

Q&A WITH THE SAN DIEGO MAYORAL CANDIDATES



These questions were sent to all candidates and those who replied by the 2/16/2020 deadline are posted below.

1. La Jolla is unique and contributes significantly to city coffers through hotel, tourism and property tax revenue. However, La Jollans believe it does not receive the basic vital city services and infrastructure needed, and which are enjoyed by many other younger communities.

What city services and infrastructure would you direct to La Jolla to address these inequities?

Gita Applebaum Singh: The problem is poor utilization of City revenues. The solution is to reduce personnel costs at the top by decreasing all salary's in excess of \$100,000 a year by 10% and impose a hiring freeze on all City positions that pay more than \$100,000 a year. With the cost savings as Mayor I will increase city service and infrastructure spending to all of San Diego.

Barbara Bry: La Jolla is a vital part of the city of San Diego. However, when a City is poorly managed, fails to maintain basic city services, lacks foresight and mishandles its finances it results in neighborhoods receiving sub-standard levels of neighborhood services. The City of San Diego suffers from consistently having "career politicians" who are focused on their next elected office, as opposed to competent, experienced professional management. Having a Mayor who is solely focused on the health, welfare, and prosperity of its residents and the city as a whole will be a gamechanger for San Diego.

La Jolla, along with all San Diego neighborhoods, should have well-maintained roads, storm drainage, parks, and public safety services, mental health and substance abuse out-reach for the unsheltered population, and code enforcement of existing city ordinances for STVRs, scooters and other quality of life issues.

Todd Gloria: Throughout my time in elected office, I have consistently fought for additional resources and infrastructure investment in every community. In the Assembly, we have directed millions of additional dollars to San Diego to address our infrastructure deficiencies – specifically road repair.

My campaign for Mayor is based on a theme of equity – being a Mayor for all people in every community. I recognize the neighborhoods of La Jolla are over 100 years old – and sadly, its infrastructure reflects that fact. Part of having an equity-driven agenda is taking that into account and spreading resources out accordingly.

In order to make sure every community receives its fair share, I believe we will need to grow the economic pie via initiatives like Measure C and encouraging our thriving technology and life sciences industries. Expanding our local economy will provide more resources for all communities.

Rich Riel: The problem is poor utilization of City revenues. The solution is to reduce personnel costs at the top by decreasing all salary's in excess of \$100,000 a year by 10% and impose a hiring freeze on all City positions that pay more than \$100,000 a year. With the cost savings as Mayor I will increase city service and infrastructure spending to all of San Diego.

Scott Sherman: The City doesn't allocate services to a neighborhood based on what that neighborhood pays in taxes, nor should it. As Mayor, I will continue to allocate services based on need not geography. It wouldn't make sense to have the same number of police officers patrolling a low-crime neighborhood as patrolling a high-crime neighborhood. If the City did that, both neighborhoods would be worse off. There should be more police (and other crime preventative services) in the high-crime neighborhood, regardless of what the neighborhood paid in taxes.

Many differences in city services are based on other factors outside of property, sales, and hotel taxes, such as whether it's a Development Impact Fee (DIF) community or a Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA) community. Older communities tend to be DIF communities and younger communities tend to be FBA communities. People in FBA communities pay substantially more in special district taxes than people in DIF communities. Some communities voluntarily self-tax themselves and create special districts, such as Maintenance Assessment Districts (MAD), Business Improvement Districts (BID) or Property Business Improvement Districts (PBID). The amount of additional taxes paid towards these special districts varies.

2. Senate Bill 50 and similar legislation has the potential to rip through the fabric of the community through increased density, in conflict with our community Plan District Ordinances (PDOs). This is only one example of Sacramento infringement on local communities and zoning.

As Mayor would you support community-centric solutions to solve the demands for housing, versus Sacramento-dictated solutions for Coastal Access, Urban Green Canopies, Height limits, Clean Water, etc.?

How will you handle Sacramento interference in our local communities?

Gita: As Mayor I would travel to Sacramento to testify on behalf of the City's ability to address these issues locally without applying State wide mandates that make no sense for our City. Yes I support the solution proposed by the Town Council.

Barbara Bry: Unlike several of my opponents who support the elimination of height, density, and parking requirements, I believe in community-centric solutions to protect the character of every neighborhood. I support accelerated completion of Community Plan updates, project-area EIRs that allow individual developments consistent with community plans to receive expedited processing, and a citywide commitment to encouraging higher densities next to transportation centers, but I strongly oppose the elimination of height, density, and parking requirements. The City can play an important role in providing upgraded transportation and other municipal infrastructure to enhance the quality of life in every neighborhood, but decisions should be made locally, here in San Diego, not in Sacramento.

Todd Gloria: First, I wholly disagree with the set-up of this question. We should not fear-monger a serious issue like housing affordability that we know is a central cause of homelessness, threatens our economy, and is effectively showing our young people (like those we graduate out of UCSD) the door in San Diego. We cannot be a city for only the very wealthy who can afford to live here and the poor who are trapped here.

Basic economics tell us that housing affordability is a matter of supply and demand, and California is simply not producing the supply of homes necessary to keep up with demand. While some cities, including San Diego, have made bold policy changes designed to remove barriers to housing production, most cities throughout the state have not taken appropriate action. San Diego should not have to bear

the responsibility of solving California's housing crisis alone. Given the gravity of the situation, I believe there is a role for the State to play to make sure every jurisdiction does its fair share and compels all local governments to be part of the solution.



I want to be very clear:

- SB 50 is dead. During the time the bill was active, I expressed my concerns with the author, which is why multiple media outlets reported on my lack of support for the bill. While SB 50 is dead, there may be other legislation that can help ease our housing burden, and I will consider any proposal based on its merits.
- When SB 330 was being considered by the Legislature, I secured the amendment to the bill that respected voter-approved coastal height limits. I will continue to respect voter-approved coastal height limits.
- I do not support building anything, anywhere – that's not smart growth. My vision for the City is not a collection of high-rise apartment buildings in the midst of single-family neighborhoods.

Each community in San Diego is unique and I fully support community-driven solutions that confront the challenges we face including our housing crisis. You can bet that, as Mayor, I will be present and personally involved in community discussions surrounding land-use, growth, and dealing with our housing affordability crisis – just as I did as a City Councilmember, Council President, and now in the Assembly. I firmly believe we can grow as a city and build the housing we need in a way that is community enhancing, not community destroying.

As for how I will, as Mayor, handle Sacramento involvement in our local communities, I will be actively involved in advocating for the needs of our City. As a current Assemblymember in leadership in the Legislature, I have the knowledge and relationships necessary to make sure San Diego has a place at the table and our voices are heard.

Rich Riel: The problem can be solved by supporting the Planning Groups recommendations. I would restructure the Planning Commission with members who have served on local planning boards and getting rid of political patronage that has dominated the Planning Board.

As Mayor I would travel to Sacramento to testify on behalf of the City's ability to address these issues locally without applying State wide mandates that make no sense for our City.

Scott Sherman: Generally speaking, I believe local government is more responsive than the state or federal government in managing local affairs. SB 50 is dead, but the message from Sacramento is clear: either local governments roll back decades of anti-housing policies or the state will take land use power away from local governments. For years, I have been championing policies to address the housing crisis. I believe that we owe it our kids and grandkids to ensure that they have an opportunity for homeownership, just as we did. If the city continues to make progress so that it's easier to build homes then state-mandates won't affect the city.

3. A large segment of the La Jolla community is concerned about the increased California Sea Lions population on our beaches. LJTC Forum 'Crisis in the Cove' was held in 2016 and resulted in the formation of San Diego Community-Wide Task Force to investigate the pollution and injuries arising from the California Sea Lions.

We learned that the Marine Mammal Protection Act (section 109H) provides a remedy and authorizes local Mayors to declare a public health and safety hazard and invoke the legal methods to move and exclude CSLs. (<https://www.lajollatowncouncil.org/crisis-in-the-cove>)

The City of San Diego funded a study by Doyle Hanan, a leading Marine Mammal Expert. The Second Hanan Report found on our website link above outlined six Management Alternatives. To date, no

attempt has been made to invoke 109H provisions that would obviously help. Our own research developed a prototype that would make San Diego a leader addressing wildlife intrusion into communities.



As Mayor, will you provide leadership and invoke the provisions under MMPA and outlined by the Hanan Report for the removal of pinnipeds from the LJ Beaches?

Gita Applebaum Singh: The problem can be solved by supporting the Planning Groups recommendations. I would restructure the Planning Commission with members who have served on local planning boards and getting rid of political patronage that has dominated the Planning Board.

Barbara Bry: A lot has changed in the past four years. For instance, the La Jolla Village Merchants Association recently concluded that it's more productive to market to the tourists coming to see the seals and sea lions than attempt to drive the popular attraction away. On the other hand, contaminated water has forced swim events to relocate from the Cove. Doyle Hanan, the author of the Marine Coastal Management Plan, suggests we monitor the water quality ahead of events and perform enzyme spraying and other NOAA approved techniques to drive the sea lions away when necessary to make the water safe for swimming. Hanan has repeatedly stated that sea lions eventually recognize efforts meant to deter them, and become aggressive in response.

Todd Gloria: As Mayor, I will gladly work with the District 1 Councilmember to take appropriate action to manage the sea lion population.

Rich Riel: Yes I support the solution proposed by the Town Council.

Scott Sherman: As Mayor, I would look to legally permissible alternatives within the confines of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to deal with the sea lion problem.

4. Some people believe that both housing affordability city-wide and the homeless crisis are exacerbated by the unchecked proliferation of short-term vacation rentals. What are your views about whether this is true and how significant the impacts are?

Gita: I believe that short term rentals are already regulated under existing law the problem is the Mayor, and City Attorney are not enforcing the law. As Mayor I will enforce the existing law by directing code violation staff to issue the appropriate citations. Repeated violations will be turned over to the City Attorney office for prosecution.

Barbara Bry: The shortage of affordable housing and the increase in our homeless population can be partly attributed to unfettered and unregulated short term vacation rentals. That's one of the reasons why I've led efforts to get STVRs out of our neighborhoods. Our current Mayor has refused to enforce San Diego's existing zoning laws, and previous City Council members lacked the independence to protect neighborhoods from the detrimental effects STVRs have on our city.

Economic studies demonstrate the costs of short-term rentals to our City outweigh the benefits, increasing housing costs, reducing City tax revenues from tourism, circumventing zoning laws, and creating more income inequality, not less. Approximately, 16,000 single-family homes are being used as short-term vacation rentals, as well as a growing number of newly developed apartments and condominiums that were intended for San Diego residents. There are about 5,500 homeless in the city of San Diego. You do the math. My opponents are funded by AirBnB special interest PACs and have refused to take action in the past to regulate STVR growth. Their lack of action has helped create the crisis we face today. I have the endorsement of Save San Diego Neighborhoods because of my leadership on this issue. I have stated repeatedly that I will enforce our zoning laws when elected Mayor of San Diego.

Todd Gloria: The unchecked proliferation of short-term vacation rentals does have impacts on San Diego's housing and housing affordability crisis – and by extension, our homelessness crisis. The current City Council could regulate short-term vacation rentals today if they wanted to. It's an absolute failure of leadership on the part of this current Mayor and City Council that comprehensive regulations have not been enacted to regulate short-term rentals. This includes the choice to waste time on an ordinance that failed to achieve consensus and resulted in a referendum, leaving us at square one without any relief.

As Mayor, I will enforce the law as it stands. Period. If we don't like the law, then we should change it.

I believe that all sides are eager for clear regulations and would be open to reasonable compromise that protects private property rights while respecting the character of our communities and providing an true enforcement mechanism for bad actors. I am confident that a solution can be reached that will regulate short term rentals and stop speculative corporate entities taking housing that we could use to house San Diegans.

Rich Riel: I believe that short term rentals are already regulated under existing law the problem is the Mayor, and City Attorney are not enforcing the law. As Mayor I will enforce the existing law by directing code violation staff to issue the appropriate citations. Repeated violations will be turned over to the City Attorney office for prosecution.

Scott Sherman: It's inexcusable that the Council and the Mayor can't reach a solution on short-term vacation rentals. Twice, I have spear headed attempts to reach a compromise only to be undone by narrow special interests at the last moment. At this point, it will likely only be solved by placing it on the ballot and letting the voters decide.

There are many anecdotal stories from coastal communities, but little to no data to show that STVRs are responsible for the housing affordability or homeless crisis. The housing affordability problems pre-date the invention of online platforms, such as Airbnb or VRBO, by decades. The homeless issue reached crisis level on the heels of Prop. 46, Prop. 58 and other changes in state law.