



October 16, 2024

Alameda County Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Public Comment on the Ten-Year Housing Plan

Dear Board of Supervisors President Nate Miley, Supervisor David Haubert, Supervisor Elisa Marquez, Supervisor Lena Tam, and Supervisor Keith Carson; Alameda County Director of Community Development Sandra Rivera and Housing and Community Development Director Michelle Starratt:

We are members of the Housing Capacity Committee for EveryOne Home, the Oakland, Berkeley/Alameda County Continuum of Care (CoC), and we are writing in response to the Ten-Year Housing Plan specifically as it relates to ending homelessness. We are service providers, clinical practitioners, housing advocates, organizers, and people with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity. As you know, we are part of the EveryOne Home CoC chartered to coordinate services and improve the system. We meet monthly and work to engage participants from across the system through a racial equity lens and systems change focus.

These comments are drawn from our Housing Capacity Committee meeting of September 18, 2024.

1. We see urgent needs in the community, beginning with:

- a. Increasing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness
- b. Lack of housing people can afford
Units with Affordability Restrictions (both subsidized and unsubsidized)
- c. Private market affordability
- d. Racial disparities in outcomes for becoming and remaining housed

2. Housing Capacity Committee Charter:

Governance documents for our Committee say our mission is:

The purpose of the Housing Capacity Committee is to support expansion of the supply of permanent supportive and dedicated affordable housing opportunities available to people experiencing homelessness in Alameda County. To achieve these ambitious goals the group will advocate that funding should be targeted to housing dedicated to households at 10% or less of Area Median Income (AMI), coordinate funding, track units apart from and in HMIS, coordinate with housing authority resources, and plan proactively for funding and expansion



Please note that since this Charter was written, a new California law, AB 1043 (Bryant, LA) requires planning for acutely low-income people at 15% Area Median Income. An example of this group is Seniors on SSI. We note that the Ten-Year Plan meets this legal requirement.

3. Our Recommendations:

- a. **Let us not be alarmed by the size of today’s problem – we have solutions and can make the difference.** Our organizations help people become and remain housed every day. We know what it takes to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring: housing people can afford, even at the lowest income levels; a system of services that addresses racial disparities while providing choice and opportunity; subsidies to support people in both non-profit and private market units; and engagement by the full community including people with lived experience, practitioners, subject area experts, and community leaders in the public and private sectors.
 - i. **Alameda County kept the promise of Measure A1 and** delivered 4,200 new homes, with 20% of resources going to households at or below 20% Area Median Income. *Source: [Measure A1 \(acgov.org\)](https://www.acgov.org/MeasureA1)*
 - ii. **Alameda County reduced unsheltered homelessness** according to the Point In Time Count for 2024. *Source: [Alameda County Health](https://www.alamedahealth.org/)*
 - iii. However, we continue to see too many individuals and families, including Seniors, Children, Veterans, and People with Disabilities on our streets, especially Black and Indigenous residents. Everyone is worthy of a home.
 - iv. **Alameda County has the resources** to increase investment in addressing homelessness, including how to pair construction and operating subsidies to serve people in greatest need.
- b. **Within the big scale of need shown, focus on these priorities.** Let’s not just rehash existing programs but be creative, bold, and passionate. Let’s find the way to fund new and existing programs at scale.
 - i. **Align goals, projects and accountability** of Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department with Alameda County Health Department of Housing and Homelessness Services to prioritize the people in greatest need – those lowest income, most vulnerable: i.e., working low-income Senior population, disproportionately Black and Indigenous Alameda County residents



- c. **Pursue new strategies or newly rediscovered strategies at scale** in both the Homelessness and Housing sectors, like:
- i. Acquisition and rehab of existing affordable units.
 - ii. Shallow subsidies and direct payments, expansion of time periods for rapid rehousing participants to avoid re-entry to homeless/unhoused status, for example, standardized, expanded, and successful rapid rehousing time periods.
 - iii. Tenant protections and interventions to prevent homelessness.
 - iv. Unified efforts to engage community in demanding adequate federal action.
 - v. Actively seek out landlords and vetting of them, their properties for structural conditions, habitability and sanitary conditions to ensure these will be met. Give landlords subsidies to help them improve their properties to provide housing opportunities in Rapid Rehousing program and the participants to thrive. Landlord/tenant counseling.
 - vi. Break lease option to find other housing resource should counseling and options are exhausted. Shelter stays should be extended to support best practices.
- d. **Maintain or improve the promise of Measure A1** in new regional or countywide resources for affordable housing development, to dedicate a minimum of 25% of resources to people at 15% or below of Area Median Income. More resources need to be dedicated to addressing homelessness because of the 93,000 units needed to address cost burden, 17,000 are specifically needed to address homelessness, and these units require higher subsidy levels.

We stand ready to work with Alameda County to bring this vision to reality.

In Community,

Housing Capacity Committee

EveryOne Home, the Oakland, Berkeley/Alameda County Continuum of Care (CoC)