

Campaign for Sustainable Transportation 2024 City Council Candidate Survey

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Climate, Safety and Vehicle Miles Traveled

<https://campaignforsustainabletransportation.org/>

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.

Yes

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?

Yes

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

Yes

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?

Commuting students already experience transportation injustice in the form of overcrowded buses, not enough routes, a shortage of on-campus parking, and high parking costs. They contribute about 10% to SC Metro operating costs. The 10% parking lot fee would be passed on to students, many of whom are living in poverty and shelter-insecure or unhoused.

System-wide improvements to our transit system, especially through raising wages for bus drivers to improve capacity and retention, will offer students transportation justice without punishing the ones who have no other choice but to drive.

Addressing student enrollment and affordable on-campus housing with the UC Regents would also address VMT while increasing housing and transportation equity for them.

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

While not popular to talk about, planned retreat is ultimately the only real option. Even if we do everything we possibly can locally, climate change and sea level rise are inevitable at this point. With the capture of COP28 by greenwashing fossil fuel industry insiders, our collective hopes for limiting rising temperatures and melting ice is diminished.

I have always thought the Downtown Expansion Plan for a "new neighborhood" was an offensive and shortsighted plan. It will inevitably increase gentrification and displacement in one of our most socio-economically diverse neighborhoods. And to build big in a flood/liquefaction zone seems like the height of hubris. I think investments should be made in all of our neighborhoods, including investments that increase socio-economic diversity and walkability, rather than focusing them all in one problematic area.

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?

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.

I support increasing bike and pedestrian access, separate from each other and separate from cars. I would support creation of one-way, one-lane car access. I think that ultimately a car-free (or resident access only) linear park would be ideal. To minimize traffic and parking

impacts on neighborhoods while maintaining coastal access, we'd have to create parking bays, traffic calming, and trolley service for visitors.

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?

Community-led planning processes

Prioritize affordable housing, starting with the lowest income levels

Governed by a City-wide Community Workforce Agreement

Tied to infrastructure improvement, especially public transportation and pedestrian/bike safety

Built on sustainable lands, taking into account climate futures

Design for accessibility, and everyone will benefit

If population remains steady or decreases, petition the state to re-evaluate their projections

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

Invest in public transportation, starting with labor equity

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

Housing stability policies for tenants and those on fixed income (including rent control)

Get California Apartment Association money out of local politics, via Santa Cruz Together PAC

Public land for public housing

Eliminate single-family zoning

Incentivize and streamline affordable housing projects

Engage neighborhoods to improve acceptance of appropriately-sized apartments

Progressive taxation dedicated exclusively to the SC City Affordable Housing Fund

Creation and support of a Community Land Trust

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

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.](#)

Yes

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

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.

Yes

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

I support democratic, community-led processes for neighborhood development, especially when they prioritize affordable housing.

At the same time, I think a city-wide Community Workforce agreement would do more for us by backing up our 2019 Green New Deal Resolution, the general plan, and our objective standards, and looking out for union and non-union local workers.

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?

I am opposed. We need affordable housing, not pricey hotels with lots of amenities. And yes, \$250 per night is pricey for me and almost everyone who might come visit me.

This move is also in direct contradiction to the argument that we need to consolidate new housing in the "new neighborhood" south of Laurel in support of "walkable cities" and encouraging people to live near where they work downtown.

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