

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
City Council Candidate Questionnaire
Due by August 15 to _____

Candidate Information

Name: Lucas Ramirez

Office being sought: Mountain View City Council

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Please send a high resolution JPEG photo of yourself to _____ at _____ Please do not embed the photo into the email as our layout person can not copy it with the resolution needed for publication.

In answering these questions, please remember that most of our endorsement decision is based upon a combination of your environmental accomplishments and environmental aspirations.

Please provide explanations with your answer and please include the original question with your response. Your response must be returned in the text of an e-mail, and as an attached MSWord file. The file must include your name in it.

General Questions:

1. We consider your past record as the best indicator of your future action for the environment. What have you done to protect natural resources and the environment?

I have been active in the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) and in Carbon Free Mountain View (CFMV), organizations that advocate for environmentally sustainable policies. In MVCSP, I've supported transit-oriented, green certified infill development proposals. I've also advocated for land use planning that promotes non-SOV modes of transportation and jobs/housing balance - both of which are important long-term strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CFMV has been one of the earliest and most important local champions for Community Choice Energy (CCE) in Santa Clara County. CFMV most recently successfully advocated for the Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority (SVCEA) to offer 100% carbon neutral electricity and for Mountain View to take the more aggressive 100% renewable electricity option from SVCEA. CFMV also provides input into Mountain View's greenhouse gas reduction goals and strategies, which are enumerated in the Climate Protection Roadmap (community-generated GhG emissions) and in the Municipal Operations Climate Action Plan (city-generated GhG emissions). The workplan for implementation of these strategies is called the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP). I have advocated strongly for inclusion of aggressive measures to reduce GhG emissions from transportation, including minimum parking requirement reductions and active transportation infrastructure improvements, in the ESAP.

I also serve on the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Citizens Advisory Committee (VTA CAC). In that capacity, I advocated for the proposed sales tax measure, which will appear on the November ballot, to fund projects that have the greatest positive environmental impact. Investment in transit and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure will help us achieve regional greenhouse gas reduction targets.

I actively campaigned for the June 2014 Measure AA, the \$300M bond approved to restore and conserve significant open space in the Midpeninsula region. I also supported the June 2016 Measure AA parcel tax to fund wetland restoration.

Add: In 2015 I served as a member of the Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters' Board, working on fundraising efforts, the annual Environmental Awards, and researching ballot issues for the organization.

2. What do you regard as the major environmental and conservation issues facing your city and the Bay Area as a whole?

Mountain View has two primary environmental challenges. The first is balancing key goals and objectives as the city revises the North Bayshore precise plan. The precise plan allows for potentially a significant amount of housing in the "Gateway" and "Core" character areas surrounding Shoreline Blvd. as a strategy to mitigate several negative impacts of the extraordinary job growth envisioned for the area. The 'housing alternative' studied in the General Plan EIR was identified as environmentally superior to a no-housing option because of significant transportation benefits. The council has also made housing a priority to address the crisis in housing affordability caused by the jobs/housing imbalance. However, it is crucial that these transportation and housing goals not be achieved at the expense of environmentally sensitive areas in North Bayshore. The city must also protect habitat and endangered wildlife, restore wetlands, and conserve open space. Housing will increase the demand for recreational facilities and access to open space, and implementation of the revised precise plan must account for and mitigate these impacts.

The second challenge is climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. CCE is an important and major step in reducing GhGs, and its benefits will prove increasingly significant as we move away from fossil fuels and toward electric vehicles and appliances. In the interim, however, most vehicles will continue to operate on fossil fuels; transportation accounts for nearly 60% of communitywide greenhouse gas emissions. The transition to electric vehicles will be slow without significant public subsidies. Other aggressive strategies to reduce GhG emissions from transportation are imperative. This will include smart land use policy that complements transit and incentivizes non-SOV travel, robust bike/pedestrian infrastructure, parking minimum reductions, unbundled parking, and other transportation demand management policies.

Regionally, sprawl and bay restoration remain a huge challenges. 2016's Measure AA funding will help address the latter, including the significant problem of sea level rise. Land use authorities, supported by transit agencies, will need to work together to plan for and implement smarter land use policy that will dramatically improve our housing and transportation crises in the long run and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

3. What are the principal areas of the environment that you will work on if elected? How will you deal with them?

I will focus principally (but not exclusively) on land use and transportation issues, which have significant implications for the environment. I will work to aggressively curtail greenhouse gas emissions through smart land use policy by supporting transit-oriented, mixed-use infill development instead of environmentally hazardous sprawl. I will support strong transportation demand management strategies to incentivize active transportation and transit use, and I will implement policies that reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. I support progressive parking strategies, which will help achieve these goals -- unbundled parking, shared parking in mixed-use developments, and reduced parking minimums (or even zero parking if appropriate and near transit).

4. Are you a Sierra Club member? Yes.
5. Political party affiliation (optional) Democrat

Issue Questions:

Climate Change

5. Would you advocate performance improvements to your city's climate change plan and what would those changes be?

Yes - we are significantly behind in meeting our greenhouse gas reduction milestones, and, in fact, the last GhG inventory taken revealed that our greenhouse gas emissions have increased. The council approved an increase in frequency of GhG inventory studies to one every two years, but I would support annual studies to ensure that we are meeting our goals. Enrollment in the CCE will help get the city on track.

6. What else should your city do to reduce greenhouse gas generation?

"Smart growth" policies that decrease dependence on cars and increase use of alternative modes of transportation are long-term strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation accounts for nearly 60% of all community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, according to an inventory prepared for the Mountain View Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program. Smart land use decisions and transportation demand management strategies for those commuting into our city are key local remedies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Sea Level Rise

7. Scientific analysis overwhelmingly concludes that sea levels are already rising and that San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties are seriously threatened in this century. Please give us your thoughts as to the near term tasks that you think should be undertaken by your city and the Bay Area at large?

Our city must prepare for the inevitability of sea level rise, which in Mountain View will

affect North Bayshore most directly. I support flood protection projects and especially wetlands restoration. As North Bayshore redevelops, we must incorporate resilience into future building and infrastructure design to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise.

If your city adjoins the Pacific Ocean or San Francisco Bay will you consider changing your city's General Plan in low-lying areas to reflect the latest scientific projections?

Yes, I think this is an appropriate consideration.

Community Choice Aggregation

8. Given the successful establishment of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Joint-Powers-Authorities (JPAs) in both San Mateo County and Santa Clara County last year, the Sierra Club believes we now need to concentrate on establishing locally generated green energy (distributed generation) free from the transmission losses attendant to remote desert/arid facilities. Please give us your thoughts as to possible implementation(s) within – or nearby – your governmental authority.

The Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority would be an appropriate venue for consideration of this idea. Some percentage of revenue generated by SVCEA is intended to be reinvested in the community. The local generation of green energy - likely solar - would be an appropriate program funded by this reinvested revenue.

Environmental Justice

9. We support the right to a clean and healthful environment for all people, we support the end to all pollution, and we support approaching all decisions based on the Precautionary Principle - When an activity potentially threatens human health or the environment, the proponent of the activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof as to the harmlessness of the activity. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. What can be done to better ensure that low-income residents in your area are not unfairly burdened by pollution, have improved access to open space and increased voice in decision-making in your community?

These are several procedural improvements that could be made to ensure timely access to information and ample opportunity for public input. For example, The City of Palo Alto releases Council agenda packets 11 days prior to meetings. This allows the public to review materials well in advance of the meeting. Mountain View currently releases Council agenda packets typically the Thursday or Friday prior to meeting (4 or 5 days in advance of the meeting). I support earlier release of Mountain View's Council agenda packets, with the primary objective of encouraging the local newspaper to print agendas prior to Council meetings for greater public access and review.

Development proposals that require a legislative act to proceed (like a General Plan Amendment) go through a "gatekeeper" process - the Council must vote to allow the proposal to move forward. I am generally skeptical about gatekeepers, especially if they proceed ahead of a precise plan, because they often do not conform to the community's

vision established in the General Plan or pertinent precise plan. However, at the very least, residents should be notified when a proposal that could affect them goes before Council for gatekeeper consideration. Right now, no notification is required, even if a significant number of residents would be displaced if redevelopment were to occur.

Not every interested resident has the availability to attend City Council meetings. Additional and enhanced opportunities to provide input can be valuable both to the public and to government. The city should facilitate opportunities for online public comment for all public bodies, including City Council and all advisory commissions, committees, and boards. Open City Hall is a well-intentioned but underutilized tool for soliciting public input. It has the capacity to be an important tool to capture ideas and allow residents to support (or challenge) suggestions made by their neighbors. I am particularly interested in expanding the use of Open City Hall for the City Council goal setting session. The Council sets two-year goals and selects specific projects to advance those goals. Open City Hall can make it easier for residents to participate meaningfully in the goal setting process.

Mountain View is currently considering a 'human rights city' initiative that will make equity a primary consideration in governmental decision-making. The proposal is to adopt a framework by which policy would be evaluated through a human rights lens. This would call attention to proposals going before the council that, for instance, would have substantial impacts on low-income communities in the city.

Sustainable Land Use

10. What are your views about the creation of downtown and transit hub specific plans that zone for building heights sufficient to generate significant economic value that will benefit your entire community and provide significant affordable housing? What types of development conditions (for example: Residential Parking Permit Programs [RPPP] to reduce redundant parking and Transportation Demand Management programs [TDM] to reduce automobile congestion) would you support to reduce land waste, unit cost and auto dependency?

I strongly support allowing for greater density and building heights in downtown and in areas well-served by transit. I also support inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, and other strategies that help increase affordable housing stock, especially in transit-oriented development.

The City Council will be making major decisions regarding the Downtown Transit Center. Capital improvements must improve safety, circulation, and capacity, but should be financially pragmatic and achievable in time for increased train frequency and ensuing impacts. I support developing the Caltrain parking lot (replacing parking appropriately) to help pay for these improvements.

I strongly support the city's efforts to create and implement the Residential Parking Permit Program. This will provide relief to parking-impacted areas where employees and commuters take advantage of free neighborhood parking near transit centers or their

place of employment. The program must be flexible so any impacted area can take advantage of it, and it must be enforced. New development may serve as a source of funding for enforcement - it would be more cost effective for developers to pay for parking permit enforcement than to provide extra onsite parking.

I support unbundled parking, which decouples the cost of a parking space from the cost of housing, in areas well served by transit. Housing costs are lower because there is less demand for housing with no assigned parking spaces. A resident who chooses not to own a car should not be required to pay for a parking space. Conversely, a tenant who requires additional parking spaces would be free to rent them. To prevent cheating, unbundled parking must be implemented in areas protected by the Residential Parking Permit Program or in areas with no free publicly-accessible neighborhood parking.

Land use and transportation policy must be integrated. Transit is most successful when serving “walkable” areas with a mix of land uses (residential and commercial) and sufficient density. Sprawl, separated land uses, and low density reduce the effectiveness of transit. New development should adhere to “smart growth” principles to encourage use of transit and alternative modes of transportation.

Transportation

11. What types of transportation projects would you support to provide people with an alternative to the private auto?

A safe and convenient bicycle/pedestrian network is essential. Walking and bicycling can offer healthy and enjoyable transportation options for many people of all ages - if we provide safe infrastructure. Safe infrastructure allows children to walk or bike to school instead of having their parents drive them. Bike/ped infrastructure also helps address the first- and last-mile challenge (getting to and from transit centers and destination points).

I support extending the bicycle/pedestrian tunnel under the San Antonio Caltrain station to the former Mayfield Mall site, providing more convenient access to the station for residents of the Monta Loma neighborhood and the employees in the vicinity.

Stevens Creek Trail and Permanente Creek Trail are important not only for recreational purposes but also as transportation infrastructure. Both trails allow easy and safe commutes to the jobs-rich North Bayshore area. I support the expansion of both trails. The major redevelopment that will occur in North Bayshore over the next several years may serve as a key source of funding for trail expansion, along with other bike/ped infrastructure improvements.

I strongly support evaluating the feasibility of a bicycle/pedestrian trail along the Caltrain corridor. This would greatly supplement the existing trail network with a much-needed East-West connection. It is crucial that ongoing design work for Caltrain corridor capital improvements (especially grade separations) allow for the possibility of a bicycle/pedestrian trail.

Caltrain is extremely important to the economic vitality of the region. I strongly support the Caltrain modernization program and capital improvements that will dramatically improve service and the fiscal health of Caltrain. Electrification, grade separation, and platform extensions will improve safety, capacity, frequency, and environmental sustainability of Caltrain.

I believe that significant investment in El Camino Real transit is warranted. In December 2014, the City Council approved the El Camino Real Precise Plan, which calls for transforming the area into a walkable, mixed-use, higher-density corridor with significantly more housing. Lines 22 and 522, which serve El Camino, represent approximately 20% of total VTA bus boardings. There is a clear market for transit service on El Camino Real, and it makes sense to invest where a market already exists, rather than invest speculatively. I support capital improvements that increase the speed and reliability of buses, including signal priority, all-door boarding with proof of payment systems, and level boarding. I also support increasing bus frequency. Transit must be time-competitive with private vehicle use in order to attract ridership and improve farebox recovery.

Open Space & Urban Recreation – Access to Nature

12. How will you ensure that residents in your city will have access to safe and enjoyable parks and open space?

I support providing a diverse mix of parks and open space: dog parks, passive parks, community and demonstration gardens, playgrounds, linear parks and trails. Appropriate locations for each of these types of parks and open spaces would best be identified with substantial public input.

I strongly support requiring appropriate public benefits, including parkland and open space access, in development proposals that require discretionary action on the part of the council. The Parkland Dedication ordinance requires developers to set aside onsite parkland in eligible projects or pay an in-lieu fee to fund parkland acquisition and improvement. Additionally, public benefit requirements in eligible projects can increase parks and open space. I strongly support opportunities like these to increase the number of parks, especially in areas with insufficient open space. Even pocket parks improve the quality of life.

Water Conservation & Recycling, Rivers & Creeks

13. California will continue to face increasing droughts. The political input of individual cities to local and regional agencies is important. Do you support local projects for recycled water? Subsidized Gray water programs? The Sacramento Delta Twin-Tunnel “Water Fix”? Additional large-scale dam projects such as the Sites Reservoir?

Mountain View benefits from a few recycled water programs. Shoreline Park is irrigated by recycled water from Palo Alto's Regional Water Quality Treatment Plant. Mountain View also has purple pipe infrastructure in some areas. I support expanding recycled water

infrastructure throughout the city in a fiscally prudent manner. I believe that conservation should be the primary strategy to address the impacts of the drought, and I do not think that large-scale dam projects are necessary.

What other actions do you support to make your city a water smart city?

I support reasonable citywide drought restrictions, including limits on irrigation, and subsidies to incentivize lawn conversions to drought-resistant landscaping.

14. What is your position on stream setback requirements for development? Do you believe current requirements in your city are too strict, too lax, or just right?

My understanding is that Mountain View has adopted the Santa Clara County Streamside Guidelines and Standards. In the four years I've closely observed the council, this has not proven to be problematic or controversial; I am not aware of any complaints that the stream setback requirements are either too strict or too lax.

Wildlife

15. Integrating nature and habitat into the City is important to the Sierra Club. Would you support programs to protect open space and parks in the City, plant more oaks and other native trees, protect stream corridors and require that buildings incorporate measures to protect birds from collision with glass?

Yes - I support strategies that preserve and enhance open space and wildlife habitat in the city, including transfer of development rights away from environmentally sensitive areas and to core areas served by transit. I would also support measures to protect birds from collisions with glass.

I strongly support the city's efforts to expand tree canopy through aggressive tree replacement ratios in redevelopment, shade goals in parking lots, and outreach efforts to increase the number of trees on private property. The emphasis should be on native tree species.

16. Would you support development of a Bird Safe Buildings ordinance?

Yes - I recently had the good fortune to attend the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society bird survey on the Living Roof of Facebook's Frank Gehry building. We should encourage similar ecologically sensitive, bird-friendly building designs in Mountain View.

Zero Waste

17. Do you believe that recycling can be improved in your city and, if yes, how, in your opinion, might that be achieved?

The city recently implemented a pilot program for food scraps in the Old Mountain View neighborhood. The purpose of the pilot was to test the weekly collection of food scraps and

food-soiled paper. This program, and weekly collection of recycling, may prove to be valuable means by which waste can be reduced.

North Bayshore

18. North Bayshore, with its sensitive habitat areas, presents unique challenges as we move forward to include new housing and jobs. What specific strategies do you support to assure the General Plan Vision "The North Bayshore Change Area (is).....a model of innovative and sustainable development that protects and stewards biological habitat and open space"?

Shoreline Park is one of our city's treasures, providing wonderful recreational opportunities and public access to nature. However, preserving and expanding sensitive habitat areas is a top priority. I support the development of a comprehensive recreational needs and habitat preservation master plan, which will be especially important as housing is built in North Bayshore and potentially thousands of new residents move to the area. The master plan will ensure that the recreational needs of new residents are met without degrading habitat or disrupting wildlife.

The allowance for transfer of development rights from the "Edge" character areas, which generally are adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas, is key to successfully protecting habitat and expanding open space while still achieving the vision for commercial vitality for the area. In redevelopment, environmentally friendly building standards and robust TDM measures will advance the goal of transforming North Bayshore into a model for innovation and sustainability.

Housing

19. What strategies would you focus on to increase the quantity of housing and affordability of housing in Mountain View?

I support the construction of a variety of housing types to meet the needs of all residents at all income levels: young professionals, families, seniors, disabled individuals, veterans. Some of these needs will be met with new or innovative housing types. I support micro-housing, especially near transit, and co-housing opportunities. The key point is to provide a variety of options to meet differing housing needs.

Companion units and "missing middle housing" can help increase the supply and diversity of housing in our city. I support the ongoing Companion Unit Regulations Update to make it easier for residents to build second units (also known as "granny units" or "in-law units") on their properties. I also support updating the Zoning Ordinance to encourage the development of "missing middle housing" - duplexes, triplexes, bungalow courts, and other lower-density multi-family housing types.

I strongly support inclusionary zoning - requiring housing developers to include affordable housing in new construction of market rate housing. In 1999, the City Council adopted an ordinance requiring that 10% of the total number of units in eligible residential developments be affordable. Currently, however, a 2009 appellate court decision (commonly called the "Palmer Decision") prohibits inclusionary requirements on rental housing development, and the Mountain View ordinance cannot be enforced. If and when the Palmer Decision is "fixed" to allow municipalities to enforce inclusionary

requirements on rental housing developments (for example, if Assembly Bill 2502 passes), I will support reasonable and financially viable onsite affordable housing requirements on market rate development proposals.

Campaign Readiness –

Tell us about your campaign readiness, including funding, volunteers, and organization. Please bring examples of your prior and current campaign literature.

1. Please list your endorsements. If they are on your website – please just insert your URL. <https://www.ramirezforcouncil.com/endorsements>
2. Please include below an exact copy of your ballot statement as submitted at filing. Attached.

As a Mountain View native, I have been fortunate to enjoy everything that makes our city an extraordinary place to live: its history, diversity, and innovation. We are blessed with a vibrant downtown, wonderful parks, safe neighborhoods, and a thriving economy.

However, Mountain View faces several challenges that erode the opportunity for both longtime residents and those new to our community to experience the city the way I have. The crisis in housing affordability, displacement, and severe traffic congestion threaten our city's long-term health.

For our community to remain strong, seniors with fixed incomes must have the opportunity to age in place. Young professionals must have the opportunity to raise their families here. Residents and commuters alike cannot afford to waste time stuck in

gridlock. Schools, City Hall, and businesses must be able to attract and retain talented employees.

As the Human Relations Commission chair, a VTA Citizens Watchdog Committee member, and a longtime City Council observer on behalf of the League of Women Voters, I have a deep understanding of local government and the issues facing our city. I will bring together the community, businesses, and government to forge solutions. I humbly ask for your vote. www.ramirezforcouncil.com