

Berkeley Neighbors for Housing & Climate Action

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Terry Taplin

District / Office being sought: Berkeley City Council District 2

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?

I support a multipronged approach to housing production at all levels. We must preserve our existing stock of rent-controlled units, enforce the ban on source of income discrimination, and ensure all housing units' habitability. We must also continue to push for strong tenant protection and anti-displacement measures. I support community land trusts and housing cooperatives. I am working with the East Bay Community Law Center to advance TOPA in Berkeley to enable tenants and non-profits to increase our permanently affordable housing stock. I am also a proponent of missing middle housing to legalize duplexes and fourplexes throughout Berkeley's neighborhoods and eliminate exclusionary zoning. I support the maximum amount of inclusionary housing in income-integrated multifamily projects. I also support projects that pay into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. We must leverage the AHTF and seek state and regional funding to subsidize housing for low and very low-income households. To increase production across levels, we should eliminate parking minimums and offer density and height bonuses to increase low-income and very low-income homes on site. Denser housing should go close to transit and along corridors, and missing middle housing and apartments should go throughout Berkeley's neighborhoods. We should also remediate toxic soil in West Berkeley and live/work on commercial ground floors to make housing available in more places. I also believe in social housing and am committed to pursuing this.

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

As a member of East Bay for Everyone and Walk Bike Berkeley, I have written and spoken at public meetings in favor of dense multifamily projects, mostly at North Berkeley and Ashby Bart. I am a member of the East Bay Community Law Center's TOPA Community Partners group working on the TOPA campaign. As an individual tenant's rights activist, I have advocated for tenant protections, anti-eviction measures, and eviction and rent moratoria at the City, County, and State levels.

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 achieve the goals outlined in Measure G, we must end both sprawl and dependency on private combustion vehicles. We need to build multifamily housing in urban centers close to transit for households across income levels. To get people out of cars, we need robust, reliable, and accessible transit, BRT, complete streets, and massive investment in bicycle and pedestrian safety infrastructure. EVs are a valuable tool but are not yet widely affordable to low-income households. Electric micro-mobility options should also be widely available to persons of all abilities and economic backgrounds.

I will support infill housing, compact growth, and transit-oriented development. I will invest in micro-mobility programs support initiatives to make these options available to all of Berkeley's residents. I will partner with BART and AC Transit to improve and invest in transit infrastructure and work in tandem with BUSD and Peralta to ensure that all students have access to transit passes. I will also promote modal shift in TOD along corridors. I will prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements in Berkeley's road network and champion Vision Zero.

I also support to Community Advisory Commission's resolution to prohibit the sale and operation of combustion-powered vehicles by 2040 and 2045. Moreover, I am committed to building partnerships with Labor to achieve a just transition.

It is also vital that we move past crisis towards climate resilience. I am committed to upgrading Berkeley's waterfront for sea-level rise by investing in West Berkeley's stormwater and hydraulic infrastructure. I will prepare our hillside for climate-driven wildfire by removing eucalyptus and other non-native species from the hills to replace it with regenerative native species. I am proud to have the support of the Berkeley Firefighters and will partner with them to mitigate wildfire risk. I will accelerate deep green building and invest in urban reforestation to improve air quality along I-80.

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

As Vice-Chair of the Transportation Commission and member of Walk Bike Berkeley, I have advanced and supported critical bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives, including BIBIMBOP and Vision Zero. I mobilized to support and advocated before Council to support the BART MOU to build housing at North Berkeley and Ashby.

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?

b) For candidates not yet elected to the office they are seeking: in your opinion, what was the most important **housing issue** that Council voted on in the past four years, or expects to vote on before November? What was the issue? Do you believe Council's decision was the best one? If you had been on Council, what would you have done?

Harold Way was the most significant housing vote. It represents everything wrong with Berkeley's housing policies. It was a voter-approved Downtown Plan project including a Project Labor Agreement, considerable community benefits, \$10,000,000 for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, would have housed families close to transit in a part of town ideal for growth. All of these things were sacrificed to preserve views of the Bay and to inhibit growth. We failed to live up to the values of climate action, social equity, and inclusivity.

Further, the loss of Harold Way undermined the will of the voters who approved the Downtown Plan. I would have honored the will of the voters and supported this project. I am proud to have the support of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Alameda County and look forward to working with them to ensure that Berkeley honors its commitment to provide both housing and gainful employment to working-class people the East Bay.

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?

b) For candidates not yet elected to the office they are seeking: in your opinion, what was the most important **climate or environmental issue** that Council voted on in the past four years, or expects to vote on before November? What was the issue? Do you believe Council's decision was the best one? If you had been on Council, what would you have done?

The best climate decision council has made would have to be approving the Memorandum of Understanding with BART to build housing at North Berkeley and Ashby. It illustrated that Berkeley has the potential to be a valuable partner to the region capable of collaborating with its partners to reduce GHG emissions. Housing, transportation, and climate are all connected. The approval demonstrated the Council's awareness of it. Not only would I have approved the MOU, but I also would have spearheaded it. I am proud to have the endorsements of the BART Board of Directors President Lateefah Simon and BART Director Rebecca Saltzman, as well as a supermajority of the City Council.

I look forward to working with our regional transportation partners to see these projects through.

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?

I support housing production near transit with subsidized transit passes and electric car share for low-income residents. I will support low-income micro-mobility programs and initiatives to make bikes and e-bikes available to low-income residents. I will also streamline, secure funding for projects that include significant levels of affordability and reduce VMT.

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?

I will eliminate exclusionary zoning, bans on multifamily construction in R zones, etc. I will also allow live/work on commercial ground floors. I will push for income-integrated multifamily housing and not just in West and South Berkeley but in all districts except fire zones. Additionally, I will enforce the City's ban on source of income discrimination, promote workforce housing, missing middle housing, and empower community land trusts and housing cooperatives. I will pass TOPA to enable more housing to become permanently affordable and provide a pathway to homeownership for tenants who might otherwise be displaced. I will upzone and secure funding for low-income, subsidized, and permanent supportive housing for the unhoused in Berkeley's affluent exclusionary neighborhoods. Additionally, I will pursue the implementation of a social housing pilot.