

Campaign for Sustainable Transportation 2024 City Council Candidate Survey

Climate, Safety and Vehicle Miles Traveled

1. Santa Cruz consistently rates near highest of a list of similar California cities in rates of injuries to bicyclists and pedestrians (according to rankings of the [Ca. Office of Traffic Safety](#)). In 2019, the City Council adopted Vision Zero, an international campaign for achieving zero serious injuries due to traffic collisions. Four years later the City has yet to take the first step in implementing Vision Zero: creating an Action Plan. Would you prioritize Vision Zero by supporting a policy to spend 80% of Traffic Impact Fees to make our streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians until such time as Santa Cruz achieves its goal of zero serious injuries by 2030?

Background:

The City has a history of devoting 80% of its Traffic Impact Fee on new development to projects that expand auto capacity and vehicle miles traveled, like the intersection expansion on Hwy 1 and River St. and the intersection at Ocean and Water St. California law now prohibits environmental impact reports from requiring expansion of roadways. We need to stop expanding intersections, and undo the damage that those expansions have caused, especially “slip lanes” (free right turn lanes) which require bicyclists to merge into traffic and are likewise dangerous for pedestrians.

Answer: I would prioritize traffic impact fees and I would also support progressive traffic congestion tax policies towards tourists who are contributing to the CO2 emissions of our town.

2. We know that traffic speed is the main contributor to the severity of injuries. If a neighborhood group were to prepare a conceptual traffic calming plan for its streets, would you support the City establishing a process for such a plan to receive consideration and funding?

Would you support measures already listed in the Climate Action Plan to reduce driving, e.g. transportation tax; congestion pricing; parking maximums; facilitate remote work

Answer: Yes, I would support a congestion pricing and transportation tax, and I would go an extra step and prioritize a path towards decarbonization in our city projects in the Climate Action Plan, rather than just reduce CO2 emissions.

0. UCSC plans a significant increase in enrollment, which will result in increased traffic. Would you support a City policy to cap vehicle trips to campus at current levels (modeled on the Santa Clara County policy that limits vehicle trips to campus to 2001 levels)? In order to enforce this cap would you support extending the City’s existing parking tax to campus?

Answer: Yes, I would support this cap and I would also expand bicycling programs and services to ensure that UCSC students and workers have access to campus while reducing our carbon footprint. Yes, I would support extending the City’s existing parking tax to UCSC since UCSC must be held accountable for its long range development plan.

0. What should the City do to respond to sea level rise citywide and in the Downtown Plan Expansion South of Laurel?

Answer: I would stand up to polluters and developers and vote against the Downtown Plan Expansion South of Laurel that was recently suggested by the Council. This project supports luxury buildings that are outside of our city's infrastructure's capacity to support. I would ensure that The City of Santa Cruz does not utilize this project or any other project to push out any small businesses Downtown.

0. How should auto, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic be configured on West Cliff Drive? For example, do you support separating bicycles and pedestrians? Would you support narrowing of vehicle lanes (e.g. to 9 ft) if that could accommodate a dedicated lane for bicyclists?

Answer: I have to be more educated on this issue, since the West Cliff Drive issue lies outside of my District. I would consult with the community members that live near West Cliff and hear their thoughts on the new infrastructure that is to be built through community survey, outreach events, etc. For now, I personally would support a bike-friendly and pedestrian-friendly lane across West Cliff and I would support a narrowing of the lanes to ensure the safety and security of pedestrians and bicyclists. I am open to be more educated on this issue since I'm not aware of the complexity of this issue.

Background:

West Cliff is a heavily used recreation spot for City residents and tourists. The path combining pedestrians with bicycles and ebikes is unsafe. Separating bicycles from pedestrians would require creating a bike lane from some street space currently used by cars, eg. parking space. Over 90% of letter writers to the City Council supported separating bicyclists and pedestrians.

Housing and Transportation

Our mission statement includes: *We support measures to protect and increase the supply of affordable housing near jobs to reduce demand for motorized transportation and encourage stable and healthy communities.* The data suggests that the rising cost of housing in our community is resulting in longer commutes. For example, since 2013 vehicle trips to UCSC are [growing at a faster rate](#) than student enrollment.

1. How should the City respond to the RHNA allocation it has received?

Answer: The City of Santa Cruz knows Santa Cruz better than the State of California. I recognize that State Law has to be followed and that affordable units have to be added into the development of our City, though I would be careful about the growth of the market rate units that the City is currently proposing since the City does not have the infrastructure to support such huge growth by adding ten-story plus buildings into our town. The City has to be careful about its growth in development and consider traffic congestion, water infrastructure and many other things before fastly approving tall towers, and if the City were to meet the RHNA Goals, then housing units for Extreme Very Low Income folks have to be prioritized over the Market Rate.

0. What are the best ways to achieve our housing goals while minimizing VMT [vehicle miles traveled]?

Answer: By adding a workforce development housing requirement that is built specifically for City workers or for workers that work in Santa Cruz County, at least. Meaning that if housing applications are

to be considered from these new housing units, only Santa Cruz workers can apply for such units. This way, workers have access to the Metro downtown which can be utilized to commute from their homeplace to the workplace. I would also ensure that transportation costs and charges are discounted for City workers to incentivize public transportation usage.

0. What is your strategy for ensuring that working people can live in Santa Cruz close to where they work?

Answer: See answer before, the workforce development housing requirement added to newly built housing units will be utilized so housing applicants are required to be working in the City of Santa Cruz if they want to apply for these new housing projects. I would also advocate for expanded tenant protections and prioritize the development of extreme very low income housing units over market rate. Foster more partnerships with non-profit organizations to build affordable housing. I would also ensure that the Regional Transportation Commission expands transportation services for South County workers from Watsonville and advocate for an expansion and additions of bus routes between North and South Counties.

0. Would you support an ordinance that would require new developments to unbundle parking costs from the cost of renting or purchasing a unit?

Answer: Yes, I would support this ordinance.

Background:

California legislation now exempts new developments within a half mile of transit from the requirement to build parking. Developers save by building less parking, and adding more residential units. The savings can be shared with tenants if tenants who don't own cars are allowed to opt out of paying for parking. Studies of developments that allow tenants to opt out of purchasing parking show **reduced vehicle ownership** and **significantly lower rents** and purchase prices. [Gabbe & Pierce \(2017\)](#) found that bundling the cost of a parking space adds an average of 17% to a unit's rent. [More info.](#)

0. Would you support an ordinance guaranteeing the right of tenants to legal counsel?

Answer: As a person that was recently displaced and unjustly evicted this past November, I would without question support an ordinance like this.

Background:

At our Transportation Justice Conference this August (see video of the panel, [Transit Oriented Development Without Displacement](#)), Fernando Marti reported that in San Francisco tenants have the right to counsel, funded by the City. [Research finds](#) that right to counsel has a high degree of effectiveness in preventing displacement.

0. What is your position on the Housing for People ballot measure?

Answer: I am in solidarity with Housing for the People and I am Yes on Measure M. I helped survey the Beach Flats and Lower Ocean Communities about this initiative and our people are in solidarity with this too.

0. The City Council recently adopted changes to the Downtown Plan to eliminate the requirement that housing comprise at least 60% of the floor area of buildings on the river side of Front St. between Soquel and Laurel. This change was to allow a hotel to be developed. What are your thoughts about this action?

Answer: I think that it is disappointing of the Council to do this since this decision was made at the very last minute, from what I heard. It seems that the Council wants to do things “business as usual” and prioritize profits over people. We must put Community First and we must embrace new ideas and creative solutions that better represents our people.