

GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY

Note: due August 27th  
Berkeley Mayor and City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2016

Dear Candidate,

Your response to this questionnaire will help inform our endorsement process, and will be posted to our website. We realize that time is short, and that you may not have the time to answer everything, or some questions as completely as you might like. Please understand that we appreciate your participation in our process, to whatever degree you feel capable.

If you have any questions, and to return your questionnaire, please contact us at: [Questionnaire@soffer.us](mailto:Questionnaire@soffer.us) Please return your questionnaire as soon as possible. To ensure that your responses can be fully considered in making our endorsement and for the voter guide write-up, we need to receive your questionnaire by August 27. We will accept your questionnaire any time after that as well, and post it to our website.

Also, PLEASE REPLY BACK NOW to this e-mail (to: [gpac-voterguide@yahoogroups.com](mailto:gpac-voterguide@yahoogroups.com) ), so so we know that you have received this message!

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

**I was asked to run for City Council by several leading progressive activists in Berkeley. As a Berkeley resident, I have been tremendously invested in my neighborhood and in social and environmental justice issues in the Bay Area and beyond. Because progressive policy making in Berkeley often influences state and national policies, we have a unique responsibility to be on the cutting edge of protecting and preserving progressive values and social and environmental justice. I love Berkeley and I want to help it become the progressive place we dream about being.**

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?

**My priorities are police accountability, housing as a human right, a livable wage, the right to self-determination, protected parks and waterways, fully funded, quality education from preschool through college, and corporate and government accountability. Each of these priorities are driven by my deep commitment to fighting for racial equity, freedom from economic oppression and ethical leadership. If our city is to be a thriving, healthy place for everyone, we must face these challenges.**

**We need to declare a housing emergency, implement a moratorium on Rent Hike Evictions, and require landlords who own housing stock that has been vacant for more than 6 months to reduce the rents and receive a tax credit for the difference to make truly affordable workforce and housing for all.**

**We also need to implement the plan to shore up Aquatic Park and act immediately to make the waterfront protected land that can be used for the good of the people and wildlife in Berkeley and not for profit.**

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

**I have a history as a grassroots organizer who has participated in and helped make coalitions that have removed corrupt and ineffective police chiefs from office in both San Francisco and Oakland.**

**My focus of the last many years has been systems analysis and capacity building and I am excited at the opportunity to look at how to most effectively build and continue coalitions to make a Berkeley we can believe in.**

4. Land Use: What do you think are the most important land use issues facing the city today? The City and the University have different missions: what conflicts/challenges do you foresee on land use policy, and how would you address these? What should happen to People's Park?

**it is imperative that we stop looking at Berkeley through the lenses of development and corridors and start looking at it as a city of people and neighborhoods. We need to build smart, effective infill housing and make the land communally owned and the residents the managers and owners of their dwellings.**

**We need to implement the San Pablo plan, build up North Berkeley bart into live/work units, and make a small business resource center that gives coaching and micro loans to small businesses, with special consideration for worker-owned cooperatives.**

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?

**I support electric car use and the phasing out of gas vehicles through incentivizing alternative forms of transportation. We need to have more effective public transportation systems, including local shuttles.**

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?

**The biggest crisis in Berkeley currently is the housing crisis, which is a major public health crisis according to such organizations as the Do No Harm coalition. We need to reduce the police budget and fund city services that help reduce and prevent homelessness. We need to have a living wage that increases access for all people to a decent standard of living. And we need to stop criminalizing mental illness.**

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?

**We have a dangerous lack of affordable housing which contributes to the increasing number of people living outdoors. I am in favor of a moratorium on luxury development and a push for 1:1 market rate to truly affordable units building. I support infill development as long as it respects the character of the city and provides for the environmental impact of new residents.**

**I support the Affordable Housing Platform developed by the Berkeley Progressive Alliance, and believe it is important to strengthen the Housing Trust Fund to pay for more affordable housing in Berkeley. Increasing developer impact fees, Housing Impact fees, allocating property transfer tax funds, and increasing business license taxes on large landlords would help revitalize the Housing Trust Fund and provide more affordable housing units.**

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 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa-Hawkins\\_Rental\\_Housing\\_Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa-Hawkins_Rental_Housing_Act)) 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 stronger rent control protections. To effect those protections, the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act should be overturned as it blocks Berkeley from effectively reforming its rent control policies, exempts a large number of Berkeley properties from rent control regulations. This law has severely hampered the ability of Berkeley tenants to remain in the city as market forces create unhealthy demand for high price rentals.**

**I am a strong advocate of a rent stabilization board that protects tenants from predatory landlords and greedy developers. I stand with the Berkeley Tenants Union in the effort to empower and educate tenants to preserve their right to stable, quality housing.**

**It is important that short term rentals must be regulated and taxed to prevent landlords and renters from turning Berkeley neighborhoods and communities into vacation rentals. Since 2003, limits have been placed on short term rentals in Berkeley - unfortunately, those limits are not being enforced. Without a commitment to accountability and enforcement, landlords and renters will continue to exploit the market and damage the social fabric of the city.**

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?

**See #7 above**

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 strongly support labeling of GMO foods. My practice is to feed my own children primarily locally grown organic produce. I support urban farms, food sharing, and alternative economies. I stand with the Ecology Center and other organizations that work to make sure that all people have access to food grown to the highest ethical standards and level of transparency in farming and engineering methods.**

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

**We are not isolated; what happens in the world is relevant to what happens in Berkeley. For instance military grade equipment used in Afghanistan and Israel and Iran is then sold to local police departments, who then use that equipment to oppress and sometimes kill local citizens and residents. However I am against taking a stand without research and thoughtful consideration, and I am ultimately of the belief that one must Think Globally and Act Locally.**

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 relationship between the Berkeley Police Department and Berkeley citizens has been severely damaged by the actions and policies of the BPD. To effectively build a bridge between the BPD and the citizens of Berkeley, the BPD must clearly demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability. I support the Movement for Black Lives platform with regard to policing, in particular the need to establish a civilian oversight agency with the following abilities:**

- **To hire and fire officers**
- **To determine disciplinary action in cases of misconduct related to excessive and lethal force**
- **To determine the funding of agencies**
- **To set and enforce policies**
- **To retain concrete means of retrieving information - such as subpoena power - from law enforcement and third parties as it pertains to to circumstances involving excessive, sexual, and lethal force, and other areas of police misconduct**

**The BPD and the Berkeley Police Association's continual focus on military and compliance based equipment and resources overlooks valuable avenues to a true commitment to public service and safety for the people of Berkeley. Communities are made safer through adequate housing, meaningful employment with a livable wage, childcare, high-quality and culturally relevant education, and robust and comprehensive mental health and community programs - NOT investment in armored vehicles, police dogs, tasers, and access to police helicopters, as are sought by the BPD/BPA.**

**Additionally, the BPD itself must dedicate resources to ensuring transparency. Engaging with the public in open and honest dialogue about problems the community/BPD has identified and proposed solutions will not only bring the BPD closer to a solution that reflects the will of the community it serves, it will demonstrate a commitment to open channels of communication.**

**Finally, the BPD must end the practice of state-sanctioned violence against Black, Brown and Poor people. The BPD must hold officers accountable for committing or supporting/concealing violence, and the BPD must promote policies that do not allow for racist officers or practices within the BPD. To do this, the Public Safety Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights must be amended to reflect a commitment to the above.**

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

**I support and am involved in the Movement for Black Lives. Racial equity will not be achieved without an honest and open conversation about race-based discrimination that leads to tangible steps to combat the problem. If Berkeley wants to be truly diverse, it must invest in diversity. I will work confront the problem of racial inequity in Berkeley, starting with an open dialogue with impacted community members to gain insight on the problem and input as to a solution.**

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

**I strongly support the Berkeley plan and will continue to support and be inspired by the work of such organizations as Urban Ore and Stopwaste.**

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?

**We should increase the minimum wage and vote for the Citizens measure to do so. And we should increase the business license tax on rental properties.**

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!**

17. Endorsements :

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

**Jill Stein is my current choice for President. Barbara Lee. Lateefah Simon. The Progressive Slate in Berkeley.**

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

**I believe that people should consider a vote for Cheryl Davila**

c. Who has endorsed you?

**Elected Officials**

**Gus Newport**

**Former Mayor of Berkeley**

**Katherine Harr**

**City of Berkeley Rent Board Commissioner**

**Max Anderson**

**Berkeley City Council, District 3**

**Anna De Leon**

**Former Berkeley School Board Member**

**Patrick Sheahan**  
**Former Planning Commissioner**

**John T. Selawsky**  
**Rent Board Commissioner**

**Sharon Maldonado**  
**Former Rent Board Commissioner**

**Pamela Webster**  
**Former Rent Board Commissioner**  
**Organizations**  
**Berkeley Progressive Alliance**  
**Berkeley Citizens Action**  
**Berkeley Tenants Union**  
**Individuals**  
**(organizations for identification purposes only)**

**Rev. Michael McBride, The Way Christian Center**  
**Rev. Ben McBride, Oakland Leadership Center**  
**Cat Brooks, Anti Police-Terror Project**  
**W. Kamau Bell, ACLU Celebrity Ambassador for Racial Justice**  
**Margot Smith, Activist, Gray Panther**  
**Rev. Debra Avery, Oakland Alliance/First Presbyterian Church of Oakland**  
**Donald Goldmacher, Filmmaker**  
**Christina 'Krea' Gomez, Dean, North Oakland Community Charter School**  
**Elizabeth Lisle, Managing Director, Shotgun Players**  
**Maria Moore, Justice for Kayla Moore**  
**Edwin Lindo, Lawyer, Activist (Frico5 Hunger Strikers)**  
**Holly Harwood, Activist**  
**Fred Dodsworth, Candidate, District 5, Berkeley City Council**  
**Phoebe Sorgen, Singer, Chair Emerita BFUU Social Justice Committee**  
**Mike Berkowitz, Former Aid to Maudelle Shirek**  
**Mel Martynn, Retired Teacher, Berkeley Unified School District**  
**Moni T. Law, J.D., Founding Member, Berkeley Progressive Alliance**  
**Ann Temple, Building Inspector (City of Oakland, ret. SEIU)**  
**Andrew Jamieson, Chief Technical Officer, Giotrans**  
**Claudia Praglin, Nurse Practitioner**  
**Akiva Anders, Director, Kika's House Family Daycare; Dancer, Aquarela Brazilian Dance**  
**Maria Kovacs, Mis Amigos Spanish Camp Founder; Children's Community Center (CCC)**  
**Preschool Board**  
**Margaret Lanier, Bus Driver (BUSD, ret.)**  
**Linda Franklin, WIC Program Director (Alameda County, ret.), Community Health**

**Commissioner (former chair)**  
**Linda Olivenbaum, Early Childhood Educator**

d. Who do you expect to endorse you?

**Wellstone Democratic Club and also hoping for Green Party endorsement as well as local Bernie clubs**

18. Anything Else? Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? **I am honored to be considered for your endorsement.**

Thank you!