

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.

Please send your completed questionnaire back to me at joey@ebho.org by Friday September 20th at 2:00 pm. Upon receipt, we will post your response on our website at ebho.org and use social media to connect the public to your completed questionnaire.

Candidate Name: Warren Logan

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

I'm a dedicated public servant with over a decade of experience. Now I'm working to improve Oakland through actionable policy solutions, which I successfully did in 2020. I'm committed to creating safer communities, building affordable housing, and ensuring our city serves all Oaklanders as the next Councilmember for District 3.

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 the City needs a balanced approach that supports both affordable and market-rate housing to address the housing crisis. We must prioritize building housing for low-income households, as the market has not adequately met their needs. By leveraging Measure U, which is funded through property tax assessments, we can increase affordable housing by generating

more property tax revenue. This can be accomplished by applying for more grants and building more affordable units.

Also, the more we allow market-rate housing to be built, particularly in wealthy neighborhoods, the better. It's a missed opportunity to prohibit apartments and increased density in areas with highly resourced communities. By encouraging market-rate housing, we can expand supply, help reduce overall housing costs, diversify housing options and increase our property tax base. The way our tax system is structured there is a virtuous cycle between allowing more market rate development, which increases property taxes, which then goes on to fund affordable housing projects in the city both directly through in-lieu fees and affordable unit and indirectly through property taxes as part of Measure U.

We need to focus on both increasing affordable housing and allowing market-rate development to ensure we meet the needs of everyone.

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.

Measure U has proven to be an effective tool, and we can increase its impact by expanding our tax base. General fund revenues, which make up 80% of District 3's funding, are crucial, and growing our property tax base through strategic development on vacant and underutilized lots will provide a sustainable, long-term source of revenue for affordable housing.

Additionally, Oakland should consider adopting a similar approach to Berkeley's upcoming ballot measure, which increases transfer taxes on property transfers over \$1.5 million. Updating Oakland's graduated transfer tax system could generate significant new revenue without burdening middle-income homeowners.

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

I support Proposition 5 because it is more democratic to have a 55% threshold for passing local infrastructure and housing bonds. This allows communities to more effectively address critical needs like housing and infrastructure without being hindered by an overly high approval requirement.

- 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 barrier to affordable housing development in Oakland is the cost; it’s just as expensive to build affordable housing as market-rate housing, so the challenge lies in how we fund it. To address this, we need to raise more funds through taxes, including updating transfer taxes, and leverage market-rate development to generate the necessary resources for affordable housing.

Additionally, when we allow dense development on only a small portion of the city’s land, we create competition between affordable and market-rate developers, driving up land prices. To address this, we should open more land to denser development, reducing competition and making it easier to build affordable housing without inflating land costs.

Additionally, the city owns significant vacant land designated for affordable housing, but we lack the staff and resources to process these projects efficiently. Strengthening the city’s financial footing through a larger tax base and better resource allocation will help streamline this process and increase affordable housing production.

- 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 strongly support Oakland’s existing renter protection policies, including rent control, the vacancy tax, and just-cause eviction protections. These programs help keep residents in their homes and prevent displacement in the short term. I also support a tenant's right to counsel, which ensures that renters have legal support during disputes and eviction cases, and emergency rental assistance, or “shallow subsidies,” to prevent people from becoming homeless due to temporary financial hardship.

To further combat displacement, I advocate for building more housing at all affordability levels. By increasing the supply of housing and allowing denser development across a wider portion of the city, we can alleviate the competition between affordable and market-rate developers, which currently drives up land costs and limits housing production. Encouraging development on Oakland's vacant land and streamlining city processes can also help create more affordable housing options.

Additionally, I would support policies that make it harder for corporations to buy second homes or speculative properties, such as increasing transfer taxes on corporations that already own multiple homes. This would help curb housing speculation and ensure more first-time buyers have access to affordable homeownership opportunities.

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 address the root causes of housing instability, in the short term, I advocate for emergency rental assistance which provides immediate financial support to households facing eviction. Often, a relatively small amount of assistance can prevent a household from losing their home. In the long term, I support expanding tenant protections such as rent control, just-cause eviction protections, and the right to legal counsel.

For those experiencing homelessness, in the short term, I support creating more transitional housing and using Oakland's vacant land for emergency shelters that connect residents with wraparound services. These shelters should be safe, dignified spaces and a bridge to permanent housing. In the long term, we need to increase the deeply affordable housing supply, particularly for those in the 0-30% Area Median Income range. This means building more affordable housing and leveraging programs like Measure U and regional funding to make permanent supportive housing a reality.

In light of the Grants Pass decision, the City should focus on compassionate solutions that address the underlying causes instead of criminalization. This includes expanding mental health

services, substance abuse treatment, and job training programs. We must also work with the Association of Bay Area Governments to develop regional solutions.

- 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 means actively addressing and dismantling systemic barriers that have historically excluded marginalized communities from equal access to housing opportunities. It's not enough to avoid discrimination; we must be proactive in ensuring that housing policies promote inclusion, equity, and opportunity for all residents. This requires addressing the root causes of housing inequality and ensuring that affordable housing is available across all neighborhoods.

I will promote mixed-income housing in wealthier neighborhoods that have traditionally excluded lower-income families. This means encouraging denser development in high-opportunity areas and pushing for affordable units in new developments, especially in wealthier arrears of Oakland. By doing so, we can create diverse, integrated communities and break the cycle of concentrated poverty.

I believe in leveraging the city's vacant land for the development of affordable housing in various parts of the city, not just in low-income neighborhoods. This would include encouraging partnerships with land trusts and nonprofits to develop housing that remains affordable for the long term.

- 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 adoption of a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act. This policy empowers tenants by providing them the opportunity to purchase their homes, thereby fostering housing stability and community ownership.

By allowing tenants to work with nonprofits or community land trusts, we can help preserve affordable housing and prevent displacement, especially in neighborhoods facing displacement pressures. I would seek provisions to ensure that low-income tenants have access to financial support, such as grants or low-interest loans, to make these purchases feasible.

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 strongly believe that Oakland's public land should not be sold but instead leased to maximize long-term community benefits. I will work to ensure this process moves forward by addressing staffing issues that are causing delays. We must hire enough staff to properly manage these processes and hold city staff accountable to the original policy timeline.

BART's model of leasing land while meeting affordability requirements is a great example of how we can leverage public land to address our housing crisis without losing valuable assets. The key is not just meeting affordability targets but also maximizing the total number of affordable units built.

The most critical elements of a public land policy for Oakland include prioritizing affordable housing development, setting clear affordability targets, and ensuring long-term community control through leases rather than sales. This approach keeps land in public hands, generates ongoing revenue, and allows flexibility to adapt to future needs.

A transparent and participatory process, where residents can provide input, is essential to ensure that developments on public land align with community priorities. Public land is a community resource, and decisions about its use should reflect the needs of the entire community, especially those most vulnerable to displacement.

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 focus on soliciting development proposals that are viable and maximize both the number of affordable units and total units that can be built. Affordable housing is a community benefit in itself, but we need to ensure these projects are financially feasible without burdening developers with excessive additional demands that could stall progress.

Affordable housing should be included in such projects, but the key is balance. A mix of income levels should be targeted, spanning from very low-income (around 30% AMI) to the often missing middle range (80% to 120% AMI). This approach avoids concentrating poverty in one area, which can have detrimental social outcomes. While the state provides more funding for very low-income housing, we need to do more for middle-income families, who also struggle to find affordable housing in Oakland.

As for who should pay, the city can leverage state funding for lower AMI units while working with developers to explore creative financing mechanisms for middle-income housing, including inclusionary zoning, tax incentives, or public-private partnerships to make these developments sustainable.