

QUESTIONNAIRE

GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2016 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com
In the subject line, please include "Oakland City Council" and your district number.
Any written correspondence for the Alameda County Green Party should be addressed to:
2022A Blake Street * Berkeley, CA 94704
Please respond by Saturday, August 27

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Note: You may respond to any question with a link to your website or other posted positions. For the yes/no questions, please answer yes or no and if you wish to add to your answer, feel free to do so.

1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for City office? If you are running against an incumbent, what are your main dis-satisfactions and differences with him or her?

The Oakland City Council At-Large seat is unique in that it represents all of Oakland, not just one district. I am running for this seat because I believe that my strong leadership skills, deep relationships and diverse life experiences, including as a longtime Oakland renter, uniquely position me to deliver more for Oakland: more engagement with constituents, more collaboration on Council governance, more resourcefulness in tapping local, state and federal resources, more imagination and inspiration.

For too long, Oakland has suffered from an unhealthy and unproductive divisiveness on the City Council, and a lack of partnership between the Council and the Mayor. It will take all of us working together to address the core challenges facing our city, and I am proud to bring to the table a record of more than 25 years as a proven consensus builder fighting for social and economic equity in Oakland. I will work collaboratively with my colleagues and the Mayor, and always have an open door to hear the concerns and seek out the best ideas from residents and businesses, renters and homeowners, students and teachers, seniors, activists, labor groups and others.

I am also an out black gay lesbian, which has given me a lifelong awareness of the importance of diversity to our thriving city. Finally, as a longtime renter who has been able to stay in Oakland only thanks to rent control, I know firsthand that our city faces an affordability crisis. We must build more housing inventory, including a mix of market rate and affordable housing. I will promote sensible, sustainable growth that alleviates our housing crisis without displacing longtime Oaklanders. And I will work hard to leverage my local, state, and federal relationships to help identify and access new resources for Oakland.

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?

Community Investment & Jobs: Oakland residents need access to jobs with wages that support their families. Too many Oaklanders have fallen through the cracks of a broken system. I believe that the pathway to community prosperity starts when

individuals have the training, encouragement and support not just to find jobs, but to thrive in them, as well as to open up their own businesses. So many people talk about job training programs, which is great, but we also need to start thinking about how we can all benefit from job *retention* programs.

Affordability and rent-control housing: Oakland faces an affordability crisis. We need more housing inventory, plain and simple, including a mix of market rate and affordable housing. I believe it's not an either/or when it comes to growth and affordability; we can and must find ways to promote sensible, sustainable growth that alleviates our housing crisis without displacing longtime Oaklanders. I will support rent control measures, promote tax breaks for first time homeowners and engage tenants, landlords, residents, labor, business and other stakeholders in the conversation.

Public Safety and Rebuilding Trust: Thriving communities are built on safety and trust. Oakland needs a police department that all residents can believe in. On the City Council, I will forcefully advocate for community policing and the expansion of restorative justice practices that build trust and heal communities citywide. Over the long term, creating safer communities will require that we address systemic issues related to job development, job access, grade-level reading, transportation and college readiness.

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of City. If you are a current City Government elected official, what issues can you point to in your time as an elected official that have had a positive impact?

I am an experienced, effective community organizer with deep ties to Oakland (See Question 1). In addition, I have held leadership roles in several local LGBTQ and African-American organizations, served as senior advisor to Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, and as California Political Director for both of Barack Obama's presidential campaigns. I have led voter mobilization efforts, spearheaded the Mayor's participation in restorative justice circles with Oakland youth, and founded and ran for 10 years Sistahs Steppin' in Pride, a march and festival that was the largest women's event in Oakland.

4. Local groups -- Are you affiliated with any of the active Oakland groups? Such as TOLA, Make Oakland Better Now, Oakland Justice Coalition, Block by Block, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club, GO Public Schools, OCO, or any other. Describe your involvement and why you feel this group is worthy of your support.

I sit on the political campaign board for Go Public Schools. In this role, I review candidates to help GO Public Schools determine which ones to support.

5. Local activities -- Other than local politics, are you involved in any other Oakland based community activities that you would like to share with us? This can range from volunteering in your school to being in your church baseball league.

I attend services at the East Bay Church of Religious Science. I am a member and former president of the East Bay Democratic Stonewall Club.

6. Budget -- If you were on council for the next budget in 2017 how would you act differently from the council members dealing with the budget in 2015? How much additional revenue should the City aim to take in, and how would you generate it?

My lens will always be focused on Oakland's needs as a whole, as opposed to personal agendas and pet

projects.

7. Youth -- Describe the condition of youth in Oakland? What would your priorities for youth be for Oakland government and how would they get implemented and paid for?

My priorities would be to provide a safer, healthier environment for all Oakland youth, and to create opportunities for youth to learn and grow in ways that prepare them for jobs or further education.

I would continue my work participating in restorative justice circles for Oakland youth.

I would establish a citywide youth commission to help orient our policies.

And I would provide opportunities for Oakland youth to gain valuable on-the-job experience by serving as Fellows in my City Council office year round.

8. Police -- How do you think our community policing is going and what are the next steps? Describe the current relationship between the residents and the Oakland Police. Do you suggest any changes? Do you support Restorative Justice programs and how should the city be involved, if at all. What are your thoughts about police misconduct and how do you feel Oakland should deal with it?

As Senior Advisor to Mayor Libby Schaaf, I spearheaded the Mayor's participation in restorative justice circles for Oakland youth. If elected to the City Council, I will work hard to expand the use of restorative justice practices across Oakland. As a general matter, thriving communities are built on safety and trust. Oakland needs a police department that all residents can believe in. On the City Council, I will forcefully advocate for community policing and practices that build trust and heal our communities. Over the long term, creating safer communities will require that we address systemic issues related to job development, job access, grade-level reading, transportation and college readiness.

9. Development Projects -- What are your thoughts and views about the West Oakland Army Base, The upper Broadway-Valdez Triangle, Oak to 9th and other projects?

Oakland is past due for new development projects, but in the process of helping Oakland grow, we need to make sure that all stakeholders have a voice, that we are taking every step possible to find consensus solutions that work for everyone, and that we are preserving our vital social and economic diversity.

10. Housing & Gentrification -- Increasing rents, dislocation, and gentrification have been in the news. What policies do you advocate to assure that Oakland tenants are protected and that Oakland remains an economically and racially diverse city? Do you favor rent control?

As a longtime renter, I favor rent control, the building of new affordable housing, and additional funding for the MAPS mortgage assistance program for first-time homebuyers.

11. Environment -- What do you think the Oakland City government should be doing about the environment?

I support the move to ban coal from going through our port, and I will champion environmental projects such as planting more trees in our communities and creating more green spaces. I also will build on Oakland's cutting edge work to reduce the use of cars and encourage bicycles.

12. Public Banking -- Will you introduce, co-sponsor and/or support an ordinance or charter amendment to create a Public Bank of Oakland, inspired by the Bank of North Dakota [\[1\]](#) (BND), a 100 year old public institution? The Public Bank of Oakland would hold the city's deposits - in contrast to having them held by Wall Street Banks as currently done. It would make fiscally responsible loans in the best

interest of the residents of Oakland - in contrast to Wall Street banks' record of risk and ruin. Profits made by the Public Bank of Oakland would be returned to the General Fund of the City of Oakland, or used to further buttress the loan capabilities of the bank, much as the BND does (the BND has returned over \$400,000,000 to the General Fund of the State of North Dakota over the last 21 years,^[ii] while substantially increasing its capitalization and its loan outreach)

^[i] <https://bnd.nd.gov/>

^[ii] <https://ilsr.org/rule/bank-of-north-dakota-2/>

I am open to public banking and would like to explore this idea further.

13. Local Payday Lenders -- Oakland is awash with for-profit Check Cashing and PayDay Loan emporiums (a simple Google query^[i] shows 20). These outfits provide emergency cash and other financial products to those who cannot obtain it otherwise - at outrageously high interest rates and/or extremely high fees. Professor Mehrsa Baradaran, in her book *How the Other Half Banks*,^[ii] quotes the astounding statistic that those who use these services spend on average over \$2000 per household per year.

It is not widely known but Oakland is home to the only non-profit check cashing and payday lending storefront in the country - Community Check Cashing^[iii] (CCC) in Fruitvale Plaza. It provides the same services for-profit operators do at 33% - 50% of the cost, while paying its employees a living wage. Will you support build-out and capitalization loans by the City of Oakland to expand CCC to other storefronts around Oakland (much as the City Council gave a 50-year, \$3,300,000 interest-free loan to the E 12th St. developers^[iv])?

In the absence of a public banking system, I would promote an education initiative to encourage more people to avoid using payday lenders and instead open bank accounts in traditional banks or credit unions to more effectively manage their money.

^[i] Type 'Oakland Payday lenders' into Google Search and click on the resulting map.

^[ii] [NALC.org](http://nalco.org) "Author makes the case for postal banking" <http://tinyurl.com/h9e6a2p>

Baradaran noted that the average unbanked family with an income of around \$25,000 spends about \$2,400 per year on financial transactions like these, even more than it spends on food.

^[iii] <http://communitycheckcashing.org/>

^[iv] Oakland City Council agenda, June 15th, 2016 <http://tinyurl.com/jzy398p>

14. Satisfaction of Residents -- How do you think the average resident feels about city government? How would you rate the satisfaction level?

I don't think there's any such thing as an average resident. Different communities in Oakland have received varying levels of service, based on a wide range of factors. I do believe that all Oakland residents deserve equal access to city services and functions, and I will work to make our government more accessible and accountable to all residents.

15. Accountability -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Oakland?

I will have an open door to all constituents, and will create an advisory committee across the city with ambassadors in every district.

16. Governance -- What kind of relationship could you have with other office holders? Who do you see as a working majority on council and who can you work with?

For too long, Oakland has suffered from an unhealthy and unproductive divisiveness on the City Council, and a lack of partnership between the Council and the Mayor. It will take all of us working together to address the core challenges facing our city, and I am

proud to bring to the table a record of more than 25 years as a proven consensus builder fighting for social and economic equity in Oakland. I will work collaboratively with my colleagues and the Mayor, and always have an open door to hear the concerns and seek out the best ideas from residents and businesses, renters and homeowners, students and teachers, seniors, activists, labor groups and others.

17. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you? Who are you endorsing, from President all the way down ballot to local races? Include your #2 and 3 choices (if applicable) for your own race and note that this year the City races are Council seats, School Board seats and City Attorney.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf ; East Bay Democratic Stonewall Club ; Gregory L. Brown ; Jim Moore ; James Harris ; Lateefah Simon ; John Protopappas ; Michael Colbruno ; Brendalynn Goodall ; Barbara E. Price ; Karen Friedmann ; Karen Anderson ; Esperanza Pallano ; Ann Dunn ; Steve Snider ; Pastor Charlie Haines

18. 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 will not accept money from anyone whose values conflict with my own.

19. Checks and balances -- How do you view current the relationship between the Council and Mayor? Any comments on the same question for the Auditor and City Attorney? Are there any changes they would propose to the city charter?

See Question 16.

20. Money in elections. -- Does Oakland need campaign finance reform? If so, what kind? Do you support amending the Constitution to end corporate Constitutional rights and getting money out of politics? Have you [Taken the Pledge to Amend](https://movetoamend.org/take-pledge-amend)? (<https://movetoamend.org/take-pledge-amend>)

I think Oakland has a fair, transparent system in place for local elections, with a reasonable cap on both individual contributions and the total amount of money that can be spent in a single campaign.

On a national level, yes, I do believe we need to take action to reduce the influence of money in politics.

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

Yes or No questions (follow with an explanation if you want to add one)

- Do you support raising the minimum wage to a living wage? **Yes**
- Are you in favor of a police commission? **Yes**
- Would you vote for using eminent domain to abate foreclosure crisis? **I'm still evaluating this issue**
- Do you support Ranked Choice Voting? **Yes**
- Would you support Proportional Representation? **I need more clarity on the context for this question.**
- Do you support diverting people from prosecution if they participate in a restorative justice program?
Yes
- Do you support Community Choice Aggregation? **Yes**
- Would you vote to allow more grey water systems? **Yes**

Sincerely,
Greg Jan
Green Party of Alameda County

(Please reply to: GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoo.com by Saturday, August 27)