WE ARE GEN H

Candidate Questionnaire

Healdsburg



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Generation Housing envisions vibrant communities where everyone has a place to call home and can contribute to an equitable, healthy, and resilient North Bay. That vision is realized through the actions of our elected and appointed leaders across all ten jurisdictions of Sonoma County. Housing is top of mind for every leader, every sector, every community member that calls Sonoma County home.

This questionnaire is designed to offer Sonoma County residents an opportunity to hear from their candidates directly about their vision for the future of housing.

All candidates were given equal opportunity to respond to the questionnaire—inclusion in the questionnaire should not be considered as an endorsement by Generation Housing. This is meant to be an educational resource to residents and voters of Sonoma County.

About Generation Housing

Since January 2020, Generation Housing has built a reputable library of housing resources read and shared by elected officials, government staff, C-suite executives and community members of a diverse audience. Candidate responses will be shared on our social media channels, our website and mailing list of over 5,000 contacts.

Generation Housing does not endorse candidates running for office. This document will be an educational resource for voters and all answers shared irrespective of the candidate.

Learn more

Incumbent Chris Herrod did not respond for the uncontested District 4 race.

City Council District 2

Scott Pratt
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Mathew López
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What role do you believe local government should play in meeting its RHNA requirements, and do you think it should stretch beyond RHNA to grow a true "housing continuum," which means diverse housing opportunities across income levels to serve our community members as their housing and family needs and assets change over time?

In Healdsburg, we must stretch beyond RHNA by encouraging a diverse supply of occupied and attainable homes—from extremely low-income housing through middle-income and workforce housing. We should make reasonable concessions for strong projects, welcome well-intentioned developers, and work collaboratively with them to shape financially feasible proposals that serve our residents and create a win for both the developer and our city.

I would like to see a diverse spread of housing, specifically mixed income and transit-oriented housing. I would like to do more than the bare minimum for RHNA requirements; however, I want to build housing on a more long-term scale so that our city can meet the next wave of requirements without using up all of our remaining space for the current one.

How would you characterize the greatest set of challenges facing housing production? And what do you plan to do to help overcome these challenges?

The greatest challenges are: 1) high pre-construction, review and impact-fee costs, which I would work to reduce for projects that meet community goals; 2) costly design requirements, which I would address by having city planners collaborate with developers on lower-cost alternatives that meet city standards; and 3) limited access to construction capital, which I would address by working with local lenders to develop financing options for viable housing projects.

In Healdsburg, the two barriers to production are the cost and the growth management ordinance (GMO). I want to work with community land trusts to acquire property on behalf of the city and develop out the housing that the city isn't able to meet on its own. As for the GMO, although affordable and senior housing exempt from the ordinance, the missing middle housing is what I would like to see more of. Like all young professionals, I find myself stuck out of homeownership and affordable housing.

City Council District 2

Scott Pratt	Mathew López
Generation Housing's current initiative, Housing for Healthy Communities, is part of our effort to continue a move away from exclusionary zoning, and looks at two state laws, SB 10 and AB 1033, that we believe are perfect fits for the North Bay. SB 10 upzones to allow up to 10 units on all parcels within a half mile of transit hubs and infill parcels. AB 1033 allows the separate sale of ADUs as small homes through condoization. Both are great opportunities for increasing affordable-by-design homes as both rent and for-sale products, perfect for young families, middle income workforce, and seniors. Could we count on your support for adoption and/or implementation of these bills? Why or why not?	
Yes. Healdsburg needs to work to overcome some of its own imposed housing restrictions and modify its own GMO. This is essential in creating a solid and replicable model to work within the State laws. Currently, Healdsburg needs to address and modify the GMO barriers. Not popular amongst voters but it must be done.	Yes. Soon we're going to hit a point where we run out of land to develop. The utility costs and environmental damages caused by sprawl are not worth the growth. So, we'll eventually need to look inward to find that extra space, whether it be through ADUs, lot-splits, or whatever.
Streamlining housing development in the entitlement and permitting processes is a powerful tool in helping to attract developers and ensure the timely approval of projects and accelerate the overall production of housing. Do you support this call to action? Why or why not?	
Yes. Absolutely. I have stated this in a previous answer. This is probably the simplest solution that the City can immediately institute.	No. I do, but I wouldn't want a blanket streamline that may bring in undesirable projects that doesn't actually provide housing for people in the area that are close to getting priced out. I would still like some council discretion.
There is work being done on a Housing Revenue Measure to be put on the 2028 Ballot. Do you support this effort? What do you believe your role in that effort is?	
Yes. My role is not only to support the housing bond effort, but also to help educate voters about its goals, benefits and costs. Bond measures often fail when voters lack clear information and default to opposing new public debt. I would work to ensure residents understand how the funds would be used, what safeguards would be in place and how the measure could expand housing opportunities in our community.	Yes. My role would be to connect with constituents and use my personal struggles of trying to continue living and working in my hometown. This way, I can provide the context and personal motivation of the optimism I have for downpayment assistance, maintaining affordable rents, and creating genuinely affordable units.

City Council District 2

Scott Pratt

Housing is often listed as a top priority here in Sonoma County. What does it mean to you to govern in a way that is consistent with your priorities? For instance, are you prepared to make tough budgetary decisions consistent with that priority? If you have already held elected office, can you provide an example?

Governing consistently with my priorities means following the data and our stated goals, not simply what is popular in the moment. It also means explaining the reasoning so residents can understand and champion sound decisions. I believe that when people have the same facts, we can reach negotiated agreement. I am prepared to make tough budget choices, but balance matters: critical infrastructure and basic city services cannot be sacrificed as we pursue affordable housing. We can do both.

Candidates were provided the opportunity to add any additional thoughts regarding housing. Substantive responses are provided here.

While serving on the board of Anderson Valley Housing, I learned that housing needs become clearer when we identify whom we are trying to serve. Focusing on the "missing middle"—teachers, first responders, working families, first-time homebuyers and young people—helps voters see the people behind the issue. Across Sonoma County, being specific about who needs housing humanizes the challenge and builds stronger support than simply saying, "We need affordable housing."

Mathew López

Housing is often listed as a top priority here in Sonoma County. What does it mean to you to govern in a way that is consistent with your priorities? For instance, are you prepared to make tough budgetary decisions consistent with that priority? If you have already held elected office, can you provide an example?

I want to think more long-term about project costs in our budget. Rather than how it's currently done with the city council making 1- or 2-year budgets, I want to look at projecting out an even longer budget so that we can allocate more capital to get more things done. I don't want to shut down any conversation by saying we don't have money for anything. On council I want to ask, "How could we make this work?" instead saying it will never work. Saying no all the time is easy, lazy, and cheap.