

Sierra Club  
Questionnaire for 2010 City Council Race

Return to William Smith [smith324@gmail.com](mailto:smith324@gmail.com) or 2822 Bayview Drive by Friday, August 20th

### General Approach

As a Councilmember, we would be working with you to help Alameda develop environmentally, equitably, and economically. As long as economic growth equates to material growth requiring materials from outside of the local area, such as large homes and automobiles and other possessions, there will be a tension between economic development and environmental stewardship. What will you do to promote sustainable and equitable economic development for Alameda and the surrounding region? (Provide details of examples of your commitment to the environment in the general information section below)

*As we try, yet again, to redevelop the base, we should be thinking about exactly what kinds of light industry we'd like out there. My preference would be for us to really go after the specialty food and wine industry at the Point, on Bay Farm and in appropriate in-fill areas. We need to manage the northern end of Park Street by developing a special 'overlay' planning district that will encourage quality restaurants, bars and high-end retail establishments. This area is one of two main entrances for our city and a main engine of our local economy. Currently it looks largely blighted. We should make sure that all jobs on the Island pay a living wage-level salary so that people that work in these businesses can also enjoy living here. To that end we need to increase the total number of affordable housing units available. This will also help us reduce energy consumption and emissions contributing to global warming.*

### Regional Development

1. Do you think it is important that Alameda consider regional issues when developing Alameda Point, such as regional jobs housing balance, housing for those who cannot afford to pay market rate rents, water supply and regional transportation systems? What would you or your major supporters like to see developed at Alameda Point? (Bill Smith)

*For all too long our elected leaders have treated this place like it was an island nation 200 miles outside of the Golden Gate. The reality is that 50 yards of brackish water is all that separates us from a massive, crowded and complex metropolitan area. Everything we do will have an impact on the greater East Bay and vice versa. We're all inter-connected -- environmentally, economically and socially -- and it's high time that we realize it. So, yes, it's important to consider the bigger regional picture when developing the Point.*

*My vision for the redevelopment of Alameda Point closely follows the current Calthorpe Plan with a few tweaks here and there. In my opinion, the Calthorpe Plan is an excellent example of a mixed-use, transit-oriented community. I would, as I noted earlier, weak the total number of housing units downward and I would reduce the total amount of office space, favoring instead the development of city-sponsored incubator business areas to foster at the Point (i.e. high-end food and beverage product production) Finally, I would saddle the entire development plan with a TDM approach to traffic mitigation. That way only the phases that fully mitigate their traffic impacts would be authorized to be built.*

2. Alameda has an outstanding solid waste recycling program and has worked well with CASA to implement it. What do you think can be done to improve our solid waste recycling program and do you think the City will meet the County's landfill waste reduction goal (Ruth Abbe)

*We do have an excellent program. We are recycling some 67 percent of our waste and that's commendable. That also means we're well ahead of the AB32 state-mandated targets, That said, we can and must do better. In 2008 we generated about 19,000 tons of compostable waste. We need to get this valuable stuff out of the landfills into our gardens, vineyards and farms. So, I think our next steps must go to full mandatory recycling which would include mandatory compostable recycling as well.*

3. A number of citizens and civic groups, most notably the League of Women Voters, are concerned about a number of actions taken or proposed very recently either by the City staff alone, or by Council members. Do you share some of these concerns, and whether or not you share them, how do you think they could be best addressed? (Jon Spangler)

*I am running in large part for this very reason. My platform is specific and to the point -- if elected I will usher in a new era in openness and transparency in Alameda government. I will seek immediate changes in our city's senior administrative staff. I will fight to create the Office of Public Ombudsman (who will report only to the City Council) to assist Alamedans in regaining control and access to their government. My complete campaign platform can be found below.*

4. The US Fish and Wildlife Service refused to accept the runway area from the Navy to create a Wildlife Refuge. The Veterans Administration has, however, at least preliminarily, expressed a willingness to accept responsibility for this land, including remediation of the toxics. Do you have a preference as to which federal agency accepts the runway area and an adjacent dump site from the Navy? Do you support the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge for the runway area and dump site? (Arthur Feinstein)

*I have no preference as long as the agency that takes full responsibility for the land carries out its promises to remediate the land and take care of the Least Tern population found on that section of the base. And, yes, I would support the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge at this location.*

5. Alameda Point Environmental Restoration (Dale Smith)

Alameda Point is a Superfund site and the Navy plans to leave some contaminated materials in place and impose deed restrictions, some in perpetuity, on the land when it is transferred. Based on what you've heard:

What percentage of the base has been transferred or is ready for transfer?

*Approximately 40 percent.*

What percentage still requires remediation or is in remediation?

*Approximately 35 percent; The remaining 25 percent remains under investigation.*

Are residential standards the same as unrestricted use?

*Yes - I think. Restoring a known Brownfield site so that human beings can safely reside there means remediating the site fully. It is the highest and most complete form of toxic cleanup. I think in this case 'residential' and 'unrestricted' are interchangeable terms. Please correct me if I am wrong.*

The toxics at Alameda Point pose potential hazards to both people and other living things. Do you think existing cleanup standards are adequate? Do they protect other living things as well as humans? (Dale Smith)

*Probably not. I would like to see Congress make CIRCLA definitions and standards tougher and more precise.*

6. Alameda energy policy (Al Weinrub)

- What would be your plan for dealing with the impact of Oakland Airport being under water in a few decades, as shown in San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission maps ([http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/planning/climate\\_change/maps/16/cbay\\_east.pdf](http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/planning/climate_change/maps/16/cbay_east.pdf))?

*Since it isn't likely that we will be able to relocate the airport to higher location and since the very economy of the entire East Bay depends in large part on the existence of the airport, we will likely have to build a series of levies and seawalls around the facility to compensate for the sea water rise.*

How would you create major transportation hubs with high-density housing, especially low-income housing?

*Through effective city planning that is proactive and not reactive and which begins to aggressively shaping our city and our region into a place that works for all people -- regardless of their socioeconomic class standing.*

What are the biggest barriers to green job development in low-income communities and how would you overcome these barriers?

*Capital - or the lackthereof - is the largest single barrier to encouraging green job development in low-income areas.. The best way to infuse capital into new green business development in such areas is to have the government "incentivize" and guarantee lenders to work in such areas. I would restructure the SBA so that it could act more directly act like a bank than just a guarantor. The second largest barrier is having access to a well-educated workforce or access to a community college or vocational college training program.*

What characteristics must a business development project have for you to consider it sustainable economic development that would benefit the local community?

*For any new development project in Alameda to succeed (and to receive my vote) it must feature structures that can be LEED certified. The project must bring living-wage-level, environmentally clean jobs and it must have a comprehensive traffic mitigation plan.*

What roles will alternative energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power and solar power play in Alameda's future? What is the City doing and what more could it do to conserve energy?

*Fortunately, Alameda Municipal Power already has one of the most environmentally clean portfolios of all municipal utilities in the U.S. AMP gets much of power from alternative energy producers around the West. As a member of the council I would push AMP to continue to follow this path. The City and the School District can both step up their electric conservation efforts which would lead to even greater energy savings for both institutions. We should continue to push for the conversion to an all-electric city vehicle fleet (where possible.)*

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

a. Please identify pro-environmental actions you have taken either as a private individual

and/or public official in your career and any environmental or civic organizations active on environmental or environmental justice matters in which you have been active.

*Over the course of my 20 years in California journalism, I have covered many environmental issues for many different newspapers and online news services. My 'contributions' to the environmental movement was in getting its story right for my readers. In particular I have become well known for my coverage of the state's oil exploration, drilling and shipping business. Most recently I provided comprehensive coverage of the attempts by the Schwarzenegger Administration to convince the State Lands Commission to reauthorize oil drilling in state waters off Tranquillon Ridge in Northern Santa Barbara County. In fact, I can say that I've even bled for my environmental stories. In 1993 I suffered significant injuries while boarding a Chevron oil tanker off Gaviota to do a report on the environmental impacts of the intra-state oil tankering business for the Los Angeles Times.*

b. Please attach any written environmental campaign material or platform plank.

*If elected, I will fight to:*

- Enact a powerful Sunshine Ordinance that will positively change the way City Hall does business with its citizens forever. Such an ordinance will demand that all city employees start with the the assumption that all documents should be public and open for inspection and that only the most sensitive can be withheld from public view. The ordinance will be designed to open up and make more transparent the workings of our local government*
- Enact a comprehensive, intelligent yet constitutional campaign finance ordinance for Alameda. This ordinance will be designed to make our city elections open, honest and free of the influence of outside vested interests and special interest groups.*
- Quickly get the redevelopment of Alameda Point underway again — only this time I would support reality-based approaches to getting the job done while eschewing the politically artful, 'feel-good' concepts such as municipal self-development.*
- Create the Office of Public Ombudsman. This city employee, who will report directly to the City Council, will serve as a public advocate to assist Alameda residents in accessing their government and their City Council. This person will assist the public in filing complaints our government or just how to make suggestions on how the city can increase its efficiency and effectiveness.*
- Institute an immediate freeze on the City Manager's ability to authorize and execute city contracts under \$75,000 until a comprehensive City Policy or ordinance can be approved governing the manager's spending authority.*
- Advocate that the City Council immediately begin a nationwide search to find a permanent city manager.*
- Create the Office of Volunteer Coordinator. This city employee will be responsible for assisting the mayor in filling commission appointments and will serve to create programs designed to recruit members of the greater Alameda community to volunteer their time and expertise to the betterment of the city*
- Move to rapidly upgrade the City's website, online services and telecommunications programs and equipment so that more Alamedans can access city services and programs from their homes via the Internet. I will also work with industry and commercial vendors to fund and build free "wi-fi" corridors for the public along Park and Webster streets and at other major commercial centers.*
- Always treat the city's employee unions with the respect they deserve and work to guarantee that the City always acts with honesty and good faith during contract negotiations.*

c. Why should the Sierra Club support your candidacy?

*Because I am the only candidate fully committed to returning City Hall to the control of Alamedans. Sunshine and governmental transparency in Alameda is at the heart of why I am running. Unless we establish basic standards openness and transparency, the same unfortunate machinations that we've seen this year will continue and likely worsen. As a community we are facing and will continue to face many complicated issues. If we don't stop first to fix our broken government, we'll never be able to properly address those other, important issues.*

#### CANDIDATE AND CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

a. Briefly describe the major bases of support you hope to gather for your campaign. What other endorsements have you received so far? From whom else (individuals, groups) will you be seeking endorsements?

*The following have nominated, endorsed or contributed to my candidacy:  
Russ Giuntini, chief assistant, San Francisco Co. District Attorney's Office (ret.)  
Becca Perata-Rosati, president of Vox Populi Consulting  
Mark Irons, Alameda civic activist, city commission member  
John Knox White, Alameda civic activist, city commission member  
Jeff Cambra, civic activist, attorney, businessman  
Nick Petrulakis, officer and manager, Books Inc.  
Robert Doumitt, Alameda businessman  
Anthony Doumitt, Alameda businessman  
Richard Rutter, architect  
Kathie Woulfe, spokeswoman, Alameda Boys & Girls Club (ret.)  
Michael Pagones, Alameda businessman  
Mike Rosati, photographer, artist  
Linda Williams, banking officer, Bank of Alameda  
Sean Cahill, Alameda LGBT organizer and community activist*

b. What level of time commitment do you expect to devote to Alameda city business?

*While I am neither retired nor independently wealthy, I will devote well more than the necessary amount of time each week to faithfully and successfully execute the duties of the office.*

c. Please provide electronic, telephone, and physical addresses for the campaign.

*Email: [j.edward.mitchell@gmail.com](mailto:j.edward.mitchell@gmail.com)  
(510) 593-5293*

*Committee for Jeff Mitchell for Alameda City Council 2010  
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Alameda, CA 94501*

The Sierra Club can:

1.

Endorse.

2.

Engage in actions short of endorsement, which can allow a candidate to identify supporters by their Club titles or use Club mailing lists for mailings. The Club may describe the candidates' records in newsletter articles or in campaign materials mailed to the nearly 600 Alameda Sierra Club members.

3.

Oppose.

4.

Remain neutral. The Club may describe the candidates' records in newsletter articles.

#### SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENT PLEDGE (REQUIRED FOR INTERVIEW)

A few candidates have misrepresented action short of endorsement in their literature or statements to the press as a Sierra Club endorsement. Others, while not endorsed, have quoted selectively from Sierra Club articles to suggest Club support for them or opposition to their opponent. To protect the validity and credibility of the Sierra Club endorsement, we ask each candidate seeking our endorsement to sign the following pledge:

(1) I understand that a Sierra Club endorsement requires a two-thirds vote by two or more volunteer leader committees, and that Sierra Club rules prohibit reporting on individual committee votes to prevent misrepresentations of a Sierra Club endorsement prior to completing the full endorsement process.

(2) I will not misrepresent a Sierra Club endorsement for my campaign or any other campaign or issue.

(3) I will not quote the Sierra Club, Sierra Club leaders, or Sierra Club publications, nor will I identify supporters of my campaign by their Sierra Club affiliation, without first obtaining written permission by an authorized Sierra Club representative.

(4) This pledge covers all employees, campaign consultants, and others representing or retained by my campaign, and I will take all necessary actions to insure that others acting on my behalf will not violate this pledge.

Name: *Jeff Mitchell*

Office Sought: *City Council of Alameda*

Signature: */s/ Jeff Mitchell*

Date *8/18/10*