

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: PRESIDENT CRISTINA GRAPPO

Please give a brief introduction of yourself. (50 word limit) My Oakland family business and government name is President Cristina Grappo. I was born and raised within the city domain, completing high school therein. I also finished my MBA on location inside Oakland and graduated from a few online law school programs while living at home in Oakland, California USA.

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?

My heart goes out to those who are homeless with inadequate means to pay for housing. For one thing, I believe with conviction that the City of Oakland should prioritize families in poverty without attracting homeless encampments. As a city, we can build shelters that follow community charity examples, such as Saint Vincent de Paul's. We can also mandate hygiene rules to stop the spread of pathogens. However, we must make sure that affordable housing is for all socio-economic levels. One example of a model affordable housing program to be similar to is the Emeryville Affordable Housing Program. It achieves viable housing for all strata by facilitating the

development of both market-rate and affordable housing units, securing program funding, and managing resources to support fair housing services. This program also is comprised of housing rehabilitation loans: loans that provide low-interest payment plans to improve existing housing stock. In addition, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) help support projects that enhance urban communities, particularly for low- and moderate-income residents. Affordable Housing Land Assets assist the development of land specifically for affordable housing projects. Ultimately, this program exemplifies how urban cities address housing challenges through a combination of policy, funding, and community engagement.

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.

I think we must continue to support and expand City of Oakland Programs. This includes the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and HUD HOME funds. For example, in 2022, Oakland awarded \$37.5 million to support the development of 249 affordable housing units. More funding expansion means more affordable housing units for Oakland residents. In addition, expanding the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) Housing Choice Voucher Programs that offer subsidized rent to eligible low-income, disabled, or elderly tenants will help shelter Oakland folks that struggle to make ends meet. Expanding specific nonprofit organizations, such as Saint Vincent de Paul's, the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, and Satellite Affordable Housing Associates can benefit affordable housing in the area. State and Federal grants like California's SuperNOFA and federal tax credits can be leveraged for affordable housing development, especially for one-time streams with the option to renew.

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?

Barriers to Affordable Housing Development:

1. **High Land and Construction Costs:** Oakland's real estate market and construction expenses make it difficult to build affordable housing without subsidies.
2. **Zoning and Land Use Restrictions:** Single-family zoning and restrictive land use policies limit the availability of land for multi-family and affordable housing developments.
3. **Lengthy Approval Processes:** Complex permitting and approval processes delay projects and increase costs for developers.
4. **Limited Funding:** The dissolution of Redevelopment in 2012 reduced local funding.
5. **Community Opposition:** Resistance from community members to affordable housing.
6. **Displacement and Gentrification Pressures:** Rising rents and property values exacerbate affordability.

Strategies to Remove Barriers:

1. **Streamline Permitting:** Simplify and expedite affordable housing projects to reduce delays and costs.
 2. **Zoning Reform:** Rezone single-family neighborhoods to allow for higher-density housing near transit hubs.
 3. **Public Land Utilization:** Prioritize the use of public land for affordable housing projects, ensuring equitable distribution across neighborhoods.
 4. **Increased Funding:** Expand funding sources through measures like impact fees, public-private partnerships, and state or federal grants.
 5. **Incentives for Developers:** Offer density bonuses, tax credits, or reduced fees for projects that include affordable units.
 6. **Community Engagement:** Have boards work with residents in civic engagement.
 7. **Anti-Displacement Policies:** Strengthen tenant protections and support community land trusts to preserve affordability.
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?

Additions to RAP Ordinances to Include:

1. **Expand Coverage:** Include more rental units under RAP protections, such as newer buildings or smaller properties.

2. **Cap on Rent Increases:** Lower the allowable annual rent increase percentage to better align with tenants' income growth and inflation.
3. **Stronger Anti-Harassment Protections:** Add provisions to address pressure to vacate units.
4. **Just Cause Eviction Protections:** Strengthen criteria for evictions against displacement without legitimate reasons.
5. **Relocation Assistance:** Require landlords to provide financial assistance to tenants displaced due to renovations or other landlord-initiated actions.

Strengthening Administration and Enforcement:

1. **Increased Funding:** Allocate more resources to RAP staff for enforcement, tenant education, and outreach.
2. **Tenant Education:** Launch campaigns to inform tenants about their rights under RAP, including multilingual resources for diverse communities.
3. **Streamlined Complaint Process:** Simplify the process for tenants to file complaints and ensure timely resolution of disputes.
4. **Data Transparency:** Publish regular reports on RAP enforcement activities, including the number of cases resolved and outcomes achieved.
5. **Landlord Accountability:** Impose stricter penalties for landlords who violate RAP ordinances, such as higher fines or restrictions on future rent increases.

By implementing these fortifying changes, Oakland can further protect renters and ensure RAP fulfills its mission of preventing displacement and promoting housing stability.

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?

Removal of homeless encampments does not provide for stable housing. As Oakland Mayor, I would create an ordinance that makes it illegal to squat in neighborhoods, business districts, and parks. I believe such people need social workers and the way to find them is by staying in homeless shelters, going to mental hospitals, or being arrested. Social workers could help these individuals find permanent housing, depending upon their skills and income. As for at-risk households, I would continue the Section 8 program, hold housing lotteries, and ask the more affluent homeowners to

open their doors for more long-term tenants. Under my leadership, government agencies and local organizations can address the needs of the homeless and the at-risk.

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?

To ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing and equitable access, Oakland should step accordingly:

Equitable Distribution of Affordable Housing:

1. **Inclusionary Zoning:** Require affordable housing units in all new developments, particularly in areas with access to quality schools, jobs, and amenities.
2. **Fair Share Allocation:** Use data-driven approaches to allocate affordable housing targets across all neighborhoods, ensuring every area contributes to meeting the city's housing needs.
3. **Incentives for Developers:** Offer density bonuses, tax credits, or expedited permitting for projects that include affordable units in underrepresented areas.
4. **Public Land Utilization:** Prioritize public land for affordable housing developments in high-resource neighborhoods.

Equitable Access for Communities of Color:

1. **Anti-Discrimination Enforcement:** Implement fair housing laws to swat discrimination in rental and homeowner markets.
2. **Targeted Outreach:** Conduct outreach and education campaigns for affordable housing opportunities.
3. **Down Payment Assistance:** Provide financial assistance programs to help first-time homebuyers from historically marginalized communities.
4. **Community Investment:** Invest in historically underserved neighborhoods to improve infrastructure, schools, and public services, making them more desirable and equitable places to live.
5. **Tenant Protections:** Implement policies like rent control, eviction protections, and right-to-counsel programs to prevent displacement.

Community Engagement:

- Actively involve residents and boards with diverse representation to oversee housing initiatives and ensure accountability.
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?

As Oakland Mayor, I would adopt a Tenant/Community Opportunity to Purchase Act because renters have rights.

Potential Benefits of a Right of 1st Offer & Right of 1st Refusal:

1. **Prevents Displacement:** By giving tenants the first opportunity to buy their rental units, TOPA/COPA helps stabilize communities and prevent displacement, especially in rapidly gentrifying areas.
2. **Empowers Tenants:** It provides tenants with a pathway to homeownership, fostering long-term economic stability and equity-building opportunities.
3. **Supports Community Organizations:** Nonprofit organizations can step in when tenants lack the financial resources, preserving buildings as permanently affordable housing.
4. **Preserves Affordable Housing:** Properties acquired by tenants or nonprofits can be protected from speculative investors, ensuring long-term affordability.

How It Could Work Best:

- Pair the policy with financial assistance programs, such as low-interest loans or down payment assistance, to help tenants successfully purchase their units.
 - Provide technical support to tenants and nonprofits to navigate the purchasing process.
 - Include timelines and clear guidelines to ensure smooth implementation and minimize disruptions to the housing market.
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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?

To ensure a Public Land Ordinance is effectively drafted, enacted, and implemented in Oakland, it's essential to align it with the city's adopted policies and community priorities. Here's critical elements and the community's role:

Elements of Public Land Policy:

1. **Affordable Housing Prioritization:** Public land should be leveraged with clear targets for income levels and long-term affordability.
2. **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure that public land use benefits racial and economic disparities in housing, jobs, and public amenities.
3. **Community Benefits:** Require developers to build parks in exchange for access to public land.
4. **Transparency and Accountability:** Establish clear processes for public reporting on land transactions and outcomes of public land use.
5. **Sustainability:** Incorporate green building standards, renewable energy, and climate resilience measures into public land projects.
6. **Mixed-Use Development:** Encourage developments that combine residential, commercial, and recreational uses to create thriving communities.
7. **Anti-Displacement Measures:** Protect existing residents and businesses from being displaced by new developments on public land.

The role of the community should entail participatory planning in workshops, community oversight is advisory boards, charity's first right of refusal for public projects, and education accessibility.

By centering equity, transparency, and community engagement, Oakland, under my leadership, will start to abide by the Land Disposition Policy.

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?

Priority Community Benefits:

1. **Affordable:** A target of **25-30% affordable units** is often considered impactful while feasible. These units should cater to the following:
 - **Extremely Low Income (30% of Area Median Income or below):** 10-15% of affordable units.
 - **Very Low Income (31-50% of AMI):** 10-15% of affordable units.
 - **Low Income (51-80% of AMI):** 5-10% of affordable units.
2. **Anti-Displacement Measures:** Implement policies to protect existing residents, such as relocation assistance, rent stabilization, and first-right-of-return programs.
3. **Local Hiring and Workforce:** Hiring local residents and providing job skills, especially for East Oakland communities.
4. **Public Amenities:** Include parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to enhance quality of life for residents.
5. **Sustainability:** Ensure green building practices, energy-efficient designs, and infrastructure improvements that promote environmental sustainability.
6. **Transportation Improvements:** Invest in public transit access, bike lanes, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to connect the area with the rest of Oakland.

Funding and Responsibility:

- **Developers:** Inclusionary housing requirements, impact fees, or negotiated Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs).
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Public land or tax incentives to offset costs.
- **State and Federal Grants:** California's SuperNOFA or federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to provide funding.
- **Philanthropy:** Engage local foundations and housing organizations to contribute resources or expertise.

By balancing these priorities, Oakland can foster equitable growth.

11. 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, as Mayor of Oakland, I must ensure Oakland's boomerang funds will remain for affordable housing solutions. Finding secure and affordable housing is a priority for everyone. Exploring available resources and programs can make a significant difference in achieving this goal. Understanding budgeting and financial planning can empower

individuals to manage their housing costs effectively. There are many supportive services and community organizations dedicated to assisting individuals in finding affordable housing options. It is encouraging to know that there are many resources within Oakland to solve and navigate the path to affordable housing.

12. 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?

Advantages and Disadvantages of Impact Fees vs. Inclusionary Housing Requirements:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Impact Fees</u>	<u>Inclusionary Housing Requirements</u>
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible use of funds for various housing projects. - Can leverage additional funding sources like tax credits. - Easier to implement in areas with strong legal restrictions on inclusionary policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures affordable units are built directly within new developments. - Promotes mixed-income communities and reduces economic segregation.
Disadvant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funds may be spent in lower-income areas, potentially increasing segregation. - Revenue depends on the pace of new development, which can fluctuate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May discourage development if requirements are too stringent. - Requires careful monitoring to ensure compliance and long-term affordability.

13. 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?

When a city invests significantly, it has a unique opportunity to negotiate housing benefits that align with community needs. Here are some key benefits it could require:

1. **Affordable Housing Units**: Mandate a percentage of units in new developments to be affordable for low- and moderate-income households. For example, inclusionary zoning policies often require developers to set aside a portion of units for affordable housing.
2. **Mixed-Income Housing**: Encourage developments that integrate affordable units with market-rate housing to promote economic diversity and reduce segregation.
3. **Permanent Affordability**: Require long-term or permanent affordability commitments to ensure housing remains accessible for future generations.
4. **Supportive Housing**: Include units designed for vulnerable populations, such as individuals experiencing homelessness, seniors, or people with disabilities, often paired with on-site services.
5. **Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs)**: Negotiate agreements where developers provide additional community benefits, such as funding for local schools, parks, or public transit improvements, alongside housing commitments.
6. **Tenant Protections**: Implement measures like rent stabilization, eviction protections, or relocation assistance for existing residents displaced by new developments.
7. **Sustainability Features**: Require energy-efficient designs and green building practices to reduce environmental impact and lower utility costs for residents.

These benefits not only address housing needs but also foster equitable and sustainable urban development.