

Question 1

Questionnaire for City Council Candidates 2009

Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN)

Terminology: "the City" refers to the government of the City of Palo Alto.

Reason for running: What are your primary reasons for running for City Council?

[K] [Greg Scharff](#) : ElectGregScharff.com

We have a great quality of life in Palo Alto, including great schools, neighborhoods, parks and open space and I am committed to preserving and protecting these things. Palo Alto is at a critical junction in its future. I want to make sure that Palo Alto makes the right choices to keep the quality of life that we all cherish. That is why I'm running for city council and asking for your support. The City faces a future of long-term financial crisis and declining city services if the City does not control its pension and health care obligations. City pension costs have increased 86% for SEIU and Management employees over the last five years, in large part due to an enhanced pension formula implemented in 2007. Furthermore, the City's unfunded liability for retiree medical insurance grew by over \$27.5 million over the past 2 years alone, from \$102.2 million to \$129.7 million. It is critical to the future of our City that that the retirement formula for city employees and health care benefits be addressed in a manner that doesn't continue to risk Palo Alto's financial future and its ability to provide the services our residents need. We must also strongly resist ABAG's attempts to impose high density housing throughout Palo Alto and insure that the High Speed Rail does not divide our City by constructing a 15-40 foot wall.

[L] Nancy Shepherd: www.electNancyShepherd.com

I am running for City Council because our future matters. I want to work with fellow citizens to keep that community feeling we know as Palo Alto while we modernize our city. I am committed to working effectively to navigate finances during this crippling financial crisis; re-energize our neighborhood shopping centers; protect city services, parklands and open spaces; and modernize our infrastructure while mitigating the massive impact of California's high speed rail projected to run through Palo Alto, if that comes to pass. How we respond to these challenges will determine the quality of our future.

[M] Brian Steen

I bring a 30 year career of public service experience to the Palo Alto Council. It's a positive and inspiring challenge to utilize my skills to improve Palo Alto.

I'm a former board member of the Pacific Grove United School District and served during a time of budget deficits that were eliminated during my term.

During the past year, I've worked hard with community leaders to bring this 21st century transportation improvement to the Peninsula in a manner that will provide the highest transportation value to residents and visitors with a positive impact to our communities, and on a financially feasible basis. Of all your choices for Palo Alto City Council, I have the greatest experience and knowledge to represent Palo Alto in the HSR process.

For nearly a decade, I was the Executive Director of the Sempervirens Fund, the oldest land trust in California, based here on the Peninsula. I directed land acquisition and implemented fundraising campaigns securing \$26.5 million for the protection of redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains. During that time, I negotiated, funded and purchased over 3,100 acres of forest watershed lands in 20 transactions for resource protection. Before that, I led the Big Sur Land Trust in preserving 15,000 acres as open space along the scenic Big Sur Coast. There can be no question that I will protect the natural environment of Palo Alto with the utmost integrity.

[N] Mark Weiss

I am running in response to a guest opinion by Sid Espinosa in Palo Alto Weekly suggesting that citizens should run as a form of civic engagement, especially given the unusually high number of seats (five of nine seats open, one incumbent).

I own a concert and artist management company, Earthwise Productions of Palo Alto, and as such follow the arts locally. In recent years, I have followed arts commission very closely, as well as the two concert series, Twilight Series (Tuesdays in the parks) and Brown Bag (Thursday noons at Cogswell Park on Lytton). I was also recruited by Mayor Peter Drekmeier, who I knew from Bay Area Action, to work on "Fete De La Musique /Palo Alto World Music Day" – running for office feels like a natural extension of my advocating for the arts here. When we decided to cut the Brown Bag series, I felt it an example of where I could help us get more bang for our bucks municipally in the arts: I want to restore the series.

[A] Dan Dykwel : <http://www.dandykwel.com>

I'm running for City Council because I believe we must do a better job of taking care of the essentials of running the city. This means focusing on the budget and the long-term implications of a new economic picture. That includes funding infrastructure repairs and maintenance that have been neglected to the point where the cost is staggering - \$450 million. I also think we have not given the business community the attention it needs to ensure we have a healthy economy in Palo Alto. And finally, I think the City Council needs to stop micro-managing projects and deal with the policy issues that reflect the desires of our citizens.

[B] Victor Frost: No response from candidate.

[C] Chris Gaither

I believe that to whom much has been given, much is expected in return. Palo Alto has been a wonderful home to me for 25 years, and I have been granted lots of gifts and opportunities in my life time. Even as I once worked in Sacramento, I commuted to and from Palo Alto on a weekly basis because I did not want to leave Palo Alto, even for a better job opportunity. In the end, I returned to Palo Alto as something inside of me always concluded, one just cannot get any better living wise than Palo Alto. Palo Alto has felt like home to me from the first day I stepped foot into the city, and I have been blessed to meet, get to know and work with so many exceptional Palo Alto citizens.

Given my positive and strong feelings for Palo Alto, and my gratitude for all the opportunities I have been afforded as a resident, I feel it is my turn as a community citizen to step up to the plate, and contribute my aptitude, commitment, experience, and skills to the governance and vision of Palo Alto; and to share my heart and perspectives with the goals of further uniting our residents and employees in order to solve the critical challenges facing our community: budget deficits; community and police relations; high rail speed issues; land use; assisting our children

with staying mentally clear and healthy; loss of retail business and growing commercial space vacancy rates; and putting the fun back into community!!!

A few months ago, Garry Fazzino suggested that he would run for city council if not enough people with experience came forward. Initially, I was excited about another Fazzino run for council. As time passed, I realized as a city, we cannot continue to rely on the same core group of residents to work on our behalf. Those of us who have the desire, experience and time must take turns in assisting the city with its objectives, day to day planning, and crisis management. Thus, I decided to run for council because of my desire to give back for all that I have been afforded. My package of experience and skills; combined with my never ending thirst for knowledge through studies and ability to comprehend and apply what I learn, all make me an exceptional fit to serve the city as a council member for the next four years. I hope that by November 3, 2009 you will agree that Chris Gaither should be one of the five council elects to progress Palo Alto forward, and to help Palo Alto preserve those fundamental characteristics which make it a unique city, and our humble abode!!! As Cesar Chavez once said, "The end of all education should surely be service to others."

[D] Tim Gray : www.vote4Gray.com

My independence will offer a financial voice really needed by the City. The Council needs a diversity of skills. There are five open seats and you have five votes. I am the finance guy that will work well any other four candidates you choose. I know how to cooperate and I know how to get things done.

I own and operate (Treasury Advocates) in downtown Palo Alto. My wife Susan Gray and I have three children (Catherine age 10, and twins Michael and Julia, age 7,)

I am committed to doing the right thing for the environment (A Green Future is a Golden Future), and fiercely protecting our quality life (I moved here 22 years ago for a reason, and our neighborhoods and schools must not be eroded.)

Palo Alto must elevate financial discipline to the top of the agenda if we really want to assure balance and make progress on neglected infrastructure. Applying benchmarking to the budget and demonstrating best management practices must be achieved. I will invite more citizen participation.

I love Palo Alto! I've lived here for more than 20 years. My wife and I have three children in local schools. We enjoy living and working in Palo Alto and are committed to protecting the environment, preserving the quality of life, and making fiscal decisions that enable us to support these goals.

The foundation for my campaign is based on three evolving principles:

- Encourage community participation in government
- Financial stewardship
- Environmental responsibility — A Green Future is a Golden Future

I believe that by encouraging citizen participation, we will gain greater community understanding of our costs of being governed. And together, we can make decisions that will positively impact the future of our City.

The Council's ability to represent the needs of Palo Alto will be enhanced by greater community connection. The Council is a policy-making group, and the formulation of policy is a dynamic

(ever changing to meet present and future concerns) conversation. It is essential to act together if we want to protect the rich American tradition of representative government. By respecting the different points of view of our diverse community, we can find a balance as we honor and strengthen the points of agreement. And then, from a unified vision, forward progress will be assured.

I am convinced that financial stewardship and care for our environment can complement each other. Palo Alto has a rich history of innovation: We will discover the Gold in Green. We will preserve what we like best about our beautiful City and our quality of life.

As a Certified Public Accountant and business consultant for Fortune 500 companies (many as large as, if not larger than, the City of Palo Alto) and hospitals nationwide, I can offer a solid set of financial skills that are an integral ingredient in the formation of an effective City Council. I believe a financially balanced city government not only protects our quality of life, but is also key to protecting our personal balance sheets (i.e., home values). Fiscal balance plays a vital role in my vision for Palo Alto.

As an experienced financial leader, known for my unique blend of pragmatism and idealism, I will be a voice for financial discipline. I have no conflicting special interests. I am free to truly represent the best interests of our community.

I also want to do everything possible to support youth services, and that includes the libraries and other valuable programs that the City Council can implement to impact positively our schools and children's futures.

While we can't dictate the future, we can establish traditions and programs that will bring forth the greatest good for our community.

Please explore my website, and learn more about citizen participation, financial stewardship, and Green innovations. I welcome hearing from you and hope you will let me know your vision and concerns for Palo Alto. I am here to be a voice for our community.

[E] John Hackmann

I have the time and interest to serve the City that has served me, and that I love.

Palo Alto right now needs experienced leaders with good judgment, ability to work to a consensus, and a proven track record of accomplishments in the public sphere. I offer this. If elected, I will serve diligently, commit the necessary hours of time required, and continue listening to each of you.

Housing density and overdevelopment, structural budget deficits, and the clear need for immediate pension reforms are some of the largest challenges that we face together.

For more than 20 years I have come before the City Council with others to help achieve positive solutions for Palo Alto such as working to protect the Baylands, preserving historic buildings, enhancing our libraries, and supporting the development of small and home businesses.

Having been a teacher of environmental and health policy and a general practice attorney solving the problems of individuals and neighbors, I am well aware of local problems and the ways to address them.

I love this city and now I have the time and interest to give back by serving on the Council if elected.

[F] [Karen Holman](http://karenholman.org) : karenholman.org

When I moved to Palo Alto in 1975, I felt like I had found a new home. It mattered to me that Palo Alto had beautiful neighborhoods, spectacular parks such as the Baylands and Foothills, numerous bookstores and movie theatres, a diverse population, a major university, and a populace that held the environment in high regard.

Some things have changed, but I still can't imagine living anywhere else.

After several years of community involvement including eight years serving on the Planning & Transportation Commission, I still believe that this is a wonderful town but that we need to

- Zone for what we want and follow the General Plan and code, the publicly adopted vision for the city that provides a reasonable right of expectation on the part of the residents, businesses, and applicants.
- Be proactive rather than reactive in attracting new and retaining existing businesses.
- Assure that our short-term goals match with long-term financial viability.
- Honor the public trust, meaning act in the public's best interests and require transparency in our government processes. This underlies all else because if we do not have trust in our processes, if the public is not heard, we will not be able to build community and move forward to outcomes that do serve the public.

I hope to bring my experience to Council to forward these goals, raise the level of pride in our community, and make Palo Alto once again a most desired place to live and do business.

For more information, please visit my website at karenholman.org as well as my responses to the other questions published by PAN.

[G] [Larry Klein](http://www.ReelectLarryKlein.com) www.ReelectLarryKlein.com

I am running to continue the work I started in my present term on the City Council and in particular to focus on three main areas:

- a. The City's finances. We face a \$10 million structural deficit and I will work to eliminate that through a combination, in roughly equal amounts, of a reduction in the number of city employees, a reduction in the compensation paid city employees and an increase in City revenues
- b. The quality of life in our community. I see two major threats here: an above grade: High Speed Rail along the Caltrain corridor and the ABAG requirement that we zone for an additional 2700 housing units over the next seven years.
- c. Global warming. Palo Alto has been a leader in this area through such measures as our mandatory Green Building Ordinance but we can and must do more through measures such as improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings.

[H] [Leon Leong](http://www.leonleong.com) : www.leonleong.com

I am running for City Council because I would like to see the Council change it's focus to the quality of life issues that are specific to Palo Altans:

- Housing density & it's effect on school overcrowding, traffic congestion & taxing of city resources,
- Economic Vitality of the city: broaden our tax base by making Palo Alto a more inviting place for community serving businesses to come; I am opposed to the Business License Tax because I believe it will discourage businesses from coming to Palo Alto.
- City Budget: we need more transparency in our city budget so that the City Council can make better policy decisions on where to allocate money and how the city can operate more efficiently. Our decaying city infrastructure needs to be addressed.

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

Twenty years ago, my wife and I moved to Palo Alto to raise our family, pursue our careers, and live in a city which shared our values and ideals. But in those 20 years, we watched as Palo Alto leadership consistently failed to resolve major issues and made decisions that detracted from the quality of life in our community. The next City Council will be called upon to confront at least six major challenges: Eliminating a huge budget deficit; encouraging development without compromising quality of life; financing the upgrading of Palo Alto's decaying infrastructure; addressing complex housing issues; High Speed Rail; and, now, repairing Palo Alto's damaged labor relations.

The new Council needs an infusion of new leadership which is free from and unburdened by the lack of vision of previous Councils and councilmembers. The next City Council must have the courage to address these issues, backed up by the real-world skills, knowledge and experience necessary to do so.

I will bring a NEW VOICE and a NEW PERSPECTIVE to the City Council. I have practiced corporate law for more than 20 years representing large corporations and now focusing on start-up and emerging growth companies; I am intimately knowledgeable of the needs and concerns of small business owners having previously owned and operated a small retail business, a franchise called "Once Upon a Child," starting with a store in Mountain View and a second store in San Jose; I am deeply involved in local neighborhood and school organizations having served on the Board of Directors of my local neighborhood association, the Green Acres Improvement Association, serving 4 years on each of the Nixon Elementary School, Terman Middle School, and Gunn High School Site Councils, being a member of the High School Task Force and the Terman School Principal Search Committee, and serving on the Board of Directors of the Stanford Campus Recreation Association (SCRA).

I believe I will be a valuable member of the City Council and can make a fundamental difference working with other councilmembers as we usher Palo Alto into the next decade. I am committed to working tirelessly to make Palo Alto a stronger and better place to live, work, and enjoy the highest quality of life.

[J] Gail Price

I am running because I have a strong record of civic involvement, strategic planning and leadership as an elected official and community activist over several decades. I have a record of being thoughtful, caring and compassionate in my decision-making, I know how to balance competing demands with limited resources.

I have been serving people as a public sector employee in city planning and transportation for over 22 years. I have a keen appreciation and understanding of how government should work. Experience is needed and critical at this time; My main goal it to create a vibrant, strong future for all the members of our community by engaging in responsible fiscal, land use, transportation, and

housing decisions to protect our environment. Sustainable community planning is critical to reduce green house gas emissions and to address climate change. We need to create careful economic development strategies that combine “smart growth” principles with energy efficient and attractive design while monitoring and addressing impacts on city services, infrastructure and school capacity.

Decisions should be made within the context of the Comprehensive Plan All decisions made now create our future. Palo Alto needs to better recognize and serve the underserved community members and neighborhoods. We need to be more efficient and effective to create a more inclusive and caring community.
