



Candidate Questionnaire

Note: The answers to the questionnaire will be shared with the members of the Democratic Party of Sacramento County and local Democratic clubs and may become public.

The DPSC Candidate Questionnaire contains questions from many subject areas that you may feel are not pertinent to the office you seek. We ask these questions because: candidates may go on to other offices, we use one questionnaire for all candidates, and we share the questionnaire with our many clubs which have broad interests. Please answer to the best of your ability. Thank you!

Section 1 - Background

- 1.1 Full Name: **Darren Suen**
- 1.2 Email address: **Darren4ElkGrove@gmail.com**
- 1.3 Office Sought: **Elk Grove Mayor**
- 1.4 FPPC ID: **Darren Suen for Mayor 2018, #1404524**
- 1.5 Occupation: **Civil Engineer / Policy Advisor**
- 1.6 Employer: **State of California**
- 1.7 Campaign Phone:
- 1.8 Campaign Website: **darrensuen.com**
- 1.9 Campaign Manager: **John Rasure**
- 1.10 Campaign Consultants: **Chris Chaffee & Skyler Wonnacott**
- 1.11 What is your anticipated budget and how much have you raised to date?

My budget will be large enough to be able to communicate with likely voters and win in November.

- 1.12 What are your primary sources for fundraising? Please list your top three campaign contributors.

Supporters. My largest contributors are from local building trades, small businesses, and civic organizations seeking to better Elk Grove.

- 1.13 Will all your campaign materials be printed by a union printer?

Yes

- 1.14 Do you voluntarily decline contributions from any particular contributor or class of contributors (e.g., Big Oil, Walmart, developers, lobbyists, charter schools, etc.)? If so, list who they are and why.

I would never take a contribution from interests that would create a legal conflict of interest for me on a City Council vote.

- 1.15 Please list your top five elected or appointed offices currently/previously held and any key affiliations, clubs, or community organizations. Please include your role and a contact name and phone number for reference.

Elk Grove City Council, Sacramento County Franklin-Laguna Planning Advisory Council

1.16 Please attach your biography, a list of current endorsements, and any campaign literature or social media information as a single file. Please name your file: last name/office sought.

See attached

1.17 Have you ever been registered to vote as a member of a political party other than the Democratic Party, or No Party Preference? If so, please state when, why, and for how long.

Yes, I was registered with another party for a short time period.

1.18 Have you ever endorsed, contributed to, campaigned for, or otherwise supported a candidate for election or appointment to a partisan or nonpartisan office that was not a member of the Democratic Party? If so, for which office, and why? Please be specific.

I have endorsed a non-democratic party candidate for non-partisan offices in the past, as I choose to endorse the candidate I believe will serve the community best.

1.19 Are you a dues-paying member of the Democratic Party of Sacramento County? **No**

1.20 Do you plan to purchase a ballot statement? **Yes**

1.21 What will your ballot designation be? **This is to be determined.**

1.22 Have you read the Platform of the California Democratic Party? It can be downloaded at <https://www.cadem.org/our-california/platform>

Yes

1.23 Have you read, and will you adhere to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices distributed by the Sacramento County Elections Department? It can be downloaded at <http://www.elections.saccounty.net>

Yes

1.24 Have you ever been the subject of sexual harassment/abuse/assault allegations investigated by law enforcement, governmental institutions, businesses or any other organizations? What was the result of any such investigation?

No

1.25 Is there anything in your history on the subject of sexual harassment/abuse/assault which, if revealed, would bring you, your proposed office, or the Democratic Party into disrepute?

No

1.26 How long have you lived in the district you seek to represent? **18 years**

1.27 Out of the last five elections, how many have you voted in? **5**

1.28 Why did you decide to run for your position and what do you hope to accomplish during your tenure? List your top three issues.

1. **Public safety**
2. **Transportation**
3. **Job creation**

1.29 If you are an incumbent, what have you accomplished during your tenure? **N/A**

Section 2 - District & Governance

2.1 Are you familiar with the budget(s) for which you will be responsible, if elected? If so, state how large it is, what its principal revenue sources are, and what its largest expenditure categories are.

Yes, I am very informed regarding Elk Grove's Budget, which currently stands at \$293M. Our largest source of revenue is through the sales tax. Our largest expenditure from the city budget is for our police services.

2.2 Will you support moving to by-district elections (rather than at-large) where they are not held now? Please explain.

Whereas no system is perfect, I learned through experience the downside of by district governance. However, as the population of Elk Grove increases, governing by districts maybe necessary.

2.3 What sets you apart from other candidates for this office?

My education, experience and ability to work towards consensus among stakeholders is what separates me from those running for this office. Also, my ability to gain the trust, respect and support of my council colleagues, the entire Elk Grove Planning Commission, the Elk Grove Police Officers Association, the Sacramento Firefighters Association, local 522, and numerous community leaders clearly sets me apart from other candidates running to serve.

2.4 How will you work with community advocates? What will you do to be accessible to community members and other stakeholders?

One of my greatest strengths is my ability to listen to stakeholders, work collaboratively with all involved, and then build consensus around a solution that works for most, if not all involved. This unique ability is due to my extensive knowledge of the planning, permitting, and other city processes and the trust I've built with the stakeholders working and living in Elk Grove.

I also believe that Town Halls are a great way to bring the community together, have a constructive dialogue about issues facing the community, and begin working through how to solve the day-to-day problems at hand.

2.5 What will you do to promote transparency and ethics? **Communicate and lead by example.**

2.6 What whistle-blower protections should there be for public employees who expose corruption, sexual harassment, or other illegal/unethical activity?

Whistle-blowers should be protected from ANY retaliation for their testimony. Further, the bad actors must be removed from the chain of command.

2.7 Do you believe that current campaign finance rules should be changed? If so, how would you change them?

I believe the current rules on the local level work. However, Citizens United must be changed to level the

playing field at the federal level.

Section 3 – Civil Rights

3.1 What will you do to advance the rights of:

- A. The LGBTQ community?
- B. Racial and ethnic minorities?
- C. Gender and gender identities?

I believe that discrimination against a person because of their sexual or gender identity or ethnic or racial identity is wrong. I will advocate for equal rights, treatment and status for ALL individuals in our community and continue to fight that EVERYONE receives the same rights and protections.

I firmly believe that education and anti-discrimination efforts are key in addressing bigotry and hatred, sexism and racism, and discrimination against the LGBT community. I am heartened by the growing acceptance and inclusive behavior by our young people and am believe tomorrow will be better than today. One day in my lifetime I hope we can speak of reaching Dr. King’s dream where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

3.2 What will you do to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in education, employment, and housing?

As Mayor, I will ensure that they have the same rights as everyone.

3.3 What is your position on a woman’s right to comprehensive healthcare, including the right to choose and access contraception, and the right to obtain a medically safe, legal abortion?

I wholeheartedly support a woman’s right to choose.

3.4 If elected, what will you do to close the gender pay gap?

Ensure pay is equitable and equal and fight alongside those pushing commonsense reforms at the state and federal level to effectuate these changes.

3.5 What is your position on immigration? Do you support an amnesty program for those immigrants already living in the United States? Do you support a clean DREAM Act, without any enforcement funding attached to it? Should undocumented immigrants have a path towards citizenship? Why?

I support the Dreamers, a pathway to citizenship, and treating immigrants and the undocumented with due process and other rights bestowed upon all humans under the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the numerous treaties the US is a signatory to.

3.6 What will you do to protect immigrant communities? **Ensure protection for all communities.**

3.7 Should there be limits on free speech or assembly in public places, such as protesting or picketing? Please explain.

Peaceful demonstration and respectful protest is paramount to maintaining decency in our community and having a vibrant democracy where individuals can come together to speak truth to power.

3.8 Do you support background checks for all gun and ammunition sales? What other restrictions on firearms do you think are appropriate?

I support any effective legislation to reduce gun violence.

3.9 Do you feel the criminal justice system is just and fair to everyone? If not, what reforms would you like to see?

The city does not manage jails and does not have an official role in the criminal justice system. However, from a moral and ethical standpoint, I do not support private prisons, believe that bail reform is needed to create a more just criminal justice system, and believe we must focus more resources on our 0 to 5 population to close the achievement gap and begin ending the school to prison pipeline.

3.10 Do you support capital punishment? If so, please explain when you think it's appropriate.

Yes, I support capital punishment for crimes of extreme heinousness and after a thorough, fair, and extensive court process.

3.11 Please share your views on the Black Lives Matter movement.

I support the mission but not some of the tactics.

3.12 How will you work toward greater police accountability? What role would the community play in that?

I believe the community must have a voice in our city's accountability process. Through an open dialogue we can ensure our police department is accountable to the residents of Elk Grove.

3.13 Do you support the universal use of police body cameras? When is it appropriate to release police body camera footage?

Yes, I support the universal use of police body cameras. The footage should be released once the investigation is concluded or after consulting with the city's legal counsel and police department, whichever occurs first.

3.14 What will you do to make your community more accessible to people with disabilities?

I will work with advocates for the disabled to correct areas of deficit they feel occur in Elk Grove.

3.15 What will you do to ensure that non-English speakers can fully participate in public meetings and access public services?

Provide translation services wherever possible. The City of Elk Grove already has translation services through our 311 program.

Section 4 – Healthcare

4.1 Do you believe that healthcare is a human right? If so, what do you believe is the most effective way to provide quality healthcare for all?

Health care is a human right and every resident of our community should be able to gain access to quality, affordable health care.

4.2 What is your position on parental notification prior to a minor terminating a pregnancy? Please explain.
I am in favor of California's current law allowing a minor to terminate their pregnancy without notifying

their parents or guardians.

4.3 What measures would you support to ensure adequate mental health services for all?

Unfortunately, the County of Sacramento is tasked with providing mental health services to the residents of Sacramento County. All I can do as a City Councilmember or Mayor is advocate for the County to operate its mental health services in a better way and advocate at the state and federal level for additional funding, which I've done as a community leader numerous times.

4.4 What will you do to help address high child mortality rates in the black community in Sacramento County?

Find out why and develop a plan of action

Section 5 – Good Jobs for All

5.1 Describe your relationship with organized labor. **Good**

5.2 Do you support the right of workers to unionize by card check? **Yes**

5.3 Have you attended the Sacramento Central Labor Council Candidate Academy? **Yes**

5.4 Do you support project labor agreements? **Yes**

5.5 Which labor unions will you be interacting with in your role? What is your plan for building collaborative relationships with union and nonunion employees?

I have a strong working relationship with the Building Trades and seek their input on major projects in Elk Grove. We have already established a collaborative relationship and I look to continue it as the Mayor of Elk Grove.

5.6 What is the role of the office that you seek in promoting good jobs for our region?

As Mayor, I will seek to ensure the ordinances, regulations, funding and other policies in Elk Grove help to facilitate the opening of new businesses and allow current ones to expand and prosper.

5.7 What solutions would you propose to solve budget shortfalls and how would you prioritize the needs of your constituents?

During budget shortfalls, I would always prioritize cutting administrative and other non-service related programs first to meet our budgetary obligations to our employees and retain the services our residents expect from a city like Elk Grove.

5.8 Do you believe income inequality is an issue in your community? If so, what steps would you take to address it?

Income inequality is an issue throughout the California. We need to do better creating opportunity for all residents of our state.

Section 6 - Local Economy & Public Resources

6.1 Under what circumstances would you support raising revenues by means of taxes or fees to support

public services and why?

When there is no other option.

6.2 How do you balance more progressive vs more regressive forms of taxation or other revenues and their specific impacts on the community, and what means of such revenues would you have at your disposal and support?

As Mayor, I will be vigilant in safeguarding every tax dollar and ensuring they are spent on programs that provide safety in every neighborhood, create opportunities for small businesses to thrive and expand, continue to provide affordable housing options, and focus on creating more transit options for residents.

6.3 Under what conditions would you support the privatization of public or natural resources (i.e. water, publicly-owned buildings, schools, park lands, parking facilities)?

None that I can think of.

6.4 What is your position on "public/private partnerships"?

These partnerships should be explored as an option when the service in question cannot be provided by city staff.

6.5 When is it appropriate to use public money or tax incentives to subsidize private business?

To generate economic development.

6.6 What is your plan to support and encourage local small business development?

Keep fees low. Provide workshops for entrepreneurs on how to do business in Elk Grove. Look into establishing small business incubators to help entrepreneurs move from concept to operation.

Section 7 – Environment

7.1 Do you support the construction of the Delta tunnels and the Southeast Connector? Please explain.

I support the objective of creating a reliable water system in California, but have concerns regarding the Delta Tunnels project as designed. I am in full support of the southeast connector it will provide vital connectivity between Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, and East Sacramento County.

7.2 When is it appropriate to expand the urban growth boundary?

The urban growth boundary is a county adopted line that the city has no control over.

7.3 Please describe your position on regional habitat and working lands conservation.

Biological science should drive the process.

7.4 What will you do to address climate change in your role? Please be specific.

Lower GHG by making Elk Grove an employment center as the GHG produced by cars is the single greatest producer for our region and nearly every region in the United States. To further reduce the GHG of cars is

to increase transit ridership by increasing the capacity of public transit and making it more convenient to be used.

7.5 Please describe your education and/or experience with land use planning.

I have extensive experience in land use planning. I am a civil engineer by education and trade and I've worked as a community planner.

7.6 Have you read the General Plan and do you agree with its vision of future development? If not, what changes would you propose? **Yes**

Section 8 – Education

8.1 Do you support Restorative Justice and funding such programs? **N/A**

8.2 What role do you believe charter schools should play in public education? **N/A**

8.3 Do you support reforming teacher tenure, due process protections, or teacher salary and benefits? Please explain. **N/A**

8.4 What will you do to minimize bullying and promote tolerance in school? Discuss your feelings about the bullying and harassment of LGBTQ students because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity. How will you help promote a safer environment in schools for all students? **N/A**

8.5 For school board candidates: Please explain LCFF and LCAP in three sentences or fewer. **N/A**

8.6 Do you believe that public adult education, colleges, and universities should be tuition free? **N/A**

Section 9 - Housing

9.1 What is your plan to address homelessness in your community?

Elk Grove is currently developing a comprehensive strategy to address the homeless crisis that includes transitional housing, a partnership with the County to provide wrap-around services, a navigator program, a POP officer and other services.

9.2 What is your plan to relieve the rental housing crisis?

Elk Grove must incentivize the building of more rental housing and more affordable housing options through permitting its construction.

9.3 Do you support rent control and just cause eviction? **No**

9.4 Do you support the adoption of inclusionary housing ordinances? **No**

9.5 What is your plan for funding affordable housing construction?

Elk Grove already incentivizes affordable housing construction through city policies. As Mayor, I will also seek additional revenue and incentives to build affordable housing at the State Capitol and in Washington DC. Unfortunately, there are very few ways local jurisdictions can incentivize affordable housing construction, to end our housing crisis this must change.

9.6 Would you support a local ordinance to end Housing Choice Voucher discrimination (Section 8)? Please explain.

I would be interested in learning more about how such a local ordinance would be structured as much of our housing policies are dictated by the state or federal government.

9.7 What is your plan to ensure that working class people have opportunities for home ownership?

Our housing crisis in California has been exacerbated by a lack of new housing construction, which has driven home prices through the roof and disrupted the rental housing market as well. Localities must find ways to increase the housing stock or few people will be able to afford home ownership in the future.

On the Elk Grove City Council I have worked to keep our construction fees low to help spur in-fill and new construction. Unfortunately, many other cities in the region have not followed suit, making Elk Grove one of the lowest priced areas to build more single-family homes. As Mayor, I will continue to strive to make sure Elk Grove continues to be a leader in new and in-fill construction of housing units to comply with our state housing requirements.

Section 10 – Transportation and Public Transit

10.1 Would you support a local sales tax measure to fund transportation and public transit? Please explain.

Yes, we must invest additional funding in our infrastructure for Elk Grove to be a fully, sustainable city.

10.2 If you are seated on the board of SACOG, STA, or Regional Transit, how would you use your role and what would you prioritize?

I would prioritize regional transit system and transportation projects that promote a job center to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

10.3 What is your plan to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled in the region?

Build Elk Grove as a job center and build up our regional transit system.

10.4 What is your plan to improve local and regional public transit? Please describe a priority project.

We must extend RT to connect the County together. For Elk Grove, we must create an express bus system in city, similar to the system that connects San Fernando Valley to the City of LA's metro system.