

Special Election Edition

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DAVIS DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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SPECIAL EDITION: As an informational service to our members, the DDC Board posed three specific questions to City Council Candidates and directed the Newsletter to publish their responses: 1) Why did you decide to run? 2) What three issues you feel most need to be addressed in our city? 3) What three policies for each issue will you be pursuing and how will those policies address these issues. Dan Carson, Babu Vaitla and Kelsey Fortune are candidates for District 1. Adam Morrill and Gloria Partida are candidates for District 4 Their answers follow below



Council Candidate Questionnaire – Responses by Dan Carson

1. Why are you running for the Davis City Council?

I want to help our community to complete our COVID recovery; pursue economic development and a new plan for our downtown that puts Davis on a path to fiscal sustainability; and help make Davis environmentally sustainable by completing our new climate action plan and accelerating the shift by Valley Clean Energy (VCE) to 100% renewable power.

2. The three greatest challenges facing Davis?

1: An estimated \$5 million annual funding gap between projected tax revenues and the costs of maintaining basic city services that threatens the high quality of life we enjoy as Davis residents.

2: A severe shortage of market-rate and affordable housing that leads to homelessness and social inequity, adds out-of-town commuters to our roads, and undermines Davis' economic progress.

3: Profound negative impacts of climate change, including drought, more frequent extreme heat events, dismal air quality from wildfires, and "super-cell" rainstorms and flooding.

3. Identify three policies to address each issue.

Completion and implementation of our new downtown plan would address all three challenges. This would generate additional jobs and city tax revenues; add housing for 3,000 persons; and reduce climate impacts by redeveloping a location close to the UC Davis campus and the Amtrak station where reliance on automobile use could be reduced.

Another important policy would address all three challenges. The council subcommittee on legislation on which I serve must continue to work closely with city staff and consultants to identify and secure grant funding to fix city parks and other city infrastructure; to build affordable housing; and to implement reduce climate actions that reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate changes that are already occurring. We have already secured tens of millions of dollars in grant funding that advances key city goals like these and more work here could pay huge dividends for our city.

A third policy to meet each challenge is as follows: (a) Fiscal sustainability -- follow through on the \$84 million ten-year plan to fix streets and roads. It's far cheaper to maintain than replace roads. (b) Housing -- implement innovative draft Housing Element polices to offer financial incentives for permanently affordable accessory dwelling units and use of surplus DJUSD land for housing teachers and faculty; (c) Climate – finish our climate plan update and accelerate the shift by VCE to 100% renewable power.

Council Candidate Questionnaire – Responses by Babu Vaitla

I'm running for Davis City Council in District 1 because I believe that our community can be a model of social equity and climate resilience.

I've lived in Davis for nearly 15 years. I obtained my bachelor's and master's degrees at UC Davis, and currently serve on the Social Services Commission, the Board of Directors of Cool Davis, and the Davis Homelessness Alliance steering committee. From these experiences, I believe that the most important issues in our town are affordable housing, climate resilience, and community cooperation. *(continued p.2)*

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Democratic News



Babu Vaitla (continued from p. 1)

We lack housing for our workforce, our low-income residents, and the unhoused. When I'm on City Council, I will: 1) create a community navigator program; 2) champion a strong Affordable Housing Ordinance; and 3) facilitate access to information about housing markets.

Community navigators will help connect the unhoused with public and non-profit services. A strong Affordable Housing Ordinance will incentivize the construction of units and ensure financing of the Housing Trust Fund. A public "cost of development calculator" will place the City in a stronger negotiating position with developers.

Climate risks are worsening. I will: 1) launch a Climate Resilience Fund; 2) expand sustainable transit options; and 3) enhance local capacity to generate clean energy. A Climate Resilience Fund will be financed through newly available state/federal dollars and public-private partnerships. Increased roadway capacity for public transit, expanded bus route, and a network of micro-mobility options that integrates bicycles, electric bikes, scooters, and pedi-cabs will greatly reduce emissions. Micro-grids and public solar power generation facilities will promote energy resilience.

Increasing community cooperation and civic engagement is vital to all of these reforms. I will: 1) upgrade our civic volunteer program; 2) strengthen City-University research partnerships; and 3) reform City Commissions. A professionalized volunteer program will mobilize our talented community to support severely overburdened city staff. A "CityLab" partnership will bring the City and UC Davis together to identify key policy questions and pilot innovative programs. City Commission reforms would give community members a clearer voice in determining the content of policy while raising expectations of Commission output.

Advancing these reforms and ensuring the city's long-term fiscal stability requires leadership and strategic vision. I will work with community members and other elected leaders to realize these changes. I have been endorsed by Mayor Lucas Frerichs, Councilmember Josh Chapman, former mayor Robb Davis, and many others. I would be honored to have your vote!



Council Candidate Questionnaire – Responses by Kelsey Fortune

I decided to run for city council because of the climate emergency that we are facing and the lack of action by our government. In my opinion, the three most important issues our city needs to address are our regular inability to balance our city budget, our lack of proactive planning to create the progress we want, and the disconnect between the city and the community.

Budget

Every agreement with another entity whether a developer, consultant, or other outside party needs to be better negotiated. Every time the city gives more than necessary to outsiders, we lose out on affordable housing, infrastructure investments, or somewhere else we could put those dollars. (continued p.3)

Kelsey Fortune (*continued from p. 2*)

Every budget item needs to be carefully considered for its effectiveness and efficiency. Things like purchasing a ladder truck for the city fire department when the university already has one is redundant and unnecessary.

We must focus on collaborating with other organizations, so Davisites get the most for their tax dollars.

The more we plan, the lower the cost. We must create robust planning within the city around infrastructure maintenance, city services, and where our priorities lie, so the city can run more efficiently.

Planning

See the final point from the Budget section.

Our last General Plan was written in the 1990s with updates in the 2000s. It is out of date and out of touch. We must begin crafting a community driven General Plan as soon as possible, so we can move forward together.

The city must adopt plans of action surrounding important community driven topics like public safety, climate action, and affordable housing, so that action is unavoidable.

Disconnect

See the final point from the Planning section.

Our representatives have shown that they are out of touch with the community with 5-0 votes on things like DISC which lost dramatically at the polls in June. I will work to establish office hours for council members and a culture of holding the community in conversation, so the public can engage with their representatives.

Our city commissions are not being heard by the council either. I will work to create a policy of including commissioners on panels during council meetings where their commissions have significant input. Our commissioners are generously providing their time and expertise. They should have a seat at the table.

Energy and Transportation Economist; fortunefordavis.com; fortunefordavis@gmail.com; 530-220-2001



Council Candidate Questionnaire – Responses by Adam Morrill

I have witnessed the gradual decay of a once prosperous city due to neglect and a lack of vision and planning. I've entered the race because I am a solution and results oriented person and I want Davis to be a place where my kids want to raise their own families and where they can afford to own their own home. Three top issues and my policies for solving them are:

- 1) Our roads and bike paths are crumbling **a. Plan:** Develop a GIS database of all streets and paths, assess their condition and devise a 10-year plan and budget to bring all roads and paths up to acceptable condition. **b. Execute:** Secure a ten-year contract, so all costs are known, with a large reputable contractor capable of delivering superior results, and investigate innovative materials and techniques in order to stretch the money as far as possible. **c. Financing:** Push for the adoption of a property tax linked to home value (this is protected from inflation and funding will increase over time) to fund municipal capital improvement bonds. Also negotiate with UC Davis for impact fees related to the obvious wear caused by Unitrans bus service.
- 2) Our urban forest is dying **a. Plan:** Divide the city into five zones and have a five-year rotation for assessing all city and street trees. **b. Execute:** Terminate the city's current tree service contract, hire one city arborist to assess and plan tree maintenance, hire 6 tree service workers so that two crews can be operating within the city year-round. **c. Finance:** Utilize funds from terminated contract to fund positions and coordinate efforts with Tree Davis to supplement city staff's efforts. (*continued p.3*)

Adam Morrill (continued from p.3)

3) Lack of affordable housing **a. Plan:** Develop a new General Plan with extensive citizen input with a focus on workforce housing while emphasizing interconnectedness with the rest of the city to reduce private car dependent travel. **b. Execute:** Hold developers accountable for delivering what they promise and ensure that developments are consistent with the General Plan. Mandate in CC&Rs that all designated workforce housing is to be owner-occupied so that affordable housing is not lost to the rental market. **c. Finance:** Reduce dependence on one-time in lieu of impact fees as these will result in future unfunded costs to the taxpayers

Environmental Program Specialist with the City of Davis; www.adam4davis.org; adam@adam4davis.org



Council Candidate Questionnaire – Responses by Gloria Partida

1) Why are you running for Davis City Council?

Having spent 4 years on Davis City council, two of which were during some of the most difficult times our city has ever known, I have grown to appreciate the need for my voice at the table. The job of representing a diverse and often outspoken community such as Davis, requires someone that can reflect on which voices are not present and pause to ensure all policies are equitable. I believe I bring this to our council.

2) What are the three greatest challenges facing Davis?

Land use, economic development, and affordable housing.

3) What are your ideas for addressing each of those challenges?

Land use: The constraints of growth in Davis makes our land use policies critical to ensuring our quality of life is sustainable. Ensuring we have clear directions on zoning codes that are equitable for homeowners as well as developers is important. Strengthening our transportation plan to make it easier for people to leave their cars at home, finding ways to create mixed use developments that create hubs of community all are land use decisions. Additionally ensuring our downtown plan is a true roadmap to vibrancy that is implementable should be of highest priority.

Economic Development: We must invest more coordinated effort in diversifying our tax base to be resilient in future downturns and unexpected developments. We must develop a vision for who we are and how we fit into the economics of our region. A coordination between our small businesses, UCD and our regional partners will be important in sustaining jobs that contribute to the flow of resources for the city as well as our businesses. Having a more dedicated point from the city with GSEC and our DDBA and chamber will need to be implemented.

Affordable Housing: The struggle to provide affordable housing is not unique to Davis. However, our lack of space to dedicate to big A affordable housing builders compound our problem. This means we need creative solutions. The Yolo County housing's voucher program is an excellent program. The voucher program provides a way to incorporate affordable housing into the stock we already have and integrate people seamlessly into our housing community. The city can help by providing security deposits and other assurances of low risk to landlords that participate. This will require us building a robust housing trust fund to provide this assurance. The housing trust fund will be key to not only supporting rentals but to helping 1st time home buyers. Our department of housing and homeless services will be instrumental in working toward sustainable solutions. Our affordable housing report due this fall will give certainty to obstacles involved in building more affordable housing. Knowing those obstacles is powerful for working towards overcoming them. A solution I would like to explore is the idea of allowing developers to offer affordable units in older properties they may own in town to satisfy a larger percentage of affordable units for new development.

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Yolo County Fair Outreach

The Yolo County Democratic Party (with financial assistance from you, the DDC membership) hosts an annual booth at the County Fair to engage the public and distribute voter information. This booth is entirely staffed by volunteers, and DDC members did their share by doing all of the work on a hot Saturday at the Fair. **With apologies to the many Club members who volunteered on that hot Saturday and whose pictures are not shown below, the following photos show a few happy DDC fairgoers.**

When discussing issues with the public, the hot button topic was the abrogation of Roe v Wade. Voters (women and men) are angry and will make their objections known this November.



In memory: Dr. Wes Honbo

We are saddened to report the passing of Dr. Wes Honbo, a member of the Davis Democratic Club. Dr. Honbo's parents were early members of Caser Chavez's UFW union and he himself started his life in a Japanese internment camp during World War 2. Overcoming these and other adversities, as a young athlete he carried the Olympic Torch at the Squaw Valley games and later became a successful dentist practicing Davis for fifty years.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his family and wife, Mrs. Pat Honbo .

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**Nov. 8th
is coming!
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donate, make a
difference!**

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See the website for current events and photos:
www.davisdemocraticclub.org

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