

BCT Candidate Questionnaire
Fred Dodsworth

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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?*

Like the false mind-body dialectic, the arts cannot be severed from the political body. A community without support for the arts is a deformed and dying community. While Berkeley is comfortable with its relationship with the university and touts our intellectual connections, Berkeley has also been an internationally important arts community and has been so since its founding. The Temple of the Wings dance studio (inspired by Isadora Duncan) is still a Berkeley landmark, Bernard Maybeck's architecture atelier was founded in Berkeley, the painter Elmer Bischoff, the poet Alan Ginsberg (who wrote *Howl at the Café Med*), US Poet Laureate Robert Hass, the composer John Adams, rock icon "Country Joe" MacDonald, even the metal band Metallica have called Berkeley home.

For more than two years our current city council majority has played kick the can down the road with AirBnB, denying our tax revenue income stream hundreds of thousands of dollars. In cities like San Francisco these taxes help support that city's vibrant arts community. The council's lack of accountability injures our arts community.

Similarly the council was asked to create an arts mitigation fee of one percent for the new massive development which are transforming our downtown into something most residents will not recognize. Again the council refused to pass this fee last year, deliberately delaying and stalling until most of the current projects (more than half a billion dollars worth) had been approved. After the potential for real benefits was lost, the council majority passed a reduced version of this legislation and sent out press-releases congratulating themselves for doing their job, a year too late to benefit our arts communities.

Clearly we need to look at every opportunity to maximize our city's contribution to the arts. Resolving the AirBnB issue is a small step in the right direction. Requiring the current projects under development to contribute their fair share is yet another. By transferring issues of homelessness, alcohol and drug excess, and mental illness out of the police department and into a mental health department that is trained to address these problems could save the city more than \$17,500,000 a year in the police budget while improving our outcomes.

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?*

See above.

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.*

Thirty plus years ago, as the publisher of Emeryville's only newspaper, and working with the Emeryville artist community, we helped create the Emeryville Artist's Cooperative, which is still in existence today and twice its original size. The city of Berkeley has many underutilized sites suitable for doing similar projects in Berkeley today. As a council person this will be one of my most important issues. By building, acquiring, repurposing, and remodeling these neglected properties we can create limited-equity, means-tested, cooperatively-own residences all over the city while improving the neighborhoods and the tax base we depend upon. By permanently taking these properties out of the real estate speculator's pool we can create "Housing For The Rest of Us."

Fred Dodsworth, City Council Candidate for District 6