

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?

I'm running because we need to renew our relationship with government. For decades, Oakland progressives have been "speaking truth to power". Oakland needs to be reminded that we are the power. Government is supposed to be a tool that we the people use together, to improve all of our lives. Our whole relationship to government needs to be completely renewed. That relationship determines how we police, the kind of jobs available and whether our fellow citizens have to continue to sleep in tents. Unfortunately a base problem Oakland has right now is that corrupt politics and petty squabbles are getting in the way of progress. It's the job of the at-large position is to make sure there is open communication between the council members and that they each are shown the collegial respect they deserve. For far too long we have accepted a standard of conduct beneath the dignity the position we are representing. I will hold myself to a high ethical standard and will hold my peers to the same standard. This is a team job and it demands someone who doesn't need to take credit and will actually forgo it if it means getting the important work done. Government is supposed to be a tool that we use together, to improve all of our lives.

I have been privileged to live in many parts of Oakland. Downtown, Montclair, Fruitvale, West Oakland, San Antonio, and North Gate. My experiences have helped illuminate to me just how bad it is for so many. I've always been a renter and I know what it's like to live under the whims of a unscrupulous landlord. What it's like to not have rent, or to choose between paying a parking ticket, PG&E or food. As a child I experienced bullying, and my campaign chair and I were victims of an armed home invasion. I've spent most of my adult life in the building trades and know what it means to blister your hands or breathe in too much sheet rock dust. These experiences help me to have a glimpse into others dehumanization. They do not overcome my privileged position in this society, but hopefully shape my perspective and help in building empathetic policy. Most of my education and moral direction came from my family and our deep connection with the Catholic faith and its teachings around Liberation Theology, and a deferential preference to the poor. I'm inspired by Pope Francis, and his teachings around poverty. It informs how my love and support for my fellow neighbors whether they can afford a tent or a house. I am proud that my nomination papers included signatures from all sorts folk including the so called "homeless".

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?

We need a 10k plan of truly affordable housing. The city must leverage its land and holdings to make this happen. Rent increase moratoriums are necessary but miss the point a bit. Our rents as they stand are too high to be sustainable, and suck all of the wealth out of the city. I think it is important to recognize the issue isn't where the money comes from, but that money is coming from outside our local economy and overwhelms it. The people of Oakland deserve better than big money (wherever it come from) playing Monopoly with our whole city.

I propose a municipal bank where our city deposits can finance local initiatives, instead of whatever Wells Fargo invests in. We could refinance our citizens home and business loans and liberate the working poor from check cashing scams.

We need to employ ideas such as restorative justice, robust mental health services, safe accessible outlets for youth to gather, policing reform, secure homes, harm reduction, job skills training, youth problem solving workshops and PTSD help. In addition, when considering our formerly incarcerated citizens, we must celebrate the return of our family members back into the fold. The only hope for any of us that we are not solely identified with our worst day and that it is possible to do the work towards making amends. Restorative justice is the key, not prison, parole and probation. When people return from prison I would love to have similar ceremonies as when people get their naturalized citizenship. There needs to be jobs and homes ready for them when they return after paying their debts. State sanctioned killing such as the death penalty is thoroughly immoral, but keeping our brothers and sisters alienated from their own citizenship is its own kind of death.

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 was a campaign coordinator for Gov. Jerry Brown's first mayoral campaign and Strong Mayor charter initiative. I gathered more signatures than any Oaklander for that initiative as well. Ran campaign headquarters and GOTV for BART Board member Tom Radulovich's SF Supervisor run. I was integral in getting California's Renewable Portfolio Standard passed. Through one to one conversations I generated over 700 hand written letters from constituents in Republican Orange County. Those letters stopped a committee block and allowed California to be the first in the world with a RPS and a beacon the world copied. I ran GOTV for the East Bay Regional Parks for a parcel tax and second in charge of the Just Cause campaign. In 2008 I was hired by CALDEM to run Oakland's campaign headquarters as well as it's GOTV. I have personally volunteered for Lee, Bonta, Swanson and Chan. For over six years I have served on the Cannabis Regulatory Commission, and was recently reelected chairperson for a second term. For the last two years we have rewritten all of Oakland's cannabis ordinances with the desire bring that whole community, with equity in mind, out into the light with legal safe jobs. Our commission has written a police information bulletin and set practices of harm reduction including complaint based enforcement of cannabis ordinances and nuisance letters instead of armed raids.

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.

Just Cause, OAKDECC, the Democratic Party, Oaklanders First, Vulcan Free Radio, EBALDC, Spaz Collective, 15th street Artists, Art Murmor, and Space Cat Voter Guide.

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 am thoroughly involved with the art scene and invest a great deal of love and energy to it. I have helped throw hundreds of events in Oakland over the last 20 years.

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?

It would need a long term plan to ultimately move spending on policing towards life enrichment.

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?

Two youth were killed and one sent to the hospital across the street of my campaign headquarters on the night of our kick off. I am working on getting professional help for grief counseling for the many youth affected. Our children live in a world of PTSD that is hard to imagine.

The municipal bank would help greatly in funding.

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?

Reform is taking to long. Community policing is essential, but we need to stop policing our selves out of and into trouble. Life enrichment for everyone must be the goal. I support the ballot measure. We still need to fix the arbitration problem, and I will fight to change the next police contract to drop arbitration when prosecuting civil rights violations. The city must insure recommendations of the Stanford study (SPARQ) on OPD be followed to the letter. We need to reform the whole way we are policed and punished. Restorative justice is the filter we need to look through. Our drug policies must be in the mold of harm reduction, not police action. We must stop all broken window strategies, except when it means helping a kid to fix a window they broke.

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?

These projects are mixed at best. We need development that does a few things at once. They need to solve current problems and be designed in way that will make us glad they are here 30-40 years down the road. I would rather have these projects broken up into more discreet parts. There would be less of cookie cutter subdivision vibe to Oak to 9th, and smaller spaces for local commercial business in the B-VT area. The Army Base could have been a nexus for all sorts of things, unfortunately it was decided to be only for port operations.

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?

I favor rent control. I worked 12 hour days to get Just Cause passed, and have personally been responsible for building out housing for artists and activists in intentional communities for years.

The municipal bank could refinance home loans and also fund truly affordable housing stock.

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

A moral and just ecology must be the guide for every policy decision. Environmental justice is social justice. When we loose track of that, we lose our moral compass and go down many the wrong path.

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[i] (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 love municipal banking and it is center to my campaign. I'm very glad to see this question.

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])?

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

[ii] NALC.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>

Criminality is bad. Institutionalized criminality is exponentially worse. We need to clean house of all the exploiters. I support CCC and also think the municipal bank is a solution.

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

The council, like the police, must be held to a higher standard. Otherwise good people get alienated from joining the job of fixing Oakland. They want nothing to do with city hall, they perceive that the game is rigged. Unfortunately often it's true. Just look at how many candidates accepted laundered campaign contributions from the last Mayoral race. Not one candidate was held accountable.

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

Accountability and transparency is the key. The people want and deserve leaders who they trust are telling the truth and ones whom they can easily communicate with. My door at city hall will always be open. Also, I live at 2331 Telegraph Ave. above the Saigon Market. Anyone that doesn't want to go to city hall can drop me a line there.

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?

I have worked with all of the city council members as Chair of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission. I also have good relationships with all the candidates running for the at large seat.

I think creating working majorities is possible and we have an opportunity to create some of the most progressive policies in Oakland for a long while. If ever. What's needed is recognition of shared goals, and discreet policies to address them, citywide.

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.

Space Cat Voter Guide
The cannabis community
Robert A. Raich, attorney
Max Allstadt
Trevor, leader of the East Bay Rats
Chris Davis, owner of Lois the Pie Queen
Mo, owner of Telegraph Quality Market

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).

Through years of street level work I have been blessed to have a large network of friends and compatriots. My time on the Cannabis Regulatory Commission, has also been fruitful, and many are grateful for the leadership of our commission fighting to make sure people aren't left out of the so called "green rush". Our campaign strategy employs methods to direct cash to empowering our supporters instead of the typical campaign that's solely mailers, phone banking and canvassing. We are being consulted by Uprise Campaigns (uprise.org). It's a strategy that's reduces the power of money in politics. They are helping us, the Zephyr Teachout campaign and two other congressional campaigns. We believe that transparency in campaign finance is a key to reintegrating our fellow citizens into the political process and knowing who butter who's bread.

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?

Checks and balances are integral to a healthy democracy. That is why I worked to change Oakland charter to a "strong mayor". But, we must recognize that the relationship between the executive and legislative branches determines wether we get the city we need or more petty turf

battles. I'm open to possible charter changes if they are determined to be building more small "d" democracy.

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>)

Yes. Oakland needs campaign finance reform badly. Money is the root of all evil. It is most clearly evident in politics. Quid pro quo isn't the only effect. The appearance of corruption is enough. It alienates us and turns us from true lovers of justice and progress and creates cynical insular citizens instead. What ever it takes to fix this, I support it.

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

Wetland restoration and a healthy Delta will mitigate some effects of climate change, but we need to recognize when spending millions on a waterfront developments whether housing or a stadium, the water is rising.

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. \$15 approaches sustenance. We must do much better.

Are you in favor of a police commission?

Yes

Would you vote for using eminent domain to abate foreclosure crisis?

Must definitely. We also need probate court reform to protect the wealth and homes of Oaklander's.

Do you support Ranked Choice Voting?

Yes. I wish we could do away with the electoral college and have ranked choice for president!!

Would you support Proportional Representation?

Yes I support transition to a parliamentary system.

Do you support diverting people from prosecution if they participate in a restorative justice program?

Restorative justice is integral if our communities are to heal.

Do you support Community Choice Aggregation?

Yes. I also would like to move away from PG&E and towards municipal power.

Would you vote to allow more grey water systems?

Yes. I've installed a few over the years myself.