

SFLCV November 2020 Election Board of Supervisors Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in San Francisco League of Conservation Voters' endorsement process. Please limit answers to the below questions to 2-3 paragraphs at most (250 words). We are accepting responses until June 24, 2020.

Please enter your contact info here (Name, District, Campaign contact, Phone, Email, FPPC#) *

Vallie Brown, District 5, hello@votevallie.com, FPPC #1426782

1. Affordable Housing: What are your top priorities around supporting infill development within your district and throughout the City? How will you respond to pushback from your constituents regarding height, density and affordability? What have you done to advance housing initiatives in your district, neighborhood, SF? *

During my term as Supervisor, I sat down with every neighborhood organization and merchant association in the area around Divisadero before meeting with representatives from three big developments to negotiate 20% affordable housing for two of the developments and 23% for the other — up from the 13-18% mandated at the sites at the time. And I passed this legislation unanimously at the Board of Supervisors. I think it's important to work with all parties to get more affordable housing built, and I've shown that I can make that happen. I'm also focused on identifying underutilized City land to build 100% affordable housing. I was able to identify more than five sites for 100% affordable housing, including the former McDonald's site on Stanyan, and if elected, I will work to find more.

In addition to building new housing, we also need to preserve existing housing. As Supervisor, I expanded the "Small Sites" acquisition program by \$40 million to buy buildings with existing tenants threatened with eviction under the Ellis Act. Moving forward, these "Small Sites" will be 100% affordable. I helped to negotiate our first acquisition at 520 Shrader, saving tenants — many of them seniors — from Ellis Act evictions.

With a mix of new construction at 100% affordable and middle-class rates, coupled with the preservation of existing rental units, we are preventing San Franciscans from being displaced and preserving the unique character of our neighborhoods.

I also believe that Affordable housing should be part of the City's capital planning projects.

2. Walkable and Bikeable Streets: What are your top priorities for better and safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists? How do you intend to advance those priorities if elected? How will you work with constituents who are opposed to bike/ped infrastructure improvements in your district (such as traffic calming, bike lanes, and bike share docking stations)? What have you done to champion these efforts up to now? *

One of my top priorities for making safer streets is to expand the “Slow Streets” program by rerouting buses a few blocks to close streets. Page Street is already part of the program, and I believe it could be expanded to include corridors such as Divisadero, to be opened for open air dining and socially distanced walks and biking. This would allow for safety on multiple fronts: from cars, and from the spread of COVID-19. What this crisis has shown is that pedestrian and bike first streets work. They’re good for our environment, good for safety, and good for urban livability. If we can permanently close Market street to private cars, surely we can do the same for other corridors across District 5 and San Francisco — one example being John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park.

I hear complaints all the time regarding the loss of parking and while I’m sympathetic to the need for parking, we have to put people’s lives first. It’s my job to work with the community to get this done and build this consensus, we did it with parklets, surely we can do it for safety.

In the past I made improvements to The Wiggle, including being involved in its first community workshops when I lived in the Lower Haight. As a Legislative Aide, I worked on protected bike lanes on The Wiggle and adding bike boxes in intersections. I also worked to improve bike safety on Fell in front of the Arco Station at Divisadero by moving the turn lane to the left of the bike lane, preventing cars from blocking the bike lane. We also worked with the gas station to use extended hoses so that cars could enter and exit the station on either Fell or Divisadero, greatly improving cyclist safety. I worked for ten years to make Masonic a safer street, with a lowered speed limit of 25MPH and a designated bike lane. Also as Supervisor, I created and passed a protected bike lane on Page Street.

3. Reliable, Fossil Free Public Transit: What are your top priorities for improving local and regional transit? How would you advance your priorities if elected? What have you done to improve transit operations, access to transit, passenger experience, etc.? *

The COVID-19 crisis has made the future of our public transportation system a huge concern. Re-opening MUNI and BART lines that have been shut down during this crisis will require all of us to move with confidence. We must redouble our efforts to decrease crowding on MUNI which is now not only inconvenient, but poses a public health risk. We have to protect Muni operators and of course everyone who takes public transportation. And we can't lose sight of issues that existed before the crisis. We can't afford long term damage to our public transportation system that so many rely on. It's also time to double down on our efforts to promote biking and walking.

During my time as Supervisor, my office commissioned a Budget and Legislative Analyst's report that uncovered Muni's shortage of 400+ operators each and every day. We lose well trained operators every year to better paying agencies in neighboring cities because they cannot afford to live in the city where they work. Operators need to be paid a living wage so Muni can improve hiring and retention rates. I'm proud that as a result of this exposure, the operators union and the City reached an agreement to dramatically increase benefits and end the operator shortage.

4. Green Energy Policy: What are your top priorities for improving energy conservation, household efficiency and renewable power, and how would you advance these efforts? What have you done to promote energy conservation in these areas? Are you, personally, a CleanPowerSF SuperGreen customer? *

There is a lot we can do to encourage energy conservation by residents but there is even more we must require of our largest commercial citizens and energy users. It isn't enough to encourage conservation, we have to mandate changes. I was the primary cosponsor to the Mayor's legislation to mandate commercial spaces over 50,000 sq. ft. to use 100% renewable energy by 2030 – this is a big step to reach carbon neutral status by 2050.

I worked for a decade as a Legislative Aide to create CleanPowerSF – I think it needs to be expanded. Over 350,000 households have signed up so far, but we need to do more to get every household in San Francisco into the program. One way to make folks more aware is through a robust marketing campaign that is easier to read and understand. Campaigns to date have been difficult to understand, which could be one reason some people do not make the switch. Data shows that when you make it simple, folks will make the change. If elected, I will look at how to work with the PUC and Mayor's office to publicize the benefits of switching to CleanPowerSF at the same time that folks get information on the tax credit they will receive next year.

This is an area where we must keep thinking big – CleanPowerSF was always the first step. San Francisco has a serious proposal to create public utility by buying PG&E's assets in the city. It's a project I fully support that will give us the freedom and authority to transition our power supply to renewable sources faster.

5. Water Sustainability & Conservation: What are your priorities for improving the sustainability of San Francisco's drinking and wastewater systems? If elected, what steps will you take to enhance the City's water resiliency and reduce its reliance on imported water? What have you done to promote conservation in this area? *

There's a lot to be done with our water management. We can start by introducing green stormwater systems along our sidewalks and streets in San Francisco, which has the added benefit of beautifying our streets. I fought for and got more money in the 2019/20 budget for rain and street gardens in District 5.

The Bay Area has developed strong regional coordination between its water agencies. Yet, we must always push for stronger partnerships that invest in water infrastructure and resiliency. One particular result of past coordination is the investment in workforce development in the water sector. While other parts of the nation struggle to find workers to build and maintain their water infrastructure, Bay Area water suppliers have been very successful at recruiting and retaining workers in the high-paying union jobs they have to offer. As a former sitting member of Workforce Investment San Francisco I am looking at ways to strengthen those programs to ensure the City has the workers to build and maintain our water systems.

In addition to investments in the workforce, we need to look at investments in flexible infrastructure such as fit-for-purpose water management which matches water of different qualities to specific uses for which they are appropriate. Fit-for-purpose reduces the overall volume of water that must be treated for the most stringent quality standards and is a highly efficient means for managing water for non-potable uses.

Finally, we need to restore and manage our natural waterways by daylighting long lost and covered streams.

6. Zero Waste: How can the city advance its Zero Waste goals in light of the temporary (we hope) move to suspend programs such as the required fee for grocery store bags that previously incentivized customers to reuse bags and containers, or purchase foodstuffs from bulk-stocked bins? What are your thoughts around recent legislation to reduce waste and what more can we do? How will you make it happen? What have you done to promote zero waste? *

The zero waste movement is something that I have been committed to for a very long time. As a Legislative aide I worked to pass the first in the nation ban on plastic bags in San Francisco. I later noticed that there were some loopholes being employed to avoid compliance which is why as Supervisor I passed the Plastic Bag Ban 2.0 to raise the bag fee from 10 cents to 25 cents to further encourage people to bring their own bags and instituted compostable bags for fruits and vegetables. This is an issue we must continue to work on, and if elected I am committed to furthering zero waste policies.

When I heard about the temporary roll-back of the plastic bag ban that I helped write as a legislative aide, I understood. We are in a public health crisis which means we must make changes, but we cannot lose sight of our Zero Waste goals. This fee on plastic bags fostered a cultural shift in how we shop, turning carrying reusable bags into the new normal and I feel confident that once this crisis has passed we will all return to the zero waste options for shopping that we have become accustomed to.

7. Your Environmental Vision: Why should the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters endorse you? How will protecting the environment shape your agenda given the potential for ongoing pandemic conditions? How will you continue the efforts and gains despite significant economic hardship? *

I would be honored to receive the endorsement of the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters as I have been a longtime environmental advocate:

Fought pollution around Bayview/Hunters Point

Passed the first in the nation plastic bag ban

Worked for over a decade to pass CleanPower SF

Worked to mandate commercial spaces over 50,000 sq. ft. to use 100% renewable

Although we are facing a global pandemic, that has reshaped the way we look at so many issues, we are still in a climate crisis and we must do everything we can to reduce waste and save our planet. We cannot allow one existential crisis to distract us from another.

We are in economic hardship now, and if we continue to ignore the environmental issues we face or roll-back existing programs, we will be in an even worse position. In particular I see future issues with food supply chains if we do not support our local farmers during COVID-19. This is why I have fought to keep our farmer's markets open during this crisis and will advocate for more space if elected, because losing this access to local food would be detrimental economically and environmentally.

I believe we must also refocus on building more and denser housing in San Francisco to ensure people are living where they work. Although we are currently seeing widespread remote work, in the next few years we will see a shift back to commuting and we must build housing before that occurs.



San Francisco League of Conservation Voters

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