



Oakland City Council Candidate Questionnaire

EBHO is a member-driven organization working to preserve, protect, and create affordable housing opportunities for low-income communities in the East Bay by educating, advocating, organizing, and building coalitions.

1. Do you believe that housing is a human right? If not, why not? If so, what are you going to do ensure every one of your constituents has a safe, quality place to call home?

Yes.

Housing / homelessness is the number one issue for the City of Oakland. It is the number one issue for the State of California.

There are multi-unit dwellings being built in downtown Oakland and across Oakland. Yet, the number of tents increase exponentially in parks and playgrounds. Our community spaces are not being utilized as originally intended, but as short-term/emergency outdoor sanctuaries for those who have nowhere else to live. These shifts in community spaces affect children, families, and seniors. This is not to state blame – this is our reality. In the midst of these makeshift outdoor day shelters, workers and business owners walk by (and drive passed) the reality of this public health crisis.

We must do something. I will work collaboratively with my colleagues and key stakeholders and community members to address the issues that are critical, if not addressed immediately. I will meet with constituents on a regular basis to hear their concerns and work with them on existing community and residential projects they are working on to improve the district.

For the long term, the only real solution is to build more housing, and housing that is affordable for families, period. Much of this is driven at the regional and state level, and I will push Oakland to work with our partners to change laws that have impeded affordable housing development.

In recent years, we have begun to put policies in place that will help – such as inclusionary zoning and secondary housing units. Some funds are beginning to flow from the affordable housing trust fund and the Measure KK bond. Mayor Schaaf is serious about her plan to build 17,000 new housing units and protect 17,000 existing households from displacement.

That's a start, but we need to do more.



East Bay Housing Organizations

2. EBHO has put forward a proposal for a package of measures to preserve existing rental housing resources and protect tenants from displacement. What would you do to strengthen the condo conversion ordinance, prevent conversion of single room occupancy (SRO) residential hotels, and regulate short-term rentals such as Airbnb and dedicate transient occupancy taxes from short-term rentals to support affordable housing?

Regulating short-term rentals and dedicating transient occupancy tax in the same way the City of Berkeley approached this – where rental hosts must register with the city of Berkeley and pay a 12% transient occupancy tax, pay a 2% enforcement fee on each transaction, and a \$220 annual fee. There is an opportunity for revenue gains for the City of Oakland, if we were to apply this to short-term rentals and in turn, allocate the revenue towards affordable housing options where it is most needed.

3. What do you think are the critical elements of a public land policy for Oakland? Would you prioritize the use of public land for development of affordable housing? How would you ensure that at a minimum the City fully complies with the Surplus Land Act?

Pulling from the San Francisco, Washington D.C., and Portland models, respectively, the critical elements are ensuring that 1) public input is a requirement prior to actual development; 2) at the minimum 20-30% of public land be designated for affordable housing; 3) that 25% of affordable housing units be available to households at 30% of Average Median Income and the rest at 50% AMI. On the sale of the affordable units, half should be 50% AMI and the other half should be 80%; and 4) an annual evaluation of displacement and gentrification monitoring.

This is a priority as people are slipping through the cracks and ending up homeless. The time is right now.

At a minimum, the City needs to go ahead and draft and finalize an ordinance establishing a Public Land Policy to give guidance to stakeholders and start acting on affordable housing needs.

4. What new sources of funding would you consider to create an ongoing stream of dedicated funding for affordable housing production?

Incentives for developers who build dedicated affordable housing in the form of a tax break.

5. In 2016, the City Council reallocated “Boomerang Funds” (the city’s share of property tax increment that used to fund redevelopment) from affordable housing development to homeless services. Measure W would create a vacant property tax to fund homeless



East Bay Housing Organizations

services and deal with illegal dumping. If this measure passes, what would you do to ensure that the Boomerang Funds are returned to their original purpose of providing permanent housing?

In this instance, the boomerang funds misplacement was a costly mistake made by the City and missed opportunities hurt the most vulnerable and clearly, there is a need for oversight. Once the Measure passes, I would propose establishing an Measure W Oversight Committee. Part of the resolution to establish Oversight Committee would include an evaluation of the Boomerang Funds and its purpose.

I also understand that there were also staffing issues in the Housing and Community Development Department. I would make sure that they provided a quarterly report to the council with updates on staff retention and vacancies.

6. What do you feel are the greatest barriers to affordable housing development in Oakland, and how would you remove those barriers?

The current role is making sure that we slow-down/eliminate displacement. Make more units available at below market rate and knowing that the market-rate is an amount not attainable for most who may be moving from district to district within Oakland or just a few streets over. For District 6, there is a need for market-rate housing for students, young adults, single adults, and families. An affordable senior housing development is already under construction and there is likely a need for more. My plan would be to meet with developers, labor unions, and the City's planning and economic development departments to assess locations within the district and set a timeline for new housing development. Preserve existing affordable housing by beefing up anti-displacement efforts.

7. Oakland is in the middle of an unprecedented building boom, with building permits issued for over 7,000 units between 2015 and 2017, and thousands more in the pipeline. This is far more housing that was created under the "10K" Program in the early 2000s. However, 93% of the housing being built is market rate for above moderate income households, while only 7% is affordable to very low, low and moderate income households. Oakland's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) incorporated in the adopted Housing Element states that 50% of new housing should be for very low, low and moderate income. What will you do to ensure that Oakland's housing production is at least proportional to the City's stated needs? Please see answers to #3 and #6.



East Bay Housing Organizations

8. Large sections of Oakland, particularly in the North and East Oakland flatlands, have been recently designated “Opportunity Zones” where investors are entitled to significant federal tax benefits. How will you ensure that those investments benefit existing residents rather than exacerbate displacement in transitioning neighborhoods? Would you support the City reclaiming a portion of the enhanced value for affordable housing, for example by creating an Opportunity Zone overlay where housing impact fees and jobs/housing linkage fees would be higher than in other areas of the City?

Make it a requirement that the Opportunity Zone has community benefit agreement tied to it. I would have to look into the City reclaiming a portion to determine what exists and what would be most feasible and request for a cost/benefit analysis of the impact and linkage fees to make a better informed decision.

9. Do you support Prop 10, and if it passes, what would you do to strengthen Oakland’s rent control?

Yes. We should work to increase affordable housing through Inclusionary zoning requirements with substantial percentages for affordable units; repeal Costa Hawkins and improve rent control; increase tenant protections, especially for unjust evictions; change zoning requirements that effectively discriminate against minorities and lower-income families. I have also called for an evaluation/assessment of D6 housing and property challenges.

10. The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program only serves a fraction of the people who qualify. Those who are fortunate enough to receive such assistance often discover that they cannot find landlords willing to accept their vouchers. What would you do to ensure that Section 8 vouchers are accepted throughout the City so that all who receive them can actually use them?

Locate a list of all identified Section 8 housing in D6. Request that the information is current and all landlords who have identified as Section 8 have confirmed that they do accept Section 8. Determine what the federal penalties for refusal and establish a local fine for the same in the event a land refuses section 8.

11. What measures will you support to prevent at risk households from becoming homeless, and what would you do to provide housing for those who are already homeless? Please discuss both short-term and long-term strategies.

My view on affordable housing is similar to my view on healthcare. We need to address that housing is a basic need and affordability is subjective when housing prices and rents are unattainable for current residents of the City of Oakland. Housing should be



East Bay Housing Organizations

affordable and accessible for everyone. We should work to increase affordable housing through Inclusionary zoning requirements with substantial percentages for affordable units; repeal Costa Hawkins and improve rent control; increase tenant protections, especially for unjust evictions; change zoning requirements that effectively discriminate against minorities and lower-income families. I have also called for an evaluation/assessment of D6 housing and property challenges.

Short term:

I have advocated for a weekly homeless count in my district so that we can pay more attention to immediate needs. I will personally take an active role in coordinating efforts if I am elected. I will also fight to increase outreach services to homeless people and improving coordination with county, city and community-based organizations. We need rapid transitional housing. Tuff sheds are not the solution after 6 months and 6 months is too long.

Long term:

We must stop criminalizing homelessness and criminalizing poverty. It is not only cruel, it's bad policy in that it does not solve the problem. We need more shelters and more housing (see above). We need more aggressive tenant protections. We need better access to mental health treatment and services. And we need to focus on job training, job placement and local hiring policies that will give more folks the ability to stay in their homes. I have advocated for a weekly homeless count in my district so that we can pay more attention to immediate needs.