

San Jose

David Cohen

San Jose City Council, District 4

Senior Manager, Lam Research - Berryessa School Board Member

Top 3 priorities citywide

1. Sustainable Development in along transit corridors in North San Jose
2. Building Affordable Housing and Reducing Homelessness
3. Safe, Clean, and Livable Neighborhoods

1. Who is your Campaign Manager?

Johnson Tran

2. What is your Campaign Budget?

Historically, successful campaigns for this seat have raised over \$100,000. I plan to raise the necessary funds to be competitive in the race.

3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:

Senator Beall, Senator Wieckowski, SCC Assessor Larry Stone, State Controller Betty Yee, Ron Gonzales, County Board of Education members Joe DiSalvo, Grace Mah, Anna Song, Assemblymember Mark Stone, 8 current and former Berryessa School Board members, Neighborhood Assn President John Semanik, dozens of District 4 residents

4. Would you support or oppose a 3 county ballot initiative for a permanent 1/8 cent sales tax to fund Caltrain?

Support

I would support a measure to fund Caltrain operations. The peninsula needs Caltrain at a greater frequency in order to meet the capacity requirements of that corridor. Being able to accommodate a large increase in ridership will serve to ease traffic congestion and reduce travel time along the peninsula. The long term viability of transportation between San Jose and San Francisco depends on it.

5. Do you support funding to complete a valley to valley connection through high speed rail?

Support

Yes. I am a strong advocate for high speed rail because it provides an alternative to gas-powered vehicles and provides an economic boost to the Central Valley that will include thousands of middle-class jobs. I believe strongly that we need to catch up to the rest of the world. I have ridden high speed rail in Europe and Japan and it is necessary that we begin to connect our cities the way these other countries have. I believe California has a unique opportunity to be a leader of high speed rail in the United States.

6. *Would you support a measure dedicated to build and operate a world class, seamless integrated transit system to better serve Bay Area residents, funded through a one cent sales tax, to better serve the transit dependent and those of us still in our cars?*

Support

Yes. We need to do a better job making our region more transit-friendly and public transportation more convenient in order to increase ridership, reduce travel time, reduce traffic congestion, and minimize pollution.

7. *Do you support Google's plans for the Diridon Station Area?*

Support

Yes, I think it's a great opportunity for San Jose and, if done right, it can be a transformative project for our city. The plan will bring more affordable housing into the downtown core and strengthen local business. I also believe it's important that we hold Google accountable for the promises they have made to our community and ensure the benefits are felt by families throughout San Jose, not just Google's high tech workforce. I look forward to a long and lucrative partnership between San Jose and Google.

8. *Do you support any revenue generating vehicles (please be specific) to build more affordable homes?*

Support

San Jose unsuccessfully tried to pass a bond last year to fill the \$500 million gap in funding needed to reach the city's affordable housing targets. An additional \$500 million, combined with funds from Santa Clara County Measure A and other sources, will allow us to make a significant dent in the region's homelessness problem. I support finding alternative funding mechanisms that don't harm existing homeowners or working families and don't disincentivize thoughtful, affordable new construction.

9. *Are you in favor of a ballot measure that will prohibit campaign contributions from advocates for development and tie the San Jose Mayoral term to the Presidential Election Cycle?*

Support

To be clear, I am actually not completely supportive or opposed to this measure as it is currently worded. There are many goals in the proposal that I support.

I have always believed that we should limit the impact of big money on politics. I'm happy with the contribution limits for San Jose campaigns. That limits the amount of influence that any one entity can have on an election. However, with the exception of regulating lobbyists, I am wary of laws to cherry-pick where we protect the freedom of participation for workers and where we don't. Limits on contributions based on where an individual works can be a dangerous limit on free speech, and open the potential for limits to workers in industries I support – like educators, nurses and others. I cite the exception of lobbyists because I believe that the public has a right to know how our elected officials interact with those whose job it is to influence them. DC and Sacramento already have laws governing interactions between lobbyists and federal and state elected officials and I'm open to measures that would provide an additional layer of transparency for local jurisdictions.

I am in favor of moving the Mayoral election to presidential years in order to increase turnout for the city-wide race, strengthening our democracy. Many cities and school districts hold their elections during presidential election years and they successfully engage their voters. We want as many people as possible voicing their opinion on who should steer the ship in San Jose.

10. Do you support requiring all new buses purchased with federal funds be zero-emission beginning on October 1, 2029 (which is California's deadline for transitioning all transit bus purchases to zero-emission buses)?

Support

Yes. I support purchasing zero emission buses immediately and would aim to meet this goal well ahead of California's deadline 2029.

11. Will you work with the Silicon Valley Leadership Group to secure additional funding to protect our region and help advance a common vision for a healthy and resilient SF Bay?

Support

Mitigating the effects of climate change, particularly sea level rise, is one of the most important issues of our time. As a PhD engineer working in high tech, I know that we must understand the science behind any policies we implement. Regional solutions are particularly important. We must work regionally to fund robust and technically sound solutions to protect our region. We should also look to find ways to harness wave energy as another source of clean, GHG-free energy.

12. Do you support or oppose a proposed amendment to Proposition 13?

Support

As someone who both works in tech and sees the bottom line in school district budgets as a school board member, I understand the tension between our limited resources and the needs of our community. While I understand the concerns of those opposed to the measure, I believe we must amend Proposition 13. In order for businesses to continue to thrive in our area, we need an educated workforce and our schools need adequate funding to provide one.

13. If a public charter school's petition is approved to operate within your local school district, meaning their proposal meets key pupil outcomes as indicated by state law, would you approve the school's bid to rent or build facilities beyond those already owned by the district?

Oppose

I support parents who are seeking the best possible education for their children. I'm a parent myself and creating stronger public schools is what drove me to run for school board, and it's why I've continued serving our local public schools for the past 13 years. We do need to offer every opportunity to our students. I have worked to bring a variety of programs into our traditional public schools. I also understand budget constraints that are only exacerbated by charter campuses. We shouldn't accept the status quo for our public schools, but siphoning money from an already underfunded system is not the way to meet this challenge.

14. Tell us about a time when you were opposed to a position of one of your major supporters. What was the issue? How did you handle this situation?

I was supported by the California Teachers Association for my first election to the School Board. During that term, our CTA chapter didn't see eye to eye with the Superintendent on a few issues and the members took a vote of no confidence against him. I stood behind the Superintendent and his vision for the district. As a result, CTA didn't support my reelection in 2010. I continued to meet with members of CTAB and found ways to work with them on issues of importance to the district. Eventually, we moved beyond the disagreement and have had a good relationship ever since, regaining their support for my subsequent campaigns. I take the same approach whenever I find myself casting a vote on something controversial. I invite those on the other side of the issue to meet with me so that we can understand each other's position better and establish a dialogue.

