

BIA| Bay Area 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

(Sept. 7, 2018) BIA| Bay Area is seeking the following information for the purposes of determining whether or not to support your candidacy. Not all questions may be pertinent to the office you are seeking but please answer those that apply. Please limit your answers to fewer than 150 words per question. The submission deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 28, 2018. Send completed questionnaires to lvorderbrueggen@biabayarea.org. We appreciate your participation.

Date: 09/28/2018

Name: Katy Miessner

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Best phone number to reach you: 707-642-2100

Office you are seeking: Vallejo City Council Second Term

Previous and/or current political offices held:

Vallejo City Council, current Vice-Mayor (Elected)

Solano County Fair Association Board (Appointed)

Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee (Appointed)

Vallejo Free of Graffiti Anti-Graffiti Team (Volunteer)

Sierra Club/Solano Group Executive Committee (Elected)

Vallejo Downtown Advisory Group Member (Appointed)

1. What do you feel is the number one cause of the housing crisis facing the Bay Area?

Too many people and not enough housing; especially middle-income. High-end homes built because they pencil out with a profit; very low income is built, subsidized by the Federal Government and other restricted funds. And Housing speculation in the region.

2. An inclusionary housing policy requires residential developers to aside a percentage of the new units for low income households. At the same time, the California Housing and Community Development Department states that inclusionary regulations must be evaluated as an impediment to new housing due to the added costs. How would you balance the need for more housing of all kinds with the need for more affordable units?

I like the idea of inclusionary housing because it mixes income levels rather than ghetto-ize people by income level. However, Vallejo is fairly built out except for a few areas, so inclusionary housing would likely make only a slight dent in the problem.

3. The Legislative Analyst's Office concluded that local government fees are contributing to the housing crisis. What steps would you take to reduce fees?

Vallejo cannot afford to give tax breaks at this time; however, we could create certain zones for a certain period of time, and discount permit fees, especially infill. Vacant buildings and empty lots don't contribute to our tax base, the reverse is true, they are a drain because of illegal dumping, weed abatement, squatters. Making vacant lots and buildings productive is a win-win.

4. Is the Bay Area building enough market-rate housing. Why or why not?

I am not even sure what market-rate housing is anymore, We differ so much from San Francisco. I am concerned that some of the luxury housing in SF is a place for international investors to park their money, creating a false market. This is having a huge impact on everyone in the region.

5. Is your community building enough market-rate housing. Why or why not?

I think we are – current housing is being built on Mare Island section of Vallejo, we are “surcharging” the soil on “Parcel A” (on our Northern Waterfront) to prepare for market rate town homes.

6. Would you be willing to vote to approve a new housing project if you felt it was well-planned and needed, even if vocal constituents opposed it? Why or why not?

It has to be well-planned and then I can support it.

7. Are you willing to meet with development applicants? Why or why not?

I will meet with anyone who wants to develop in Vallejo, the only issue I have is my schedule!

8. A recent U.C. Berkeley study found that new residential development does not displace existing residents. Given these findings, how would you handle requests for gentrification and displacement regulations in your community?

I would love to see housing built that fits a middle-income (and in Vallejo that differs from SF, etc, we still have the lowest property values in the Bay Area.) There are a lot of folks that are paying upwards of 50-60% of their income to rent. There needs to be a balance of housing mix.

9. Does building market-rate housing generate a need for more affordable housing? Why or why not?

I don't think it's a direct cause, or maybe direct over a long period of time, but market rate housing could raise surrounding property values so that renters are evicted, rents raised, etc.

10. The Bay Area has failed to produce enough housing to accommodate its growing workforce for decades. The lack of supply is driving up prices and leaving many families unable to buy or rent homes near their jobs. What policies would you champion to alleviate the region's housing crisis?

I would love to see workforce housing built, as well as land trust idea. The question will always be, will the development pencil out for the builder. I'd like to see more concentration (apartments/condos near transit areas) and "gray-fill" meaning under-utilized or vacant commercial/residential housing is converted into housing. Our new General Plan has the flexibility to support this, and it could be applied to some of our retain corridor strip-malls; add new life into these areas.