

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2014 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: [GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com](mailto:GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com)  
In the subject line, please include "Alameda City Council"

If it is not possible for you to email, please mail your responses to:  
Alameda City Council Questionnaire  
c/o Green Party of Alameda County ,  
2022A Blake Street \* Berkeley, CA 94704

Please respond by Saturday, August 23, 2014

Name: Jim Oddie

Phone: 415-509-1964

Email: [jim@oddie4alameda.com](mailto:jim@oddie4alameda.com)

Website: [www.oddie4alameda.com](http://www.oddie4alameda.com)

#### **1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for City Council?**

I work hard every day as district director for our local Assemblymember and help make policy that improves the lives of everyday Alamedans, provide services to our constituents, and collaborate with local leaders to solve the problems of our day.

Working hard is a value I learned from my parents while growing up in the suburbs of Chicago. And working hard is what I have done for Alameda since I moved here to raise a family almost 20 years ago.

Like all of the candidates in the race, I love Alameda.

What I love about Alameda are the things that I want to preserve and strengthen as a councilmember:

- Great public schools
- More parks and open space

- A vibrant local economy
- Safe neighborhoods, and
- A small town quality of life

My record of working for Alameda includes serving as:

- The first chair of the city's Open Government Commission
- A member of Alameda Hospital's Finance and Management Committee
- A member of the America's Cup ad hoc committee
- The long time treasurer of the Cantamar Homeowner's Association
- A member of one of the Superintendent's Parcel Tax Advisory Committees
- An elected member of the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee, and
- A number of years of president of the City of Alameda Democratic Club

I want to continue this service and leadership on the City Council.

Our city has made tremendous progress over the last four years. An era of acrimony and divisiveness has been replaced with an era of transparency and collaboration.

I am running for City Council to use my skills and experience to keep moving Alameda forward, and would be honored to earn the Green Party's endorsement.

**2. Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to proactively lead by placing new ideas on the agenda for consideration and development. What are some specific ideas you intend to pursue if elected? What do you believe are the main priorities for the City Council?**

The most important of any councilmember is negotiation of labor contracts for public employees. As noted (and more deeply answered) in your next question, these contracts make up the lion's share of the City's budget, so this is a main priority. Getting it right at Alameda Point and doing so without negatively impacting traffic are the other two top priorities, and your questionnaire properly devoted a detailed question to each.

As for new ideas –

I talk about this also in a later question, but I would like to see lower reporting thresholds and increased reporting frequency for independent expenditures. In the 2010 election it took until the following January to see the full scope of these expenditures – over \$50,000 spent by a developer who voters overwhelmingly rejected. In Richmond, we saw \$2.5 million spent to influence 2012's Measure N (soda tax). These independent expenditures are obscene. We shouldn't have to wait until long after an election to find out who is spending what on our local elections. Organizations spending money should disclose their donors. I would like to see localities like Alameda implement stricter campaign finance disclosure rules around independent expenditures.

Another area I intend to lead on is wage equality. The gap between the richest and the poorest in this country is widening and there seems to be a race to the bottom when it comes to middle class wages. As Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco, and San Jose raise their minimum wage, I'd like to see Alameda and surrounding cities consider raising our minimum wage and lift up our communities.

Although it is largely symbolic as it's not done in the City of Alameda, I would like to pursue a ban on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Alameda and call on Alameda County to do the same (there are a few wells in the Eastern part of the county). By standing up city by city and county by county, we can end this environmentally disastrous activity in California. This strategy worked on the death penalty moratorium (while we have no official moratorium, it's been over eight years since an execution and momentum is on our side with the recent court decision). For another example, I was one of the drivers in Alameda to get the council to pass an anti-war resolution over 10 years ago when Bush first invaded Iraq.

**3. Finances -- It's known that the city is heavily in debt and many projects have been put on hold (deferred maintenance like pot-holes). What plan would you propose to ease the city out of red-ink and into black ink? Given the very dire economic straits that Alameda is in (like many cities) how would you handle the pension issue for the police and fire fighters? Data from the city budget shows that 70% is for public safety workers leaving only 30% of**

**the general fund budget for everything else. How would you address this issue?**

I would dispute the assertion that the city is heavily in debt as we finished the last fiscal year with a surplus of \$2.4 million and still have healthy reserves at 34%. However, the challenge of addressing unfunded post retirement benefits is immediate.

Clearly, one of the biggest challenges facing Alameda in the next decade is the cost of post-employment retirement benefits – OPEB (other post-employment benefits) and the impact of new PERS contribution rates. The estimated funding gap over the next 30 years is approximately \$244 million. Like a mortgage, we are not required to come up with the entire \$244 million right now.

Unlike four years ago, the city enjoys a collaborative and constructive working relationship with our bargaining units – important as police and fire make up about 70% of our general fund budget (as the question pointed out). This has helped us make tremendous progress over that time in addressing costs, and is critical to moving Alameda forward on this key challenge.

At the state level this year, we were faced with a similar issue with STRS – the teacher retirement system. We were able to solve the problem by bringing all of the stakeholders together and share in the solution.

It will take a similar collaborative approach here in Alameda, and I am ready to build upon the strong foundation we have in place and my experience working for Assemblymember Bonta on the teachers' retirement solution to address these issues. The bargaining units understand we all need to work together collaboratively to keep our city solvent. The solution starts at the bargaining table.

As I noted in the previous question, bargaining with our public employees is the most important job of a councilmember. Both my parents belonged to unions. One of my earliest memories – from age three or four – was when my father's union went on strike. The strike lasted for over four months. My father worked a series of part-time jobs to keep food on our table – driving a taxi, delivering milk, and such. While he did so, my mother would drive my brother and me down to the

picket line where we would march every day. When I graduated college, I ended up working for the same company as a manager. Thanks to my parents' sacrifices and those of their union brothers and sisters, it was a great job. Strong middle class wage, pension, 401k, health benefits, and a 35-hour workweek. Today, both my parents enjoy a stable and secure retirement, even after sending all three kids to college.

I believe the collective bargaining process is what ensures a strong middle class and believe it is most successful when done collaboratively. No one wants to see us go down the path of Detroit or Stockton or Vallejo. Binding arbitration, which is the result of poor labor relations, played a significant role in Detroit's financial problems.

As for deferred maintenance, I support Measure BB. While the measure still relies on highway construction, it will help fund catching up on the deferred maintenance of Alameda's streets and is much needed here.

**4. Alameda Point -- Now that portions of the Point are clean and available for developing how would you proceed? How do you stand on the issue of open space and adaptive re-use for the Point? How would you plan for the increased traffic both on the island and the impact on Oakland Chinatown? Where do you stand on a housing unit cap for the point?**

As the question points out, the development at Alameda Point needs to be considerate of both local and regional impacts, such the region's jobs/housing balance, affordable housing, and transportation.

I am excited about the potential at Alameda Point to create jobs and generate revenue to the city. After years of stops and starts and heated disagreements, in the last four years, the Mayor and council have achieved tangible progress at Alameda Point. The city owns the property, it is fully entitled, and we are ready to put shovels in the ground.

As councilmember, I will evaluate any proposed project on three criteria.

First, it needs to generate revenue for the city to pay for the infrastructure at the Point and the services our community depends on

to keep our streets safe and our schools strong. This requires looking closely at some of the details. For example, if a project is going to be phased in, holding on to adjacent parcels and allowing the city to benefit from appreciation might make more sense than selling these parcels immediately. Also, the cost of infrastructure to develop parcels further away from existing infrastructure should be a factor in the decision making process as the cost is less to move incrementally out from Main Street.

Second, it should be green. Green in two ways. First, any project – both retrofitting and new construction – needs to be zero net energy in order to help us meet the AB 32 GHG emission reduction goals. Second, the Point needs to contain abundant open spaces for all of us to enjoy, including wetlands to help mitigate sea level rise.

Third, any project should have no negative impacts on traffic. I will talk more about transportation more in the following question.

I favor a cap of no more than 1,425 housing units at the Point. Our community has spoken decisively and rejected any plans to double or triple that amount. As for the idea that we should cap residential housing at what exists today, with the infrastructure costs necessary to develop the Point for commercial or residential use, I am skeptical that such a proposal would pencil out for the city, and might deter business development like a new campus for Google, who might like to have its employees housed adjacent to their workplace. The waterfront needs to be enjoyed by all of us, and not turn into a corporate ghost town that shuts down at 5:00 pm.

Adaptive reuse is already part of the Alameda Point General Plan and we will continue to seek creative reuse of historic buildings.

**5. Transportation and Growth -- Since Alameda is an island - 4 draw-bridges and a tube - it is widely believed that any further development must carry with it a concrete, realistic proposal for increasing access to the island. Where do you stand on this issue?**

**What ideas would you put forth to address the future development in Alameda? Considering Alameda is an island with limited access, do you support a limit to the number of future housing**

## **units and what solutions would you suggest to mitigate the increased traffic?**

On transportation, I will engage in a conversation about creative transit alternatives. These are not easy solutions.

Ferry service on the Bay is underutilized. By making Alameda a water-transit hub, we can connect thousands of people to jobs in the South Bay and the Peninsula and take their cars off the road.

I support the Waterfront Town Center Plan recently adopted by the Council, which creates a transit-oriented community with waterfront parks and promenades at Seaplane Lagoon. Projects at Alameda Point that allow for residents to live and work within walking distance of their home and workplace should be prioritized.

We also need to think about other creative solutions, such as the increased use of shuttles to connect residents to other transit hubs such as Amtrak, BART, and ferries. Light rail along Lincoln is another creative solution, but may be cost prohibitive. Measure BB includes funding for two BRT (bus rapid transit) lines in Alameda – through the Tub to Downtown Oakland and to the Fruitvale BART. Ideas such as adding another automobile bridge/tunnel or extending BART to Alameda are not financially realistic. The city could be friendlier to bicycles with more dedicated and clearly marked bicycle lanes (I like the color-coded bicycle lanes in San Francisco, for example).

A discussion of housing units must address affordable housing. As housing prices rise in the Bay Area, homeownership becomes more elusive for many households, even those earning above moderate incomes. Alameda and the Bay Area are not alone as affordable housing is a major issue statewide. I worry that my children, who are just starting out, will never be able to afford a home in Alameda. Although I am a renter now, I would like to be a homeowner again someday here in Alameda. So, this is an important issue to me.

We have a 15% citywide and 25% Alameda Point specific affordable housing ordinance to insure we meet our obligation to provide affordable housing. We have two Priority Development Areas (PDA's) – Alameda Point and the Northern Waterfront – available to meet our Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 1,723 units by 2022.

The City's Transportation System Management (TSM)/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan was put in place to attract transit-oriented developers and homeowners to Alameda, and provide strategies to reduce the use of single-occupant automobiles for work and travel to and from Alameda.

The City also has Development Impact fees to offset some of the infrastructure costs required for development projects and maintain critical City services.

Resolution of the Broadway-Jackson/880 interchange would help alleviate traffic through the tube, but the long-term solution is getting people out of their cars, reducing single occupancy automobile trips, and into more environmentally friendly transit such as public transit and bicycles. While intermediate-term solutions such as carpooling, ridesharing, and electric vehicles reduce GHG emissions, to truly address climate change and traffic, we need to get more cars off of the road and into public transit, walking, and bicycling – these are not unrealistic and the Green Party should be applauded for making these strategies part of their party's platform. The City's plans for some of the Northern Waterfront projects to limit the number of cars per household is a step in the right direction to reducing single occupancy automobile trips.

**6. Crab Cove -- Where did you stand on the Crab Cove issue? Did you support the petition campaign to rezone it open space?**

I supported the citizen's initiative to re-zone the McKay Avenue property as open space and I signed the petition to place the measure on the ballot (it was a petition circulated by Gretchen Lipow in front of Trader Joe's). The litigation between the EBRPD and City is the most significant current obstacle to EBRPD acquiring the property. As an attorney, I appreciate the effectiveness of good-faith mediation to resolve disputes such as this one and am supportive of concerted efforts to mediate an end to the lawsuit. But, if everyone were reasonable, then attorneys would be doing something else for a living. Here, taxpayers are financing one government entity suing another government entity as well as the defense of the suit – the only winners here are attorneys when we should be focused on working together to expand Crown Beach. As a taxpayer, this irritates me.



I also signed the petition for 2012's Measure D to close the land swap loophole in the City Charter. As President of the City of Alameda Democratic Club for many years, I helped shepherd the club's endorsement of Measure D in 2012 (although it was an easy endorsement to earn) and helped put on a number of meeting programs over the last 13 years to educate our members and the public on issues that impact of the environment. Preserving our existing open spaces, like Measure D does, and expanding them as Alameda Point is developed is a priority issue of my campaign.

As for open space Alameda Point, 71% of Alameda's voters supported Measure WW with the promise of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities. Alameda Point provides the City with the unique opportunity to create parks, passive open spaces, sports fields, wetlands restoration, and a waterfront all of our citizens can enjoy. I support all of these options for the allocation of Measure WW funds at Alameda Point.

### **7. Accountability -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Alameda?**

Elected officials should never forget who put them in office – their constituents. Accountability and accessibility are the hallmarks of a good public servant. Any constituent should feel free to contact me via telephone or e-mail and expect a prompt response. The job of a councilmember is to listen to all of the community, hear both sides of issues, and make thoughtful and reasonable decisions.

As far as larger outreach efforts, I plan on maintaining an email marketing account to provide updates to constituents on issues before the council. I would replicate successful efforts by other councilmembers, such as Tony Daysog's community office hours and Rob Bonta's periodic town halls. Town hall events are effective as they provide staff and the community an opportunity for an extended dialog and discussion on issues and the organizer of then-Vice Mayor Bonta's events, I found them valuable as a tool for listening to community input.

### **8. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you?**

I have been endorsed by the Building & Construction Trades of

Alameda County, the Alameda Central Labor Council, and the City of Alameda Democratic Club. As an active member of the Democratic Party, I expect to have significant support within the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee at their endorsement meeting in September and hope to earn the endorsement of other Democratic Party clubs.

I'm also honored to have the endorsements of a number of elected officials, including: Sen. Ellen Corbett, Sen. Loni Hancock, Assemblymembers Sandré Swanson (ret.), Rob Bonta, Nancy Skinner, and Fiona Ma (ret.), County Supervisors Wilma Chan and Alice Lai-Bitker (ret.), Alameda School Board Members Niel Tam, Mike McMahan, Margie Sherratt, and Barbara Kahn, Alameda Healthcare District Directors Mike McCormick and Jordan Battani (ret.), a number of elected officials in San Leandro, AC Transit Director Chris Peeples, and many other community leaders.

This list, which includes a number of local elected officials, is demonstrative of my ability to work together with solving the problems of our time.

**9. Campaign Funding -- How much money do you currently have for this race? How much money do you plan to raise? Where will the money come from? Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).**

My most recent FPPC report showed over \$11,000 funds raised. The average budget of a council race is between \$30,000 and \$40,000, and this is my fundraising target. My fundraising has and will be coming from individuals, small businesses, and representatives of working men and women raised from house parties, fundraising events, and personal calls.

As current and past councilmembers, the other two candidates in the race should have superior name recognition and raising money for direct mail is the most effective method of increasing my visibility. This is the system we have and its nearly impossible to get elected without paying for some type of campaign – even public financing programs like San Francisco require some sort of private fundraising. Unfortunately, until there is a change at the Supreme Court, implementing meaningful

and necessary reforms to our campaign finance system will be problematic.

Locally, I would like to see more frequent disclosure requirements for independent expenditures – the public should know who is funding these outside expenditures. This is something I have long advocated for and published a law review article about in 2005.

As for contribution limits, as long as the Koch Brothers are out there with their 1% brethren to spend an unlimited amount on independent expenditures, I am skeptical of any efforts that would undermine the ability of working men and women to have their voices heard.

The groups I would not accept contributions from are not likely to send any contributions my way. Right wing groups, oil and petrochemical companies, tobacco and cigarette companies are on my do not accept list, but I'm confident I'm not on their "give" list anyway. Developers with projects pending/planned with the City are also on my do not accept list.

#### **10. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?**

I am privileged to work hard every day to get results for the people of the Alameda. In the last two years:

- When the Newark school district was trying to take BTSA (beginning teacher) grant money away from Alameda, I worked with the school district, teachers, and my colleagues in other legislative offices to convince the Budget chair to include a fix in this year's budget to stop this.
- When Alameda Health System wanted to acquire San Leandro Hospital and affiliate with Alameda Hospital, it was not financially feasible if the employees were required to join the Alameda County Pension system. I worked with the bargaining units to get them to support legislation drafted by our office to both keep them whole and allow these two hospitals to stay open.
- When a local business in town was going to be closed down by the DMV, I worked to explain to the agency why they were misinterpreting the law and allowed the business to stay open.
- When no one stepped to the plate to organize a committee to put a school bond on the ballot to rebuild our crumbling schools, I jumped in and got the ball rolling.

- When CalTrans delayed responding to the City not once but twice on permits for the new In-N-Out Burger, and also on the new crosswalk by Krusi Park, I helped cut through the red tape. I also ensured CalTrans kept the Otis Drive sewer repair project as a priority item and on schedule for completion this year.

After beginning my career in the financial and technology industries, I went to back to school to become an attorney so I could advocate for everyday people.

As an attorney, I worked on behalf of fathers, mothers, tenants, small property owners, and small business owners. After starting up a law firm during the great recession, I know from personal experience how the tough economy impacted families' sense of security and safety. I am also proud to have grown up in a labor household. These values and experiences will shape how I vote on the City Council.

I have no political aspirations outside of Alameda and would be honored to serve as an Alameda councilmember for the next four years. I've worked hard to build collaborative relationships with local leaders across the East Bay, but I will be an independent voice on the City Council, who makes thoughtful and reasonable decisions that put Alameda first and move Alameda forward.

I would be honored to earn your endorsement. Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Greg Jan  
Green Party of Alameda County

(Please reply to: [GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com](mailto:GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com) by Saturday, August 23 ).