

Housing Santa Cruz County 2024 Candidate Questionnaire - David Tannaci

Most people in Santa Cruz say they are for affordable housing, but then they qualify it with not in my neighborhood. Since council seats are now by district, what criteria would you apply to deciding whether to support a project located in your district?

As City Council decisions are now made by district, it's imperative to establish clear criteria for evaluating projects within each district. While the City Council's authority is limited by local zoning and land use policies, I believe there's room for prioritizing affordable housing projects and actively engaging with the community to address concerns before project approvals. Emphasizing the need for diverse housing options to meet the city's evolving needs, I would advocate for robust community engagement through town hall meetings, surveys, and other forums. Understanding specific housing concerns and gathering input on potential solutions from residents is essential in developing policies that align with the community's needs and values.

Can you name a specific location in your district that you feel would be a good site for a housing project?

In considering suitable sites for housing projects within my district, existing locations such as 908 Ocean, 831 Water, 917 Water, and 150 Felker come to mind. These locations are already in the pipeline for potential development. Emphasizing the importance of focusing on existing transit corridors, I believe these sites offer strategic advantages. By developing housing along transit corridors, we can promote efficient transportation options and simultaneously safeguard our environment and future. Such a strategy not only minimizes our carbon footprint but also ensures access to sustainable transit options for our community. Therefore, advocating for the development of housing along transit corridors aligns with our goals of environmental sustainability and accessibility.

Are there policies that make it harder to build housing in your community that you would like to change?

Yes, there are indeed policies in our community that I believe need adjustment to facilitate housing development. One particular area I've been actively addressing is the adoption of California Plumbing Code Appendix M into our Municipal Code. This addition would streamline the process for proposing adequate water service for projects, particularly benefiting large housing developments. By embracing Appendix M, we can enhance efficiency, significantly reduce development costs, and ultimately make it easier to bring much-needed housing projects to fruition in our community. This change aligns with our goal of fostering sustainable and affordable housing options for Santa Cruz residents.

In the last five years have you attended a Planning Commission or City Council Meeting to support or oppose a housing project?

Yes, over the past five years, I have actively participated in both city and county planning and zoning meetings. Attending these meetings allows me to stay informed about agency directives, available funding sources, and community input on housing projects. My engagement in these meetings reflects my commitment to staying informed about local housing issues and advocating for community-driven solutions.

Did you attend community meetings, participate in the surveys, or make comments on the City's Housing Element?

Yes, actively participating in community meetings, engaging in surveys, and providing comments on the City's Housing Element are integral parts of my civic engagement efforts. My campaign is centered around fostering this level of community involvement. I strongly believe that every voice matters, and ensuring the full spectrum of community concerns and creative solutions is represented at the table is essential for effective decision-making and policy development.

What is your position and reasoning on the Housing for People initiative?

I have not taken a firm position on Measure M, as I see both sides of the issue. On one hand, I understand the concerns about its potential challenges, particularly regarding its broad language and its interaction with new state housing laws aimed at streamlining housing production. On the other hand, I recognize that the measure reflects genuine community concerns about the impacts of growth on our city's character and environment.

I believe that the City needs to improve its engagement with the community regarding future General Plan and zoning changes to address concerns before projects reach decision-making bodies. It's essential to have robust discussions before decisions are made at the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, or City Council level.

Predicting the exact impact of Measure M is challenging due to the complexities of development, and it's unclear how state agencies and the Legislature might respond. However, I believe our current General Plan has the capacity to support higher density projects and meet RHNA allocations without requiring significant changes to local zoning, which could trigger a public vote.

Ultimately, regardless of one's stance on Measure M, it's clear that everyone involved shares a commitment to addressing our community's affordable housing crisis. I aim to harness this shared energy to secure critical resources for affordable housing, including inclusionary units, surplus properties, Section 8 vouchers, grants, and local revenue streams. Collaborating with local stakeholders, I believe we can implement effective strategies to build and sustain affordable housing in our community.

Santa Cruz is the only jurisdiction in the area that met its RHNA numbers in the last cycle, and the only one to have acquired the ProHousing designation. What stands out to you in how that was accomplished that can be applied to the next cycle, and what

additions to the new Housing Element do you feel will help the city meet its new RHNA numbers?

Santa Cruz's achievement of meeting its RHNA numbers in the last cycle and earning the ProHousing designation is commendable and indicative of effective strategies in housing development. Moving forward to the next cycle, it's essential to identify what contributed to this success and how those approaches can be applied again.

One notable aspect of our accomplishment is the alignment of housing development efforts with both state law and the city's General Plan and Housing Element. This consistency ensures that projects are in line with established guidelines and priorities, facilitating smoother approvals and implementation processes.

Additionally, it's crucial to address the feedback provided by HCD on the draft Housing Element, particularly regarding the need to better tackle displacement, which disproportionately affects working-class residents. Incorporating measures to prevent and mitigate displacement, such as strengthening tenant protections, expanding affordable housing opportunities, and promoting inclusive community engagement, will be vital in addressing this issue effectively.

Looking ahead, additions to the new Housing Element should focus on enhancing affordability, promoting equitable access to housing, and fostering sustainable development practices. This may include strategies such as increasing the availability of affordable housing units, incentivizing mixed-income developments, and exploring innovative financing mechanisms to support housing projects.

By building on the successes of the previous cycle and addressing identified areas for improvement, Santa Cruz can continue to make meaningful progress in meeting its RHNA numbers and advancing housing affordability and equity in our community

Consultants, in a report to City Council, stated that a 100% affordable housing project usually needs to be at least 50 units, and depending on lot size would most likely be 5 stories. There is a general community push against anything over three stories. Would you support a 100% affordable housing project, with that criteria, if it was on a major transportation corridor?

Yes

100% affordable housing projects need to have the equivalent of free land. There are few sites the city owns that are large enough for an affordable housing project. One is the existing library site. The city began the process of planning what could be built there and affordable housing was a common choice for those who participated in the survey. Would you support that site including affordable housing as a major component?

Yes

100% affordable housing projects have a better chance of acquiring funding if the city funds part of it, land is one of the ways, but also cash funding. The city's fund for that is nearly exhausted on current projects. What, if any, ways would you support to increase funding sources?

To ensure the viability of 100% affordable housing projects, it's crucial to secure adequate funding, which often requires support from the city. While land allocation is one avenue, it's essential to recognize that the city's funds for such purposes are nearly depleted due to ongoing projects.

To address this funding shortfall, I advocate for the establishment of a dedicated revenue stream, ideally generated through a real estate transfer tax. Such a tax could provide a consistent and reliable source of funding for affordable housing initiatives, helping to alleviate the strain on the city's budget.

Additionally, it's important to reassess our approach to allowing developments to opt out of affordability requirements through the 'in-lieu' transfer process. This option must be rigorously evaluated and substantially revised to ensure that it effectively addresses the pressing need for affordable housing and our capacity to deliver it.

By implementing these measures, we can enhance our ability to fund 100% affordable housing projects and make meaningful progress in addressing housing affordability challenges in our community.

Do you have any ideas that would increase incentives for developers to build in Santa Cruz instead of somewhere else?

While Santa Cruz may not struggle to attract developers due to our desirable coastal location and limited competition for real estate, my focus lies in maximizing affordability and community benefit within our development projects.

Rather than solely focusing on incentivizing developers to choose Santa Cruz over other locations, I believe it's more important to collaborate with developers who are committed to building in our community. By working together, we can ensure that development projects prioritize affordability and provide tangible benefits to our community.

This approach involves fostering partnerships with developers to explore innovative strategies for increasing affordability, such as offering density bonuses for including affordable housing units, streamlining permitting processes, and providing financial incentives for sustainable and community-oriented developments.

Ultimately, by prioritizing affordability and community benefit in our development policies and partnerships, we can create a more inclusive and sustainable housing landscape in Santa Cruz.

One of the new requirements in the Housing Element is Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. The Peace Village project is an example of what can be done, having low-income housing in one of the most affluent neighborhoods. Another example is the Dream Inn project that would have lower income units in the coastal zone that also has been an exclusive neighborhood. Do you have any ideas of locations or ways to meet the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing provisions?

To meet the provisions of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, it's essential to engage in bridge-building efforts between communities concerned about preserving their character and the imperative to expand affordable housing options. Leadership and active listening are key to finding solutions that balance the needs of all city neighborhoods.

One approach could involve identifying suitable locations within affluent neighborhoods for mixed-income developments, leveraging community input and collaboration to ensure that such projects enhance rather than diminish the character of the area. Additionally, exploring creative zoning incentives and partnerships with developers could help facilitate the integration of affordable housing into diverse neighborhoods.

Ultimately, by fostering open dialogue and collaboration, we can work towards achieving fair housing objectives while respecting the unique character of each neighborhood in our city.

Even though the county a few years ago, working with the Housing Authority, promoted landlords to consider Section-8 tenants there is still a long wait for housing units for those qualified. Do you have any ideas for incentivizing beyond what the program already provides, or any thoughts on how to encourage the program?

Collaboration between the city's Economic Development and Planning Departments, the Housing Authority, and local developers has already proven effective in facilitating the use of Project-Based vouchers in new multi-unit projects. Expanding upon this collaboration presents an opportunity to further maximize the availability of Section 8 units for qualified tenants, particularly in developments that prioritize affordability.

In addition to local efforts, advocating for increased allocations from the federal government is crucial to addressing the long waitlist for Section 8 housing. I commend Congressman Panetta's advocacy for more vouchers in our district and pledge to support his efforts as a city council member. Securing additional federal resources will enable the Housing Authority to continue its vital work in making vouchers available to those in need.

Furthermore, supporting the Housing Authority's expansion into construction projects, such as the Natural Bridges Drive apartments, demonstrates a proactive approach to addressing housing shortages. As a city council member, I am committed to advocating for additional resources and supporting collaborative efforts to alleviate housing challenges and ensure access to affordable housing for all residents."

This response emphasizes the importance of collaboration, advocacy, and proactive measures to address the waitlist for Section 8 housing while highlighting the role of federal resources in supporting these efforts

Housing the homeless has been and continues to be a significant challenge. Three projects are in the works, Jessie Street under construction (50 units), an expansion of the Coral Street Harvey West with 120 units and the Housing Authority's 20-unit project at Natural Bridges. Cities like San Jose are working on finding a location for and creating villages using tiny homes. What ideas do you have for housing the homeless -- supportive housing?

A Housing First policy is essential in addressing homelessness, recognizing shelter as a fundamental human right and prioritizing preventive measures within our community. To prevent individuals and families from falling into homelessness, we must implement eviction protections and affordable housing initiatives.

Stable housing is crucial for addressing the root causes of homelessness. This can take various forms, including safe parking programs, temporary shelters, and longer-term brick-and-mortar housing options. In these safe and reliable spaces, wraparound services such as mental health support, addiction treatment, document assistance, and job training can be provided to meet the diverse needs of the unhoused population.

Equally important is fostering support, compassion, and empathy from our sheltered neighbors towards those experiencing homelessness. Community engagement initiatives can provide opportunities for collaboration, creative problem-solving, and mutual understanding.

By prioritizing preventative measures, implementing a Housing First approach, and fostering community engagement, we can work towards effective solutions to address homelessness and provide stable housing for all members of our community.

What do you feel voters should know about you to convince them you will be a strong advocate for housing/affordable housing?

As a current member of the City of Santa Cruz Water Department, I have gained invaluable experience in managing essential resources, addressing climate challenges, and navigating city growth. My background as a biologist further enhances my understanding of environmental justice and sustainability, crucial components for our community's future planning.

My commitment to preserving the environment, advocating for working families, addressing housing issues, and promoting inclusion underscores my dedication to making Santa Cruz a sustainable, dynamic, and prosperous community for all.

In my role, I have developed a nuanced understanding of development processes and creative problem-solving skills, particularly in addressing housing challenges. Additionally, my leadership

in securing fair contracts for our city's labor force demonstrates my ability to negotiate and advocate effectively for the needs of our community.

With a focus on housing the unhoused and fostering community engagement, I am well-equipped to address Santa Cruz's housing and affordability crisis. My unique blend of experience, values, and dedication positions me as a strong advocate for housing and affordable housing initiatives in our city.