

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

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Top 3 priorities citywide

1. Housing Affordability
2. Address Homelessness
3. Cleanup Traffic Congestion

1. Who is your Campaign Manager?

James Rincon

2. What is your Campaign Budget?

\$150,000

3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:

Chuck Reed, Dev Davis, Debbie Giordano, Denise Belisle

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

Oppose

I rode Caltrain for almost 4 years as part of my daily commute. Caltrain's ridership skews affluent vs the general population, but sales taxes are highly regressive and paid by everyone with proportionately greater impact on low income families. It is not equitable that residents of Milpitas, Los Gatos, or Half Moon Bay, miles from the Caltrain corridor and unlikely to use it, should pay an ongoing sales tax to support it on every taxable item they buy.

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

Oppose

I previously supported High Speed Rail but have watched as the CHSRA has blown budgets, reduced expectations (not meeting its original Proposition 1A mandates), and continued to run roughshod over neighborhoods and communities both in the Central Valley and Silicon Valley. Rail is a 19th Century solution to the 21st Century problems of residential development restrictions, unbalanced growth, and Climate Change, which is going to require far more than expensive commuter train service to be solved.

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

In contrast to my earlier answer about Caltrain, I believe that transit systems that serve everyone can be paid for by everyone. Integrated, seamless systems work around the world, even in sprawling world cities like Mexico City and Berlin. Part of what does not work here is our disjointed, poor service that does not serve everyone and leaves whole neighborhoods

underserved or unserved. The fact that it takes less time to sit in our terrible traffic than it does to take transit is a testament to local transit ineffectiveness.

Nearly 20 years ago, when I was a college student on language study in Berlin, I became a frequent rider of the BVG – Berlin’s integrated system of busses, subway, trains, and trams. The system was interoperable, used the same passes and fare structures (zones), and provided good service all over both the east and west parts of the city. Berlin is a city of interconnected villages and the BVG moved Berliners around the city very effectively, at commute time as well as off-peak and on weekends.

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 County needs to use every opportunity at its disposal to develop both emergency as well as permanent housing on sites it already owns.

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

Support

First, the public sector does NOT traditionally “build the community’s housing.” The public sector zones parcels and permits private landowners and developers to build a community’s housing. The problem in Silicon Valley is that many cities in the West Valley have approved millions of square feet of office space and significant industrial expansion while discouraging development (or disallowing rezoning of commercial / industrial lands as San Jose has done to excess over a 30-year period.) This has resulted in an imbalance of commercial to residential capacities in these areas. Notable exceptions include the cities I seek to represent, Sunnyvale and Milpitas, which have met recent RHNA goals. Although San Jose has “underproduced” housing in recent years, it has served as Silicon Valley’s bedroom for decades and is over-housed versus its commercial capacity compared to other local cities.

Regarding Stanford: The University is a special case given their status as a non-profit institution of higher education but also an economic engine incubating technology, talent, and organizations that then drive commercial growth for the full region. As an educational campus, Stanford is in a unique position to be able to grow in a somewhat self-contained manner and should do so. Its neighboring communities are already overbuilt from a commercial standpoint and will be unlikely to grow significantly to accommodate the residential growth to meet Stanford’s needs, so Stanford must balance growth on campus lest they exacerbate regional traffic conditions and the housing shortage.

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

Oppose

Regulating health care is not the role of local government. This is a role best left to federal or state authorities, such as the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Food and Drug Administration, and the California Department of Insurance.

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

Zero-emission busses are a scalable, cost-effective means of public transportation. Removing diesel particulates (PM 2.5, etc.) from the air is an improvement in public health and a way for us to lead as the entire vehicle fleet is electrified over coming decades.

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

The health of the Bay is central to the health of our entire Bay Area ecosystem. It is important that we address sea level change carefully, ensure the safety of all communities, and protect (or improve) the natural environment, in a fiscally responsible manner.

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

Oppose

Split Roll is the wrong way to reform Prop 13 and will drive unintended consequences that will be hard to correct:

1) Despite small business exemptions, many small businesses will see large tax increases as triple-net leases allow the pass-through of property taxes from REIT landlords to small business tenants.

2) Split roll further fiscalizes land use, exacerbating the problem of Silicon Valley cities that eschew housing with high service costs and low revenues, for commercial / industrial intensification with low service costs and even HIGHER revenues... which will skyrocket if a split roll is passed.

3) Anyone facing an increased assessment has an automatic incentive to appeal the assessment, backing up requests in an already understaffed government function.

4) The mark-to-market nature of using current assessments will cause even wilder revenue oscillations at the state and local levels across each business cycle, already a problem with a state whose budget is largely dependent on capital gains and income tax influxes from waves of IPOs.

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?*

Support

Charter schools and school district operations are not under the jurisdiction of the SCC Board of Supervisors. They are overseen by the Santa Clara County Office of Education, an agency which stands apart from the County of Santa Clara.

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?*

As a San Jose Planning Commissioner, I supported development, including multi-family and mixed-use facilities. Recently, one community group with which I often agree believed that the Bascom Gateway Station project should have included more units and affordable units on site than planned. I was excited to see 590 new units and 200,000 sf commercial built in San Jose, the most intensive project to date, for that part of town. The community group was technically correct: the project site could have been maximized and developed in a more intensive manner.

However, in accordance with the local Urban Village Plan, the project applied step-back and set-back provisions so as to not overwhelm the existing multi-family development immediately to the north, which was "only" four stories tall compared to the Bascom Gateway eight-story residential building. As a commissioner, I explained that we need to allow "good projects" to

advance which are not perfect in everyone's eyes but strike a balance among competing interests, while providing homes and employment capacity for the next generation.

Additional Question asked on 10/15

15. *Are you in favor or in opposition 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?*

Oppose

I oppose the so-called Fair Elections Initiative, because it is not fair:

First, if we want to limit campaign contributions, then limits (not just dollars but staff and volunteer time, independent expenditures, etc.) should apply to all organizations, not entities of one type or political persuasion but not another.

Second, the current practice of having the mayoral race on the "off-year" gubernatorial election cycle serves as additional inducement for voters and helps to level turnout from cycle to cycle (presidential vs gubernatorial election years). Shifting the mayor race to the presidential cycle will mean that even-numbered council districts and the mayor's race will enjoy substantially higher turnout than the odd-numbered council districts, which are on the gubernatorial cycle and which already see lower voter turnout, as argued by the measure proponents.

Third, this appears to be a ploy by labor interests to boost their turnout in mayoral elections and advantage their candidates, an anti-democratic form of "gerrymandering by calendar." This measure does nothing to make San Jose — or our political environment — better.