

BCT Candidate Questionnaire

Ben Bartlett

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1. *What role do you see the arts playing in Berkeley's future? What specific policies or directives should the City Council champion to make this happen?*

Arts are central to my life. As a child, I used to perform black panther passion plays in people's park. Since then, I have consistently worked and played in artistic spaces.

I see the arts taking a more prominent and public role. Even in places you might not expect. For example, on the transportation commission I pushed to fund kids painting murals on the street at cross walks.

The 1% for art is also a bellweather. This community benefit which I voted for at the Planning commission will result in much more public art.

Here in South Berkeley, I want to take public art to the next level. The Byron Rumford sculpture is a great beginning. I envision the Adeline Corridor and Sacramento filled with statues, sculptures, and murals.

I also am pushing for the creation of a long parkway down Adeline replete with an amphitheater for public performance.

And I am personally working with my neighbors and some local businesses to create a South Berkeley Blues Festival on Alcatraz.

2. *Recently, Berkeley citizens came together and worked with the City Council to win our first increase in funding to the Civic Arts Grant Program in 14 years. Knowing how important the arts are as an economic driver and community building block, what concrete ideas do you have to create a sustainable and progressive income stream to support our growing, vibrant, and diverse arts ecosystem in the years to come?*

The key is use Community Benefits to channel private wealth for public good. For example, right now, the Friends of Adeline and the neighbors of the 2906 Adeline development are working to establish a community benefits matrix for all new luxury developments. This matrix is essentially a checklist, which includes affordable units, labor agreements, sustainability, support for nonprofits, including the arts.

3. *Affordable housing is clearly a big issue across the whole Bay Area. Working artists increasingly struggle to find a place to live in our competitive rent market. Please explain how you would address this problem.*

Working artists, seniors, students and the disabled often live in housing that is 'naturally affordable'. In other words, these are low rate, below market, yet unsubsidized apartment buildings. One way to prevent the displacement of these people and at the same time rapidly, and cheaply create affordable housing is to buy these buildings with

the tenants still in them, and remove them from the market. I call it the “Home Safe Housing” plan and it’s the cornerstone of my campaign.

4. *What other issues concerning the arts community would you like to address? How might the arts community collaborate with the city to address the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century?*

The city needs to foster greater collaboration among the various artists in the city. We also need to create more opportunity for the arts to thrive and become a prime attractor of tourism to Berkeley. Our values, culture and people are special. The world could learn much from us.