

Subject: Summary of table conversation from the 3/22/19 C/CAG -Home for All Workshop on CASA

Date: 4/2/19

Executive Summary: The March 22nd special C/CAG meeting was attended by roughly 80 individuals from the following groups were present at the meeting: C/CAG Board of Directors, C/CAG Legislative Committee, Home for All Steering Council and Work Group members, California Apartment Association, San Mateo County Association of Realtors, and residents. This memo summarizes the major themes that emerged from the facilitated table discussions at the C/CAG meeting and copies the participant comments recorded by table notetakers.

Most participants were concerned about the process that led to the CASA compact due to a lack of representation for San Mateo County. The least well received parts of the CASA compact were its provisions to preempt local zoning authority near transit, rent control and renter protection provisions, and the proposal to divert local revenues towards regional initiatives. Although there was a broad consensus in favor of new housing construction, many participants emphasized that the “one size fits all” solutions of CASA were a poor fit for cities that had local knowledge of unique community considerations and, in many cases, have already approved significant housing construction. The proposed provisions to create rent caps and tenant protections for renters were generally seen as opposed to the expressed will of the voters in local elections and a recent statewide election (Proposition 10, 2018).

Meeting attendees were favorable to proposals to ease the construction of second units and potentially to construction streamlining in general. Participants also had a wide variety of individual ideas they brought to the table and encouraged the community engagement process around CASA to continue.

Question 1: Having heard this update, what in the Compact and its related legislation are you comfortable with?

Although the discussion on this question ranged widely, there were a few main areas of agreement. There was broad support for the CASA compact’s proposal to support the construction of second units (also known as Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs). There was also unanimous agreement with the general idea of building more housing. Although less prominent in discussion, several tables looked favorably on the concept of promoting transit-oriented development (TODs) and spoke highly of examples already existing in San Mateo County. Several tables were glad that the CASA compact represents a regional approach to a regional problem, though opinions were split towards the wisdom of that approach. A few tables approved of some sort of renter protections, though opinions toward the specific options of rent control, just cause evictions, and anti-price gauging rules were split. A couple of people spoke favorably of the compact’s funding proposals, and a couple of people spoke favorably of the plan’s proposals for surplus land disposal.

Question 2: What are your remaining concerns? How can your concerns be addressed?

This question yielded a robust and wide-ranging series of conversations. The most universal concern expressed was a general dismay with the lack of significant engagement with San Mateo County representatives prior to the announcement of the CASA compact. Another widespread concern regarded the current proposal to establish rent control and just cause protections despite state and local election results on this issue. Several participants expressed specific concern about the possible impacts of rent control on “mom and pop” landlords and on new housing construction. Many participants were also concerned with the compact’s proposals to limit local control over housing approvals. Several participants were particularly concerned that the use of “one size fit all” solutions failed to account for the considerable work some San Mateo County jurisdictions had already done to support new housing construction. Another recurring concern was the general lack of detail included in the CASA compact in several major policy areas. Other areas of concern included the possibility of higher taxes or loss of existing tax revenue, a perceived failure to force large employers to pitch in, and the creation of a regional housing body.

Many meeting participants agreed that it was important for San Mateo County to be represented in future CASA discussions, and several attendees said they wanted more public engagement to be done with city councils and the public at large. Meeting participants made a wide variety of policy recommendations to address their concerns about the current CASA proposal, though no single solution was prevalent enough to be considered a consensus.

A condensed version of the concerns and suggestions from this discussion can be found below:

Concern	Corresponding Solution (if applicable)
CASA’s proposals fail to adequately secure more land for affordable development (as there is no mention of greenbelt opportunities or other agencies in the public lands proposal).	Consider using spaces around or under freeways for development.
Several commenters expressed concern over the CASA compact’s plans on taxation and funding, due to the high level of existing taxes and concerns about lost revenue for local schools and cities.	One suggestion was to extend the sales tax to services.
Many commenters expressed concern over rent control for various reasons. Some argued that it was primarily pushed by the big cities, others were worried rent control could depress the supply of available housing, and some expressed concerns that enacting rent control contrary to recent electoral outcomes in state and local	One idea was to create an incentive/recognition program for good landlords who chose to keep their rents affordable. Another idea was to establish a community land trust, and a third idea was to use shared equity homeownership to make homebuying easier. Alternatively, some participants thought that it would be possible

elections could undermine faith in the system.	to make a compromise arrangement to protect tenants while still providing a fair rate of return to the landlord.
Several people were concerned that the CASA compact would grow bureaucracy at the regional level and expressed a skepticism towards the power of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.	One person suggested transferring state funding from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to the Association of Bay Area Governments.
Another concern was that affordable housing construction is mostly apartments, which was seen as geared toward younger populations	Ideas included building, more single family homes for families, conducting more lot subdivisions, and changing property tax rules to encourage seniors to downsize.
Several people expressed concern that the CASA compact's proposals to automatically upzone near transit would ignore the existing accomplishments of cities in San Mateo County and would destroy the character of single family neighborhoods.	One idea was that cities who demonstrate they are taking effective local action on housing should get an exemption from changes to height and density rules.
A few commenters expressed concern about what they saw as a lack of connection to transportation challenges and funding needs.	One suggestion was to invest more in transportation projects and east-west connections.
Several people expressed concern that large employers that have driven much of the region's recent job creation are not contributing adequately to solving our housing woes.	One idea was to force new commercial development to offset its housing demand.

Question 3: Do you have suggestions for how we can work/engage with MTC/ABAG going forward?

Although not all tables had time to delve into this question, those that did urged a strong effort to educate MTC/ABAG and the state legislature about the needs of San Mateo County and the work that San Mateo County jurisdictions have already done to tackle the housing crisis. Several participants also expressed a desire to address the Bay Area's traffic woes in tandem with its housing challenges. Many commenters suggested engaging in a broader public engagement process with city councils and the general public to receive more input on the CASA compact. Some of the comments were split towards whether it would be wiser to build off of the CASA compact or start over from scratch.