

D4 Supervisor Questionnaire
Susan Ellenberg for County Supervisor

A. General Questions

1. Why are you running for office and what are your top goals that you would like to accomplish?

I am running for County Supervisor to be a vocal and effective advocate for our community's most vulnerable members, in particular families, children and seniors. County government is responsible for the public health, safety and welfare of community members who are unstably housed, inadequately nourished, have inconsistent access to health care and do not receive an income that permits self sufficiency. My top goals include the following:

- a. Addressing the root causes of chronic homeless in order to render the condition of homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring.
 - i. build more permanent, supportive housing.
 - ii. expand and target effective mental and behavioral healthcare services to impacted individuals who are experiencing homelessness.
 - iii. improve re-entry services for individuals who are exiting the criminal justice system to ensure that they have opportunities to move into housing and have access to opportunities for employment.
 - iv. improve services for transitional youth who are exiting the foster care system at age 18 to ensure that they have opportunities to move into housing and continue their education or access opportunities for employment.
- b. Expanding and targeting mental and behavioral health care services in order to improve individual quality of life as well as public safety, environmental sustainability and economic stability
 - i. pilot mobile mental health crisis units to partner with law enforcement to respond to calls that involve an individual who is exhibiting symptoms of mental or behavioral health crisis

D4 Supervisor Questionnaire
Susan Ellenberg for County Supervisor

- ii. expand partnerships with schools to offer comprehensive mental and behavioral health care services for students and their families who are exhibiting symptoms of mental or behavioral health crisis
 - iii. improve outreach services to persuade homeless individuals who are exhibiting symptoms of mental or behavioral health illness to take advantage of County services and enter into residential treatment programs or supportive housing arrangements
 - c. Improving access to early childhood high quality care and pre-kindergarten education
 - i. develop entrepreneurial support programs for residents in low income neighborhoods to create high quality in home daycare programs that will enable other parents to pursue employment opportunities
 - ii. partner with health care providers to link new parents to parenting education programs so new parents can better understand and manage children's physical, social-emotional and developmental progress
 - iii. partner with existing agencies such as local after school programs to provide additional pre-K programming in the mornings at otherwise unused facilities
2. In your prior public service roles, what policies that you championed and that were implemented make you most proud?
- a. Maternal/Family Leave Policy that was recognized as most progressive of any school district in the state of CA at the time of passage
 - b. SAT exams offered to every junior in the district without cost to the student *and* on a school day, addressing both the cost and scheduling/transportation/job conflict barriers that prevented many students from accessing this college gateway exam

D4 Supervisor Questionnaire
Susan Ellenberg for County Supervisor

- c. Identifying all-gender restroom options at every high school in the district
3. What do you see as the most significant future changes that will impact our valley?
- a. **Greater urban density**, combined with Increased access to public transit and autonomous vehicles, will ultimately force a culture shift away from single car-single driver favored means of mobility to reliance on more multi-modal transportation.
 - b. **Significantly changed demographic with the largest population of seniors in our history.** This change will impact every sector of society from housing and transit options to universal design, multi-generational employee cultures, retirement and obligations on currently unfunded pension liabilities.
 - c. **The near and real danger of climate change** will drive everything else. It will accelerate the impact of ongoing environmental challenges including the extreme weather fluctuations of drought (leading to fires and agricultural crises) and flooding (exacerbated by our unpreparedness to hold the water in areas away from urban centers). It will compound the warming of our cities, already plagued by concrete jungles that absorb heat, dirty fuel vehicles that pollute the air and destroy the protective ozone layer, and allows the sun to beat down without the filter of sufficient trees and other light absorbing resources. It will threaten our food supply and force communities to make questionably sound decisions regarding clean water procurement from distant reservoirs rather than using locally sourced water. And finally, it will significantly alter the habitats of thousands of plant and animal species, leading to endangerment and even extinction.

B. Housing & Land-Use

D4 Supervisor Questionnaire
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1. What creative and practical ways should the County use to leverage the \$950M bond measure passed by voters?
 - a. Maximizing the leveraging power of the \$950 million requires extensive partnerships between the County and other public entities, as well as the private business and nonprofit sectors. Potential access to County dollars should incentivize city governments to approve new affordable developments. Developers should feel supported by County leaders to engage communities to become “housing ready”. Service providers are needed to support vulnerable tenants so that they can become integrated members of their new communities.
 - b. Partnerships with school districts can lead to the creation of innovative teacher and workforce housing developments, which will have spillover positive effects on the local economy and reduce traffic congestion. Partnerships with private businesses can lead to the creation of on-site or near on-site workforce housing, also impacting local economies and reducing traffic.

C. Parks & Public Spaces

1. What should the County do to reduce trash and litter that is way too common along our creeks and waterways?
 - a. Build more housing for population currently experiencing homelessness.
 - b. Employ more individuals to monitor and collect trash and litter along County expressways and in other unincorporated pockets.
 - c. Hold Caltrain and other transit authorities accountable for regular collection and clean up of trash and litter along creeks, waterways and freeways.

D. Health, Public Safety & Resilience

1. There has been a lot of troubling news about workers on downtown developments being locked up and forced to work without pay. In a sense,

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this is talks to the broader issue of human trafficking. What experience do you have addressing and preventing those kinds of issues?

- a. As an educator, I developed and taught an anti human-trafficking curriculum to middle school students for six years. I worked with a consortium of educators and law enforcement officials who wanted to see public schools incorporate anti-human trafficking education at the middle school level.
 - b. As a community advocate, I participated in the design and execution of an interfaith Passover seder that incorporated the theme of human trafficking in order to raise awareness among a wide variety of community activists.
 - c. As a consumer, I have investigated businesses that I patronize, including nail salons, to be assured that they do not engage in trafficking practices. I strive to be an ethical spender and support companies that practice fair trade and fair labor practices.
2. How have you partnered with law enforcement and justice systems to work alongside neighborhood groups on public safety?
- a. Our school district partners with SJPD and community based organizations that promote restorative justice and positive behavioral intervention practices to increase safety at school and on the way to and from school, as well as to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions. This month, I will be participating in a Willow Glen bike to school event to raise awareness of how to bike safely to and from school. I have advocated for crosswalks in front of schools and in opposition to new businesses that would heighten traffic directly adjacent to schools.

D4 Supervisor Questionnaire
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E. Transportation & Environment

1. With the State of California's goals of reducing Greenhouse Emissions, what steps can the County make, through its own operations, through policy or partnership to reduce Greenhouse Emissions?
 - a. In California, transportation electrification represents the largest near-term opportunity to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution to help California meet its climate and clean air goals. Santa Clara County's Office of Sustainability (OoS) is responsible for reporting regularly regarding sustainability and climate activities, both for government operations and community programs. The County named 11 Environmental Stewardship Goals in 2009. I read the most recent annual report to gain an understanding of what has happened between 2009 and 2017 and use that as a basis to recommend performance improvements. Goal # 8 is to ensure that 100% of public fleet vehicles are electric, hybrid electric, or run on alternative fuels. The 2017 report notes that since 2009, the county has increased its percentage of alternative fuel vehicles, yet in 2016, less than 17% of the 1612 vehicles in the County's fleet are AFVs. To me, that is a less than modest increase and I would require more than an update - a real, SMART goal plan with dates and specific potential barriers so those can be directly addressed. I would advocate not simply for hybrid vehicles, but for zero emission vehicles for the entire County fleet.
 - b. The County must also pursue greater interconnectivity between departments in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There is a clear nexus between environment, economy and social equity. All three of those components must be addressed in a truly comprehensive Sustainability Plan and all departments must clearly understand their role in this holistic vision. As one example, walkable

D4 Supervisor Questionnaire
Susan Ellenberg for County Supervisor

and transit oriented neighborhoods preserve our precious open space, contribute to the local economy & reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2. There are huge differences in job-housing imbalances, which is a huge source of traffic. How can the County help balance traffic flows?
 - a. Improve County expressways to accommodate more modes of transportation, including bicycles and express buses.
 - b. Advocate for the expansion of the supply of affordable housing in areas where there are more jobs and for specifically transit oriented development.
 - c. Use the positions of influence on the six regional transportation boards to improve accessibility of public transit.
 - d. Directly incentivize county employees to utilize public transit and use the purchasing/contracting power of the County to encourage contracting partners to create incentive systems for their own employees to carpool or use public transit or, where possible, to provide transit options for employees (company buses).