

**Berkeley Neighbors for Housing & Climate Action
2024 Candidate Questionnaire**

Candidate Name: Igor Tregub

District / Office being sought: Berkeley City Council District 4

1. Berkeley's Housing Element lays out the city's plan for new housing construction through 2031, ensuring the city can meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of ~9,000 homes.

The Housing Element commits Berkeley to a number of major policy changes in order to meet state requirements for affirmatively furthering fair housing, including citywide zoning for "missing middle" housing, a San Pablo Specific Plan, an updated Demolition Ordinance, and upzoning along North Shattuck, Solano, and College Ave, among other items.

What is your view on the Housing Element and these policies? Please discuss your ideas and priorities around:

- a. Missing Middle housing
 - b. San Pablo specific plan
 - c. Demolition ordinance
 - d. Zoning for housing in high-resource neighborhoods like North Shattuck, Solano, and College Ave
- a. I strongly support missing middle housing and have lived in an eightplex that could be classified as such for several years. I support the Planning Commission recommendation of the Missing Middle Ordinance with the following changes:
1. Remove the floor area ratio (FAR) standard for all zones being discussed,
 2. Remove the maximum residential density standard for all zones being discussed,
 3. Increase the lot coverage to 60% for all zones being discussed,
 4. Remove language specific to additional permit requirements for bedrooms in BMC Section 23.202.030(B)(1), and
 5. Remove development standards specific to additions and instead rely solely on main building standards.
- Once objective design standards are enacted, I also would support the recommendation to approve conforming missing middle housing over the counter (with a zoning certificate). Doing so would free up time and staff resources, which would further reduce the soft costs associated with housing approvals.
- b. I support balancing conformance with the community-developed West Berkeley Plan, which preserves Berkeley's artisanal and light manufacturing sector for small- and medium-sized businesses, with the need for every part of Berkeley to do its fair share in accordance to our recently revised Regional Housing Needs Allocation goals. This balance is possible in a tasteful way that incorporates denser housing projects along transit corridors like San Pablo and missing middle housing outside of these transit cores. As a member of the Design Review Committee (DRC) I have effectively weighed in on specific projects to help provide that balance. My consensus-building, community and housing-

first approach has earned me the endorsements of my colleagues on the DRC such as Kimberly Gaffney and Cameron Woo.

My ideal vision would be removing a lane of parking on one or both sides of San Pablo, wherever feasible, and to upgrade the 72R bus rapid network from mere signal prioritization to full-on Bus Rapid Transit (particularly on those stretches of San Pablo that are most heavily impacted during rush hour), and to replace the lost lane of parking with a fully protected bike lane (this could be either a one way lane on both sides of San Pablo or a two-way lane on one side of the street, as is the case on Bancroft). San Pablo Avenue improvements are heavily dependent on buy-in from Caltrans and MTC (which is in the process of releasing a strategic plan for region-wide San Pablo Ave. upgrades). In my opinion, this process has been going too slowly and on occasion (as in the case of real-time signage on I-80 directing traffic to San Pablo Ave) actually going in the wrong direction. If elected, I will support my Districts 1 and 2 colleagues in addressing this issue, and, if called upon, help build a coalition of fellow elected officials who represent jurisdictions that include San Pablo Ave. I also hope to supplement these efforts with beginning a community-based process of revisiting the San Pablo Plan to ensure that we have a consistent pattern of development and spot zoning is minimized or eliminated. In addition, while on ZAB, I have been a strong proponent of asking applicants to voluntarily add a condition that, should a shuttle system be developed, pay into a fund for it. This would serve residential, commercial, and industrial uses west of San Pablo. However, the kind of free shuttle I would like to see would not have the same issues as the Emery-Go-Round, which pays drivers close to minimum wage, does not employ union labor, and competes with AC Transit. Rather, I intend to work with AC Transit to develop flexible shuttle or small bus service in these areas, which are not particularly transit-rich at the moment. If the system were to be implemented, I believe this would in the short term reduce congestion and present an important and needed new mode of public transit and, in the long-term, obviate the need to drive to and from West Berkeley.

- c. I support changes to the Demolition Ordinance that I helped craft over the past eight years, as a former chair of the Housing Advisory Commission and a member of the 4*4 Committee, I support this ordinance and am conceptually open to [embracing the amendments proposed by Councilmembers Humbert, Kesarwani, and Taplin for the March 26, 2024, Council meeting](#). As a general rule, I support the principle of protecting sitting tenants and ensuring that the property owners do not have a perverse incentive, through demolition or “renoviction” to circumvent just cause. At the same time, if a unit has been off the rental market for a long period of time (and it’s possible that there is a “sweet spot” between the “three years” and “five years” in the different proposals), it should be appropriate to demolish it if it incentivizes the opportunity to produce affordable-by-design missing middle housing. I also support a regulatory environment that allows for the uninhibited production of ADUs and JADUs and support the amendments concerning those proposed in the amendment.

As discussed above, I would be open to exercising flexibility on the Demolition Ordinance when clearly there was no intent to rent for a period that may be less than five years but in which there was no intention to do an Ellis Act eviction or exercise harassment. I would, however, draw the line at not allowing demolitions of units where evidence of such harassment or Ellis Act eviction has occurred, as I believe strongly in, first and foremost,

doing no additional harm. The policies I support should not provide a perverse incentive to evict tenants outside of just cause. I would be open to some degree of redress by requiring first right of return to the displaced renter to a substantially similar unit as that from which they were evicted, at similar rent, and subject to rent stabilization if the unit they were in that was subsequently demolished was covered by it. As discussed previously, I do not support this degree of protectionism for ADUs/JADUs, but have advocated for on the Rent Board and will work on the City Council toward requiring the landlord to present a rider to the rental agreement in which the renter attests that the ADU/JADU they are moving into is not covered by the Rent Stabilization and Good Cause Eviction Protection Ordinance.

- d. Berkeley's RHNA for the 2023-2031 period alone is 8,934 residential units, and Berkeley is still chipping away at the RHNA goals from the previous cycle for below-market rate housing. It is crucial that, in addition to opportunities for affordable-by-design missing middle housing and ADUs, transit corridors anchor dense housing. I believe that these transit corridors should account for, at the bare minimum, 50% of the new housing units needed for Berkeley to produce in the upcoming RNHA cycle. The best way to provide affordable housing along these corridors is to support the developers' ability, should they choose, to avail of revised density bonus laws to build up in height beyond the allowable base project envelope (using objective design standards, which the City is developing) as a result of providing on-site inclusionary affordable housing.

While the brunt of approved housing has been concentrated in the urban core and sub-core of Shattuck Avenue as well as along other transit-oriented arterials such as University and San Pablo, it is critical that every part of Berkeley, including North Berkeley and the Solano Corridor, contributes toward its fair share of housing production and conforms with state law. I was proud of helping approve the first affordable senior housing project in North Berkeley on Oxford and Cedar, just outside of D4, and would welcome additional denser housing such as that one. The areas that should be elevated are those that have historically not done their fair share to produce housing or protected a history of redlining through single-family zoning (including West and South Berkeley).

2. Please describe how you would approach addressing the **climate emergency** if elected (or reelected). How would you achieve the goals set forth in 2006 Measure G, which set a goal of 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050? What does the city need to do to reach carbon neutrality by 2045? How can Berkeley become a Fossil Fuel Free City?

Berkeley has always led the way on the environment, often with Igor's leadership. I am a clean energy policy expert, and will prioritize making Berkeley the first carbon-free city in the nation, including expanding public EV charging infrastructure, localized solar energy, battery storage, and microgrids - with an emphasis on helping renters and all those who have been left behind in the clean energy transition access their benefits.

Three years ago, I made a career pivot and have since then served as one of California's leading advocates and coalition builders in support of access to distributed energy resources - such as PV solar, battery storage, and microgrids - particularly for renters and all who have been historically left behind in the clean energy transition. I have taken on the investor-owned utility monopoly to stop four attempts by the State of California to impose a

solar tax, helped cultivate the largest coalition the state had ever seen (over 700 organizations and elected officials) in support of making local renewable energy more affordable, not less. I currently serve as the Strategic Partnerships Director and Senior Policy Advisor with Reimagine Power, a women-owned boutique consultancy, and helping run one of the most promising state bills on microgrids in California history.

For my work, I am honored to earn the sole endorsement of both the League of Conservation Voters East Bay and 350 Bay Area Action, as well as leaders like DNC Climate Crisis Chair Michelle Deatrick, Green the Church Founder Rev. Pastor Ambrose Carroll Sr., People Powered Solar Cooperative CEO Crystal Huang, Oakland Councilmember Dan Kalb, and Berkeley Environment and Climate Commission Vice Chair Brianna McGuire and Member (and D4 appointee) Daniel Tahara.

3. In your opinion, what was the most important City Council vote on Berkeley's housing crisis in the past four years? Briefly describe the issue, what you think of the Council's decision, and what you would have done had you been on the Council.

The decision to redress not just a housing, but a moral wrong, committed 100 years ago, when Berkeley became the first city (but sadly not the last) to redline – by abolishing single-family zoning – was one of the most important votes I can think of in the past four years. At the time, I spoke in support of this vote and contributed to this blog-post as the then-chair of the Northern Alameda County Group of the Sierra Club:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/san-francisco-bay/blog/2021/06/end-single-family-zoning-berkeley-forces-us-reflect-our-past>

“In March of this year, Berkeley once again put itself on the cutting edge of zoning reform, this time joining the nascent but growing list of cities across the country that have voted to repeal single-family zoning. The Sierra Club has been at the forefront of most of these efforts. In Berkeley, Northern Alameda County Group chair Igor Tregub testified on behalf of the Club in support of the measure.”

Of course, had I been on the City Council, I would have also voted in support and continued to work on implementation.

4. In your opinion, what was the most important climate or environmental issue faced by the Berkeley City Council in the last four years? Briefly describe the issue, what you think of the Council's decision, and what you would have done had you been on the Council.

If five years ago counts, I played a key role in ensuring that the City of Berkeley, unanimously, passed the first building electrification ordinance in the nation – now a model for hundreds of them. Specifically, I co-wrote the Building Electrification Ordinance/Gas Ban - worked with Councilmember Kate Harrison and a multipronged coalition as then-Chair of the Sierra Club SF Bay Chapter to adopt an ordinance that has inspired nearly 100 jurisdictions across the nation to follow suit through reach codes or other mechanisms. The only thing I would have done differently, if on the City Council, is worked with more closely with the Downtown Business Community to see if, by exempting a tiny

fraction of floor space from this ordinance, we would be able to ward ourselves off from a court case that sided with the California Restaurant Association, thus overturning the gas ban – though there are plenty of reach codes and other mechanisms to do the same thing without triggering preemption (which I'm also working on).

5. To achieve its RHNA goals, Berkeley must continue to build homes for all income levels. These new residents will need to travel within Berkeley. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation comprise roughly 60% of total emissions in Berkeley.

How would you ensure that Berkeley continues to reduce GHG emissions while adding new homes?

Transportation impacts accounts for the brunt of Berkeley's and most other urban municipalities' GHG emissions. Minimizing or eliminating parking in urban cores and along transit corridors, where housing should be built, is unlikely to induce demand for more parking, particularly when coupled with the condition we put into projects that occupants of these units, to the extent that they are in Restricted Preferential Parking (RPP) zones, will not be eligible for parking permits. Doing so is more likely to do the opposite - increase the opportunity to cut emissions in the most significant sector contributing to these GHG emissions in the first place. Applicants and members of the public alike know me as someone who tends to question projects that appear to be overparked.

6. Berkeley has a long history of using zoning, restrictive covenants and redlining to achieve racial and economic segregation. This history continues to shape Berkeley today.

Recent research by the Turner Center at UC Berkeley suggests that inclusionary zoning requirements, which mandate on-site restricted affordable housing in new developments, may have the effect of reducing overall housing construction, including the production of affordable units. However, on-site affordable housing can also be an effective tool for desegregating neighborhoods.

What is your perspective on how Berkeley should use inclusionary zoning requirements, versus other affordable housing development options (such as in-lieu fees)?

I have evolved on this question over the years, and have for some time now believed that, while the causes of the housing unaffordability and insecurity crisis that our region faces are myriad, a lack of a sufficient supply of housing at all affordability levels, including market-rate housing, is one such cause. Thus, I do believe, as backed by numerous studies, that in general development does not create its own displacement and that, in the aggregate, the production of more market-rate housing can not only, in turn, increase the supply of below-market housing - either through utilizing the inclusionary housing requirement or paying into the Housing Trust Fund - and that increased supply can also help lead to a filtering effect.

In terms of the debate between inclusionary housing and an applicant of market-rate units paying the Affordable Housing Mitigation Fee into the Housing Trust Fund, I appreciate the respective advantages and drawbacks of each of these solutions and, all else being equal, wish to leave the ultimate decision to the applicant. With the advent of new statewide zoning laws, the inclusion of

a certain percentage of on-site housing can maximize the production of housing at multiple income levels (including market-rate housing) through an increased density bonus percentage. On the other hand, the payment of the AHMF into the Housing Trust Fund is money well spent, particularly once leveraged with regional, statewide, and even federal funding.

7. Many of the highest income neighborhoods in Berkeley are also in the Hillside Overlay, portions of which are in the California Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CalFire VHFHSZ). How should we balance fire risk with affirmatively furthering fair housing?

I am familiar with the ongoing tension between these two needs. My approach would be along the lines of how I have approached consensus building for the last 20 years of my public service - by listening to the community, councilmembers, and staff, some of whom may hold different positions and support the Districts 5, 6, and 8 councilmembers with helping thread that needle. Just as fire safety is a major issue, and getting it wrong could lead to certain disaster, it is also important that every part of Berkeley contributes toward its fair share of housing and conforms with state law, which has recently been revised to make it easier to build ADUs and remove some of the rigid local discretion around their production, including in the hills.