

## 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: REV KENNETH ANDERSON**

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

Dr. Kenneth Anderson is a distinguished professional with a diverse background spanning civil rights activism, housing development, philanthropy, and religious leadership. Since 2010, he has served as the Senior Pastor of the historic Williams Chapel Baptist Church in Oakland, CA (District 2), an institution for over 85 years.

**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? **The housing crisis in Oakland requires a nuanced approach that balances the need for both market-rate and affordable housing. Here's where I stand and the actions I would take:**

**Position**

**Prioritize Affordable Housing: While increasing overall housing supply is important, the data shows that Oakland's private market primarily serves above-moderate income households. With home prices rising (e.g., median sale price of \$800K in 2025) and limited supply (0.41 homes per person), low-income households are disproportionately affected.**

**Targeted Development:** Affordable housing must be prioritized to address the needs of families earning below the Area Median Income (AMI), as demonstrated by successful projects like Casa Sueños, which provides 181 affordable units near the Fruitvale BART station.

#### Actions

**Expand Affordable Housing Programs:** Increase funding for initiatives like Oakland's Affordable Housing New Construction Loan Program and Section 8 vouchers to directly support low-income residents.

**Streamline Development:** Simplify permitting for both affordable and mixed-income developments to accelerate construction while ensuring affordability requirements are met.

**Leverage Public Land:** Convert underutilized public land into affordable housing, as seen with Casa Sueños.

**Inclusionary Zoning:** Require developers to include affordable units in new market-rate projects or contribute to affordable housing funds.

**Preserve Existing Stock:** Invest in rehabilitating and maintaining naturally occurring affordable housing to prevent displacement<sup>4</sup>.

This approach ensures equitable access to housing while addressing the systemic barriers faced by low-income households in Oakland.

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. **To address the affordable housing crisis in Oakland and Alameda County, I would focus on expanding existing funding sources and introducing new, sustainable streams. Here's a breakdown:**

#### Expand Existing Funding Sources

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF):** Increase contributions from impact fees (e.g., Affordable Housing Impact Fees and Jobs/Housing Impact Fees) and allocate more "boomerang funds" from former redevelopment tax increment revenues.

**Measure U Bonds:** Ensure the \$350 million allocated for affordable housing is fully utilized for construction and preservation projects.

**HOME Investment Partnerships Program:** Continue leveraging federal HOME funds for rehabilitation and preservation of affordable housing.

Section 8 and Project-Based Vouchers: Expand these Oakland Housing Authority programs to assist more low-income families with rent subsidies.

#### Introduce New Funding Sources

Vacancy Tax: Implement a tax on vacant properties to encourage development or generate revenue for affordable housing initiatives.

Local Housing Trust Fund Contributions: Secure additional funding through public-private partnerships, similar to Alameda's Affordable Housing Trust Fund model.

Commercial Linkage Fees: Introduce or increase fees on commercial developments to fund affordable housing projects.

State Grants: Pursue competitive state programs like the Infill Infrastructure Grant and Multifamily Housing Program to support new developments.

#### One-Time vs Ongoing Funding

One-Time: Bond measures (e.g., Measure U), state grants, and federal allocations like HOPWA or ESG grants.

Ongoing: Impact fees, boomerang funds, vacancy taxes, and rental income from city-owned affordable units.

This combination of strategies ensures both immediate impact and long-term sustainability for affordable housing in Oakland and Alameda County.

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? **The greatest barriers to affordable housing development in Oakland include insufficient funding, high construction costs, regulatory delays, and displacement pressures. To address these challenges and ensure balanced housing production, I propose the following strategies:**

#### Key Barriers

**Insufficient Funding:** The elimination of Redevelopment Funds in 2011 significantly reduced Oakland's primary source for affordable housing development<sup>5</sup>. Current funding sources are inadequate to meet demand.

**High Construction Costs:** Rising labor and material costs hinder affordable housing projects.

**Regulatory Delays:** Lengthy permitting processes and zoning restrictions slow development.

**Land Availability:** Limited access to land for affordable housing projects makes development challenging.

**Displacement Pressures:** Low-income residents face displacement due to rising rents and limited protections.

### Proposed Strategies

#### Funding Solutions

##### Expand Existing Sources:

Fully utilize Measure U bond funds to support affordable housing construction and rehabilitation.

Increase contributions to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund through impact fees and boomerang funds from former redevelopment revenues.

##### New Funding Sources:

Implement a vacancy tax on unused properties to generate revenue for affordable housing.

Advocate for a regional housing bond to secure additional funding, as recommended in PolicyLink's roadmap.

Partner with private employers and philanthropic organizations to create a local housing fund targeting extremely low-income households.

#### Streamlining Development

Simplify permitting processes and fill staff vacancies in Housing and Community Development to expedite project approvals.

Promote infill development by prioritizing the use of vacant or underutilized public land for affordable housing projects, as outlined in Measure Q.

#### Policy Changes

Strengthen inclusionary zoning policies to require more affordable units in market-rate developments or higher in-lieu fees.

Expand tenant protections and rent control measures to prevent displacement during new development projects.

#### Collaboration

Work with regional agencies (e.g., BART) to develop affordable housing near transit hubs, maximizing accessibility for low-income residents.

Coordinate with state legislators to advocate for Article 34 repeal or reform, removing legal barriers to public housing development.

These strategies aim to address systemic barriers while ensuring equitable and proportional housing production that meets Oakland's needs.

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? **To strengthen and improve Oakland's Rent Adjustment Program (RAP) and its ordinances, I would propose the following additions and modifications:**

#### Proposed Additions or Modifications

##### 1. **Expand Coverage:**

- Include more rental units under RAP by reducing exemptions for single-family homes and condominiums, particularly those owned by corporate landlords.
- Extend protections to tenants in units built after 1995, which are currently exempt under Costa-Hawkins.

##### 2. **Cap Pass-Through Costs:**

- Lower the allowable percentage of capital improvement costs that can be passed to tenants (currently up to 70%) or eliminate pass-throughs entirely for low-income tenants.

##### 3. **Strengthen Just Cause Protections:**

- Tighten the Just Cause for Eviction Ordinance to prevent abuses, such as evictions disguised as owner move-ins or renovations.

##### 4. **Limit "Banking" of Rent Increases:**

- Reduce the cap on deferred rent increases ("banking") to avoid sudden rent hikes that destabilize tenants.

##### 5. **Enhance Tenant Education:**

- Mandate clearer, more accessible notices about RAP rights at lease signing and with every rent increase notice to ensure tenants understand their protections.

#### Administrative and Enforcement Improvements

##### 1. **Increase RAP Funding:**

- Raise the RAP service fee for landlords (currently \$30 per unit annually) to expand staffing and resources for enforcement and tenant outreach.

##### 2. **Streamline Petition Processes:**

- Simplify the tenant petition process by reducing paperwork requirements and offering online filing options.

##### 3. **Proactive Enforcement:**

- Conduct regular audits of landlords' compliance with RAP regulations, including proper notice delivery and adherence to allowable rent increases.

##### 4. **Expand Mediation Services:**

- Increase funding for mediation programs to resolve disputes more efficiently without requiring formal hearings.

##### 5. **Tenant Legal Support:**

- Establish a city-funded legal assistance program to help tenants navigate petitions and defend against unjustified rent increases or evictions.

These changes would make RAP more effective in protecting renters from displacement while ensuring fair administration for both tenants and landlords.

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? Mayor Sheng Thao's executive order on homeless encampment removal reflects a challenging balance between public safety and the rights of unhoused individuals. While the focus on compassion and connecting residents to services is commendable, clearing encampments without sufficient housing alternatives risks exacerbating homelessness. Here's my perspective and proposed measures:

#### Do I Agree with the Executive Order?

I support aspects of the order that prioritize public safety, such as addressing encampments near schools, playgrounds, or critical infrastructure. However, I believe the approach must ensure that all displaced individuals have access to adequate shelter or housing before encampments are removed. Without this, the policy risks perpetuating cycles of displacement and instability.

#### Preventing Households from Becoming Unhoused

### Expand Rental Assistance Programs:

Increase funding for programs like Keep Oakland Housed, which provides emergency financial assistance, legal aid, and supportive services to prevent evictions<sup>8</sup>.

Enhance one-time rental assistance programs for households facing temporary financial crises.

### Strengthen Tenant Protections:

Expand legal aid for tenants through partnerships with organizations like East Bay Community Law Center.

Advocate for stronger rent control measures and eviction moratoriums during economic downturns.

### Increase Affordable Housing Supply:

Fully utilize Measure U funds to expedite affordable housing projects.

Support inclusionary zoning policies requiring developers to include affordable units in new projects.

### Housing Solutions for Unhoused Individuals

#### Expand Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing:

Scale up programs like Homekey and R2H2 to convert motels and vacant buildings into permanent supportive housing.

Prioritize modular construction projects on city-owned land to quickly increase housing stock.

#### Emergency Shelter Expansion:

Increase funding for emergency shelters like Covenant House for youth and other vulnerable populations.

Expand hotel/motel voucher programs to provide immediate shelter.

#### Wraparound Services:

Strengthen case management, mental health care, job training, and addiction recovery services to help unhoused individuals transition into stable housing.

#### Mobile Outreach Programs:

Enhance Oakland's Homeless Mobile Outreach Program (HMOP) to connect more individuals with services and housing resources directly at encampments.

#### Strengthening Implementation

To ensure these measures are effective, I would advocate for:

**Data-Driven Approaches:** Regularly track outcomes of encampment closures, including how many individuals transition into stable housing.

**Collaboration:** Partner with Alameda County, nonprofits, and private entities to pool resources and coordinate efforts.

**Community Engagement:** Involve unhoused residents in planning solutions to ensure policies address their needs.

A comprehensive approach that combines prevention, immediate shelter, long-term housing solutions, and robust support services is essential to effectively address homelessness in Oakland.

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 equitable distribution of affordable housing and access for communities of color, Oakland must take proactive steps aligned with its legal obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH).**

#### Strategies for Equitable Distribution

**Incentivize Affordable Housing in High-Resource Areas:** Use zoning and financial incentives to prioritize affordable housing developments in neighborhoods with access to quality schools, jobs, and transit, reducing historical patterns of segregation.

**Leverage Public Land:** Dedicate city-owned land in wealthier areas for affordable housing projects to ensure inclusivity and balance across the city.

**Strengthen Inclusionary Zoning:** Require higher percentages of affordable units in market-rate developments, particularly in high-opportunity neighborhoods.

#### Improving Access for Communities of Color

**Anti-Displacement Tools:** Expand tenant protections, rental assistance programs, and legal aid to prevent displacement of vulnerable residents.

Community Revitalization: Invest in historically underserved areas through infrastructure improvements, while ensuring affordability protections to prevent gentrification.

Fair Housing Enforcement: Increase funding for education on tenant rights and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws to combat bias in housing access.

These measures will foster inclusive, opportunity-rich communities while addressing systemic inequities in Oakland's housing landscape.

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? **Yes, I support the adoption of a Tenant/Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) in Oakland. This policy would help address housing instability and displacement by empowering tenants and nonprofit organizations to secure housing for long-term affordability.**

#### Why I Support TOPA

1. **Prevents Displacement:** TOPA gives tenants the first opportunity to purchase their homes, providing stability and preventing displacement, especially in neighborhoods vulnerable to gentrification.
2. **Promotes Affordable Housing:** By allowing tenants to assign their purchasing rights to nonprofit organizations or community land trusts, TOPA facilitates the creation of permanently affordable housing.
3. **Equity in Housing:** Communities of color, disproportionately affected by housing insecurity, would gain a pathway to homeownership or access to affordable housing through this policy.

#### Implementation Considerations

To ensure success, Oakland must:

- Provide technical and financial assistance to tenants and qualified organizations to navigate the purchasing process.
- Establish funding mechanisms, such as low-interest loans or grants, to help tenants and nonprofits compete with private buyers.
- Streamline administrative processes and enforce compliance to prevent landlords from circumventing the policy.

TOPA is a practical tool for addressing systemic inequities in Oakland's housing market while promoting stability and affordability for residents.

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? **To ensure that a Public Land Ordinance is drafted, enacted, and implemented in line with Oakland's 2018 Land Disposition Policy, I would take the following steps:**

#### **Ensuring Implementation**

**Set Clear Deadlines:** Work with city staff to establish a timeline for drafting and enacting the ordinance, ensuring accountability.

**Allocate Resources:** Dedicate staff and funding to prioritize ordinance development and implementation.

**Community Engagement:** Host public meetings to gather input from residents and stakeholders, ensuring the ordinance reflects community needs.

**Legislative Oversight:** Regularly monitor progress through City Council hearings to avoid further delays.

#### **Critical Elements of a Public Land Policy**

**Affordability Prioritization:** Require surplus public land to prioritize deeply affordable housing, exceeding state Surplus Land Act minimums.

**Transparency:** Mandate a clear, public process for land disposition, including timelines and criteria for evaluating proposals.

**Local Benefits:** Include labor standards, local hire requirements, and green building practices in all projects.

**Mixed-Use Flexibility:** Allow for mixed-income or mixed-use developments to maximize affordability while generating revenue for city services.

#### **Community Role**

The community should play a central role in shaping public land use by:

Participating in advisory committees.

Reviewing proposed projects.

Ensuring developments address local needs, such as affordability levels and displacement prevention.

This approach ensures equitable, community-driven outcomes for public land use.

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? **For large projects like the Coliseum area, the City of Oakland should prioritize community benefits that address housing affordability, economic equity, and environmental sustainability. Here's what I propose:**

#### Community Benefits

1. **Affordable Housing:** Require at least 25-30% of residential units to be affordable, targeting income levels as follows:
  - 10% for very low-income households (below 50% AMI),
  - 10% for low-income households (51-80% AMI),
  - 5-10% for moderate-income households (81-120% AMI).
2. **Local Workforce Development:** Mandate hiring from Oakland's local workforce, with a focus on underrepresented groups, and provide job training programs.
3. **Environmental Justice:** Include green building standards, renewable energy integration, and air quality improvements to mitigate environmental impacts.
4. **Public Amenities:** Invest in parks, transit infrastructure, and community spaces to benefit surrounding neighborhoods.

#### Funding and Responsibility

- Developers should bear the primary cost of affordable housing through inclusionary zoning requirements or impact fees.
- Public subsidies (e.g., Measure U funds or state/federal grants) should be leveraged for deeply affordable units.
- Community land trusts or nonprofits can partner to ensure long-term affordability.

#### Community Role

The community should have a formal role in decision-making through advisory committees to ensure developments align with local needs and prevent displacement. This approach ensures equitable outcomes while fostering community trust.

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 fully commit to ensuring that Oakland's boomerang funds remain dedicated to affordable housing solutions. These funds are a critical resource for addressing the city's housing crisis and must be protected and effectively utilized.**

#### Why Boomerang Funds Are Essential

Boomerang funds, derived from former redevelopment tax increment revenues, are one of the few consistent local funding sources for affordable housing in Oakland. Since the dissolution of redevelopment agencies, these funds have helped fill the gap left by reduced federal and state funding. Allocating 25% of these funds to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) has already supported critical projects that preserve and create affordable housing.

#### Steps to Strengthen Commitment

**Codify Protections:** Push for a legally binding ordinance to ensure boomerang funds are permanently allocated to affordable housing, preventing future reallocation.

**Increase Transparency:** Require annual public reporting on how boomerang funds are spent and their impact on affordable housing development.

**Leverage Additional Funding:** Use boomerang funds as matching dollars to secure state and federal grants, maximizing their impact.

**Prioritize Deep Affordability:** Ensure these funds target deeply affordable units for very low-income households, addressing the most urgent needs.

By safeguarding boomerang funds, Oakland can continue making meaningful progress toward equitable and sustainable housing solutions.

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? **To improve how Oakland assesses and collects Affordable Housing Impact Fees and Jobs/Housing Impact Fees, I propose the following changes:**

#### Proposed Changes

**Increase Fee Levels:** Adjust fees to reflect updated nexus and feasibility studies, ensuring they align with the true cost of mitigating the impact of new development on affordable housing needs<sup>13</sup>.

**Fee Timing:** Require full payment earlier in the development process (e.g., at permit issuance) to accelerate funding availability for affordable housing projects<sup>5</sup>.

**Equity-Based Adjustments:** Reduce or waive fees for developments that include deeply affordable units or are located in underserved neighborhoods, encouraging equitable housing production<sup>6</sup>.

### Impact Fees vs. Inclusionary Housing Requirements

#### Advantages of Impact Fees:

**Flexibility:** Funds can be pooled to support larger affordable housing projects or leveraged with state and federal programs like Low-Income Housing Tax Credits<sup>24</sup>.

**Predictability:** Developers know upfront costs, simplifying project planning.

#### Advantages of Inclusionary Requirements:

**On-Site Affordability:** Ensures mixed-income communities by requiring affordable units within market-rate projects.

**Immediate Housing Creation:** Produces affordable units directly, avoiding delays associated with fee collection and fund allocation.

### Conclusion

Oakland should adopt a hybrid approach, combining increased impact fees with stronger inclusionary housing requirements, to maximize affordable housing production while maintaining flexibility. Developers should bear responsibility for these costs, but public subsidies can support deeply affordable units.

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 the City of Oakland makes significant investments or grants regulatory concessions, it should require robust housing benefits to ensure equitable outcomes and address the city's housing crisis.**

### Housing Benefits to Require

**Affordable Housing:** Mandate that at least 25-30% of residential units in large projects be affordable. These should target diverse income levels:

10% for very low-income households (below 50% AMI),

10% for low-income households (51-80% AMI),

5-10% for moderate-income households (81-120% AMI).

**Permanent Affordability:** Require long-term affordability covenants (e.g., 55 years or more) to ensure lasting impact.

**Mixed-Income Communities:** Encourage integrated developments to prevent economic segregation.

#### **Funding Responsibility**

Developers should bear the primary costs of affordable housing through inclusionary requirements or impact fees. Public subsidies, such as Measure U funds or state programs like Homekey, can support deeply affordable units.

#### **Additional Benefits**

**Local Hiring:** Require developers to hire locally and provide job training programs.

**Community Amenities:** Include investments in parks, transit, and infrastructure improvements that benefit surrounding neighborhoods.

**Sustainability:** Ensure green building standards and climate-resilient designs.

By tying public investments and concessions to meaningful housing benefits, Oakland can promote equity, affordability, and community well-being while addressing its urgent housing needs.