

Candidate Name: Christina Umhofer

Q1: Redwood City's General Plan directs future growth to a revitalized downtown and along existing transit corridors, while conserving open space and protecting our quality of life. It also sets limits on the intensity of development within various land-use categories.

a) Do you agree with our community's current vision for building in the urbanized core of our City and not in areas that the General Plan designates as open space, such as the Redwood City salt ponds? Please explain your answer.

A: Absolutely, I agree with the vision and the premise that thoughtful transit-oriented development (TOD) is critical to relieving pressure to develop on the salt ponds or the hillsides. Given our severe housing crises, we need to produce more housing units and high-density development gets us to that goal faster than building in less optimal locations.

b) Do you agree with the land-use mix and development intensity within the current General Plan? Please identify changes you would like to see, if any.

A: Yes, I mostly agree with the current General Plan. It took hundreds of hours of community input before it was adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council back in 2010; however, it has been eight years and much has changed in that time. Given our mounting housing crises, it is time to reassess and look at using Industrial Restricted (IR) and Light Industrial (LI) zones, if close to transit, for creative housing. We should consider uses for the floors above the ground floor (that are currently used for business), for creative housing solutions. I also believe the Mixed-used Live/Work (MULW) zoning areas of the City are worth revisiting because they have not accomplished the goal of providing housing. The MULW zoning district was first adopted in 2013 and primarily applies in the northeastern portion of the El Camino Real Corridor Plan Area. However, since its adoption, there haven't been any significant housing projects that have utilized this designation to build or convert space to MULW housing. It's imperative that we get a better understanding of the impediments to successful implementation of the MULW and steps that might improve the potential of this land use.

Q2: In considering the current Harbor View proposal, a council member argued that the City has an obligation to grant the developer "due process" by studying the project – eg. allowing the project to move forward with required environmental studies and initiation of a General Plan Amendment. California law, however, allows a city to deny outright, without further studies, any development proposal that is not in conformance with its General Plan.

In your opinion, what obligation does the City have to process an application and conduct environmental studies for a development project that is not consistent with its General Plan and current zoning?

A: None, and to be frank, the property owner knew the zoning restrictions of Industrial Restricted (IR) zoning when he bought the property. Given the high demand for IR uses on the peninsula, I suggest that the developer bring a plan that fits within the parameters of the current IR zoning. The current IR zoning already allows for 800k+ of development (with half being office space). There is nothing in the request for rezoning that would lead me to believe that Redwood City needs or can absorb a non-TOD office park that would allow for 6,000+ office workers at this location. The developer of this project should have been told no and saved all of us, including the developer, a lot of time and money.

Q3: In 2009, the City Council voted to accept the initial Saltworks development application and begin a lengthy (and divisive) environmental review process to fill in restorable wetlands on the Cargill salt ponds, which have long been designated as “Open Space” in the General Plan and are zoned “Tidal Plain”.

If elected and a future development proposal for any portion of the salt ponds comes before you:

- a) **would you be inclined to accept the application and vote to initiate environmental studies and a General Plan Amendment process? Please explain why or why not.**

A: No, any Salt ponds project would be a huge mistake for Redwood City and neighboring communities. There are many compelling reasons why over 100+ local and regional officials signed a letter voicing their displeasure for the original project. Given its location and the current dysfunctional state of 101/84, the traffic implications would be severe, unavoidable and could not be fully mitigated. And just as important, we have no way of maintaining a reliable, sustainable supply of water for the development. The costs of impacts to the residents and the nearby businesses will be severe and this should be enough of a reason alone to not development in this location. DMB/Cargill’s focus on housing growth on an isolated parcel east of Highway 101, far from existing public transit, adjacent to heavy industry, and sitting at or below sea level where it will need to be protected by flood levees is reckless and misguided. Bottom line: this is housing in the wrong location!

- b) **are there any circumstances that you believe would justify a Council decision to approve a development on the salt ponds? Please explain your answer.**

A: No, we already have several large housing projects and millions of square feet of office development already proposed along our transit corridor to consider. These projects are in alignment with the vision of our General Plan and its TOD desires and don’t require a amendment to our General Plan. I want to VERY clear -- the bayfront salt ponds should never be developed.

Q4: Redwood City's 2013 Climate Action Plan states that *"while the City has taken significant action on climate change in the past 7 years, it becomes increasingly important to begin climate adaptation planning as well"*, and suggests developing recommendations for adaptation measures based on the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy, which includes measures for increasing, protecting and restoring wetlands as well as avoiding or limiting development in areas subject to sea level rise.

a) If elected, would you encourage Council/City staff to work with other agencies to increase areas of tidal marsh for flood protection in Redwood City?

A: Yes, without question, this will require collaboration with nearby agencies. As an elected official, I promise to do everything within my power to make this a big priority for our City going forward.

b) If elected, would you be in favor of the City including adaptive measures for restoring and increasing tidal marsh in its Climate Action Plan?

A: Yes, there are many benefits to the restoration of our tidal marsh. The incredible efforts of Ralph Noble and the Friends of Redwood City to restore the Bair Island wetlands is one of our environmental crowning achievements. As a potential member of City Council, I promise to do everything within my power to carry on that legacy by encouraging the restoration of our remaining and growing tidal marshes.

c) If elected, would you consider approving future development in areas subject to sea level rise beyond what is currently allowed by the General Plan? Please explain your answer.

A: No, given all the recent data and scientific research that has been released since our General Plan was adopted in 2010, it would be reckless to consider any additional development than currently allowed in the General Plan. In fact, given the new and compelling data on the impacts of sea level rise, I strongly believe this section of the General Plan should be revisited soon.

Q5: The July 2016 Redwood City Climate Action Plan and Environmental Initiatives Update states that *"if the current trend continues unchanged, the City's 2020 [greenhouse gas] reduction goal will not be met"*. This conclusion was based on GHG inventories that ended in 2013, before the recent boom in office development and corresponding traffic increases.

a) Do you believe that it is important for Redwood City to strive to meet its community-wide goal of a 15% decrease in GHG over 2005 levels by 2020, and/or to meet California's goal of a 40% reduction in GHG over 1990 levels by 2030?

A: Yes, while it's disappointing that we haven't reached our objectives, that is not a reason to stop trying.

b) If elected, would you support adoption of local codes, ordinances and/or programs, as some other cities have enacted, that would help achieve those goals?

A: Yes, I would support any efforts to achieve those goals.

Q6: The current Highway 101/Woodside Road interchange improvement plan did not incorporate any increased traffic from potential development east of Hwy 101 beyond what is accounted for in the General Plan. If substantial new development there is allowed, the expected traffic relief for current commuters and Seaport industries from these improvements could be short-lived, or traffic through the interchange could end up worse than current conditions.

If elected, would you approve a development project east of Highway 101 if it would significantly increase traffic impacts on current Redwood City commuters and nearby industries? Please explain your answer.

A: No, our infrastructure is straining and can barely support the development that has been built since the DTPP was adopted in 2011 -- how can it support more development? It simply can't support further significant growth without a massive infrastructure investment, including, but not limited to, the 101/84 exchange, Samtrans, Caltrain, and multiple grade separations.

Q7: Despite significant housing construction in the last several years, the worsening jobs/housing imbalance in Redwood City contributes to our housing affordability crisis, adds to commute times and greenhouse gas emissions, and creates increased pressure to develop on open space lands.

a) Do you believe the City's Downtown Precise Plan should be reopened to allow for additional office space development? Why or why not?

A: No, with the rapid growth that we experienced and dozens of projects that have yet to come online, it would be rather foolish and a bit reckless to think about expanding the existing DTPP. We have no way of knowing the impacts until more of the already approved projects are completed. The office and residential caps in the DTPP are providing the necessary pause in development that our some of our Councilmembers promised but failed to deliver. I fully support an extensive vetting and community engagement process that would come with the initiation of the DTPP2. Only then, would I consider more projects in our DTPP than what is currently allowed.

b) Do you agree with the recent 4-2 City Council decision to proceed with the study of the Harbor View project proposal to amend the General Plan to allow for construction of more than 1 million square feet of office space and thousands of additional workers east of Highway 101? Why or why not?

A: No, as I have publicly stated, Jay Paul bought the Harbor View property knowing full well what what was permitted in the IR zone. It is not in the best interests of

Redwood City residents, nor should it be, that a developer bought in one zone and it now seeking to change the zoning for their personal gain. Simply stated, the current Harbor View project does not belong at this location.

Q8: In addition to publishing this questionnaire, RCNU will be informing voters about candidates' past Council and Planning Commission votes as well as public comments that candidates have made at City Council/Planning Commission meetings or to the media that are related to the topics covered in this questionnaire. If you have any comments you would like to make regarding your past actions or public statements, please take this opportunity to discuss them below.

A: n/a