

**Mark Coplan for Berkeley City Council District 3  
Berkeley Mayor and City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2016**

**1. Motivation -Why did you choose to run for this office?**

Dedicated to my community, I intend to make Berkeley a beautiful place to live, work and visit. I am committed to green, sustainable environments, *access to health care, housing affordability, decent standard of living, clean safe environment and access to quality education from early childhood to college are fundamental* I believe that *public policy should be crafted based on sound research and best practices with social and economic justice as our guide. And I believe that government should be ethically and fiscally responsible, with* strong grassroots advocacy. Our community deserves representation, and I am the most experienced candidate in the race. I plan on working full time, as the Berkeley City Council District 3 Councilperson, to get the job done.

**2. Priorities -What do you believe are the major issues facing your district? The City? What are some specific tasks (e.g. specific legislation, policies, et.) you intend to accomplish while in office?**

We need to

- Build new residential housing and require developers to meet more stringent affordability goals.
- Encourage Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) to help senior citizens
- Maintain rent stabilization and minimize costs for small property owners
- Raise the minimum wage to a living wage
- Identify our open spaces and transform into community gardens

**3. Qualifications - Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for being a City Council-member.**

- 20 years of serving the public schools, from PTA to Public Information Officer
- Vietnam Veteran, U.S. Air Force
- Children attended Berkeley public schools
- Board Member of 5 non-profit boards (serving on 4 as president)
- Homeowner
- Lifetime of Public Service
- Zero Waste champion in ethics and economics, efficiency,

**4. Land Use: What do you think are the most important land use issues facing the city today?**

Developers replacing our green spaces with boxy high-rises.

**The City and the University have different missions: what conflicts/challenges do you foresee on land use policy, and how would you address these?**

The City of Berkeley needs to demand a greater contribution from the university to offset more of the impact that they have on city resources. They also need to negotiate the impact that 10,000 additional students will have on the community, available housing stock, the infrastructure and the environment.

**What should happen to People's Park?**

People's Park has a rich history, from the beginning of a movement in the 60's that took over the space to create a free zone for free speech, to many unsuccessful attempts by the university over the years to reclaim the space for student housing. Currently the park is occupied by a homeless population who sleep there at night, and hang out during the day. This has come with many problems, including open drug use and sales and alleged criminal activity. Given the inability to manage the park or any of the activity, and the current crisis of homelessness in our community, we need an out of the box solution. A solution that I would support is to use half of the site to develop housing for the homeless population, with a drug rehab, mental health services and job training component that the residents would have to successfully participate in in order to qualify for transitional housing. I would propose this site for the Tiny Homes pilot project to see how feasible the idea is before building a homeless transitional dormitory.

**5. Automobiles - What policies should the city take to reduce automobile use and make the city friendlier to pedestrians and other non-automobile transportation? Should the city promote electric car use, and what policy and infrastructure changes would you support, if any?**

To minimize pollution, maximize energy efficiency and reduce our carbon footprint, we should advocate for a transportation policy that emphasizes mass transit and alternatives to using our automobiles. The massive subsidies currently being given to the auto and fossil fuel industries should be curtailed. We need to prioritize better city planning, greenspaces, and pedestrian-friendly streets. Gas-guzzler vehicles should have a much higher annual tax and registration fees, and we should insist on the state and federal government taxing them more to repair our streets and infrastructure. All city vehicles and AC Transit buses should be electric, with solar stations powering them.

**6. Safety - What are the most important public safety issues facing the residents of Berkeley? What kinds of programs are useful for creating a safe environment for all people?**

Gun violence, Care for the mentally ill, earthquake/emergency preparedness, homelessness, and not having enough police and fire services. A solution to two of these issues would be to increase the mental health crisis teams by up to 30 so that they could deal with situations currently being managed by the police department, often with negative results. This would free up BPD to focus on public safety. This could be funded by billing Medicare and insurance companies for the mental health services provided, while more effectively attending to the needs of this population.

**7. Affordable housing- What is your position on building market-rate housing versus affordable housing? Does building mostly market-rate help or hinder affordability in Berkeley? What affirmative steps would you take to increase the availability of new or refurbished affordable housing in Berkeley? Are there any particular demographics that you would target for this housing? Are there any particular neighborhoods that you would target for this housing?**

Renter's rights, increase affordable housing, strengthen and enforce fair housing laws, remove restrictions on creating PDU's, creating small businesses/retirement cushions for seniors and others.

**8. Rent Control- How important is it to keep Berkeley's form of strong rent control and eviction protections? How important is keeping an elected rent board? What is your position on the effects of Costa-Hawkins on the affordability of Berkeley units? Is it an overall good or an overall bad law, looking back over the 20 years since it was passed? What can or should be done to roll back the massive rent increases new tenants face because of vacancy decontrol?**

We need to repeal the Costa Hawkins Act because it is having a major impact on an already difficult situation where gentrification is moving people out of their homes in record numbers. We need to place a moratorium on the dislocation of Berkeley renters and we need to tighten up the parameters of the current rent control system. We need to insure the protection of the renters. I also believe we need to make provisions to encourage property owners to properly maintain the properties.

**9. Homelessness- Berkeley Greens agree with, but don't necessarily believe, the Democratic Party Platform where it states, "we will fight for robust funding to end homelessness in our cities and counties once and for all, through targeted investments to provide the necessary outreach, social services, and housing options for all populations experiencing homelessness." What do you think can and should be done about the "Homeless problem" here in Berkeley?**

While we need to expand community-based services for the homeless and make them more readily available in the short term, we need to change our mindset from looking for ways to accommodate homelessness when we should be looking for ways to eliminate it.

We need to repeal all laws that criminalize any facet of homelessness or helping the homeless.

We don't have adequate open space, shelter and sleeping areas for the homeless, so we need to abolish anti-sleeping laws, and we need to allow the homeless to take part in decisions about long- and short-term solutions to the problem.

**10. Food Policy- What policies would you support to re-localize our food system? Do you support labeling of GMO foods, similar to Vermont's law?**

I do support the labeling of GMO products as well as any other legislation we can move forward to make organics more accessible and encourage more local farm to table opportunities.

**11. Should the City Council take positions on national and international issues?**

I think that we should take positions on national and international issues where we are adding our voice with others in situations where we can actually influence outcome, without taking away from our local responsibilities as a Council

When it concerns environmental and social justice, yes.

**12. The trend in recent years has been for state and local law-enforcement agencies to procure military-grade weapons as well as high-tech surveillance equipment (drones, among others), and to adopt military-style tactics and training. This is generally but not exclusively under the aegis of Urban Shield. What do you think the Berkeley Police Department's and City's stance should be on this issue, as well as what you think the City's policy and practices should be? What would you do or not do as an elected official?**

The distribution of military grade equipment is directly related to the overspending of the military budget in Washington, and our elected officials reluctance to cut back on government contracts that serve the industries in their home states. While these units have been proven effective in isolated hostage and other extended tense situations, their use in Ferguson and other demonstrations around the country have caused

alarm about military-style solutions used to control free speech. They are a hard sell in a community concerned with anything that looks military.

**13. Do you support The Movement for Black Lives Platform?**

Yes. My niece is a national organizer for Black Lives Matter, and I have been actively supporting the movement. I am concerned with attempts in many parts of the country to criminalize or label this as a terrorist movement.

**14. What specifically will do you think Berkeley needs to do locally to fight climate change? To make Berkeley a zero carbon city?**

I support Berkeley's Climate Action Plan, and believe that our community is an industry leader. I also believe that the situation is critical.

I would like to modernize the Transfer Station and broaden our level of recycling. I know that responsible recycling may be costly, but this is part of our climate solution. Too many presumably recyclable items become trash by default in our current process. Zero Waste

Integrating urban agriculture into our economic and ecological system involves the use of residents, organic waste/compost, urban wastewater for irrigation, consumers, and has a direct impact on urban ecology and our food system. Strategies include taking inventory of our city's lands and securing long-term use of land; forming partnerships with residents and organizations for tools, collaboration, resources and donations; amending ordinances to allow more urban agricultural areas; cultivating market access; and, using more our city's rich composted waste.

**15. What are your positions on the any or all of the eleven Berkeley Ballot Measures? Specifically, what is your position on the competing ballot measures on both the minimum wage and on increasing the business license tax on rental properties?**

**Measure T1** - Infrastructure and Facilities Bond - Yes

**Measure U1** - Rental Unit Business License Tax - City Sponsored - Yes

**Measure V1** - GANN Appropriation Limit - Yes

**Measure W1** - Citizens Redistricting Commission - Yes

**Measure X1** - Public Campaign Financing - Yes

**Measure Y1** - Youth Voting - Yes

**Measure Z1** - Low Income Housing Authorization - Yes

**Measure AA** - Rent Board Ordinance - Undecided

**Measure BB** - Minimum Wage - City Sponsored - I support the consensus legislation passed by the City Council today, which replaces both of these

**Measure CC** - Minimum Wage - Initiative - N/A

**Measure DD** - Rental Unit Business License Tax - Initiative - No

**Measure E1** - Berkeley Public Schools Educational Excellence Act of 2016 - Yes

**16. Are there particular statewide initiatives you support? Proposition 59, if passed, would commit California officials to overturning the Citizens United case and getting money out of politics. Will you take the following pledge: "I support amending the U.S. Constitution to make clear that corporations and other artificial entities do not have Constitutional rights and that money is not speech and campaign spending should be limited through regulation."?**

Yes. I support Proposition 59.

**17. Endorsements :**

**a. Who are you endorsing, from President all the way down ballot to local races?**

President: Hilary Clinton  
Senator Kamala D. Harris or Loretta L. Sanchez ?  
California State Senator – District 9 ... Nancy Skinner  
U.S. House of Representatives – District 13 ... Barbara Lee  
California State Assembly – District 15... Tony Thurmond  
Mayor

**b. Are you endorsing anyone else in your own race, considering that we have instant run off voting?**

I am exploring this with one of the other candidates.

**c. Who has endorsed you?**

I entered this race in February only to be told by the political insiders that the two candidates running had already sewed up the

support of the Berkeley political machine. I have met with most of the local elected officials, and with rank choice voting, many of them indicated a possible late second endorsement. Since then, talking to the voters has convinced me that these endorsements were potentially toxic and might cost me as many votes as they would bring. I have decided that I want an endorsement list of community leaders and a neighbor from every block. I have collected many of these, and this is a short list of those endorsements:

- Thelette Bennett (Berkeley High Vice Principal, Retired)
- Pamela Doolan (Former School Board President)
- Lisa Bullwinkel (HOPLA CEO, Another Bullwinkel Show)
- Rosemary Ritchie (Owner, Benvenue Children's House)
- Wanda Stuart (Community Organizer, Garden Educator)
- Carolyn Scarr (Community Organizer)
- Jacki Fox Ruby (Former president, Berkeley Federation of Teachers/ Alameda County school board member, retired)
- Daryl Bartlow (Deputy Probation Officer, Retired)
- Salvador Murillo (Berkeley Latino Community Leader/Organizer)
- The Reverend Dr. Robert McKnight (Retired Chair, BHS African American Studies Department)

**d. Who do you expect to endorse you?**

I continue to collect community and neighborhood endorsements.

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

I am a lifetime public servant, not a career politician, and am seeking this office for the sole purpose of serving my neighbors for the next eight years. I have no intention of seeking higher office.

During dinnertime conversations at our home, because my wife is a lifelong Green Party member, are highly spirited. It is apparent that the Democrats and Green Party tenets parallel and fuse along activism, socioeconomic justice and ecological wisdom.

Thank you!