

2018 Cupertino 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 7th, 2018

Email address *

Candidate name

Tara Sreekrishnan

A. What are your housing priorities?

- Ensure that our City Council takes a stronger role in financing the construction of affordable housing and requiring an equitable level of community benefits/on-site affordable housing units from for-profit developers; partner regionally in the county to build BMR housing where land is more affordable
 - Champion out-of-the-box affordable housing initiatives including Community Land Trusts; assist these cooperatives in purchasing existing buildings to make housing more affordable
 - Balance office and housing development, so that successful local businesses can remain in our community, and residents and their children can still afford to live here
 - Reduce unnecessary barriers to ADUs
 - Identify sites for Affordable Housing - "Scattered Sites" - including vacant lots, underutilized lots, and public sites
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B. To date, Cupertino 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 corridors 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?

It depends on the specific proposal.

I support statewide legislation that would link housing goals with transportation funding so cities would be able to build both. Often jurisdictions are accountable for housing production but are not given adequate funding for BMR housing or transportation.

SB 827

Looking at www.SB827.info, you can see that the earlier version of SB 827 would have affected the Stevens Creek corridor. This was concerning because Cupertino is not transit oriented and not connected to our larger transit systems (Caltrain and BART). We have a few reliable VTA lines with very low ridership (2%). The map shows that the later version of SB827 would have allowed for denser, but not higher, units. Stevens Creek corridor is not zoned for SFHs, so SB827 would have allowed for more compact units in these areas. Our current Planned Development Areas (PDAs) account for 80% of our future housing targets. These properties fall along Stevens Creek Boulevard (from the West side of Cupertino bordering Highway 85 to its Eastern side) and De Anza Boulevards (the northern and southern part). These PDAs have a density of 25-35 units per acre.

I think that building housing near transit is smart, but I was skeptical that SB 827 would create more affordable housing, instead focusing on more market rate housing and office space. Earlier versions lacked protections to prevent displacement or the demolition of existing housing, and could have deterred cities, such as Cupertino, from investing in the new transit infrastructure they so desperately need. It also eliminated setback requirements, residential density, parking requirements and didn't adequately define a "high-quality transit corridor".

I don't think I would amend SB827, but instead look at a way we can require cities to individually zone denser near transit in their General Plan and zone for densities at levels necessary to meet their entire Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

SB 35

I agree with the premise of SB35 and the projects it allows "by-right" approval of. I think cities like Cupertino should approve 50%

BMR housing projects “by-right” and cities that have not built enough market rate housing should streamline housing projects as long as they comply with the General Plan and applicable building codes.

But, there are reforms I would make to SB35 to ensure that the intent of the law is followed.

- 1) I would put a jobs/housing balance in SB35 to protect from projects that have a large jobs/housing imbalance
 - 2) I would add in a phasing in process to ensure that the BMR housing must be built before the market rate housing
 - 3) I would protect from parcelization/subdivision so property owners could not sell off parcels
 - 4) I would consider other measures to ensure the BMR housing was high quality
 - 5) I would consider measures to implement traffic demand management systems and the protections in CEQA into these streamlined projects
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C. Do you support and will you advocate for Measure-A funded projects in your jurisdiction? 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?

Yes I will proactively advocate for Measure A projects. Our community is supportive of affordable housing; I don't think support for these projects would be an issue.

Our homeless count in Cupertino is about 250. We should prioritize building supportive housing and/or affordable housing for these folks. The City was able to leverage Measure A funds on a recent 19-unit senior housing project, as 6 of these units would be reserved for formerly homeless or special-needs seniors.

We can work with Housing Choices Coalition, a local non-profit dedicated to fighting for supportive housing opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. HCC and I have discussed how we could partner together if I'm elected and dedicate units on future projects as supportive housing. This is called a "Partner Property". Their specialty is connecting folks to these reserved units. Housing Choices Coalition is currently working on a proposal to divert more Measure A funds to towards ELI units.

I support setbacks of 100 feet in the Riparian corridor.

D. How many homes do you think are appropriate as part of the Vallco Specific Plan? How many of these homes should be affordable to lower-income households? And how many of them should be affordable to moderate-income households?

It depends on the mix of housing, retail, and office etc. in the entire project. I support a Vallco project that emphasizes housing, retail and community, rather than being just another Apple office park.

A market-rate unit in Cupertino is practically "affordable" compared to the average monthly mortgage on a single family home in Cupertino.

E. Do you support amending the zoning code to allow additional multi-family and mixed-use zones in Cupertino? If so, where do you think these uses are appropriate?

I believe our housing goals until 2040 in our General Plan account for the job growth we have seen thus far. If we build more office space, we will have to “upzone” parcels to incentivize housing construction. If companies fit workers into smaller and smaller offices, then we will have to amend our General Plan Housing Element to build more housing. (The Housing Element is updated every 8 years).

We have seen a drastic increase in jobs after the Apple Park was approved. Along with this, more jobs are fitting into smaller offices spaces, and more folks are working from home. MTC/ABAG updated their growth projections yearly and population and job projections continue to grow. Our current General Plan includes 4421 housing units over 25 years from 2015-2040 to account for this job growth.

Ad Hoc GPAs on specific development projects leads to widespread distrust in the community. A more transparent process would be updating our Housing Element if necessary.

Our General Plan spreads housing equitably across the city based on realistic capacity. The Planning Commission and City Council came up with a list of 17 potential development sites. The priority sites for 2014-2022 are: 1) The Hamptons 2) Marina Plaza 3) Vallco, 4) The Oaks 5) Homestead Lanes 6) Glenbrook Apartments 7) Barry Swenson, and 8) Carl Berg property. These sites are on the east and west sides of the Cupertino (using De Anza as a divider). With density bonuses the 17 sites have a “realistic capacity” (meaning 85% of development potential) of 4,450 units. Without density bonuses, the realistic capacity would be 3,150 units. I support Affordable Housing density bonuses that allow for more than what’s granted on paper.

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