

Why I'm Running for Cupertino City Council

I'm running for Cupertino City Council because our community needs leadership grounded in real-world experience, public safety expertise, and practical problem-solving.

For more than fifty years as a professional engineer, I have designed and managed major infrastructure and transportation projects throughout the Bay Area. In that work, I was responsible for solving problems, balancing budgets, managing risks, and delivering projects that worked in the real world. When projects faced safety concerns, funding challenges, or schedule pressures, success depended on facts, analysis, and sound decision-making rather than ideology.

I believe those same principles should guide city government.

Today, Cupertino faces significant challenges: housing mandates from Sacramento, wildfire and evacuation concerns, fiscal uncertainty, increasing costs for residents and businesses, and growing pressure on local control. These issues require careful analysis, honest discussion, and solutions that reflect the needs of the people who live here.

My priorities are affordability, housing, fiscal responsibility, government transparency, and protecting local decision-making.

Affordability: Addressing the Real Causes

Much is said about affordable housing and affordability generally. We often hear that building more housing, especially higher-density housing, will attract younger families, provide homes for employees, keep schools open, and create a more vibrant local economy.

I believe affordability is a broader issue.

The affordability challenge is directly tied to the overall cost of living and the cost of goods and services. California consistently ranks among the most expensive states in the nation, with higher taxes, fuel costs, energy costs, regulatory burdens, and business expenses than many neighboring states.

These costs affect every part of daily life. Businesses pay more to transport goods, operate facilities, and comply with regulations. Construction costs rise. Cities face higher operating expenses. Homeowners and renters ultimately absorb these costs through higher housing prices and higher costs for goods and services.

California's business climate reflects these realities. Independent analyses consistently rank the state near the bottom in measures such as cost of doing business, tax burden, regulatory complexity, energy costs, and overall affordability. While California's economy remains strong, it is increasingly difficult for cities such as Cupertino to attract and retain small and medium-sized businesses.

Large corporations such as Apple are the exception, not the rule.

Water is often overlooked in discussions about affordability, yet it affects nearly every household and business. California's long-term water supply and storage capacity are critical not only for everyday residential and commercial use, but also for public safety. The devastating Palisades Fire highlighted how essential reliable water systems are during major emergencies.

Despite billions of dollars approved by voters for water-related infrastructure projects, many Californians question whether enough has been done to increase storage capacity, improve system reliability, and prepare for future growth. The cost of developing new water supplies, expanding storage capacity, upgrading infrastructure, and ensuring adequate resources for droughts and wildfire emergencies is ultimately borne by ratepayers and taxpayers. These costs ultimately affect ratepayers and taxpayers, adding to the broader affordability challenges already facing California families. Housing, affordability, public safety, and water infrastructure are interconnected issues that should be planned together.

As a city, Cupertino has limited authority to change state tax policy, energy policy, housing mandates, or many of the regulations that contribute to California's high cost of living. However, local governments are not powerless. Cities across California are facing many of the same affordability, business climate, and fiscal challenges. By working with neighboring jurisdictions, regional organizations, and statewide municipal associations, Cupertino can help build coalitions that advocate for practical reforms in Sacramento. A united voice from cities experiencing similar impacts can be an effective way to influence state policymakers and encourage solutions that address the underlying drivers of affordability while respecting local needs and priorities.

The State continues to impose increasingly aggressive housing production mandates on local governments in the name of affordability and housing availability, yet it has failed to address many of the policies that make affordability impossible in this state. If policymakers truly want to address affordability, they must examine the underlying drivers of cost rather than focusing exclusively on housing production. State policies that increase energy, transportation, regulatory, and business costs ultimately make housing less affordable instead of more affordable.

In my view, affordability cannot be solved without addressing California's broader cost structure.

Housing: More Housing Is Not the Same as Better Policy

Everyone agrees that California needs housing. The debate is not whether housing should be built, but how it should be built and who should make those decisions.

I believe state housing mandates have steadily eroded local control and weakened zoning protections that residents have relied on for decades. Local communities have historically determined how to balance housing, traffic, infrastructure, schools, public safety, open space, and neighborhood character through public hearings, planning commissions, elected city councils, and voter participation.

Residents purchase homes and make long-term investments based on those locally adopted plans. When the state overrides local zoning policies, it undermines expectations that communities have relied upon for years.

The principle of local zoning authority has long been recognized in American law. In *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.* (1926), the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed zoning as a legitimate exercise of local government authority to protect public health, safety, and general welfare.

Housing policy must also recognize local conditions. In many communities, wildfire hazards, evacuation limitations, infrastructure capacity, and environmental constraints are real safety concerns. Decisions about growth should account for those risks instead of applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

I am particularly concerned when state mandates encourage higher-density housing in areas facing significant wildfire risks or limited emergency evacuation capacity. Public safety should remain the first priority.

I also do not believe housing affordability is driven solely by supply. California's high taxes, energy costs, fuel expenses, insurance rates, and regulatory burdens all contribute significantly to the cost of homeownership and renting. Simply increasing housing production does not address those underlying factors.

Transportation and Housing

State-mandated high-density housing placed into neighborhoods that were never engineered for that level of intensity directly reduces the viability of Vision Zero. Vision Zero depends on predictable traffic flow, adequate sight distances, and enough right-of-way to safely separate bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles. When Sacramento imposes density without allowing cities to upgrade the underlying infrastructure, it forces more cars, more curb congestion, and more conflict points into streets that simply cannot absorb them safely.

Most roads in neighborhoods, away from main arteries, were designed for low-volume residential traffic, not multifamily density. They have constrained geometry, limited shoulders, and evacuation-critical choke points. Adding density in these areas increases vehicle volume and parking spillover, pushing cyclists into mixed traffic and reducing the margin of error that Vision Zero requires. It also creates circulation patterns that conflict with wildfire evacuation planning, where every second and every foot of roadway width matters.

Trying to retrofit safe bicycle-vehicle separation in these constrained corridors becomes exceedingly difficult. The city cannot widen the streets, making it difficult to add protected lanes, and cannot create the redundancy that Vision Zero's Safe System model demands. The result is a street environment that is less safe, less predictable, and fundamentally inconsistent with Vision Zero. In areas designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones this condensed street environment is inconsistent with wildfire-evacuation best practices.

This is the core issue: state-mandated density without local infrastructure planning doesn't advance safety — it undermines it. It creates new conflict points, parking shortages, evacuation risks, and mobility challenges that make Vision Zero goals harder to achieve, not easier.

The Role of CEQA

It is important to understand how California arrived at the current situation.

For years, environmental groups often used the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to challenge or delay development projects. In many cases, CEQA was used in ways far beyond its original purpose.

CEQA was created to ensure that government agencies evaluate, disclose, and mitigate significant environmental impacts before approving projects while providing meaningful opportunities for public participation.

That remains a valuable purpose.

I do not believe CEQA itself is the problem. Properly applied, it provides one of the few remaining tools that allows residents to understand how major development proposals may affect their neighborhoods, infrastructure, traffic, public safety, and quality of life.

The challenge is ensuring that CEQA serves its original purpose rather than becoming either a tool to block all development or a process that is bypassed entirely.

Fiscal Responsibility and Cupertino's Future

Cupertino's financial challenges stem largely from the loss of major sales tax revenues historically associated with Apple transactions.

The result was a significant reduction in one of the city's most important revenue sources. While property tax revenues continue to grow, property taxes do not generate the same level of discretionary revenue for cities as sales taxes generated by commercial activity.

This creates an important challenge.

Housing alone cannot replace the revenue generated by commercial, retail, and office uses. Residential development increases service demands such as parks, roads, public safety, and recreation while producing relatively limited city revenue compared to commercial development.

To maintain financial stability, Cupertino must diversify and strengthen its revenue base.

That means attracting and retaining small and medium-sized businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, improving customer service for businesses, streamlining permitting, and reducing unnecessary regulatory delays.

My commitments include:

- Strengthening transparency in how revenues are used.
- Improving revenue tools.
- Streamlining permitting and reducing delays for small businesses.
- Creating a business-support liaison to improve customer service.
- Advocating for state regulatory reforms that reduce costs.
- Supporting flexible commercial zoning that encourages a broader range of retail and service businesses.
- Building a more diversified and resilient revenue base.

Cupertino cannot directly change state tax policy or many state regulations that affect businesses, but we can make it easier to start, expand, and operate a business locally. We can also work with other cities and local government organizations to advocate for reforms in Sacramento that improve California's business climate and reduce unnecessary costs for residents and employers.

Transparency and Accountability

Government works best when it is transparent and accountable to the public.

Recent reports of fraud, waste, and abuse in California government programs have raised serious concerns about oversight and accountability. Taxpayers deserve confidence that public funds are being used effectively and responsibly.

Transparency is essential for earning and maintaining that trust.

Government should make it easier, not harder, for residents, journalists, and watchdog organizations to understand how public money is spent and how decisions are made.

Reducing waste and improving accountability are important not only for good governance but also because every dollar lost to inefficiency ultimately affects taxpayers and contributes to broader affordability concerns.

The Issues

Common Sense • Local Control • Public Safety • Fiscal Responsibility • Environmental Stewardship

Cupertino deserves leadership grounded in engineering experience, transparent decision-making, and respect for the people who call this community home. My priorities reflect decades of professional practice, a commitment to public safety, and a belief that residents deserve a meaningful voice in shaping our city's future.

Protecting Neighborhoods & Restoring Local Control

For decades, Cupertino residents relied on locally adopted zoning to guide growth, protect neighborhood character, and ensure safe, sensible development. Today, state housing mandates are overriding those protections and forcing dense projects into areas that cannot safely support them.

I believe local government exists to serve its residents—not distant policymakers or special interests. I will fight to restore local control, defend neighborhood protections, and ensure that development decisions respect the people who live here.

My commitments:

- Protect neighborhood character and property rights
- Advocate for legislative amendments to state housing mandates
- Build regional coalitions to restore local discretion
- Ensure residents have a meaningful voice in major development decisions

Public Safety First—Especially Wildfire & Evacuation Safety

Public safety is government's first responsibility. Yet dense housing is being pushed into Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones with known wildfire hazards, evacuation constraints, and infrastructure limitations.

This is not responsible planning—it is knowingly increasing foreseeable risk to life and property.

My commitments:

- Require evacuation-capacity analysis for all major developments
- Strengthen hazard-based zoning and defensible-space enforcement
- Oppose high-density projects in VHFHSZ unless exemptions are granted
- Improve emergency response, infrastructure resilience, and preparedness

Fiscal Responsibility & Honest Government

Taxpayers deserve transparency. Too often, new programs or services are proposed without clear explanations of long-term costs. Residents are asked to approve taxes and fees without honest discussion of tradeoffs.

Government must earn public trust through responsible budgeting, clear communication, and efficient use of existing funds.

My commitments:

- Strengthen oversight of public spending
- Require full cost-impact disclosures for new programs
- Reduce waste, fraud, and inefficiency before considering tax increases
- Ensure residents understand long-term financial impacts of policy choices

Strengthening Revenue & Supporting Local Businesses

Cupertino's financial stability depends on a balanced revenue base. After the state changed how online sales tax is allocated, Cupertino lost a major portion of the revenue once generated by Apple's online transactions. Today, property tax has become one of our most stable and fastest-growing revenue sources — but residents deserve clear, honest explanations of how that money is being used.

Practical Environmental Stewardship

Environmental protection must be grounded in science, engineering, and real-world conditions—not national political narratives. Cupertino's most urgent environmental challenges include wildfire hazards, water reliability, hillside ecosystem protection, and infrastructure limits.

I support practical, evidence-based environmental stewardship that protects residents and natural resources without compromising safety or affordability.

My commitments:

- Protect hillside ecosystems and open space
- Strengthen water-supply reliability and drought resilience
- Require infrastructure-capacity assessments for major development
- Support sustainability measures that are practical, affordable, and grounded in engineering reality

Transportation Safety & Vision Zero

Cupertino must improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers—but solutions must be driven by engineering, data, and measurable outcomes. Vision Zero is a commitment to eliminating severe injuries and fatalities, not a slogan.

I support targeted, evidence-based safety improvements that protect residents and strengthen mobility.

My commitments:

- Prioritize high-injury corridors through a Vision Zero Priority Network
- Support protected bike lanes, safer intersections, and traffic-calming measures
- Replace sharrow-only projects with modern, proven safety facilities
- Maintain an independent Bike/Ped Commission with Planning Commission coordination

Balanced, Common Sense Development

Growth must be safe, sensible, and supported by infrastructure. High-density housing in wildfire zones or aging neighborhoods without adequate water, evacuation capacity, or utilities is not responsible planning.

I support housing where infrastructure exists—not where it puts residents at risk.

My commitments:

- Align development with infrastructure capacity
- Protect long-established neighborhoods from incompatible density
- Support infill housing in safe, infrastructure-supported areas
- Ensure development respects hazard-based zoning and public safety

Transparency & Accountability

Government authority is held in trust for the people. That trust must be earned through transparency, honesty, and accountability.

Residents deserve clear explanations—not political messaging or hidden impacts.

My commitments:

- Strengthen public access to environmental and planning data
- Require independent technical review of major proposals
- Support open government and strong public records laws
- Ensure residents can evaluate public policy based on facts, not slogans

A Community-First Commitment

I will fight for common sense, fiscal responsibility, local control, public safety, and respect for the people of Cupertino. Together, we can protect our neighborhoods, preserve our quality of life, and ensure future growth reflects the values of our community.

My Commitment

My commitment is straightforward:

- Protect public safety.
- Defend local control.
- Improve government transparency.
- Strengthen Cupertino's financial future.
- Support responsible economic development.
- Base decisions on facts, data, and practical solutions.

I believe Cupertino's residents deserve leaders who focus on results rather than slogans. My career as an engineer has taught me to evaluate risk, solve complex problems, and make decisions based on evidence.

Those are the skills I will bring to the City Council.

I am running to help preserve the quality of life that makes Cupertino special while addressing the real challenges facing our community today.