

Community Equity Council Meeting

May 24, 2022

Facilitator: Mary

Councilmembers In Person: Mahsa

Councilmembers Online: Raquel, Del, Will, Norma, Majeid, Ben

Staff: Director Rich Hillis, Claudia Flores, Maia Small, Shelley Caltagirone, Lauren Hiller, Rio Holaday (Graphic Recorder)

1. Opening

Mary, as the facilitator, opened the meeting. Mary read the statement acknowledging that the Equity Council's work is done on unceded Ramaytush Ohlone lands. Mary also gave an acknowledgement of National Asian American Native Hawai'ian Pacific Islander Heritage Month and spoke briefly about the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas that had occurred hours ago.

Claudia introduced Rio Holaday, a contracted graphic recorder. Rio introduced herself and her role in the meeting to visually capture the themes of the Equity Council's discussion that day.

2. Housing Element 2022 Update Ongoing Community Engagement

Staff opened the conversation about the Housing Element 2022 Update's community engagement opportunities with a guiding question – **what should the Equity Council's relationship to the Housing Element 2022 Update be?**

Context Presentation

Before facilitating a discussion for councilmembers, Shelley delivered a presentation about the status of the Housing Element draft and updating process. She presented key features from the Housing Element, which include a focus on equity and reparations, more local funding for affordable housing, significant reductions in constraints to housing approvals, and rezoning that encourages housing production at multiple affordability levels. The discussion today aimed to focus on increasing community engagement resourcing and city accountability.

Based on feedback vulnerable groups shared with SF Planning staff during engagement events, Shelley highlighted the ways in which the 2022 Update delivers and does not deliver on community asks. Actions including producing community-led studies to report discriminatory government actions to communities of color, measuring and reporting access to affordable housing, integrating an elevated community role in policy and project review, amplifying the voices of communities of color, creating housing for low- and moderate-income households in well-resourced neighborhoods, and eliminating discrimination in housing are direct responses to community asks. Not all community asks, however, were fulfilled in the 2022 Update. Notably, requests from the Race and Equity in All Planning (REP) Coalition and other community members for a community verification of the Housing Element's

mapping (e.g. Well-Resourced Neighborhoods & Priority Equity Geographies), an elimination of streamlining policies, and a housing oversight committee were not delivered by the 2022 Update.

With this context, Shelley presented a draft community engagement proposal. This proposal included community consultation on housing priorities that would be most impactful to communities of color and metrics on anti-displacement investment and affordable housing production and preservation investments. This community consultation will begin with the Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Impact Analysis in the fall of 2022. The Housing Element project team asked the councilmembers for input on:

- Is engaging communities to inform the priority programs suggested by the equity analysis a realistic goal for three months (August-October 2022)?
- If so, what would make the engagement valuable to your communities?
- If not, could this engagement phase lay a foundation for a relationship that advances community empowerment and government accountability?
- How do we not tokenize or extract communities for their input? How can we ensure their feedback will meaningfully impact our housing system?

Discussion

Given the presentation delivered by Shelley on behalf of the Housing Element project team, councilmembers posed several lines of inquiry and themes in their discussion.

Planning must hold honest conversations with community in order build the trust needed to meaningfully address community housing challenges – Councilmembers clearly and repeatedly expressed that the Housing Element doesn't fully deliver on community asks and even raises some new concerns. Specifically, councilmembers shared their ongoing concerns about the streamlining of market-rate housing projects, the usage of mapping whose data has not been verified by the community, and the "well-resourced neighborhoods" framework. Staff responded to these concerns by sharing that some approaches are required by the state, giving additional policies from the Housing Element that may alleviate concerns, and by explaining the reasoning behind strategies. Shelley and Director Rich Hillis both explained that while the state requires municipalities to streamline all types of housing development, SF Planning intends to incorporate community input much earlier into the project review process rather than eliminate community input altogether. Director Hillis, however, acknowledged that the Planning Department does not currently have the community's trust, a factor essential to the Housing Element's goal of reducing the role of discretionary review in favor of earlier community review and input of potential projects. Part of Planning's work must be holding honest and open conversations and meet commitments in order to earn the community's trust to work together.

Balancing the unique needs of each community while avoiding an environment of scarcity and competition is difficult, but necessary – Repeating themes brought up in previous Equity Council conversations, a councilmember highlighted the differences in need between communities. For example, "anti-displacement" strategies meant different things to lesbians of color, who have been displaced from San Francisco over the decades, and Black communities, who were never welcome in San Francisco to begin with. As such, teasing out unique needs is essential. Planning must also balance against, however, divisions of communities and identities that create conflict and competition between communities advocating for their own needs. Another councilmember urged Planning to begin those

conversations somewhere and allow for different needs to organically emerge. Otherwise, Planning risks becoming frozen and taking no action at all.

Housing is a challenge that requires sustained work and communication, beyond the Housing Element and the Planning Department - Councilmembers shared experiences working with city agencies and meeting stalls due to a lack of interagency coordination. These experiences have harmed community trust in the city's actions and project momentum. Director Hillis echoed that Planning and other departments have historically accepted interagency disorganization as a fact when it should be agencies' responsibility to advocate for coordination. Moreover, councilmembers expressed a desire for consistent, long-term communication. They did not want Planning to come to community when they needed something, a behavior that creates an extractive relationship. Councilmembers asked for proactive communication during the implementation of projects and one expressed a desire to discuss the Housing Element again in a future meeting.

3. Updates

Equity Council Member Selection

From a shortlist put forward by Planning and other Equity Council members, the Equity Council Member Selection Subcommittee selected three candidates for Malcolm's backfill. Of those three, Anni Chung, President and CEO of Self-Help for the Elderly, and Rosa Chen, Community Planning and Policy Manager at Chinatown Community Development Center, submitted statements of interest for the position. The subcommittee will make their nomination soon and aim to invite the candidate to join the June Equity Council meeting.

Community Engagement Resources

Claudia has been and will continue to hold one-on-one conversations with councilmembers in order to determine their own priorities for the proposed \$750k community engagement budget. Councilmembers will return to this topic to further discussion budget allocation during the June Equity Council meeting.

Community Access to Planning Jobs

The Hiring Subcommittee is participating in the hiring process for the Community Engagement Manager. Councilmembers participating in the process shared their experience participating in the hiring process, acknowledging the number and diversity of candidates and the difficulty in narrowing down the field. Staff encouraged councilmembers to continue to nominate community members for upcoming roles.

Sharing Equity Council Strategies

Staff announced that we will continue coordinating with Cultural Districts and other community groups to present the Equity Council's work and strategies in the coming months, aiming to conduct presentations throughout the summer and into the fall.

4. Closing

Mary closed the meeting and reminded councilmembers that the next Equity Council meeting will take place on June 28, 2022 at 4-6pm. The June Equity Council meeting will discuss the communications strategy, allocating the community engagement budget, and coordinating communication between the Equity Council and Planning Commission.

