



Susie O'Hara
for Santa Cruz City Council
DISTRICT 5

MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 21, 2023

CONTACT
Laura Knobel
Campaign Manager
(831) 288-3959
susie4santacruz@gmail.com

LOCAL LEADER, SUSIE O'HARA, ANNOUNCES HER CANDIDACY FOR SANTA CRUZ CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 5

Longtime Santa Cruz mom of three daughters, current UC Santa Cruz resident, and former City employee Susie O'Hara has decided to throw her hat into the race for the newly formed Santa Cruz City Council District 5.

"I'm thrilled by the prospect of returning to a leadership position for the City of Santa Cruz. I love working alongside the incredible staff that serve our community; witnessing the critical and essential work they do every day; and seeing the tangible, beneficial impact their efforts have on our residents, visitors, and workers," Susie notes.

Susie enters the race with nearly 20 years of relevant experience. She has served on the City's Water Commission, Santa Cruz County's CORE Steering Committee and Homeless Action Partnership, and four different County Health and Human Services Committees/Commissions, and worked for ten years at the City's Water Department and Manager's Office.

"I met Susie in 2006 shortly after she arrived in Santa Cruz – then a young mother of two small daughters and experienced water engineer taking a pause from professional work," shares former-mayor, Cynthia Mathews. "I quickly nominated her for the City's Water Commission, which she served on admirably for four years during a complex long-range planning process. Susie's community service took off from there as she served on other civic, non-profit and school boards, establishing an impressive range of experience and networks along the way. She has a deep and wide knowledge of the community that will make her a productive and effective councilmember."

District 5 is the most geographically and economically diverse district in the City. The District includes part of the UC campus, a wildland open space (Pogonip), a large regional park and sports complex (Harvey West), industrial centers, a coastal watershed (San Lorenzo), single-family homes, multifamily housing units, artists' live/work spaces, a mobile home park, a homeless resource center, and even a state park. It will take an experienced and skilled leader to be able to understand and represent the needs of these disparate constituencies.

"I enter into this race with years of experience working with, and advocating for, this diverse constituency," Susie adds. "Whether it be serving on the 2015 Arts Council committee to plan the first Ebb and Flow River Arts Festival; or engaging with Housing Matters and Roaring Camp to envision a visual rail gateway that celebrates the industrial, homeless service, and rail history of Harvey West; or commiserating with UCSC faculty, staff, and students on the real affordability challenges of making a life in Santa Cruz, I have been deeply engaged in advocating for District 5 constituents since long before the District was conceived."

“I moved to UCSC at the height of COVID to support my husband, a history professor,” Susie continues. “Living on campus gives a new perspective on student life. District 5 student constituents are largely first-year dorm students, finding their way post-COVID, often rebuilding their mental health, motivation, and connection to each other. I see this student constituency needing an advocate to help them move into the community as sophomores, find housing, jobs, and mentors, and develop deeper connections with their City neighbors. UCSC faculty, staff, and students are important thought leaders and economic engines for our City. We need to find a way to better connect the City on a Hill with the City of Santa Cruz. I can facilitate that.”

Susie plans on setting up neighborhood hubs in each distinct area of District 5 where neighbors can find yard signs, get information about her qualifications, and find ways to engage with her campaign. Hubs will be District 5 neighbors that have known and worked with Susie for years, who also share her campaign values, and are excited to engage with other civically-minded neighbors.

“I’m honored to serve as a neighborhood hub for Susie’s campaign representing the El Rio mobile home park”, says Anna Brooks. “I have known Susie as a co-worker for nearly ten years. Throughout her time at the City, I witnessed Susie lean into every challenge that was thrown at her, whether it be running the 2013 Public Safety Task Force, managing the Downtown Accountability Program, or building and managing a brand new camp for the unhoused on River Street. Susie is a dynamic, smart, and empathetic leader who does not shy away from any obstacle. My neighbors in El Rio would benefit from her leadership style, passion, and extensive knowledge of City processes.”

Susie will host a kick off event for her campaign in early January. Information on Susie’s campaign can also be found on her website, voteforsusie.com.