

## 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: Todd Andrew**

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

I came to Berkeley in 1999 and raised two kids here through BUSD. I've both owned and rented a home, which I've done in District 5 for 17 years. We CAN build a brighter day for Berkeley AND be true to our Berkeley values by focusing on our core responsibilities.

**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 was disappointed to see the demise of the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority's low-income affordable housing bond for the nine-county Bay Area. People consider many factors when deciding where to live, including affordability, job opportunities, schools, and commute options. Thus, like transportation, housing is at the very least a regional issue.

We need to take a long-term view of our housing stock, looking back for context and applying those lessons to our future.

The vast majority of the housing in Berkeley was built privately. At various points, this production was encouraged by state and federal subsidies like the mortgage interest deduction on owner-occupied homes and accelerated depreciation on multi-family rental properties. Similarly, the financing of affordable housing is at the very least a regional issue and, given broader mobility patterns, more appropriately a state and federal one.

From approximately 1970 through 2010, very little housing of any kind was built in Berkeley. Looking forward, we need to understand that housing would be more affordable NOW in Berkeley had we built more housing of all kinds during this time. Thus, I support an “all of the above” approach to new housing going forward.

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.

The financing of subsidized, low-income affordable housing is multi-faceted, multi-source and arcane, and I do not claim to understand all the intricacies. I would be very interested in meeting with EBHO, Turner Center, and other experts to understand it in more depth.

I would also be interested in learning more from for-profit developers about how the provision of inclusionary affordable units and the in-lieu affordable Housing Trust Fund fees affect their ability and willingness to build new homes.

I would also like to understand better how labor standards like Project Labor Agreements and HARD HATS, with provisions for apprenticeship and health benefits, effect the feasibility of both non-profit and for-profit development.

Having said all of that, it’s my understanding that certain sources of state and federal funding are based on local funding. I would like to learn more why this requirement exists when housing is very much a regional issue.

I would also think it wise to explore creative sources of financing like revenue bonds and public-private partnerships of all kinds, and I would like to know what North Berkeley Housing Partners has learned from their work on the North Berkeley BART housing project.

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

I have struggled with this.

The core problem is Proposition 13. Even if we spend more from our General Fund on core municipal responsibilities, in an older city like Berkeley, Prop 13 virtually guarantees we will need additional revenue for basic needs like streets, fire stations and parks.

The fundamental inequity of Prop 13 is exacerbated by bond financing. We have next-door neighbors whose taxes vary by a factor of four, five, six or more. Bond financing is the right choice for long-term assets like fire stations and other public buildings, but it adds to this assessment-based inequity.

Parcel taxes are a more progressive source of revenue based on property size, and are a better choice for shorter-term assets like streets and sidewalks.

Approximately 20% of Berkeley homeowners are below-median income and even more are on fixed incomes. We need to exercise good judgment in revenue measures and sound stewardship of our public funds, lest we create the very unaffordability we are trying to combat.

I prefer a comprehensive solution to Prop 13. In the absence of that, I would prefer to see a threshold of 60% for approval of revenue measures for the reasons outlined above.

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?

Please see above.

Also, though it doesn't count toward fulfillment of our RHNA objectives, by definition much student housing serves a low-income population. So, as long as the University of

California meets basic requirements and confers with the City on related infrastructure needs, we should get out of the way when they want to build more of it.

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've been a tenant in a rent-controlled apartment in District 5 in Berkeley since 2006. I've also been a homeowner here, and recently retired from a career in residential real estate helping first-time buyers who struggled with the cost of housing.

Housing stability is an important public policy objective. Property owners have several sources of public and private support for stable housing and housing costs, including 30-year fixed-rate mortgages, the mortgage interest and property-tax deductions (though limited by the 2017 federal tax changes), Proposition 13, and accelerated depreciation on multi-unit residential investments.

In an environment where rental housing supply was so severely constrained from about 1970 to 2010, reasonable housing stability measures make sense for renters, including rent stabilization and just cause for eviction. The last time I checked, Owner Move-In and Ellis Act evictions in Berkeley were modest, and I believe were exceeded by evictions from non-profit affordable housing units. I would have to check the data again.

I would like to see more cooperation between the Rent Board, Health Housing and Community Services department, and non-profit operators in identifying at-risk tenants, including the need for supportive housing.

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?

We need to better utilize the Alameda County Homeless Management Information System to track progress on an ongoing basis and report results regularly to the

residents of Berkeley. The “functional zero” approach to homelessness, which has been successful in other jurisdictions, demands a better approach to evaluating progress than the biennial Point-in-Time count.

Residents of the City of Berkeley have been told recently:

- Over 1,500 people have been “permanently” rehoused
- 700 people have been offered shelter
- PIT count has shown ~875 homeless most recently vs. ~1,100 previously

Both because we owe it to the people we’re trying to help and to the residents of Berkeley who finance many of our efforts, we need to tighten up our understanding and communication of the progress we’ve made.

Regarding the additional flexibility we have as a result of the Grants Pass decision, I support the recent action sponsored by Councilmember Kesarwani and approved by council to prioritize public safety while doing everything we can to offer housing to those impacted.

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?

I support Councilmember Kesarwani’s and Taplin’s amendment to our recent Housing Element to include the Solano Avenue and North Shattuck corridors, which are in District 5, for new housing in Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing for Berkeley.

I support council’s recent action on Middle Housing in Berkeley, making good on our effort to atone for over 100 years of housing exclusion and expand housing opportunity throughout Berkeley, through the legalization of multi-unit housing throughout Berkeley.

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?

The TOPA program in Washington, D.C., resulted in approximately 10% purchases by tenants, with the rest being non-profit organizations like land trusts and coops. I think our Small Sites program is where we should be focusing, instead of establishing a cumbersome process for everyone concerned.

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?

Please see above.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate!