



2016 City Council Candidate Questions

- 1. Reason for running:** What are the top three goals you want to achieve in the next four years on the city council?
- 2. Experience:**

Non-incumbents: Describe your personal experience with Palo Alto City government and recent issues that have come before public hearings at the city council or other board and commissions. What was your role? (For example, did you send an email, speak to the Council, lead a group of citizens, etc.?) How extensively were you involved?

Incumbent (Kniss): What have been your major initiatives on the Council? Describe your role and the results.
- 3. Affordable Housing:** Regarding building affordable housing, we are faced with several problems: lack of land, lack of interest on developers' part and the cost (one unit costs \$400-600,000). Please address:
 - How do we get such housing built?
 - Can we even build enough housing to satisfy demand?
 - Should the City increase development fees to fund more affordable housing?
- 4. High-density housing:** What are your thoughts on "high-density housing" in Palo Alto? How much should be built and for whom?
- 5. Jobs/Housing Imbalance:** Office creation is outpacing housing development. Please address:
 - How much, where *and what kind of* office space can Palo Alto sustain?
 - Do you support extending the annual office space development cap?
 - Should the City consider placing a moratorium on new office development?
- 6. Growth:** There has been a lot of discussion about the demand for housing as well as potential impacts, and how fast it should increase in Palo Alto. How does this compromise the quality of life of local residents, including school enrollment, and what mitigations do you support?
- 7. Cumulative Impacts:** Commercial projects are evaluated on an individual basis, without looking at the cumulative impact on intersections, traffic and spillover parking in neighborhoods. Many traffic studies seem to have a finding of "no impact," yet traffic continues to get worse. What changes in the way we evaluate projects would you favor?
- 8. Local Review:** What is your opinion of the Budget Trailer Bill 707's (or similar bills) by-right exemption from environmental review?

9. **Retail:** How would you support local retail? Specifically, how would you protect, support and possibly even extend ground-floor retail in our commercial and neighborhood commercial areas? How would you enforce existing laws?
10. **Accessory Dwelling Units (aka “Granny Units”):** Do you support zoning changes to enable the creation of additional second units, such as reduced minimum lot size, removal of parking requirements? If so, which ones? How do ensure these units don’t simply become short-term (Airbnb-type) rentals?
11. **Parks:** The current Comprehensive Plan calls for the city to maintain 4 acres of in-town park space for every 1,000 residents. The actual ratio is now below this ratio as our population has grown. What should we do?
12. **Dewatering:** What policies should the City set regarding the discharge and loss of water (as well as land settlement problems in neighboring properties) when basements are being built?
13. **Single Family Individual Review (includes SSO, Eichler preservation):** Please address:
 - What type of design guidelines should be developed to preserve neighborhood character?
 - Is the current process working?
 - If so, give examples. If not, what should be changed?
14. **Traffic/Commuters:** With so much traffic spreading into many neighborhoods, and with a lack of regional transportation plans, what do you propose Palo Alto should do to address employee traffic into town? How do you propose to ease the congestion on our arterial streets — especially during the rush hours — so fewer commuters will try to take unsafe short cuts through our residential neighborhood streets?
15. **Parking (RPP):** Do you support an expanded Residential Parking Permit Program? Please address:
 - How should it be structured to protect neighborhoods?
 - Should neighborhoods get determine which type of program is appropriate for them?
 - What alternatives or additional mitigations do you support?
 - Will you keep in place the commitment to phase out non-resident parking in the Downtown RPP district in 10 years?
16. **Caltrain/HSR:** What is your view on Caltrain’s electrification plans, High Speed Rail and grade separations?
17. **VTA:** What will be your strategy in dealing with the VTA to stop their proposed severe reduction of VTA bus service within Palo Alto, and to persuade them instead to improve their service in Palo Alto so more commuters working in Palo Alto will take VTA buses to their jobs in Palo Alto.
18. **Budget:** How do you plan to fund the city’s long-term pension and health benefits liability, which currently stands at \$500 million? How serious is the impact of this liability to the City’s ability to provide services and amenities to residents?
19. **Stanford:** What is the most important aspect of the City’s upcoming negotiation with Stanford regarding its General Use Permit?
20. **(Optional) Unasked Question:** If there is a question you think we should have asked, ask and answer it.