

Kevin Kennedy for Alameda Treasurer  
Green Party Endorsement Questionnaire 2016

1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for the office of Auditor or Treasurer?

*I've always been active serving in the community, and the job responsibilities of the Treasurer overlap a lot with my full time job as a financial planner (investment policies, investment management, financial forecasting), so it seemed a natural fit where I could use my knowledge and experience to add value to our City government and better our community.*

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 Auditor or Treasurer?

*The Treasurer is not in a policy-making role but rather a position that can offer apolitical analysis and insights into the financial issues and choices the City faces to enable the policymakers on City staff and the City Council to make sound decisions. Much of the work I've done in my 16 years on issues like long-term budget trends, the rising cost of pensions and health care, and engaging the public in understanding City finances, is an ongoing process, so I would continue to work hard to make progress on those important fronts. And as I've done in the past I would continue to consult with and offer information to staff and the Council whenever they need me.*

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of Auditor or Treasurer. If you are not an incumbent, what specifically in your background do you believe qualifies you for this position? If you are an incumbent, what issues can you point to in your time as an incumbent that have had a positive impact? As an incumbent what can you tell us about your service in your current position, and share with us the decisions you have made in this capacity that you believe made a difference for the City. In addition, you have never faced a competitor in your previous campaigns. Why do you believe this is now the case in the current election?

*I've served as the Treasurer for the City of Alameda for the past 16 years, and worked as a financial planner for the past 28 years, so I have a strong education and background in finance and financial forecasting. During my tenure the City has won a "Certificate of Excellence" award from the Association of Public Treasurers for the progressive Investment Policy I've crafted, and multiple "Distinguished Budget Presentation" awards from the Government Finance Officers Association and "Operating Budget Excellence" awards from the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers for the transparent budget presentations I've contributed to.*

*I've also made a positive impact on the financial well-being of the City by researching and speaking up on a number of issues. Early in my tenure the City Auditor and I spoke up about financial issues we saw regarding the expansion into telecom services at our City-owned utility, something which initially exposed us to a lot of criticism but was ultimately recognized as correct and [resulted in the City exiting the telecom business](#) before any more financial damage was done. Subsequently the Auditor and I led the push to do long-range budget forecasting so policymakers could understand the long-term impact of the choices they faced. At the request of Council we co-chaired the [Fiscal Sustainability Committee](#), which was a year-long in-depth study of City finances and long-term trends, resulting in a comprehensive report which educated both Council and citizens on how City finances worked and identified particular key areas where attention should be focused. In recent years we've participated in a City-formed [task force](#) to study the issue of rising pension and medical costs, and continued to work to educate policy-makers and the public on these important issues.*

4. What do you believe is Alameda's most important financial issue? What suggestions or policy changes would you offer?

*Clearly the single largest financial issue facing most every city in the state is the rapidly escalating cost of retiree benefits. The liabilities of un-funded or under-funded benefits often eclipses the entire annual operating budget of a city. In Alameda, our under-funded pension and retiree healthcare liabilities total well over \$200 million, which is immense relative to our roughly \$80 million annual General Fund budget. The increasing burden of servicing these liabilities has begun to manifest itself in seemingly annual budget cuts to many of the services and resources Alamedans depend on and value (great parks and libraries, well-maintained streets and sidewalks, and a safe community). While there is no easy policy answer to solving the issue of rising benefit costs, I've worked collaboratively with staff, Council, and employee unions to understand the issue and explore possible solutions. Ultimately, through honest and transparent discourse on these issues I hope that the City, employees, and citizens can come together to set the City on a solid course for the future. I've worked diligently on this for over ten years, and plan to continue to dedicate myself towards tackling what is obviously a difficult and sensitive problem.*

5. Accountability -- Concretely and specifically, how will you make yourself accountable to the voters who elect you? How can the voters participate in holding you accountable if you are elected?

*I have never and will never accept campaign contributions from special interest groups, nor do I plan on using this office as a stepping stone to fulfill higher political aspirations. I work at the behest of and for the people of Alameda. My door has always been open for people who want to understand the important financial issues in this city, and equally for those who want to debate or critique my findings. Many Alamedans have said that both the Auditor and I have been the eyes the ears and the voice for the people, and I will always act in the best interests of all Alamedans.*

6. 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).

*I'm running a joint campaign with the City Auditor Kevin Kearney, thus far we've raised less than \$5,000, and we anticipate that our grassroots campaign will need less than \$15,000 in total. All of that total will either come from us or from supportive citizens. We are refusing any contributions from any special interests (unions, developers, etc.).*

7. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you thus far?

*Our campaign has just launched, but already we have the endorsement of many prominent members of the community: Eric Cross, Bill Sonneman, Marilyn Appezzato, Bill Schmitz, Bill Leitz, Burney Matthews, Lil Arnerich, Adrienne Chaix-Alexander, Dan Tuazon, and numerous others.*

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

*Finance and accounting are often topics that make people's eyes glaze over, but having a financially healthy City is critical to continuing the services and resources Alamedans expect and deserve. Having a pro-active, apolitical, engaged City Treasurer (and Auditor) who can present unbiased and accurate information to the policy makers is vital to ensuring the City makes sound decisions to preserve the wonderful community we live in. With your support I look forward to continuing to provide honest, accurate, and transparent information to our citizens and our government.*