

1 Candidate Questionnaire Sierra Club Sonoma Group May 2021 Windsor Town Council
Special Election Candidate Name:

FPPC#:

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Question 1. Please describe your public service record on environmental and social justice issues, particularly membership and leadership in environmental organizations, work on conservation and climate justice campaigns, public positions you have taken and activities you have initiated or actively supported.

For the past ten years I have been a member of the California Stewardship Network (CSN) and I am currently serving as Co-Chair. As members of CSN we share a common value and commitment to being caretakers of place; to steward that which has been entrusted to us. We also share a common approach to achieving Triple Bottom Line outcomes: the concept that sustainability through economy, environment and social equity must factor in decision-making.

This philosophy has guided my involvement, leadership and approach in the environmental and social justice movements. The environmental movement has historically lacked racial diversity and the ability to meaningfully engage the disenfranchised and communities of color. For that very reason I have focused my efforts at the intersection of race, class, poverty and helping our white privileged allies understand that “urgency” is relative to the situation and lifestyle people enjoy.

For poor people, who live day to day, spending time contemplating the future is not a luxury that is afforded to them when the only thing that matters is how they are going to make it to the next day. I don’t say this to disparage but to acknowledge how income inequality shapes our thinking about the future as well as existential threats facing humanity.

Through my past work as executive director of Community Action Partnership and at the County of Sonoma, I have been an active participant across multiple initiatives to ensure that our response and support related to environmental justice and issues resonate and are relatable to communities of color and that our well-meaning intentions to protecting our environment don’t exacerbate or create further hardship for the very communities we seek to help.

I am currently working in a workgroup called Latino Leadership on Climate Change, where we work to plan events and learning opportunities to grow leadership in the environmental space.

As president of Latino Service Providers we recently launched a “Green Youth Promotor” program to help support and grow environmental justice youth leaders. I helped lead the creation of the Sonoma County Latino scorecard to lift up social and environmental issues impacting Latinos and strategies to make measurable change in order to close the disparity gaps over the next decade. I have also been an active speaker on the impacts of extreme weather and how climate change impacts vulnerable populations as well as offering solutions to address these important issues. And, I have worked with the Pepperwood Foundation and Daily Acts to help them expand their outreach to the Latino Community.

Below are a few examples of environmental themed talks I had the honor of presenting:

CLIMATE 2020: SEVEN GENERATIONS FOR ARIZONA

Preparing for Hotter Drier World: Wildfire, Infrastructure, & Emergency Management

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine Conference

Implications of the California Wildfires for Health, Communities, and Preparedness

Latino Health Forum: Climate Change and Latinx Health

Taking Action: What does an Equitable Climate Action Plan look like?

Bioneers Conference

Designing for Inclusive, Thriving Resilience in a Complex, Emergent World

Question 2. If elected to the City Council, what will be your priorities?

My lived experience has shaped who I am today and why I have made it my life’s work to serve and give back to my community. As a child, I grew up in unstable and precarious housing. My parents, immigrants to this country saw hope and opportunity despite facing constant setbacks and adversity. They never gave up on the American dream; they sacrificed for their children, working long hours in the fields to save up every penny to achieve the American dream of homeownership and pursuing their lifelong dream to become naturalized US citizens. Their sacrifice, work ethic and commitment to family and community is at the core of who I am and what I believe in.

That is why I am running for Town Council- to not only give back to my community, but to help shape Windsor for the future and to make the American dream possible for those who today see little hope and opportunity for themselves. Windsor needs to provide adequate opportunities to house everyone who wants to live here, which means the Council needs to incentivize responsible development. As a former school board member, I've seen the need for more opportunities for our youth, and as someone who has lived in Windsor for 13 years, I want to make sure the fabric of our community - the small businesses, family shops and restaurants - can thrive again. We need to invest in and build a local economic strategy where people can earn a family supporting wage and where we can provide greater access to educational and upskilling opportunities that lead to upward mobility and opportunity.

As a community we have dealt with overwhelming adversity and trauma from the recent wildfires and the pandemic. My overarching theme is about unity and advancing our human potential, recognizing that we, as a community, are better together. Our fates are tied to a future that requires interdependence, relationship building and mutual cooperation to build a more prosperous, just and resilient community.

The platform I'm promoting is:

- Ensure our health and safety through the COVID-19 crisis
- Help local businesses and residents recover from pandemic financial struggles
- Increase fire preparedness and prevent and mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Promote access to housing for a range of incomes
- Maintain Windsor's small-town, family friendly character

My Bio:

From humble beginnings, growing up in a small farming community in the Central Valley, I learned firsthand the value of hard work, gratitude and determination. No stranger to adversity or the harshness of poverty, I found success with the love and support of family and the kindness and generosity of others who believed in my potential. This upbringing taught me the value of hard work and exposed me to the challenges that immigrant and low-income families face on a daily basis. It also showed me how resilient, hardworking and driven families can succeed in this country and make it their own.

My lived experience has shaped who I am today and why I have made it my life's work to serve and give back to my community.

For the past 13 years, my wife Christine and I have called Windsor our home and our community. In every way, it has lived up to its expectation of a safe, family oriented and friendly community to raise our four sons and in turn for them to build lasting relationships and strong community ties.

Since moving to Windsor, Christine and I have been active members of the community. When our boys were little, we joined the Cub Scouts and for a while I served as Cubmaster, working with other parents to provide fun and enriching activities for our boys. I served on the Windsor School Board to give a greater voice to our Latino community and working families. Christine became an active member and president of the PTA. We enjoyed supporting our teachers and raising funds to make sure teachers had enough classroom supplies.

I have a long history of public service and community engagement. Upon graduating college with a degree in Political Science, I worked at CSU, Bakersfield to help boost college enrollment for first generation college students and directed a series of pilot initiatives for the Office of Economic and Community Development at Oxnard College. From this experience, my passion was discovered for helping people better themselves, their families and their community.

As Director of Business Support Services for one of the largest non-profit organizations in Kern County with a staff of 850 and an \$85-million-dollar budget, I oversaw the organization's procurement and contracts management, community outreach and engagement, information technology and facility construction; gaining valuable experience working with local state and federal funders and managing large projects. As executive director of Community Action Partnership Sonoma County, I worked to expand early childhood education opportunities by building new preschool facilities and expanding programs to strengthen child and parent education as well expand workforce development opportunities for youth and microbusiness development programs for women and migrant entrepreneurs.

With nearly two decades of senior management and leadership experience, along with my experience as an elected School Board Trustee, I am ready to bring my depth of knowledge, independent thinking and real-world experience to benefit the residents of Windsor. Please contact me with your thoughts on the state of our Town, and with ideas you might have for the future.

Question 3. All the jurisdictions in Sonoma County have committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but have fallen short of their initial goals. What will you do in your first 100 days to reduce GHGs in your city? How should your city mitigate GHGs

from tourism? What long-term actions should your city take to help city residents and businesses, especially those most disadvantaged, adapt to global warming?

Closing the achievement gap and the poverty gap is probably the greatest thing we could do to help the disadvantaged adapt to mitigate GHG's and climate change. It's difficult to do this in 100 days, but as I have for my entire career, I will absolutely from day 1 advocate for these needed changes.

In terms of tourism GHG's, Windsor is looking at locating a hotel downtown, and through that project we can demand that the developer incorporate features that are climate friendly, such as bicycle share and parking programs, local business partnerships to encourage guest to walk or cycle, and energy efficiency of the building produced in the project. We can also work with the hotel operator to establish a climate friendly electric shuttle to transport guests around town, as well as with local wineries and destinations to schedule group pick up times to reduce the amount of individual trips from the hotel. An equally important strategy for Windsor is developing a long term strategy to create more family supporting wage jobs closer to where people live thereby reducing long commutes that lower wage workers have to make because they cannot afford to live in the communities in which they work in. Our failed housing policies and extreme weather have accelerated the creation of mega commuters in our region adding to the very GHG emission problem we are seeking to address.

Windsor was the first city in Sonoma County to enact an all electric reach ordinance in 2019. Unfortunately the town had to retract that ordinance due to a lawsuit. I understand the Town council is planning to bring forward very soon another electric-based ordinance and if elected I plan to look at and study that issue closely. As it relates to the Town Green development, I would expect the developer to make his hotel project mostly electric, and as net zero as possible, incorporating heat pumps and solar. Since the project includes a new civic center, I have heard the Council talk about making the civic center buildings (town hall, school district offices, library and police station) net zero energy. I would agree with them and vote to make Windsor's Civic Center the most "green" city hall complex in Sonoma County, and perhaps in the Bay Area.

We are also about to have a SMART rail station in our downtown, which is an incredible opportunity that we must leverage as a Town to work and incorporate it into local bus routes and other visitor-serving connections to wineries, restaurants, and visitor features.

Question 4. What natural resources/systems (such as creeks, wetlands, open spaces) within your city's urban growth boundary do you consider in need of protection or restoration?

I think all these features mentioned are important. We have many creeks and wildlife corridors that traverse Windsor that we must protect. We need to find ways to balance our human interactions and built environment with the pre-existing ecology and existing creeks, wetlands, and open spaces. I do think it is important to protect our wetlands, and to find ways to restore our salmon bearing creeks in Sonoma County.

Question 5. Where will your city get its potable water from over the next 20 years? How do you think your city can ensure water supply for its residents without jeopardizing water availability for the natural environment?

It is my understanding that the Town of Windsor has its own wells off the Russian River, and also receives 20% of its water from the Sonoma Water Aqueduct. Windsor has utilized a successful PAYS system to promote water conservation at home. The Town brought the first purple piped residential development online with landscaping for outdoor water uses to offset the need for fresh river or Lake Sonoma sourced water. That project provides recycled water for the front and back yards of a 587 unit subdivision and was implemented in 2001. Windsor also irrigates the Town Green, many parks, and landscaping with recycled water.

I would push to expand the recycled water trunk lines to reach more of Windsor. Also - we should extend our recycled water to the Airport Area. Windsor's water master plans show that we have enough water, using all the tools we have, through our 2040 General Plan. We should also be looking at zeroscaping programs to further reduce our dependence on freshwater for household use. Years ago I removed my front and backyard lawn to reduce water usage when the Town urged its residents to conserve water during our last drought.

Question 6. Please describe how wastewater is disposed of and re-used in your city. When is wastewater re-use appropriate? What disposal or re-use methods would you support for your city?

Windsor's priority is reuse and not disposal. In order: Recycled water is sent to the Geysers under contract, then it is used for irrigation both inside and outside Windsor, and Windsor's last priority is disposal into the creek off of Eastside Rd when allowed by permitting agencies. Wastewater re-use should always be first priority. As a former school board member, I know that Windsor even piped the high school toilets to use

wastewater for flushing, and also the toilets at the Russian River Brewing company. As stated above, I would advocate for expanding our treated wastewater system with the goal of never having to dispose of any of it into our creeks or Russian River watershed. Very little is disposed of there now, but I'd like to see that number be zero.

Question 7. How can your city encourage non-automobile and alternative fuel transportation, or create transportation efficiencies that will reduce trips?

As I have mentioned, SMART coming online for Windsor offers an opportunity for residents who want to go to Santa Rosa for the afternoon or for a workday meeting, to use the train. It also gives the Town a focal point for future development, including and especially for affordable housing. The Town should expand its electric vehicle infrastructure and incorporate expansion of that infrastructure through new projects, as well as retrofitting existing spaces. This is a priority of the Biden administration (infrastructure funding) and I want to position us to bring home dollars in that regard to the maximum extent possible, not just to Windsor but to our North Bay region. Windsor already has a 4 day work week for our Town Employees, but we can also look at additional telework opportunities. Also, I'd like to see Windsor join the SCTA bikeshare e-bike program at SMART train stations. I know the Council has asked to join that program, sooner than later. As well, I know that Sonoma Clean Power has an e-bike program now for lower income residents, where rebates of up to \$1000 are given for the purchase of e-bikes so that residents could get by with the expense of one less car in their families. I plan to advertise this program within the Town.

Question 8. How has your city been using Smart Growth principles and how do you see your city growing in the future? What is your position on the Windsor Town Green project proposed by Robert Green Company?

I know that Windsor has been at the forefront of smart growth principles for 25 years. I live not far from downtown and I've watched the transit oriented/mixed use developments take shape near the SMART train station. Higher density/mixed use projects are appropriate at transportation nodes in Windsor, and there are opportunities for diverse types of mixed use housing, or even more affordable attached housing for rent and for sale along our Old Redwood Highway. It's important that more dense housing be placed near services such as grocery as well as transportation. The changing demographics of Sonoma county tell us that we are greying and browings. We should explore opportunities for intergenerational housing to foster community building for people from diverse lived experiences. These types of efforts promote connectedness and belonging.

The Civic Center project as it is called in Windsor is still undergoing changes and review. The revised project will be seen by the community at a special town council meeting on April 14. I have heard that the developer has incorporated many of the comments made by residents - and has made revisions that many more will approve of, although I haven't seen them myself yet. It's important that the Town Green remain a public space, that the hotel/civic center project not overtake it and make it feel privatized. Windsor desperately needs a new police station, library and town hall - and if this project meets the expectations of the residents, AND can pay for the new civic center buildings through a ground lease of town owned land, property taxes and TOT taxes, then I'm certainly willing to consider it. Our downtown very much needs more foot traffic - small businesses have really suffered during the pandemic, and were really on the edge of survival before 2020. The downtown has always needed an anchor, and this project could well serve that purpose as well. We will all know more in April.

Question 9. What would you do to ensure the housing inside your Urban Growth Boundary becomes more affordable? What challenges do you see in creating additional affordable housing opportunities? Where should new affordable housing units be located? What are your thoughts on vacation rentals and time shares? Do you support efforts to control rents and/or raise minimum wages?

Affordable Housing: As chair of the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, I have recommended for approval millions of dollars in funding for affordable housing projects in Sonoma County through the allocation of Community Development Block Grant dollars and have advocated for additional housing vouchers to support and house low-income households. There is no question that more needs to be done to meet our housing goals across the range of our housing needs in our community.

As a member of the Leadership Council of CA Forward, we recently published a report highlighting a range of strategies and recommendations our State and regions can pursue to expand and realize more affordable housing. They include working with the private sector and philanthropy to provide gap funding for below market rate housing projects; changing zoning restrictions to make possible affordable multifamily housing by changing current height limits in order to allow for taller, denser housing and expanding accessory dwelling units (ADUs); connecting housing with transportation in ways that maximize affordability and sustainability while minimizing displacement risks; where appropriate expand inclusionary housing policies; and explore the creation of land trusts to expand below market housing by using existing housing stock.

Essentially we need a host of solutions for this very complex problem. I am motivated to find solutions, because I want my children to have a chance to live in the community where they grew up, and I want that opportunity for all Windsor families.

I'd like to see new units located near transit, especially in the SMART station area plan zone downtown (within a half mile of the station site ideally). At the same time, ADU's and second units can be distributed throughout the city to help enable families to live nearby and for aging in place long term.

Vacation Rentals and Time Shares: Windsor does have some vacation rentals and time shares. The Town Council had this subject on their agenda on March 17, and is looking to regulate VRBO's and Airbnbs. The Council expects an ordinance within the next 6 months.

Rent Control: Rent Control might be appropriate in some areas, but cannot or should not be looked at in isolation for a town or in a rural setting. Rent control is a last resort policy that is a sure sign that the system is not working for renters or employers that depend on local labor. It's important for neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate on rent control, especially small to medium sized cities in rural settings, to ensure they are going to produce the desired result. Rent control may not be applicable in these more rural or semi rural settings. I believe that it is incredibly important that we address the root cause issues that have led to the need for rent control policies in the first place; mainly our inability to build sufficient housing of all types to meet the range of housing from low-income to affordable to market rate and step down housing for our aging population.

\$15 Minimum Wage: I support a \$15 minimum wage as the State of CA has adopted. I also support a living wage for employers that are of a certain size and/or are working off government contracts that Windsor may have some approval of their funding. Living wage can be looked at in a deeper way to flush out specific policies for Windsor.

Question 10. What is your position regarding Urban Growth Boundaries? What can your city do to assure that most future housing units are built in areas served by accessible public transit?

I think Urban Growth Boundaries are important tools to manage growth and prevent sprawl type development. Windsor has worked to focus growth downtown, but frankly

has not built very many units in the past 10 years. I would encourage future development to look toward the downtown station area (as SMART will be online within the coming few years), and would like to see new developments to show how they are meeting GHG reduction goals set by the city, including proximity to bus and rail service. Windsor's current UGB is valid until 2040.

Question 11. Do you believe that your city is meeting the requirements of its Growth Management policy? How would you address traffic impact requirements and mitigations when much of downtown traffic comes from outside your city? How will you balance economic priorities and realities with environmental needs in your city?

We are not meeting our growth management policies. We are definitely staying under our maximum allowances. But barely any housing has actually been built in Windsor in the past 12 years. We have approved units downtown that have not been built, as example with the Oliver's Market development. We must do more to actually get housing built, both affordable and market rate, to accommodate the needs of our residents and their families. See my answer to question 9 for some additional thoughts on housing.

Regarding traffic mitigations, I'm not sure that most of our traffic comes from outside the Town. One thing we have going for us from this awful pandemic, is that much of our workforce and many employers have discovered telework and virtual meetings, which I know reduce the need for people to travel as much. If we could find solutions for our schools when they go back, via bussing and transportation, we'd be in a much better place with local traffic. That is advocacy we can do at the State, and as a former school board member I can lead efforts in this regard from the Town's perspective. I have mentioned SMART a few times through this questionnaire, but obviously there is a role for SMART to play in our menu of options to reduce vmt.

I think balancing economics and the environment, as well as social equity, is of paramount importance. One cannot thrive without the other, in a sustainable way. As decisions come before the council, I will weigh these various impacts or outcomes, and do my best to find a solution that honors the three E's, always. My life's work has centered around social equity, but a thriving economy and a healthy environment have been involved in many ways with that work.

Question 12. Do you support efforts to manage tourism to protect housing, the environment and quality of life for your residents?

Windsor has not experienced the level of community concern that some other areas of the county have experienced from the vacation rental phenomenon. However, I am aware of these issues, and recognize the importance of managing tourism impacts before they become problems. We certainly don't want to nor can we afford to lose much of our housing stock to temporary vacation rentals. Our schools and family neighborhoods are not served well by temporary unhosted rentals. We are looking as a town to additional hotel rooms which could satisfy the desire for temporary stays while attracting tax funds for the Town. We need to be mindful also about how we utilize those TOT funds to ensure our services are keeping up with any increased strain from tourism impacts.

In Windsor we have the Town Green, and a constant need for mindfulness to ensure how we manage and plan for the Green continues to be friendly to families and businesses alike. It's a common area and we need to balance the uses and demands to accommodate as many as possible, while preserving our Town identity.

Question 13. Do you support the Black Lives Matter protests?

Yes. My entire professional career has been about addressing structural and racial inequalities that have hampered, and continue to harm low-income people and communities of color. As executive director of Community Action Partnership our mission was always about building people power and increasing maximum feasible participation of the poor by ensuring that they have a seat at the table, and by arming people with the skills and knowledge to determine what is best for their communities. I was also one of the leaders that advocated for, and helped lead the creation of the Portrait of Sonoma report. The Portrait report brought to light local disparities across geographies broken out by race/ethnicity, gender, education and life expectancy. I led the creation of the Sonoma County Los Cien Latino Scorecard, highlighting gaps in economic and social mobility for Latinos in Sonoma County and solutions for closing those gaps over the next decade. During the nine years that I served on the board of the Community Foundation I also advocated for greater funding support to invest in organization led by people of color including working to expand and grow the Black/Brown movement to advocate for greater diversity on foundation boards, CEOs and program officers of color. I share these examples to illustrate my lifelong commitment to achieving racial equity.

While I find comfort in the progress we have made in reckoning with our past racial and structural discrimination, we have not made sufficient or lasting progress since the signing of the Economic Opportunity and the Voting Rights Act that were signed more

than 50 years ago. I stand for real equity, the kind of equity that is realized when we go beyond, “make you feel good statements,” to real equity where our actions are demonstrated by our financial investments and changed policies that dismantle structural impediments that conspire against the wellbeing of communities of color.

I believe that police reform is necessary, as well as the laws that have led to over-policing in low income and communities of color. After the murder of Andy Lopez by law enforcement, I was asked to help staff the CALLE taskforce for a nearly two years. The recommendations of the taskforce led to the creation of IOLERO and provided additional financial investments focused on restorative justice practices in schools and necessary policy reforms aimed at building trust between disenfranchised communities and law enforcement. While we have made progress, more needs to be done to financially invest in communities living furthest away from opportunity. I will bring that real world policy and community engagement experience to the job of Town Councilmember.

Question 14. How do you plan to win the election? Please identify core constituencies and community leaders you expect will support you. How do you plan to fund your campaign? Who is your campaign consultant? What is your budget?

Winning: I am finding support from Windsor residents as well as colleagues of mine from working in Sonoma County non-profit, social justice, equity, education, government and housing circles for the past 13 years. I have had generous support come in from Deb Fudge, Windsor Town Councilmember as well as Esther Lemus, and all of the School Board Trustees, and others in small business in our town. I think my balanced views on the Town Green development proposal will be attractive to many local residents as well as business people, because I am advocating for balance in the final project that maintains our family friendly environment on the Town Green, while maximizing the public benefit to the city and residents by upgrading our aging and expensive civic center buildings.

Consultant and Campaign Team: I’m working with Denny Rosatti, of Rosatti Consulting, as my campaign consultant. I am currently my own campaign manager, but am looking to add an intern and possibly some extra help staff for the final weeks of the campaign. I am also seeking the input, wisdom and advice from diverse business, environmental and social equity leaders to inform my thinking and deeper understanding of how policy and program choices will affect the social equity, environmental health and the economic prosperity of our community.

I am grateful to have the assistance of many supporters. First, my wife Christine and my four sons are very supportive, which is very important to me as a candidate. I have a very supportive professional network of friends and colleagues that are donating and pitching in to help out the campaign with walking, phoning and text-banking to voters. I have been active in the Windsor community, through serving on our local school board and my sons' many activities, such as cub scouts, and our years of involvement with the PTA where my wife served as president for numerous years.

Budget and Fundraising: To date I have raised ~\$10,000 and I plan to raise what it takes to win. I have a budget that flexes between \$20K and \$40K. I do plan to actively engage voters, and already have my larger highway signs. I have ordered small yard signs that I picked up this week and will be distributing today, from a union print shop in the local Bay Area.

I am also planning to direct mail voters, and have already been walking doors with a walk piece that I'm attaching, as well as with a survey card for voter feedback.

Question 15. Why is an environmental endorsement important to you? If we endorse you, what are the most effective ways we can help you get elected

An environmental endorsement is important to me on a number of levels. One, I strongly believe that environmental justice cannot be achieved without addressing racial and economic justice. Two, my values and what I bring to the race and will bring to the town council are strong leanings toward dealing with climate change and adaptation, and a strong sense of good planning and housing for a range of incomes. Third, I want to help bring along Sierra Club and other environmental groups into leadership positions around racial justice and social equity. I want to hear from you regularly when I am elected, so that we can work together on problems facing our community and our region.

Communications to your members and supporters would be very helpful in my election. I am planning a robust outreach campaign and your logo, volunteer participation and financial contribution would be most welcome to help us achieve our goals for the campaign. I want a better Windsor for my kids futures, and for all of our futures.

Please include biographical information, applicable campaign literature and other information helpful in evaluating your candidacy.

Please find attached the hand card I am distributing, as well as the survey card we are leaving for voters as well.

Thank you

Oscar Chavez

(We may include excerpts from candidate responses in our communications to our members.)