

ABOUT YOU

Please provide your name as it will appear on the ballot: Irene Smith

What office are you seeking? SJCC D3

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

Where's your hometown? lived and voted in D3 for 35 years

What is your current city of residence? San Jose

What is your highest level of education? JD, PhD

What is your current primary vocation/occupation? Financial Analyst

Do you have an arts background of any kind? I sang at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fischer Hall and Lincoln Center with Master Work Chorus & conductor David Randolph in the 80's. I also taught yoga inside the San Jose Museum of Art.

ABOUT YOUR CAMPAIGN

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

District 3 should be – and can be – the pride of San Jose. But to get there, we need the sort of change that can only be realized with new ideas. New voices. Independent perspectives. I advanced to the general election for D3 in 2022 against Omar Torres. And my platform in 2025 sharpens my focus on four policies that need immediate attention.

One, fiscal accountability and much greater local control on how D3 and City Hall monies are spent.

Two, bigger, faster, more cost-effective, large scale, Homelessness solutions. Let's get our homeless neighbors off the street ASAP.

Three, pro local business incentives for Downtown and all of D3.

Four, a much more responsive public input process for D3 and the whole city. The people's voice and D3 needs to be heard.

I'm confident my background in fiscal management (10 years IBM finance), entrepreneurship (started three businesses in D3), and nonprofit leadership (started three local advocacy groups),

along with my successful run to the 2022 D3 finals provides the right mix of skills to galvanize the change we so clearly need.

What is your campaign budget? \$50K

How much have you raised to date? Please specify if you have loaned or contributed any personal funds to your campaign and how much. \$25K

How many doors have you personally knocked to date? How many are you committed to knocking before Election Day? 800 thus far, knocking every day

ABOUT THE ARTS

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

D3 carries the lion share of Arts in SJ and the Arts have stayed supporting D3 and SJ despite financial turn downs, blight, and crime. The Arts continue to struggle in SJ. Donors and major foundations are moving away from art funding and smaller arts creators are taking a larger hit.

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

Arts create community where residents can have a shared experience even if they have a different interpretation or experience. Arts bring communities together. Arts bring people from outside of SJ to downtown and are an economic engine for D3, small businesses, and the SJ budget.

Were you familiar with SJAA before receiving this survey? Yes

If yes to the above, are you familiar with our current policy priorities? Yes

ABOUT OUR PRIORITIES

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?

TOT in 2025 is projected at \$16M, making 40% of that \$6.4M. San Jose currently faces a budget shortfall in excess of \$60M for 25/26 and is proposing cuts in police, fire, and parks and recreation, the fundamental core services of our city government. I appreciate and value the importance of art and culture in our community, but I support a reallocation of a significant portion of the TOT set aside for arts, culture, and tourism programs to maintaining the city's essential core services. \$6.4 million could help avoid significant reduction in SJPd. That said, it is important to enact any such changes temporarily, making sure that any reductions are restored as quickly as possible.

As an alternative to reallocation, will you support setting FY25 as the baseline for General Fund revenue from TOT and dedicating net new TOT revenue in FY26 and beyond to arts, culture, and tourism programs? Why or why not?

No. San Jose needs to maintain budget flexibility that puts our core services of public safety, parks and roads at the top of the funding list.

Will you support efforts to fund updates to the City's Cultural Plan and Public Art Master Plan, both of which expired several years ago? How would you do this?

Absolutely. I would advocate that a specific amount of TOT revenues be set aside to define and update the Cultural and Public Arts Master Plan.

Will you commit to ensuring local creatives, arts practitioners, and culture bearers are centered in the planning, marketing, and execution of all arts and cultural activities related to major sporting events such as the Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup?

Absolutely. We need our local creatives to ensure these events shine and represent our multicultural environment in D3. We should not move forward without local input.

OPEN FORUM

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

The importance of the small arts organizations that represent each and every single one of our cultures and perspectives are important for the D3 community. I would like to partner with the different arts organizations to tailor ideas that would uniquely address the offerings and needs of that art organization.

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

Parking for Arts events. Pedestrian safety as they walk to events. Blight in downtown that is an impediment to stellar Arts programs. Unsheltered encampments, fires, and crime that give patrons pause to visit.