

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:** Shawn Danino

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

I am a union member and a progressive, prohousing, promobility candidate for Oakland City Council At-Large centering climate change and affordability with over a decade of experience in housing. I am focused on affordable housing without displacement, safe streets, and local businesses that help ensure economic and environmental health.

**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?

On Day One in office I plan to push to implement my Zero displacement housing program, which threads the needle on building new market rate development while also making sure residents stay in place. No other candidate in this race has the experience, nuance and understanding of this issue to do so. In my role at the State Housing Department for the last five years, I planned for the construction of over 250,000 homes across the state. The work I did was centered around racial equity. Specifically, I focused on getting Rockridge, a neighborhood with a history of racial exclusion, rezoned for over 5,000 additional homes.

We also need to relegalize naturally affordable housing typologies that we made illegal for racist reasons in the 50's 60's and 70's, including single stairwell buildings, boardinghouses, etc. Market rate development and the taxes it generates can be useful to fund the construction and subsidizing of new and existing affordable housing. However, I am a firm believer that housing is best when it is mixed income.

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.

During my time at the Department of Housing and Community Development, I received 8 separate peer recognition awards through the RISE and Director's Award Nomination Program. I was also a founding member of the State ADU Team and Prohousing Team. I have deep knowledge of how to plan, construct, and fund affordable housing. California Housing Finance's ADU program subsidizes the construction of accessory dwelling units, or affordable backyard homes. These accessory dwelling units are an innovative, affordable, effective option for adding much-needed housing in California. This is a program that I helped to design and launch during my time at HCD, which currently funds \$40,000 grants to finance affordable ADUs, but has been fully subscribed every year. This pool of funding may make sense to increase 3 to 5-fold. The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program is a source of ongoing funding for the construction of walkable, bikeable, and transit friendly affordable housing. During my time at the Housing Accountability Unit, I reviewed cases leading to the approval of a 222 unit mixed income project near West Oakland BART. This is an excellent example of transit focused housing that makes it more convenient for residents to live car free. Another source of ongoing funding is the Infill Infrastructure Grant program (IIG). The IIG promotes infill housing development by providing financial assistance for Capital Improvement Projects that facilitate the development of affordable and mixed income housing. Mixed income housing projects promote diverse, stable communities. Federal subsidies can also be useful in planning and funding the development of affordable housing. Federal Highway Administration funds can also be targeted towards Active Mobility improvement plans, including protected bike lanes, bumpouts, and other traffic calming measures which make neighborhoods safer.

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

I support Proposition 5. If the majority of voters want their local government to borrow money to fund desperately needed affordable housing or other public infrastructure, they should be able to do so. This is also an issue of local control, funding measures like prop 5 allow local governments to be less reliant on state or federal funds. Ballot measures also have a problematic history with information asymmetry, and the opposition to prop 5 includes groups I do not generally align with, such as the Association of Realtors.

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?

Inclusionary housing programs can be productive, but we also need to make sure projects are financially feasible. San Diego's ADU Density bonus program threads this needle well. San Diego allows pairs of ADUs to be permitted in excess of the maximum allowable density, one affordable and one market rate. We need to focus on naturally affordable housing typologies, including, but not limited to, single stairwell buildings, bungalow courts, and missing middle housing. It is important to fund deed restricted affordable housing, but it is not the only solution. Some requirements can add unsustainable costs, which is why some deed-restricted affordable projects in the Bay have cost \$1.2 million per unit. Social housing models, from places like Vienna and Singapore, include income taxes on their market rate units, that allow a much larger and more direct cross-subsidy.

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 am in favor of the Tenant Opportunity/Community Opportunity to Purchase Act, as well as cooperative ownership models. Policies like these allow for long term affordability. The Ellis Act has made evictions far too frequent, and I am supportive of state action to overturn this policy as well as local ordinances like San Francisco's which attempt to mitigate some of the damage caused by Ellis Act evictions. I am the only candidate with

a zero displacement housing program that has a financially feasible way to ensure we can build new homes without displacing residents. I am also the only candidate that has worked with land trusts, affordable housing developers, and tenants rights advocates' to ensure new growth does not displace current tenants. I head up the tenant preferences program in the City of San Jose, which gives displaced residents a higher ranking on the waitlists for new affordable housing developments. Policies like San Jose's can also help center residents needs, even under the Ellis Act. I am also in favor of replacement housing requirements, in laws like SB-330 and SB-35, which I fought to enforce.

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?

Homelessness is a pervasive issue impacting the entire state of California, and especially the Bay Area. As someone with lived experience around homelessness, providing abundant housing that is affordable is so much of the reason why I am called to run for Oakland City Council. I have pioneered, evangelized, and spearheaded a variety of affordable housing strategies, including the San Diego ADU Density Bonus program. There are many other existing policies we can look towards to help residents both experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Policies like the Tenant Opportunity/Community Opportunity to Purchase Act prevent displacement and promote the creation and preservation of affordable rental housing. The city of Oakland currently partners with nonprofit organizations to provide temporary financial assistance and services to eligible residents at high risk of homelessness or housing loss. Programs like these aim to prevent homelessness before it begins, and I suggest allocating additional funding towards prevention measures. My keystone program is a zero displacement housing program: a suite of programs vetted extensively by homebuilders and housing economists to meet our demand for new housing while keeping existing Oaklanders in their homes. The structure will allow owners of detached single family homes to trade in their homes for ownership of two new missing middle homes on a redesigned lot with eight to ten new stacked townhomes (or other similar products), with the other homes being made available to new and old Oaklanders. This policy will allow Oakland to grow inclusively while not displacing the communities of color

that have shaped Oakland's identity for decades. Another long term strategy I support is doubling down on naturally occurring affordable housing, including smaller units like efficiency and micro units, as well as tiny homes. Providing a variety of affordable housing options allows the city to meet each residents needs while also keeping construction costs down. In order to prevent criminalizing residents who are currently experiencing homelessness, the City must invest in public restroom facilities and provide health and hygiene facilities to existing encampments. This benefits not only encampment residents, but also their neighbors in surrounding areas. I am opposed to encampment sweep laws when there is not abundant existing affordable housing.

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?

I worked on enforcing these laws at the State Department of Housing and Community Development, and helped to design the matrix that reviews for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. There are important components of access to various types of opportunity, including transportation, economic, education, and environmental. I focused deeply on census tracts with disproportionate housing needs, including the racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAP) ones with higher rates of housing cost burden, overcrowding, and substandard housing conditions. Housing abundance and ensuring mixed income neighborhoods and developments helps us affirmatively further fair housing. I did this work full time for five years, holding racially concentrated areas of affluence (RCAAs) like Rockridge and the City of Piedmont accountable to build significantly more affordable housing as part of their housing element review. EBHO's comments were particularly useful in pushing for these policies. Oakland is disproportionately exposed to the worst impacts of pollution from highways and cars, which is why I am in strong favor of adding BART stops in San Antonio Station and dismantling I-980. In Oakland's housing element, the final version focused most on targeting Capital Improvement Programs, including tree canopy, greenways, traffic calming, and road repairing towards the disinvested parts of Oakland in the west, south and east.

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, absolutely. I supported getting TOPA/COPA programs in Oakland's housing element. I see Cities like Mountain View passing these policies successfully. As previously mentioned, these policies prevent displacement and promote the creation and preservation of affordable rental housing. I would additionally double down on anti displacement prohousing policies through things like our zero displacement housing program.

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 am in strong favor of moving quickly on the Surplus Lands Act (SLA) as well as Executive Directive N-06-19 that will target lands owned by publicly owned agencies. I would sponsor legislation in my first year to streamline higher density mixed income housing projects on these sites. Research has shown that redeveloping publicly owned sites is also an economic necessity, and some scenarios comparing surface parkings lots to mixed income housing collect 30x the property taxes the previous use did. No one knows these land issues better than me, and I will move swiftly to use publicly owned land efficiently. State funding is also available for the predevelopment and development of affordable housing on excess state sites. The Excess Sites Local Government Matching Grants Program (LGMG) will provide grant-based funding to match certain local government funding for selected developers and local governments.

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?

Selling the coliseum was a mistake. Ground leases for large sized lots like this help the city generate far more tax revenue, which exceeds the value of an outright sale over time. Affordability requirements can certainly be helpful. We need to balance high percentages of affordable housing with the challenge of ensuring that projects are financially feasible. In areas of historical disinvestment, it makes sense to add additional environmental justice concessions like HEPA air filters, which is something I fought for in approving the 222-unit Golden West Project near West Oakland BART during my time in the Housing Accountability Unit. Access to greenspace is an appropriate concession, so ensuring parkland is dedicated is important. Ensuring mobility is sustainable and affordable is important, so ensuring that mobility lanes for bikes, wheelchairs, and scooters are protected and separated from vehicle traffic. Walkability should not be a privilege that only wealthier whiter neighborhoods enjoy. Some required affordable units are productive, and strategies like analyzing development standards will help us unlearn the idea that people are pollution, and that higher density mixed income projects allow for significant upward mobility and better outcomes for everyone involved.