

# 2016 LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



Candidate Name: Peter Ohtaki Position You Are Running For: Assembly District 24  
Political Party Affiliation: Republican Are You an Incumbent:  Yes  No

**INTRODUCTION:** Candidates for the state legislature in 2016 are respectfully requested to answer these questions relevant to the respective and often complementary roles of the state and city governments in California. While the League does not itself endorse candidates, the responses to this questionnaire will be shared with elected city officials in each legislative district for consideration in their own endorsement decisions as well as posted on the League website. Thank you for your participation. Please email your response to [Bismarck@cacities.org](mailto:Bismarck@cacities.org) or by fax to 916-658-8240 by no later than March 31. If you have any questions, please contact: League Public Affairs Director Bismarck Obando at [Bismarck@cacities.org](mailto:Bismarck@cacities.org) or 916-658-8273.

**LOCAL CONTROL.** The relationship between the state and cities functions best as a partnership where major policy issues are approached by the state with careful consideration of the varied conditions among the state's 482 cities and an appreciation of the importance of retaining local flexibility to tailor policies to reflect local needs and circumstances. Still, at times, cities have to respond to state legislation they believe undermines the principle of "local control" over important issues such as land use, housing, finance, infrastructure, elections, labor relations and other issues directly affecting cities. What is your perspective on local control and state preemption of local control? *(Please explain).*

As a second-term City Councilmember and former Mayor of Menlo Park, I believe strongly in local control and reforming unfunded state mandates on our cities. For example, we wanted a grocery store in a housing site, but it wouldn't count toward our RHNA, so I worked with current Assemblyman Rich Gordon on AB1690 to reform the state Housing Element law and allow mixed use in high-density housing, which passed with League and bi-partisan support in 2014. Now all California cities have more flexibility in zoning under RHNA.

City councils are elected by residents to manage land use issues, and are in the best position to address problems and come up with solutions that best fit the character of their communities. All too often, well-intended state laws create unintended consequences for cities and towns, and require substantial city staff time and resources to comply with these state mandates, rather than encouraging and funding local solutions to the important issues our communities face.

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**TRANSPORTATION FUNDING.** Cities and counties are struggling with a \$78 billion, 10-year maintenance funding deficit for the local streets and roads system. This amount is needed simply to maintain existing infrastructure; delaying these repairs by just 10 years would increase the deficit to \$99 billion. Meanwhile, millions of cars, trucks, busses and other vehicles have been added in California, utilizing our already over-burdened transportation network. At the same time, gas tax revenues (that benefit both the state and local system) have not been raised since 1994; they have been eroded by inflation, expanded use of electric and more efficient vehicles, and more recently declined 26% since Fiscal Year 2013-14. How would you support addressing this infrastructure funding deficit?

- Additional state gas or other vehicle taxes:  Yes  No
- Additional state user fees (similar to the vehicle registration fee):  Yes  No
- Expanded local authority to raise taxes and fees locally:  Yes  No
- Return transportation funding from General Fund (\$1 billion/yr.) and reform CalTRANS:  Yes  No
- Combination of approaches:  Yes  No
- Other approaches? *(Please explain)*

We should not spend \$64 billion on high-speed rail that will end short in Bakersfield, when it's so hard to commute to work each day. According to the League, \$500 million of Cap and Trade fees each year will go to high-speed rail, and I would re-allocate these funds to local commuter mass transit and regional transportation infrastructure needs such as Caltrain, BART, and grade separations.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** With the loss of \$1 billion in redevelopment funding that previously went to affordable housing and the exhaustion of past state affordable housing bond funds, California has virtually no resources to construct affordable housing. Affordable units often require additional public subsidy so that rents and/or purchase prices can be made affordable to low and moderate income households. What is your solution to the affordable housing crisis?

- Allocate a portion of state general fund dollars for affordable housing:  Yes  No
- Establish a new permanent source of affordable housing funding from a new revenue source such as a recently contemplated \$75 state tax or fee on various real estate instruments:  Yes  No
- Establish a local-state matching program, where local funding commitments to affordable housing are matched dollar-for-dollar with a state contribution:  Yes  No
- Reduce the regulatory burden on housing production imposed by CEQA and other regulations:  Yes  No

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- Combination of these approaches:  Yes  No
- Other approaches? *(Please explain)*

I have served as the Peninsula Division representative on the League's Housing, Economic and Community Development policy committee for the last two years.

The best way to increase the supply of affordable housing is to encourage construction of market rate housing, particularly studios and one bedroom rental units targeted as workforce housing and empty nesters, near jobs and transit hubs, which in turn will relieve pressure on existing rental housing stock.

In addition, the state should match and leverage local Below Market Rate funding to generate more subsidized units, rather than creating a new funding program and bureaucracy.

**WATER CONSERVATION AND STORMWATER.** Faced with the ongoing drought and increasing federal and state clean water regulations, local governments have struggled to enforce water conservation requirements and remove contaminants from stormwater and urban water runoff without reducing funding for public safety and other general fund commitments. How should the state assist cities with this challenge?

- Providing increased grants through state bonds financed from the state General Fund:  Yes  No
- Providing cities and other water agencies with increased flexibility to implement water conservation rate pricing and raise funds locally:  Yes  No
- Combination of these approaches:  Yes  No
- Some other approaches? *(Please explain)*

Cities and districts should be encouraged to build small water recycling facilities for irrigation needs to reduce demand for potable water. Water recycling for irrigation is cost effective and scalable. For example, our wastewater district is building a small water recycling plan to supply the irrigation needs of a golf course and another large water user in Menlo Park. California recycles a small percentage of water compared to Israel, and irrigation is a significant portion of our water demand.

In addition, water districts should be allowed to place higher rates on usage over certain base levels (tiered rates) in order to encourage conservation. Water districts have had to eliminate tiered rates due to a court case in San Juan Capistrano.

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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