **Transparency:** The public should know what tools the city uses, what data is collected, how long it is retained, and who can access it
- **Oversight:** Any surveillance technology should require council approval and be subject to regular public reporting and audit
- **Data minimization:** Collect only what is necessary. I would support strict ALPR data retention limits — likely 30 days (as is already PAPD policy) or less for data not associated with an active investigation
- **No unauthorized sharing:** Palo Alto data should not be shared with federal immigration authorities or other agencies without a warrant, consistent with California law; in addition, PAPD's policy already requires that data cannot be shared with other California cities unless they sign an agreement to abide by Palo Alto's policies.
- **Warrant requirements:** Law enforcement access to retained surveillance data should require a warrant or documented exigent circumstances.

In the Flock debate, I take seriously the legitimate concerns on both sides: protecting residents' privacy while giving our police effective tools to investigate crime and apprehend dangerous offenders.

Flock has faced serious concerns over the sharing of license-plate data with federal agencies in violation of state law and local policies, as well as misleading statements from company leadership. In addition, Palo Alto license-plate data is searched up to 200,000 times a month by Northern California law-enforcement agencies, far more than appears necessary to investigate serious crime. I believe stronger privacy protections are needed.

At the same time, automatic license-plate readers have proven valuable in solving crimes and identifying repeat and dangerous offenders. Police Chief James Reifschneider told the Council in June that the department had identified more than 130 cases in which Flock played an important evidentiary role in identifying and arresting suspects. I support exploring alternatives, including the Genetec system, which was recently adopted by Stanford. Genetec lacks some of Flock's regional data-sharing benefits, but allows data to be stored locally under greater agency control.

Public safety is extremely important to Palo Alto residents, and I support giving our police the tools they need to fight crime effectively and cost-effectively while establishing strong safeguards against misuse of residents' data.

I will continue listening to both sides as we work toward the right balance between protecting privacy and reducing crime.

In the near term we should:

- 1) Limit how outside-agency searches can be limited, as narrowly as practicable, to felonies, sex crimes, and narrowly defined crimes of regional concern, such as organized retail theft. The police auditor is investigating this.
- 2) Review prohibiting PAPD from searching historical travel data for traffic citations, infractions, other low-level offenses, and exploratory use.
- 3) Reduce the data retention time from 30 days to 7 in line with Flock's new default retention period for new customers. The police auditor is investigating this.
- 4) Evaluate Genetec (used by Stanford) and other vendors who can provide a more secure data architecture and more accurate license plate readers with less false positives. The police auditor is doing this. We should not switch before a thorough evaluation is fully completed and the audit is completed and only then if the evaluation shows an alternative to be effective at both increased privacy protections and helping PAPD with crime fighting both with real-time alerts and investigations.