

**Berkeley Neighbors for Housing & Climate Action
2020 Candidate Questionnaire**

Candidate Name: Ben Bartlett

District / Office being sought: Berkeley City Council, District 3

1. Please describe how you would approach addressing the housing crisis if elected (or reelected). How would you achieve Berkeley’s RHNA targets for extremely low income, very low income, low income, moderate-income, and above moderate-income homes? Where should these homes go? How should this be achieved?

To solve this crisis, my housing plan calls for the 3 P’s—Production, Preservation, and Protection—which addresses how to fund the production of more affordable housing, preserving structures and housing units that are already built and stronger protections for tenants. I’ll unite local and state resources to provide funding for affordable housing production and also work with non-profit housing developers to create an affordable housing boom. In addition, I’ll promote tenants’ rights by supporting Tenant Protections policies. Most importantly, I’ll push forward housing initiatives that create more and preserve existing sites. The most important initiative I will push forward to address the housing crisis, and end homelessness is my Step-Up Housing, which will house the homeless community in prefabricated modular micro-units with six floors and a service provider and medical facility on the first floor. I’ve already passed this item, which took innovation and the ability to bring together groups who were in opposition. In my second term, I will focus on the implementation phase of this initiative.

I would achieve Berkeley’s RHNA targets by also advocating for a range of housing initiatives that benefits both homeowners and tenants of different socioeconomic statuses. Currently, I’m in the process of developing a robust Adeline Corridor Specific plan to make 50% of all housing developments for the next 20 years along the corridor affordable, especially for those with the lowest incomes and highest needs. In addition, I authored the Open Doors Initiative, which aims to increase the feasibility of homeownership for first-time homeowners among the “missing middle” (people earning moderate income) by transforming existing large housing structures into affordable housing units. This is meant to help turn single family homes into duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes while helping young people own starter homes. In addition to my Step-Up Housing initiative, I will focus on bringing these projects into fruition. I will also continue to advocate for anti-displacement community benefits and measures to protect our long-term residents from displacement.

2. What actions have you taken, beyond this current campaign, in line with the approach you described above?

During the last four years as Councilmember, I’ve successfully [co]authored key affordable housing measures. My office wrote the \$300,000+ grant that allowed Resources for Community Development to create plans that allowed them to successfully secure \$40 Million Dollars in affordable housing for South Berkeley. There will be 100% affordable housing at the current Credit Union Site (Maudelle Shirek Apts). As previously mentioned, I have also proposed the Open Doors Initiative, which aims to increase the feasibility of homeownership for first-time homeowners. And I’ve also built coalitions and

gathered community groups to pass Step-Up Housing, which reduces the cost of housing the homeless. In addition, I supported the Missing Middle Housing Report to examine potential revisions to the zoning code to foster a broader range of affordable housing types across Berkeley. This report also seeks to allow the conversion of Single Family homes into duplexes.

To protect the most vulnerable from displacement, I've also created the Small Sites Acquisition Program to create and preserve affordable housing; streamlined ADUs and by-right affordable housing; and created the Tenants Opportunity to Purchase Act to prevent displacement. In addition, I helped pass higher affordability requirements, funding for the Youth Spirit Artworks Tiny Home Village, a homeless youth priority policy, financial aid to tenants, free job training for low-income persons, and millions of dollars to fund affordable housing under Measure O.

I have been a trusted leader on housing, especially when it comes to bridging the divide between pro-housing advocates who help advocate for the need for housing for the future and long time residents who have distrust toward development because of increased gentrification. My record on building and preserving housing at all income levels speaks to how I am a champion on building more housing.

3. Please describe how you would approach addressing the climate crisis if elected (or reelected). How would you achieve the goals set forth in 2006 Measure G? What does the city need to do to reach carbon neutrality by 2045? How can Berkeley become a Fossil Fuel Free City?

To fight climate change and achieve the goals set forth in 2006 Measure G, we must address the leading source of carbon: transportation. I would focus on implementing an interlocking network of electric vehicle (EV) transportation, known as MTRANS, that would represent a bold vision of an integrated approach to public transport. MTRANS is a network of bicycles, e-bikes, scooters, mini cars, EV public shuttles, EV car-share and EV car-pooling services. The City of Berkeley would contract out the services to various locally-owned and regional transportation innovators with the following qualifications: 1) MTRANS operators are run on Clipper Card; 2) transportation is free whenever possible, particularly for seniors, students, and low income residents; and 3) local youth are engaged in MTRANS management.

We must electrify the city with solar energy and an increased investment in more sustainable modes of transportation to help Berkeley become a fossil fuel free city. I will address this through legislation promoting the use of alternate low emission vehicles and taxing the emissions from corporations. Commuter vehicles are not the only contributor to transportation emissions. The supply chains of large businesses involve constant streams of ships, trucks, and planes. These corporations gain efficiency and higher profits, but they also must be taxed for the externalities imparted on society as a result of their pursuit of such gains. Taxing their emissions not only disincentivizes polluting activities, but also serves as a revenue source for a climate action fund. Speaking of Climate Action Funds, I plan on voting in support of Measure HH, which would increase the Utility Users Tax on electricity and gas from 7.5% to 10%. This would also establish a Climate Equity Action Fund to support measures that equitably reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

4. What actions have you taken, beyond this current campaign, in line with the approach you described above?

This year, I authored an item to place a measure on the November Ballot taxing large carbon-emitting corporations to support a Berkeley Climate Action Fund. The recommendation advocated for an annual flat tax of 10,000 dollars on carbon-emitting large delivery service companies and corporations operating in the City of Berkeley. Revenues will support the Berkeley Climate Action Fund to help low-income residences and small businesses undertake carbon remediation and fund Electric Vehicle (EV) and renewable energy infrastructure. While this item did not pass, we did help move the agenda forward. Now, a similar measure (Measure HH) will be on the November ballot.

I also authored an item advocated for the development of a City Electric Vehicle Charging Ordinance to establish policies that would support EV charging infrastructure and help Berkeley transition to renewable energy. In addition, I co-sponsored a resolution to support AB 1839, which would create the California Green New Deal Council. Currently, I'm also working with the Mayor of Berkeley on a local Green New Deal to make our Berkeley a zero-carbon city.

5. a) For incumbents seeking reelection: please share a vote you are most (or least) proud of in the last four years on a housing issue. What was the issue? Why did you vote the way you did? How do you feel about it now, and why?

The proudest housing issue was the passage of my "Step Up Housing" Initiative – Supportive Housing for Homeless and Very Low-Income People. Slated to be built on 1367 University Avenue, the process was streamlined through SB 35 and is close to the background as soon as funding for BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency) to run a homeless program becomes available. I am most proud because it has the potential to solve homelessness. Step-Up Housing will house the homeless community in prefabricated modular micro-units with six floors and a service provider and medical facility on the first floor. Prefabricated units will also allow for building housing quickly, making housing stackable on top of each other, and cheap to build. The process of passing this item also took innovation and bringing together groups who were in opposition to pass it. Moving at a historic speed for housing development, SB35 has enabled these affordable housing sites to come into fruition in about a year. I was and still am a strong supporter of this item because housing is a human right, and it is critical that housing is both affordable and accessible to our communities.

6. a) For incumbents seeking reelection: please share a vote you are most (or least) proud of in the last four years on a climate or environmental issue. What was the issue? Why did you vote the way you did? How do you feel about it now, and why?

I am most proud of voting in favor of a Berkeley Single Use Foodware and Litter Reduction Ordinance. Before I took office, I collaborated with others to write this ordinance during my time as a Zero Waste Commissioner. Then I got the wonderful opportunity to vote and help push forward this ordinance as Councilmember. The Ordinance is designed to reduce the use and disposal of single use foodware, such as cups, lids, utensils, straws, clamshells, and other disposables that contribute to street litter,

marine pollution, harm to wildlife, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste sent to landfills. It works to help businesses shift from single use foodware toward reusable foodware as a way to move the city towards its zero waste goal. I voted in support of this ordinance because I am passionate about protecting the environment and fulfilling Berkeley's zero waste and climate action goals. The production, consumption, and disposal of single use plastic have severe consequences for our environment, and it's important that we take steps to tackle climate change.

7. Berkeley must continue adding more homes in order to achieve its RHNA goals, especially for extremely low income, low income, and moderate income households. These new households will need ways to get around Berkeley. At the same time, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation comprise roughly 60% of total emissions in Berkeley.

How would you ensure Berkeley continues to add new homes while reducing GHGs?

As an advocate for transit-oriented development and safe pedestrian infrastructure, I would push for an increased investment in public transit, especially where there is new development in areas that are farther from BART and bus services. In addition, I would support building affordable housing closer to existing transportation networks, such as Ashby BART station. I've already led the development process of the Adeline Corridor Plan, so I would focus on implementing this project in my second term.

It is key that we continue to prioritize the safety of pedestrians and reduce traffic collisions as well. Thus, I'd lead initiatives to deliver funded capital projects that help make our streets more safe and attractive for people walking and biking. For example, I've already authored a budget referral to increase staffing levels of the transportation division to expedite the city's goal of eliminating fatal collisions and re-engineering the streets to make them accessible for our communities. I will continue to support these types of efforts in the future to ensure we can continue providing affordable housing for all and simultaneously work towards the City's climate action goals.

8. Berkeley has a long history of segregation, racial zoning, restrictive covenants, and redlining, which continue to impact our community to this day. Much of this history was, and remains, reflected in Berkeley's zoning restrictions, with resulting implications for greenhouse gas emissions.

How would you address Berkeley's history and impacts of segregation through housing policy?

When it comes to addressing the affordable housing crisis, it's critical that we address gaps in homeownership and the income disparities that continue to significantly impact the ability of Black and Brown communities and communities of color to obtain and afford a home. I will address Berkeley's history and impacts of segregation through housing policy by focusing my efforts on increasing the accessibility and affordability of housing for all, especially for underrepresented groups. With every housing initiative I've supported, I always employ a racial equity lens to ensure that our city is improving the quality of life for racial and ethnic groups, and reducing the wealth gap between older, predominantly white homeowners and underrepresented communities. For example, my Open Doors

Initiative specifically focuses on increasing homeownership opportunities for first-time home buyers, which are often individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

I also want to emphasize how displacement continues to have a large negative effect on long-term Black residents of Berkeley, both as a community and as a fate suffered by individual persons and families at the hands of rent increases by unscrupulous landlords. This is a situation that requires the city government to carefully address the root issues, and I will do so by developing: 1) policies with respect to this erosion of the Black sector of Berkeley society, 2) rules and regulations that would halt this process of loss of the Black community, and 3) means of providing a “right to return” of those who have been exiled from Berkeley’s Black community by these economic and social developments, especially those who continue to be employed in this city, even after having to relocate beyond its boundaries. It’s also critical that we put in place anti-displacement measures and community benefits that protect the Black community and long-term residents from the effects of gentrification.