

Candidate Questionnaire

In order to provide a valuable service to our members and the Mountain View community as a whole, the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) seeks information about you and your candidacy for Mountain View City Council. Your answers to the following questions will allow the Chamber to make an informed judgment about your candidacy.

The Chamber may consider any information that is available in reviewing your candidacy, including the information you provide in your application, any campaign materials or other statements you provide, your public statements, and information from any other available sources.

Consideration of your candidacy is an opportunity extended by the Chamber. It does not obligate the committee to endorse you. We reserve the right to choose not to make an endorsement in any election campaign. An endorsement, if awarded, carries no commitment as to additional action, financial assistance, or other support of any kind by the Chamber.

All information will remain confidential and will only be reviewed by the Chamber Endorsement Committee.

Candidate Information

Please provide your personal and campaign information for our records

Name (First/Last) *

Lucas Ramirez

E-mail: *

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Contact Phone *

[REDACTED]

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Years at Home Address *

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Current Occupation *

Digital Product Manager

Campaign Manager (First/Last Name) *

Emily Ramos

Campaign Finance Officer/Treasurer (First/Last Name) *

Emily Ramos

Campaign FPPC Number *

#1384620

Campaign website *

<https://www.ramirezforcouncil.com/>

What best describes your motivation for running for office/Please explain why you have decided to run for Mountain View City Council? *

The biggest challenges facing Mountain View are the crisis in housing affordability and severe traffic congestion. I am running to promote smart growth policies and jobs/housing balance, which are both long-term solutions to these challenges. I also want to work to increase the confidence and trust of the public in government by ensuring that residents have timely access to information and ample opportunity to provide input on crucial issues.

How does your prior experience prepare you for elected office? *

I have served twice as chair (2015 and 2016) of the Mountain View Human Relations Commission, a council advisory body that makes recommendations on the allocation of CDBG and HOME grant funding from the federal government. As a member of the VTA Citizens Advisory Committee, I have had the opportunity to influence regional transportation policy, including the sales tax measure that will appear on the November ballot. Having volunteered for the League of Women Voters local government observation corps for several years and served as a dedicated observer of the Mountain View City Council, I have a very strong understanding of the issues facing the city.

If elected, how will you nurture and maintain a relationship with the local business community? *

If I am elected, accessibility, collaboration, and transparency will be the hallmarks of my approach to governance. I will value input from all constituents and stakeholders. The Mountain View Chamber of Commerce and the Central Business Association will serve as primary resources for me when addressing issues of interest to the business community.

If elected, what will be among your top priorities? Specify your goals. *

1. Housing affordability - implement multi-pronged solutions that address the problems comprehensively:

- a. The long-term solution is to address this problem through land use planning that prioritizes housing over office development. The root of the problem is the regional jobs/housing imbalance. Job growth increases the demand for housing, and when supply is limited, housing costs skyrocket.
- b. The medium-term solution is to promote policies that increase affordable (below market rate) housing. I support inclusionary zoning and impact fees on new development, especially office space, to increase funding for affordable housing.
- c. The short-term solution is to support anti-displacement policies that help families stay in their homes. I support relocation assistance for displaced tenants and rapid rehousing policies to prevent homelessness.

2. Traffic congestion relief and safety:

- a. Implement and enforce strong transportation demand management policies with aggressive "mode shift" goals (reducing the number of people who drive alone and increasing use of alternative modes of transportation).
- b. Invest in bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, especially safe routes to schools and trails used by commuters.

- c. Support reasonable impact fees on new development to fund improvements to transportation infrastructure.
- 3. Civic engagement and resident participation - expand opportunities for residents to stay informed and provide meaningful input in critical decision-making:**
 - a. Release council agendas earlier and encourage publication of agendas in the local newspaper (the Mountain View Voice).
 - b. Enhance noticing requirements to ensure that residents know about critical issues that will directly affect them.
 - c. Create an Open Data policy and portal, and make publicly available in machine-readable formats government data that would be valuable to the community.

What do you think are the essential components for a healthy local economy? *

The annual CEO Survey conducted by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group has consistently found since 2009 that high housing costs and severe traffic congestion are the primary challenges businesses face in the region. It is essential that businesses, schools, and governments have the opportunity to recruit and retain talented employees, but the extremely high cost of living makes it increasingly difficult to hire and keep skilled workers. Local governments must work aggressively to increase both affordable and market-rate housing stock and invest in transportation infrastructure to cut commute times. Additionally, taxes and regulations that affect businesses should be reasonable and fair, not burdensome. Significant outreach to the business community and all stakeholders is crucial.

List the top three issues the City of Mountain View faces during the next four years and your plans to address them. *

- 1) Increasing the amount and affordability of housing. I support expediting review of residential development proposals to speed up both the entitlements process and construction of housing. I support reducing parking minimums and allowing for appropriate and reasonable variances and exceptions to incentivize development. I also support unbundled parking, small units, and other "affordable by design" strategies. I would support revisiting the Companion Unit ordinance to eliminate the parkland dedication in-lieu fee entirely, since the fee would generate a negligible amount of funding for parkland but is still significant enough to discourage homeowners from constructing a second unit on their property.
- 2) Reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic safety. I strongly support investment in transit and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, especially routes to schools and trails used by commuters. I support effective parking management strategies, including residential parking permit programs and paid parking, to increase efficient use of space and reduce local congestion caused by drivers

circling around looking for parking. Longer-term, I support transit-oriented infill development. Land use and transportation policies must be integrated. We must allow for greater density near transit hubs to encourage transit use.

- 3) Investing in recruiting and retaining first-rate public employees. Key positions have been vacant for some time, and the city has lost several talented employees to other agencies. This greatly inhibits the city's ability to keep up with the hot development market and respond to the needs of constituents.

Mountain View is geographically placed to be impacted by growth- by our neighboring communities and by those who want to live and work here, what are your views in allowing Mountain View to "grow smart"? *

Mountain View must "grow smart" in order to continue to be environmentally sustainable and economically prosperous. I strongly support transit-oriented and mixed-use infill development. We must allow for greater density and height near transit centers and reduce sprawl. Job growth is not a bad thing, but there are impacts, and we must build enough housing to accommodate both current and incoming residents.

How would you help to create an environment that attracts new businesses and retains existing businesses? *

The SVLG CEO Survey indicates that key strengths for Silicon Valley in fostering a positive business environment include access to skilled workers, proximity to customers and competitors, and "entrepreneurial mindset." Local government can help maintain a positive business climate by designing cities that are desirable to live and work in. Space is absolutely essential - businesses need commercial space to operate in, and employees need housing and amenities. This means that, to attract new businesses and retain expanding businesses, the city must grow in a sustainable and smart way. The CEO Survey also identified taxes and regulations as obstacles for businesses. I believe that taxes and regulations must be fair and reasonable, and I would solicit input from all stakeholders before making a decision that affects the generally positive business climate our city enjoys.

What is your view on cities raising their minimum wage to a level that differs from the region? *

I support the minimum wage, but I agree that ideally the minimum wage would be uniform across a given region. In working toward a regional minimum wage, however, I do think it is appropriate and sometimes politically necessary for individual cities to be leaders in implementing a policy first. Other cities will follow.

Please list any key endorsements. *

Anna Eshoo, Congresswoman*

Jerry Hill, California State Senator*

Jim Beall, California State Senator*

Bob Wieckowski, California State Senator*

Paul Fong, California State Assembly (Ret.)*

Joe Simitian, Santa Clara County Supervisor*

Mike Kasperzak, Mountain View City Council*

Sanjay Dave, Mountain View Los Altos High School District Board of Trustees (Trustee-elect)*

José Gutiérrez, Jr., Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Trustees*

William Lambert, Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Trustees*

Ellen Wheeler, Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Trustees*

Juan Aranda, Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Trustees (Ret.)*

Christopher Chiang, Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Trustees (Ret.)*

Laura Casas, Foothill-De Anza Community College District Board of Trustees*

Gary Kremen, Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors*

Julia E. Miller, El Camino Healthcare District Board of Directors*

Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters

Full list available here: <https://www.ramirezforcouncil.com/endorsements>

List any elective offices held and/or major civic/community activities in which you have participated in the last five years. *

Appointed offices held:

- Mountain View Human Relations Commission (2013 - present; Chair 2015 & 2016)
- VTA 2000 Measure A Citizens Watchdog Committee/Citizens Advisory Committee (2015 - present)

Civic/Community Activities:

- Leadership Mountain View (Class of 2014)
- League of Women Voters - Los Altos/Mountain View
 - LWV Housing Committee
 - LWV Education Committee
 - LWV Local Government Observation Corps
- Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

- Mountain View Historical Association
- Carbon Free Mountain View
- Challenge Team - Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills
- Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters board member (former)

What do you believe are the most important services the Chamber of Commerce provides for Mountain View? *

As a graduate of Leadership Mountain View (Class of 2014), I can attest firsthand to the value of that program. It is not only a great networking opportunity, but also a phenomenal way to learn about local government, industry, and nonprofit services provided in Mountain View. The Art & Wine Festival is also culturally and economically important for the city. The Chamber itself serves as a crucial resource for its members and for city and community leaders seeking to interface with local businesses.

If elected, how will you seek the opinion of business on public policy matters facing our community? *

I would use the Mountain View Chamber, the Central Business Association, and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group as resources when evaluating public policy that impacts local businesses. Certain major employers may have government affairs teams I would also work with, but many small businesses do not and rely on organizations like the Chamber to represent their views.

What are your views on increasing fees or placing new fees on local businesses, a majority of which are small business operators? *

There must be a clear and justifiable nexus between new fees and taxes and the use of the revenue generated from those fees and taxes. For example, new development increases the demand for transportation infrastructure, so it would be appropriate to levy a reasonable fee (or accept improvements in lieu of a fee) to help mitigate the impact of that increased demand. The city must be able to pay for crucial services, capital improvements, and infrastructure maintenance. However, it is essential that input from the business community be solicited to ensure that new or increased fees and taxes are fair, reasonable, and equitable.

Do you believe the businesses of Mountain View are good community citizens? Please elaborate. *

Absolutely yes. Mountain View benefits greatly from a vibrant downtown and generally prosperous economy. Mountain View is a desirable city to live in because of

the health of its business climate. Furthermore, major employers frequently invest generously in the city through grants, infrastructure improvements, and services provided (including use of facilities/private space for public benefit). Businesses in Mountain View, more so even than in other cities in the Peninsula/South Bay, seek to collaborate with local government to achieve shared goals.

Housing for Silicon Valley's workers and families has become a major issue. Currently, demand for housing far outpaces the supply. What solutions do you propose? *

I strongly support infill and transit-oriented development. The city must encourage production of market rate rental and ownership housing to the greatest extent possible. I support "by-right" housing and expedited review generally. I support reduced parking minimums and appropriate variances and exceptions. I support maximizing unit count and density. Decisions made by a city council should not be arbitrary and capricious - major discretionary changes imposed at the last minute during review are unreasonable and unfair.

I support inclusionary zoning and commercial linkage fees to help create and finance affordable housing. I will also support Measure A. I would consider supporting a parcel tax to create a stable source of local funding for affordable housing. I also support market-based solutions, including relaxing restrictions on companion units and incentivizing housing that is affordable by design (reducing or eliminating parking minimums, small units, unbundled parking, etc.).

Please indicate what you think are the three areas of improvement for downtown Mountain View. *

- 1) Efficient and effective parking management. Before adding parking supply, we should maximize the effective use of existing capacity. Wayfinding, dynamic pricing, and agreements with owners of private parking facilities are key strategies. Additional bike parking must be provided throughout downtown, and transit should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.
- 2) Redesign the Moffett/Castro/Central Expressway intersection to enhance safety, improve mobility and connectivity, and potentially allow for development opportunities. This will be an integral part of the Transit Center Master Plan process. The redesign must minimize construction and economic impacts to local businesses, be fiscally prudent for the city, and increase capacity for transit center use.
- 3) Redevelop city-owned parking lots to allow for housing and retail opportunities. This is a more productive use of public land than surface parking,

and it will enhance the vitality of the downtown. Parking in-lieu funds can be used to subsidize the creation of subterranean parking spaces.

What will be the impact on our downtown businesses of the transit center construction, both within the next three years and beyond ? How can we minimize any negative impacts on downtown businesses during the construction phase?

If done well, the Transit Center redesign will considerably increase Caltrain, VTA Light Rail, bus, and shuttle capacity and improve mobility and connectivity within and around the Center as well as across the railroad tracks. One of the key questions is whether to close Castro to vehicular traffic coming from Moffett/Central and instead realign Evelyn across Castro, construct a ramp connecting Evelyn to Shoreline, and constructing a bicycle/pedestrian pathway across the tracks. The alternative is grade separation - depressing Castro/Moffett and leaving Central Expressway and the Caltrain tracks at-grade. Although the latter preserves most of the existing mobility for cars and buses, it comes at considerable cost (\$150 million or more) and many years of construction impacts. The former option is fiscally prudent and has comparatively minimal construction impacts.

Regardless of the option selected, it is imperative that mobility and connectivity across the tracks be preserved as best as possible to ensure that customers can maintain easy access to downtown businesses and commuters can get to the Transit Center. Wayfinding and outreach will help patrons understand how they can access businesses and the Transit Center during construction. Considerable outreach to the business community is essential to identify needs and appropriate mitigation measures.

El Camino Real BRT Project, do you support a dedicated bus lane on El Camino Real, why/why not? *

El Camino is congested right now, and it will only get worse. The El Camino bus routes are among the most successful in the entire VTA system - ridership is not as good as it needs to be, but it is better than any other corridor. I think a meaningful investment in transit on El Camino makes sense since there is a demonstrated market for transit there. However, there clearly is not public support for the dedicated bus lane, and there is considerable disagreement that the benefits of the project outweigh the costs and impacts. I cannot support the dedicated bus lane proposal without 1) extensive community outreach and demonstrated public support; and 2) compelling evidence that the project will significantly increase ridership without substantially negatively impacting traffic on El Camino and diverting traffic to neighborhood streets.

There are several business positions on the November ballot.

What are your views/positions on the following: Measure A *

I support Measure A, which will provide a much-needed regional source of funding for affordable housing that can be leveraged with local, state, and federal funds. There is an urgent and desperate need for affordable housing, and given the expense of land and construction, such a regional source would be invaluable.

There are several business positions on the November ballot.

What are your views/positions on the following: Measure B *

I support Measure B, which will generate significant funding for major and key transportation infrastructure and operational improvements throughout the county. Congestion is severe, and state and federal funding is extremely limited. Measure B includes a \$1 billion investment in Caltrain (\$700M for grade separation of the corridor and approximately \$300M for capacity improvements), which will be immensely valuable for North County. It also includes several billion dollars for bicycle infrastructure, expressway improvements, highway interchange improvements, and streets and roads maintenance.

There are several business positions on the November ballot.

What are your views/positions on the following: Measure V *

The jobs/housing imbalance is the root cause of the housing crisis. The long-term solution is to increase housing supply to meet demand. However, given the severity of the housing shortage and the externalized costs of the affordability crisis (homelessness, employee recruitment and retention difficulties, relocation hardship for families), I think a rent relief program is appropriate and urgently needed. Measure V provides a short-term solution to the displacement crisis. I understand that there are uncertainties and potential complications associated with Measure V. However, I think the voters will be receptive to changes that improve the program in the event problems are identified.

There are several business positions on the November ballot.

What are your views/positions on the following: Measure W *

Given the severity of the crisis in housing affordability, I will support Measure W along with Measure V. Both measures provide rent relief. However, the solution to the crisis long-term is to add enough housing to meet demand, and that is what I intend to focus on should I have the good fortune to be elected.

If you were selected, would you accept a formal Chamber endorsement? *

YES