

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

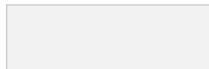
Discover the candidates and measures the Berkeley Democratic Club supports and the reasons behind our endorsements [here](#).

\*\*Berkeley Democratic Club endorsements indicated by asterisks

<b>MAYORAL CANDIDATES</b>	<b>3</b>
Adena Ishii**	3
Sophie Hahn	6
Kate Harrison	10
<b>COUNCIL CANDIDATES</b>	<b>14</b>
District 2	14
Terry Taplin**	14
Jenny Guarino	17
District 3	17
Deborah Matthews**	17
Chip Moore	20
Ben Bartlett	20
District 5	20
Nilang Gor	20
Todd Andrew	23
Shoshana O'Keefe	27
District 6	30
Brent Blackaby**	30
Andy Katz	34
<b>DA RECALL PROPOSERS</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>DA PAMELA PRICE OPPOSING RECALL</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>BALLOT MEASURES</b>	<b>40</b>
MEASURE W**	40
MEASURE X** (no formal opposition filed)	42
MEASURE Y** (no formal opposition filed)	43
MEASURE Z** (no formal opposition filed)	44
MEASURE AA** (no formal opposition filed)	45
MEASURE BB	46
MEASURE CC	49
MEASURE DD (no formal opposition filed)	52
MEASURE EE	53
MEASURE FF**	55
MEASURE GG	58
MEASURE HH	61

<b>SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES</b>	<b>63</b>
Jen Corn**	63
Laura Babitt**	65
Ana Vasudeo	68
Abdur Sikder	70
<b>RENT BOARD</b>	<b>72</b>
Alfred Twu	72
Carole Marasovic**	74
Xavier Johnson	76
Avery Arbaugh	77
Andy Kelley**	79
Dominique Walker	81
<b>BART BOARD</b>	<b>83</b>
Victor Flores	83
Dana Lang	84

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# MAYORAL CANDIDATES

*Note: Naomi Pete is not a Democrat and was not interviewed because The BDC can only endorse Democratic candidates. Logan Bowie did not respond to interview requests.*

## Adena Ishii

*Note: Mayoral candidates were interviewed by the board of the Berkeley Democratic Club. These oral interviews are transcribed for length and clarity, not content. Full interviews available on our [YouTube](#) channel. To ensure fairness and equitable time, seven questions are highlighted from the interviews.*

### 1. Why are you running for Mayor?

I'm running for Mayor because it's time for a reset at City Hall. We've had two city council members leave stating that our local government has become broken and toxic. While our council members fight each other, we aren't focusing on our problems. I bring a fresh perspective— I'm someone who knows that it's important that we unite Berkeley around common sense solutions. I'm focused on housing and homelessness, public safety, and infrastructure. I've been a leader in our local community as president of the League of Women Voters here as the youngest and first woman of color in over 107 years. I was appointed to the Soda Tax Commission by both former mayor Tom Bates and current mayor Jesse Arreguin. I've worked on a number of measures in this city and I know the issues very well. I live here in South Berkeley with my family and I look forward to your questions to learn more about your club and see what you all are focused on. Thanks for having me.

### 2. What are your top issues you would like to address?

When it comes to **housing and homelessness**, I'm someone who has experienced housing insecurity so I understand the importance of policy but also making sure that we are actually implementing that policy. In Berkeley, we need to build affordable housing in every Berkeley neighborhood. I'm a supporter of missing middle housing, the upzoning, and building on our BART stations. I also know that when it comes to homelessness we need to make sure our shelters are safe and accessible. I'm sure you all know about the shooting that happened at one of our shelters. If people don't feel safe being in the shelters they're not going to want to go to them. We need to make sure we're providing them with the right support services as well, including mental health.

When it comes to **public safety**, I believe we need a balanced approach— investing in our social services, mental health youth programming, as well as making sure our police and fire departments have the appropriate tools necessary to keep us safe. I've actually done a ride along with [the] fire [department, and] with police. I've done a sit along with dispatch and our Homeless Response Team.

When it comes to **infrastructure**, I want to make sure that both our streets, sidewalks, and transportation systems are safe and accessible. I'm someone who is supporting Measure FF

because I know that it's more than just paving our streets and making sure they're smooth. We also need to make sure we're allowing for safety. When it comes to infrastructure, we should also be looking at climate change and how are we preparing our city. [TIME EXPIRED]

**3. What is your vision for improving and enhancing Berkeley's Downtown?**

I've spent a lot of time talking to business owners. Many of the business owners have told me that when there are more people who are living downtown, they are going to have more foot traffic which will allow them to have more business. Even though some folks disagree with me, I know that there are families and young professionals that are living in these buildings.

I also know that with our small businesses in downtown Berkeley one of the things that they're really concerned about is homelessness. Unfortunately folks who are having mental health crises and leaving trash and human waste on people's doorsteps. We need to make sure that our streets are clean and that we're providing support for these folks so that they can have the right support they need and they have a place to go that's not just downtown in front of someone's shop.

Public safety is another piece of this so increased lighting is always a great option. A lot of folks don't actually know about parking in Downtown. They are concerned about how to access it. We have BART, public transportation, increased bike racks and also the parking—so making sure folks know about that and that we're supporting, as a City, the transportation there and also the events that are happening. These events have brought a lot of life back into the downtown and we need to encourage that. As we are building more housing downtown and they are going to be revitalizing a lot of the businesses on the ground level and more folks move in Downtown, things will look very different. It's really important that we have a downtown that we can be proud of here.

**4. Currently, absent Council direction to the contrary, city staff are continuing to follow the Martin vs Boise standard of offering shelter in every instances before closing an encampment. According to city staff, they do not have the authority to enforce on dangerous encampments which constitute a public health hazard or even a fire hazard. Do you believe that continuing this approach is the right policy, especially persistent and dangerous encampments?**

I have spent time at some of these encampments, visiting them with our Homeless Response Team and also shadowing HAC, the Homeless Action Center. I know that [District 1 City Council Member] Rashi Kesarwani brought forward something to the Council that will be heard in the next week. It is important that we are paying attention to health and safety. I do know that some of these encampments can be dangerous.

At the same time, I think that we need to make sure that it's tailored narrowly enough so that we can't just say sweep all these encampments. I have some concerns about the way that we are treating encampments in our city currently. Even though I know we say that we are offering shelter first, I have spoken to many folks who have had their belongings thrown away and that

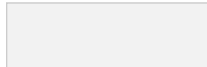
includes medication, money, [and] personal documents. That's important because if we want people to get off the street, we need to make sure we're not throwing away their documentation. It makes it much harder for them to access housing. Personally, we need to be focusing on making sure that we're finding them shelter or a safe encampment site or safe parking site and putting our energy there because I know that sweeps can also be quite expensive. In speaking to many officers in the Berkeley Police Department, some of them are uncomfortable throwing away people's belongings. Of course, there are some things that are just trash that are in encampments. Also, it's very difficult for folks to go through and figure out what is actually important [to encampment residents] or not. I think if we are doing sweeps we need to be thinking more thoughtfully about how we are moving folks because people can also just return to the same exact spot. Then we're not really solving anything. So [the City needs to be] focusing on making sure we have shelters and places for people to go more than focusing on moving people with sweeps.

[see video for follow up question on Harrison corridor encampments]

**5. Do you support efforts to end exclusionary zoning and what does that mean to you? What if any restrictions on new housing do you feel are appropriate in the Berkeley hills in and in other neighborhoods in Berkeley that have a particularly exclusionary history?**

I absolutely believe that we need to get rid of exclusionary zoning in the city. I'm a big supporter of [ending exclusionary zoning] and I've been following missing middle [housing legislation] as it's been going through Council. There are many folks who came out from District 6 and District 5 who were unhappy with changes to housing [policy]. They stated that they were concerned about fire danger in the hills. I recognize that fire danger is absolutely a concern. There are many folks who will be unable to get down from the hills during a fire and that would be an absolute horrible disaster. At the same time, I think that many folks don't realize that the number of units that would actually be created up in the hills is actually a lot smaller than they expect. Many folks I've spoken to have talked about high rises and thousands of people moving up into the Berkeley Hills. That's not actually what we were talking about there so I think it's important to make sure that folks understand what does it actually look like? What is the impact of making changes? I am interested to see what the evacuation plan looks like and have more information to know what the actual impact on the hills with more housing; but generally I am supportive of allowing more housing to be built and not having too strict restrictions because I think it does it does really show how we have continued to discriminate when it comes to housing.

**6. Automated License Plate Readers and surveillance cameras have helped Berkeley Police catch serious criminals, including recently nabbing a driver who ran over and seriously injured a child on Alcatraz. Do you support Automated License Plate Readers and hot spot cameras to prevent crime and catch criminals if they comply with the surveillance ordinance and public works retains control over the cameras?**



Yes absolutely. I also followed that issue very closely. Alcatraz and Dover is actually a very dangerous area and I used to live on Alcatraz and Adeline, just a little bit below that, and I know that people just go flying by there. When I heard about that hit and run, unfortunately, I wasn't surprised. I think that there are some seriously dangerous streets in our city and having those License Plate Reader cameras is a benefit. The fact that they [Berkeley Police] were able to catch that person using [automated license plate readers] was a huge success story for using those cameras.

**[BDC mistakenly repeated a question about top issues she wanted to address. Please see video to listen to Ishii reiterate her policy priority areas]**

**7. Do you have anything else to add?**

I'm running because I really think we need to reset at City Hall. We have had a lot of drama, for lack of a better word, on our City Council. I think it's important to have someone who can come in and work with people. I'm someone who has a proven track record, having worked in non-partisan politics for over a decade and bringing people together across differences to get around common sense solutions. I think that's really important currently. One of my opponents left City Council. What is it that we are saying to support someone who has left our city, had us pay for a special election, and wants to come back and be Mayor in a city where we know that the mayor does not have that much more power than a city council member.

I think that one of my biggest concerns for the city (even though of course I'm focused on housing and homelessness, public safety and infrastructure) is our staff. I think that staff is one of our major concerns in our city. It is really going to impact how we get things done. I have spoken to so many staff who are very concerned about the direction of our city. [They] want to make sure that we have a Mayor who is going to support them in doing the work that they are supposed to be doing and allowing them to do their jobs and not interfere in a way that is going to prevent them from doing [their] job. We need to create a stable environment where we can show the city that we have strong leadership, that we are focused on the important issues, and that we're not going to get distracted by drama and infighting. I think that's really essential.

## Sophie Hahn

*Note: Mayoral candidates were interviewed by the board of the Berkeley Democratic Club. These oral interviews are transcribed for length and clarity, not content. Full interviews available on our [YouTube](#) channel. To ensure fairness and equitable time, seven questions are highlighted from the interviews.*

**1. Please introduce yourself and why are you running for Mayor?**

I grew up in Berkeley and raised my own family just a few blocks from my childhood home. I think most people know that literally from grade school to the City Council, I have been very devoted to this community. I want to say that I will never, ever quit on Berkeley or on my obligations to you. In Berkeley, I've been a leader for the schools, for the libraries. I've served on the boards of Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, the zoning board, the Commission on the

Status of Women. I'm running to continue Berkeley's legacy as a pace setter for equity and environmental action and transform Berkeley into a resilient 21st century city that supports strong community, thriving local commerce, robust civic engagement, active transit, health, equity and joy.

**2. Tell us about your top issues and your priorities that you want to address.**

I have five priorities: house people, care for people, revitalize our common home, help save the planet, and advance equity to fulfill the promise of Berkeley. Housing people— I want to continue creating housing at all levels of affordability. I'm a huge champion for affordable housing and I have some very ambitious ideas around that. I want to focus on creating new ownership opportunities, achieving our fair housing goals, and, of course, continuing to end unsheltered homelessness which is something I've done a lot of work on and am very passionate about. Caring for people— that is ensuring the health and safety and the well-being of all Berkeleyans, that includes all the public safety issues from policing, making sure we have a strong well-trained and well overseen police force. Saving Alta Bates hospital or another full service acute and emergency care hospital, earthquake and fire preparedness, but also a special focus on children and seniors. We have an aging population, people with disabilities, etc. Revitalizing our common home— we need to transform Berkeley into a safe and vibrant city that prioritizes community gathering, open space, local commerce, and active transit. We have a 19th century city that we have underinvested in for a long time and I think we need to make major investments in transformative change for how we take care of the physical plant of the common home that we share together. Obviously help save the planet—we need to continue our efforts to fight climate change and restore the environment and equity and the promise of Berkeley an equitable future where everyone thrives.

**3. What is your vision of improving and enhancing Berkeley's Downtown?**

If I could wave my own magic wand, I would stop it from being basically a super highway that takes us past the downtown and make it into a vibrant attractive destination. That means pedestrianizing it to the greatest extent possible [and] adding street life. I think the one silver lining of the pandemic is that we all learned that being out dining and shopping in the streets is actually incredibly pleasant. I would like our downtown to be so fabulous, so beautifully designed, and attractive, landscape seating, places to walk, kiosks, street fairs, street musician really truly lively and vibrant so much so that people all over Berkeley would say, "hey, let's just go downtown and stroll. It's so lovely." So I really have a very transformative vision for the Downtown. Our arts organizations are struggling [and] I tried sort of a Hail Mary at the last minute. When I understood that our arts organizations in the downtown, many of them are facing critical economic crises, I tried to pull together a measure so that we could support them. They are pulling out of the pandemic more slowly than some of the other businesses and organizations. We have to invest in the arts. If we don't do that, I think that we will no longer be the vibrant, cultural community that I think is what attracted most of us to living here.

**4. Currently, absent Council direction to the contrary, city staff are continuing to follow the Martin vs Boise standard of offering shelter in every instance before closing an encampment. According to city staff, they do not have the authority to**

**enforce on dangerous encampments which constitute a public health hazard or even a fire hazard. Do you believe that continuing this approach is the right policy, especially persistent and dangerous encampments?**

First of all, I do not want persistent and dangerous encampments. I think that the general idea of Martin vs Boise is a good idea and it is the first thing that we should pursue but I absolutely think that we need to have the authority to address more problematic encampments. We need more tools to do that. I think the line of cases that came down in interpreting and expanding Martin really tied our hands are just actually sort of absurd. So I'm pleased that we have a little more leeway now but I want to be super clear: I actually met with the city attorney about this for an hour this week. We have all the authority that was provided by the recent Supreme Court ruling. We are not no longer constrained by Martin or by those cases. So we have all that authority now. There is nothing that stops our staff from exercising all of it. *[Editor's note: city staff issued a [memo](#) stating that they did **not** currently have the authority.]*

Obviously, the City of Berkeley is never going to move to an enforcement-first model. I don't support that and by the way, it doesn't work. We have reduced unsheltered homelessness by 45% using the policies that we have in place which are working. Clearly, we have a few locations at encampments where those policies aren't working. I welcome the opportunity to have a stronger hand as a last resort when our humane, housing first, services-first approach hasn't yielded the results that we need. We need people to accept housing and services and not continually impact specific locations. I am glad that the city has more leeway to address very problematic encampments.

**[see video for follow up question on Harrison corridor encampments]**

**5. You have not supported the automated license plate readers, surveillance cameras, or supported residents to voluntarily give BPD access to their security camera footage. Can you explain why you didn't support these measures to ostensibly deter and prevent crime?**

I think there's a little mistake in there. I certainly have never opposed having private individuals share their camera footage—not sure where that came from, but that's incorrect *[Editor's note: Hahn did not support. [Link](#)–Item 22]*.

I support the responsible deployment of technology, including surveillance technology. My problem is that the city does not have, in my opinion, a responsible balanced set of policies that strike the right balance between the utility of surveillance and the intrusion into civil liberties. Doing that is something I would like to do as Mayor. I also know that the back end policies about how we store, use, who has access to all of that surveillance footage are not tight enough. So I support the use of technology, just like I support all reasonable balanced uses of police powers, but that has to be carefully balanced against civil liberties. I don't think this city is anywhere near to achieving that. To be a little more specific, we have no criteria for how we select a location where we deploy surveillance technology, we have no process for reviewing that location after a reasonable amount of time, we don't have any criteria for evaluating what we consider the utility



to be (*Editor's Note: location determination and review explained on p. 77 of [Surveillance Ordinance](#)*). So we can take a billion images and over a year, one or two were useful. Do we think that that's the proper balance? We have to have a rational way to decide how and where we're deploying these technologies, for what reason to evaluate after a reasonable amount of time and also to harvest and remove that if we find that it does not meet our utility standard. So I absolutely support it but I just don't think we have in place what I think we need to to strike that civil liberties utility balance.

[see video for follow up question on surveillance]

- 6. I think there is broad agreement in Berkeley that housing is too expensive and too hard to find for all but for the very wealthy. Over the course of your tenure on the City Council and Zoning Adjustments Board, you have at times expressed skepticism toward new housing and its impact on overall housing affordability. Such skepticism has included seeking to exempt the hills from providing equitable zoning as well as having once described efficiency units as having insufficient space for people to be intimate. *[Editor's note and correction/apology: In 2024, Hahn did seek to exempt the hills in 2024; however, in 2021 she introduced legislation with Kate Harrison to [only upzone \(build more housing\) the hills](#)– non-redlined areas– in 2021]. Has your position on housing evolved? If so, what is the policy that you would champion as Mayor that you think would represent a break with your past positions on new housing?***

You're pointing to a few very small exceptions and you're missing the bigger picture of my record on housing. I was on the zoning board for almost seven years. I said yes to thousands of units of housing. I abstained on a few and said no on a few and and out of thousands of units of housing, I think that that's a reasonable record. I have appointed a strongly pro-housing Zoning Board member, Shoshana O'Keefe. We have calculated it together– we literally have said yes to more than 10,000 units of housing. So that's my record on housing.

On zoning, I have voted in favor of every single upzoning that has come before the City Council. I want that record to be straight. Regarding the hills, the fire and earthquake hazards in those areas are real. They are not fake, manufactured issues that are being put forward in order to thwart added density. We already know that about 500 people– that is what studies have shown– will not be able to escape from the high hills in case of a catastrophic fire, which is a likely outcome. Unfortunately our housing goals and our public safety goals are in tension in the very high fire hazard severity area. I do have an idea about how to resolve them in a way that is equitable and that is unit neutral. That is something that I plan to bring forward. To explain that, fire doesn't care if there are two units or four units or a single family home. Fire just burns a certain amount of material, whether it's trees and shrubbery or actually buildings themselves. I think we need to put a cap on the total amount of built structures that you can have on a parcel in the hills and probably a cap on the number of bedrooms as sort of a proxy for how many people might be able to live on that parcel. Anyway, I think we can resolve this tension in a way that doesn't favor single family housing but also addresses the real fire safety needs and that is something that I'm committed to doing.

**7. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?**

We have done better than most communities during and in the wake of the pandemic. Places like Oakland and San Francisco had huge shortfalls in their budget and have really struggled with huge deficits. I'm incredibly proud that we have been able to weather the pandemic and come out of the pandemic with balanced budgets without any cuts to services or reductions in workforce. I am incredibly proud of how we have responsibly navigated that and this huge economic impact that we've had because of the pandemic.

I always hope that we have additional funds available for our innovative ideas. launching new ideas and programs. We are not just a city that putt putts along. We really pride ourselves on pushing the envelope on innovative policies and programs. That's how we have reduced homelessness by 45%. We didn't have the money this year to fund the kinds of innovative things that in the past we've been able to fund.

## Kate Harrison

*Note: Mayoral candidates were interviewed by the board of the Berkeley Democratic Club. These oral interviews are transcribed for length and clarity, not content. Full interviews available on our [YouTube](#) channel. To ensure fairness and equitable time, seven questions are highlighted from the interviews.*

**1. Why are you running for Mayor?**

I am running for Mayor to work with you to create a livable climate forward City with Urban amenities. I stand for safe streets for kids and us, providing cost-effective mental health, health, homeless and public health services, enshrining economic and racial equity and creating an accountable and open city government. I have proven leadership and management skills gained during my work on the council and my years of experience in government. Cities change all the time. Berkeley needs a mayor who looks forward to change and is prepared to lead us through it while preserving what makes us special as one of the countries healthiest and most lively small cities.

As a longtime resident of the diverse Shattuck corridor and the former District 4 councilmember, I have a unique vantage point on how to create a livable, modern city. I brought people together in coalitions to pass legislation. I do not shy away from issues and do not abstain to avoid the hard votes. I cast, for example, the tie breaking vote on allowing ADUs in the hills without parking and refusing to pave Hopkins Street without safety and environmental improvements (*Editor's note: Harrison was absent [9/19/23](#) when the Council deadlocked on ADU parking in the hills. She was not the deciding vote when it returned on [10/3/23](#) but voted in favor*). I listen and work with our business community and residents, for example, to create our Hope Center. I look forward to working with you. Without this leadership we will be in an endless cycle of competing ballot measures, as we see this year.

## 2. Tell us about your top issues and your priorities that you want to address.

I have a lot of priorities but the top three for me are 1) building an accessible, affordable, and transit-rich city. 2) public safety for all and 3) climate equity.

In terms of an equitable city, we need to invest resources if we want to have affordable housing and we want to have a city that everyone wants to be in. However, we cannot rely entirely on the residents of Berkeley. I'm looking forward to working with regional partners and insisting that we get our fair share. The way that funds are allocated to Berkeley is unfair. We're not receiving what we are due and we are also not adequately evaluating our services for their cost-effectiveness. So, as we worked toward an accessible city that's transit rich and has affordable housing, we have really to be tough on understanding what is happening with the numbers and that is something I excel at.

A climate equity approach. It's great that I can afford solar panels but we have many residents in Berkeley that do not have these resources. I established the Climate Equity Fund which allows low-income homeowners and tenants, using union labor, to get improvements made to their environment. Also, I'd like to expand that to include fire safety improvements. We've done a lot of work on earthquake safety but we have not attacked the twin crises of climate and fire safety.

Finally, real public safety for all. That includes making sure we have an adequate police force but also that we are not wasting resources on things that they are not in the best place to do. We want them to fight crime, essentially. We are slow in adopting the unit that's supposed to deal with mental health crises. We have not expanded our work in BerkDOT. We've really not moved forward on the promise of trying to see who the best people are to do the job cost effectively, while leaving our police intact to deal with crime I worked with our department to create a program to etch catalytic converters with VIN numbers so when they are stolen we could know when we found them who was behind that. We've seen a big decline in those thefts. I work with our Downtown Business Association on making our downtown safer and more livable. I'll continue that work while insisting that we have the people to do the job they are best suited for.

## 3. What is your vision of improving and enhancing Berkeley's Downtown?

We're in a period right now of growing pains. There's a lot of new building going on, but I just want to say that I don't think the Downtown was all so fabulous in 2000. I think what we are doing now in creating a more lively downtown is a real plus for the city; however, in the meantime, we're losing a lot of our small businesses. So one of the things I'm very focused on is how do we provide security for those businesses so they don't get forced out. For example, Missing Link was forced out of Shattuck because there is going to be a housing project— all to the good—but in the meantime, there's an empty hole and there's crime on my street, and a drug den, frankly. So we have to think about the vitality now as we move towards the future. I worked with the DBA [*Downtown Business Association*] on a lot of beautification efforts for the downtown—trash corrals, making BART plaza better, doing seating, creating a business damage fund so when people are vandalized, we can help them recover from that. But we need to focus both on housing and retail at the same time. They need to be integrated together. I'm also a little

concerned we're adding residents without some of the necessities of life like a good grocery store in the Downtown. We don't have that. I live in D4 [*Editor's note: Downtown*]. We have no grocery stores, except in the very northern end. We don't have the things that make a city a city. We are not becoming Manhattan, we're kind of becoming a suburb with apartment buildings because we are not building the other things. I consider that the city's responsibility to set that direction, not the responsibility of an individual building developer. But we need to do the long range planning. We need to step back and say "what do we need to make this a vital city and someplace where people really want to live?"

- 4. Currently, absent Council direction to the contrary, city staff are continuing to follow the Martin vs Boise standard of offering shelter in every instance before closing an encampment. According to city staff, as of yesterday, they do not have the authority to enforce on dangerous encampments which constitute a public health hazard or even a fire hazard. Do you believe that continuing this approach is the right policy, especially persistent and dangerous encampments?**

I'm not certain that is completely true because we have closed encampments in the last two years under the Boise regime [*Editor's note: city staff issued a [memo](#) stating why they did not currently have the authority.*] I think, though, what we're finding is we're closing encampments and putting people in living situations where they are not going to stay. So, while I like the hotel model, it is cost-effective for us because we get money from the state and county, but people are not staying there because they have no ability to cook, live their own lives, have visitors, etc. So we see on San Pablo, this huge problem of people in the hotel there, spilling out on the street, creating crime, and going back to living in these encampments. So, as quickly as we are cleaning them up, they are being re-created. We need solutions like the Hope Center, which is in Downtown, Jordan Court, which is in my district, and things that have real permanency to them with services.

At the same time, I'm completely in favor of closing encampments that are dangerous. We had this one on Milvia Street where we closed that encampment under the Boise regime. So I'm not sure why it's being said they don't have that authority. I think clarifying that authority would be really helpful. I think it's not that they don't have it but there have been so many statements of what we are doing that it can be confusing for staff.

[see video for follow up question on Harrison corridor encampments]

- 5. In this and past campaigns you have spoken of yourself is a pro-housing candidate and even said at public hearings and meetings that you like and support tall buildings. However, at a 2017 candidate forum, you said you did not support tall building at BART stations and at a [Livable California meeting](#) boasted about having been the only council member who didn't support increasing the city's housing capacity and proudly noted it had made you a local pariah. How do you reconcile these opposing positions as well as your absence during the city's council's vote to end exclusionary zoning.**

First of all, people evolve and I think we have seen that with Mayor Arreguín. This was in 2017, right? I had barely gotten into office at that point. We have had more building downtown. I haven't objected to any of these tall buildings [Editor's note: Harrison has supported [one out of three Downtown projects](#) appealed to the City Council in 2019 and 2024]. Height is not the issue that I concern myself with. I'm totally fine with the BART project except that I would have liked to see more building separation on the buildings on Sacramento, to be frank. I think it's kind of a wall of buildings and I don't love that. We have seen a change in people's attitudes toward housing. And I don't think referring to a 2017 comment is very helpful.

What we need to do is look at the record—I voted for the ADUs [Accessory Dwelling Units] in the hills when there was a massive objection by the two councilmembers that live in the hills. They were using parking as an excuse not to do it. I am in favor of the multifamily z... housing everywhere in the city. I have it on my block. Look where I live—next door to me is an apartment building, next door to that is a house with two cottages, and there's another house, and there's an apartment building. That's the city I like living in. That density is really attractive to me. So, the sort of gentle densification is great. The tall buildings downtown are not a problem. The only problem is, as we are waiting for them to be built, as I said, we are ending up with a sort of shell in some parts of the downtown that are creating crime and other problems, which we need to rectify. I think that would be my response. People do change. I'm a good listener. I learn things. I changed my position on surveillance cameras towards supporting them when my opponent did not. You find out things when you get into office.

**6. Given that the exclusionary housing vote was in 2021, as was the Livable California meeting, since you say you have evolved, will you commit to opposing [Livable California's](#) future anti-housing stances and to affirmatively support as mayor the efforts to end exclusionary zoning across the city?**

Yes. I have never been a member of Livable California because I think that they have serious problems in terms of their proposed ballot measure they were trying to do, etc. I don't like that approach at all. I think every city needs to figure this out while building the needed housing.

**[SEE VIDEO FOR BUDGET QUESTION]**

**7. Automated license plate readers and surveillance cameras have recently helped Berkeley Police catch serious criminals, including recently nabbing a driver who did the hit and run and seriously injured a child. Do you support automated license plate readers and hotspot cameras to prevent crime and catch criminals so long as the city complies with the surveillance ordinance and Public Works routines control over the cameras?**

Thank you for those conditions because those are the conditions I care about. I helped write the surveillance ordinance and then I helped write the policy that allowed us to buy ALPRs and these and these cameras working with the police department and their union. As long as we

are protecting data from being sent to places like Texas, which frankly are going to send agents here to crack down on gender assignment surgery, crack down on people seeking choice rights. I don't trust their police. I trust our police. So the data retention policies that I wrote which keep data for minor traffic things, like you're in a 72-hour parking zone for longer, for only a limited period are really important to me. I don't want to build a record of somebody if they are a bad parker or keep parking illegally. We need to be careful about how we use the data but I think the data can be really useful. I voted for the pilot of the surveillance cameras. Councilmember Hahn did not [Editor's note: Hahn supported the [pilot program in June 2023](#) but [both Harrison and Hahn did not vote in favor of the surveillance cameras in 2024.](#)] I think we need to see how those are being effectuated and are they working for us. That's where I'm at at this moment is seeing how we can put them at entrance and exit points. I'm not in favor of putting surveillance cameras just where there are homeless people. I will say that I think there's sometimes an effort to do that and I think we should be thinking about serious crime when we are talking about these cameras.

[See video for answers about the Pedestrian and Bike Plan implementation and closing.]

## COUNCIL CANDIDATES

### District 2

Terry Taplin

#### 1. Why are you running for office?

*I am running to continue my work on housing affordability, community safety, climate resiliency, and economic justice. These past four years, I have worked closely with neighborhoods and community leaders in my district to elevate West and South Berkeley's priorities and needs and delivered historic investments. The Berkeley City Council needs leaders with an unwavering focus on pragmatic solutions to local problems and the ability to work collaboratively with staff, colleagues, and community stakeholders to advance the city's goals and place municipal service above all else.*

#### 2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

*In addition to my four years of City Council service, I previously served as Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission and worked as an instructional assistant at Berkeley City College and a research assistant at Saint Mary's College. I am also a caretaker for my disabled mother, who lives with MS and diabetes.*

#### 3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to

**address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?**

*Housing affordability: affordable housing zoning overlay; social housing pilot study; first-time home buyer's assistance.*

*Community safety: EMS triaging to divert low-acuity calls for service; expanding community policing units like the bike force to commercial districts across the city;*

*Climate resilient infrastructure: a fiscal policy directly tying excess equity to critical capital improvement projects that advance the city's Climate Action, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Plans.*

**4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?**

*I am proud that we avoided layoffs and supported community organizations with a proven track record of successful recreational equity and economic justice programming for young people.*

*I am disappointed that we had to close the deficit by borrowing from the pension trust, pausing worker's comp, and severely reducing the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department's capital improvement budget (and other department cuts) while maintaining several high-expense, non-essential, duplicative, politically motivated line items.*

**5. Given the current vacancy rates, the police department relies heavily on overtime to meet minimum staffing and coverage needs. Do you support filling vacant police officer positions and hiring additional community service officers to ensure adequate staffing and patrol coverage, if a staffing analysis confirms the necessity? Additionally, please describe your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley.**

*Yes. I have a comprehensive and multipronged approach to crime that includes prevention through community investment, intervention through the fostering of partnerships between the community and law enforcement to break patterns and cycles of crime with a focus on resources, services, and community policing, modern tools for the investigation and resolution of crimes with strong use policies with built-in protections for privacy right and civil liberties.*

**6. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?**

- YES
- NO

**7. Do you believe that there is too much market-rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?**

- YES
- NO

8. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ?

Check all that apply.

- 16 story buildings downtown Yes
- ≥7 story buildings in Priority Development Areas

*It is fundamentally inequitable to have one set of density standards for "priority development areas" vs high-resource corridors*

- ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing.

*It is fundamentally inequitable to have one set of density standards for "priority development areas" vs high-resource corridors*

- Fourplexes only in neighborhoods outside State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones Yes
- Fourplexes only outside Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3.
- Fourplexes only in formerly non-redlined areas
- Fourplexes everywhere

(OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL YES/NO QUESTIONS–TAPLIN)

9. Do you support the homeless services tax (W)?

- Yes
- NO

10. Do you support the library tax (X)?

- YES
- NO

11. Do you support the parks tax (Y)?

- YES
- NO

12. Do you support the soda tax (Z) ?

- YES
- NO

13. Do you support Council's amendments to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (BB)?

- YES
- NO



14. Do you support the citizen's initiative to amend the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (CC)?

- YES
- NO

15. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Fix the Streets" (EE)?

- YES
- NO

16. Do you support the citizen's initiative "Safe Streets"? (FF)

- YES
- NO

17. Do you support the Large Buildings Fossil Free Tax? (GG)

- YES
- NO

18. Do you support the Healthy Buildings Ordinance? (HH)

- YES
- NO

19. Do you support the recall of District Attorney Pamela Price?

- YES
- NO

Jenny Guarino

*Jenny Guarino did not complete the questionnaire.*

## District 3

Deborah Matthews

### 1. Why are you running for office?

South Berkeley needs an advocate who keeps the needs of residents and small businesses front and center in the council members' minds. I am that advocate. I am committed to leading Berkeley to support South Berkeley as a vibrant district in our city and not observe its continued historical decline in economic investment and public safety. With 30 years of advocacy under my belt, I am ready to use my leadership to serve as a Council Member. My commitment extends to delivering low-income and missing-middle income at the Ashby BART and city-wide. The Missing Middle initiative will create opportunities through supply for more affordable homes, lower rents, and homeownership. I will encourage our Mayor and Council to provide laser focus and community investment/intervention programs in our neighborhoods with the goal of

reducing violent crime and drug activity that plague the community. This will provide greater excellent public safety throughout our city.

**2. What relevant experience prepares you for this role?**

I am the first African American Woman to serve as President of the Berkeley Democratic Club in its 90-year history. I received a State of California Recognition Award, presented by Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer. This recognition is a testament to my leadership and dedication to serving our community.

- I received an Amazing Woman's Day Conference Leadership and Producer Recognition, which empowered Bay Area Women in Leadership, presented by California Senator Nancy Skinner and Berkeley Councilmember Susan Wengraf.
- City of Berkeley, Chair, Zoning Adjustment Board
- City of Berkeley, Chair, Housing Advisory Commission
- City of Berkeley, Vice Chair, Planning Commission
- South Berkeley Now! Co-Founder
- EAH Housing California & Hawaii, Advisory Council
- UC Berkeley, Wesley Foundation Housing, Board of Directors
- Berkeley Cooperative Federal Credit Union, Board of Directors
- Downtown Berkeley YMCA, Board of Directors
- Oakland And the World Enterprises, Board of Directors/ Officer
- The Suitcase Clinic, Chef for Unhoused

**3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?**

**Public Safety-** Violent crime is on the rise in South Berkeley; we must target drug activity and turf wars that leave our community with little hope and fear for their safety. Community policing, early intervention programs, mental health services, and walk-in addiction treatment programs.

**Low and Missing Middle Housing-** While Berkeley has added 1,000 units of housing, the need for low-income and middle-income housing continues. We must continue to build to meet the needs of our residents.

**Infrastructure Climate Action**

Our city is effectively implementing practical fire safety guidelines to protect our beautiful Berkeley hills and its residents. Our streets are underway with upgrades that have been deferred for many years. I recommend creating comprehensive maintenance plans to protect the new street upgrade assets and build on organizational resilience, credibility, and long-term sustainability of our wildfire prevention programs and emissions goals.

**4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?**

I am proud of the *increased budget for the Berkeley Police Department*. While many folks have supported defunding the police, our civic leaders grasp the mission and need to protect and serve our residents. The City of Berkeley needs additional BPD officers to eliminate the increased budget cost of overtime pay. This will reduce officer fatigue, time away from their families, and stress on the job.

*Disappointed by the Housing Trust Fund*, I would like to establish increased revenue to offer low—and middle-income housing development projects more significant financial support to fast-track housing development. I would also implement down payment programs that will additionally provide financial support to residents who qualify as first homebuyers. Studies have shown that urgent financial support is needed for homeowners facing immediate foreclosure to prevent long-term homelessness.

**5. Given the current vacancy rates, the police department relies heavily on overtime to meet minimum staffing and coverage needs. Do you support filling vacant police officer positions and hiring additional community service officers to ensure adequate staffing and patrol coverage, if a staffing analysis confirms the necessity? Additionally, please describe your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley.**

I have addressed this question in response #3 Public Safety.

**6. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?**

YES

7. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?

NO

8. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.

16 story buildings downtown

≥7 story buildings in [Priority Development Areas](#)

≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the [Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing](#).

Fourplexes only in Neighborhoods outside [State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones](#)

Fourplexes only outside [Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3](#).

Fourplexes only in formerly **non-redlined areas**

Fourplexes everywhere

Chip Moore

*Chip Moore did not complete the questionnaire.*

Ben Bartlett

*Ben Bartlett does not seek Berkeley Democratic Club endorsement and didn't participate in the interview process or complete the questionnaire.*

## District 5

Nilang Gor

### 1. Why are you running for office?

I am running for City Council to address GHG emissions associated with consumption of meat and dairy and get money out of political campaigns along with several other priorities that I want to address through partnering with Berkeley residents. As a long time activist in District5, I have observed Sophie Hahn neglecting constituents like myself who are holding her accountable for failing to address public interest. She fails to implement her championed policies due to lack of collaboration with City Manager/Staff and constituents. Therefore, I am running for City Council D5 to increase civic engagement in local politics. I ask for people's vote to serve the community with empathy, facts and progressive solution-oriented approach.

### 2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?

Since 2016, I have demonstrated my commitment to Berkeley and a sustainable future through a variety of ways, including:

- Serving as a Berkeley Homeless Commissioner, appointed by Kate Harrison, and supporting policies and programs in support of our unhoused community
- Distributing food and supplies to Berkeley's unhoused community with Consider The Homeless as a long-term food delivery volunteer and volunteering with Downtown Streets Team in Hayward, San Jose and Berkeley
- Advocating for policies that address Berkeley's methane emissions through a gas ban and several plant-based policies by speaking out at City Council meetings, having one-on-one meetings with Councilmembers and by mobilizing community members
- Partnering with Former Councilmember Kate Harrison to launch the Plant-Powered Carbon Challenge
- Raising funds for Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Climate Literacy programs like the U9 Climate Conference and the Elementary Plant-based Curriculum Advocating for healthy and sustainable BUSD cafeteria meals.

### 3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?

- One Health approach: Berkeley is part of a global community. Our well-being is interdependent on fellow human and non-human animals, and our shared environment. This interconnected relationship is the basis of the One Health approach. While the environmental movement has progressed significantly in the past few decades, animals are almost never recognized in our social and environmental movements because we fail to recognize our interdependence. In recognition of One Health, Berkeley Council has adopted several Plant-based Procurement policies in recent years. But none of these policies have been implemented. My priority is to work with Berkeley Councilmembers and City Staff to implement these policies.
- Money in Berkeley Politics: Public Financing continues to use public dollars to support campaigns rather than using it for social and environmental issues. I want to address the issue of Money in Politics by taking no donations for this campaign and instead rely on free public forums and volunteers to reach Berkeley voters.
- Democracy: I want to strengthen democracy in Berkeley by
  - Scheduling open office hours
  - Responding to emails
  - Making policy decisions based on public opinion
  - Scheduling community meetings to collaborate and discuss issues and concerns

**4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?**

For eight years, I have been working with the City Council as a community activist on issues related to our unhoused community, public health and environmental crisis. I have also served in the Homeless Commission. It is my knowledge that many of the services and programs for our unhoused community are underfunded. We don't provide support to encampments for sanitary/safe life and then immediately, jump on citing and clearing the encampments quickly concluding that these encampments impose safety risk on the residents. For public health and mitigating climate change, the Council has adopted procuring healthy and climate-friendly food procurement policies. But lack of funding is one of the reasons why these policies are not being implemented. I am aware of these budget related issues and therefore, I am doing my part of running the campaign without taking public tax dollars (public financing) as well as corporate money.

**5. With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently.**

**Considering these changes, as a last resort, should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered?**

Please select all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard:

- YES
- NO

Fire Hazard

- YES
- NO

Significant Public Nuisance

- YES
- NO

**Please explain.**

[Editor's note: none selected]

Issuing citations to remove encampments are based on incorrect knowledge that residents impose risk to themselves and the community. Encampments arise out of human fundamental needs and can be supported with services for safety and sanitation. But we fail to provide these crucial services and jump to extreme actions like issuing citations. If elected, I will resist such citations and instead focus on collaborating with the community based organizations and neighbors to provide services to these encampments until housing options are allocated.

**6. What is your vision for enhancing the vibrancy and appeal of Solano Avenue, while also stimulating economic development in the area?**

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

**7. What is your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley?**

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

**8. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?**

- YES
- NO

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

**8. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?**

- YES

**9. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units ? Check all that apply.**

- 16 story buildings downtown
- ≥7 story buildings in [Priority Development Areas](#)
- ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the [Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing](#).
- Fourplexes only in neighborhoods outside [State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones](#)
- Fourplexes only outside [Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3](#).
- Fourplexes only in formerly non-redlined areas
- Fourplexes everywhere

I need to learn, collaborate with constituents and then form opinion.

Todd Andrew

**1. Why are you running for office?**

As both a homeowner and tenant, I've lived in this historic city of potential for 25 years. I was proud to raise two children through Berkeley public schools, to coach their youth sports, and encourage their academic, artistic and moral development. But after being deeply involved in local policy and politics for six years, I've learned we're falling short of our aspirations. Community surveys show a pattern of declining satisfaction with local services and direction. I want to help turn this around with what I've learned from my service and in my many conversations with neighbors and fellow leaders. They want our government to focus on its core responsibilities like public safety, fixing our streets and critical infrastructure, maintaining our parks, and sound priorities for our public funds. I want everyone to know we can do this - we can build a brighter day for Berkeley!

**2. What relevant experience do you have that prepares you for this role?**

In 2019, as a result of local political and policy experience and leadership, I was appointed to the Homeless Commission and the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board, where I currently serve as Chair.

As a 17-year tenant in a rent-controlled Berkeley apartment, a 7-year owner in a Berkeley home prior to that, a tenant in three other cities, having been a Realtor for 21 years, and a member of several housing and transportation advocacy groups, I have a unique, well-informed, and valuable perspective on housing.

As someone who grew up in a financially challenged working-class family, and who has never fully recovered financially from the Great Recession, I bring a unique perspective to a city like Berkeley where income and wealth disparities are large.

With this personal, professional and avocational background, I am ready to hit the ground running on behalf of District 5 and Berkeley residents on Day One.

**3. What are the top three issues or challenges you would like to address if elected? What specific policies or proposals would you introduce or augment?**

We need to fulfill our solemn duties and core municipal responsibilities: streets and other critical infrastructure; public safety in all its senses; and sound stewardship of our public funds.

Our unfunded infrastructure liabilities total \$2+ billion, including basic responsibilities like complete streets, sanitary and storm sewers, public buildings like fire stations and parks, and our waterfront, but also extend to investments in disaster preparedness and climate change. We no longer have a choice -- we MUST allocate more funding to these core responsibilities than we have in the past.

*I would like us to explore assigning a certain amount of revenue from new buildings to core infrastructure. This may have the ancillary benefit of helping to overcome resistance to new housing on the part of some community members.*

On public safety, let's not oppose or overburden common-sense and proven measures like ALPRs and other technology.

On disaster prevention and response, let's make sure we're evaluating FF measures on an ongoing basis and staying in constant touch with regional bodies and state officials on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

On street safety and trauma prevention, let's continue to move forward in a collaborative effort with BFD to modernize our approach.

**4. What aspects of this year's budget are you most proud of, and which ones are you most disappointed by?**

I want to see more revenue from our General Fund dedicated to core municipal responsibilities.

**5. With the recent changes in legal interpretations following the Grants Pass decision, some elected officials in California have started to approach the resolution of homeless encampments differently.**

**Considering these changes, as a last resort, should the city have the authority to issue a citation and remove an encampment if its inhabitants refuse to move, even when no shelter spaces are available, but other services are offered?**



I need to study Councilmember Kesarwani's proposal for the Sept 10 council meeting, but something tells me I will find much to appreciate.

Please check all the circumstances that apply and provide your reasoning below:

Imminent Health Hazard:

- YES
- NO

Fire Hazard

- YES
- NO

Significant Public Nuisance

- YES
- NO

Please explain.

**6. What is your vision for enhancing the vibrancy and appeal of Solano Avenue, while also stimulating economic development in the area?**

I was gratified to see Councilmember Hahn seek restoration of the Solano Avenue Revitalization monies postponed due to COVID. I understand the allocation still exists, though the Office of Economic Development lacks the staff to tackle it.

With some exceptions like the Peets and Zachary's parklets, the streetscape hasn't changed in many decades. Pedestrians have very few places to feel at home and to gather; I suspect urban design pros would suggest widening the sidewalks and other measures.

The BID Advisory Board considered lights, both for the holidays and continuously lit on the roofline or in trees, but the necessary electrification is lacking. We will explore solar-powered lights, and kinetic art, but operate within a budget of \$25,000-30,000 per year.

The Housing Element modification to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing in resource-rich corridors like Solano will also help revitalize the area and provide new sources of support to our small businesses.

**7. What is your approach to addressing crime in Berkeley?**

Eyes on the street and increased patrols are proven, including neighborhood crime watches and increased foot traffic. I believe we can increase the sentinel effect through a variety of methods that don't always involve a badge and a gun.

I'd like to see us explore an "ambassador" model in the neighborhoods on a pilot basis, like some of the business districts. In some cases, they have had to incorporate a security component, but we can start with the original model to increase eyes and feet on the street – drawn from the neighborhoods themselves, wherever possible.

I'd also like to see the mayor and council focus on staffing up BPD so every officer can once again be trained in de-escalation techniques, and we can expand bike patrols to the neighborhoods rather than just business districts. This will have a beneficial effect on the budget, too, since overtime is very expensive.

**8. Did you support ending exclusionary zoning?**

- ✓ YES
- NO

**9. Do you believe that there is too much market rate housing and Berkeley is already too densely populated?**

- YES
- ✓ NO

**10. Do you support building the following types of housing in order to comply with the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) of 8,934 housing units? Check all that apply.**

- ✓ 16 story buildings downtown
- ✓ ≥7 story buildings in [Priority Development Areas](#)
- ✓ ≥5 story buildings on North Shattuck, College Ave and Solano Ave to comply with the [Housing Element's assessment on affirmatively furthering fair housing](#).
- ✓ Fourplexes only in neighborhoods outside [State-Mandated Very High Wildfire Zones](#)
- ✓ Fourplexes only outside [Berkeley's Fire Zones 2 & 3](#).
- ✓ Fourplexes only in formerly **non-redlined areas**
- ✓ Fourplexes everywhere

I support an "all of the above" strategy on housing and a comprehensive look at housing policy in risk zones. If the number and proximity of structures, people and cars are the issue, then let's look at it not just in terms of the impact of new housing but the existing circumstances as well.

BPD Chief Sprague's memos on ADU's and Middle Housing in the hills called out important issues, including the precarious nature of **current** conditions and **existing** structures. We need to take this seriously and examine the possibility of pre-evacuation on Extreme Fire Weather days under **current** density and conditions. This mindset will provide a clearer view on additional housing in the hills, especially considering new housing is much more fire resistant than existing stock.

