

Santa Barbara City Council Candidate Questionnaire on Transportation

Brought to you by the Community Environmental Council, Coalition for Sustainable Transportation, and Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition.

Cathy Murillo

- 1. Do you agree with the City's Circulation Element vision statement, "Santa Barbara should be a city in which alternative forms of transportation and mobility are so available and so attractive that use of an automobile is a choice, not a necessity"? If not, how would you improve it?**

Yes, I fully support the Circulation Element and will work diligently to assure it remains incorporated into the upcoming General Plan update, and is implemented in planning and development decisions. That vision statement was crafted in 1999 and it continues to encapsulate what our goals should be for governing our City. Some current City Council members do not support these principles (example: rejection of the Chapala Street design guidelines), and that was part of my inspiration for seeking public office. Santa Barbara residents want transportation options such as bicycling, driving, bus riding, skateboarding, and walking. The Circulation Element could be improved by having its application monitored and reviewed more closely by the City's Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC) and having TCC consulted far more often than they have been.

- 2. Given that dangerous walking conditions exist in Santa Barbara's Eastside, what might you do to make the Eastside a safer place to walk - more lighting, re-pavement of crosswalks, speed bumps, more police enforcement, or something else?**

I know first-hand how dangerous these conditions are – I walked with Eva Inbar and Ana Rico as part of COAST's Eastside Walks/Eastside Camina program on September 21. We identified needs for better lighting, speed bumps and enforcement, and for, most of all, sidewalks where there are none! I was struck by how State law plays an important role in traffic and pedestrian-safety issues. We must work with our state partners and elected officials to address speeding problems, sign placement (about proximity to schools), and traffic control in general. Actually, dangerous walking conditions exist at places throughout all Santa Barbara neighborhoods. Pedestrians need to reclaim their streets and assert their legal rights of way, such as safe walking groups to school and old-fashioned peer pressure. Motorists must take personal responsibility to slow down in general! Extensive community outreach and site-specific studies should occur to recommend the best treatment for the particular site. I commend the efforts of COAST to find solutions in this important public safety issue.

- 3. Is it the City's duty to improve the jobs/housing imbalance in Santa Barbara? If so, what would you have the City do to accomplish this? If not, how can this imbalance be best addressed?**

Yes, city leaders must do what they can to address the jobs/housing imbalance. The General Plan update may be approved before I get into office, but I will do what I can to increase housing options in Santa Barbara – rentals and for-purchase opportunities. For the record, I agree with the early 2010 version of the General Plan update, which specifies that most of the

Santa Barbara City Council Candidate Questionnaire on Transportation

Brought to you by the Community Environmental Council, Coalition for Sustainable Transportation, and Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition.

new increment of residential development should be focused in the downtown area of Santa Barbara and along major transportation corridors, rather than sprawling into the outer neighborhoods. While I know we cannot build our way into widespread home affordability, we can improve the quality of life for people willing to live in well-designed, smartly located, and sustainable housing projects close to their jobs so they don't have to commute. As we know, housing and transportation are necessarily integrated and I agree with and understand the HOT principles (Housing, Open-space, Transportation) promoted by many community groups.

4. Please list three specific things you would prioritize to improve our regional transportation. How would you pay for them? How long would it take to accomplish them?

This question naturally leads from the prior question – yes, we will always have people commuting from north or south of Santa Barbara, as some people want to live a suburban lifestyle and can only afford to buy homes outside of the City. I would focus City efforts on establishing a robust commuter rail system (or more frequent passenger trains via Amtrak Surfliner). And I will promote enhanced frequency of regional bus services. Working with SBCAG and its programs, a coordinated vanpool and carpool matchmaking service also can be improved. Of course, these regional transportation efforts take regional inter-governmental cooperation – to establish programs and find funding from local and Federal sources. With my experience working in Ventura County as a local government news reporter, I have some good connections and insights for improved cooperation with our partners there. It would help if Ventura County had a dedicated sales tax for transportation projects, and funding appears to be the largest factor in determining how long it would take to implement these projects. Fortunately, we already know most of what we need to do, through the past and ongoing studies, plans, and other work of COAST, Coastal Rail Now, SBCAG, VCTC, On-TRAC, and other allied efforts. To stay informed on these issues and to serve as a bridge to City Hall, I would seek the liaison assignments for MTD, TCC, and the various commuter rail committees.

5. Do you support the State of California's goals for new and retrofitted "net zero energy" buildings that generate as much energy as they use? If so, how can the City be a leader and help its citizens meet this challenge? If not, why?

Yes. Net Zero Energy buildings are part of the solution and the City should lead by example. I support City zoning and code standards that encourage more solar power production and energy (and water!) conservation, with appropriate balancing for historic preservation standards at specific properties. On-site solar energy should become more and more aesthetically acceptable as technology evolves. I especially like the model project from a few years ago where the City partnered with a private firm to produce and sell solar power generated on the roof of the City equipment and vehicle storage yard, while selling the power to the City at a discount price, with no capital investment required by the City. For future City government building projects (the new police headquarters building, for instance), I would make sure the City financial analysts fully incorporated and amortized the long-term money saved from Net Zero Energy (and other LEED standards) into the development costs of new

Santa Barbara City Council Candidate Questionnaire on Transportation

Brought to you by the Community Environmental Council, Coalition for Sustainable Transportation, and Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition.

construction and retrofits to existing buildings.

6. Given projections of increased traffic levels in Santa Barbara, how would you best mitigate our upcoming street congestion?

Street traffic congestion is a direct function of the jobs/housing imbalance and data from the past 20 or so years show a high correlation between traffic congestion and housing prices. As noted in my responses to other questions here, more choices in the modes of transportation, along with wisely locating new residential and commercial development, will mitigate traffic congestion, especially at the most congested freeway interchanges and under-crossings.

Accordingly, with robust choice in transportation, people will not have to drive alone taking up space on the roads and car parking facilities. We must make it easy and convenient for people to ride bicycles or the public bus. Our City is small enough that we can make it happen! We are fortunate in Santa Barbara to have so many public advocacy and educational organizations, and a knowledgeable City staff, who understand the intricate relationship between traffic congestion and transportation and urban planning.