WE ARE GEN H

# Candidate Questionnaire

## Windsor



Mayor | Find Your District | District 1

**Generation Housing envisions vibrant communities where everyone has a place to call home and can contribute to an equitable, healthy, and resilient North Bay. That vision is realized through the actions of our elected and appointed leaders across all ten jurisdictions of Sonoma County. Housing is top of mind for every leader, every sector, every community member that calls Sonoma County home.**

**This questionnaire is designed to offer Sonoma County residents an opportunity to hear from their candidates directly about their vision for the future of housing.**

*All candidates were given equal opportunity to respond to the questionnaire—inclusion in the questionnaire should not be considered as an endorsement by Generation Housing. This is meant to be an educational resource to residents and voters of Sonoma County.*

### About Generation Housing

Since January 2020, Generation Housing has built a reputable library of housing resources read and shared by elected officials, government staff, C-suite executives and community members of a diverse audience. Candidate responses will be shared on our social media channels, our website and mailing list of over 5,000 contacts.

Generation Housing does not endorse candidates running for office. This document will be an educational resource for voters and all answers shared irrespective of the candidate.

**Learn more**

**Meredith Rennie did not respond for the uncontested District 4 race.**

# Mayor*

**Tanya Potter**
tanyapotterforwindsor@yahoo.com

**What role do you believe local government should play in meeting its RHNA requirements, and do you think it should stretch beyond RHNA to grow a true "housing continuum," which means diverse housing opportunities across income levels to serve our community members as their housing and family needs and assets change over time?**

Yes, I believe the best way to reduce housing costs is to have enough housing for everyone. The Town of Windsor has been growing and building housing over the last four years I have been on council. We have had low income housing and market rate housing, but still are missing the middle. I would like to continue working on policy that creates incentives to build mid-range, affordable by design housing for purchase.

**How would you characterize the greatest set of challenges facing housing production? And what do you plan to do to help overcome these challenges?**

Housing production is costly and with little room to build, small developments are hard to pencil out without being market rate or subsidized by low income financing programs. Stiff regulations like all electric and changes in appliance mandates create expensive building conditions for developers.

**Generation Housing's current initiative, Housing for Healthy Communities, is part of our effort to continue a move away from exclusionary zoning, and looks at two state laws, SB 10 and AB 1033, that we believe are perfect fits for the North Bay. SB 10 upzones to allow up to 10 units on all parcels within a half mile of transit hubs and infill parcels. AB 1033 allows the separate sale of ADUs as small homes through condoization. Both are great opportunities for increasing affordable-by-design homes as both rent and for-sale products, perfect for young families, middle income workforce, and seniors. Could we count on your support for adoption and/or implementation of these bills? Why or why not?**

Yes. I have already considered both of these bills in Windsor. We are looking to see any pitfalls with the home owner's association issue with AB 1033. SB 10 is suitable for a transit center and would be easy to bring into Windsor.

**Streamlining housing development in the entitlement and permitting processes is a powerful tool in helping to attract developers and ensure the timely approval of projects and accelerate the overall production of housing. Do you support this call to action? Why or why not?**

Yes. Windsor has created checklists and worked to ensure developers are not delayed in their projects. We have also adopted Objective Design Standards and ensured our Housing Element is completed and approved

***Rick Massell did not respond.**

# Mayor

## Tanya Potter

**There is work being done on a Housing Revenue Measure to be put on the 2028 Ballot. Do you support this effort? What do you believe your role in that effort is?**

Yes. My role is to bring light to the need for additional housing. Windsor has many in fill lots available for development and has been known as a family friendly town for years. I would like to support the building of missing middle housing for purchase to help residents build equity. Additionally, if there is suggested ordinance language to assist councils with adopting housing incentives, it is my role to bring that forward for implementation.

**Housing is often listed as a top priority here in Sonoma County. What does it mean to you to govern in a way that is consistent with your priorities? For instance, are you prepared to make tough budgetary decisions consistent with that priority? If you have already held elected office, can you provide an example?**

Yes, I have made decisions that have allowed reduced impact fees, delayed impact fees, changes to requirements such as undergrounding power lines to assist developers in completing their projects. Additionally, I voted to create a pilot program that allowed smaller units to be build in apartment complexes to help developers have their projects, "Pencil out." Housing is important and especially a balance of all kinds of housing throughout town.

**Candidates were provided the opportunity to add any additional thoughts regarding housing. Substantive responses are provided here.**

I want to work with Gen H to create policy language that assists in incentivizing missing middle housing such as for sale condos, attached housing or my favorite, town homes on the bottom and apartments on top. This is a great way to have several types of housing in one place, increase density (especially near a transit center) and allows residents and families to own, build equity and generational wealth for their families. This attains housing and increases quality of life.

# City Council District 1

**Evan Kubota**
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**Gina Fortino Dickson**
gina@ginaforwindsor.com

**What role do you believe local government should play in meeting its RHNA requirements, and do you think it should stretch beyond RHNA to grow a true "housing continuum," which means diverse housing opportunities across income levels to serve our community members as their housing and family needs and assets change over time?**

Local government should be open to new styles of housing and plans which create opportunities for developers to successfully complete projects. Flexibility on density and design should be utilized to help underutilized locations develop. Local governments should also assist with community outreach to engage with the neighborhoods that are impacted by development to make sure they have a seat at the table and understand the process for projects.

Windsor has already exceeded its low-income housing requirements—though we have a lot more work to do on middle-income housing, and filling the void for the 'missing middle.' I have adult children, and there are few housing options available for them as young adults who make too much to qualify for affordable housing, but not nearly enough to buy a home. To create a housing continuum, I hope to see more housing proposals focused on condos, ADU's and single-family starter homes for young people and prospective first-time homebuyers to achieve the dream of homeownership.

**How would you characterize the greatest set of challenges facing housing production? And what do you plan to do to help overcome these challenges?**

Cost seems to be the greatest challenge. Many approved and even started projects are struggling to keep up with the ever-changing construction market. By making sure projects are allowed to proceed as fast as possible, local governments can help builders complete projects sooner and control exposure to fluctuating markets.

I recognize the challenges posed by high building and labor costs, coupled with development impact fees, that make it difficult for some projects to make financial sense. Between tariffs on lumber and steel and material shortages, the raw costs of construction have never been higher, and with the higher cost of living here, the wages needed to support this work has also risen. The Town is not in a position to absorb development impact fees, but I'm supportive of streamlining processes and rightsizing impact fees based on unit size instead of flat rates regardless of unit size.

# City Council District 1

| Evan Kubota | Gina Fortino Dickson |
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**Generation Housing's current initiative, Housing for Healthy Communities, is part of our effort to continue a move away from exclusionary zoning, and looks at two state laws, SB 10 and AB 1033, that we believe are perfect fits for the North Bay. SB 10 upzones to allow up to 10 units on all parcels within a half mile of transit hubs and infill parcels. AB 1033 allows the separate sale of ADUs as small homes through condoization. Both are great opportunities for increasing affordable-by-design homes as both rent and for-sale products, perfect for young families, middle income workforce, and seniors. Could we count on your support for adoption and/or implementation of these bills? Why or why not?**

Yes. The benefit of this process is that when a parcel or project is found to be a good fit for the location, plans and approval can move faster without the need for CEQA which would delay projects and possibly make it an unaffordable project.

Importantly, the ability to utilize them rests with local government. This is important and beneficial as long as local government is making good-faith efforts to identify projects and locations which will benefit the community as a whole.

I'm not in favor of allowing 10 units on all parcels within a half mile of transit hubs by right. I think the Town should have the discretion to look at those applications on a case-by-case basis. On some lots, it may be workable, but if there's historical single-family homes on lots, it may not be appropriate.

As to for-sale ADU's, I support this opportunity to create more homeownership opportunities of smaller homes for first-time homebuyers and seniors looking to downsize. This creates more housing opportunities without necessarily adding density in existing residential neighborhoods.

**Streamlining housing development in the entitlement and permitting processes is a powerful tool in helping to attract developers and ensure the timely approval of projects and accelerate the overall production of housing. Do you support this call to action? Why or why not?**

Yes. Windsor has already done a great job of creating things like our carbon checklist which makes the permitting and approval process faster. I support continuing to work with builders to create thoughtful processes which can benefit all parties involved.

I support streamlining to a degree. I still think it's important to maintain discretionary review—maintaining local control, given too many state mandates have negatively impacted Windsor's quality of life, such as parking reductions and density bonuses pushed by the state, and opposed by small towns like Windsor. Shiloh Terrace is a posterchild of this—and it's the result of the state allowing the project to be under parked. This is why I support discretionary review, though there are some technical provisions that could be moved from discretionary to administrative review.

# City Council District 1

| Evan Kubota | Gina Fortino Dickson |
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| **There is work being done on a Housing Revenue Measure to be put on the 2028 Ballot. Do you support this effort? What do you believe your role in that effort is?** | |
| Yes. A bond is an additional way to secure funding which will help not only complete projects but create more desirable projects for those seeking affordable homes for both rent and purchase. I support the use of tax dollars to continue to help affordable projects created in Windsor. | I am not familiar with work being done for a possible housing bond measure in 2028. I would want to understand its impact on Windsor before taking a position. |
| **Housing is often listed as a top priority here in Sonoma County. What does it mean to you to govern in a way that is consistent with your priorities? For instance, are you prepared to make tough budgetary decisions consistent with that priority? If you have already held elected office, can you provide an example?** | |
| In reviewing our budget, the most significant impact would be the reduction of planning staff. This would increase workloads and delay the processing of applications for building. Planning staff, while part of the budget, represent a smaller portion than some other departments, which may be considered less essential. I would prioritize keeping essential services when the budget discussion comes up. | As a mom, housing affordability is important to me and my adult kids. As a Planning Commissioner, I have supported new housing, both single-family for-sale homes and affordable rental homes. I will continue to support housing when it fits within the character of Windsor, and doesn't have negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods. I recognize we need housing for our kids and our future, and while I won't always say yes to achieve this goal, I'll value housing developers who work with the community to make their project better in response to community concerns. |
| **Candidates were provided the opportunity to add any additional thoughts regarding housing. Substantive responses are provided here.** | |
| I have concerns surrounding the loss of local control over all aspects of development. Unfortunately, relying on the good intentions of developers has not seemed to work out and has negatively affected our community. We have overbuilt projects, incomplete projects, and very little affordable for-purchase inventory. Housing is a basic human right. I hope to regain some local control, while also continuing to do our part to provide affordable housing for those in need. | Windsor has been a leader in creating new housing—but in looking at our RHNA numbers, it's clear that middle-income housing—single-family starter homes, ADU's, and condos, are the type of housing that Windsor really needs. We've built a lot of apartments, and I think that the rise in new apartment construction has created frustration within the community for too much of one type of housing – and we need to diversify our variety of housing moving forward. I'll push to fill those unmet needs – middle-income housing, and truly affordable housing for vulnerable, very low-income residents. |