

**Candidate Name: Diane Howard**

1. Redwood City has plans to grow significantly over the next few years, and the way in which that growth is directed will shape our city for years to come. The 2010 Redwood City General Plan envisions a revitalized downtown area with housing located near our existing transit hubs and entertainment and retail venues, while conserving our open space areas and protecting the community's quality of life.

Do you agree with our community's vision for building housing in the urban core and not in designated open space areas? If not, how would you describe where you see our city's growth progressing?

I feel we should build strategically where we can invest and support transportation/mobility options, and where there is easy walkable access to services and goods. When I was on the Council, we developed the Downtown Precise Plan, which was a balance of housing, retail and entertainment, and addressed the community concerns, e.g. a stable water and energy supply, transportation mobility, density, green space and other quality of life issues. This plan has been implemented and projects are underway that will yield about 2000 additional housing units upon completion. We have also planned through a thorough public process to incorporate housing along our transportation corridors, including El Camino Real, which is part of the Grand Boulevard Initiative.

2. According to Redwood City's General Plan EIR, key traffic corridors, including Highway 101, Woodside Road and Whipple Avenue, are already at or near capacity and do not have excess capacity to absorb a significant influx of new cars from development on the salt ponds. Recent plans for improving traffic flow through the Highway 101/Woodside Road interchange did not incorporate any development on the salt ponds. If a development is allowed, the limited traffic relief for current commuters and Seaport industries from these improvements could be short-lived, or traffic through the interchange could end up worse than current conditions.

If elected, would you approve a development project on the salt ponds that significantly increases traffic impacts on current Redwood City commuters and nearby industries? Please explain your answer.

I support responsible growth in our community as illustrated in our Downtown Precise Plan and our updated General Plan. With any new large project, an EIR would be done to measure the impacts that traffic, water, air quality, etc., would have on our community. I would have serious concerns and reservations about any development project that significantly increases traffic impacts on current Redwood City commuters and nearby industries. Large developments would have to increase transportation alternatives for our community.

3. Sustainability and protection of our land, air and water are becoming increasingly important. By concentrating growth in the core of our city, we conserve energy, reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and maintain our open spaces for the benefit of wildlife, the enjoyment of hikers and other recreational users, and for restoration of Bay tidal marsh. Scientific studies have shown that marshlands can provide valuable protection for residents and businesses from flooding and sea level rise, and provide effective mitigation for global warming by absorbing carbon from the atmosphere.

Moving forward, what are your views on the best way to protect Redwood City's natural resources and mitigate for climate change?

Now with the General Plan and Downtown Precise Plan in place, it is time to do Adaptation Planning. All developments, whether within or outside the urban core, are being asked to consider climate change, as well as other environmental impacts, guidelines and checkpoints. I believe next steps should be for the City to provide additional language to address Adaptation Planning. This may also be an excellent time to create implementation strategies for the Natural Resource section of our General Plan.

I also believe we must address these issues on a regional level with our neighboring Bayfront communities, as well as locally. An example of this has already begun with the excellent work being done on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. There is an excellent article in the Daily News dated 2/16/13. It is written by Chris Palmer and is titled, Report recommends Innovative Flood Protection along the Bay. This is the type of partnership and innovative planning we must continue to do.

4. In 2009, the City Council voted to accept the initial Saltworks development application and begin a lengthy environmental review process even though the project had no clear plan in place for supplying water for the projected residents. Water supply options the developer proposed included a complicated Kern County agricultural water transfer with an expiration date. A desalination plant located on the Redwood Shores Peninsula also surfaced as a potential option.

In the future, should the City Council accept and review a project application for a development that has no clear plan in place for water, or a water supply plan that could increase future costs to Redwood City ratepayers? Please explain your answer.

I would like to study the current process being used by the City for review of applications for large projects. I believe there is value in the City reviewing the application. However, to move forward, maybe we should require the applicant to demonstrate a clear plan for a long-term source of water, which would not increase the future costs to Redwood City ratepayers. Water has already been identified as a major issue of concern.

5. According to the Pacific Institute, San Mateo County already has more property at risk of inundation from sea level rise (estimated to be worth \$24 billion) than any other county in California, and it will cost taxpayers significant amounts of money in coming years just to

protect already developed infrastructure. To address the regional adverse impacts of climate change, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) recommends that:

*“...undeveloped areas that are both vulnerable to future flooding and currently sustain significant habitats or species, or possess conditions that make the areas especially suitable for ecosystem enhancement, should be given special consideration for preservation and habitat enhancement and should be encouraged to be used for those purposes.” (Bay Plan Climate Change Policy #4)*

Cargill's Redwood City salt ponds are a good example of an undeveloped area (no existing infrastructure) vulnerable to future flooding, and requiring construction of new levees for flood protection. In the 1999 report, *Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals*, regional scientists determined that these salt ponds are especially suitable for ecosystem enhancement, where managed ponds and restored tidal marsh could increase valuable wetlands for waterfowl and expanded habitat for nearby endangered species.

Do you agree with BCDC's policy discouraging building in undeveloped areas vulnerable to future flooding and suitable for ecosystem enhancement? Please explain why or why not.

The reality is that we must address the sea level rise that is inevitable. The article that I referenced above by Chris Palmer cites advances in thinking about how to prepare for sea level rise, e.g. building horizontal levees. However, there needs to be caution when we are addressing private property and owner's rights. Before making any decision affecting the private property owner, we must consider the implications, both legal and financial, of making any decision. I do not believe that BCDC policy addresses private property and probably would not be held financially responsible for any legal actions. This is certainly not an easy question to answer.

6. All of the Redwood City Cargill salt ponds are designated as “Open Space” in the General Plan and are zoned “Tidal Plain”. In addition to salt making, parks, public recreation and restoration to tidal marsh are all permitted uses. Commercial/residential development is currently not allowed.

If you were elected to the City Council, would you approve a change in the City's current General Plan and zoning to allow development on the salt ponds? Please explain your answer.

In the General Plan, the Cargill salt ponds have two designations, Open Space and Urban Reserve. The General Plan defines Urban Reserve as land to be preserved for future use to expand the limits of our area of Redwood City. This is based on the 1990 General Plan and has been carried forward to our recently updated Plan. If I am elected, part of my role as a City Councilmember would be to make sure that our General Plan stays current, so at times, in the public interest it would be amended. Our Plan has just been updated, and the City is now focusing on Downtown development and the Grand Boulevard Initiative to provide additional housing in our community.

Dear Members of Redwood City United,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address these topics you have given me. I have given these questions a great deal of thought and consideration before I answered them. I am always open to conversations with you about any of these questions, or others that may concern you about our community. Please, feel free to contact me on my cell: #650-208-4774 or by email at [diane@dianehoward.org](mailto:diane@dianehoward.org). Thank you again for this opportunity.

Sincerely,  
Diane Howard

Thank you again!

Redwood City Neighbors United  
Council Election Subcommittee

Alice Kaufman  
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