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Thursday, October 20, 2016

Hon. Julie Pierce, President, Association of Bay Area Governments
Hon. David Rabbitt, Vice President, Association of Bay Area Governments
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Item 9 Report on Plan Bay Area 2040

Dear President Pierce and Vice President Rabbitt,

The Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) is grateful to both the ABAG Executive Board and the MTC Commission for being partners in crafting a Plan that can respond to the needs of the Bay Area's lowest income residents. We appreciate your responsiveness to our proposal for additional meetings to discuss feedback on the Plan and for staff's consideration of our concerns.

No one wants to live in a region where half the population spends nearly seventy percent of their income on housing and transportation costs. Nor is it desirable to live in a Bay Area with longer commutes and deteriorated roadways as our workforce is forced to look farther and farther away for homes they can afford. If Plan Bay Area 2040 to be a guiding document then we must plan for a Bay Area that is able to house all of its population including its young people, seniors on fixed income, teachers, medical assistants, and countless service workers who make the economy thrive but who cannot afford the region's astronomical housing costs. We must also work towards ensuring that our region's longtime residents, who have made the Bay Area what it is, can stay in the place that they call home. Unfortunately, the Draft Preferred Scenario fails to create the Bay Area that we want but instead depicts the Bay Area that we are headed towards without meaningful action.

NPH has two requests of the ABAG Executive Board: 1.) We urge staff to develop a meaningful and aggressive implementation plan to address the region's housing affordability and displacement crises that will result in a joint work program and action items for ABAG and MTC staff AND 2.) The ABAG Executive Board should also be open to making policy assumptions and pushing for growth allocations for the Bay Area that may not necessarily be able to be modeled.

1. Developing a meaningful and aggressive implementation plan to address the region's housing affordability and displacement crises:

Now is the time for bold action if we wish for the Bay Area to maintain any of its income diversity over the next 24 years. Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties have already answered the call by placing over \$2 billion worth of affordable housing

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subsidies on the November ballot, while San Francisco voters approved a \$310 million bond in 2015 and with another on this year's ballot – it is time for the regional agencies to consider similar action to help address the yawning funding gap for affordable housing.

A final Plan Bay Area chapter should detail both the funding gaps and policy changes needed achieve the Plan's housing performance and anti-displacement targets at the desired levels. The chapter should also include a roadmap for filling in the subsidy gaps and for adopting the policy changes necessary for building and preserving affordable housing at scale as well as preventing further economic displacement of tenants. To make the Plan actionable, staff should simultaneously create a work program based on the roadmap to guide their joint work through the next iteration of Plan Bay Area in 2021. Both the implementation plan and the joint work program should be adopted at the same time as the final EIR.

A Final Plan Bay Area chapter should at a minimum:

a) Detail how the Plan moves in the wrong direction in terms of housing affordability and displacement risk and present findings from UrbanSim as to why. Staff should ensure that the model is making realistic assumptions including taking into account proposed affordable housing bonds in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties and a sales tax measure in San Mateo County as well as modeling the effect of anti-displacement policies on local jurisdictions that have such proposals on the ballot. The Plan should also examine approaches to improving local jobs-housing fit.

b) Quantify both the funding and policy gaps for Plan Bay Area to achieve its housing affordability performance target at scale while also identifying available resources at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.

c) Establish a roadmap of specific housing policy actions to be taken in the near, medium, and long term to address funding gaps and shortcomings of the Plan's performance targets including identifying areas for which additional work is needed.

- *The roadmap would specify housing actions to be undertaken by ABAG and MTC.* These actions should include fostering the creative use of billions of discretionary transportation dollars to create OBAG-like programs that incentivize and support local action targeted towards affordable housing; a proposal for a Regional Housing Trust Fund that can help finance affordable housing development at a scale commensurate with former redevelopment agencies; creation of an ongoing Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Fund for sites designated for 100% affordable housing developments in PDAs and PDA-like places.
- *Actions to be undertaken in partnership with stakeholders (local jurisdictions, other agencies, stakeholder organizations)* These should include programs to promote local adoption of residential development and commercial impact fees to fund the

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production of affordable units; adoption of community benefits agreements that lead to the creation of more affordable units; implementation of existing state law to yield more deed-restricted and naturally occurring affordable units (Surplus Land Act, Teacher Housing Act, Accessory Dwelling Units including Junior Accessory Dwelling Units.)

- *Actions to be advocated for at the state level.* These include advocating for an ongoing source of affordable housing subsidy at the state level, passing a new statewide affordable housing bond, Ellis Act reform, the “Palmer Fix” for inclusionary housing, etc.
- *Actions to be advocated for at the federal level.* Restoring funding that has been cut from crucial federal programs such as HOME and CDBG and fully funding both tenant-based and project-based Housing Choice Vouchers.

d) Commit ABAG and MTC to creating an “implementation plan” and a work program for the housing actions that are detailed in this final chapter to be adopted concurrently with the final EIR by both the ABAG Executive Board and the MTC Commission.

2. The Executive Board should also be open to making policy assumptions and pushing for growth allocations for the Bay Area that may not necessarily be able to be modeled.

UrbanSim’s complex simulations allow policymakers, stakeholders, and members of the public to better understand how land use decisions and policy assumptions are likely to impact development patterns in the Bay Area through 2040. The model is still a work in progress and, as such, the Draft Preferred Scenario has a number of flaws that must be corrected irrespective of UrbanSim’s modeling capabilities. If UrbanSim is not able to appropriately model basic housing assumptions, we should not shy away from making off-model adjustments so that the region can benefit while the model is improved.

The Draft Preferred Scenario presently assigns unrealistically high growth projections to some jurisdictions while failing to meet even basic assumptions for others. The region’s three large cities are expected to shoulder the lion’s share of the region’s housing growth (43%) while some suburban jurisdictions with access to high quality rail transit are projected to receive as many as 10 new jobs per new housing unit. For certain jurisdictions, the Draft Preferred Scenario projects less housing growth than what is called for in either the jurisdiction’s own general plan (i.e. Palo Alto) or their 8-year RHNA allocation (i.e. Livermore, Los Gatos, San Carlos). The region must address such discrepancies even if they are “off-model” or we risk pursuing a disingenuous development pattern that exacerbates the region’s displacement pressures, jobs-housing imbalance, and housing affordability crisis. NPH believes that all neighborhoods near transit and jobs should do their part to house the region’s future population.

The Draft Preferred Scenario currently makes assumptions that, in some cases, may be inconsistent with the current state of the law. For example, one of the Draft Preferred Scenario’s major assumptions is a 10 percent inclusionary requirement on all new



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residential development in the Bay Area. Such requirements, outside of the context of a developer agreement or community benefits program, could be legally challenged due to the erroneous ruling in *Palmer v. Sixth Street Properties* from 2009. Because UrbanSim is unable to model future housing growth by tenure this assumption becomes doubly problematic as new inclusionary zoning requirements can only be applied to for-sale housing units while, if development trends hold, much of the region's new housing stock will be rental units. At the very least staff should also specify the income levels for whom these inclusionary units are projected to be affordable to even if those numbers are likely to be halved.

Much as the model takes into account local zoning and proposed transportation funding measures, the Draft Preferred Scenario should be recalibrated to take into account proposed and adopted local housing policies. The model should include the proposed general obligation housing bonds in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties (Measures A1 and A respectively) and San Mateo County's proposed sales tax extension (Measure K). The Draft Preferred should also consider all local residential and commercial development impact fees that are targeted towards the provision of affordable homes. It should also analyze the impact of local anti-displacement policies (rent stabilization and just cause eviction ordinances) that have both been adopted and proposed.

We look forward to continuing to work with both the ABAG Executive Board and the MTC Commission as well as regional staff in the coming months to ensure that Plan Bay Area 2040 is truly the best Plan for the region. We appreciate your responsiveness to and engagement with NPH and are grateful for your work to date.

Sincerely,

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