

Green Party of Alameda County

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Current occupation: Outgoing Executive Director, Partnership for Working Families; former Executive Director, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE)

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 dissatisfactions and differences with him or her?

I love Oakland. District 2 has been my my home for the last 20 years. The home where my partner and I have raised our 14 year old daughter. I am running for Oakland City Council because we need a proactive and values-based approach to governance. Oakland faces an unprecedented housing crisis; long-term residents have been pushed out of their homes, with far too many landing on the streets. In the midst of riches, our resources are mismanaged. We under-invest in our youth, small businesses, and quality jobs. This public crisis is creating real tension between old residents and new, dividing residents across racial lines. Because City Hall has failed to take action, Oakland may lose its heart and soul forever. I will bring our communities together and take action to build an inclusive, just and equitable city.

I am running against an incumbent because he has failed to stand up for the backbone of Oakland's economy, our working class residents, and he has turned a blind eye to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. In fact, many of the community groups and labor unions who once backed him in 2014 are now supporting me. Furthermore, his track record in the last four years has been poor, compared to my hopes that he was a true progressive. He could have championed the East 12th St project for 100% affordable housing, the Refund Coalition's city budget, and the People's Proposal for Public Land; he did not. He has sponsored only four ordinances since he was elected according to legistar. Lastly, his financial supporters do not reflect the diverse neighborhoods, communities, and residents that he represents. In the last two years, he has raised over \$150,000 from about 340 donors averaging to about \$450 per donor. Most of the donors are Real Estate Investors, Consultants, Attorneys, and Businesses. Only about 55% of his donations come from individuals who live in Oakland, according to his campaign finance reports.

2. Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to 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?

District 2 needs a leader who will prioritize the well-being of all residents with equity and compassion, a leader who is not beholden to millionaire outsiders and corporate developers that seek to profit without contributing their fair share so that all can thrive.

As District 2 Councilmember, I will:

- **Prioritize housing for all Oaklanders**
- **Establish a community approach to policing and safety**
- **Tackle illegal dumping and other threats to quality of life**
- **Promote a values-based City budget & thriving economy**
- **Preserve our cultural heritage**
- **Protect our environment and our residents' health**

My full platform is here: <http://www.nikki4oakland.com/platform>.

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?

For two decades, I've been an advocate for working people, leading the passage of policies in Oakland to create the building blocks for regional, state, and national change by:

- **Raising Oakland's minimum wage with paid sick leave by passing Measure FF which won with 81% voter support.**
- **Bringing City government and developers to the table with community groups to secure a ground-breaking good jobs policy for the Oakland Army Base redevelopment, which is putting Oaklanders to work and exceeding its 50% local hire goal.**
- **Partnering with neighborhood and environmental groups on a Port of Oakland Clean Trucks Program to reduce diesel emissions and create healthier neighborhoods.**

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 am a member of Oakland Justice Coalition and Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club. I am endorsed by Oakland Justice Coalition and Block by Block; their values and priorities are aligned with my own.

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'm also a member of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance and Climate Workers. I have volunteered with ACCE and Oakland Rising on ballot measure campaigns.

I have served on the Boards of the following organizations:

- **Advisory Board, UC Berkeley Labor Center**
- **Secretary, Board of Directors, Asian Pacific Environmental Network**
- **Board of Directors, Chinese Progressive Association**
- **Advisory Boards, Oakland Rising and Oakland Rising Action**
- **Assemblymember Rob Bonta, Woman of Color Advisory Committee member**
- **Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Advisory Committee member**

6. Budget -- If you were on the Council for the next budget in 2018, how would you act differently from the council members dealing with the budget in 2016? How much additional revenue should the City aim to take in, and how would you generate it?

Oakland and District 2 are experiencing explosive growth. We must take a balanced approach to accommodate new businesses and new opportunities while protecting long-standing businesses, cultural institutions, and residents who should benefit from this growth and the jobs it brings. Employers in the City of Oakland must be responsible for ensuring fair pay and treatment of workers, and the City must enforce existing protections for people who work here.

I will:

- **Support a community-based budget and budget process that includes input from residents and stakeholders to ensure that the City budget reflects the values and needs of all of District 2 and Oakland.**
- **Attract businesses to Oakland that provide quality jobs and benefits while providing the services and products that residents need and want.**
- **Ensure all businesses pay their fair share for infrastructure to preserve Oakland's quality of life for old and new residents.**
- **Increase enforcement of Oakland's worker protection laws and ensure that businesses are responsible neighbors.**
- **Reduce barriers to employment for Oakland residents and build a future for Oakland residents and businesses by ensuring a fair chance at employment and housing for formerly incarcerated neighbors, investing in youth employment programs, and supporting English language programs for immigrants and refugees.**
- **Champion Oakland's small businesses that have served as beloved and iconic institutions for decades. Confront unfair practices head-on by creating commercial vacancy fees that will improve rental stability for Oakland businesses and by improving services for immigrant and refugee-owned businesses.**
- **Keep the As in Oakland, ensuring that the Coliseum project includes meaningful community benefits that serve existing residents and workers.**
- **Support the creation of a public bank for Oakland that would invest in the community.**

I will also support the Refund Coalition's People's budget.

7. Youth -- What would your priorities for youth be for Oakland government and how would they be implemented and paid for?

I believe we need to reinvest our resources into education and educational resources, job training programs, and community centers that allow youth to thrive. I oppose the narrative of getting our youth off the streets, as long as the activity on the streets help promote community. Our current investment in youth has failed our city's youth for far too long--particularly youth of color, which has forced many

of them to operate in the black market including prostitution, drugs, gambling, and related activities because they cannot exist in our traditional economy.

When you investigate criminal activity, you find a relationship between crime and income inequality. Much of this has to do with a lack of quality education and resources (like libraries and community centers), instability in housing and employment, and other factors. I don't believe that throwing money at our Police Department, especially one that has a reputation of misconduct, is the solution to public safety. I believe redirecting those resources into our community so that we can prevent the crimes from happening in the first place is part of the solution and that includes access to mental health services, equitable education and educational resources, job training programs, and more.

8. Police -- Describe the current relationship between Oakland residents and the OPD? Do you suggest any changes? Do you support diverting people from prosecution if they participate in a restorative justice program? Do you support a change in the use of force policy of the Oakland Police Department? Do you support Assembly Bill 931 that would require that police use deadly force only when there are no alternatives? (See https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB931)

Oakland needs neighborhoods and commercial districts where everyone feels safe and enjoys a sense of belonging. This can only be achieved when we take a holistic approach to safety. First, we must increase resources to support education, employment, and public health services to address the root causes of crime. And second, we must shift the culture of policing so all residents feel that officers are working with the community, not against it. District 2 problems such as illegal dumping, theft, car break-ins, sex trafficking, and other crimes need a better approach than business as usual. Oakland Police Department (OPD) must serve with the highest community standards, end the targeting of people of color, and "bad cops" must be appropriately disciplined or removed. I will:

- Take a different approach to crime and policing, one that incorporates restorative justice, conflict de-escalation training for police officers, and disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline through programs that keep youth in school and on paths to employment and higher education.
- Strengthen Oakland's protections for vulnerable communities, safeguard our status as a Sanctuary City, and stand up to the inhumane and unjust practices of the Trump administration.
- Prioritize public safety by increasing police response times while rebuilding community trust with OPD.
- Ensure that the voter-approved, community-led Oakland Police Commission is fully staffed and resourced to hold OPD accountable and do what voters have mandated without interference.
- Support an independent, thorough cost-saving audit of OPD spending to ensure our resources are most effectively utilized.

Do you support Senate Bill 1421 that would honor the public's right to know about confirmed officer misconduct and serious uses of force? (See

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1421

Yes.

Does the current police commission have the right to fire a police officer for misconduct? What are your thoughts about police misconduct and how do you feel Oakland should deal with it?

No. We need more accountability mechanisms in place. The Mayor hires the City Administrator who appoints Department heads. This is a flawed system because the City Administrator is not directly accountable to the voters. In many cities, the Mayor appoints Department heads. Furthermore, the Police Commission is largely an oversight commission, like many of the Commissions in Oakland and it has very little enforcement powers. They are responsible for ensuring our policies are in line with

those on the national level and making recommendations; however, these recommendations can simply be ignored by the Police Department and our City Government.

I believe current policies have been ineffective at addressing police misconduct and that we need to do more including repealing the Peace Officers Bill of Rights, making police misconduct a federal crime, bettering our police training programs, and hiring more diverse police officers especially ones who are part of the community they serve. I believe crime is inextricably linked to income inequality which is a product of institutionalized oppression in our education, government, and economic systems. I believe we need to invest more in all of our communities to eliminate barriers to equitable quality education and employment.

9. Development Projects - Financial and real estate interests currently play a controlling role in shaping Oakland development projects. What are your thoughts and views about holding the developers accountable to the city's zoning, code, and permit regulations?

I oppose developer giveaways. I believe in a balanced approach to land use which includes growth, affordable housing, open space, safer streets for pedestrians, and opportunities for local and large businesses which will provide local jobs and revitalize the economy. The development that we should be prioritizing are ones that add value to our existing communities, not ones that are wealth transfers from everyday-working-people to luxury real estate developers. We must ensure developers are paying their fair share, whether that's paying impact fees or building more affordable housing. Land use and planning are important components to creating better neighborhoods.

I refuse to accept any developer or corporate money. My opponent; however, is largely funded by Real Estate Investors, Attorneys, Consultants, and Businesses.

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 support State Proposition #10 that would repeal the Costa-Hawkins Act, a 1990s law that barred rent control expansion?

Oakland's housing crisis is out of control and we need experienced, compassionate leadership that recognizes housing is a human right. The need to improve and increase affordable housing and provide options for the growing homeless population requires a champion who can bring residents, developers, and housing advocates together—and collaborate with the county and state—for win-win solutions. I will:

- Strengthen and enforce tenant protections to put a stop to unjust evictions and illegal rent hikes.
- Support the state Affordable Housing Act to repeal Costa-Hawkins, allowing Oakland and other California cities the flexibility to create smart renter protections that work for us.
- Ensure our public lands are used for public good by supporting a public lands policy that prioritizes affordable housing and permanent supportive housing projects, and designating city-owned parcels for sanctioned camps that move homeless neighbors off dangerous streets.
- Increase resources to provide our homeless neighbors with rapid measures that move people into stable temporary housing while we work toward permanent housing solutions, as well as provide increased health services and sanitation to our homeless community.
- Bring developers, community members, labor leaders, and other stakeholders to the table to negotiate community benefits for any development deals.
- Ensure that development "Impact Fees" which are meant to generate funds for affordable housing adequately serve our communities by updating the existing rules to make sure they are properly and equitably utilized.
- Preserve existing affordable housing by updating policies on condo conversions and single

- room occupancy buildings (SROs) and adopting a policy on short-term rentals.
- **Advance longer-term housing policies that support ownership, including community land trusts, tenant ownership, and low-interest loans for repairs and maintenance.**

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

Oakland and the Bay Area are at the forefront of creating solutions to address the challenges we face with climate change. With more than 140 parks and 2,500 acres of open space, Oakland's natural beauty must be cared for and maintained. Oakland must address the health concerns arising from expansion, industry, and business that operate in and near our communities. I will:

- **Keep our open spaces beautiful and available for generations to come by ensuring robust maintenance programs that keep trails open and parks well-maintained.**
- **Prioritize investments in key parks and open space to ensure equitable use in all our neighborhoods, and make sure that existing investments are implemented.**
- **Ensure that District 2 and all Oakland residents are protected from pollution-related health risks by pushing for stricter environmental and anti-displacement protections for residents and families living near industry. Support Oakland's ban on coal storage and handling, a critical issue facing Oakland.**
- **Ensure that health concerns with existing and new developments are adequately mitigated through tough guidelines and robust community benefits agreements.**
- **Keep Oakland on the cutting-edge of new innovations that will help battle the effects of climate change, reduce Oakland's carbon output, and create jobs in the low-carbon and clean energy economy.**

12. Public Banking - Inspired by the Bank of North Dakota (BND) <https://bnd.nd.gov/>, a feasibility statement to create a Public Bank of Oakland is currently before the Oakland City Council. 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 \$400M to the General Fund of the State of North Dakota over the last 21 years <https://ilsr.org/rule/bank-of-north-dakota-2/>, while substantially increasing its capitalization and its loan outreach.)

Are you in favor of making Oakland one of the first cities in the nation to create a municipal bank?

I support the creation of a community bank in order to help Oakland residents, particularly to become homeowners and to maintain their properties, and also to create local businesses and community enterprise. I support making Oakland one of the first cities in the nation to create a municipal bank 1000%.

13. Local Payday Lenders -- Oakland is awash with for-profit Check Cashing and PayDay Loan emporiums (a simple Google query on "Oakland Payday lenders" 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*, quotes the astounding statistic that unbanked families who must use these services spend on average over \$2000 per household per year -- more than it spends on food. NALC.org: "Author makes the case for postal banking" <http://tinyurl.com/h9e6a2p>.

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 <http://communitycheckcashing.org/> 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 non-profit check cashing to other storefronts around Oakland -- much as the City Council gave a 50-year, \$3,300,000 interest-free loan to the East 12th Street developers (see Oakland City Council agenda, June 15th, 2016 <http://tinyurl.com/jzy398p>)?

Yes. I support non-profit check-cashing and payday loans 100%. There are a couple of check-cashing storefronts in my district including the one on E.18th street across from Lucky Supermarket. I stand strongly against institutions that capitalize on the suffering of low-income and working class communities.

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

When my campaign first starting going door-to-door in April we asked residents what their biggest issues were and what they expected from the D2 Councilmember. Overall, housing was one of the highest concerns from residents but everyone also voiced that they didn't feel listened to. Oakland residents are frustrated by our city government, they are frustrated by the lack of proactive leadership, and lack of direction coming from City Hall. Average residents feel that there is too much infighting and not enough action around the real challenges facing Oakland - housing, jobs, environment, policing and public safety, and education.

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

I will make myself accountable by holding regular office hours both at city hall and at each of the neighborhoods I serve. I respect the public input process and want to increase participation as much as possible, especially in underserved and underrepresented communities. I plan to increase community outreach so that more residents feel like they can share their thoughts with me and I also plan to attend as many neighborhood meetings and events as possible.

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'm a seasoned coalition builder. While leading EBASE, I convened one of the coalitions that won the good jobs policy on the Oakland Army Base redevelopment project. Because we took the time to build unity around goals, each time we went to Council for a vote we had unanimous support.

I have worked with every council member. I forsee being able to work with: Kaplan, Brooks, Gallo, Kalb and the new District 4 rep.

17. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you? Who are you endorsing, from statewide races 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.

My endorsements: <http://www.nikki4oakland.com/endorsements>

I endorse these other corporate-free candidates: Cat Brooks and Jovanka Beckles.

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 intend to raise the maximum expenditure limit which is \$142,000. I have raised \$86,000 to date. My money largely come from friends and neighbors, and their networks. I also have received several contributions from local labor unions. I am running a corporate free campaign and will refuse any contributions from developers and corporations. I have also taken the No Coal in Oakland pledge and will not accept donations or support from Phil Tagami.

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?

The current relationship between the Council and Mayor is, for lack of a better word, dysfunctional. It's clear that there is a camp in line with the Mayor and another that is more independent. I would be an independent voice.

This article highlights many of the problems with our current City Government.

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/How-to-make-Oakland-government-work-12876001.php>

I agree with many of these points and would seek input to build consensus around proposed changes to the city charter.

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. I am running a corporate free campaign and believe we must get money out of politics. Oakland needs serious campaign reform especially considering the barriers to entry are huge including the fact that there are no term limits, the maximum individual contribution for an Oakland City Council race are higher than a San Francisco Supervisorial and Mayoral race, and that you need to submit \$1,000 to file nomination papers with no signatures-in-lieu option.

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

I would be honored to have your support.

22. Please answer "Yes" or "No" to these questions, and follow with an explanation if you want to add one:

a. Do you support raising the minimum wage to a living wage?

Yes

b. Do you support the California Peace Officers Bill of Rights?

No

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

No

d. Do you support Ranked Choice Voting?

Yes

e. Would you support Proportional Representation?

Yes

f. Do you support Community Choice Aggregation?

Yes

g. Would you vote to allow more grey water systems?

Yes

