

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:

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

I'm Marcie Hodge, a dedicated advocate for District 7 in Oakland with over 15 years of experience in community development, minority business equity, and public service. My background in organizational psychology and leadership has prepared me to address our district's challenges and create meaningful change for our community.

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?* **I believe a balanced approach is essential to addressing Oakland's housing crisis. While removing regulatory restrictions can help speed up the development of market-rate housing, this alone won't solve the problem. We must prioritize building affordable housing for low-income residents, who are disproportionately affected by rising costs. I would support policies that promote affordable housing projects, streamline approval processes for low-income housing developments, and provide incentives for developers to include affordable units in new projects. Additionally, I would push for stronger tenant protections and rent control measures to prevent displacement and ensure that everyone has access to a place they can call home.**

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.* **To address affordable housing, I would advocate for expanding funding sources such as Measure KK bonds and local housing trust funds. Additionally, I would push for the restoration of redevelopment funds dedicated to affordable housing. With the Regional Housing Bond no longer on the ballot, I would explore creating new revenue streams through a vacant property tax or by adjusting commercial linkage fees to fund affordable housing. For ongoing funding, I support allocating a portion of the city's general fund to affordable housing initiatives, while one-time funds could come from state and federal grants aimed at housing development and support services.**

3. *What is your position on Proposition 5, and why?* **Proposition 5, which aimed to expand property tax portability for certain homeowners, could have provided tax relief for seniors and disabled individuals. However, it also had the potential to significantly reduce local tax revenues, which are vital for funding schools, public safety, and affordable housing. I believe we should focus on policies that balance support for vulnerable homeowners with the need to protect critical public services. Therefore, I would not support Proposition 5 as it stands, as the financial impact on communities outweighs its benefits. Instead, I favor targeted measures that protect vulnerable homeowners without harming essential local services.**

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?* **The greatest barriers to developing affordable housing in Oakland are high construction costs, lengthy approval processes, and limited funding. Additionally,**

the market-driven focus has prioritized market-rate housing, leaving affordable housing underfunded and underserved.

To address this imbalance, I would streamline the approval process for affordable housing projects by reducing red tape and expediting permits, particularly for projects that serve low- and moderate-income residents. I would also advocate for increased local funding sources, such as an affordable housing bond, and leverage state and federal resources. Partnering with nonprofit developers and creating incentives for private developers to include affordable units in market-rate projects through inclusionary zoning policies are also critical strategies.

Finally, I would work to strengthen community land trusts and support land banking initiatives, which allow us to reserve land specifically for affordable housing development, ensuring more equitable housing production that aligns with Oakland's needs.

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?* **Oakland's rent control and Just Cause for Eviction ordinances are among the most effective programs in protecting renters from unaffordable rent increases and arbitrary evictions. These policies help stabilize communities and prevent displacement. I support expanding the Rent Adjustment Program to ensure broader tenant education and access to legal services, especially for vulnerable renters.**

One change I would advocate for is closing loopholes that allow landlords to bypass rent control through "substantial rehabilitation" claims. I would also support stricter enforcement of current laws and increased penalties for landlords who violate tenant protections.

New policies I would pursue include establishing a Right to Counsel program for all renters facing eviction, creating stronger anti-harassment protections, and increasing funding for emergency rental assistance programs to prevent homelessness during financial crises. These efforts would provide a stronger safety net and help prevent displacement.

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? **To prevent at-risk households from becoming unhoused, I would support expanding emergency rental assistance programs and eviction prevention services, as well as increasing access to legal aid for tenants. In the short term, we need rapid rehousing programs and transitional shelters, particularly for families and individuals facing immediate crises.***

For those already experiencing homelessness, I support a Housing First approach, which prioritizes placing individuals into stable housing with wraparound services like mental health care, job training, and addiction treatment. We must increase investment in affordable housing units, convert vacant properties into housing, and expand safe RV and tent communities with access to basic services.

To avoid criminalizing homelessness, especially after the Grants Pass decision, the City should prioritize compassionate responses by enhancing outreach efforts and ensuring that law enforcement is not the primary response to homelessness. Instead, I would push for the development of more sanctioned encampments with access to basic needs while also increasing investment in permanent supportive housing.

In the long term, we must address the root causes of homelessness, including the high cost of housing, lack of mental health services, and income inequality, by advocating for regional and statewide solutions that increase affordable housing development and social services.

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? **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) means actively working to dismantle systemic barriers that have led to housing inequality, particularly for communities of color. It requires ensuring that everyone, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, has access to safe, affordable, and fair housing. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) means actively working to dismantle systemic***

barriers that have led to housing inequality, particularly for communities of color. It requires ensuring that everyone, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, has access to safe, affordable, and fair housing. For me, this is about addressing the historic and ongoing impacts of discriminatory policies like redlining and predatory lending that disproportionately affect Black, Brown, and Indigenous residents.

To address these disparities, I would pursue several specific policies:

Expand Affordable Housing in Higher-Income Areas: I would advocate for inclusionary zoning policies that require affordable housing units to be built in all parts of the city, not just in low-income neighborhoods. We should use incentives, such as density bonuses and tax credits, to encourage developers to build affordable housing in wealthier areas, promoting more equitable distribution.

Increase Funding for Affordable Housing Development: I would push for increased local funding through housing bonds and other mechanisms to support the construction of affordable housing, specifically targeting areas that have historically excluded low-income residents and communities of color.

Strengthen Anti-Displacement Measures: Oakland must invest in programs that protect long-time residents from displacement due to gentrification. This includes stronger tenant protections, rent stabilization policies, and programs that assist low-income homeowners with property taxes and home repairs.

Address Racial Wealth Gaps in Housing Access: I would also support expanding down payment assistance programs for first-time homebuyers from historically marginalized communities, and create pathways to homeownership for Black, Brown, and Indigenous residents who have been shut out of the housing market due to discriminatory practices.

To ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing, the City should work to balance development across all districts, leveraging city-owned land and establishing firm guidelines to prevent the concentration of low-income housing solely in underserved neighborhoods. By requiring affordable housing development in higher-income areas and improving access to quality housing for all Oakland residents, we can create a more just and inclusive city.

To address these disparities, I would pursue several specific policies:

Expand Affordable Housing in Higher-Income Areas: I would advocate for inclusionary zoning policies that require affordable housing units to be built in all parts of the city, not just in low-income neighborhoods. We should use incentives, such as density

bonuses and tax credits, to encourage developers to build affordable housing in wealthier areas, promoting more equitable distribution.

Increase Funding for Affordable Housing Development: I would push for increased local funding through housing bonds and other mechanisms to support the construction of affordable housing, specifically targeting areas that have historically excluded low-income residents and communities of color.

Strengthen Anti-Displacement Measures: Oakland must invest in programs that protect long-time residents from displacement due to gentrification. This includes stronger tenant protections, rent stabilization policies, and programs that assist low-income homeowners with property taxes and home repairs.

Address Racial Wealth Gaps in Housing Access: I would also support expanding down payment assistance programs for first-time homebuyers from historically marginalized communities, and create pathways to homeownership for Black, Brown, and Indigenous residents who have been shut out of the housing market due to discriminatory practices.

To ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing, the City should work to balance development across all districts, leveraging city-owned land and establishing firm guidelines to prevent the concentration of low-income housing solely in underserved neighborhoods. By requiring affordable housing development in higher-income areas and improving access to quality housing for all Oakland residents, we can create a more just and inclusive city.

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? Yes, I support the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) because it empowers tenants to stay in their homes and helps prevent displacement. Giving tenants and nonprofit organizations the right of first offer and first refusal promotes stability and community ownership. I would seek provisions to ensure affordability in these purchases, such as financial assistance or incentives for tenants, and would consider exemptions for small, owner-occupied properties to***

protect individual homeowners. This policy would provide a fair balance between tenant rights and property owner interests while addressing Oakland's housing crisis.

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?*

To ensure a Public Land Ordinance is drafted, enacted, and implemented, I would prioritize holding city staff accountable through regular updates and deadlines. I would push for collaboration between the City Council and community stakeholders to expedite the process. The most critical elements of a public land policy for Oakland include prioritizing affordable housing, ensuring transparency, and protecting public land from speculative development. The community should have a central role, with input in decision-making, through public hearings and advisory committees to ensure public land benefits the people it serves.

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?* **For large projects like the Coliseum area, the City should seek community benefits such as affordable housing, local job creation, infrastructure improvements, and environmental sustainability. Yes, I would require the inclusion of affordable housing, with at least 20-30% of units designated as affordable, targeting low- and moderate-income levels. Developers should share the responsibility for funding affordable housing, possibly through a combination of public-private partnerships, tax incentives, and inclusionary zoning policies to ensure affordability without burdening public funds.**