January 24, 2018

From: Bay Area Equity Advocates
To: CASA Steering Committee
Subject: Adopt Goals and Equity-Based Guiding Principles for the CASA Process

Dear CASA Steering Committee,

We the undersigned, representing the affordable housing, environmental, faith, labor, public health, homeless and legal service providers, and tenants’ rights communities, write to urge CASA to (1) adopt measurable goals for protection, preservation and production (“the 3 Ps”) that accurately reflect the scale of our housing crisis and (2) adopt overarching principles to guide CASA’s policy solutions.

The Bay Area faces an extreme housing affordability crisis. High housing costs, low wages, rapid gentrification, evictions and the legacy of exclusionary practices like redlining continue to marginalize low-income communities and communities of color, displacing families, limiting access to high-opportunity areas and driving the Bay Area into further socioeconomic stratification. Displacement separates people from their jobs and schools, forces low-income transit riders to switch to polluting cars, adds to congestion and impossible commutes, creates homelessness, adds to health disparities, and destroys community networks. Meanwhile, the lack of affordable housing near low-wage jobs in most suburban job centers forces these workers to commute long distances, and denies them and their families access to resources available in the communities in which they work.

This crisis disproportionately impacts low-income families, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, seniors, and other populations, creating a new era of regional resegregation and impeding fair housing. It also reminds us that we are linked: the fight for the right to a dignified home is connected to the struggle for workers’ rights, immigrant justice, climate justice, equitable development, and transportation equity.

As a united voice, we urge you to consider the following recommendations to guide the CASA process.

1. **Adopt Measurable Goals for Each “P” that Accurately Reflect the Scale of Our Housing Crisis**

   “Regional affordability and equity challenges, including displacement risks, are expected to worsen by 2040 . . . To truly address affordability and equity challenges, an engaged public and government at all levels will need to act. In particular, the Bay Area will need more aggressive policies and significantly more funding to deal with the housing crisis . . . .” - Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Plan Bay Area 2040

   During the first Steering Committee meeting, the Committee discussed the need to focus on order of magnitude solutions that adequately respond to the scale of the problem. In support of this call, we urge you to adopt the following three goals to guide solutions around tenant protections, affordable housing preservation, and new affordable housing production:

   - **Protection**: Protect the 450,000 low-income renter households¹ at risk of displacement by adopting incentives and requirements and generating $400 million/year.²
   - **Preservation**: Take over 25,500 homes³ occupied by and affordable to low-income renters off the speculative market and preserve over 11,100 expiring deed-restricted units⁴ by adopting incentives and requirements and generating $500 million/year for 10 years.⁵
   - **Production**: Meet the region’s need for 13,000 new affordable homes per year⁶ by adopting incentives and requirements and closing the $1.4 billion yearly housing gap.⁷

   The above goals reflect a data-driven analysis of the scale of the need to protect tenants from displacement, preserve existing affordable housing, and produce new units of affordable housing. By adopting the above big
picture goals, CASA can frame the scale of the problem, establish collective objectives, and engage stakeholders towards ambitious solutions.

2. **Adopt Overarching Principles To Guide CASA’s Policy Solutions**

CASA’s policy solutions should advance collective goals but also be reflective of a set of collective values. We urge CASA to adopt the following five principles to guide policy solutions:

a. **Solutions advance racial equity.**
   All CASA solutions should advance racial equity. The Bay Area, like the rest of the country, is saddled with the legacy of segregation and other discriminatory governmental policies. Creating a just and inclusive Bay Area requires policies that explicitly undo this legacy by affirmatively promoting racial equity.

b. **Solutions benefit, and do not harm low-income communities.**
   Low-income communities are under the greatest strain from the affordable housing crisis, so it is essential that solutions affirmatively benefit, and do not further burden them. CASA should ensure that policy solutions protect low-income renters from displacement and do not exacerbate displacement pressures. CASA solutions should also make sure that low-income people and neighborhoods are relieved of the disproportionate environmental and health burdens they currently bear.

c. **Solutions are appropriately tailored by geography to reflect the varying experiences of low-income residents in different communities.**
   Low-income residents in the Bay Area are experiencing displacement, disinvestment, and/or exclusion depending on the community. CASA solutions should reflect these community-level realities and respond to historic and ongoing patterns of discrimination.

d. **Solutions engage disadvantaged communities and advance community priorities.**
   CASA should engage communities traditionally underrepresented in government decision-making, ground-truth solutions, and advance the priorities of those most impacted by the housing crisis.

e. **Solutions are actionable.**
   CASA should anchor policy solutions in implementation. Policy ideas are only part of the equation; CASA’s success will ultimately depend on whether these solutions can be meaningfully implemented at the local, regional and state levels. By anchoring policy ideas in implementation, CASA can move one step closer to creating actionable game-changing solutions that impact people’s lives for decades to come. Policies should meet or advance these collective principles for inclusion in the final compact.

CASA has the ability and responsibility to create a transformative regional housing justice agenda—an agenda that values community stabilization where current residents can prosper in place, breaks down barriers to exclusion and creates more integrated neighborhoods, promotes land stewardship and respect for the people on it, leads to increased democratic participation, and invests in an equitable distribution of resources throughout the region.

Achieving these ambitious outcomes must begin by setting our sights high—adopting bold and measurable goals and visionary guiding principles. Let us write a new story for the Bay Area.

In community,
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, Carroll Fife

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Riders for Transit Justice, Alia Phelps

Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, Erin McElroy

Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Alvina Wong

Bay Area Consortium of Community Land Trusts

California Housing Partnership Corporation, Matt Schwartz

Causa Justa :: Just Cause, Camilo Sol Zamora

Community Housing Development Corporation, Donald Gilmore

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, Daniel Saver

Council of Community Housing Organizations, Fernando Martí and Peter Cohen

EAH Housing, Mary Murtagh

East Bay Community Law Center, Seema Rupani and Melissa Colón

East Bay Housing Organizations, Gloria Bruce, Jeff Levin and Stevi Dawson

Enterprise Community Partners, Rich Gross

Fair Rents for Redwood City, Diana Reddy

Faith in Action Bay Area (a federation of the PICO National Network), Lorena Melgarejo

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, Evelyn Stivers

Jefferson Federation of Teachers (AFT Local 1481), Sergio Robledo-Maderazo

Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, Diana E. Castillo

Latinos United for a New America (LUNA), Salvador Bustamante

Monument Impact, Debra Bernstein

Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH), Amie Fishman

North Bay Organizing Project, Susan Shaw and Davin Cárdenas

North Bay Organizing Project - Transit Riders United, Carol Taylor

Northern California Land Trust, Francis McIlveen
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