

East Bay Housing Organizations

Oakland City Councilmember Candidate Questionnaire 2024

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.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to educate and inform communities on each candidate's stance on the housing issues directly impacting them, and does not indicate endorsement. All candidates for City Council have been invited to complete the questionnaire.

Candidate Name: Edward C. Frank - D1 Oakland City Council

Please give a brief introduction of yourself. (50 word limit) : Homemaker, small business owner, community volunteer

Questions: (200 word limit for each response)

1. Everybody needs a place to call home, but for too many people, the private market is failing to meet that need. Some advocates argue that the City should focus on removing regulatory restrictions to speed up development of market-rate housing, thereby expanding supply to lower the cost of housing for everyone. Others argue that the market has produced plenty of housing for above-moderate income households, and the City should prioritize housing affordable to those with low incomes. Where do you stand on this, and what actions would you take?

Following Massachusetts' recent action in passing the Affordable Homes Act of 2024, I would encourage the City of Oakland to explore community land trusts, green housing initiatives, and utilizing federal, state, and county resources to acquire abandoned lots and buildings and transforming them into efficient, City-Owned, below market rate housing.

2. What current sources of affordable housing funding would you increase or expand? Now that the Regional Housing Bond is no longer on this Fall's ballot, what new sources would you support? Please identify both one-time and ongoing funding streams.

I would support a parcel tax on residential and commercial properties to fund new and renovate existing public housing. I would work with my fellow councilmembers to secure all county, state, and federal funds that become available to help address our housing crisis.

3. What is your position on Proposition 5, and why?

I support California Proposition 5, with reservations. I believe that if we the people choose to fund bonds, that borrowed money should be used for infrastructure improvements that will provide benefits for many generations. It is unfortunate that there is language in the bill that prohibits cities from using the money to acquire vacant properties or lots. I would encourage lawmakers to include language in the Proposition, or in future bonds, that new construction and development be done as environmentally sustainably as possible. I believe public ownership of vibrant, low-income housing is the future.

4. In the previous Housing Element cycle (2015-2022), Oakland permitted seven units of market-rate housing for every low or moderate income unit, producing double our assigned need for market-rate but only one-third of our affordable housing need. What do you consider to be the greatest barriers to development of affordable housing in Oakland, and what strategies will you take to remove those barriers to ensure that Oakland's housing production is more balanced and at least proportional to the City's stated needs?

One of the greatest barriers to the development of affordable housing in Oakland is voter education and the influence of money in politics. I will advocate for fully funding our Democracy Dollars program, which, if implemented, should see greater engagement from historically marginalized Oakland citizens, while decreasing the amount of big money that unfairly sways elections. A strategy I will use personally is to connect via forums and town hall meetings with D1 constituents, explaining the benefits of public-owned low income housing.

5. Oakland has a number of policies to protect renters from unaffordable rent increases, arbitrary evictions, and other forms of displacement. Which programs do you think are most effective? What changes would you support? Are there new tenant protection and anti-displacement policies that you would pursue?

I will earnestly declare that I do not have adequate knowledge of Oakland's existing housing support programs to give an educated response to this question. Policies that keep people housed, and therefore off of the streets - including renter protections and rent caps - would have my support.

6. What measures will you support to prevent at-risk households from becoming unhoused, and what would you do to provide housing for those who are already experiencing homelessness? Please discuss both short-term and long-term strategies. What steps should the City take to prevent criminalizing homelessness, particularly after the Grants Pass decision and the Governor's executive order, and to focus instead on solutions for unhoused people?

Working to secure county, state, and federal grant funding to provide rental assistance for at-risk households.

In the short term I would encourage the Mayor and City Administrator to identify and document our unhoused population as accurately as possible, then prioritize securing shelter/stable housing for those most vulnerable - families with young children and elderly/disabled people. Partnering with local non-profits to encourage treatment for those suffering from substance abuse. Supporting police in policing criminal activities that sometimes occur in encampments, including human trafficking and sales of illicit drugs.

7. Local jurisdictions have a legal obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing in all their housing and community development policies. What does this mean to you? What specific policies would you pursue to address the disparate impacts our housing system has on Oakland residents of color, particularly Black, Brown and Indigenous people? What should the City do to ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing across all parts of the City rather than concentrating it in low income neighborhoods and communities of color?

AFFH declares that jurisdictions that receive federal HUD funds to proactively take meaningful actions to overcome patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, eliminate disparities in opportunities, and foster inclusive communities free from discrimination. Beyond issuing proclamations and resolutions to comply with these rules, Oakland could consider beginning the process of creating a new City Charter - setting Oakland forward on a course that embodies these and other values anchored in equality, community, and environmental stewardship.

8. Oakland has been considering adoption of a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, which would give tenants the opportunity to purchase their rental units if their buildings are offered for sale. Do you support giving tenants (and nonprofit community organizations) a right of first offer and a right of first refusal? Why or why not? Are there particular provisions or exemptions that you would seek?

Renters and tenants are the majority in Oakland. Giving long-term renters the opportunity to own their unit would lead to an increased sense of security, belonging, and well-being for individuals & families in Oakland. It could shift families from precarity to security. I support the idea of a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, but would seek counsel of my constituents, policy professionals, and advocates before passing such a law.

9. In December 2018, the City Council adopted a Land Disposition Policy to prioritize the use of surplus public land for affordable housing. Staff was directed to bring back an implementing ordinance within 6 months, but that hasn't happened. What will you do to ensure that a Public Land Ordinance is drafted, enacted and implemented consistent

with the adopted policy? What do you think are the most critical elements of a public land policy for Oakland? What role should the community play in the disposition and use of public land?

I think the most critical element of public land policy in Oakland is ensuring our communities are educated on the matter and understand the policy and implications of implementing frameworks for the disposition and use of public land. I would advocate for clean, green, vibrant housing to be built next to/within walkable range of efficient, attractive public transportation. I would work with fellow councilmembers and D1 constituents in imagining and developing inclusive, diverse, sustainable, and resilient public housing.

10. For large projects such the Coliseum area, what community benefits should the City seek and at what levels? Would you require inclusion of affordable housing, and if so, what percentage should be affordable and what income levels should be targeted? Who should pay for that development?

Federal, State, and County funding should be used to develop low-middle income housing in large development projects. Development should not be done only for development's sake. We must move forward and develop with intention - with the understanding that old models of progress have landed us in the inequitable present, and only by reimagining paradigms will we make real progress toward a just, equitable, community-centered future that so many yearn for.