

## East Bay Housing Organizations Berkeley 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.*

**Name: Jenny Guarino**

**Please give a brief introduction of yourself. (50 word limit)**

My name is Jenny Guarino. I'm an elected Head Steward for UAW 4811 Academic Student Employees at UC Berkeley, and I fight every day so that workers are paid fairly, have safe working conditions, and are treated with respect. I'm excited to extend this fight to the people of Berkeley.

**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?**

There are many factors driving our housing crisis. Restrictive single family zoning, disinvestment from public housing, land and housing as a speculative asset, and price gouging by landlords all contribute.

I think "removing regulatory restrictions" is a simplistic framing. There are many critical housing regulations to protect public health and safety, ensure the fair treatment of workers, and provide needed housing affordability and tenant protections. I strongly support the HARD HATS Ordinance, the Demolition Ordinance, and our rent and eviction control laws. There are some zoning and planning requirements, however, that are

burdensome with little upside for the public good. I support the Missing Middle proposal, in particular as presented by the Planning Commission and Councilmember Lunaparra.

However, the private market will always serve the needs of the wealthy far better than the needs of the poor. The City should be focused on affordable, social, permanent supportive, and public housing to ensure that people of all incomes can live in Berkeley. I support a multifaceted approach to raising money for affordable housing, as discussed further in a subsequent question. I support TOPA, Measures W and BB on this year's ballot, and strongly support a regional bond measure in 2026.

**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 strongly support Measure W to renew and expand our tax on the most expensive property sales to fund homeless housing. I would support placing a new affordable housing bond on the ballot if elected, especially in light of the failure of Measure L. We have to explore multiple avenues for generating affordable housing; construction, conversion, and rehabilitation are all essential. I support TOPA as a way to convert existing housing to affordable housing and unlock potential matching funds from state and non-profit sources. I support funding the Small Sites programs as another way to convert existing housing to affordable housing. I would also like to explore innovative new progressive revenue options, like Oakland's progressive business tax.

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

I am strongly in favor of Prop 5. Supermajority requirements for funding affordable housing are a relic of the exclusionary, reactionary, and segregationist tendencies of Prop 13. We desperately need to raise funds for affordable housing, and a simple majority should be enough.

**4. In the previous Housing Element cycle (2015-2022), the City of Berkeley produced nearly six units of market-rate housing for every low- or moderate-income unit, producing nearly triple our assigned need for market-rate but only about two-thirds of our affordable housing need. What do you consider to be the greatest barriers to development of affordable housing in Berkeley, and what strategies will you take to**

**remove those barriers to ensure that Berkeley's housing production is more balanced and at least proportional to the City's stated needs?**

Ultimately, the barrier to generating affordable housing is funding. I strongly support Measure W to renew and expand our tax on the most expensive property sales to fund homeless housing. I would support placing a new affordable housing bond on the ballot if elected, especially in light of the failure of Measure L. Construction, conversion, and rehabilitation are all essential to generating affordable housing.. I support TOPA to convert existing housing to affordable housing and unlock potential matching funds from state and non-profit sources. I support funding the Small Sites programs as another conversion tool. I am strongly in favor of the Demolition Ordinance that the Council passed, particularly its 1 for 1 replacement requirement of rent controlled and affordable units. I would also like to explore innovative new progressive revenue options, like Oakland's progressive business tax.

There are some regulatory steps we can take to make affordable housing easier to build. The City has already expedited planning approval for 100% affordable housing projects and given additional density waivers to such projects. I support exploring additional ways to make it easier to build and approve affordable housing, and to make affordable housing more competitive through increased density.

**5. Berkeley 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? There are two separate tenant protection measures on the Berkeley ballot this Fall. Which do you favor, and why?**

I am proud to have gathered signatures for Measure BB, and am campaigning in coordination with Yes on BB, No on CC. Meanwhile, my opponent refused to take meetings to discuss Measure BB and did not attend the Council Meeting where it was placed on the ballot. I am strongly in favor of rent and eviction control. I support increasing partnerships between the City and the Rent Board, especially around areas of active enforcement of our habitability laws for rental housing. Berkeley rental assistance program has been incredibly effective and resulted in far fewer evictions in Berkeley as compared to the rest of the county. I support ongoing and increased funding for our rental assistance program. I support Prop 33 and the repeal of Costa Hawkins. Apart

from the provisions of Measure BB, there are other innovations and protections in Oakland's eviction law that I would seek to replicate in Berkeley.

- 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 focusing instead on solutions for unhoused people?**

I strongly oppose the Council's recent resolution adopting the powers given by Grants Pass and authorizing destructive and counterproductive sweeps. Sweeps are false solutions that disrupt communities, destroy belongings, and make the provision of services more difficult, all while simply relocating encampments to new locations. Leading with services and resources is the solution, both for helping the unhoused and reducing impacts on neighbors. We know that most homeless people in Berkeley were housed in Berkeley or Alameda County before losing their housing, often due to eviction. Emergency rental assistance programs are thus essential for preventing homelessness. I support Measure W which will extend and increase funding for homelessness services and housing. I support identifying sites for sanctioned encampments, so that we can better provide services, sanitation, and resources to homeless residents while reducing their impacts on neighbors. RV parking sites will help in the same way. Long term, we need to invest in permanent supportive housing. I support partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions and Alameda County to take advantage of efficiencies of scale and coordinated response.

- 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 Berkeley 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?**

There are wealthy parts of the City, at little risk of gentrification and displacement, that should be significantly upzoned to allow for dense, multifamily housing. This includes North Berkeley near Solano, Southeast Berkeley near college, and areas North of campus. Additionally, programs like Right of Return can help allow those who have been

displaced from our community to come back, helping to reverse gentrification and displacement. While fire safety concerns in the Hills are real and must be addressed, they are often used as a cudgel to prevent any changes in our zoning. I oppose blanket exemptions from upzoning to the hills area on the basis of fire risk.

The other side of addressing inequity in our housing system is ensuring adequate protections for tenants against displacement, harassment, and discrimination. I support strengthening our Tenant Protection Ordinance, which is relatively weak compared to neighboring jurisdictions. I strongly support the Demolition Ordinance passed by Council. I support increasing enforcement of anti discrimination laws.

- 8. Berkeley 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 elements of the proposed policy that you would want changed, or any exemptions from such an ordinance that you would seek?**

I strongly support TOPA. Tenants already living in a home should have the opportunity to buy it before it is put on the open market. It also enables us to move units from speculative assets to permanently affordable or cooperative housing. TOPA additionally enables us to access matching funds from state and non-profit sources for this conversion work. I have been disappointed at Council's watering down of the proposal, and support passing the strongest version possible. I think there are already reasonable protections for inheritance and family transfers. There is no reason to broadly exempt single family homes that are not owner occupied. Meanwhile, my opponent has repeatedly refused to meet with the TOPA Coalition, including members from District 2.

- 9. What is your thinking about the current proposal to eliminate single family zoning in Berkeley and allow multiple units on all lots (sometimes called "middle housing")? Do you see this as a vehicle for affordability or other important City goals? Why or why not? Do you have other questions or concerns about the proposed policy?**

I support Missing Middle, in particular the version put forward by the Planning Commission and Councilmember Lunaparra. It is an important step to increase our housing supply, address the legacies of redlining and housing discrimination, and combat climate change. I do think we need to be realistic, however, about the fact that the housing generated by Missing Middle will not be broadly affordable to middle class

and low income residents. This doesn't mean we shouldn't increase our zoning, but it does mean we need to take additional steps to ensure there are affordable options in the areas we are upzoning.