

Alameda County Greens

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Current occupation: Transportation Planner

1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for this seat? What personal attribute makes you best suited for the position?

After serving on multiple boards, commissions and task forces in Alameda over the past 16 years, I have shown that I am effective at bringing people together to discuss tough issues, broadening the voices of those who engage in our city processes and conversations, while also making sure that decisions are made and actions taken on them. These are qualities that are needed on our council. We are an extremely diverse community and yet that is not well reflected in our civic sphere. I'm committed to working hard to change that and have a history that backs that up with action.

2. 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?

Despite the fact that the city budget's structural deficit has been a point of discussion for over a decade, no long-term strategic planning has occurred to identify how the City will address it. One of my top priorities is to develop and have accepted by Council a long-term strategic financial plan for Alameda.

Additionally, the City will soon be working on its General Plan Housing Element update. This is a renewed opportunity to look at Alameda's role in addressing housing affordability issues and identifying a plan for doing so from a comprehensive perspective. This process needs to better engage the community in the issues around housing, state law requirements and what solutions are viable and which housing needs they will meet.

Lastly, the City Council has become a dysfunctional body, losing sight of the processes it has in place for building trust with our community, running efficient and effective meetings, ensuring meaningful community engagement, and moving the results of that engagement forward. If elected, I will work to ensure that City staff puts in place best practice policy and practices for public engagement and outreach and that before items come to the council for consideration, the practices are followed.

3. Housing affordability - What *further* measures can Alameda take to provide more affordable units?

Housing solutions are complex. Alameda will need to identify how it can accommodate future state requirements for housing, but these are extremely long-term solutions. On the Planning Board, I advocated for the City to begin a process of looking at funding for building more affordable housing in Alameda. Areas for exploration would include land-value taxes, vacancy taxes and a local housing bond. I also think that we should look at regulating short-term vacation stays (like Air BnB).

4. Open Space -- Alameda has opportunities for improving public recreation and open spaces. What are your priorities?

On the Planning Board, I led the charge to protect existing public access to the city's waterfront. Along Fernside, when private property owners illegally annexed public waterfront property for their private use, I helped organize the community in support of ensuring public access, against the initial position of city staff and a majority of the city council. I have worked to ensure that new developments have increased the range of public recreation and open space opportunities in Alameda and that funding for their ongoing operations is available. At Alameda Point, I fought early development plans that looked to limit public water access with golf courses and convention centers and have supported non-motorized spaces for walking, biking and just plain enjoying open space without safety and noise issues from nearby roadways.

5. Transportation -- Do you have any specific priorities to increase public transportation and reduce traffic in the city?

Yes. My position is "we have to do better." As a council member, I will work quickly and diligently to have a near-term transit plan developed. The Transportation Choices Plan identifies some potential routes, but we need our regional transit partners to adopt a transit plan for Alameda so that we can get to work on funding them.

We know that 78% of people commuting from Alameda to the inner East Bay, including Oakland, are driving by themselves. This short commute is one where walking and bicycling are a viable option. Couple this with the fact that Oakland's surface parking lots are being redeveloped into housing and office buildings, trips to downtown Oakland and the inner East Bay are the lowest hanging fruit for removing vehicles from the bridges and tubes and mitigating the traffic impacts of future development. Additionally, while well over 80% of people commuting to San Francisco from Alameda are using transit, most use BART and access these stations via a personal vehicle. This is a second group of cross-estuary commuter who would be provided a new choice for getting out of the traffic.

We need better, safer options to getting to downtown Oakland and BART and this will be a strong priority for me.

6. Climate adaptation -- The city is about to update its climate action plan. What local climate change adaptation should the city be pursuing now and what funding strategies would you advocate?

First and foremost, the City needs to identify how to better engage in regional and state climate adaptation conversations. As the only island (and peninsula) city in the Bay Area and one of the few in the state, we must be at the table.

I have been a strong advocate for planning for climate adaptation. I believe that wetlands and other natural protections should be our go-to solutions, but that existing development, including the Army Corps Oakland-Alameda Estuary, may make seawalls a more appropriate solution in some areas. Rather than identify specific solutions before the City has properly identified the areas of greatest concerns and potential options, I continue to support a robust planning process for Climate Adaptation that starts with a well-studied conditions report, expert-driven solutions development and public engagement about which solutions will allow the city to continue to be protected and vibrant for centuries to come.

7. Income inequality -- What do you propose the city could do to lessen the income gap in the city, including in city government?

I fully support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour ahead of the state's raise. I believe that our city conversation should revolve around whether or not we want to have that continue to go up, ahead of the State's requirements, in recognition that Bay Area living costs are significantly higher than much of the state.

We also need to be looking at how to reduce housing and transportation costs, so that no matter what the income gap is, those at the lower end of the range are impacted much less. Our housing and planning policies, in the City and the region, have exacerbated this over the last few decades.

As part of the long-term fiscal sustainability plan mentioned above, we need to be working with our labor partners in good faith to address issues around income issues to ensure that City employees are compensated fairly for the hard work they do.

8. Electoral Reform -- Currently, Alameda uses a plurality system of voting in which a mayoral candidate could win with as little as a third of the vote. Would you support moving to a ranked-choice voting system for Alameda's mayoral race? Explain your reasoning.

Yes. But we also need to find a way to fully implement it. The current method in Alameda County results in many voters being left out of the final decision. The County's voting technology makes it difficult to allow for full ranked-choice, by limiting voters to only three choices regardless of the number of candidates. This ends up leaving voters out of the final result when their third choice is eliminated from the vote and others remain. This is something that ranked-choice was supposed to solve.

9. Viability -- Please name your major endorsements so far and how you plan to win. Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept, if any.

I have been endorsed by the City of Alameda Democratic Club, the Alameda County Labor Council, the Building and Trades Council of Alameda County and Bohol Circle (one of the oldest Filipino American organizations in the country).

Elected official endorsements include:

Hon. Rob Bonta, California Assembly Member, District 18
Alice Lai-Bitker, Former Alameda County Supervisor
Marie Gilmore, Former Mayor of Alameda
Gray Harris, President, Alameda Board of Education
William Schaff, Former President, Alameda Board of Education
Margie Sherratt, Former President, Board of Education
Ron Mooney, Former President, Board of Education
David Forbes, Former President, Board of Education
Philip Hu, Former Board of Education member
Robert Raburn, BART Director and Board President
Rebecca Saltzman, BART Director
Elsa Ortiz, AC Transit Director
Chris Peeples, AC Transit Director
Doug Linney, East Bay Municipal Utilities District Director
Mike McMahan, Former School Board Member
Jordan Battani, Former Alameda Hospital Board Member

Funding: I am not accepting donations from developers and I will recuse myself from any votes on financial contracts if I have received over \$500 from an organization or individual. Additionally, I will not loan my campaign money and then pay it back after the election with donations (a way that some campaigns hide their funding).

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

I have been a dedicated public servant for over 16 years in Alameda. I am committed to an open government that serves everyone and looks to include and support those who have less historical access to decision-making. I have a strong track record of successfully working to do this. I am a lapsed Green and now a registered Democrat. There are no Greens running this election and I believe that my campaign, my past actions and my values highly align with the four pillars and ten key values of the Green Party. With this in mind, I respectfully ask for your support in November. www.johnknoxwhite.com and www.facebook.com/JKW4Alameda