

# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES RESPONSES TO DOWNTOWN BERKELEY ASSOCIATION QUESTIONS

September 24, 2018

On August 31 the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) invited City Council candidates to respond to questions regarding the future of the Downtown Berkeley. We asked eight for District 4 candidates since this district incorporates most of the Downtown, and then a reduced set of four questions for the other districts. ***Questions in bold italics were asked of all candidates.***

While the DBA does not endorse candidates, we see these questions as an opportunity for the DBA to express our concerns and priorities, and then for the candidates with their responses help inform the DBA, Downtown stakeholders, and the entire Berkeley electorate about the candidate's positions on these Downtown and city-wide issues.

Unedited answers have been posted on the [DBA website](#), and will be shared with local media. The eight same questions were asked of all candidates:

1. What is your near-term vision for the Downtown and its role in the City? Your vision over the next four years? Ten years?
2. ***What are your thoughts regarding the persistent street behavior challenges in the Downtown, Telegraph and other areas in the City? Do you support the proposed [Sidewalks Ordinances passed by Council on April 26](#)?***
3. ***What do ideas do you have for bringing BPD staffing levels up to authorized levels?*** (...and reinstating bike cops in the Downtown?)
4. ***What are your ideas for making Berkeley more supportive of current businesses and welcoming environment for new businesses?*** (...particularly for retail and office space in the Downtown?)
5. What is your vision and ideas for revitalization of the Civic Center Historic District?
6. Would you support public/private partnerships to adaptively reuse the Downtown Post Office?
7. What is your vision for public art in the Downtown, including visual and performing arts? Also, what is your vision for supporting current and/or additional visual and/or performing arts venues in the Downtown?
8. ***What do you see as the critical management and financial issues facing the City over the next several years?***

**We received responses from the following candidates:**

**District 1 (four questions):** Rashi Kesarwani, Margo Schueler, Igor Tregub

**District 4 (eight questions):** Ben Gould, Kate Harrison, Greg Magofna

**District 7 (four questions):** Rigel Robinson, Ces Rosales

**District 8 (four questions):** Lori Droste, Mary Kay Lacey, Alfred Twu

You can view all of the candidate responses under the Documents/Other section of the DBA website at [www.downtownberkeley.com/documents/#othe](http://www.downtownberkeley.com/documents/#othe)

## **1. What is your near-term vision for the Downtown and its role in the City? Your vision over the next four years? Ten years?**

### **Ben Gould – District 4**

As a resident of Downtown Berkeley, I am very excited for the opportunities in its future. As the Councilmember for District 4, I will push for the continued realization of the Downtown Area Plan's vision of Downtown as a fully-realized neighborhood that is vibrant and welcoming for all. I also want to see Downtown continue to expand its role as the cultural and culinary heart of Berkeley.

We've seen this progress stall over the last 18 months with the current Councilmember for District 4. Since taking office, the incumbent has worked to undermine our Community Benefits ordinance, needlessly demonized and demoralized our first responders, and exacerbated the housing crisis. This doesn't serve the needs of the Downtown neighborhood, or the City as a whole.

Over the next four years, I plan to put the Downtown back on track. I will ensure that the City continues to foster opportunities for new homes, small businesses, restaurants, and public space improvements. I will also work to ensure this space is welcoming and accessible to everyone, collaborating with City staff and service providers to proactively and compassionately address the encampment and street behavior issues in the Downtown.

Over the next ten years, I envision Downtown Berkeley becoming a model of sustainability and a world-class destination here in the East Bay. I will collaborate with regional transit agencies to improve public transportation facilities and access to the Downtown, and also realize the vision of the Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan, with new pedestrian spaces, more parklets, and more efficient circulation. I'll coordinate with the City's Office of Economic Development and the businesses community to enhance Downtown's selection of high-quality retail. And I will work with historic preservationists and private developers to retrofit, restore, and adaptively reuse Old City Hall, the Veterans' Building, and the Downtown Berkeley Post Office. I'm proud to have the endorsements of dozens of Downtown and District 4 neighbors who support this vision.

### **Kate Harrison – District 4**

Berkeley's Downtown is in the heart of Council District 4 and the City. The Downtown can and should be the pride of every Berkeley resident. Within walking distance to the University of California and home of the Arts District and Berkeley's historic Civic Center, the commercial district should support thriving businesses that serve permanent residents, visitors, students and alike.

A vibrant downtown is critical to the City's ability to meet housing goals, mitigate climate impacts and promote economic development and continued cultural vitality. Downtown development should be encouraged but with sensitivity to maintaining a vibrant streetscape with adequate light and open space, setbacks for surrounding residential neighborhoods and architecture that is unique and aesthetically compatible with surrounding buildings. We need to update the Streets and Open Space Plan (SOSIP), incentivize developers to include its features in their projects, and continue to seek funding for its elements. I served as a Commissioner on the SOSIP committee and am proud of the vision incorporated in the plan. Unfortunately, some of its signature elements, in particular making Center Street a shared street with amenities have not been realized. We are moving ahead with changing the traffic flow on the block around Shattuck Square, and have added significant additional bicycle pathways and amenities.

The new hotel that just started construction should make the Downtown an even more attractive and viable destination. I would still like to identify how the hotel could be linked up with adjoining conference spaces to encourage its use for civic- and university related conferences.

The redesigned BART plaza, including public open space for informal gathering and planned events should also provide a central commons area enhanced by street performances.

Finally we need to expedite completing the affordable housing and integrated homeless services/shelter/transitional housing at Berkeley Way. These improvements can all be realized or at least begun in a four-year time horizon.

Over the five to ten year perspective, Downtown should become a showcase for environmental sustainability. We need to emphasize housing at all affordability levels downtown to reduce automobile traffic, green buildings, sustainable infrastructure and water recycling. Transit oriented development needs to serve us all, not just the affluent.

Existing downtown businesses will need support through grants and loans while this transformation is taking place.

#### **Greg Magofna – District 4**

Downtown is not only the gateway to, but also the heart of Berkeley. My vision for the near term is to continue the work set forth in the Downtown Plan to create a lively and walkable Downtown. While a senior aide to former Mayor Tom Bates I worked on many initiatives in conjunction with the Office of Economic Development to make help make Downtown Berkeley a welcoming place to residents, visitors, and businesses. I worked to expand the Downtown Arts District overlay and would want to make sure that we attract businesses and create attractive art-filled spaces in the area. I would also continue the work I was involved in with the Berkeley Startup Cluster to attract, support, and retain startups. I worked to get a gigabit fiber infrastructure plan and I would work to get more office space. Lastly, I would work on our Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan and work on pedestrian safety improvements and making it safer to bike Downtown.

**2. What are your thoughts regarding the persistent street behavior challenges in the Downtown, Telegraph and other areas in the City? Do you support the proposed Sidewalks Ordinances passed by Council on April 26?**

**Rashi Kesarwani – District 1**

As I've knocked on doors and held house parties across District 1, I've heard from neighbors who've been assaulted by individuals on the street. This is a tragic situation for both the victim and the perpetrator. **We must never resort to criminalizing the condition of homelessness.** However, we must intervene when problematic street behavior threatens the ability of other residents to access public spaces or for small business owners to earn a living.

I fully support efforts to make our sidewalks and other public areas accessible and welcoming to everyone without unfairly penalizing those experiencing homelessness. I approach this issue from the lens of a policy expert on health and social services programs for vulnerable individuals, including seniors and people with disabilities. Our sidewalks and public spaces need to be accessible to individuals using wheelchairs, walkers, crutches or canes or others with impaired mobility.

My vision for the downtown is a bustling hub of culture, shopping, and dining that is welcoming for residents, workers, and visitors. I want to work collaboratively with our first responders, business owners, neighbors, and homeless service providers to provide better options for our homeless population. For individuals with untreated mental health challenges and/or addiction issues, we need to work with the county, state, and (eventually) the federal government so that we can provide more and better treatment options. I support state legislation to modernize our conservatorship system, so that cities and counties would be better equipped to help individuals who suffer from chronic homelessness and are at risk of dying on our streets.

**Margo Schueler – District 1**

I am very concerned about the level of homelessness and anti-social behavior we have experienced downtown for too long. The Council is considering regulations to address this matter. In light of the Boise, Idaho decision we must consider how we will address homeless persons' ability to sleep or encamp. We can regulate objects on the sidewalk, an issue that is pervasive throughout the City, which would go a long way toward making and keeping the City cleaner.

The City is poised to open some storage for persons' goods near the Downtown which will help people keep their belongings in a safe place. The regulations and storage go hand in hand to addressing the matter of belongings on the street, at least to some degree.

**Igor Tregub – District 1**

The close vote on Measure S, the sit-lie ordinance, in 2012 demonstrated that the Berkeley community is split on this issue - a split that has not diminished in the six years that have passed. Since that time, the City has not had any clear policy delineating the circumstances under which they may move people and/or their belongings from sidewalks – but they have had the power to do both, and have done so on a regular basis. The City Council needed to provide some direction.

The policy the City Council referred to staff in its April 26 strikes a balance that I think most Berkeley residents can get behind. It affirms an individual's right to sit while proposing space restrictions that respect all sidewalk users -- space large enough for a shopping cart and a couple additional items. Council's direction explicitly authorized the BPD to remove objects in the path of travel, and the penalty for lying in a location or at a time not allowed is to be asked to comply or to receive a ticket that can be dismissed by engaging with services or

performing a community service. This helps direct individuals with behavioral, substance abuse, or mental health issues to the services they need.

Storage is required in the City Council ordinance, and will be available before the new policies go into effect. The City Council's April 26 sidewalk ordinance is the best balance I've seen to respect human dignity while ensuring that Berkeley's Downtown is welcoming to all.

I served on the Task Force on Homelessness that came out of Measure S's failure - to make recommendations to the City Council that would ensure that we treat all of our community members equitably. Several of the housing and services proposals that have come out of this proposal - including the Berkeley Way Project, which I strongly support - will ensure that new units of permanent below-market-rate housing and wraparound services will become available to our unhoused community members.

The sad but unavoidable reality is that there are not enough shelters right now to ensure that everyone has a roof over their heads. It's important to continue to expand close communications between encampment leaders, the City, and service providers.

We cannot tolerate dangerous or menacing behavior anywhere in the city, and it's an issue that impacts downtown merchants more than most. I strongly support additional funding to expand staffing for service providers, social workers, and mental health professionals.

The Council has asked the Homeless Commission to come back with a model for Sanctioned Encampments for the Council to consider. I look forward to continuing to study the different proposals on this question and listening to your perspective, because only together, with all the expertise in this room, can we develop a truly lasting policy on this question, for a Berkeley That We Can All Call Home.

#### **Ben Gould – District 4**

As a Downtown resident, I see and experience the street behavior challenges on a daily basis. At a same time, I also frequently see the same individuals on the street on a daily basis. In the five years I have lived in Downtown, more of my long-term neighbors have lived on the street than in my apartment building.

We have to ensure our public spaces work for all residents. I believe the proposed sidewalks ordinance passed by Council is a good approach to ensuring our sidewalks and parklets are available, accessible, and welcoming to the public.

It shouldn't stop there, however – in order to ensure we can meaningfully address the root of the problem, we have to address the root causes of homelessness by working regionally throughout Alameda County to create supportive affordable housing with wrap-around services. I'm proud to have been endorsed by Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and Emeryville Mayor John Bauters because of my plans to take a regional approach to ending homelessness.

#### **Kate Harrison – District 4**

I voted for the Sidewalk Ordinance and support companion regulations to deal with unattended items being left on the street. The City is in the process of implementing these proposals, something I am asking the City management to expedite.

I recognize the negative impacts that result from disruptive street behavior. Safety is critical to increasing the willingness of residents and visitors to come here and the economic vitality of the area and the City as a whole.

When the disruption involves illegal activities, individual perpetrators should be cited or arrested to address the behavior. Disruptive street behavior is not synonymous with homelessness. Sufficient laws are on the books now – what we need is enforcement, not new laws which are overly broad, potentially criminalize innocent activities and invite unequal treatment.

Part and parcel of stopping some of the most disturbing, if not most criminal, behavior, would involve providing more public toilets (e.g., self-cleaning/ opening ones made by JC Decaux). I support some limitations on property kept by the homeless on the street so that all of us can safely use the sidewalks. The City is currently establishing a location for the homeless to store their belongings.

The City moved quickly recently to open the Stairways Navigation Center and increase shelter beds and increase outreach by City staff. Housing first should continue be our goal, modelled after San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and other communities, and collaborating regionally. The proposed affordable housing bond (Measure O) combined with the recently passed A1 county housing and homeless services bond and U1 Berkeley increase in the business license tax for landlords will go a long way toward giving us the enhanced resources to approach this problem. A new project on Berkeley Way will provide transitional housing for the first time for single men.

However, we cannot build traditional housing fast enough and the number of projected units falls far below the need. I fully support creating tiny house villages and other solutions for relatively inexpensive but stable housing crises.

For some adults, providing housing will be enough. For others, wrap around services are needed. An increase in mental health, social service and rental subsidy supports through the transfer tax on high value sales (Measure P). We need to expand mental health/social work crisis teams to a 24/7 schedule and move away from our precious police resources being required to respond to mental health for youth, re-housing may involve interventions with family or mediation with roommates. I voted in favor of the expansion of mental health beds available to Berkeley and other uses of Laura's Law, which requires those with mental health issues to appear in court to discuss available services.

Before these solutions become a reality, we have to implement immediate measures. I support a sanctioned tent city at locations of the City's choosing, limited in size, with sanitation facilities and trash services and operating under agreed-upon behavioral rules.

Finally, we need to recognize that the problem of homelessness does not occur in a vacuum; it is linked to the displacement crisis caused by rising rents, elimination of SROs, and conversion of formerly rent controlled units. Efforts to stop displacement through protection and expansion of affordable housing are critical. I authored legislation to provide \$600,000 to assist tenants facing illegal evictions to make it easier for them to stay in their homes.

#### **Greg Magofna – District 4**

I believe that Downtown is an amazing cultural amenity that should be shared by all and that no one should feel unsafe. I think that Berkeley is a very compassionate city and we have to differentiate between behavior challenges that are merely inconvenient and those that make people feel unsafe or threatened. In cases of repeated threats to public safety, we need to examine what legal options we have keep our citizens safe. I support the ordinance passed by council as it keeps Downtown accessible while offering opportunities and services to people who may have no other alternatives.

**Rigel Robinson – District 7**

Disruptive behavior can pose a negative impact to residents and businesses, but these behaviors can best be alleviated by strategically increasing public resources. By building more housing for the homeless and ensuring that there are public bathrooms available at all hours, we can reduce impacts on streets.

While the April Sidewalks Ordinance may serve as a short term way of mitigating the effects of the homelessness crisis on our downtown, it is not a long term solution. I would like to see the final version of the Sidewalk Ordinance that the City Manager presents to council before committing to supporting it. It is important that the Ordinance appropriately balance the needs of residents and businesses in the downtown with the rights of our homeless community, especially in light of recent court decisions.

**Ces Rosales – District 7**

The persistent street behavior challenges in the Downtown, Telegraph and other areas in the City are very challenging. Many hours of work and millions of dollars have and are being spent to alleviate the impact both on the residents, visitors and businesses on the area. The Sidewalks Ordinance is but one effort to try to respond to this challenge. I support the current regulation particularly because it addresses pedestrian safety and concern for the needs of businesses while trying not to be totally oblivious to the needs of others. However, it is not a perfect policy. Once elected I want to keep working with small business, law enforcement and mental health professionals and explore better alternatives that support our merchants while maintaining the dignity of all Berkeley residents.

**Lori Droste – District 8**

I supported the sidewalk ordinance passed by Council on April 26. I also co-authored the initial sidewalk ordinance back in 2015. Our City Attorney is reviewing the recent Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision and how that interacts with our sidewalk ordinance but I feel confident our ordinance complies with this decision. The bottom line is that I believe we should enforce our existing laws. As the only councilmember with school-aged children, I share a unique perspective of our persistent street behavior challenges in the Downtown and in our parks.

In particular, I think there are a few remaining issues that need addressing in the sidewalk ordinance—encampments, long-term placement of personal items on the sidewalk (BMC 14.48.020), the City's role in removing sidewalk impediments (BMC 14.48.210), and the enforcement of laws that assist in the free passage of persons (BMC 14.48.020, BMC 13.36.020, and BMC 13.36.030).

The City of Berkeley has the ability to do two important things with regard to street behavior: 1) provide compassionate and robust care (shelter, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, etc.) to individuals and 2) ensure that our Downtown, Telegraph Area and other parts of our city are inviting to all residents (children, disabled, and elderly). They aren't mutually exclusive. The truth of the matter is that many of my peers don't visit Downtown Berkeley because of street behavior challenges. We should not tolerate anti-social and dangerous street behavior. I am particularly adept at addressing this problem as I worked firsthand with struggling individuals throughout the Bay Area as a homeless services provider.

We also need to address crime in People's Park. I have been working with UC-Berkeley, the Telegraph Business Improvement District, neighbors and merchants to address the persistent problems within People's Park, which often spread to the surrounding neighborhood. I have been continually voicing my concern to the University that People's Park, as it is currently constituted, presents enormous safety risks to residents, children and students and it needs to change. I have encouraged the District Attorney to issue stay away orders for those individuals that are consistently problematic and violent.

Additionally, I have a proven track record in helping our addicted, mentally ill and/or homeless population get the help it needs. I have led investments in supportive housing, co-authored visionary modular housing for the homeless, wrote legislation to explore mobile showers/bathrooms, supported court-assisted outpatient treatment, and joined my Council colleagues in supporting the new Pathways navigation center by voting for it in the [Spring of 2017](#).

Homelessness is an unfortunate byproduct of our ongoing housing crisis. I have worked over the years with some of the nation's leading experts in housing affordability and anti-displacement strategies. As a result, I have earned the endorsement of Karen Chapple from the Urban Displacement Project, Carol Galante, who was Obama's assistant secretary of housing, and Michael Lens, who studies racial and economic segregation at UCLA. They trust my work on addressing housing affordability and understand that addressing homelessness and affordability needs to be grounded in sound, evidence-based policy and not catchy soundbites. I'm honored that my eight colleagues on City Council have consistently rated my legislation as the City's number one priority two out of the past three years.

Finally, homelessness is a regional issue and Berkeley can't do it alone. We need to work with our neighboring cities to pursue a shared, regional approach to homelessness. I have continually engaged in conversations with regional elected officials about this and other issues. That's why I have the endorsements of all of Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, El Cerrito Mayor Gabriel Quinto, Albany Mayor Peggy Quaid, and Emeryville Mayor John Bauters. They trust my collaborative skills, experience, and commitment to these pressing issues.

#### **Mary Kay Lace – District 8**

There are many people in distress on our streets, and they deserve both our sympathy and appropriate services. While some street behavior is a result of people living unsheltered with mental illness, substance abuse and other challenges, others also engage in behaviors that are disruptive and at times frightening.

The best way to help the homeless is to get them housed and enrolled in services appropriate to their needs. I strongly support the Pathways Project and the Mayor's efforts to address homelessness with coordinated services and stable shelters such as Berkeley's new Navigation Center on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Housing First is a nationally recognized best practice for rehousing the homeless, and I support investing in programs that have proven to be successful in getting unsheltered individuals housed.

In addition, the Pathways Project is designed to help relieve pressures on Berkeley's commercial districts and neighborhoods by engaging on focused outreach to encourage homeless individuals into Navigation Centers. As spaces in the STAIR center become available, I would like to see concentrated outreach in the downtown area, such that every unsheltered individual is offered meaningful and repeated opportunities to opt into services and a path to housing. In San Francisco, this kind of sustained outreach has resulted in over 85% of individuals opting into Navigation Centers.

Berkeley's Downtown should be vibrant and welcoming. No one should feel frightened or threatened in our public spaces, and I support enforcement of rules related to public safety and threatening behavior, no matter who is involved. We have an obligation to all residents and visitors to ensure that no one is allowed to engage in behavior that compromises public health or safety. To help the City to preemptively manage these concerns, I strongly support the addition of public restrooms throughout the City, in our parking structures, public buildings, parks and other public facilities, and would like to see public restrooms similar to those found in many cities across the world. Berkeley has deployed porta-potties throughout the city, focusing on areas with large concentrations of homeless. This is an important temporary measure that should continue to be funded. We need to make sure we are providing humane facilities, and also guard against public health



concerns that arise from unsanitary conditions – which negatively affect the homeless themselves, as well as other citizens.

Bringing back foot and bicycle patrols is also important for our Downtown, and for the entire City. Just the regular presence of police in an area can have the effect of discouraging inappropriate behavior, and the relationships our police can develop when present regularly are important elements in creating a respectful environment for all.

I support the Sidewalks ordinance passed by Council because I recognize that we must address the concerns discussed above. However, I understand there are legal questions still being analyzed by the City Attorney. As an attorney myself, I look forward to applying my expertise and working closely with the City Attorney on these issues.

**Alfred Twu – District 8**

I do not support the Sidewalks Ordinance. Punitive measures that criminalize poverty simply shift people around. We need shelters open 24 hours a day so people have places to spend the day other than the sidewalk. In places where sidewalks are often blocked, the sidewalk should be widened.

**3. What do ideas do you have for bringing BPD staffing levels up to authorized levels? (...and reinstating bike cops in the Downtown?)** Second part of question asked only of District 4 Candidates.

**Rashi Kesarwani – District 1**

When I worked in Sacramento for the non-partisan California Legislative Analyst's Office, I had the opportunity to participate directly in the development of effective public policy. Real progress requires that all stakeholders have a seat at the table. If elected to City Council, I will make sure that the Berkeley Police Department has a seat at the stakeholder table, along with neighbors, business owners, and homeless services providers. I'm proud to have received the endorsement of the Berkeley Police Association, and I want to work collaboratively with the police department to improve morale and increase recruitment and retention. We need to think holistically about compensation as well as opportunities for training, tools, and special assignments. We should provide our police force with the best training on de-escalation techniques and make sure that the compensation of our police officers reflects the vital role they play in our community.

**Margo Schueler – District 1**

Police staffing levels throughout the region are below authorized levels. Hiring in the public sector in general is challenging with the local economy supercharged. The very high standards we hold for hiring into the BPD is part of what makes our police force exceptional in our region. Public perception of policing as a career path is not highly respected in our region due to national and other regional police practices.

Our community has a wide range of perspectives and opinions on police and policing. There is fear of crime coupled with fear of police. I applaud BPD's current initiatives to strengthen relationships between community members and public safety officers and support finding new avenues and opportunities for communication and transparency between the BPD and our many fractured communities. When our local young people see community policing and public safety as the career path they want to follow, we can begin to recruit and retain public safety officers.

**Igor Tregub – District 1**

Berkeley has one of the finest police departments in the country, and officers serving our community deserve fair wages and benefits. As the candidate endorsed by the Alameda Labor Council, Alameda Building Trades Council and eight affiliates, California Nurses Association, National Union for Healthcare Workers, and SEIU-UHW, I have a track record of supporting our hard-working staff and ensuring that they access to the resources they need to do their jobs. I will work to retain officers by ensuring that they earn the wages and benefits they deserve, and the respect they deserve from my office.

BPD has faced a steady decline in staffing since the early 2000's, with a sharp decrease in the past year (down from 180 authorized officers). I am deeply concerned over the serious shortage in staffing. We need to ensure our wages are competitive with other departments and that we are providing our officers the tools and support that they need. As your Councilmember, I will make stabilizing our police force, and expanding community policing efforts a top priority.

Our community faces many challenges, including a recurring inundation of violent individuals who come to Berkeley to seek attention. Certain types of crime are also on the rise. In three weeks, my campaign team has experienced three car break ins. We've felt the costs of this crime personally and in our pocketbooks. We need a fully staffed police force that can respond in a way that keeps the community safe.

**Ben Gould – District 4**

I believe in working with our police officers, not against them, in order to address our public safety and staffing challenges. Right now, we have the budget needed to hire more officers, but due to morale and recruitment challenges, we have been unable to fill those vacancies.

The Berkeley Police Association has endorsed “anyone but Kate Harrison” in this District 4 council race, because of her active support and advocacy for policies “...that de-professionalize and demoralize the department... [by placing] unqualified activists in charge of core police functions.” The policies the incumbent has advocated for have exacerbated our staffing challenges and made it more difficult to reinstate bike cops in the Downtown.

Our police have been recognized as having nationally leading experts in de-escalation techniques and for having the lowest rates of observed bias in the country, and our elected officials should recognize and reward that and work with them to further improve. From day one as your councilmember, I will work collaboratively with BPD to help rebuild morale, boost recruitment, and take BPD to an even higher level of fairness and professionalism.

**Kate Harrison – District 4**

The City Council has budgeted a full 181 officer force but we haven’t been able to fill vacancies due to retention and recruitment issues. We recently negotiated a significant pay raise, making ours the most highly compensated departments in order to help with recruitment and retention. 60% of our General Fund is now dedicated to public safety and this is projected to grow. We will soon be faced with choosing to pay more for public safety or to fix potholes, infrastructure, libraries, and parks.

Berkeley is not alone in having trouble recruiting police officers – it is endemic across the nation. Anybody who rides BART can see large BART police recruitment ads offering a \$10,000 signing bonus. San Francisco has billboards *in Berkeley* advertising for officers. What is unique to the pressures of Berkeley’s officers are outside forces such as right-wing demonstrations repeatedly coming to town and dealing with the homelessness crisis. These are far outweighed by the cost of housing - police officers who live in Vallejo can work in Vallejo, significantly reducing their commute. That’s one of the reasons I’m a big proponent of workforce housing for our police, firemen, and teachers not just the development of market-rate housing.

I authored legislation to recreate bike and pedestrian patrols Downtown and have requested funds in next year’s budget. A significant amount of police/citizen interaction occurs in just a few spots in the City, almost all of which are Downtown. Having officers on the street, close to these locations should help.

Crime in Berkeley is slightly up. But we are all feeling more unsafe because of street behavior, unattended objects and a visible increase in people with mental health issues. More police are not the answer. We need to redirect fund to mental health workers, dealing with illegal dumping and sanitation services.

Berkeley’s reputation as having one of the best police departments requires sustained efforts by our department, citizens, and elected officials to stay ahead of the curve. Berkeley has racial disparities in law enforcement and use of force, but we also have the political will and motivation to confront and resolve these issues. We need to make the entire community safe. People should not be doubly victimized – once by crime and then by reluctance to call the police. My efforts to clarify the role of the Police Review Commission are directed toward insuring that the public is confident that police accountability is being addressed.

**Greg Magofna – District 4**

It is a not an easy time historically to be a police officer and the staffing and recruiting challenges BPD faces are quite alarming. While the constraints Berkeley places on police officers to protect citizens’ rights may make it

less attractive than other cities in the region, we have a very high quality police force and we have to look at what would attract and retain the types of officers we want in our community. Morale and the cost of living are things that come up in conversations with BPD and we have to look at how we can show we support our officers not only in spirit but in being able to live in our community. We have start to examine how we can provide housing to our officers, firefighters, teachers, and others who serve our community.

#### **Rigel Robinson – District 7**

Improving community trust in the police is mutually beneficial. Through community policing strategies, I hope that trust between local communities and first responders can grow, improving morale in the department and disincentivizing officers from leaving. While it is true that the department is understaffed and needs to hire more officers to function effectively, the long-term issues must be addressed as well.

#### **Ces Rosales – District 7**

For the safety of our community safety – which is one of my top priorities as a Councilmember - it is imperative that staffing levels be reached up to authorized levels. Some of the ideas I have at this time: Support the City Manager to make filling the positions a priority; that the department is properly funded and staffing fully budgeted; To make outreach and retention attractive - provide training and equipment (not militarization) that attracts candidates; make sure compensation packages are competitive; offer career development support for all levels so they can look forward to improvement and succession planning; develop and maintain good community relationships between community and police; and last, but not least, maybe ask the police what they recommend for attaining authorized levels of staffing and get the discussion going from there.

#### **Lori Droste – District 8**

This is perhaps one of the most important issues facing Berkeley and very few people know about it. We are facing significant recruitment and retention problems in the Berkeley Police Department. Our police officers have historically been among the most diverse and educated officers throughout the country. What many people don't realize is that our police department has to have a certain number of officers on patrol. Our numbers are so low that specialty departments like traffic enforcement could fold in order to meet our required patrol levels. Recently, my friends were in San Pablo Park with their children and parents when there was a shooting. As a result of this incident, they have become incredibly concerned with our staffing issues because not only does it affect basic concerns like traffic enforcement and investigations, it dramatically affects crime prevention.

So, why are our officers leaving? First of all, police departments across the country are facing these problems but the issue is particularly acute in Berkeley. Secondly, BPD's job has become much harder in the past few years. I have [documented](#) some of the challenges that they have faced in my newsletters. Whether it involves proposals to put citizens with no qualifications in [charge of our police department and \\$65 million dollar budget](#) or having to police [violent protests](#), it is a challenging time to work in Berkeley. I am also the only candidate in my race who supported our police officers participating in free regional disaster training this year. I have talked to police officers firsthand and they have mentioned that working closer to their homes (because housing costs are so high here) in a safer environment, with comparable pay is appealing. We need to undertake a significant recruitment and retention effort and provide professional support to our police officers.

While I oppose police militarization throughout our country, strongly support implicit bias training, and have backed oversight measures and independent investigations to ensure fair and equitable policing, it is absolutely critical to have a councilmember who has a solid comprehension of community safety issues, relies on evidence instead of ideology, and respects city employees when they are providing positive outcomes for our community. As a result, I have the sole endorsement of both Berkeley's police officers and firefighters.

**Mary Kay Lace – District 8**

The City Council has authorized – and funded – over 180 full time police positions. Unfortunately, with Baby-Boomers reaching retirement age, Berkeley, like many jurisdictions across the State and Nation, is facing many retirements. At the same time, the number of people choosing to go into law enforcement has declined, due to the availability of other well-paid careers, the many dangers our police face, and incidents of police misconduct that are reported in the news.

Another set of factors that makes this a challenging environment for recruitment and retention of Berkeley police officers is the mix of: (1) high housing prices in the inner Bay Area which means many of our officers commute long distances; and (2) the fact that we have high standards and requirements for hiring Berkeley Police officers. We require higher levels of education than others, and have exceptional training. Because every other jurisdiction in the Bay Area is also facing a surge in retirements, just like Berkeley, Police departments throughout the region often recruit Berkeley's Police officers to fill their ranks. They can offer shorter commutes and sometimes promotions. All of this creates a very challenging environment for bringing staffing levels up to what the Council has already authorized and funded.

I serve on the City of Berkeley's Personnel Board, and from that experience, I know we are working on a variety of measures to recruit and train locally. We are also committed to ensuring that salaries for the Berkeley Police Department remain generous. I am aware that the Berkeley Police Department officers recently received a raise and I support that decision.

Other measures I would propose include:

- Create more opportunities for professional development and promotion.
- Fund incentives such as recruitment and referral bonuses.
- Consider benefits that would help retain officers with long commutes.
- Work collaboratively with the police, the community and the Center for Police Equity to ensure that we act in an objective and fact-based manner to achieve our policy objectives in eliminating bias in policing.

**Alfred Twu – District 8**

The high cost of living is a major barrier to hiring – already, many Berkeley police live outside of the city and commute long distances. Better pay may be needed.

**4. What are your ideas for making Berkeley more supportive of current businesses and welcoming environment for new businesses? (...particularly for retail and office space in the Downtown?)** Second part of question asked only of District 4 Candidates.

**Rashi Kesarwani – District 1**

I want Berkeley to be a welcoming place for small business owners, with interesting shops and thriving restaurants along all of our commercial streets. To achieve this vision, I will work with our Planning Department to streamline the permitting process for new businesses. We need to explore the reorganization of our Planning Department so that planners specialize in a particular type of permit. For instance, planners who specialize in permitting for small businesses would be able to process those permits faster. I also support regular public reporting by our Planning Department on the number and type of permits issued in order to encourage efficiency and results.

Current businesses are often hurt by less foot traffic when nearby retail spaces sit vacant for long periods of time. I support a tax on vacant retail space (or other inducement) in order to encourage landlords to find commercial tenants faster.

Finally, if we want vibrant commercial streets, we all need to support our small businesses by shopping locally.

**Margo Schueler – District 1**

Many policies which impact our local businesses are made without participation and input from our business community. The recent decision to move forward with a ban on all disposable dishware is exemplary. While the environmental goal of reducing disposable plastic ware is an excellent goal, we risk destroying small restauranteurs who do not have the dish and cleaning infrastructure to manage the requirement for total transformation away from disposables, risk public health as home dishware that may not be appropriate for hot food or not sanitized to the standards of commercial dishwashing is used for take out food, and require additional staffing at regionally high minimum wages to manage the dish work not originally included in small business plans. Our ambition to address a serious environmental problem should be done in collaboration with our business community to ensure that we can maintain, support and attract local business development that makes Berkeley our diverse rich city.

**Igor Tregub – District 1**

In my five years on the Zoning Board, I have had the privilege to approve use permits for hundreds of new businesses – including many in District 1. However, there's much more that we can do as a city to ensure that small business owners that create these jewels of our community feel welcomed and supported. As a member of the Zoning Ordinance Revision Project committee, I have been working closely with city staff to enact recommendations to the Berkeley City Council about streamlining certain approvals – the ones in which there is minimal or no public opposition, but it still takes months to years from beginning to end to achieve them. Many small business owners tend to get caught in the crosshairs of these processes, which costs them valuable time and money and places their business model at risk.

In addition, I support incentives that would make it easier for small businesses to remain here in the Berkeley community. If elected to the City Council, I would work with the Loan Administration Board to champion a revolving loan fund for existing small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs wishing to start a business here. I also helped secure the Sierra Club's endorsement of Measure J in San Francisco in 2016, and would love to bring a similar concept here to Berkeley.

According to <https://www.sfheritage.org/legacy/legacy-business-registry-preservation-fund> , Measure J established “[t]he Legacy Business Preservation Fund ... [which] makes Legacy Businesses on the registry eligible for an annual grant of \$500 per employee, as well as offers an annual \$4.50 per square foot grant to property owners who extend 10 year leases to Legacy Business tenants. Annual grants will be capped at \$50,000 per Legacy Business and \$22,500 for building owners. Annual costs for the fund are projected at \$3 million for the first year with an estimated annual new appropriation to the Legacy Businesses Fund of \$3 million per additional year ... Legacy businesses and nonprofits ... are 30 years or older, have been nominated by a member of the Board of Supervisors or Mayor, and in a hearing before the Small Business Commission, prove that they have made a significant impact on the history or culture of their neighborhood.”

On the very day I’m preparing this questionnaire, we are experiencing the last day that Brennan’s – a mainstay of this community and just across the street from our district’s lines – will be in operation (<https://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/08/16/almost-60-year-old-brennans-restaurant-in-berkeley-is-closing>). For someone who has patronized this business on numerous occasions, having held many civic meetings there, and gotten to know the staff on a personal basis, hearing this news brought tears to my eyes. I also know that its closure is a symptom of the struggles that hundreds of small business owners have faced all over Berkeley, and many others have already had to shutter or are at risk of closing. I want to do whatever is possible to keep these businesses here, and assist our creative business owners in opening up new ones. Our small businesses are what make the City of Berkeley such a vibrant, unique place to live, visit, and shop.

Additionally, we need to continue working on ways to make our city’s commercial corridors a destination for people within and beyond Berkeley. On the City Council, I would support a Bus Rapid Transit system from Oakland to South Berkeley to Downtown. I have always been supportive of businesses that help maintain a vibrant nightlife in our commercial corridors; the added visitors improve street safety while providing a valuable new and recurring customer base for neighboring businesses. On the Council, I would love to work with the Downtown Business Association and other business community stakeholders to develop and expand promotional and re-branding opportunities for our business corridors.

#### **Ben Gould – District 4**

Resolving Downtown’s persistent challenges with street behavior are just one piece of the puzzle for making Downtown Berkeley more welcoming for new businesses. Unfortunately, current leadership continues to pursue policies that reinforce Berkeley’s anti-business reputation; for example, the Council’s exceptional, unnecessary, and counter-productive efforts to regulate commercial signage in the Downtown. As Councilmember, I will seek opportunities to streamline the permitting process and remove needless obstacles to doing business in Berkeley, while also promoting sustainability and ensuring workers are treated fairly.

Long permitting wait times discourage people from setting up shop in Berkeley. A new storefront shouldn’t have to wait six months or more to get permits. Berkeley needs to overhaul its permitting process to be faster, easier to understand, and technologically up-to-date. The 2017 report by Zucker Systems on Berkeley’s permitting processes already offers Berkeley a roadmap for improvement — we need a City Council that will make implementing its recommendations a priority.

New businesses in the Downtown also depend on customers and employees being able to access their stores. Downtown needs a Councilmember who will support creating new homes, both affordable and market-rate, and expand transportation options and accessibility to the Downtown. Both approaches are needed to ensure new business have a large and vibrant pool of both customers and employees, living locally in Berkeley and the East Bay, to reduce the need for lengthy and polluting commutes.

I’m proud to have earned the endorsements of former Obama Science Envoy and UC Berkeley Professor Dan Kammen, and Professor Karen Chapple, head of the UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project, because my policies align with best practices for urban sustainability and anti-displacement practices.

**Kate Harrison – District 4**

Loss of local businesses that have given Berkeley its unique character are a tragedy.

In addition to the problems of rising rents and competition from the internet, the entire Bay Area is facing a “silver tsunami” of post-war baby boomers reaching retirement age and wanting to sell/close their business. One option to address this transition is to encourage retiring owners to consider selling their business to their employees through workers’ cooperatives similar to Zachary’s Pizza and the Cheeseboard, and currently being considered by Urban Ore.

On the Council, I serve on the Small Business Subcommittee that is working to reduce barriers to small businesses in our planning processes, consider how to mitigate the short-term effects of construction, encouraging vacant storefronts to be filled, and small business succession.

As a Councilmember I have started a “Small Business of the Month” program that recognizes Berkeley’s small local businesses such as Eastwind Books, Missing Link Bicycles, Copy Central, and Flora Arte. When re-elected I would like to develop a legacy business program, similar to the one established in San Francisco, that would provide incentives to unique local businesses.

Bringing in new businesses is part of the larger issue of making Downtown a vibrant, friendly and safe area. The new Acheson Commons construction, will bring more residents, and as mentioned, the new hotel will also bring more visitors to Downtown. We have also added informational kiosks (IKE) and rental bikes to the Downtown area and are working toward making the Greenway from Downtown to South Berkeley more attractive.

**Greg Magofna – District 4**

I worked very closely with the Office of Economic Development and understand many of the challenges new businesses face. In terms of retail, the permitting process is one huge challenge for new businesses. Not only is it costly to make improvements to your new business, but the time that it takes for some businesses to get final approvals is a drain when you are paying such high rents. In terms of office space, we need to get more and larger office spaces. We suffer from a brain drain in Berkeley and many businesses that start in Berkeley leave when they outgrow their local office spaces. We need to look at how we can incentive real estate lenders to offer larger and more flexible spaces that startups can grow into.

**Rigel Robinson – District 7**

Too many small businesses go bankrupt and too many commercial spaces are left vacant in Berkeley. I will work to incentivize worker-owned cooperatives and bring more small businesses to Berkeley, while preserving existing valuable businesses that may be at risk. Additionally, I will work to densify housing development and expand public transit which will improve walkability of commercial areas, to the benefit of local businesses.

**Ces Rosales – District 7**

I am in a unique position of having owned and run a business in a commercial district in San Francisco for over 20 years. I understand the angst of small businesses who have to deal with a lot of government regulations and at the same time maintain the dignity of the office space as a welcoming environment for your clientele. Safety is a big issue for businesses – especially personally and for the customers. Response to these concerns should not be taken lightly. Better communication between businesses and the City departments, depending on the needs, should be easier. Right now – getting a permit is a two-step process – one with the City and the other with the County. Can the City make it possible to make this run to the County office be avoided? I will certainly look into this when I am in office. The other thing is the rental space. Are businesses protected from egregious rise of rental rates? As a Councilmember, I certainly expect to be more representative of the small



business community, as well as longtime residents (homeowners, renters and tenants) and the student population in District 7.

#### **Lori Droste – District 8**

I'm grateful to have broad support from the business community throughout Berkeley, including numerous Elmwood merchants, like the owners of Mrs. Dalloway's, Elmwood Theater, La Med, Elements, Anton Salon, and Summer Kitchen. Additionally, I helped Baker and Commons reopen quickly after the Elmwood Cafe closed its doors. Our local merchants know that I have been working nonstop on this issue over the past few years and value their input.

I work with merchants and city staff to help organize and advertise "buy local" campaigns like the Elmwood Wine Walk. In addition to establishing a Council subcommittee on Small Business to focus on these vexing problems, I also have had my students in the Mills School of Business and Policy examine trends and conduct analysis and exit interviews with many Elmwood merchants.

Additionally, the Office of Economic Development conducted a [rigorous analysis](#) of the issues our businesses face in this challenging environment for retail.

Although I have discussed with staff various iterations of a vacancy tax and I requested polling on this particular issue, our economic development experts on city staff and in the community have indicated that there currently is a much more immediate pressing issue for small businesses in Berkeley that can have positive impacts on our retail environment. Business owners surveyed overwhelmingly indicated that our permitting and licensing processes are the biggest impediment for business in Berkeley. I finalized long-awaited changes to our [retail quota system](#) and I have helped spearhead changes to our planning and zoning processes so more businesses get permits or licenses faster so don't have to pay rent for several months while they wait. This is the most important issue we should—and are—addressing this year. Granted, we still need to focus on neighborhood conditions (illegal street behavior, cleanliness, parking availability, vacancies, construction impacts), costs of doing business (rent, labor, and housing costs), competition from the Internet, and Berkeley's overall reputation as a place to do business.

I'm grateful that my work on these issues has earned me the support and endorsement of so many small business owners and the City of Berkeley's former Economic Development head, Michael Caplan.

#### **Mary Kay Lace – District 8**

With rents rising, and competition from Big Box stores in surrounding communities, and from the internet, there is enormous pressure on Berkeley's small businesses. Yet, small and local businesses are what give Berkeley much of its character. I strongly support the City's new focus and emphasis on small and local business that was in response to Councilmember Hahn and Mayor Arreguin's Small Business Support Package, passed over a year ago. The City's Economic Development staff have been engaged in sustained outreach and have already implemented numerous improvements. As a Planning Commissioner, I am directly involved in the work that is being done to simplify and expedite the permitting processes. New businesses cannot pay rent for 6 months, a year, or more, without being able to operate, due to slow permitting processes, we need to, and will address this problem.

#### **Alfred Twu – District 8**

##### Faster Approvals for New Businesses:

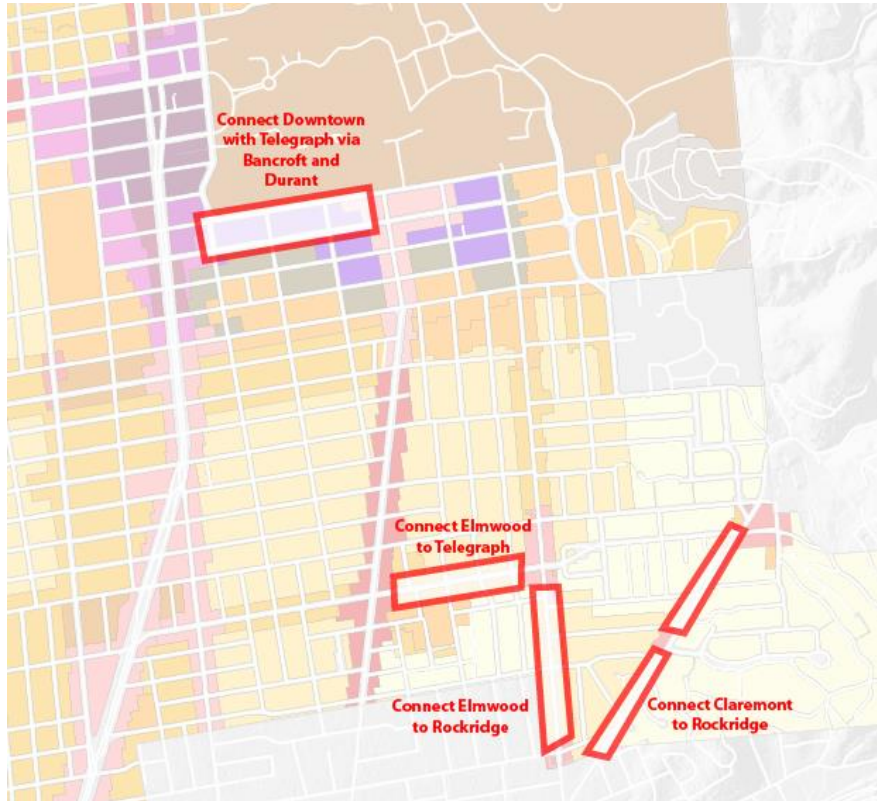
It can take over a year for a new business or an existing business seeking to move/expand to get all permits and

inspections needed to open. We need to accelerate this process by reducing the number of steps and increasing Planning and Health Department staffing.

#### Allow Businesses in More Places

Rents are high as the amount of commercial zones is capped, and many stores are being replaced with housing. As the city grows, we need more places where businesses can open. I support legalizing small corner stores in residential zones, as well as more spots for food trucks and street vendors.

In particular, we should use zoning incentives to fill the retail gaps that separate our commercial zones to encourage shoppers to visit more than one district while in town. The first priorities should be linking up Downtown with Telegraph, and linking up Elmwood with Rockridge.



#### More Residents = More Customers

Get a lot more homes built near business districts and bus lines, to create a larger customer base that doesn't need parking to get to the stores.

## **5. What is your vision and ideas for revitalization of the Civic Center Historic District?**

### **Ben Gould – District 4**

Berkeley's historic Civic Center has fallen into disrepair and disuse. I support reinvesting and restoring our parks, historic buildings, and public infrastructure through new spending and/or public-private partnerships.

I would like to see the Berkeley High School Community Theater & Little Theater restored and used more frequently for public performances, which can charge admission to help defray the cost of the renovations. Similarly, I would like to see Civic Center Park repaired and modernized to encourage more regular public events, such as food stands, live music, movie nights, markets, and festivals.

I also want to retrofit, restore, and adaptively reuse Old City Hall, the Veterans Memorial Building, and the large rear area of the Post Office. By exploring options for a mixture of public and private uses, we could offset costs and restore the role of these buildings in Berkeley's public life. For example, City Hall previously housed BUSD offices; allowing a portion of the building to be rented out as private offices or even coworking spaces could help cover costs of renovating the building and fund creating revitalized public facilities in other portions of it.

### **Kate Harrison – District 4**

Preserving and revitalizing the historic character of Berkeley's Civic Center will help insure our city's aesthetic and cultural identity. \$300,000 in planning funds to help develop plans and ideas for the Civic Center Historic District have been provided through Measure T-1, a \$100 million investment in Berkeley's infrastructure. Additional funding will be required.

The centerpiece of the District is the Civic Center Park. Although perhaps better known at the moment as the location of the recent alt-right rallies, I believe the Park can be an inviting location for families and events. We have recently re-seeded and refurbished Civic Center Park and the area should also benefit from the new Civic Center parking structure.

Attractions and activities in the area could include an expanded historical museum and live performances. The farmers' market needs more programming. The live music and poetry readings at Oakland's farmers' markets create an inviting environment. More specific activities for children would also add to the attraction. The efforts to add the food courts on different days is a good start. Also, the current nature of the Farmer's Market layout in a long strip is not inviting. Perhaps more of the park could be used for the market as is true in other cities. We should also work with the school district to reopen and creatively use the Berkeley High Theater and Florence Schwimley Little Theater (I saw Frank Zappa there!). I believe we should expand the historic district's boundary to include all pre-war construction along this corridor, including the Shattuck Hotel and the Herrick Campus.

Public/private partnerships should be encouraged, with the addition of a Friends of the Civic Center.

### **Greg Magofna – District 4**

This is an amazing opportunity area, however, they City itself does not have the funds to retrofit Old City Hall and the Veterans Building. We need to look at how we can leverage federal historic preservation funds and partner with private enterprises. There are amazing examples of reuse of historic buildings across the country and we need to look at how we can use our spaces to house public-facing businesses like restaurants, arts organizations, and educational institutions.

## **6. Would you support public/private partnerships to adaptively reuse the Downtown Post Office?**

### **Ben Gould – District 4**

Absolutely. The Downtown Berkeley Post Office is an architectural gem and a treasured part of Downtown's historic fabric. I am committed to preserving the front section of the Post Office and to ensuring that this portion of the building, like the Civic Center, continues to play a role in Berkeley's public life.

The City of Berkeley has already exhausted too much time, money, and effort to oppose decisions by the US Postal Service; I believe we need to change course. I am open to supporting the relocation of post office services to another location, if it creates an opportunity to restore and adaptively reuse the elegant lobby. I want to leverage a public-private partnership and/or the redevelopment of the back portion of the lot to turn the main building into a new attraction for Downtown Berkeley. I'm very excited about the potential to create a performance/event space, a museum, or even a market hall.

### **Kate Harrison – District 4**

I was very pleased that the City of Berkeley successfully defended itself in the lawsuit challenging the validity of Berkeley's Civic Center Overlay District. The U.S. Post Office on Allston Way is a historically landmarked building. I support it remaining a public asset with the inclusion of public banking. The rear portion of the Post Office could be a community resource for one of the uses allowed by the Civic Center Overlay. I would support a comprehensive and inclusive process to decide its future use. Factors to consider are its local and national historical significance; central location; and proximity to other civic institutions. Performing arts groups are woefully short of space in Berkeley. Using the rear of the building as a concert hall is one possible creative reuse.

### **Greg Magofna – District 4**

Yes. Please see answer above.

**7. What is your vision for public art in the Downtown, including visual and performing arts? Also, what is your vision for supporting current and/or additional visual and/or performing arts venues in the Downtown?**

**Ben Gould – District 4**

I am excited about the direction Downtown is moving with the existing Arts District, the new Berkeley Art Museum / Pacific Film Archive, the newly renovated UC Theater, and the upcoming improvements to Shattuck Cinemas — provided the Harold Way project actually moves forward. Additionally, with the “1% for the Arts” requirement, new construction in downtown will add to public art or contribute to the city’s art fund.

I will continue to support the arts in Downtown, especially around the Arts District. I believe having a diverse range of activities and businesses in Downtown is crucial for keeping it vibrant and thriving, and the arts serve as an important year-round draw to the area, stimulating other businesses and activities, and making Downtown an appealing place for new businesses and residents to locate. I would like to see the Berkeley High Community Theater and Little Theater renovated and used for more community events, and see Civic Center Park used for live open-air music and festivals.

**Kate Harrison – District 4**

Berkeley has made a great effort at making the Downtown district as an arts center. Home to two regionally acclaimed theatres, jazz and theatre schools, music venues, media centers, museums and film archives., it is a destination point for art enthusiasts of all disciplines. The next step is to build upon this foundation by expanding public access and participation in the arts. I would encourage better utilization of open space and under-used commercial spaces. The renovated BART plaza will provide a focal point to develop public art, both visual and performance. How we allocate our dedicated budget line for arts funding is worth examining – we need to use the funding for more living, interactive art and fewer static pieces. On the Council, I closed the loophole that exempted new buildings in the Downtown area from paying the full 1% arts fee that all other developments in the City have to pay.

In the short-term, more use could be made of vacant storefronts and lots as art spaces. Longer-term, redevelopment of the former Post Office building and Veterans Building could provide new venues for performance and cultural attractions.

As most entertainment occurs on nights and weekends I am sensitive to the need for sufficient parking in the Downtown area. Transit service is significantly less at night. My friends from San Francisco, for example, have an easier time getting home at night after a performance at Berkeley Rep or Aurora by just hopping on BART, while my friends in the hills need to drive. We will soon complete the new Downtown parking garage adding significant parking to Downtown. Longer term, the ever increasing use of Uber and Lyft (while not readily available to some segments of Berkeley such as seniors and the disabled) as well as the potential for autonomous vehicles should lessen the need for parking.

**Greg Magofna – District 4**

I personally worked on doubling arts funding during Mayor Bates tenure, the Percent for Art Ordinance, and expanding the Downtown Arts District overlay. I would want to use these resources to make Downtown an outdoor art gallery with rotating art placed at the Downtown BART Plaza and around the area such as in Civic Center Park and up and down Addison. I would also love to continue to activate the area with public events and would continue to support the events held by the DBA and BAMPFA and see how we can expand offerings. Additionally, I would try to see how we could get more arts experiences that are free or low cost to the public to expand the audience of people who come Downtown for cultural experiences.

## ***8. What do you see as the critical management and financial issues facing the City over the next several years?***

### **Rashi Kesarwani – District 1**

I currently manage a \$900 million budget for San Francisco's Human Services Agency, which provides healthcare, meals, and other essential support to needy families. As a government Finance Manager, I'm highly attuned to government management and financial issues confronting our city over the long-term, including unfunded pension liabilities and crumbling infrastructure. I'm running for City Council in part because I look forward to bringing my public budgeting experience to Berkeley. I will make sure that Berkeley's budget is making the **appropriate investments in infrastructure** and our pension liabilities in

### **Margo Schueler – District 1**

Implement new computer and accounting systems to ensure the ability to provide information and developing reporting goals and metrics to ensure accountability to the community. As costs escalate, transparency and accountability from the City to the residents needs to be first order. During my 24 year residency in the Berkeley it has been difficult to get clear information on costs and revenues with respect to city programs and projects.

The direction of the City Manager during this year's budget cycle to have Council address priorities of all the work done by staff is a great step forward. We are often given piecemeal information about deficits in one area – we need money because there is no money for infrastructure, or the Marina fund is in the red, or there is a looming unfunded pension liability. We as a community have trouble addressing problems as they arise and our response often looks like a whack a mole exercise. Keeping an overview and developing the ability to reprioritize or confirm priorities within available funding streams.

Focus on grants and external funding as it develops. What are we prepared to seek as part of the federal infrastructure bill? Do we have any staff able to focus on assessing our fundability?

When developing revenue proposals, address the increasing disparity in tax basis among property owners and when developing tax and bond funding proposals identify ranges of impacts and not the average tax. The surprise to property owners when they expected a \$100 tax increase when they find their tax will be \$200 and their neighbor only \$50 will ultimately lead to a tax revolt. Again, transparency is the best approach.

### **Igor Tregub – District 1**

The City of Berkeley tends to budget by department, with generally a 10-15% carryover for each year. I fully support the importance of having a healthy contingency and rainy day fund. However, some of these budgeting decisions are made based on "paper FTEs" - in other words, staff positions that don't currently exist, nor are their projections to add them in the near- or even medium-term future. In situations where there is a projected deficit, I would start with taking a critical look at each departmental line item, to see where these paper FTEs exist - and move that funding to provide resources, staffing, and training where it is most needed, such as our Housing, Health, and Human Services Department, Code Enforcement Department, and to support our first responders.

I also believe that Berkeley residents - while extremely generous in supporting prior bond and parcel tax measures - do have a breaking point, and that we should make future funding decisions with homeowners and small property owners (many of whom tend to be house-rich, but cash-poor) in mind. Smart reallocations using the existing budget to add resources to the areas that are most in need of them, as well as keeping our promises to voters (which is why as Chair of the Housing Advisory Commission I led the charge to prevent U1 revenues from going into the Workforce Compensation Fund to fund a new Council chamber or other projects

not directly related to solving our housing or homelessness crisis) will go a long way toward building trust with the people of Berkeley.

Finally, I support ensuring that the Auditor's work maintains its independence and that the Council takes it seriously. Just last year, based on an audit relating to management reserves, the Council allocated \$371,000 to fund the reserves, of which \$300,000 went to the catastrophic event reserves and \$71,000 to the stability reserves. I supported these actions and will support other actions that ensure that our city provides the best possible service to its resident, provides the resources our employees need, and that we have a healthy amount of money saved up in case of a recession or other unfortunate event.

#### **Ben Gould – District 4**

I think the biggest financial issues facing the City are ensuring we have a strong reserve fund to protect against the likelihood of an economic downturn in the next few years; and addressing our unfunded capital and pension needs. Fortunately, the City has set a target of reserves being at 16.7% of the General Fund by the end of fiscal year 2020; getting there will require prudent policies and good stewardship.

Addressing our unfunded capital and pension needs will be more challenging, however, with \$500 million in deferred maintenance and capital improvements. The passage of Measure T1, with \$100 million for infrastructure spending, is a step in the right direction. But it will only begin to pay down our backlog, and does nothing to address the ongoing structural deficit.

Berkeley needs a comprehensive review and plan to address this structural deficit and rebuild our public resources, likely through some combination of efficiency improvements, adjustments in level of service, economic development, and tax increases. I also want to work with City staff to expedite the replacement of the obsolete, floppy-disk era FUND\$ system for budget tracking. Modern budgeting and record-keeping software is essential to making City operations and budgeting more transparent and efficient. By working with City staff, other Councilmembers, and up-to-date technology, I will push for new cost-saving and revenue-generating opportunities for the City.

#### **Kate Harrison – District 4**

The challenge in managing and balancing our City's budget is not only to identify the most crucial priorities but also to ensure that implementation is fair, consistent, and smart. My career has been devoted to improving the way public sector agencies use resources – financial, human and capital – to ensure they are meeting their goals in the most efficient way possible. The government cannot do it all and must keep in mind the primary goals we are trying to achieve. I would advocate for a comprehensive strategic plan, a process I have managed for cities, states and countries working to enter the European Union. Clarity and more transparency regarding the budget process will instill public trust in our government.

One way we can improve city services is to invest in technologies that support better management decision making and transparency. The new financial system under development is only one part of that. We must update the business license process and ensure that all who want to own a business are able to do so. As discovered during the campaign for the recent increase in the business license tax on larger landlords, we are losing potentially millions of dollars in revenues by not comparing data across available databases between the Finance Department and the Rent Board.

Technological improvements to ease access for its citizens and business owners is also a priority as they will improve services and help save staff time. Technology to expand citizen participation in council proceedings is in place in many municipalities and should be introduced here.

Another key management opportunity involves capitalizing on the twin tools of U1 for affordable housing and T1 for infrastructure spending. A challenge for the City is to not carry out business as usual but to ensure that these funds are used to support housing for all people below the median income and that we are using infrastructure funds sustainably.

The issue of pension and retiree health benefits is real but should not be exaggerated. As with having a mortgage which may not be payable all at once today, we need to insure we know how this obligation will be paid over its lifespan. Defined benefit pension plans are the backbone of a secure, middle class. We also have contractual obligations to those whom we have employed. This situation did not arise in a day nor will it be solved in the short run and it cannot be solved by not honoring our obligations. We need to come together in negotiations to address the situation. Employees have already begun to contribute to retirement and we have instituted a two-tier system and more will need to be done.

Increasing revenues is also a key priority. Working to meet the needs of the small business community and investment in the Downtown and commercial districts will boost city revenues. On a local level, I support increasing the transfer tax on property sales above a certain value (e.g., \$5 million) and assessments for parks, transportation and other infrastructure for which new developments create new demands.

#### **Greg Magofna – District 4**

The critical issue we face are how we maintain and enhance our infrastructure. It is very apparent Downtown that our streets are crumbling and many of our parks and public spaces are underfunded and falling into disrepair like Old City Hall, the Marina, and Willard Pool. We need to find ways to make improvements that not only save money but prepare for the climate changes we are already experiencing.

#### **Rigel Robinson – District 7**

Berkeley's significant infrastructure needs and maintenance backlog will require particular attention over the next several years, which is why I am working on the Measure R campaign to promote Vision 2050, with the hope that we can soon bring a new bond measure to the ballot to fund infrastructure fixes to bring Berkeley into the 21st century and prepare us for the 22nd. Rising pension costs and unfunded liabilities is an issue that I take seriously. We need to find a way to address these costs without balancing the solution on the backs of municipal workers.

#### **Ces Rosales – District 7**

Berkeley is going to need to spend time and money in infrastructure needs in the next decade. Our budgets have not forecasted for the maintenance and replacement of aging infrastructure and this will require massive infusion of time, energy and cash for the City and its residents. Let's hope this can be mitigated before it becomes truly disastrous.

#### **Lori Droste – District 8**

The city's unfunded liabilities tied to benefits and infrastructure total \$994 million. Our future city employee retirement payments to CalPERS will increase by 50% over the next ten years. Our City needs to elect someone who has the experience in addressing these issues, is an independent thinker, and has a track record of making sound decisions for the overall wellbeing of our community.

Within the past year, I strongly advocated for a general funds reserve policy. Council took a great step forward but I made it stronger so our City wouldn't inadvertently face a fiscal crisis. Thanks to my analysis of the City Auditor's recommendations, I realized that Council needed to pass criteria and guidelines should we ever have



to access those rainy day funds. This is why my background teaching public policy helps with judicious policy making. A reserve policy means nothing if there are no guidelines governing how those funds can be accessed. As a result, I put forward legislation to create criteria and guidelines so that Council can only access that rainy day fund in the event of a real fiscal emergency.

In the years ahead, City Council needs to really be vigilant in how we are spending our money. Since we have a finite amount of resources, we need to ensure that we are spending money on programs that show results. As an example, that's why I have consistently argued for accountability and performance metrics in homeless services and community agency funding. I authored the framework for a comprehensive homeless service analysis so we can determine 1) who we are serving 2) how much we are spending and 3) if it is effective.

My work on these important policy issues has garnered me the support of State Controller Betty Yee, former Councilmember Gordon Wozniak, and a wide variety of other local stakeholders. Please see my list of endorsements [here](#).

I hope you will join the Alameda County Democratic Party, the Berkeley Democratic Club, the Sierra Club and numerous other organizations, elected officials, and over 300 neighbors in supporting my candidacy. I hope to earn your support. [www.loridroste2018.org](http://www.loridroste2018.org)

#### **Mary Kay Lace – District 8**

Since the “new Council” and Mayor took office in 2016, the City has made significant progress in addressing longstanding fiscal challenges. First, the City is implementing a new financial software system to replace an outdated DOS-based system that had been in use for several decades. Once the new system is in place, it will allow the transparency and accountability we need. Good data supports good decisions, and this is a positive step forward.

I am also aware that the new Council in 2016 established a formal Reserves policy – something previous Councils did not undertake despite the City Auditor's recommendations. Establishing reserves will result in better bond ratings, lower financing costs, and greater security and stability for the City of Berkeley. I strongly support the establishment and maintenance of prudent and fully funded reserves. Another important step forward is the Mayor's establishment of a Budget Subcommittee, which is looking at ways to improve Berkeley's budgeting systems and processes, to increase transparency and efficiency and to provide better information for the public and Council to review and consider in budgeting decisions. We also have a wealth of expertise in our community regarding budgeting and I would support bringing together all of the resources we have to tackle the budget complexities we face.

Meeting pension obligations is a challenge for all public entities throughout the country. I support the establishment of Trusts to invest monies at higher rates than can be obtained through CALPERS. Contributions must be significant over many years to ensure trusts are adequately funded, but the analysis provided by City Staff in their 2017 presentation shows the significant long-term benefits of these up-front investments.

Finally, I am aware that the new Planning Director is moving to implement the 150+ recommendations that came from an audit of that department. There are many changes being made right now regarding the City's budget process and I am very interested in taking a leadership role on these critically important issues.

**Alfred Twu – District 8**

Pension costs are a long term cost the city needs to plan for. In addition, we have more programs and services that people want. Our current revenue is insufficient. We need to bring in new businesses and construction to grow the tax base, and thereby increase revenue without raising the tax burden on small businesses.

