

Name	Susan Wengraf	Fred Dodsworth	Isabelle Gaston
Age	71	65	54
Job	Berkeley City Council, District 6	Retired journalist-businessman-teacher	Medical writer (oncology)
What is the main reason you are running?	<p>I want to continue to represent the needs and concerns of District 6 residents and to bring a rational and civil approach to our city's governance. I really care about our community and I want District 6 to continue to have strong, progressive representation. The hills have very specific needs that must be addressed. I will advocate for more hills' police patrols, stronger view protections, more aggressive vegetation management, better emergency vehicle access, safer evacuation routes, improved drainage, and repaved streets. My initiative to underground utility wires must move forward for the safety of our entire city.</p>	<p>The council majority has failed to provide "housing for the rest of us," while encouraging luxury housing, exacerbating skyrocketing rental rates, changing the ethnic make up of our community.</p> <p>35% of police calls are for homeless services. Council spends millions criminalizing homelessness failing to resolve homelessness. We need social workers for better outcomes and so we can bill Medi-Cal for services, not taxpayers.</p> <p>The council majority fails to capitalize on Berkeley's desirability to demand all new construction be energy neutral and low-carbon, to reduce our energy usage and carbon-footprint. Global warming is a catastrophe which can no longer be ignored.</p>	<p>The main reason I am running is because I am profoundly disheartened by the state of our City's infrastructure, fiscal mismanagement, and seemingly unbridled development — and I want to do something about it.</p> <p>I am also very concerned about District 6's safety: our district lacks an earthquake shelter; has not undergrounded most of its utility wires (after waiting decades); and has inadequate police patrolling (only one officer for District 5 and 6 per evening shift).</p>
Why are you qualified for the position?	<p>Experience: I know District 6. I work with hundreds of district residents responding to their needs and trying to solve their individual and collective neighborhood problems. Some solutions come about quickly; others take years of dedicated attention, such as the undergrounding of utilities.</p> <p>Temperament: I have a proven record of being a problem solver, consensus builder and a sane, rational and civil voice on the City Council. The reason I am running for re-election is to provide strong representation for the residents of District 6. My reputation speaks to my dedication and commitment. I am patient and respectful, yet persistent in pursuing my goals.</p> <p>Knowledge: My 18 years serving on the Planning Commission gave me an extensive and comprehensive background on land use law, issues, and tensions and conflicts in our city. I brought to the council a wealth of knowledge about the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and Development Agreements.</p> <p>Respect: My approach to serving the citizens of the district has earned the respect of my colleagues, organizations, and policy makers throughout the Bay Area. My many, diverse endorsements are evidence of my broad-based support.</p>	<p>As a 30-year journalist, as a business owner and employer meeting a weekly payroll, I understand the importance of not wasting taxes or resources while fairly treating those who make our community vibrant. We have a moral responsibility to the young, to students, children and grandchildren, to elders and to those less fortunate to make the world equitable and fair, to leave it better than we found it.</p> <p>As a journalist I've covered and exposed corruption and malfeasance in Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, San Francisco, and Martinez. I am familiar with the issues Berkeley faces while I'm not committed to the political groupthink that prevents consideration of innovative responses.</p> <p>I served on the board of the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, the BUSD committee on the Future of Education, Arts Magnet PTA, Berkeley's Zero Waste Commission and Disaster Preparedness Commission, and I'm serving as chair of the BUSD Measure H Oversight Committee. But we can't live by politics and business alone, so I also serve on boards of the Beast Crawl Commune, Bay Area Generations, Watershed Ecological Poetry Festival, and I taught under-served children through California Poets in the Schools, and prisoners through Community Works West.</p>	<p>For over four years, I have served as President of the Northeast Berkeley Association (NEBA), one of the largest, oldest, and most respected neighborhood associations in Berkeley. Since being President, I have become very active in City politics; spoken at numerous City Council sessions; and written many articles regarding the City's budget challenges, structural deficit, unfunded liabilities, and need to rebuild our City's physical and financial infrastructure.</p> <p>Professionally, I am medical writer, with a PhD in cancer biology. I perform data analyses for a living. The City Council needs someone who doesn't shy away from numbers.</p>

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What sets you apart from other candidates?	<p>Experience, knowledge, commitment, dedication, integrity, and character set me apart from my opponents. I cut my teeth on local politics through more than 30 years of citizen engagement, neighborhood activism, city commissions, and most recently as District Six City Council representative. Because of this broad experience, I am respected for my ability to partner with my colleagues on the City Council, and am known for my effectiveness in accomplishing improvements to our civic life. I ask the hard questions, and am deliberative in my decision making. I am an honest and ethical person. Unlike my opponents, who have knee-jerk, ideological responses to issues, I insist on real data to make fact-based decisions. Unlike my opponents, who try to dupe voters with apocalyptic fictions and have a tenuous relationship with the facts, I don't lie and do not make promises that I cannot keep. Getting things done at City Hall is a challenge, but I know how to chip away at the bureaucratic resistance to change, and to persevere until I get a desired response. I have learned that change takes time. I try to examine the big picture and I am always considering unintended consequences.</p>	<p>I am not a professional politician; I have no desire to move up the political food chain.</p> <p>I'm not endorsed nor supported by businesses and organizations with economic interests before the city council.</p> <p>I haven't represented District Six for the past 24 years (the incumbent has— 16 as council aide, eight as councilperson).</p> <p>I was journalist with a clear understanding of Berkeley's place within the Bay Area political and economic environment.</p> <p>I was a businessman with a sensible attitude regarding how best to accomplish our goals while being mindful of the costs taxpayers will have to cover. Too often politicians get addicted to "Other People's Money" and make foolish statements like, "There's never been a better time to borrow money," ignoring that the council has yet to figure out where the money will be spent. Too often politicians make politically expedient decisions to hire employees or give benefits the city can't afford. For example, the council recently hired four police officers, dedicating \$400,000 to that purpose, ignoring that four police officers cost the city more than \$1,000,000. Where will the missing \$600,000 come from?</p>	<p>I have studied the City's budget and employee contracts in depth; the incumbent has not.</p> <p>For example, at a recent endorsement meeting at the East Bay Times, the incumbent stated the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "SEIU employees received 6% raises." This is inaccurate; the raises range from 11.58% to 15.58% (over three years). 2. "SEIU employees are now contributing 8% to their pensions." This is inaccurate; employees will not be paying the full 8% until December 31, 2017 (1% starting in early June, 2017). 3. "Two hundred employees were laid off during the recession." To my knowledge, there were reductions in vacant positions (FTEs) but no actual layoffs. 4. "We can address the >\$500 million unfunded liabilities debt (pensions and health care obligations) by setting aside excess general fund revenue every year." This is wishful thinking. Berkeley has a structural deficit because of these overly generous labor contracts. That is, there is no "excess general fund revenue." The fundamental problem in our budget is our expenses exceed our revenues. The only way to balance the budget (which we are legally obligated) is to cut back on City services and general maintenance. It is why our infrastructure is crumbling.
How did you end up in Berkeley?	<p>I came to Berkeley in 1969 on a mission to teach deaf children how to express themselves through photography. I accepted a position at a school in El Cerrito teaching children with multiple physical and developmental challenges. I lived in Berkeley on Northside, a few blocks from campus. After awhile, I started teaching gifted children filmmaking. This led to me write a book about films about women, which led me to make a documentary film about folksinger Malvina Reynolds. At that point I met my husband and we settled in North Berkeley, where we raised our two children.</p>	<p>I hitchhiked out here from Scottsdale in 1969 with friends. I hitchhiked back a few months later when I was asked to be road-security for two young women whose parents had moved from Palo Alto to Scottsdale. I moved to Berkeley (upper Cedar St) in 1974 with my girlfriend (now wife). We bought our home on Spruce Street in 1984 and raised our children here (in the public schools). Now our grand children are growing up here (two granddaughters in District 6, a grandson in District 4). I'm running for my grandchildren and all the other young people.</p>	<p>I first came to the Bay Area to attend Mills College in 1980. After two years at Mills, I transferred to Barnard College in New York. I returned to the Bay Area in 1985 to work in a lab studying HIV at UCSF/SFGH. In 1994, I moved to Portland to go to graduate school, then lived in San Diego for five years, and finally, in 2005, my husband and I returned to Berkeley (where we first met, in 1980, when he was an MBA student at Haas and living in a dorm on the Mills campus for grad students).</p>

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<p>What are the three biggest challenges Berkeley faces in the near future?</p>	<p>Homelessness: The number of people living on the streets is overwhelming. Berkeley is compassionate and generous and does more for the homeless population than many neighboring cities, but it seems that we are not making progress solving the problem, despite the fact that we fund mental health services, medications, shelters, etc. Many of our chronically homeless are suffering from drug and alcohol addiction; others are suffering from mental illness; others have made a lifestyle decision to live on the street. Whatever the cause, having so many people without shelter who need help in our city is problematic. Our businesses are struggling with the impacts, resulting in people avoiding the commercial areas.</p> <p>Housing Affordability: The region is struggling with very high housing costs. California's population is increasing. Supply cannot keep up with demand. People cannot afford to live near their work, and young families cannot afford to purchase homes. High rents, and houses selling for millions, threaten the essence of what we want Berkeley to be... culturally, ethnically and economically diverse. In addition, the University is increasing their enrollment and not providing housing for their incoming freshmen. The demand for housing needs to be addressed in a comprehensive and thoughtful way.</p> <p>Fiscal Management: Berkeley's unfunded liabilities are a serious issue. In the 1990's, when California was experiencing economic prosperity, local governments, including Berkeley's, authorized very generous retirement and health benefits for their employees. This was a near-sighted approach that did not consider the long term liabilities that were being created for future generations. When the Great Recession hit in 2008-2009, every major revenue source declined. CALPERS' retirement investments suffered serious losses, and unfunded liabilities increased dramatically. That was the legacy that I inherited when I was elected to the City Council at the end of 2008.</p>	<p>We can end chronic homelessness in Berkeley by acknowledging this is a social, not a criminal problem. Utilizing our Mental Health Department and Mobile-Crisis Teams we can help the homeless without bankrupting our city. Sending out mental crisis teams instead of police officers will save millions of dollars each year. By identifying and tracking those who need help, signing them up for Medi-Cal, SSI, drug and alcohol programs, Housing First we'll get reimbursed by the state instead of paying police officers to handle problems better served by social workers.</p> <p>Luxury housing exacerbates our housing crisis by stimulating demand while failing to provide affordable "Housing for the Rest of Us." Housing must be created outside the "whatever the market will bear" mindset. Greater density doesn't improve affordability. SF has 50% greater density than Berkeley and higher prices. We need affordable housing. Working with the university to provide adequate student housing would chill demand and lower prices. Working with the school district to build limited equity coops on BUSD-owned (and neglected) land would reduce housing demand and encourage teachers to stay in a profession perpetually underpaid. Working with the city to build limited equity coops on city-owned (and neglected) land would reduce demand and lower prices.</p> <p>Saving Alta Bates and Herrick Hospitals is critical. We have a Health Department and Mental Health Department; not having a local hospital is insane. Losing our hospitals would put our residents and UC-Berkeley students at risk when the need for timely medical treatment is most critical. We live in an earthquake zone and a major urban fire zone. We can't drive to Oakland when the roads are obstructed. When there's the inevitable pandemic every hospital bed will be critical.</p>	<p>1. Fiscal mismanagement: The City's financial health is poor and is worsening every year. We have closed parks (such as the iconic Berkeley Rose Garden), closed pools (Willard Pool and Warm Water Pool), a closed City Pier, a closed West Berkeley Senior Center, and a closed John Hinkel Clubhouse. In total, it is estimated that we have >\$500 million in unfunded capital needs and \$550 million in unfunded pension and health care obligations.</p> <p>2. Public safety in District 6: We have no earthquake shelter; inadequate police patrolling; and no concrete plan for undergrounding our utilities.</p> <p>3. Responsible development: Berkeley is one of the most densely populated cities in California, and in the coming years, the density will increase even more with the building of up to seven new high-rises in the downtown (as approved by the voters in 2010) and elsewhere. This is a lot of growth for our city to absorb so rapidly, especially given our inadequate infrastructure (transportation, pools, parks, roads, and no earthquake shelters). We will need to hire many more police and fire, and build more schools (a cost breakdown has not been provided by the City).</p> <p>Many District 6 residents have shared with me that they no longer go downtown as much as they used to due to increased traffic, poor transportation and/or lack of parking. In addition, there is growing concern about the overall stability of our neighborhoods. For example, there is a proposal to build a massive new development on the Pacific School of Religion campus ("Holy Hill"). I do not support this proposal because this is already one of the most congested areas in Berkeley and I also believe it is critical to maintain what little green space is left in the neighborhood.</p>

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What are your ideas to solve them?	<p>Homelessness: Sustainable, lasting solutions to homelessness take time and resources. A short term and a long term strategy are necessary. Short term, we need to provide adequate shelter beds, hygiene facilities, and social services. By partnering with other cities and pooling resources, we can get this done. Long term, we need to build cost-effective housing and provide support services for those in need. National, state, and county agencies, as well as regional neighbors, need to collaborate to get this accomplished.</p> <p>Housing: Constructing housing near transit while protecting neighborhoods is my goal. Our zoning needs to provide for transition zones so neighborhood impacts are minimized. With careful and sensitive planning, both goals can be achieved. We need to ensure that new buildings provide at least 20% of their units at below market rents, or that they pay a fee into the Housing Trust Fund to build low income units. In addition, the University needs to be held accountable for providing decent housing for all their freshmen. Admission levels should be based on available UC provided beds. If re-elected, I will insist this be included in the next agreement between UC and the City.</p> <p>Fiscal Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make cost reductions that won't impact core services or diminish our quality of life. • Establish a committee to review the budget from top to bottom. • Review staffing levels and benefits so we are competitive and appropriately staffed for the services we provide. • Explore ways to increase revenues without raising taxes. Invest in economic development. Require the University to pay their fair share of services provided. • Create a dedicated fund for paying down unfunded liabilities. Every million paid off is 5 million less in debt. <p>Our unfunded liabilities are out of proportion to our revenues. Reducing the long term burden to future generations is a priority.</p>	<p>This is redundant.</p> <p>We can end chronic homelessness in Berkeley by acknowledging this is a social, not a criminal problem. Utilizing our Mental Health Department and Mobile-Crisis Teams we can help the homeless without bankrupting our city. Sending out mental crisis teams instead of police officers will save millions of dollar each year. By identifying and tracking those who need help, signing them up for Medi-Cal, SSI, drug and alcohol programs, Housing First we'll get reimbursed by the state instead of paying police officers to handle problems better served by social workers.</p> <p>Luxury housing exacerbates our housing crisis by stimulating demand while failing to provide affordable ""Housing for the Rest of Us."" Housing must be created outside the ""whatever the market will bear"" mindset. Greater density doesn't improve affordability. SF has 50% greater density than Berkeley and higher prices. 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We must save Alta Bates by all means and any means necessary.</p>	<p>1. Fiscal Responsibility We need a master fiscal plan. I am not prepared to say or know what all our options are; however, I believe everything should be on the table. We must stop the hemorrhaging and we have to do this responsibly and fairly to both taxpayers and employees alike.</p> <p>2. Safety Earthquake shelter: If elected, I pledge, on Day 1, to contact BUSD to start discussing the designation of Cragmont Elementary as an earthquake shelter; unlike the incumbent, who is unaware that this was its intended purpose when the school was reopened in 1999 with the help of FEMA funding.</p> <p>Patrols: We desperately need more officers patrolling District 6. I will strongly advocate for more patrols when I enter office.</p> <p>Undergrounding: Because of fiscal mismanagement over the last several decades and the lack of political will, I am not optimistic that there is immediate funding available for undergrounding our utility wires. Once I am in office, I will scour the budget and analyze all options, and communicate my findings with the community.</p> <p>3. Responsible Development I believe our City leaders must actively engage with its citizenry on its future plans for development in Berkeley. I'm not referring to the buildings coming on line now. I'm talking about those that may be built five to ten years from now.</p> <p>As the author of this article so eloquently states, we need to have a dialogue about the growth-at-any-costs ideology and whether it is one that our community wishes to embrace. This doesn't mean being anti-growth but it may mean slower growth - where we make sure to preserve the integrity of our neighborhoods and quality of life of our residents.</p>
What is your most inspired or unique idea for Berkeley?	<p>My most inspired idea is to create affordable housing for seniors on top of Berkeley's three low-rise senior centers. Since the City already owns the land, this idea is financially feasible and will allow our valued older adults to stay in Berkeley rather than having to move elsewhere.</p>	<p>Decriminalizing homelessness and billing Medi-Cal for services. Self-policing Dignity Villages. Limited equity, means tested, cooperatively owned residences. Demanding the University to build adequate, affordable housing for its students. Moving immediately to a zero-energy, LEED Platinum, eco-district, building policy. Moving immediately to a distributed power generation policy. Increased, round-the-clock public transit.</p>	<p>To have a giant potluck one day a year in Berkeley where everyone is invited! It will be a wonderful opportunity to engage with people from different parts of the City.</p>
How will you be accessible to constituents?	<p>I am a full-time representative. If citizens call my office, I will return the call in a timely manner. Residents can also make an appointment to meet with me. I host frequent Town Hall meetings on important issues. I also publish a newsletter with useful information every month. Neighbors invite me to their homes. My office is open and staffed every day when City Hall is open, except for vacation. My job is to serve the residents who elected me to office. That is how I define my position. I take pride in responding to my constituents.</p>	<p>I'm already accessible. I was a journalist! I'm widely known. For the past decade I've run two neighborhood newsgroups. I utilize social media extensively, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and NextDoor, plus the hundreds and hundreds of email addresses I've collected. I'm working with approximately 100 local residents on regulating cell towers. I'm working with local residents to moderate Pacific School of Religion's neighborhood-destroying real estate speculation. I'm doing the same with residents around Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. I've been active in the progressive community for decades hosting community forums on critical issues.</p>	<p>I will have monthly "office hours" and more as needed. I have not decided on the venue. It would be wonderful if someone could suggest a good place in District 6 to meet rather than at my office in City Hall.</p>

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How much do you expect to spend on your campaign?	\$40,000	\$18,000	<\$10,000
A final thought?	<p>Berkeley has many challenges ahead. My experience, my commitment to our community, and my comprehensive and rational understanding of how to get things done are vital to Berkeley's future. With your collaboration, we can address our city's most pressing issues. Voters in Berkeley are intelligent and discerning. Don't be deceived – evaluate the candidates on their proven merits. I ask for your support to continue my work for a better Berkeley.</p> <p>Ranked choice voting can result in unintended consequences, so mark your ballot for Susan Wengraf only. For more information, please visit my website at wengraf4council.com.</p>	<p>This is the election of a lifetime. As a city we are either going to immediately address our social challenges and create "A Berkeley We Can All Call Home," or we are going to surrender to the unchecked-growthers and out-of-town developers who will turn our city into a mini-Manhattan with all the problems of Manhattan and none of the benefits.</p>	<p>My campaign has been a real grassroots effort — going door-to-door and speaking with District 6 residents about important City issues. There is truly no experience like running for office! It is not too late to show your support and donate to my campaign. And to all my supporters, please consider voting for Fred Dodsworth as your #2 choice! Thank you!</p>
Website	wengraf4council.com	http://freddodsworth.com	isabellegaston.com
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Twitter	(none listed)	https://twitter.com/fdodsworth	(none listed)
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