

BCT Candidate Questionnaire
Ben Gould
Mayor

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?*

I think the arts are an incredibly important part of Berkeley's future, and are a part of what make it so culturally distinctive. Growing up in Berkeley, I was a direct beneficiary of many of the art programs in Berkeley schools, and want to ensure that future generations can receive the same benefits.

I think City Council should continue to support the 1% for the Arts requirement for new development and protect the Fine Arts district in Downtown. I think Council could also do more to support public performances by repairing and maintaining our parks and public spaces, and support local artists by exploring easier permitting of small in-home businesses.

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?*

I would support working with the various business associations to increase the voluntary tax rate in order to support more public art in their district. I would also support placing a parcel tax on the ballot to give Berkeley voters the opportunity to provide a dedicated progressive income stream for the arts in our community.

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.*

Our chronic housing shortage has led to demand for housing far outpacing supply, resulting in only the wealthiest being able to find a place to live and afford. I support building new housing at all income levels – new market-rate housing helps ensure newcomers can find housing without displacing existing residents, preserving older buildings for middle- and lower-income residents; and affordable housing helps protect our lowest income and most vulnerable citizens.

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?*

One of the greatest challenges we will face in the 21st century is the issue of climate change. I think the arts community can collaborate with the city to help both tackle the issue and reduce emissions through education, and also to help redesign parts of our city to mitigate a changing climate – rising seas, drought, and flooding will all require adaptations and new approaches in our civic infrastructure, and the arts community can help envision (and ensure) a beautiful and resilient city.