

Oakland Mayoral 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

Name:	Saied Karamooz
Office:	Mayor
Jurisdiction:	City of Oakland
Website:	www.EveryOnesMayor.org

Question		Answer
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?	<p>Yes. I do believe that housing is a human right. But the notion of housing as a human right is not a matter of opinion or subject to debate. It is a matter of international law as declared by the United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): The Right to Adequate Housing (https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf).</p> <p>In my platform, I have stated that I would embark on an extensive publicly funded construction program with a \$500M bond to build affordable homes for sale or rent to low-income families.</p>
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	<p>Currently, short-term rentals in Oakland are completely unregulated. The city does not impose the limitations on Airbnb and has no penalty for violators.</p> <p>I would impose a 180-day moratorium on evictions or rent increases and work closely with housing advocacy non-profits to draft policies for protecting the current supply of rental homes.</p> <p>With regard to short-term rentals, I would draft a uniform policy for all short-term rental services and enforce the tax collection and rental limitations rigorously. All taxes collected from short-term rentals would be spent on affordable housing initiatives.</p>

Question	Answer
occupancy taxes from short-term rentals to support affordable housing?	
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?	<p>Public land must be dedicated for public good. Public land, owned by the City or OUSD, MUST NOT be sold.</p> <p>As stated herein, I oppose any sale of public land. With regard to lease of public land, I would ensure that the City publishes its plans for any parcel under consideration for lease with no less than 180 days notice so that the public has plenty of time to provide input into the City’s decision.</p>
4 What new sources of funding would you consider to create an ongoing stream of dedicated funding for affordable housing production?	<p>I have committed to a \$500M bond to initiate the housing construction/refurbishment project. This bond would cost the City \$17M per year. I project that the rental and sales revenue from the initial implementation of this project would provide the ongoing stream of funding necessary for continuation of the program for the foreseeable future.</p>
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 services and deal with illegal dumping. If this measure passes, would your budget proposal ensure that the Boomerang Funds are returned to their original	<p>Redirecting the Boomerang Funds away from affordable housing was shortsighted and self-defeating. More specifically, it resulted in an exacerbation of the homelessness crisis in our City.</p> <p>So, yes, I would return Boomerang Funds back to their original purpose. Moreover, I have stated that I will dedicate \$17M (see response to item 4) to construction of publicly funded affordable homes.</p>

Question		Answer
	purpose of providing permanent housing?	
6	What do you feel are the greatest barriers to affordable housing development in Oakland, and how would you remove those barriers?	<p>The greatest barrier to building affordable homes in Oakland is Developer Greed!</p> <p>My platform includes a major construction/ refurbishment of publicly funded affordable homes that are of the same quality, material, design, and workmanship as market rate homes built by union labor, except they would be void of Developer Greed. These homes would be made available for sale or lease to low-income families.</p>
7	<p>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</p>	<p>My administration will take direct responsibility for ensuring an adequate supply of public housing by embarking on a large-scale housing construction/ refurbishment project.</p> <p>All new permits issued for market rate projects will be expected to increase their allocation of affordable homes to no less than 25% or to contribute to the City’s fund for construction/refurbishment of affordable homes.</p>

Question		Answer
	City's stated needs?	
8	How will you work with the county and with MTC/ABAG to provide regional solutions to homelessness and affordable housing?	<p>Oakland's homelessness is a local crisis. It is true that homelessness is a widespread issue in the region and the entire state of California. However the report published by the City of Oakland indicates that the last known address for 86% of our homeless population was in Alameda county (http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/City-of-Oakland-ES.pdf). As such, I will collaborate with the County to provide wellness, housing, and nutritional services for our homeless resident.</p>
9	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?	<p>The City has an obligation to ensure that resources and community benefits are made accessible not only equitably, but also targeted to help the disenfranchised and marginalized community members. As such, I would demand that all investors who seek to benefit from the "Opportunity Zones" have specific plans for betterment of their surrounding communities. But I will not stop with this initial demand; I will implement rigorous enforcement procedures to ensure that they fulfill their promises as projects proceed.</p> <p>Given the severity of our housing crisis, I will absolutely be open to creating Opportunity Zone overlays that promote construction of affordable homes.</p>
10	Do you support Prop 10, and if it passes, what would you do to	<p>I support Prop 10 wholeheartedly. And when passed, I will work closely with housing advocacy non-profits to draft a fair and effective rent control ordinance in Oakland within 180 days.</p>

Question		Answer
	strengthen Oakland’s rent control?	
1 1	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?	I would offer business tax incentives to Oakland landlords who accept Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.
1 2	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.	<p>I would earmark funding for no-interest loans to at-risk households so that they can pay for rent, utilities, and taxes to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>With regard to providing housing for the currently homeless resident, I would take the following discrete, actionable, and measurable steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Short Term (2-6 weeks). Meet the immediate needs (i.e., hygiene, wellness, safety, storage, and mailing address) of our homeless residents, 2) Medium Term (within 180 days). Provide humane (i.e., converted containers, NOT Tuff Sheds & Port-a-Potties) temporary housing in 6-8 locations (with 300-400 residents per location) with full navigation services at each site, and 3) Long Term (within 24 months). Embark on a housing construction initiative to provide affordable homes (for rent or purchase) to low-income families.