

ABOUT YOU

Please provide your name as it will appear on the ballot: Lenka Wright

What office are you seeking? San Jose City Council District 10

Are you an incumbent in this office? No

Do you now or have you ever held elected office(s)? If so, please list title(s), jurisdiction(s), and years in each office: No, I have not ever held elected office.

Where's your hometown? Long Island, New York

What is your current city of residence? San José, CA

What is your highest level of education? Master's degree

What is your current primary vocation/occupation? Communications executive

Do you have an arts background of any kind? If so, please explain.

Growing up, I was exposed to the music industry due to my dad and former stepfamily. In the 1990s, I auditioned and was accepted into a summer session at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City.

ABOUT YOUR CAMPAIGN

Please share your candidate statement as it will appear in voting materials. (approx. 200 words)

I came to San José to realize my dreams of living in a safe, vibrant community where my family could thrive. These days, I see that dream slipping away for far too many young people, families and retirees. We deserve better from a city that has so much potential.

As Councilmember, I will work tirelessly to restore public safety, fix the homelessness crisis in San José, improve the quality of services that make our neighborhoods strong, and maintain fiscal responsibility with transparency and accountability.

With over 15 years of experience working for five cities as a communications executive, I have seen how government can work well for all members of the community. From my years as an award-winning broadcast journalist, I saw first-hand the results of public policy at its best and at its worst. As a working mom and military spouse, I know how to overcome obstacles and get things done. Through my volunteer work, I have brought people together for a common goal.

I have dedicated my life to public service. Now I seek to serve you as your next elected Councilmember in District 10.

Join me in standing up for San José's future: www.LenkaforSanJose.com.

What is your campaign budget? Please contact my campaign consultant, Victor Ajlouny, for information about campaign operations.

How much have you raised to date? Please specify if you have loaned or contributed any personal funds to your campaign and how much.

Please contact my campaign consultant, Victor Ajlouny, for information about campaign operations.

How many doors have you personally knocked to date? Please contact my campaign consultant, Victor Ajlouny, for information about campaign operations.

ABOUT THE ARTS

What is your perception of the current state of arts and culture in San José? (250 words)

Overall, it seems that there's not enough philanthropic support for arts and culture in San José, which could partly be due to its close proximity to San Francisco and Oakland. This is an untapped opportunity for the 12th largest city in the country. I remember when the Ballet San Jose rebranded itself as Silicon Valley Ballet in 2015 and the ballet company had to shut down within a year. There are also bright spots with community support for a multicultural arts scene, such as MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana.

How would you define the role of arts and culture in San José's economy? (250 words)

Arts and culture contribute to a vibrant local economy. I read with interest the results of the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study, which was shared publicly in November 2023. According to the City of San José's news release, Santa Clara County's nonprofit arts and culture industry generated \$292 million in economic activity in San José in 2022. Arts and culture also give the public more reasons to stay longer and fully experience our city's cultural diversity through its museums, live music venues, theatre venues and performing arts centers.

Were you familiar with SJAA before receiving this survey? No

If yes to the above, are you familiar with our current [policy priorities](#)?

I wasn't familiar with SJAA.

ABOUT OUR PRIORITIES

The following questions are directly related to SJAA's policy priorities. Your direct responses are appreciated!

Would you support a policy requiring large private developments to contribute funding and/or space and other resources to public arts and cultural programs in San José — similar to existing policies in Bay Area cities like Sunnyvale and Berkeley? Why or why not? You can read an overview of SJAA's policy proposal [here](#).

I am interested in exploring the possibility of such a policy in San José in collaboration with the development community. Having more spaces and funding for public arts and cultural program enriches the city experience. Supporting the arts in this way can serve as an economic boost for San José by drawing more workers, visitors including convention attendees, and residents alike to visit these locations while staying longer and spending more money at restaurants, hotels, retailers, etc.

Would you support reallocating the current 40% General Fund set aside from the Transient Occupancy Tax (aka TOT or Hotel Tax) to arts, culture, and tourism programs? Why or why not?

I would need more information about what the tradeoff would be with reallocating the current 40% General Fund set aside from the Transient Occupancy Tax to the arts, culture and tourism programs — essentially what would not get funded as a result of the reallocation. Based on what I am hearing from District 10 residents as I am knocking on doors, they like the arts but their top priorities are public safety and reducing blight.

Would you support the creation of positions within city departments for artists in residence to coordinate with staff on community engagement and strategic planning — as other municipalities like [Los Angeles County](#) are already doing? Why or why not?

Not at this time given the City's fiscal situation. I encourage exploring how the business and philanthropic community may want to get involved with having artists in residence or hosting pop-up events and/or spaces.

OPEN FORUM

What are some other ideas you have for increasing City support for arts and culture?

Hold free “theater in the park” events in City parks in the summer. Consider partnerships with public and private schools to enhance arts programming for schoolchildren as well as arts and culture appreciation tours/mini-trips for youth and adults alike.

Expand the art box and mural program with neighborhood associations throughout the city. This is a great way to showcase art in the community.

Collaborate with San José State University and community colleges in providing arts and culture programming that is open to the public.

What do you wish we had asked but didn't?

My question would be: what should our city do differently to support arts and culture? Here's my answer: with San Jose's 300+ days of sunshine, cultural diversity and varied scenery from high rises to country pastures filled with cows, consider how our city could become an economic engine for the entertainment industry while supporting local arts and culture and creating jobs. Develop the City's film permitting office to be a streamlined one-stop shop for film and commercial productions, increase revenue that would support essential public services, and become known as the Hollywood of Northern California.