

## East Bay Housing Organizations Oakland Candidate Questionnaire 2025

*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:**

Kara Murray-Badal

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

As Director of Turner Labs' Housing Venture Lab, I spearhead innovative housing solutions to address Oakland's affordability crisis. My commitment to equitable development stems from firsthand experiences growing up in Oakland's District 2. I believe every resident deserves access to safe, affordable housing, vibrant community spaces, and opportunities to thrive.

**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 think there is a role for market rate housing construction in our approach to combat the housing crisis, but that doesn't mean we need to engage in a race to the bottom of deregulation and corporate subsidies and tax breaks. Market rate housing can include affordable units and can be a good source of funding for affordable housing. Inclusionary affordability requirements and public/social/affordable housing developments can include housing at a range of income levels, with higher income tenants subsidizing lower income tenants as in mixed income neighborhood trusts. I support sensible efforts to improve the efficiency of our housing

approval process and increases to density in exclusionary neighborhoods through “missing middle” housing policies, but those policies must be accompanied by robust tenant protections to prevent displacement resulting from new development.

Construction of affordable housing must be one of the most important priorities of our City. “Affordable housing” can take many forms, and will look different for people of different means. For a homeless resident, permanent supportive housing with no out of pocket contribution aside from a portion of their Social Security or disability payment is the only real affordable housing. For low income and working class residents, we need to work towards housing that costs them no more than 30% of their income. For middle class families, creating moderate rate housing/naturally occurring affordable housing allows more affordable housing dollars to be directed to lower income residents. We need to ensure that all of these are available so our diverse and vibrant community can be whole.

2. What current local/City sources of affordable housing funding would you increase or expand? What new sources would you support? Please identify both one-time and ongoing funding streams.

Periodically bond measures specifically to fund affordable housing are a critical tool. Oakland voters have consistently said that affordable housing is one of their number one priorities, and we have seen that voters will support affordable housing funding at the ballot. I am excited that the funding from Measure W should soon be released for this purpose. For ongoing funding, I would look at new progressive revenue sources like increasing the property transfer tax on the most valuable land sales and a speculator tax targeting Wall Street firms.

3. 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?

Funding is the single largest barrier to affordable housing construction. In addition to the revenue sources I mentioned previously, there are innovative programs that we can explore to stretch our money as far as it will go. The California Dream For All Shared Appreciation Program allows the state to pay a portion of the downpayment for a home and then, when that home is sold or transferred, the homebuyer repays the original down payment loan, plus a share of the

appreciation in the value of the home. That money then is reinvested to help more homeowners. Once our budget situation is stabilized, a similar Oakland program would allow continued investment in homeownership without exorbitant cost. I also support exploring mixed income neighborhood housing trusts, which puts rental properties into a neighborhood trust with some units being held affordably in perpetuity while other units appreciate with market value and the market value units pay the subsidy for the affordable housing. This creates both affordable housing and socioeconomic integration. We can also improve our planning process to make those projects more feasible. That includes expedited planning review, increases in density limits, and limits on the number of hearings required.

4. Oakland has a number of ordinances to protect renters from unaffordable rent increases, arbitrary evictions, and other forms of displacement included in the Rent Adjustment Program (RAP). Are there any additions or modifications that you would make to any of these ordinances? How would you strengthen or improve the administration and enforcement of RAP?

I am incredibly proud of Oakland's leadership in tenant protection legislation. We have some of the most up to date ordinances in the state, and I support continual efforts to keep our rent stabilization and eviction laws at the cutting edge. I would support adopting tenant union protections like those recently passed in Berkeley. I support full funding of RAP, and would seek to increase coordination between the RAP and other City departments so information is timely shared with the RAP on tenant occupied units when it comes into other departments like planning.

5. Do you agree with the previous Mayor's Executive Order on removal of homeless encampments? 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?

I am concerned by policies that allow the displacement of homeless residents without first offering alternative housing arrangements. There is a real and pressing need for clean, safe, and navigable streets and public spaces for our entire community, and we need to achieve that while respecting the human rights of our homeless neighbors. The recent Supreme Court ruling does not respect that balance, and allows for the unfair criminalization of homelessness and poverty. I support investing in more permanent supportive housing for homeless residents, and providing more services like restrooms, sanitation, and trash removal for encampments right away, which reduces the impacts of encampments on our neighborhoods.

Emergency rental assistance is one of the most important and cost effective steps we can take to prevent homelessness. Maintaining and expanding funding for housing retention programs helps people to stay in their homes and creates stability for children and families. It is also far more cost effective to keep someone from becoming homeless than get them housed once they have become homeless. We can also continue and increase the capacity of our social services to reduce the causes of eviction, like drug addiction services and funding for decluttering/anti-hoarding programs.

6. Local jurisdictions have a legal obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing in all their housing and community development policies. What should the City do to ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing across all parts of the City and equitable access to housing for communities of color?

I support ending exclusionary zoning and allowing missing middle development throughout our City. Coupled with inclusionary zoning policies, this can significantly help to provide socially and economically integrated developments in areas that have historically not been accessible to low income residents and residents of color. I also support a strong equity analysis for City allocation of affordable housing money that will prioritize affordable housing developments that address our need to further Fair Housing by integrating exclusionary neighborhoods. Increasing density and reducing permitting timelines and barriers specifically for affordable developments can also make them more competitive in exclusionary neighborhoods as compared to market rate developments.

7. Oakland has in the past considered adoption of a Tenant/Community 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?

I support TOPA/COPA. It is an excellent tool both to create new affordable and social housing from our existing housing stock, and serves an anti-displacement function to prevent tenant-occupied households being evicted by speculative investors. The land trusts and non-profit affordable housing providers that are critical partners with the City have identified TOPA/COPA as a useful tool to enhance their operations.

8. 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 support the use of public land for public good, and in Oakland the best and highest public good is almost always affordable housing. I would seek to work with our community legal advocates to draft an ordinance directly if staff capacity is preventing the completion of that work.

Public land should not be sold for private profit. If surplus public land is to be used to increase City funds, long term leases are FAR preferable to sale. Increasing the City's stock of public land should be a long term priority, and I support policies that allow for and incentivise the transfer of land to the City by developers and landowners as payment of fees or fines.

Community input into the use of public land is critical, especially for determining what resources and services are most needed. However, we cannot allow a few loud voices to prevent us from constructing affordable housing, and to that end I oppose unnecessary bureaucratic processes as to whether affordable housing should be built, rather seeking input on what form it should take or what services should come alongside it.

9. 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?

There are many reasons Oakland is a desirable place to do business, and I strongly support robust community benefits packages in exchange for the approval of large developments. That includes affordable housing, robust labor standards including PLAs, local hire provisions, public amenities including art and open space, and improvements to nearby infrastructure like sidewalks and bike lanes. Affordable housing is foremost among these, and I support inclusionary affordable requirements for these kinds of developments that maximize the number of units of affordable housing, rather than the percentage. Low and very low income housing should be the priority for these developments, but moderate income housing is also valuable and including some moderate income housing serves to socially and economically integrate these developments. Funding for this housing should primarily come from the developer who will benefit from the construction, but negotiating over the provision of City

funding can be an important level to increase the number and percentage of affordable units and other community benefits.

10. In 2013, The City Council adopted an ordinance setting aside 25% of Oakland's boomerang funds (the City's share of former redevelopment tax increment moneys) for affordable housing. Will you commit to ensuring these funds stay committed to housing solutions?

Yes.

11. Outside of one-time voter approved bond measures the Affordable Housing Impact Fee and the Jobs/Housing Impact Fee are the City's only significant ongoing funding sources for housing since the dissolution of Redevelopment in 2012. What if any changes would you make to how the City assesses or collects these fees? What are the advantages and disadvantages of impact fees versus inclusionary housing requirements?

I would support moving from a per unit to a per square foot fee structure. Per unit fees are more susceptible to loopholes and abuse by developers looking to minimize their contribution to affordable housing. Whether fees or on site units are preferable depends on the type and location of the development. In smaller developments, the small number of inclusionary units can be hard to track by the City and are vulnerable to misuse; in these cases fees can be preferable. In larger developments, inclusionary units provide social and economic integration not provided by fees, and come online sooner. On the other hand, the money from fees can be multiplied by matches from state and federal grants, and can be used to fund permanent supportive housing that can't be required in inclusionary units. I support a flexible approach that allows the City to negotiate on site vs fees based on the specifics of the project and the needs of our community.

12. When the City makes significant investments (e.g., infrastructure, public facilities) or regulatory concessions (e.g., rezoning, relaxed development standards, permit streamlining) for specific sites or areas, what kinds of housing benefits should it require in return?

Regulatory concessions, especially increases in density, are valuable to developers and increase the value of land. The City should ask for increases in affordability requirements and labor standards in exchange. How much of an increase and what kind of standards depends on the value of the concession. I support policies that maximize the number of affordable units generated per project, and the greater the value of the concession given by the City, the more

affordable housing we should be asking for. The granting of public funds or resources must come with an even higher bar, and should only go to projects that are directly serving the public good.