

Access4Bikes Votes

Gabe Paulson Candidate Questionnaire

Introduction and Understanding:

- 1) **How familiar are you with Access4Bikes' mission and initiatives to maintain and expand mountain bike trail access in Marin County?** I know and agree with the core mission to acquire, promote and sustain access to public trails.
- 2) **What are your general thoughts on outdoor recreational activities like mountain biking? Do you support mountain biking as a way to promote community engagement and a healthy lifestyle?** I am very supportive of not only mountain biking but road biking, walking and other alternatives to driving. I have voted on the SMART board to increase funding for key pathway projects. I have also worked with the Marin County Bicycle Coalition and Wilderness Trail Bikes (WTB.com). I have ridden with constituents as a board member. I personally bike for my commute (weather pending), approximately 40 miles per week.

Support for inclusive access

- 3) **Access4Bikes is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, aiming to make trails accessible to all. How do you plan to ensure that your policies and decisions align with this commitment?**

I believe racial and economic equity are fundamental to social justice and democracy. The United States in general and Marin County in particular are suffering from a shrinking middle class and new patterns of economically and ideologically driven segregation. I also believe the key areas to address this issue are public safety (especially policing), housing, education/employment, eldercare and messaging/communication.

Examples of my work:

- a) **Policing:** equity begins with fairness in law, policing and use of force. After the tragedy of George Floyd, many Marin constituents were unsure about local police practices and demanded de-funding police. As a Larkspur Councilmember, I answered all emails and reviewed 250,000 calls logged for the Central Marin Police with the Chief of Police. Among the 1000 calls using the use of force, I did not see a patten of racism but strongly advocated to RIPA (Racial and Identity Profiling Act, AB 953) to ensure no incidents emerged.
- b) **Housing** – there is little opportunity for diversity or inclusion without available housing. I spent most of my time as Larkspur Mayor working to increase the production of affordable and locally suitable housing on the Housing Element Steering Committee and negotiating better rental protections. These efforts resulted in a strengthening of state law (Ordinance 1067) in Larkspur and a lowered rental increase cap (Measure D on the March 2024 ballot). I have been promoting the use of a rental registry in Larkspur which would leverage County resource to ensure we can better measure rent-burdening and inclusionary housing.
- c) **Education/employment** – higher incomes are key to promoting people of color, women and any marginalized group. Unfortunately, the many residents losing a foothold in Marin have

low paying service jobs. As the founding member of the Marin Wildfire Protection Agency, I voted for and advocated expansion of the Fire Foundry which combines training and higher paying forestry and fire prevention work. I seek the Supervisor position to help build a better worker pipeline for two critically needed job categories: electricians and nurse practitioners. The environmental needs of electrification and needs of our senior citizen care provide a unique opening for upward mobility that I intend to actively develop.

- d) **Eldercare** – the number of Latino senior citizens will increase five-fold in the next decade. Most have little equity and face language and discriminatory barriers. The County only spends 2% of the HHS budget on aging and has no dedicated leadership. I intend to increase resource allocation and work with other Supervisors to ensure equity in healthcare is prioritized.
- e) **Communication** – when Larkspur and many jurisdictions experienced racist and anti-Semitic zoom public comments at the end of 2023, I wrote a statement of denunciation and reached out to Marc Levine (West Coast Director of the Anti-Defamation League) to meet with mayors and councilmembers. I have also asked for the pride flag to be flown over City Hall each year in June and continue to look for opportunities like Mayor office hours and multi-language options to increase inclusion.

Each of the above critical areas need to be measured to ensure success: RIPA Board Reports (AB 953), California Housing and Community Development indices of affordability and data from County/Local Rental Registry, Marin Economic Forum Job reports on equity and inclusion, HHS reports on service uses and levels by demographic and input from consultants and polling on DEI results.

- 4) **Are you open to supporting initiatives that promote inclusivity and diverse representation in outdoor recreational activities, including mountain biking?** Yes. I am a proud supporter of the equity policies in Measure A which I helped write (free park access), the Fire Foundry at the Marin Wildfire Prevention Agency and supporting including like Pride Week as Larkspur Mayor.

Collaboration with Stakeholders:

- 5) **Access4Bikes emphasizes collaboration with different trail user groups to share the trails. How would you facilitate constructive dialogue and cooperation among various stakeholders to achieve this goal? As an elected official, would you work with us to bring trail user interests that are in conflict together to find ways to equitably share the trails amongst all users?**

I am by nature a mediator. The 10 articles below are my public record of bringing renters and landlords together. I bring people together by insisting on respectful dialogue, getting a common understanding of facts and data and weighing values against the public good.

My public record of bringing people together in housing: I am the only candidate in this race who passed rent control (as Mayor of Larkspur) and actively promotes rental protections on the ballot (Larkspur Measure D). My record of housing advocacy has been in the Marin IJ 10 times:

- [Marin IJ September 7, 2023](#): My work with the Larkspur Council and stakeholders to introduce a moderate revision to California's existing rent control. "It's been such a challenge to keep

landlords in business and renters housed. But I think we, as policy makers, we have to do that, we have to have this conversation.”

- [Marin IJ July 24, 2023](#): Closing public hearing and moving rental legislation to first reading.
- [Marin IJ May 24, 2023](#): Proposing reducing CA state rental increase cap from 10% to 7% as a "shock absorbers" to inflationary spikes
- [Marin IJ May 9, 2023](#) Working to build some consensus without which the rent stabilization ordinance would not be stable stable
- [Marin IJ March 27, 2023](#) More input from landlords and renters
- [Marin IJ October 10, 2022](#) More input from landlords and renters
- [Marin IJ September 11, 2022](#) More input from landlords and renters
- [Marin IJ August 4, 2022](#) Starting the rent control conversation
- [Marin IJ November 2, 2020](#) Ending the discussions on mobile home rent control in Larkspur
- [Marin IJ July 17, 2020](#) Deliberating mobile home rent control during covid

- 6) **Are you willing to actively participate in community events, such as trail work days and group rides, to better understand the needs of mountain bikers and ensure their interests are considered?** I am and I have. I have ridden with constituents, participated in Marin Bicycle Coalition events. More broadly, as Mayor of Larkspur I held 40 office hours. Without appointment, anyone could visit me Tuesdays 2:30PM at City Hall.

Sustainability and Trail Maintenance:

- 7) **Maintaining and expanding mountain bike trail access is a key focus of our organization. How do you propose to allocate resources and work with volunteers to ensure the sustainability and proper upkeep of our public trail system?** I am interested in looking at the federal, state and private grants pursued by Access4Bike, Marin Bicycle Coalition, WTB etc. Re-drafting Measure A as needed is an important policy approach as open space will need to be reconsidered as aging, housing and technology changes continue.
- 8) **What strategies do you have in mind to balance the preservation of natural habitats with the increased need and usage of trails for recreational purposes?** Using a model of Environmentally Sound Practices. Key stakeholders like Marin Conservation, Audubon, FERN and other environmental groups as well as hiking organization are the key stakeholders to ensure general interest and mutual understanding are prioritized.

Public Engagement and Education:

- 9) **Access4Bikes encourages responsible trail usage. How would you support educational initiatives that promote trail etiquette and safe riding practices to reduce conflicts and ensure public safety?** Working with organized groups like Access4Bike, Marin Bicycle Coalition, WTB etc. is an effective way to engage many trail users. As I have learned from SMART, signage is important. Reviewing the County Communication platform is one of my priorities which could support broadcasting and “narrowcasting” messages.

- 10) **Do you have any ideas for innovative ways to engage the community in discussions about trail access, while also addressing concerns from various user groups?** Yes. As mayor I have led many workshops and public hearings. Much of the key is advertising and reviewing the County Communication platform is one of my priorities.

Legislation and Advocacy:

- 11) **Are you willing to advocate for the development and revision of local ordinances that support responsible mountain biking while ensuring the protection of natural resources?** Yes. As a County Supervisor, the coordination of unincorporated policy with the 11 incorporated cities and towns is important. The County often leads and set the standard and benefits from Measure A funding.
- 12) **How would you collaborate with Access4Bikes and similar organizations to lobby for state and federal funding to support trail development and maintenance?** I would work with Access4Bikes to build the case for any trail extension or maintenance project based on its value to the greatest value to the public. I am currently involved in this effort on the SMART board which tracks about 50,000 “walks” per month. One key is to select high value projects based on project use and funding requirements.

Personal Connection to Mountain Biking:

- 13) **Do you have any personal experience with mountain biking or outdoor recreational activities that influence your perspective on trail access and conservation?**
I have been mountain biking in Marin for almost 15 years. I lived on Tennessee Valley and made biking and camping a regular practice. I also have trained actively for 2 Escape From Alcatraz Triathlons and the Marin Metric Century. Also, as a board member of SMART working on pathways and general transportation issues, I enjoy the value of bike alternatives.
- 14) **How would your personal experience contribute to your ability to support and advance the goals of Access4Bikes?** I believe Access4Bikes advocacy requires a supervisor with broad agency experience who can forward your concerns form multiple points on view: transporation, housing, public safety and health and human services. I am the only candidate with background in all those areas having served on SMART, Housing Element, Rent Control, MWPA/Flood Zone 9 and in healthcare settings.

Closing Remarks:

- 15) **Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding your commitment to promoting inclusive access to trails and supporting the mission of Access4Bikes?**
Enjoying Marin’s unique and amazing open space through biking adds great value to our community. By ensuring that habitats and hikers concerns are addressed, the sustainability of this form of recreation is ensured.