

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

Otto Lee

Santa Clara County Supervisor, District 3 (open seat)

Founder & Lead Attorney at IPLG, LLC and CA DNC Member

Top 3 priorities citywide

1. Housing Affordability. The cost of housing is hurting our young families, seniors and veterans. We need to do more to create more affordable housing, especially for our most vulnerable populations.
2. Homelessness & our unhoused neighbors. The growing number of people forced to live on our streets, creekside and in their cars is unacceptable. We need to get people off the streets and into temporary and permanent housing.
3. Infrastructure investments, maintenance, upgrades and improvements. You can read more about my priorities and plans to address them online at OttoLee.org/issues

1. Who is your Campaign Manager?

Mark Tiernan

2. What is your Campaign Budget?

County regulations limit fundraising to \$250,000. We already have over \$220,000 in funds for our campaign. Supervisor is a serious role, and it is important to have the funds necessary to deliver our campaign message to the district.

3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:

Anna Eshoo, US Congress, CA-18 Norman Mineta, Fmr. US Secretary of Transportation and San José Mayor Mike Honda, Fmr. US Congress, CA-17 Ted Lieu, US Congress, CA-33 Betty Yee, State Controller Fiona Ma, State Treasurer John Chiang, Fmr. State Treasurer & Controller Rod Diridon, Sr., Fmr. Santa Clara County Supervisor Pete McHugh, Fmr. Santa Clara County Supervisor Dianne McKenna, Fmr. Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss, Fmr. Santa Clara County Supervisor A more complete list of support is available online at OttoLee.org/endorsements

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

Support

Investments in public transit, especially electrified rail lines, will be the biggest factor in curbing CO2 emissions and the impacts of climate change. The Bay Area must be a leader on this and I will absolutely support a measure that will provide permanent funding to improve Caltrain frequency and reliability. The Caltrain corridor is more than just a daily commute for riders, but an access line for commerce, entertainment and recreation from Gilroy to San Francisco.

Whenever I have to commute to San Francisco for work or fun, Caltrain is always my first consideration. The more efficient and more frequent service options are available for riders, the greater the chance for increasing ridership and getting people out of their cars. As Supervisor, I will work to strongly support Caltrain and find ways to see ridership hit 200,000 before 2040.

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

Having traveled on High Speed Rail across the world, I know firsthand how efficient and necessary it is as a mode of transit. High Speed Rail (HSR) should already be here. I support the funding and construction of HSR, not just from Silicon Valley to the Central Valley but to the San Fernando Valley. Political divisions, frivolous lawsuits and a lack of bold leadership and vision have delayed this project, allowing costs to rise drastically and leaving thousands of people in limbo about a hopeful opportunity that can connect so many of us.

After returning from service in 2012 I made a lot of great connections and relationships in the Central Valley and know how much of a boost HSR can be for our families. This boost is incredibly prescient as displacement is causing many of Santa Clara County's families to flee to the Central Valley. The long drive disconnects families, and for many it is still their commute for work, leaving before the sun rises and home after the sun sets, generating tons of greenhouse gases daily.

Like Caltrain, BART and VTA's Light Rail, High Speed Rail has to be one of the public transit options we embrace if we are going to take climate change seriously. Every dollar we invest in public transit has a 4x return rate. We need national and state leadership willing to make the commitment.

As Supervisor, I want to be on the platform with my colleagues and other community leaders as we cut the ribbon opening Silicon Valley's HSR station.

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

Los Angeles County provided a plan that included major light rail expansions, creation of new bike and pedestrian pathways, major freeway and road maintenance plans and so much more. I believe that Silicon Valley is in need of a major update and upgrade to our transit lines, but as VTA is extending Light Rail to Evergreen, we are also seeing cutbacks in services. Public transit has been a piece by piece approach, it is time for a major and massive review and creation for a plan to make the hub of innovation and technology the home to transit solutions.

As Supervisor, I will guide visionary ideas to become real solutions that we can take to improve our transportation. I also want to see us make this investment now. For residents in LA County, Measure M will increase to 1% in 2039, while this provides for funding stability, it also means

the changes that people paying for now will not be realized for more than a decade. I don't believe we can wait, we need to take action now.

7. Would you support using County land for housing and affordable housing, including the former San Jose City Hall land and the County Fairgrounds?

Support

The old San José City Hall continues to be a discussion point for housing and I think the Board of Supervisors has a real chance to do something positive with this land. The Santa Clara County Fairgrounds is another potential site for discussion, and while I am open to utilizing some of this space, all housing solutions need to be thoughtful in their connection to public transit, parks and green spaces and near the services and commerce that allow for healthy neighborhoods.

As Supervisor, I will seek to review all land options and find viable areas that we can utilize to address the housing crisis, and to ensure we protect our open spaces.

8. Do you support the general principle of employers needing to fully mitigate/build the housing for all the jobs they produce?

Oppose

Changes to our economy have put Silicon Valley into a difficult position to provide both stable jobs to housing balance and enough housing for the persistent need. Cities are now pushing companies and major employers to step in or be held accountable for the needs of our community. However, it is simply not practical to expect all employers to provide housing solutions for all of their workers.

As Supervisor, I will work with our business partners to create solutions to our housing needs. Companies know that if the cost of living is too extreme and if housing options or quality of life is limited, then eventually these impacts hurt the workforce and hiring. I know that we can work together to invest so that the working families of Silicon Valley work in the communities they live and we provide sustainable jobs to housing balance. As I grew up in Hong Kong, I strongly believe smart growth and building high density housing in downtown areas and along major transportation hubs will be our best way to solve this problem.

9. Would you support a measure, such as Measure F, that regulates the amount that health care providers may charge for services?

Oppose

I am thankful that our friends at SEIU-UHW are leading the fight in California to control health care costs and ensure that everyone has access to affordable care. While I am supportive of the intentions of Measure F, it is a piecemeal approach to a health care system that needs a full overhaul. We need to work to mitigate health care costs as they rise and access becomes more limited, but thankful Covered California is providing care to many residents that had none prior.

As Supervisor, I will work to expand health care services at County hospitals and facilities and reduce costs so everyone is provided care. One of the County's major responsibilities is the health and well-being of the residents, and I am committed to delivering the best quality service to anyone that walks into our hospitals.

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

In China today, every city bus is electric, already! We have fallen behind significantly and it is imperative that our replacement vehicles are zero-emission. I look forward to seeing this change occur so that Silicon Valley is a leader in addressing the impacts of climate change, but we should not wait until 2029 to upgrade our fleet.

As the Mayor of Sunnyvale I put forward and passed several major green initiatives, including plastic bag ban, solar panel installations on city building and signing onto the 2007 US Conference of Mayors Climate Agreement, to push national leadership to take action on climate change. In addition, I have pushed commercial developers to build green, resulting in LEED gold and platinum certifications building across Sunnyvale.

As Supervisor, I will lead the fight for making our County and our 15 cities toward carbon neutral and providing services in the most efficient and green ways possible.

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

Supervisorial District 3 includes some of the most vulnerable areas to sea level rise in the Bay Area. The neighborhoods of North San José, especially Alviso, have a history of flooding and rising sea level will only make this worse, hurting one of the oldest communities in the South Bay. It is imperative that we lobby hard for additional funding to protect our region.

As Supervisor, I will be persistent in my efforts to protect our homes and families from flooding. When Downtown San José flooded in 2017, a failure of communication prevented many families protecting their homes, vehicles and belongings. Effective warning systems and safe locations are a must, as is ensuring that every resident is informed and prepared.

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

Support

For years Proposition 13 has been the target and blame for many of California's financial and economic struggles. I am proud of my fiscally prudent record as Mayor, our balanced budgets and labor peace with our city departments, and additional funding available from commercial properties at fair market value will help the community and schools, especially those that are falling behind.

As Supervisor, I will seek to find solutions to provide financial stability to our residents and businesses. Sometimes the tough decisions make the biggest differences. I will also meet with the full spectrum of community partners and work to make decisions to do the most good, no matter how difficult it may be. Times call for us to rise above the status quo and put the needs of the people first.

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

When it comes to education, I believe in doing what is best for our students. Charter schools have helped to bring new ideas and innovation to the way our children learn, but some have also misused tax dollars and not fulfilled on the big promises they made to students and families, and with less accountability, resulting in students falling behind in their learning.

Pupil outcomes are measured after programs are implemented and properly assessed, and when a Charter School seeks to purchase land that is not owned by a district, they have to be provided allowance first from their local Planning Commission, especially if the land is not zoned for such use. Districts do not have the ability to offer anything beyond anything they own.

As Supervisor, I will fight for our youth and ensure they have the options and the access needed to learn and earn a quality education. I am proud to have graduated from public high school and earned my Bachelors and Juris Doctorate from California's public university system. I will work with our school boards and parents to improve our public schools and ensure the next generation has all the tools and resources needed for success.

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?

When one of my major supporters, a developer, proposed to build large office buildings by Moffett Field using traditional (non-green) building method, beyond the amount of office space allowance in the City's general plan, there were substantial oppositions. I pushed the developer to revise the plan to make the project into green buildings with LEED Silver and higher certifications. This was not agreed to initially, but after some hard work with our City's Planning Staff it turned out the additional construction costs incorporating these sustainable features and practices only raised it by less than 3%. The developer eventually agreed, and those are the very buildings housing some of the most successful companies today. These green buildings were very sought-after right after the last recession, because they had the highest LEED certification. The operating costs are also substantially less for green buildings, giving the developers and property owners extra incentive whilst using less energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions