



2026 City Council Candidate Questions

Priorities

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

BRYNA CHANG

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.

YUDY DENG

I really come back to two things: helping young families and longtime residents stay in Palo Alto, and making our neighborhoods places where people actually feel connected.

First, we need more housing that works for real families and the people who work in our community. Teachers, public employees, young families, and even our own kids should have a chance to put down roots here. That means making it easier to build good housing near transit, schools, and neighborhood centers, while also supporting things like childcare.

Second, I want to focus on the everyday things that make a neighborhood feel like home: parks, libraries, local shops, safe sidewalks and bike routes, playgrounds, and places where people can simply spend time together.

That's really what my Green Lights approach is about. When something makes a neighborhood better, whether it's housing, childcare, a small business, or a safer street, City Hall should be helping move it forward, not making it harder.

HENRY ETZKOWITZ

Did not answer.

GARY GECHLIK

10 Story Max on new housing development

Focus on Firefighters, Police, EMS services

RAYMOND LEE GOINS

The two things that I would prioritize would be making Housing as a right/Rent stabilization. I believe if we don't price families out then we will have community to build on that last for generations to come.

BRIAN HAMACHEK

First, preserve neighborhood character by protecting single-family neighborhoods, maintaining trees and parks, and supporting groceries and other local businesses. Larger developments should have appropriate transitions to existing homes.

Second, improve everyday safety and access. I would prioritize safe school routes, accessible sidewalks and crossings, and practical loading and customer access for businesses.

I would use existing capital and maintenance budgets for a neighborhood improvement program shaped by residents. Staff would evaluate proposals for safety, accessibility, cost, and feasibility, and Council would publish the projects it funds.

ED LAUING

+ Existing neighborhoods should preserve and enhance their own distinct identities. New neighborhoods - formed by new housing growth - should be “created equal”. They should be developed with the same breadth of amenities as existing neighborhoods - such as parks, safe roads and road signs, walkability, etc..

+ Restrict lived-in RV parking to non-residential areas for a select number of income-verified families in specially permitted transitional-housing-areas.

VICKI VEENKER

It's challenging to pick only two, but my top priorities for neighborhood livability include:

- oversized vehicle (OSV) abatement in our city, and
- improving retail vibrancy and availability throughout our communities.