

2018 San Jose City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Silicon Valley at Home (SV@Home) is an affordable housing policy and advocacy organization working to ensure housing affordability for all who work and live in Silicon Valley. As a candidate running for office, we invite you to participate in a survey regarding affordable housing. Responses to this survey will be shared widely with community members, and SV@Home members and partner agencies.

Please complete the survey by September 17th, 2018

Email address *

Candidate name

Kalen Gallagher

A. What are your housing priorities?

To work regionally to make a serious dent in our housing crisis and expand the opportunity for people across income levels to continue to call Silicon Valley home.

B. To date, San Jose has failed to meet any of its state mandated housing goals. Earlier this year, the Legislature considered a proposal to allow higher default densities around transit stations in an effort to create more opportunities for housing and affordable housing across our neighborhoods. Do you support or oppose this type of state intervention around the housing crisis?

I think the state has a large responsibility to put out common sense housing packages that address the underlying causes of the housing crisis. Too often our cities are discussing the problems in a silo, instead of regionally. Currently, there's many incentives to not build any new housing, but to instead pack your city with job centers. The end result is not sustainable for the average person. Common sense housing packages from the state can help shift those incentives and force people to think and act regionally.

Building higher density projects around new BART or existing CalTrain lines makes sense. Building them along (often empty and slow) VTA lines may not. Every project is different and should be made in collaboration with the community.

C. Do you support and will you advocate for Measure-A funded projects in your District? If yes, how will you work with your community to ensure support and acceptance of supportive housing for the homeless and families earning less than \$30,000 a year?

It really depends on the project. As we go door to door, it's clear that people want to see real, actionable, and effective solutions to help transition our homeless neighbors off the streets and into the services they need. But the key is the projects being effective and not just some photo-op for a politician. Location matters. If you wanted to build a 10 story transitional housing building on city park land in the middle of a neighborhood, it wouldn't fly. If we wanted to build a small legal encampment with services and security in an empty parking lot and serve our local homeless, it probably would. I think it's important to start small, prove a model works, then use the success to convince people it's the right investment. That's how you get the buy in necessary to actually solve the core problem.

D. How many homes do you think are appropriate as part of redeveloped Diridon Station Area? How many of these homes should be affordable to lower-income households? How many of these homes should be affordable to moderate-income households?

Taking step back from the Google project for a second, I think it's important to keep in mind that our region failed to build an adequate amount of housing infrastructure and transportation infrastructure well before the Google project was a twinkle in someone's eye. As a councilmember my expectation would be that our region shifts that trend in the opposite direction and makes a healthy dent in the crisis. If cities around San Jose start contributing their fair share of housing infrastructure, it will go a long way in helping San Jose continue to do it's part.

When we think about big projects like the proposal in the Diridon Station area, it's important that we plan for adequate housing supply and transportation infrastructure to match the project. That means more density in places it makes sense (in Downtown San Jose), but not forcing 10 story buildings out in the suburbs where there's no public transportation. A fair number of those units should be below-market. The need for housing supply may be lessened a bit since the job center is right next to public transportation, but thinking there's no responsibility is the wrong approach.

E. Do you support or oppose adopting a commercial linkage fee to provide affordable housing?

I support the Mayor and council's current discussion around doing a nexus and feasibility study about the impact such a fee would have. My end goal is to ensure that people across income levels can call Silicon Valley home. Being armed with a detailed study about the perceived positive and negative impacts of a commercial linkage fee is a move in the right direction, but there's also danger in pretending that a commercial linkage fee would solve everything and that there are not trade offs. We need a comprehensive, regional approach that actually solves the core, underlying issues causing our housing crisis. Having a study of the impacts gives the council more information towards that goal.

