

## Sierra Club – Alameda Election November 2012

### Questionnaire for City Council – Marilyn Ashcraft Response

#### General Approach

As a Councilmember, we will be counting on you to help Alameda develop environmentally, equitably, and economically while preserving our natural and cultural heritage. 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 guidelines do you use to achieve sustainable and equitable economic development and preservation of our natural and cultural heritage?

**RESPONSE:** I have long supported Green Building requirements, I pushed to have the Alameda Library built to green standards, and as a Planning Board member, have ensured that all aspects of projects are built to meet LEED, Bay-Friendly, and other sustainable standards.

I championed the construction of VF Outdoor’s Headquarters in Alameda, the first net-zero energy building in Northern California.

Alameda has continued to lead the East Bay in sustainable planning, through its groundbreaking Transportation Element which I helped ensure was adopted and included green building standards.

These actions will have meaningful impacts as more and more communities adopt them. As a councilmember, I will continue to push Alameda to be a leader in environmental development. Appropriate development will respect the existing community, provide access to all people in the community, and provide opportunities for open-space and protection of natural resources.

#### **Toxics and Environmental Restoration**

1. 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. 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? Is it advisable for Alameda to permit the construction of housing, such as Shinsei Gardens, above soil containing fuel or chlorinated hydrocarbon vapors? Is it advisable for the City to accept deed restrictions that require the City to enforce restrictions on digging into soil in perpetuity where residual “marsh crust” (heavy asphalt like hydrocarbons from town gas plants in the 1800s and early 1900s) is found?

**RESPONSE:** Clearly we should not be building housing on land that is unsafe. As a councilmember, I will work diligently to ensure that development throughout the island, not just Alameda Point, is appropriate for a given site.

I will work to ensure that the city has appropriate, independent representation in negotiations with the US Navy regarding clean up standards.

Clearly in locations where housing currently exists, it is advisable that deed restrictions limit activity that poses a danger to occupants or community health.

### **Regional Development**

2. Is it 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, and regional transportation systems? What would you or your major supporters like to see developed at Alameda Point?

**RESPONSE:** Typically, regional issues are Alameda issues too. Alameda has a jobs/housing imbalance and housing affordability issues. Any transportation system, to be effective, must connect into and rely on regional systems.

For 15 years, the citizens of Alameda have identified mixed-use development as a priority at Alameda Point. The size and scope of this development has varied, but the vision itself has remained consistent. An appropriate development will meet these goals in a financially sustainable manner, providing new public space opportunities along with housing, jobs and uses compatible with the community vision.

3. What modes of transportation should the City support to develop in Alameda and the region? Possible modes include auto, motorcycle, bus, ferry, BART, bicycle and walking. Which modes do you see increasing their share of trips in the future? I am a long-time bike advocate, but I don't feel that the city should be in the business of determining which modes of transportation will be used by its citizens. Alameda should, however, provide equitable options that allow residents and employees to utilize the system that meets their needs and interests. All roadways need to be built as complete streets. With rising gas prices and other automotive costs, a shifting sensibility about active transportation, and growing commitments to public transportation, it's clear that we will see increases in all non-single occupancy vehicle modes in the coming years.
4. How would you create major transportation hubs with high-density housing, especially low-income housing? Do you support Alameda's revised housing element, the first one certified by the State in nearly two decades?

**RESPONSE:** I not only support Alameda's revised, and recently approved Housing Element, I have strenuously advocated doing this during my entire Planning Board tenure. Experience and good planning principles dictate that higher residential

densities, including affordable housing, will support transportation hubs. Future development, especially at Alameda Point, must incorporate these principles.

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

**RESPONSE:** The biggest barrier is a lack of green collar jobs. Green collar jobs tend to have lower barriers to entry, therefore the solution is to encourage creating these jobs in the community, as well to provide training programs and apprenticeships. At a recent Alameda Labor Council workshop, I learned that community colleges and school districts in the area are providing this sort of vocational training and technical career education programs. As a councilmember, I would encourage AUSD and the College of Alameda to do the same.

### **Resource Management (Water, Materials, Energy)**

6. 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?

**RESPONSE:** CASA could use more help from the City publicizing and promoting its solid waste recycling program. As the City grapples with diminishing resources, CASA can be an important community partner and help ensure that we meet the City's landfill waste reduction goal.

7. Do you support AMP's sale of excess recycled energy credits to fund energy conservation programs in Alameda?

**RESPONSE:** No, I think that Alameda's green energy program has been a real selling point in attracting businesses. The sell-off of this "excess" energy is a step in the wrong direction; we should be aiming to meet our own standards, not reducing our self to State standards that bring us in line with everyone else. We want to spur more green energy, not create a race to the bottom on the issue.

### **Fauna, Flora, Open Space and Recreational Land Management**

According to the 1996 Community Reuse Plan, the runway area at Alameda Point is slated to become (1) a national wildlife refuge and (2) California Public Trust land (Northwest Territories) for open space and recreation.

After the US Fish and Wildlife Service refused the Navy's terms for accepting the land to create the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, the Veterans Administration expressed a willingness to take over the parcel and manage the least tern colony, while it runs a medical clinic and columbarium. The VA would be responsible for maintaining the runway area as a wildlife refuge. It is possible that the East Bay Regional Park District

(EBRPD) would manage that refuge site. Do you support the section of the reuse plan that calls for creating a wildlife refuge?

**RESPONSE:** I support the refuge. The decision to continue to include it must involve a decision about whether it can be appropriately managed. I tend to believe that the more local the management, the better, but a discussion on who that should be needs to be a part of a public process.

8. Do you believe it's appropriate for the city to require EBRPD to give Measure WW funds to the city before the park district creates and manages a regional park on the Northwest Territories?

**RESPONSE:** So far, the City has made no determination as to what will be built in the Northwest Territories, though I certainly support the idea of a regional park on that land. Measure WW specifically lists \$6.5 million for the creation of trails and recreation at Alameda Point, so it's clearly appropriate to ask for money, but the discussion and negotiations will determine whether or not the final deal includes money for the land. Depending on what deal is struck, it's possible that requiring funding is appropriate. The park is not being created in a vacuum and I would want to ensure that whatever decision was made regarding it did not preclude other aspects of the project.

9. Enterprise Park, located next to the USS Hornet and Breakwater Beach, includes active soccer fields, a dormant campground, a shuttered recreation building, and unused volleyball, basketball and tennis area. What would you do to help create the regional park at this location as called for in the base reuse plan?

**RESPONSE:** A park has been identified in this location in just about every plan that has been created for Alameda Point. The planning of Alameda Point cannot carve out specific pieces and just hand them out. I would work to honor the vision of the community, which includes park and open space which will require discussions about trade-offs to ensure that amenities, like new parks, can be built and sustained.