

## Candidate Questionnaire

**From: Santa Cruz for Bernie**

**To: Candidates for Local Races in the March 5, 2024 Primary Election**

Santa Cruz for Bernie, with over 2,000 politically active members in the Central Coast region, requests that you complete this questionnaire so we can provide guidance to our membership in the upcoming important Primary Election in March.

Because SC4B members widely support policy proposals promoted by Senator Bernie Sanders, some of those topics are reflected in this questionnaire. (See [berniesanders.com/issues](https://berniesanders.com/issues))

*(Just start typing after the >> cue)*

**1. Your full name >> Iwalani (Lani) Faulkner**

**2. Your city and county of residence >> Santa Cruz (Live Oak) in Santa Cruz County**

**3. Office you are seeking >> First District Supervisor**

**4. Length of residence in your current District >> 16 years in D1, 27 years in Santa Cruz County**

**5. Your occupation or avocation >> Organizer**

**6. Significant memberships, affiliations, and leadership positions held (political, labor union, public service, etc.) >>**

- Founder and Director of Equity Transit, EquityTransit.org
- **Sierra Club** Executive Committee Member and Member of the Transportation Committee Santa Cruz Chapter
- **Delegate to the Democratic State Convention**, Appointed
- Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (**CAAP**) **Stakeholder**-Advisor, County of Santa Cruz
- Housing Element Community **Stakeholder**, County of Santa Cruz
- Community Traffic Safety Coalition (**CTSC**), County of Santa Cruz & Vision Zero Watsonville
- Stakeholder on the Housing Work Group, Caltrans
- Stakeholder on the Equity, Engagement, and Health Work Group, Caltrans
- Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee, Alternate to the District Representative. Member of the Legislative Committee.
- Safety and de-escalation volunteer, Rainbow Defense Coalition, Santa Cruz County
- Board Member and Equity Officer, Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail
- Volunteer, Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail
- Mountain Biking Coach - Middle & High School Youth
- Video Production and Grant Assistance, Direct Concessions, Make-Up, Other Tasks as needed. Little People's Repertory Theater, LPRT
- Volunteer Builder, Habitat for Humanity International
- Team Volunteer with Prospect High School, First Robotics Team
- Road Association President, Buena Vista Road Association
- Volunteer, Community Bike Collective: Getting bikes into the hands of kids and families who need them.

**7. In what political campaigns, organizations, and movements have you been active, and what role did you play? >>**

I was one of a handful of core organizers in the campaigns fighting Greenway's MeasureD-2022, separate from the official 'No Way Greenway' campaign under Equity Transit FPCC. I've assisted in supporting other ballot measures, mostly canvassing door-to-door. I canvassed for Felipe Hernandez, Justin Cummings, Vanessa Quiroz-Carter for Watsonville City Council, Adam Spickler, Dawn Addis, Joy Schendledecker, and other progressive candidates. I served on a speaker's panel of women in support of Felipe Hernández with his

amazing mom who led the strike against the Richard Shaw Cannery in 1985. I've helped hang door hangers for the Santa Cruz for the Bernie slate and other ballot measures. I spent a great deal of energy writing persuasive reports opposing misinformation coming out of underground Q-Anon occult supporting Trump's campaign as I saw a handful of acquaintances and friends fall victim to their programming through hours of hypnotic videos.

I am very proud to be a Bernie Sanders supporter and was fortunate to get to hear him speak when he came to rally in Santa Cruz and I voted for him in 2016 and 2020. Bernie Sanders has been consistently for the people for decades, not wavering from his message or his intent.

#### **8. Which policy proposals championed by Bernie Sanders are you most passionate about? >>**

All of Bernie Sanders' policies inspire me as they are logical and humane. The outcomes of implementing his policies would form the basis for a strong interconnected equitable foundation upon which the United States could become a positive global leader in economic and racial justice, sustainability, and good governance. We must learn to think in terms of systems and be able to guide others to think in terms of the interconnectedness of our policies and actions. For example, while we need to shift to infill and transit-oriented development, we also need to ensure that we include urban forests, wild spaces, community gardens, and welcoming centers amidst the buildings and street life that generates natural connections and community amongst strangers. Rezoning so that neighborhood markets and other resources can be located amidst neighborhoods is another change that would benefit our environment and our connectedness by leading to economically vibrant walkable communities throughout our county.

It is critical that we address the severe wealth inequality gap through corporate power that has grown in this country over the past 5 decades leading us to a second gilded age. The current systemic structures, like our taxation system, have engrained corruption and contributed to the wealth inequality which will grow exponentially in the next decade if we do not work diligently to activate a change. We must address entitlement through legalized tax evasion that corporations/investors have embedded into our system. Corporations take advantage of people by no longer paying a living wage, doing away with reasonable retirement pensions, and undermining affordable healthcare. Corporations have used sly marketing and scapegoating, that prevents many people from looking at the greater systemic issues and causes.

Corporations now control our tax systems that have allowed them to hoard wealth and push workers to extremes of productivity while lowering relative wages. Workers can no longer afford basics, like housing, medical and dental care, and even food. Our growing segment of seniors and others on a fixed income have increasingly faced homelessness and poverty, despite decades of fulltime work, home ownership, and contributions to our society. At the farmer's market, I've met seniors who tell me they must chose each month between paying rent, buying food, or paying for their medication! This is an intolerable state of affairs when people who have spent their entire lives working cannot afford to stay in their home or hometown. Savvy corporate owners, even small-scale corporations, contribute to the problem because if they know how, they can benefit from many of the same tax advantages used by large scale corporations. This means that owners who use these strategies, many in our community, are far less apt to want to change our broken system.

Corporations hold far too much power in this country. Their advocates work to move public services into for-profit models and hide the depressed economics that results from capitalism shirking its essential responsibilities of contributing back to the system that allows them to thrive. Corporate philanthropy has become a money-making control scheme where nonprofits remain silent on some issues, or worse, take a stance that aligns with donors, even when the outcomes are not in the best interest of the greater public. Even our public universities have moved towards prioritizing profits over the quality of education.

Large multinational corporations across a number of industries use their powerful marketing savvy to convince Americans that controlling this extreme wealth hoarding and corporate imbalance would lead to militaristic socialism and communism. Taxing extreme wealth, getting money out of politics, holding free and fair elections, and ensuring income equality would strengthen our overall economic foundation.

Our unions and union members understand the power of organizing. When they stand strong together against unfair practices and contracts, they win! We need to strengthen this power throughout our communities. For many people, work, family life, and commuting culture keeps people so overworked, they do not have enough time or energy to engage our civic process. Participation in the democratic process should be an integral part of both our education system and time should be granted to all working people allowing them to participate in their civic process.

**9. What actions would you take at the local level in support of single-payer healthcare including a national Medicare for All and a state CalCare plan? >>**

I absolutely support single-payer healthcare, including a national Medicare for All and a state CalCare plan. The current design of our health care 'system' ensures that insurance, pharma, and device companies are the big financial winners while many people who need quality healthcare in this country must either forgo the healthcare they need, pay huge amounts of money to receive the care they need, or go deeply into debt if they have to obtain healthcare they cannot afford. A number of people in the United States are traveling to foreign countries, like Mexico, to get high quality but more affordable dental and health care and prescriptions. There is no excuse that in a country with the wealth of the United States that we cannot provide the best most affordable healthcare in the world.

I would work with our local legislators urging support for policies that provide strong contracts for our workers, including health benefits. I would continue to advocate for such policies by writing and signing letters, for example in support of Bills like SB5252 and SB799, and whatever else is needed to help move this important remediation forward. Many in our community walked door-to-door to gather petitions and bring awareness to CalCare. I've been working on other important projects and so I did not have time to walk for CalCare, but whenever possible, I would canvass for these important policy changes.

**10. What bold and transformative policy proposals would you support to address the climate crisis at the local, state and national levels? >>**

**Green New Deal**

We need a Green New Deal for our state and the nation. The United States is one of the greatest contributors to our global climate crisis and we consume more resources per capita than any other country in the world and yet we fall far behind in the work being done to ensure our systems, transportation, agriculture, industry, etc. can support life on this planet for generations to come. Our hyper-materialistic lifestyle has made this planet unlivable for countless species of plants and animals and humans have failed to maintain a sustainable interconnectedness with nature.

Our modern way of living has created a separation between us and nature. Many young people today have a fear of nature beyond a walk in a park. Ensuring our children spend much of their early years in the outdoors exploring, experiencing wilderness, and working with the land and seasons in the garden supports both their mental health as well as their learning to be better stewards of the planet. The human brain subconsciously learns from the complexity of nature which we gain through exploring and having an intimate relationship with the land, seasons, changes in the weather patterns, animal behaviors and so forth. There are subtle interactions that inform us without our knowing. Working with the Department of Education in Environmental Education furthered my commitment to supporting our youth. I've taken kids backpacking and coached mountain biking for 7 years, sharing skills and experiences that translate into real life building skill. I want to support programs that ensure all of our children have equitable access to the outdoors, nature, and the garden.

**Resource Use & Toxic Substance Reduction**

The excessive use of resources has been promoted through industries like beef, soy, automobiles, hi-tech, clothing, etc., resulting in the unsustainable depletion of our virgin rain forests, extinction of species, and toxification of our air, water, and soils. The list is extensive. Our perceived entitlement to live a lifestyle incredibly harmful to our planet is unacceptable. Our county can serve as a leader in promoting wise

environmental policies and practices. As a scientist with a strong background in environmental education, I can bring more awareness to the crisis and more importantly, help people understand how choices we make can have an important benefit. I will work to further eliminate plastics from our local economy, for example plasticware which is still being given out by many take-out restaurants. Even more importantly, we need to work to eliminate harmful pesticides and herbicides from our agriculture systems. Dr. Ann Lopez who works with the farm workers and Stanford University noted that over 50% of childhood cancers and a high number of children with developmental delays and children on the spectrum are from the farmworker communities.

### **CAAP In action and Transportation**

I am a member of the stakeholder group on the Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience (OR3) Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). It is critical to support not just the signing of the CAAP, but also urge rapid action in line with the CAAP. We have been too slow to act and some of our leaders are not willing to take bold steps forward in environmental policy. One thing we can do immediately is to support anyone who **can** effectively work from home to do so, across the county, limiting the need to drive as much as possible. For those whose jobs require interfacing with the public, providing access to transit is the next important action.

With over 70% of local GHGs coming from cars, we need to invest in robust equitable environmentally wise transit. As founder of Equity Transit and a stakeholder on the Reimagine Metro project, I am supporting Metro's upcoming ballot measure for a ½ cent sales tax in 2024. The work that Metro is doing to dramatically increase service to 15 minutes headways across the county will be a critical step to building a transit system that works for community members and commuters throughout and beyond the county. I would work with our county departments to grow incentives and flexibility for county employees to encourage and support the use of transit as well as building a culture of tolerance regarding the timing of connections, traffic, and walking as we transition to using our public transit system.

I will champion moving forward with our local passenger rail system. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the governor have indicated that implementing a state rail network is a top priority in addressing climate change for California. Our segment of rail, from Santa Cruz to Pajaro, is seen as an important part of the State Rail Network, connecting people to jobs and tourism both within and from outside the county. The current 1<sup>st</sup> district supervisor has not clarified to our constituents that state representatives, including the chair of the CTC, have stated that our promise, when we were given the money to buy the rail system, was to build passenger rail and a trail.

Prioritizing robust public transportation allows for important changes that 1) provide real alternatives to driving for our community, 2) address decades of inequity and a lack of access to opportunity, education and jobs by providing frequent and dependable transit service, 3) help address our climate crisis by reducing vehicle miles travelled, and 4) serve to alleviate traffic.

Our county has one of the highest rates of traffic violence in California, where someone is killed or seriously injured every 3 days by a car! This is directly related to speed. Traffic calming measures ensure our most vulnerable community members, our children and seniors, can bike and walk safely in our community. Everyone is safer when our streets are safer for the most vulnerable among us. It is very important to me that we make our streets safer for all of our community members. The primary way we can address this problem is through implementing safe streets infrastructure.

Vision Zero is a program I will support in our County. I will implement proactive communications throughout the district and county as to why prioritizing safe streets, i.e. creating infrastructure that slows traffic, is beneficial to everyone. Prioritizing safe streets is a safety, equity and environmental issue. When we make our streets safe enough for kids to bike and walk to school, we don't have to see long lines of parents driving their kids to school! We need make it safe so that families can get their kids onto bikes and buses again. I will continue to support providing free transit fares for youth, and better yet, free fares for everyone.

## **Methane**

One of the most important things we can do to slow climate change is to reduce methane emissions. One molecule of methane is 80X more destructive to the environment compared to one molecule of CO<sub>2</sub>. The most pressing reason for reducing methane has only recently come to light. As carbon-free energy like solar and wind have gradually replaced polluting fossil fuels the world over, our skies are clearing. That's great for our health. Surprisingly, though, much of that dirty pollution was actually reflecting some sunlight back into space, keeping Earth a bit cooler than it might have been otherwise. The result is that sunlight is now heating the atmosphere *more*. Scientists call this effect an "unmasking" of previously hidden climate warming.

*Natural gas* is a large source of methane emissions to heat and power our kitchen stoves, water heaters, and furnaces through the county. Natural gas is 70 to 90 percent methane. Burning methane inside our homes releases a cocktail of toxic gases and particles that are all bad for our health. But health issues aside, those hundreds of miles of gas pipes—going to individual buildings and appliances—leak significant amounts of methane into the atmosphere.

## **Methane and our Food**

In the US, the biggest source of methane is our 90 million cattle! New research shows that extreme amounts of methane produced are coming from the cattle industries. Current data indicates the amounts of methane production from dairy and beef cattle in California exceeds the methane from any oil and gas basin in North America except the Permian Basin and Nationwide, cows collectively emitted more than twice as much methane from their belching and manure in 2020 as all of the country's oil and gas wells, including those active and abandoned, onshore and offshore ([see reference here](#)).

We can dramatically reduce global warming simply by reducing our consumption of products which come from cattle, including meat, cheeses, and milk products. With this in mind, I would like to create policy that encourages schools to prioritize healthy alternatives to beef, milk, and cheese such as high protein plant milks, healthy vegetarian options which are rich in beans, lentils, and vegetables, and cheeses that are either non-cow or vegetarian sourced. These whole nutrition foods are healthier, less expensive, and do not store the level of toxic hormone disrupting chemicals in the fat that beef products do.

Eating habits are formed when kids are young. Typically, kids will eat nutritious foods if they are provided healthy foods from an early age, especially if they have a chance to participate in growing and preparing the food they eat. Getting kids to eat a healthy diet without beef products at a young age will serve several benefits, they'll be accustomed to eating healthier as children, they will grow healthier as they age thus reducing medical expenses, and the reduction in the need for cattle will reduce global warming.

We need to ensure we have functional ways for households to compost both food scraps and compostable containers, so that these things are not being thrown in the garbage but are actually composted as large amounts of methane are generated from food waste in our landfills whereas turning food into rich soil ensures that nutrients are being recycled rather than wasted. I will support looking into ongoing solutions for addressing concerns about the smell as food accumulates in the green waste bin and encourage better systems to address managing food scraps and recycling.

## **Building and Electrification**

Some 25% of all Santa Cruz County CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from homes and commercial buildings—both from burning gas in appliances and from electricity generated from burning gas in power plants. California building codes now require new construction to be wired for all-electric appliances. California's grid is growing ever cleaner, making electrification of both vehicles and buildings the right choice. Electrification allows us to switch from gas furnaces and gas water heaters to super-efficient heat pumps, reducing our total energy use and reducing methane emissions from gas lines and appliances. I will work to support Santa Cruz County policies that help us smoothly transition to electrification. I will also help county residents take advantage of the many rebates and tax credits now available for electrification.

## **Carbon Storage and our Redwoods**

In Santa Cruz County, the best way to store carbon is in our redwood forests. Santa Cruz is home to some of the biggest, longest-lived trees in the world. Coast redwood forests store more carbon per acre than any other kind of forest in the world.

In 2022, the California Air Resources Board called for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 85%. The County's sustainability update calls for capturing the remaining 15% through "increased action on natural and working lands." Managing our timberlands for carbon storage and expanding natural redwood forests throughout the County would support that goal.

I support promoting the expansion of redwood forest on unforested public lands. Substantial grants are available from the federal government for forest health, and I will work hard to help the County get grants to support all of our climate goals. I also support looking at increasing the number of street trees along long stretches of roads such as Soquel Blvd, Brommer, and Broadway. Street trees have multiple benefits including carbon sequestration, cooling of the heat island effects, and when placed appropriately, provide speed calming and hence safety for pedestrians and people biking.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

I have a number of projects that I feel will help us environmentally and many of them may already be a part of the CAAP, since I am a part of that project. We need to get plastics out of our systems as some restaurants are still using plastics.

### **11. What policy proposals would you support that address the issue of growing income/wealth inequality?**

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Locally, as Supervisor, I would champion support for our local unions and workforce in getting paid a living wage including support an ordinance that would trigger Project Labor Agreements of a certain size.

I support policies that limit the wealth gap between an employee and a CEO, a gap which has grown grossly out of proportion in the past 5 decades. I support policies that would tax companies increasingly as the ratio between CEO and median worker pay increases. We must hold corporations and their high paid leaders more accountable for the impact they have on undermining the current state of our economy that prevents workers from affording to live where they work and has driven an increasingly higher percentage of our community into poverty and homelessness.

Many people are unaware that by forming corporations, even small-scale businesses, developers, and investors are able to abuse tax shelters and strategies that contribute to excessive reductions in taxation. I support policies that end the age of entitlements built into a false economy driven by greed.

### **12. What policy proposals would you support that address our local housing and homelessness crises? >>**

The housing and homelessness crises are intertwined. Increasingly, people are becoming unhoused as rent and cost of living rise, especially if they are on a fixed income. For every \$100 average increase in rent there is an estimated 8% increase in homelessness and our fastest growing sector of unhoused people are seniors and people with disabilities (i.e. those on a fixed income).

Our homelessness crisis will continue to worsen if we cannot produce enough truly affordable housing. With the state RHNA numbers, unincorporated Santa Cruz is planning for building close to 5,000 units with portions designated as very low, low, and moderate income as well as market rate over the next 8 years. The 6<sup>th</sup> Housing Element, a portion of the General Plan required by the State of California, will be up for approval in December.

I support policies that prioritize development that will meet the needs of our frontline workers such as multifamily and multi-generational housing near high quality transit corridors, also called missing middle and Transit Oriented Development. The work that Metro is doing right now will ramp up our transit system to 15-minute, high quality service along major transit corridors which may allow us to qualify for additional grant opportunities towards affordable housing projects managed by housing builders like Eden and MidPen.

I was excited to learn that Assemblymember Alex Lee and others have been working on social housing bills. I support legislation such this to move forward where publicly owned mixed income housing by its nature prevents a concentration of poverty, and contributes to integrated neighborhoods across socioeconomic, age, and racial categories. I was frustrated that Lee's social housing bill made it to the Governor's desk where it was vetoed. It would be a game changer if funding for mixed income social housing projects to be approved across the state so that we would no longer be locked into strict models of affordable housing by federal agencies like HUD that concentrate poverty. Until we can get a California bill passed that would help support mixed income housing, exploring how we can set up public private partnerships locally to build developments similarly structured to social housing would be a creative path forward. We can set up strategies for locals who would like to invest in being a part of the solution to build housing and receive a reasonable return on their investment while contributing to non-profit housing. This model is already being done at Peace United Church on High Street.

I support looking at how we can build mixed income workforce housing, for example, housing on county owned properties that would house county employees or housing on school district property that would house school district employees. I would work with churches to encourage them to form partnerships that would allow mixed income and affordable housing to be built on their properties. I would look closely at solutions that could increase our percentage housing affordability by proposing incentives to builders who want to address our serious housing crisis by coming to the table with a willingness to be transparent about their books and consider a reasonable rate of return for being moved to the front of the list and fast tracked through the entitlements and approvals process and maximize affordability in exchange for a fair return on their investment. Working with builders who are willing to be a part of the affordability solution, in partnership with the county, would create good will with the community.

There are a number of legislative bills which can help bring more affordable housing to the community, like SB9 that allows homeowners to split their lots and build one additional ADU per lot and SB10 that allows possible upzoning where up to 10 units can be built by a property owner without rezoning being needed. SB10 is optional and each county has say over its implementation. SB10 could be a way for families to work together to build family compounds and co-housing for multifamily housing. There is a long list of legislative bills which can help reduce costs of building and increase affordability, for example no minimum parking requirements within a half mile of high quality transit systems and the ability to allow tenants and purchasers to buy their parking separate from their housing.

We have a long list of people that have Section-8 vouchers who need housing. Section-8 is a fantastic federally funded program yet there continues to be a stigma about people on Section-8 when in fact this program is an excellent opportunity for landlords to get regular guaranteed income from qualified tenants. There are currently cash incentives and protections for when someone rents to Section-8 tenants in Santa Cruz and this is a program I would work on with the community to encourage more rental owners to consider.

We need to work on rent control measures that protect renters and address investor group speculation that artificially drives up the market. We also need to seriously look at the number of empty homes and vacation rental in this community. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is a shortage of more than 7 million affordable and available rental homes for extremely low-income renters in the US. and about 16 Million empty homes, and according to a United Way [March 2023 report](#), there are 28 vacant homes for every person experiencing homelessness. These numbers tend to be higher in wealthy beach and vacation communities and offer a window on an opportunity for further discussion. While Measure N did not pass in

the city, its intentions were reasonable given the our affordable housing crisis and the numbers of neighborhoods that have numerous homes that lie empty for much of the year.

I would like to find ways in which we can support local families to be able to partner together and build their own multifamily project and provide support for community members in ways to avoid cryptic building processes and long waiting times for permit approvals that make it hard for anyone who wants to build in Santa Cruz. I would like to explore creative ideas that engage our community to be in action on solving our housing crisis together. There have been a number of affordable housing conferences that have been instrumental in developing the conversations across the community as to how we can best address our housing crisis. I intend to partner with agencies throughout the county and collaborate on identifying creative solutions together.

**13. What measures would you support to foster union jobs? (e.g. adopt project labor agreements with local hire and apprenticeship training requirements; invest in fully staffed public sector workforce.) >>**

In many cities today, the percentage of one's income required for housing has grown well beyond what is considered affordable. For many, remaining solvent has become untenable even when working extra jobs and in two income households in places like Santa Cruz. Many who work here have been forced to live further away from Santa Cruz. Having to rent or buy a home so far from work results in countless lost hours driving instead of spending time with family. This is a serious systemic issue nationally!

At its foundation, the extreme and growing wealth gap in this country is a gaping wound that undermines a balanced sustainable economy. Many of the efforts we deploy to address the repercussions of the wealth gap are mostly band-aides trying to address symptoms of the problem, and do not target the heart of the problem. One serious medical incident can push many families today into poverty. In Santa Cruz, the average jobs pay about \$25/hour and yet to afford a basic 1-bedroom apartment, a person would have to earn around \$125K per year! Currently, a 2-3 bedroom mobile home averages around \$500K and to buy a mobile home requires at least \$100K down and a monthly income of \$13,000 when considering the recommended 30% rule.

I support our union brothers and sisters and I will work to ensure they can make a good income and benefits, including paid sick time and paid time off. Even a middle class income can no longer afford a home here and so we have to create segments of affordability, such as workforce housing on public land, that ensure people who work here can live here. I would like to work with the unions to move forward an ordinance that will trigger a PLA that includes local hire and apprenticeship training requirements. I will also work to ensure we fill frontline staff, especially in key positions like our mental health and crisis staff that have been overworked and understaffed.

I will support policies that ensure a living wage for all people that work and policies that ensure that people who work in our county have the opportunity to live in our county. I support policies that ensure our elders are able to retire and remain financially solvent in the community where they've worked when employment ends.

**14. If you were eligible, did you vote for Bernie Sanders in the Primary Election 2016? Yes or No >>**

In 2020? *Yes or No* >> Yes, I voted for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Primary Election. In 2020? *Yes or No* >> Yes, I voted for Bernie Sanders in the 2020 Primary Election.

**15. If elected, what do you realistically hope to accomplish during your term of office? >>**

Realistically, given that we have two other pro-union Supervisors in this county, we can make a positive difference by supporting an ordinance that will trigger PLAs for county projects. We can also make a difference in moving forward with both the rail and trail in ways that have been thwarted since 2021 given the votes of the current first district supervisor. We can move Metro forward through a ballot measure in 2024 so that we can start the work of getting people out of their cars right away. I believe we can move the needle towards providing more affordable housing units for our community members that work here. Collaborating with the



community, I believe I can help redefine perceptions of homelessness and that we can help reduce homelessness and provide more services across the county. I am committed to initiating and collaborating on actions that will make our streets much safer and more walkable and bikeable for everyone, one neighborhood at a time. I am also determined to move us forward on a number of important environmental policies.

**16. Give an example of when you spoke truth to power. Who were the players, what were the stakes, and what did you do? >>**

I regularly attend and speak at the Regional Transportation Commission and Bus Metro Board meetings as well as Board of Supervisor meetings as needed. Two specific topics on which I have spoken truth to power at the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) meetings includes opposing the executive directors attempts at adverse abandonment against Roaring Camp, pushing towards railbanking, and building an 'interim trail' which would require tearing out our tracks as well as fighting the widening of highway-1. I work with a group of individuals who are very knowledgeable regarding RTC and rail policy.

In Jan/Feb of 2022, we addressed the RTC and the work we did rallied people to send over 6,000 emails to our commissioners which led to a vote by the RTC opposing adverse abandonment, stopped an early vote called by the ED to support an interim trail that would have prevented passenger rail in the near future, and went on to help defeat Measure D. My organization, along with many others, helped provide letters in support of efforts which resulted in a \$115M Active Transportation grant we received from the California Transportation Commission that will allow us to build segments of a world class trail next to our rail, and other important trails throughout the county, including Watsonville. I spoke regularly in opposition to the RTC executive director's ongoing efforts to widen Highway-1, the plans for which initially did not include the restoration of the rail bridges. We've connected with leaders from the Sierra Club and Campaign for Sustainable Transportation working to amplify our message. While we have been unsuccessful in completely stopping plans submitted to the California Transportation Commission requesting grant funds to widen highway-1, we were able to ensure that restoring the rail bridges was included in the plans.

**17. Are you running in coordination with any other local candidate? >>** Not officially.

**18. Why should members of Santa Cruz for Bernie vote for you to be their elected representative? (max 50 words) >>**

My leadership philosophies are based on an empathy for all living things and an awareness of the interconnectedness and diversity of living systems critical to sustaining a living thriving planet earth. I am very sensitive to the incredible imbalances that exist in how we function.

Our current tax systems reward corporations and people for wealth hoarding, exploiting natural resources, and wasteful production of tons of material goods that contribute to the growing vast amounts of trash. If people felt they had a strong safety net including affordable health care, guaranteed housing, food, access to opportunities in education and the workforce, and a good quality of life without the fear of losing everything in a crisis like cancer or job loss, more people might not feel compelled hoard vast amounts of wealth.

I feel that the integral destruction of our public transportation systems leading to suburban sprawl and isolated nuclear housing has driven us from being a more empathetic connected community centered society. Bernie Sanders served much of his life as a constant force supporting equitable sustainable systems for all people and a living planet.

I want to offer my unique voice, insights, and part of my life energy in support of strengthening democracy so that it serves ALL of us, not just those who have been fortunate enough to accumulate great wealth based on a system that serves the wealthiest. Part of this work is mentoring our younger generations to understand that democracy is never guaranteed and that we cannot grow complacent once we have systems in place that better serve more people.

I am running for County Supervisor to serve our community and its members, including the most vulnerable among us.

**Please return your completed questionnaire to [santacruz4bernie@gmail.com](mailto:santacruz4bernie@gmail.com) by October 13, 2023.**

**Thank you for your participation in this democratic process of candidate endorsement.**