

BCT Candidate Questionnaire
Lauri Capitelli
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?*

The visual and performing arts are vital to the economic success of our Downtown because they not only serve Berkeley residents but also attract visitors from around the world. As mayor, I would continue my work to retain and expand performing and visual arts uses in the Downtown. I helped secure funding for the UC Theater so that Downtown Berkeley could have another firstclass live entertainment venue. Having also worked to preserve the Elmwood Theater, I am the candidate with the most experience in finding creative ways to sustain arts and entertainment venues. But I want to go even further by creating housing affordable to artists and performers, as well as by bringing new arts and cultural uses to the Downtown's underutilized spaces.

There are opportunities with Old City Hall and other City property in the Downtown to create new venues for the arts, both performing and visual. I believe publicprivate partnerships could help achieve this vision by generating the funding that will be necessary to seismically upgrade and adaptively reuse these civic treasures.

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 support Berkeley's innovative 1% for the Arts program, which ensures that projects provide new onsite public art or financial support for the arts community. I also would like to see the City explore other options for funding arts in our city, including a potential bond measure. As Downtown Berkeley continues to grow as an economic engine, we will have more resources available to fund our arts 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.*

Berkeley is suffering through an affordability crisis exacerbated by rising student enrollment and housing shortages throughout the region. Studio space is very expensive for artists. We have to build more affordable housing and find ways to create affordable workspaces. I have been a strong advocate for the inclusion of affordable "live/work" spaces for artists. I have also secured more than \$10 million dollars more than my opponents in affordable housing funding for these types of innovative housing solutions.

We also have an urgent need for shortterm housing for visiting performing artists. I have recently engaged with the Berkeley Rep to explore avenues to develop shortterm housing for some of their performers. We must be creative in our approach to providing this affordable housing without creating burdensome new requirements and review processes. I believe that our multiyear review processes should be streamlined for affordable housing. Artists need housing now—not in five years.

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 arts community is not merely an economic engine of a broader community. It is the soul of a community and a reflection of our values. The heart of Berkeley is nurtured by these arts organizations, including but not limited to Ashkenaz, La Pena, Magnes, BAM/PFA, Berkeley Rep, the Aurora, UC Theater, Shotgun, Berkeley Art Center, Kala, and ACCI...the list goes on and on.

I believe the Berkeley Cultural Trust can inform and educate our community and the City should play a critical role in this effort. The City needs to celebrate our wealth of talent more often, as we do monthly with our Council artist recognition events. The Trust can play a pivotal role in this effort. We must have intentional collaboration at many levels promoting our talents and inviting the broader citizenry to participate. The City and BUSD should look for ways to engage our youth in the arts community.

It will take persistence and creative thought to reach our shared goals. I have demonstrated those characteristics over the years beginning with my work to save the Elmwood Theater from demolition. I brought together a group of likeminded neighbors to purchase and rehabilitate the theater. I have advocated for the Berkeley Art Center to find a location in the downtown. I will continue to work on converting the Oaks Theater to a performing arts venue.

In order to do all of this, we need to fund these efforts through increased resources from the City both financial and in other ways. I look forward to collaborating with the arts community in providing creative ways to support you. We need to celebrate more and argue less.