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# MEETING SUMMARY

## Anti-Displacement Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Meeting #5 - Thursday, Sep 23rd, 2021

6:00 pm – 7:30 pm via Zoom

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The City of San José hosted the fifth Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting as part of the citywide Anti-Displacement working group. This group is tasked with offering input on the design of a realistic Community Opportunity to Purchase program that balances the needs and desires of tenants, property owners, brokers, realtors, and housing advocates. A copy of the PowerPoint can be found [here](#).

### Attendance

Over 40 community leaders from diverse sectors attended the meeting. Among those invited included housing advocates, property owners, affordable and market rate developers, philanthropic leaders, realtors, community-based organizations, and business leaders.

The meeting was facilitated by Baird + Driskell Community Planning with assistance from the City of San Jose Housing Department staff. The regular facilitator, Daisy Quiñonez, was out for medical reasons so Joshua Abrams facilitated.

Because of Daisy's unplanned medical leave, it was not possible to arrange for Spanish interpretation for this meeting. The City will be hosting a make-up session on Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for Spanish speakers.

### Introduction

Following a welcome and introductions, the facilitator revisited the ground rules the group established previously at the first SAC meeting. The facilitator also summarized previous discussions and the plan for future topics (i.e., education and outreach, and the draft framework).

### Tenant Engagement

Partnership for the Bay's Future Challenge Grant Fellow with the City of San José presented information about the goals of tenant engagement and how it is managed in other cities. Participants were then placed into small groups to discuss the following questions:

### Question 1 – Pre-Purchase communication

- What should (pre-offer) tenant communication look like? (e.g. what activities/types of communication/frequency)
- How should the current owner be involved?

### Question 2 – Tenant support

- What say do tenants have in the support or vetoing of a sale?
- Should there be a target threshold of tenant support as part of a property acquisition?
- Should tenants be able to refuse/deny a QNP's attempt to purchase the property so it could be sold on the open market?

Some themes from the discussion are summarized below with full notes in the appendix.

- **Respect tenants' privacy** – Remember that tenants did not consent to have their information shared, so be respectful of their privacy.
- **Renters' application provides some information** – While a good starting point, the information often becomes less accurate over time.
- **Do not burden owners** – The primary responsibility should fall to the nonprofit buyers, so as not to make additional work for the owner. If the nonprofit and the owner want to involve the owner, that is an option as well.
- **Process does not need to be overly complicated** – Tenants should be informed and nonprofits should have the opportunity to ask for more information, but the process does not need to be overly complicated or drawn out.
- **Provide appropriate information** – It is important to provide tenants information in a variety of ways including in person meeting, printed, and as needed (e.g. letting the tenant call the nonprofit). The information should be provided in the preferred language of the tenant.
- **Find a way to handle the situation if multiple nonprofits expressed an interest** – The goal should be to minimize disruption for both tenants and owners.
- **Adjust strategy based on the size of the building** - There may be different information available depending on the size of the building (smaller landlords and buildings tend to know their tenants more). Different strategies may be appropriate.
- **No tenant veto authority** - The general consensus for the groups that discussed it was that tenants should not have a veto authority over the sale to a nonprofit. It would add too much complexity and uncertainty and they do not have it for other sales.
- **Provide information throughout the process** – Be sure to have a way to follow up with tenants so they know if the offer was accepted or refused.
- **Consider if outreach is important** - A minority opinion was that communication was not that important and nonprofits should make their offer without meeting or informing tenants.

## **Ownership**

Challenge Grant Fellow presented information about homeownership trends in San José as well as a variety of ownership models. He also explained how COPA can be used to promote ownership. Participants asked for more detailed/disaggregated data for Asian Americans, which the City staff agreed to send out. One participant asked if the City will attempt to have more owners from certain racial groups. Staff explained that that would be illegal under state and federal law, and the program would be run in a race-neutral manner.

Participants returned to their small groups to discuss the following questions:

- Why is ownership important? What elements of ownership are most important to you? (E.g. wealth-building, stability, control, etc.)
- Knowing there will be resale restrictions that limit equity, does that change your thoughts on ownership?

Overall, there were divergent opinions about how much the program should emphasize ownership. Some participants felt strongly that there are unique benefits that only ownership could provide including control, wealth building, stability and respect. They doubted that nonprofits would be good enough stewards. Others felt that safe, affordable homes were the most important feature and that rental properties managed by a well-run nonprofit could deliver similar benefits to ownership. They wondered if very low income residents would be able to manage the unexpected repairs costs associated with homeownership.

## **Next Steps**

The next SAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 - 7:30 pm via Zoom. The Spanish-language make up meeting for SAC #5 is scheduled for Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 - 7:30 pm via Zoom.