

# MVHJ Candidate Questionnaire 2024

Your Name: **Pat Showalter**

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## Policy Questions

Please answer the five policy questions below.

Rent Control History and Vehicle Resident History tables are available [here](#) for your reference.

### 1) Rent Control

Please share your public and private positions on the rent control measures proposed or adopted in Mountain View since 2015 ([see here](#)).

Are you satisfied with current Mountain View rent control policies?

2015-16 Council meetings:

Listened to hundreds of people tell story after story about the issues they faced with high rents and the displacement and uncertainty it produced in their lives. As Mayor in 2016, I tried to persuade my fellow Councilmembers to support rent control. We were able to pass an ordinance that required every tenant to be offered at least a 6-month lease, but not rent control.

Measure V and W:

The proponents of rent control didn't think the lease requirement ordinance was good enough, so the CSFRA was written and Measure V was put on the ballot. At the time, I thought it would be better to have rent control that was an ordinance instead of a charter amendment so it could be changed easily as needed. I led an effort to put Measure W on the ballot. There was not enough Council support to include strong eviction protection in Measure W. Measure V passed and Measure W was defeated. In retrospect, having Measure V pass has been an excellent outcome for our community. Every person who lives in one of the over 14,000 housing units protected has certainty about how much their rent will go up and protections against eviction. That is huge!

Getting the CSFRA established:

Council was still divided on whether the CSFRA was good for the community when the 1st Rental Housing Committee was appointed. I regret that Council didn't require that every person appointed to the Rental Housing Board was committed to making the program work. That appointment round made me realize how important these appointments are to our community. Now, I offer to meet with every candidate for every advisory board before the formal interview. Although optional, so far almost every applicant has taken advantage of the opportunity. Several other councilmembers have adopted this custom as well. These meetings have allowed me to get to know the candidates better and help balance our boards & commissions from an equity and a gender-orientation point of view.

### Sneaky Repeal:

Signatures were collected to essentially gut the CSFRA. There was a lot of bad press about it and it was never put on the ballot. I always thought the proponents were surprised by the public outcry. It demonstrated that there were many voters- not just tenants- who supported rent control in Mountain View. I opposed the Sneaky repeal and was relieved when it was dropped.

### Measure D:

Measure D was another effort to gut the CSFRA put on the ballot by a slim majority of the Mountain View Council. I was not on the Council at this time and I campaigned against it.

The defeat of Measure D demonstrated that there is a strong constituency for rent control in our community. It helped so many Mountain View residents and there was no ground swell of re-development as the naysayers had warned. The defeat of Measure D is one of the things that convinced me to run for Council again. I felt if there were so many people in support of rent control, there might be enough voters interested in supporting me as a housing champion.

### MHRSO:

It was a mistake to not explicitly include mobile homes in the CSFRA. The Rental Housing Committee was not willing to assume that the general language of the CSFRA meant that mobile homes were included, even after receiving legal expertise on the subject. That meant that the Council needed to pass an ordinance. It took quite a while to work through all the steps, but I was glad to be back on the Council in 2021 and able to vote in favor of this ordinance.

### Housing Element:

Mountain View has a robust Housing Element that was approved by the State Department of Housing. It includes many activities to remove *barriers to housing* as well as the required zoning. I was proud to support the development of the Housing Element. There is a tremendous amount to be done to implement it. One of those commitments is to study lowering the AGA for Mobile Homes. I am looking forward to implementing the many components of our Housing Element including lowering the AGA.

## **2) Vehicle Residents**

Street parking of RVs is currently permitted on some streets following settlement of a lawsuit against the City. When the Measure C settlement ends, how would you support the residents who are currently living in the three miles which the city must allow? [RV parking ordinance history here.](#)

I opposed the Narrow Streets Ordinance and campaigned against the referendum. A suit was filed after passage and the implementation was postponed while the suit was resolved. After the settlement period, the City will no longer be required to keep any

particular length of streets available. It seems unlikely that the program will change dramatically because the width of our streets is not going to change. An exception to that is establishing bike lanes. Hopefully, we can avoid putting bike lanes on streets where RVs are regularly parking.

I think more problematical than the length of streets available for parking is the requirement that vehicles move every 3 days. The current system of outreach by community-based organizations and specially trained police is designed to get people connected to services that help them move toward permanent housing. I think we need to continue this range of programs to assist our un-housed residents and improve our programs as we continue to learn what is effective. This fall a major evaluation of our program to assist un-housed residents is coming to Council. It provides us with an important opportunity to incorporate as many of the lessons we have learned over the last few years as possible.

### **3) Safe Parking**

Do we need to continue to provide Safe Parking Lots for RVs?

Would you support providing electricity access to RVs at the Shoreline lot so that there would be less need for generator or natural gas use?

I see safe parking as one of the most successful programs to assist our un-housed residents that Mountain View has undertaken. We definitely need to continue it. In fact we need to increase the program. This need could go on for quite a while because the housing shortage is not going to be resolved quickly. Providing electrical access to the RV's at Shoreline is a logical way to decrease our GHG emissions and to reduce local air pollution. I'll work to add it during our program update this fall.

I would like to see the safe parking program expanded, so more of RVs could move into Safe Parking Lots. We should negotiate more with developers to establish new lots. The small lots on the future affordable housing sites are good examples of what can happen. We need to push this idea with other developers going forward.

### **4) Displacement**

What policies do you favor to help mitigate or prevent displacement?

What balance are you looking for when it comes to redevelopment and its impact on existing residents?

The CSFRA is a huge anti-displacement effort and we should recognize that is one of its purposes and strengths. The issue of what happens when naturally affordable housing is redeveloped into market rate housing is covered by our TRAO. The ordinance has been re-evaluated several times to make it more protective. From my point of view, the foremost need is to find displaced residents a rent-controlled apartment in Mountain View to reduce the disruption to their lives.

Balance between redevelopment and its impact on existing residents: It's always important to ask the question *What benefit does this project bring to Mountain View in general and this neighborhood in particular?* It is not a simple question and it always depends on the specifics of the situation. First, it needs to provide more housing and fortunately the SB330 has made that the law until 2030. It needs to fit into the existing area and help us meet our community goals such as more housing, complete streets, better energy efficiency and access to schools, parks & jobs.

SB330 is a model for anti-displacement, but it has a sunset date of 2030. We gave staff direction for an ordinance to replace those displacement protections when the SB330 sunsets. I look forward to passing this ordinance, but it will be important for housing advocates to promote this in 2030.

I am interested in working with current landlords to absorb displaced tenants. We had an apartment fire recently and the tenants were re-settled immediately. If we can do it after a fire, why not with a construction project? The City should try to providing a series of options- moving into a local rent-controlled apartment during construction, moving into a nearby community with lower rents or moving out of the area- whichever is better to the individual tenant. The City should also be open to innovative solutions. For instance, the deal struck with Prometheus related the apartments on Villa Street and the affordable housing on Mariposa Street is a good example. The larger landlords have more flexibility to assist and we should work with them to implement needed housing opportunities and reduce vacancies.

## **5) Affordability of new and/or existing housing.**

What are your suggestions to increase the affordability of new or existing housing?

The City does not control the cost of funds needed to build housing or the cost of construction materials, but we can make improvements in the time it takes to get projects through the review process. Any reduction of time translates into lower project costs because it means less staff time on the part of developers and City staff. Since materials normally go up as time passes, the sooner you can get to the construction phase, the cheaper the same materials will be. We have been working on speeding up the review process through the results of the Matrix Study and improvements suggested by Staff and developers. While it is making a difference, we need to continue to improve.

Another huge time sink and cost to getting housing built is financing. This is particularly true for Affordable Housing. Many different sources are tapped for a single project. Typically, affordable housing uses seven or more sources of funding and each of those funding sources has their own timeline. Mountain View has been investigating innovative techniques to finance housing such as community land trusts. There is a new industry of financing in the middle income housing space and we need to make

sure they are active Mountain View. We hosted a conference on the subject in early 2024.

Affordability by design can also help reduce costs. Many of our recently built apartments are made of large units with many on-site amenities. Costs can be reduced by building smaller units and making more of them.

ADU's are a source of more housing distributed in our single-family neighborhoods. We can make this less expensive by providing ready-to-use construction plans. Several jurisdictions such as Santa Cruz County are doing this. The new state law ( AB1033) that allows a City to decide that an ADU can be sold as a condo is also an interesting way to increase opportunities for residents to become homeowners at a lower price point.

To sum up, in our Housing Element, there is a list of things we need to explore to remove barriers to housing. Many of them will also work to lower the cost of housing or at least slow it's rise. I'm determined to work through the entire list.