

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:

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

I am an engineer and business consultant raising 4th generation Oaklanders with my wife Erica. As Oakland's District 6 Council Member for four years I delivered tangible results for residents in public safety, housing, and economic development. I bring an outsider's mindset to transforming city hall so it's more effective at delivering on our progressive values.

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?**

We must build both market rate and affordable (below-market-rate) housing in order to address the housing affordability problem because ultimately we need to correct the supply-demand imbalance. Building exclusively market rate housing will always leave some folks left out, but building exclusively affordable housing won't ultimately ease the pricing pressure and will instead continue to drive prices up for all other housing. Some of the solutions are further described below like streamlining the development and permitting process.

I think our housing affordability crisis is first and foremost a supply problem. To protect our diverse local economy, particularly Black and brown renters, and to provide opportunities for our children and grandchildren to live in Oakland, we must increase the supply of housing. That means prioritizing building *both* affordable and market rate housing. I applaud the state, including our local representatives, for leading the way in providing cities with more tools to build more housing units and I embrace the fact that my job as Mayor will be to bring residents, workers, and builders together to support projects that are economically viable and respect the communities that are here and the people who want to be here. I am proud to have actively supported the addition of more than 820 units of affordable housing to the pipeline of units in development in District 6 as its councilmember and look forward to amplifying that impact citywide as Mayor.

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.

The city has the following solutions to address preservation and development of affordable housing in Oakland.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) established by the City of Oakland provides ongoing capital funding for the development and maintenance of affordable housing.

Measure U is a local bond measure that is another source of funding it has allocated \$350 million for affordable housing projects in Oakland.

Another source of funding is the Rapid Response Homelessness Housing Acquisition Fund is an initiative adding \$8.9 million over two years from the AHTF and the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Asset Fund to increase affordable housing units for individuals exiting homelessness.

I would support working with the state and federal government to identify additional sources of funding. Other sources include establishing one or more enhanced infrastructure financing districts (EIFDs), engaging Alameda County Housing & Community Development Department which offers competitive funding opportunities for community service providers and affordable housing developers through grants and loans. Nonprofit organizations that acquire and manage land to promote affordable

housing and community stability are another source for increasing the city's affordable housing units

- 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?**

High construction costs, fees, and administrative burdens are barriers to the development of more affordable housing. Land is very costly and limited availability making it difficult for affordable housing projects to compete with market-rate developments. Impact fees, permitting costs, and regulatory burdens can significantly slow down or deter projects.

Our difficult and inefficient permitting process has allowed special interest groups and wealthier communities/individuals to block housing – particularly low-income housing – adding delays and costs to building housing and limiting the amount of housing that actually gets built. I am a strong proponent of efforts to reimagine Oakland's planning and permitting processes to more effectively and efficiently move valuable housing projects through the zoning, planning, and permitting process. Height limits, density requirements, and parking mandates can limit the feasibility of affordable housing developments. A more efficient planning and permitting department will also level the playing field so that the less resourced residents and developers of color aren't leap-frogged by those well financed developers and real estate interests.

And of course, all zoning, code, and permit regulations must be equally applied to all stakeholders regardless of financial position. Expand zoning for multifamily and mixed-use housing, including increased density bonuses for affordable units. Strengthen community engagement efforts to build support for affordable housing and counteract opposition.

- 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?

Studies should that the RAP program and other efforts to keep tenants housed are strengthened when the tenants have legal representation. I will ensure adequate funding for additional tenant legal services to level the playing field with larger rental property owners who afford professional legal staff.

Additionally, the RAP program could improve the way it allows property owners to “bank” rent. Oakland allows landlords to delay rent increases and apply them later, which some have argued leads to leading to large spikes in rent. The city should expand outreach in under-resourced areas and ensure that the petition process is fast and efficient. The program should support responsible property owners while ensuring maintenance of affordable units.

In addition, I would propose a program where property owners are incentivized to convert rental apartments into affordable condominium units to support pathways to homeownership for historically marginalized and under-resourced populations.

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?

Reducing homelessness is a moral imperative and will be a top priority of my administration. I'll close unsafe encampments, move unhoused neighbors into shelter, and provide them with the full complement of services they need. With my leadership in City Hall, we engaged over a thousand Oaklanders in a 9-month planning process to create the first-ever Homeless Encampment Policy that reduces encampments near schools, reduces chronic homelessness, and addresses illegal dumping. I would start my administration by ensuring that that policy is implemented. As Oakland's mayor, I will continue to innovate and establish effective solutions that strike the balance between protecting our residents and respecting their civil rights and civil liberties. In the first 100 days as mayor, my first objective will be to fully implement the Encampment Management Policy and adequately resource the teams responsible for that execution. In addition, I will work to double investments into outreach services and homelessness prevention services, which include emergency rent relief and free legal assistance. It is

my intent to do so while establishing a report card for our outreach service providers to measure their success rates of transitioning unsheltered residents in housing.

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?

It should be a priority for the city to ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing across all parts of Oakland and equitable access for communities of color. The city should expand affordable housing opportunities across the entire city including high-income areas to support new affordable housing developments. In most instances it makes sense to reduce barriers such as single-family zoning, parking requirements, and height restrictions that limit affordable housing development. The city should promote increased access to affordable housing programs, low-interest loans, and foreclosure prevention programs for Black and Latino homeowners to prevent displacement. The city could allocate more funding from Measure U and other local resources to affordable housing in historically disinvested neighborhoods. Also, improve public transit access to ensure new affordable housing developments are well-connected to transit, jobs, and services to promote economic access to affordable housing.

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?

The Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) is a policy designed to prevent displacement by giving tenants the first right to purchase their rental properties before they are sold to outside investors. I traveled to Washington, DC and met with stakeholders and although the goals behind the TOPA are admirable there are a number of unintentional consequences that have prevented those goals from being achieved. While it has strong potential benefits, it also presents challenges and barriers to implementation. Many tenants, especially low-income renters, lack the financial resources to buy their units, even with subsidies. TOPA extends the selling process, which can frustrate property owners by delaying transactions. Finally, managing TOPA effectively requires a city infrastructure that can handle compliance, financing, and education for tenants.

I believe that current terms and proposals for TOPA haven't yet sufficiently addressed the drawbacks and likely adverse impacts.

- 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?**

A strong public land policy for Oakland should prioritize affordable housing, equitable development, and long-term community benefits while ensuring transparency and accountability.

City-owned land should be used primarily for affordable housing rather than sold for market-rate development. There should be considerations for long-term affordability protections: Use ground leases, deed restrictions, or Community Land Trust (CLT) models to prevent future displacement.

Require robust community engagement should take place for public land sales or leases. Define what qualifies as a "public benefit" when evaluating proposals (e.g., affordability levels, sustainability goals, local hiring commitments). Prevent public land from being flipped or developed solely for profit-driven projects. Public land should be used to create affordable housing in wealthier neighborhoods, not just concentrated in historically low-income areas. Locate new affordable housing near public transit, jobs, and services to support economic mobility. Give priority to local, minority-led developers and small businesses in public land projects. Anti-Displacement Protection ensure no current residents or small businesses are displaced as part of new development. Encourage projects that integrate affordable housing with community spaces, local businesses, and social services.

- 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?**

Large developments in Oakland should be required to provide strong community benefits that address housing affordability, job access, and environmental justice.

Developers should contribute to Oakland's Affordable Housing Trust Fund if they cannot provide enough on-site affordable units. Developments should include a local hire standard where at least 50% of jobs go to local residents and/or local businesses, especially those in under-resourced communities. Fund apprenticeship programs in partnership with local unions, workforce training centers, and schools. Ensure at least 30-40% of construction and retail contracts go to minority and women-owned businesses. In order to benefit the larger Oakland community, developments should include or improve public spaces, especially in areas lacking green space. Fund community arts projects, murals, and performance spaces that reflect Oakland's diverse culture.

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, I would commit to implementation of the ordinance and ensuring that the funds stay committed to housing solutions. As a local government, the city only has so many funds available for housing and we have a large need for all levels of housing in Oakland.

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?

Impact fees are charged to developers of market-rate housing to fund affordable housing Production. The city can pool impact fees and target them toward high-priority affordable housing projects, rather than relying on scattered inclusionary units. Developers may be more willing to build since they are paying a fee rather than setting aside units that might be less profitable. Money collected from multiple developments can support 100% affordable housing projects in strategic locations across Oakland.

A policy I would change is allow the city to deploy some of the impact fees collected early even before a project is finished based on a percent likelihood of project completion. That way we can get greater project traction from the collected funds versus collecting an interest rate well below inflation.

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?

Oakland has many areas, including commercial corridors and areas near transit, that are underdeveloped and underutilized. These areas have the potential for taller buildings, which could provide more housing and attract more customers to local businesses. Also, more attention needs to be paid to the needs of lower-income historically underserved neighborhoods because the cost of transitioning to our desired future state is likely more costly - e.g., the costs of not having a car are much higher when living in East Oakland versus living in a downtown transit village.

I propose that in exchange for the city's contribution toward these projects we demand increased amounts of affordable housing, increased investments into the surrounding community, concessions to street level retail tenants to increase commercial corridor vibrancy, and an opportunity for the city to receive recurring revenues from the development project as part of their compensation model.