



2026 City Council Candidate Questions

Goals

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

BRYNA CHANG

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)

YUDY DENG

As City Councilmember, I want to help build Palo Alto into a place where people can build a career, raise a family, and actually stay. That means making housing, childcare, local businesses, and everyday community life more accessible.

My Green Lights approach is about making City Hall work better. Good housing and neighborhood-serving projects shouldn't spend years stuck in unnecessary process. I want clearer rules and faster decisions, while still maintaining the high standards Palo Alto expects.

I also want to invest in the things that make people love living here: our parks, libraries, trees, local businesses, safe streets, and gathering places. We can continue leading on climate while being thoughtful about affordability and reliability.

I want residents to feel like City Hall is a partner. Government should listen, communicate clearly, and actually get things done.

HENRY ETZKOWITZ

Did not answer.

GARY GECHLIK

Serving on Council is a team sport, we have to work together and reduce the number of issues to the top priorities.

RAYMOND LEE GOINS

I hope that I can accomplish in the next 4 years the right to housing, and the affordability for all our residents that work here to live here.

BRIAN HAMACHEK

My priorities are to protect single-family neighborhoods while directing housing to appropriate locations, adopt a five-year financial plan that protects essential services and reduces unnecessary overhead, and advance flood protection and neighborhood retail.

In my first year, I would seek Council agreement on specific commitments, each with a responsible department, an approved budget, and clear milestones. Residents should be able to track progress on library access, permitting, infrastructure, and City finances through existing reporting tools.

ED LAUING

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

FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Double down on funding for more affordable housing to increase the economic and ethnic diversity of our city. Further, state mandates dictate that 40% of our new housing units (2452) must be below market rate. But they have not given us a dime to build them.

INVEST IN PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety is the fundamental obligation of an elected official. We have to keep our people safe. This includes having the best police, fire and emergency services departments in the region. It also includes much of the work done by public works. It extends to the transportation departments on our streets and grade crossings. And it embraces initiatives for youth mental health. Safety is Priority One for investment decisions.

DELIVER EFFECTIVE & RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

Increase proactive communication and accountability to residents with clear and timely information and easy access to city services and department leaders. Big decisions impacting neighborhoods should not be a surprise to neighbors. Residents should have meaningful opportunities to shape city decisions.

VICKI VEENKER

HOUSING: Palo Alto needs thoughtful new housing for workers and families by:

- increasing density on transit corridors
- Improving ADU options that retain neighborhood character
- Holistic planning for safe neighborhoods with access to schools, shopping, transit and more
- Improving our permitting process so that it is more efficient and predictable.

CLIMATE: I'll work to accelerate progress toward our climate goals by

- Innovative greenhouse gas emissions reduction
- Promoting our Whole Home Electrification program
- working to make electric vehicle charging more readily available, including for multi-family homes

FULL-SERVICE CITY: Promote excellence and keep close oversight of key services, including:

- City-owned utilities
- Municipal Police and Fire departments
- Parks and Open Space
- Libraries

CUBBERLEY COMMUNITY CENTER: If the sales tax passes, striving to move the project forward in a phased, responsible fashion, focusing first on rehabilitating the infrastructure that is at the end of its useful

life. If it doesn't pass, exploring options to see if there is any other path by which the city could purchase the land from PAUSD so we can make it a place where our community can gather, learn, create, and play.