

## A Bay Area Agenda for INVESTMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT

*Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Causa Justa: Just Cause,  
Council of Community Housing Organizations (CCHO), PolicyLink, Public Advocates, Urban Habitat*

Regional planning in the Bay Area must promote **investments and incentives to strengthen and stabilize communities vulnerable to gentrification and displacement**. Investment without displacement is not only vital to the survival of low-income communities and communities of color, but essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing economic vitality. In many neighborhoods, the low-income communities at risk of displacement are already leading environmentally sustainable lives: using public transit frequently, living in dense neighborhoods with compact homes, and living near where they work, shop, learn, worship, and socialize. Regional and local plans should build upon and strengthen this strong foundation, rather than ignoring or undermining it.

Achieving investment without displacement will require coordinated local and regional actions. These actions must be grounded in the localized neighborhood needs of low-income communities as identified by those communities, because they are the experts on what they need to thrive. **Well-funded neighborhood engagement and community assets mapping should inform all stages of regional and local plans for low-income communities, from development through implementation**. Local government policies play a critical role in preventing gentrification and displacement, and it is essential that the regional government bodies use their money and influence to promote strong local policies. **Regional agencies should fully leverage the funding they distribute, data and mapping they provide, and priorities they set, to incentivize local government policies that promote investment without displacement**.

To achieve development that benefits vulnerable communities, while bringing economic and environmental gains, regional and local governments should work together to:

### **Ensure Meaningful Resident Leadership and Influence in Planning Processes and Outcomes**

1. Base regional and local planning in vulnerable communities on well-resourced neighborhood processes that place decision-making power about core development issues into the hands of the community – particularly residents who are low-income, immigrants, and people of color – in a way that directly influences outcomes.
2. Guarantee that all planning processes are linguistically accessible, transparent, and understandable to local residents.
3. Demonstrate that resident priorities and recommendations have been incorporated meaningfully into planning outcomes in low-income neighborhoods.
4. Condition any streamlining of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements in low-income communities vulnerable to displacement on full preservation of the notice, transparency, and public participation benefits of environmental impact review so that these communities retain these important opportunities to shape new development.

### **Invest in Community Assets to Meet the Needs of Low-Income Families**

1. Plan and implement new investment and development in low-income communities in a way that promotes cultural and community cohesion, recognizes and strengthens existing community assets, and privileges localized needs, community benefits, and priorities identified through inclusive neighborhood-based planning.
2. Create “complete communities” in areas that currently lack access to essential resources (such as healthy food, banks, and pharmacies) and infrastructure (such as street lights, sidewalks, bus shelters, and playgrounds) through targeted economic and physical development strategies driven by a community-based identification of local needs, rather than top-down planning. Such development strategies must be coupled with protections for tenants and affordable housing, as detailed below.

## **Protect Tenants and Preserve Existing Affordable Housing**

1. Maintain existing homes that are affordable to low-income households by preserving deed restricted housing, increasing the stock of permanently affordable housing through acquisition and rehab of market rate units, enforcing health and building codes that ensure long term building habitability, and limiting the conversion of rental apartments into condominiums.
2. Safeguard the rights of tenants to remain in their homes through enacting and enforcing just cause/fair rent laws, strong relocation assistance requirements, enforcement of tenant protections in foreclosed properties, and right of first refusal policies that provide current tenants an opportunity to buy a property before it is sold to a third party.
3. Protect tenants and homeowners from direct displacement caused by construction of infrastructure, transportation, or other demolition of existing homes. In exceptional instances where temporary relocation is unavoidable, tenants should be fully protected by safeguards including adequate notice, the right to return, sufficient financial compensation to meet 100% of all out-of-pocket and intangible expenses, and an affordable temporary unit within the same neighborhood.
4. Ensure greater housing security for low-income tenants and homeowners by funding tenant counseling services, rental and utility assistance programs, no-interest loans for property maintenance, and counseling and assistance to help low-income homeowners at risk of foreclosure secure fair and affordable loan modifications.
5. Direct first time home buyer programs to residents who are purchasing homes in neighborhoods where they have lived for 5 – 10 years and to individuals who are buying homes from family members.

## **Promote New Affordable Housing to Meet Existing and Future Needs**

*(See the “Affordable Housing Agenda for the SCS” for more information)*

1. Tie affordability levels of new housing to the existing needs of local residents and workers, with particular attention on the availability of housing for those who are extremely-low and very-low-income.
2. Maximize the use of tools to ensure that expensive market-rate development supports affordable housing, such as inclusionary housing, impact fees, and affordable housing overlays.
3. Require the inclusion of affordable housing in any development that receives CEQA streamlining benefits.
4. Accommodate the Bay Area’s full housing need at affordable levels so that workers are not forced to move into neighboring rural counties, which can displace existing low-income communities there.

## **Tailor Economic Investments to Local Workforce and Community Needs**

1. Guarantee that employers in lower-income neighborhoods implement local hire and job training programs to improve economic opportunities for existing residents and maximize the potential of the existing workforce.
2. Preserve local businesses, especially those owned and operated by community residents, so that public and private investments do not displace or drive them out of business in favor of companies that are not based or invested in the community over the long-term.
3. Promote economic development that supports environmental sustainability and includes green job training and placement opportunities.

## **Improve Transportation Access**

*(See the “Transportation Justice Working Group RTP Equity Platform” for more information.)*

1. Prioritize transportation investments to provide frequent, affordable, and reliable local-serving transit to support neighborhood social networks for those low-income communities who most depend on transit to access jobs, schools, services, retail, healthcare, and other essential destinations.