

# San Jose

## **Jenny Higgins Bradanini**

San José City Council, District 10 (open seat)

Director of Development, Women's March Foundation

### *Top 3 priorities citywide*

1. The Housing Crisis - affordability and rising homelessness. No issue is more important than this one right now. With the rate of homelessness and displacement on the rise and with housing costs continuing to skyrocket, this is not just an imperative for our community, but a moral imperative for how we as a community care for one another. We need more affordable housing options and we need rescue our neighbors living on the streets or in their cars.
2. Community Safety - City Hall's first responsibility is the safety of our neighborhoods. After years of in-fighting and political divisions, we are working together but still struggling to rebuild our departments and provide the safety, protection and justice that our community deserves. Petty theft and stolen vehicles remain a concern, but domestic violence is now on the rise, and we need the resources and staff to face these head on. We must also see beyond the badges and do the little things that keep our community safe - like providing safe spaces and alternatives for our youth.
3. Investments, upgrades and improvements in key city services to spur economic growth, support our families and opening access to a strong quality of life and opportunity for every resident. San José is an amazing community but inequity is causing major rifts in our community. With all the big changes happening around San José, City Hall must be guiding us on a path that lifts up our residents and improves the quality of life for every family. You can read more about my vision on how to tackle this issue and others online at [VoteJenny.org/issues](http://VoteJenny.org/issues)

### *1. Who is your Campaign Manager?*

Allie Hughes

### *2. What is your Campaign Budget?*

City regulations prevent the fundraising period to begin until September 5, 2019. My goal is to raise at least \$100,000 for the March 3 primary and we will be utilizing these funds to connect with the community through grassroots organizing - door to door canvassing and embracing technology's advancement in voter engagement through online and text connections. I have been fortunate to build strong relationships in District 10. I raised my family and thrive in my profession here, so I have an energized network of volunteers who support me and are ready to deliver our message to the residents.

### *3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:*

Fiona Ma, CA State Treasurer; Cindy Chavez, Santa Clara County Supervisor; Sergio Jimenez, San José City Councilmember; Don Rocha, Former San José City Councilmember; Karina Dominguez, Milpitas Vice Mayor; Claudia Rossi, Santa Clara County School Board Trustee; Carla Collins, Teresa Castellanos, & Brian Wheatley, SJUSD School Board Trustees; San José Teachers Association

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

Support

Our rail lines will be the major mode of transportation for our future if we make the right investments now. Electrification of Caltrain is an exciting realization that will help us address our environmental sustainability and deliver better quality of service to one of the Bay Area's most important transit corridors. It is important that the Bay Area is a leader in developing and implementing innovative solutions to our transit needs.

Each day we hear about new efforts and ideas in green and sustainable energy, yet if we are not making upgrades like electrification to Caltrain a priority, we limit the opportunities of the future. Cities and startups across America are reimagining how we get around, and our rail lines play an integral role. We are seeing solutions to close the "last mile" gap, and trains are becoming a viable solution for work or play within our communities and the Bay Area at-large.

BART stations will soon open in San José, Caltrain is undergoing enhancements, VTA Light Rail is expanding to Evergreen and High Speed Rail moves closer to becoming a reality. All of these transit changes are happening because the people are demanding it but more importantly because of the imperative to curb carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. We need sustainable funding for our public transit systems and a measure across three counties is a potential mechanism for doing so.

As Councilmember, I will make funding our public transit a priority. We need support from the federal to local level, and we need to find solutions that go beyond a sales tax.

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

Support

Four times. That's the return for each dollar invested in public transit, and there is not a project that could make a bigger impact for transit and mitigating climate impacts like High Speed Rail, HSR. In 2019 as many other parts of the world have long upgraded their rail connectivity, we are still without big advancements. California must be the leader on this and end the frivolous lawsuits and political fights that prevent us from cutting down on carbon emissions and the dangerous traffic congestion that is now spreading into the Central Valley. We cannot continue to let oil-company interests influence policy that limits our ability to improve transit and protect our environment. It is time to connect Silicon Valley to the Central Valley and beyond via HSR.

This matter is all the more prescient as we seem families fleeing San José for the Central Valley and disconnecting friends and family. Worse, many of our neighbors leaving still work here,

endeavoring on too far of a commute each day, time that could be spent with family or at recreation, or living in the community they work in.

As Councilmember, I will champion big ideas like High Speed Rail and work with regional partners to make them a reality now. San José will soon be connected to the Bay Area by BART, we should be celebrating this achievement by connecting with more of California and I will advocate for HSR to our state leadership and end the delay for this project to break ground.

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

The Los Angeles County 2016 ballot measure M is an excellent example of an innovative, thoughtful and detailed major transportation renovation plan for one of the nation's most congested areas. LA county voters overwhelmingly passed Measure M acknowledging the status quo was not a solution to their transportation woes and because they were presented with a complete plan.

I support a transportation plan that is funded by a one cent sales tax Measure if developed in a fair and equitable way, taking into account the diverse needs of all our Bay Area residents, ensuring adequate funding for public transportation and highways, as well as providing improvements in active transportation and goods movement, which will increase the economic vitality of our region. If we hope to mitigate the impacts of climate change, we can not wait, we need funding now to make our commute greener, safer, shorter and more efficient.

As Councilmember, I will fight the status quo and turn big ideas into real actions. I will fight for a multimodal transportation program that will address the mobility needs of today and lay a strong foundation for future generations. I will also ensure that transportation upgrades are equitable, and we ensure our low-income residents and working families have access to all modes of transportation. These improvements are the chance to lift people up and create new opportunities, and will only be successful if they help the entire community.

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

Support

If we hope to see big ideas become reality, especially to improve our transportation and address the housing crisis, we have to work with community partners to get it done. Google's interest in revitalizing and reimagining our downtown provides us a great opportunity to make a once in a lifetime investment in our community and our future. However, San José can not be another in a long list of cities that have offered up and given away too much in order to spur growth, only to be left short on the promises made. Google's commitment of \$1 billion in funds for housing will be a major boost, but as they seek to bring 25,000 additional jobs to the area that amount will not be enough. Getting this project right is imperative, not for Google's success but for the residents of San José. I am excited for what's to come for the future of San José but we must get it right. It is easy to fall for think tank talking points about how amazing this opportunity is, but this is too big of a project to not demand it be the best and the people of San José our

counting on City Hall to make sure they are not an afterthought. We must care more for the people than for corporate profits.

As Councilmember, I will be diligent and transparent on all major developments project and ensure our tax dollars are not subsidizing corporate growth. Benefits must outweigh the impacts of years of construction. BART is already coming to our downtown and with the addition of Google we can make San José shine as a world class city and the true capital of Silicon Valley. I will do my part to create solutions by providing an opportunity through an open process that brings City Hall, labor, businesses and community partners together. When we search for answers to our toughest challenges, I know that Google has the capabilities to help us find the best results.

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

Support

We cannot tax our way into solutions to the housing crisis, but we can level the playing field so that affordable units are built and the resources needed are available to make it possible to do so. For the proposed suggestions my stances are as follows:

Real estate transfer tax - currently the \$3.30 per \$1,000 transfer tax funds our libraries and fire departments, an increase in this amount would bring us closer to matching other major cities' figures; SF is at \$5 per and Oakland at \$10. Projections suggest that a small increase to the current rate could generate more than \$50 million annually to directly support housing for our homeless and vulnerable populations. I am supportive of exploring this option of updating our rates that would provide resources to be used solely for housing. Though, I am leery of making it harder for people to own homes in San José, especially for new couples starting out and looking to start a family.

Commercial-only parcel tax or general parcel tax - Our school districts often utilize parcel taxes to help support various projects or programs. I supported Measure Y in 2016, San José Unified's parcel tax, but as the results showed, it was a very slim margin of support. I think a commercial-only tax is likely to face major opposition and could find us spending more money fighting at the ballot box instead of investing in solutions. I am supportive of these ideas in concept, but I am hesitant to give full support without seeing all the numbers. I do my homework before making decisions and until we have a full financial plan, that includes oversight of these funds, I am not ready to commit to these tax increases.

Vacant land tax - Oakland is currently navigating their way through passage of a vacant property tax that passed in 2018, and along with San Francisco, San José is considering this option as well. When people live on the streets or in their cars, and when new small businesses struggle to survive because of limited options, it is both confusing and disheartening to know units remain vacant. I do not believe that City Hall should force property owners to sell, rent or lease their properties, but when we are in a housing crisis and our jobs to housing numbers are not in balance, we have to consider steps to do something. I am supportive of a vacant land tax, but if we hope it will be successful, we need to provide the proper exemptions to avoid harm and

also provide a clear definition of “use” so we aren’t caught up spending more time fighting and enforcing than getting residents or business owners into units.

As Councilmember, I will work to find sustainable financial solutions to our housing and service needs. I know that we can balance incentives and fees so we spur growth and solve our major problems. The cost of living in San José is already incredibly high, and we must be intentional about not taxing our residents just to solve the problems that City Hall should already be leading action on.

*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

Residents of San José deserve clean elections that provide for as many voters to be engaged as possible. Final ballot language is extremely important when making a decision on supporting important and impactful choices. I look forward to seeing the final language of the measure once these items are on our ballots.

Switching the Mayoral election cycle continues to be a challenging point of discussion. I am supportive of removing any obstacles to voting, and want to improve San José’s partnership with the County to increase voter engagement and turnout. Though if the Mayoral cycle is aligned with the Presidential, more votes will be cast. I support bringing this before the voters because they should be the ultimate decision maker on this. We face a unique challenge in getting this one right because we will end up with a two-year term for our next Mayor and then back to the voting booth.

Limiting the contributions will be the more divisive and fought over portion of this measure, and why I would not want to see these items combined under the same measure. The city already has strong limits on individual donor amounts and strict allowances on when candidates can raise funds and prevents our Councilmembers from continuing to engage in political fundraising once in office. Additionally, cardroom owners and staff are already barred from contributing to eliminate undue influence that could change city policies to work in their favor. I am in support of strengthening the limitations of corporate and outside interest’s influences on all elections. We often hear politicians say “contributions do not buy access or votes” however we should not be so callous in our approach and voters deserve more than promises. We need to have a policy in place to prevent unjust influences by those who seek to make profits and gain power through city policies.

I find the attacks against labor organizations to be shortsighted, through the years we have seen that labor organizations investments pale in comparison to the corporate investments in our elections. The monies spent by labor organizations come from the workers, not from corporate coffers, attempts to conflate the workers donations as equal to corporate spending is dismissive of the workers and their rights.

As Councilmember, I will support bringing forward options on our ballots to increase voter participation and fair campaign finance reform. If the people make the decisions then we are fully utilizing democracy. It is my responsibility to see City Hall as a body working for the people.

*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

It takes time to upgrade an entire fleet of buses, but I do not believe we should wait until 2029 to implement this change. Climate change is our most prescient issue, and we need to make bold decisions to mitigate the impacts of carbon emissions and greenhouses gases. Public transit is the big solution to getting people out of their cars but if our buses are contributing to our pollution, the gains are limited.

As Councilmember, I will pursue every option available to make our City carbon neutral, embrace green technology and alternative energy sources to power our future without sacrificing our quality of life. Solutions are before us, we just need the right energy to make it happen.

*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

Climate change does not hurt one community and spare another, we are all impacted and we all need to play a role in solving this issue. San José is an incredibly vulnerable place to flooding and sea level rise. We are the only city to have a professional indoor hockey game postponed due to weather, when the rain flooded the Guadalupe River in 1995. Then in 2017, we saw flooding cause severe damage in the downtown area again and the Alviso neighborhood in North San José, which rests about a dozen feet below sea level, has a history of flooding disasters that has limited access to one of the most beautiful spots in our city. I would be excited to work the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and other regional partners to address sea level rise and flooding.

As Councilmember, I will fight to protect our communities from climate change's impacts and ensure we have a warning system in place so our residents are safe during an emergency or disaster. It is only a matter of time before our homes and families face the next major incident, and I must do my job to make sure we are protected, prepared and safe, and that every Bay Area city is working together on this, because this concerns all of us.

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

Support

It is time to update Proposition 13. The new economy and our future cannot continued to be constricted by a policy enacted forty years ago. Many families have been able to stay in their homes and pass a house along from one generation to the next thanks to Prop 13, but it has also been a major loophole to skirt financial responsibilities and deny cities the resources

needed to provide services. Prop 13 will eventually be amended, and if not in 2020, then perhaps in 2022 or 2024. We need to work together to make changes instead of spending millions to fight one another and let this issue linger on.

Splitting roll for different assessments may cause short-term disruptions to our commerce, and it is likely that businesses will threaten to pass these costs onto the consumer. We cannot be afraid to make bold changes because of this. I know many within the business community that are prepared and willing to be good community partners and welcome this change. Corporate altruism is not a myth, and I believe that with good leadership, we can connect with the business community to mitigate the impacts while also recognizing the need for their fair contribution to lift up our entire community.

As Councilmember, I will always pursue solutions that provide financial stability so City Hall can provide the opportunities and services our residents deserve. Our housing choices and ways of life are much different than they were in 1978, and we need state laws that allow cities to have the resources our residents need instead of expecting new results from outdated solutions. I am ready to rattle the status quo to help our families and our future.

*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

City Hall does not have jurisdiction to approve charter school's petitions but City Hall does have jurisdiction on land use. Charter schools have helped bring new ideas and innovation to education, but their record of successes is also filled with stumbles and broken promises. We must do what's in the best interest of our students, and only with accountability and a rigorous approval processes can we ensure the education of our youth is done with their consideration in mind. The success of their learning is top priority, not profits or land grabs.

Student enrollments are on the decline in San José, public schools face closure and are facing huge economic hits. The housing crisis is hurting our children too. I do not believe it is in our best interest to building or opening more charter school facilities that would divert our tax dollars from our public schools. I want charter school students to have access to facilities, but not at the detriment of public school students. I will work with all education partners to see that our facilities are open and used. It is easy to level attacks against our public schools and use flowery language that appeals to parent's concerns, but education should not be a for-profit industry and our children should not be test subjects for what "new ideas" work and those that do not. The California legislature put this issue under the spotlight with a slew of proposed bills, many of which I support, especially AB 1505, to address the negative impacts caused by Charter schools, including their lack of proper credentials and certifications for the educators they put in the classrooms.

As Councilmember, I will be a leading advocate for our youth and schools. Starting on the first day that my daughter started Kindergarten at Los Alamitos Elementary, of the San José Unified

School District, I was in the classroom volunteering with the students and working with other parents to ensure that all of our children had access to the best education possible. I know the challenges our schools are facing, and I have been fortunate to work with many education heroes that continue to do great things for our students and schools. Respect for our educators is also a must, that is why I also provided support to our teachers as much as possible, often helping them organize assignments, monitoring assistance during recess and organizing donations drives because of the high need for classroom supplies. In 2010, I was recognized for my work as the San José School District's Volunteer of the Year. My daughter is now in her sophomore year in college and my son is in his senior year at Pioneer where I am still an active volunteer and a PTSA Boardmember.

Providing good quality education to every child is not an easy task, like they say it takes a village. As Councilmember, I will work with educators, parents and school boards to make sure every child has a safe space to learn and grow. Our public schools are vital to the success of our community, now and for the future, I will make sure City Hall is playing its part to lift up our youth and providing them a strong village of support.

*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?*

Since my community participation has been focused on direct action, I have not been embroiled in many of the political fights and divisions that would cause my network or friends to be in opposition with me. Though as President of Women's March Bay, a non partisan women-led 501(c)(3), I was often the facilitator of meetings with board members, women's organizations and community members who were often opposed to each other positions. I learned years ago from a mentor that setting "ground rules" was the quickest way to successful productive conversations that lead to resolutions and/or solutions. Listening, respect and clear communication are some of the most basic ground rules I have employed, and something that we certainly need more of from City Hall. If I am elected City Council, I will have many opportunities to apply these ground rules when I am meeting with constituents, supporters, staff, electeds and while on the Dias:

-Show up and CHOOSE to be present. Treat your participation as the most important conversation you can be in, we cannot have productive conversations if we are distracted by our phones or technology.

-"Why am I talking (WAIT)?" Thoughtful consideration makes what we share more powerful. Repeating what has already been said, straying off topic or cold body language does not provide for full engagement. Others notice if you are paying attention, time is valuable and we must use it wisely.

-Share your experience, not others. We do best when we speak about our own situations instead of speaking on behalf of others, especially if they also have a seat at the table. When we know and become familiar with the experiences of those we work with, we make more informed decisions.

-State your “headline” first. Being clear and concise on your goals or concerns allows for clarity and direction of purpose or action.

-Listen. It’s the only way to understand, and inquire (ask) before you advocate (persuade).

-Seek unity not separation; critique ideas not people; use thoughtful language; listen to understand; and establish spaces to speak your truth without blame or judgement; ask what is possible not wrong; and accept good intentions. These are the key factors in providing respectful conversations and dialogues.

Most importantly the golden rule still applies: treat others with an expectation with how you wish to be treated. Conflicts and disagreements are inevitable, but they do not have to be violent, abusive, or rude. I will keep my door open to our community and meet with everyone. Even with friends and allies, there are times we agree and times we disagree, but the ability to communicate and work together is the only way to solve problems and help our community. I want people to be passionate and strong, but civility is key and goes a long way to getting things done.