



To: CAHR Stakeholder Convening Participants
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Thank you all so much for participating in our series of convenings designed to elucidate how San Francisco State University's Center for Applied Housing Research (CAHR) can best contribute to research on affordable housing. What follows is our summary of the suggestions, questions, and concerns that were raised in the three meetings. We pulled these ideas from the conversations that transpired as well as from the question prompts we put up on the walls around the room. We did our best to capture both the general contours of the conversations as well as some of the granular detail, but not everything could be included in this document.

One of the most important takeaways that emerged was the need to think about affordable housing in tandem with many other social variables. Affordable housing isn't just about improving housing options, but also about improving outcomes in other arenas such as labor and income equity, the environment, and social service delivery. Research should consider outcomes that include and value these other factors. High labor costs make it more costly to produce affordable housing, but also add high-wage jobs. Environmental regulations make the development process more difficult, but also could provide important protections for the health of the community. These thornier questions need to be addressed with nuance and specificity.

Another key question with no clear answer is what do we mean by "affordable?" We saw a significant need for conversations about what affordable really means and who will benefit from construction of new housing. We heard questions such as: If middle income people are included in the affordability conversation, will extreme low income people have less opportunity? How do we ensure that both affordable housing and market rate construction share the same quality and are located in high-opportunity neighborhoods? How do we encourage new construction but also keep a focus on poverty reduction, integration, and equity?

Finally, we also noted that many of you were asking to see real data that may prove or disprove certain common narratives that are currently unsubstantiated by research. There are

myths or assumptions that many of you have to consistently resist or fight against. Two good examples are the notion that commercial development is more economically beneficial than residential development for cities, and the notion that NIMBY groups are more successful at blocking projects at the planning stage than perhaps they actually are. CAHR may be able to bring data-driven research to bear on all of these questions. Listed below we have a series of topics by category, along with a list of other issues that emerged. Then we provide some bullet points for specific data needs and typical problems or challenges. The final page is a list of all the agencies or organizations that participated in any of the three sessions.

This list of ideas and topics that follows is not the CAHR research agenda, which will have to be much more focused in the near-term, but we are hoping by sharing this compilation with you all we will keep this broader set of ideas in circulation. We will keep these topics in mind as we reflect on the potential roles identified for CAHR, refine CAHR's research agenda, and identify implementation partners. We will be back in touch with more information at the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester.

Potential Roles for CAHR

- ✓ Bridge the gap between community-based housing organizations and city agencies by sharing data and communicating specific needs.
- ✓ Help housing practitioners distill and evaluate quality of competing research publications; identify underlying assumptions and merits/quality of the research (design, methods, data) itself. Weigh in on the debate, to provide a point-counterpoint to dominant narratives. Help disentangle political arguments from data-driven, evidence-based arguments.
- ✓ Help educate the public, politicians and policymakers about issues related to housing supply & demand, resource allocation, and a full range of affordable housing options.
- ✓ Enhance the research capacity of community-based housing organizations.
- ✓ Conduct qualitative research to give life (tell stories) to existing quantitative housing data.

Homelessness

There is a need to examine definitions of homelessness, identify impacts on families, and establish promising practice models for providing stability for unsheltered people. Questions include:

- Should the definition be expanded to include families living in cramped quarters or residents doubled or tripled up in SRO housing? What are some likely implications for practice and policy?
- Which types of interactions are more effective in helping which unsheltered populations?

- How much long term supply do we need for supportive or transitional housing? How long do people usually need those supports?
- Which promising practice models exist for successfully stabilizing unsheltered people?

Construction and Development Process

A good chunk of our discussions focused on the construction and development process, which generated some of the more confounding practical and research questions.

- Does construction match the pace of approvals? At which points in the approval process do projects most often get bottled up?
- Is there a way to track construction costs and predict a down market reduction in costs?
- What are the real constraints on the labor market? What actually shapes supply and demand?
- Are there different construction typologies that might cost less?

Mixed Income Housing

Mixed income housing is often highly touted and many jurisdictions have mandated inclusionary zoning for new projects. There is a need to investigate the specific benefits and drawbacks of this shift in housing policy.

- Are the benefits tied simply to geography or also to mixed-income residence itself?
- Are there negative outcomes associated with mixed-income residence, because of stigmas or assumptions held by higher income residents?
- Flip the script – how can we ensure that middle and high income residents are willing to change their behavior or expectations in mixed-income housing?

Social Benefits

How does housing and the quality of housing affect individuals in other arenas of their health? There is a need to focus not just on the construction of new housing but also how specific elements of housing affect residents and their overall health.

- Does affordable housing reduce healthcare costs, and, if so, how can those cost reductions be quantified? Focus on housing and homelessness as public health issues.
- Should not lose focus on resident experience, satisfaction, leadership, and how these can affect the quality of housing.
- Is there a correlation between provision of social services and impact on residents? For instance, the LIHTC requirements that developers provide social services.

Regional Perspective

While many of our convening participants are based in San Francisco, we were frequently reminded that housing needs to be looked at as a regional issue. This is a more complicated approach, in terms of both collecting and analyzing data.

- New construction should be analyzed on a regional level. Where is new housing being built and how does that affect overall construction totals?
- How have community networks resisted displacement across different cities throughout the region?
- How do we compare data from different jurisdictions, when not all cities have the same resources to track and compile information?

New Kinds of Housing

How do we build more of these ‘new kinds’ of units within the current regulatory framework, or how do we change that framework?

- Cost-benefit analysis from other jurisdictions that have allowed container housing, modular housing, or tiny houses. How much actual housing was created relative to cost?
- What are the major zoning restrictions on adding cottages in a back yard, or multiple units on one site? Are there restrictions to do with parking, height restrictions, other issues?
- Accessory Dwelling Units – how do we make it easier for homeowners to construct these? How do we ensure they are added to the rental housing stock?

Existing Program Analysis

There are many programs that are already in place, but we don’t have good data on their effectiveness. Can we partner with local agencies to help collect and analyze their data and produce results about program outcomes?

- MOHCD’s home ownership assistance programs - what happens to those applicants who don’t get the assistance, did the homeownership counseling help them purchase someplace else?
- Homeward Bound program - how successful is the program in re-housing individuals or families in other cities?

Other Pressing Data-Specific Needs

- How can we correlate job growth with housing need? Are there good models for combination job-housing programs?
- Can we get more concrete data on interest in and efficacy of cooperative housing?
- Are there good models for incentivizing owners to make vacant or underused lots available for affordable housing?
- Are there policies available to incentivize landlords to accept more section 8 voucher tenants? Can we get data on ROI for landlords in accepting subsidies?
- How do we measure vacancy rates if units aren't actively in the leasing phase? What's the actual vacancy rate? What are the real percentages of rental vs vacation units?
- Need good data on number of units that are not deed restricted but are still "naturally affordable" for low-income renters.
- What's the overall number of new housing units we could add if every locality followed their housing element and added the number of units they either claim they need or claim they will add?
- Who really owns the rental stock, and what percentage is held by small investors compared to the percentage held by large investment portfolios?
- What populations are currently underserved by existing stock of affordable housing units?

Biggest Challenges in Meeting Agency Goals

- No integrated or coordinated source of data across all agencies. Different departments don't share information with others, both within and across jurisdictions.
- Lack of communication across sectors in housing, affordable housing (development, property management, social services).
- Lack of political will to approve projects. Specifically a lack of political will for affordable housing developments that are explicitly for lower-income people.
- Not enough LIHTC or tax-exempt bonds available to finance all the housing that's needed.
- Competition from market rate housing increases site costs and construction costs.

List of participants (March 16, March 29, and April 2, 2018)

Association of Bay Area Governments / Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Community Land Trust
Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
BRIDGE Housing Corporation
California Housing Partnership Corporation
California Renters Legal Advocacy and Education Fund
Causa Justa Just Cause
Compass Family Services
Council of Community Housing Organizations
East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
Enterprise Community Partners
Hamilton Families
Health Equity Institute, San Francisco State University
Housing Trust Silicon Valley
Merritt Community Capital Corporation
Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
Oakland Housing Authority
Saint Francis Homelessness Challenge
San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)
San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Office of Supervisor Hillary Ronen, District 9
San Francisco Council of Community Housing Organizations
San Francisco Housing Authority
San Francisco Information Clearinghouse
San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development
San Francisco Planning Department
Schiff Hardin LLP
SOMA Pilipinas
University of California, San Francisco - Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Urban Land Institute San Francisco
U.S. General Services Administration



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