



September 13, 2023

Civil Grand Jury - Foreperson
725 Court Street
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

SENT VIA EMAIL: ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov

RE: City of Richmond's Response to Grand Jury Report No. 2306: "A Plan Without a Home"

Dear Foreperson:

Thank you for your letter and the accompanying Grand Jury Report No. 2306, Affordable Housing, in which you highlighted several findings that align with the prevailing trends and challenges in our jurisdiction. As part of our review process, we carefully considered your concerns, and we acknowledge that some findings may lack context.

The City of Richmond and other Contra Costa County jurisdictions share many common challenges to the production of affordable housing development. As you highlighted in your letter and report, one significant challenge shared across the County, is the lack of funding for affordable housing initiatives. Additionally, even when funding is available, the competition for these dollars often discourages developers from pursuing projects with a lower probability of receiving funding.

In addition to our shared challenges, there are also critical differences between Richmond and the rest of the County. Richmond's history, demographics, and geography generate unique needs and demand unique responses. Richmond has a more racially and ethnically diverse population than either Contra Costa County or the Bay Area as a whole. Overall, household income in Richmond is lower than that of Contra Costa County. Richmond's median household income in 2019 was \$68,472 compared to the County's median income of \$99,716. The concentration of high-income households in Richmond is lower than in the County and the region. As a result, Richmond experiences a higher demand and need for housing with subsidized rents than other Contra Costa County jurisdictions, and Richmond's progress toward its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals varies from many Contra Costa County jurisdictions, which tend to underproduce low-income housing and overproduce above-moderate income housing. Additionally, Richmond is often the first place lower-income people move to when relocating into Contra Costa County because of its lower housing prices.

Thus, while Richmond has a higher need for, and consequently concentration of, affordable housing, this fact attracts new residents to Richmond, which in turn, increases the competition for and cost of housing and the need for more affordable housing. This additional demand for housing, along with rising construction costs, contributes to rising rental and home prices in Richmond. Housing costs in Richmond grew considerably over the past decade. According to Zillow, between 2011 and 2020, the typical value of a Richmond home increased by 159 percent from \$247,317 to \$641,530. Additionally, between 2015 and 2019, Richmond median rent increased by 25 percent, from \$1,102 to \$1,381.

Richmond also has a unique history relative to many of its county neighbors. Richmond was an epicenter for African American migration during World War II (WWII) as a robust industrial town. However, as a result of its great diversity, Richmond residents experienced racial discrimination and the impacts of racist housing policies such as the inability to access mortgages and other forms of structural disinvestment. In the mid-2000s, Richmond was again disproportionately impacted due to racist predatory lending that resulted in mass home foreclosure across the city. This history of structural disinvestment and racist policy contributes to Richmond’s high need for affordable housing and community investment today.

Richmond experiences the lack of funding and high competition for funding in a unique way due to the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) Opportunity Maps. The California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) is responsible for designing the criteria for the distribution of housing tax credits in the administration of both the state and federal Low Income Housing Tax credit (LIHTC) Program. The methodology for the criteria is annually reviewed and may be updated to reflect state housing objectives. LIHTC is one of the most important forms of financing for affordable housing projects. In 2018, TCAC implemented the Opportunity Map. The intended outcome of the policy was an increase in access to “opportunity” for those that have been the historical victims of racist and exclusionary public policy decisions. Opportunity refers to the indicators that research has associated with positive outcomes for some residents, including but not limited to educational, economic, and environmental outcomes. The unintended outcome of this change to the criteria was the introduction of bias against low-income communities of color by redirecting project awards away from these communities.

In 2018, following the implementation of the TCAC Opportunity Maps, entire cities around the state were categorized as “Low” or “Moderate” Resource as is the case in Richmond, making Richmond based affordable housing projects less competitive in the application process for LIHTC. In the five years prior to the 2018 implementation of the Opportunity Map (2013-2017), Richmond was awarded 13 LIHTC credits through both the 4percent and 9percent programs. In the five years following the implementation of the Opportunity Map, Richmond was rewarded only 3 LIHTC funds. This reduces the access to financing and increases the project timeline for affordable housing projects in Richmond.

Richmond’s specific needs outlined above, demand the city take a multi-faceted approach to addressing housing affordability. It is not enough to focus on housing supply alone. Addressing the housing needs of Richmond residents means fostering economic development, tackling low wage jobs, increasing tenant protections, and eliminating housing discrimination as well.

Below are some of the relevant City of Richmond Programs and Policies implemented to address the varied housing needs of our residents:

- Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction and Homeowner Protection Ordinance: In 2016, Richmond passed the first rent stabilization law in Contra Costa County. The comprehensive measure includes both rent control and just cause eviction protections. Community organizations emphasized that Richmond’s strong Just Cause protections give its residents an important layer of protection against unlawful evictions in comparison to many other cities. BALA and CCSLS credited these protections as the reason why they receive far fewer eviction cases from Richmond than from demographically similar cities in Contra Costa County such as Antioch and Martinez.
- Community Land Trust Development: The City of Richmond is also home to Contra Costa County’s first and only community land trust, focused on preserving and producing permanently affordable community ownership opportunities.
- Fair Chance to Access Affordable Housing Ordinance: Regulates when and how affordable housing providers may ask about and use arrest and conviction records in making housing decisions.
- Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance: Protects tenants from harassment by their landlord and provides tenants with the ability to sue their landlord for harassment.
- Inclusionary Housing and Linkage Fee Ordinance: Facilitates the development of affordable housing by (1) requiring housing developers to include set-aside affordable housing units in new market-rate for sale developments in higher opportunity areas; (2) requiring housing developers to include set-aside affordable housing units in new market-rate rental developments, or, if they opt out, to pay an in-lieu fee, and (3) requiring an affordable linkage fee on new non-residential development to generate local funding for affordable housing production and preservation.
- 2016 Zoning Ordinance Update: Replaced the City’s previous zoning ordinance, establishes various zoning and land-use regulations that promote density, and establishes incentives for affordable housing, senior housing, accessible housing for people with disabilities, and developments with an on-site childcare facility. It also establishes waiver procedures to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities seeking fair access to housing through a waiver of certain development standards.
- Health in All Policies Ordinance and Strategy: In addition to addressing affordable housing needs, Richmond recognizes that housing is also critical to public health. The Health in All Policies (HiAP) ordinance and strategy was

passed in 2014 to address health inequities in the City of Richmond. Health in All Policies is based on the idea that health starts with where people live, work, learn, and play, and that community health is influenced by more than individual choices. One’s physical and social environments, along with local government decisions and actions that shape these environments, have an impact on health outcomes. HiAP is an overarching framework to guide city policy, practices, and partnerships that promote health and well-being for all residents.

In addition to protections, preservation and anti-discrimination policies, Richmond is facilitating affordable housing production. In contrast to other Contra Costa County jurisdictions, from 2015 to 2021, Richmond issued permits for 100 percent of its very low-income housing goal (438 Units), 70 percent of its low-income housing goal (214 Units), and 69 percent of its above moderate-income housing goals (882 Units).¹

The housing crisis has become a pressing concern in our jurisdiction and beyond, with far-reaching implications for individuals and communities. Your letter has shed some light on critical aspects of the housing crisis we face today and affirmed that we are not alone as a jurisdiction in facing these challenges. Despite potential areas of partial disagreement, we acknowledge the factual basis of your findings and recognize the interconnectedness of the underlying conditions that have given rise to the current challenges.

By working collaboratively and understanding the broader context of the housing crisis, we strive to develop more effective strategies and policies to address this pressing issue and create a more inclusive and sustainable housing landscape for all members of our community.

Sincerely,



Shasa Curl,
City Manager

cc: Richmond City Council
Lina Velasco, Director of Community Development
Hector Rojas, Planning Manager
Jesus Morales, Housing Manager
Kaitlyn Quackenbush, PBF Housing Fellow

Enclosure: City of Richmond Response

¹ As of December 31, 2022, Annual Element Progress Report

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933.05(a) and 933.05(b), please find below the response of the City of Richmond to the findings and recommendations of the 2022-2023 Contra Costa Civil Grand Jury Report No. 2306: “A Plan Without a Home”. The City’s responses are in italics directly below each finding or recommendation.

The Richmond City Council reviewed and approved this response at their meeting of September 12, 2023.

FINDINGS

- 1. Within existing city or County infrastructure there is no clear owner who is responsible for achieving RHNA permitting targets.**

Response: We partially disagree with Finding 1. While a single entity is responsible for reporting on RHNA permitting targets, jurisdictions do not develop housing projects. State Housing Law only requires that jurisdictions plan to address barriers to development, accommodate all types of housing based on the RHNA allocations, and report their progress towards achieving RHNA permitting targets.

The City of Richmond creates this regulatory environment through General Plan and Specific Plan policies, zoning standards, City programs, and/or economic incentives to encourage the construction of various types of units. In addition, the City can partner and collaborate with other agencies, organizations, and entities to advance City housing priorities. The programs in Section IV of the 6th Cycle Housing Element Update (HEU) (referred as Housing Plan by the Grand Jury) are specifically intended to encourage the production of housing in the city.

The Planning Division within the City’s Community Development Department is then responsible for preparing the Annual Progress Report (APR) as required by State Housing Law. These reports are presented before the City Council early in the calendar year, prior to submission to HCD. Furthermore, each jurisdiction’s Housing Element identifies the department responsible for carrying out the Housing Element’s Plans and Programs.

- 2. City and County officials see no direct path to meet state-mandated regional housing (RHNA) targets.**

Response: We partially disagree with Finding 2 because while City of Richmond officials recognize the challenges ahead, our Housing Element identifies a clear path to accommodate the RHNA targets and we are actively exploring and implementing strategies to work towards meeting state mandated RHNA targets. The City’s regulatory environment successfully facilitated the permitting and development of affordable housing in the last planning cycle, and the City is going further with its programs and

policies to support affordable housing development in this next cycle. (See HEU Programs 1.A, 1.B, 1.E, and 1.J)

3. There are currently no measurable penalties if a city or a County does not achieve RHNA targets in an approved housing element plan.

Response: *We partially disagree with Finding 3 because while there are no legal or financial penalties if the cities and County do not achieve their RHNA targets, there are penalties for not accommodating RHNA in a Housing Element and the consequences for not issuing adequate permits can be considered punitive.*

In addition, jurisdictions are subject to penalties if they fail to achieve Housing Element certification, including designating adequate sites to accommodate the RHNA targets. For example, cities and the County may be subject to litigation from individuals, housing rights' organizations, developers, and/or HCD. Depending on court decisions, local control may further diminish, beyond that prescribed in State law, including, for example, suspending cities' or the County's authority to issue building permits or approve certain land use permits. Cities and the County may also be subject to court-issued fines, court receivership, and streamlined approval processes that remove local discretion.

Regardless of the reasons for lack of building permit activities, if the cities or County do not issue building permits that meet the RHNA targets, developers may choose to use a ministerial process for housing projects that meet specified criteria (SB 35).

4. Data published by ABAG shows that Contra Costa County and most of its cities have missed their current RHNA targets for very low- and low-income housing allocations. The allocation requirements continue to increase (16x for very low-income and 4x for low-income residents).

Response: *We partially disagree with this finding. It is true that many cities and the County missed their RHNA targets for very low and low-income housing, and that RHNA Allocation for very low- and low-income housing has continued to increase, but it should be noted that Richmond attained 100 percent of its very low- and 70 percent of its low-income targets during the 5th Cycle planning period covering 2015 through 2023.*

5. Many obstacles hinder the development of AH at the local level, specifically for very low- and low-income housing, including: a) Limited availability of land; b) Restrictive zoning policies specific to AH development; c) Limited developer interest to bring projects forward; d) Limited available funding; e) Lack of community support; f) NIMBY opposition & city council response to NIMBY opposition.

Response: *We partially disagree with this finding. Though the above list of obstacles can hinder the development of affordable housing, the City has addressed each item in*

the HEU programs, policies, and actions to the extent feasible and considered acceptable to HCD as noted in the table below. Additionally, Richmond attained 100 percent of its very low- and 70 percent of its low-income targets during the 5th Cycle planning period despite many obstacles, including the ones listed in this finding.

Limited availability of land	Restrictive zoning and policies specific to AH development	Limited developer interest to bring projects forward	Limited available funding	Lack of community support	NIMBY opposition and City Council response to NIMBY opposition
<p>Program 5.M: Richmond Housing Rehabilitation Program</p> <p>Program 1.J: Surplus Land Act Sites</p> <p>Program 5.I: County Home Rehabilitation Program</p> <p>Additionally, the City is using Richmond Housing Authority Properties to upgrade and increase the supply of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Program 1.G: Compliance with Changes in State Housing Law</p> <p>Program 1.I: Minimum Densities</p>	<p>Program 1.E: Expedited Review</p> <p>Program 1.L: Eliminate Parking Minimums near Transit Consistent with AB 2097</p> <p>Program 3.B: Housing Developers Interviews</p>	<p>Program 2.C: Affordable Housing Assets Fund Program</p> <p>4.D: State and Federal Housing Funds Program</p> <p>4.J: Funding for Emergency, Transitional, and Supportive Housing</p> <p>Additionally, the City of Richmond is applying for the CA ProHousing Designation which will provide priority for several state affordable housing funding programs</p>	<p>Program 1.D: Outreach to Property Owners to Encourage Housing Development</p> <p>Program 5.C: Online Housing Resource Center</p> <p>Program 5.D: Housing Education Workshops and Outreach</p> <p>Program 6.A: Community Land Trust</p>	<p>The City conducted extensive community outreach in the development of the 6th Cycle Housing Element update and the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Appendix. Additional public engagement and participation will continue with the development of the Housing Equity Roadmap and implementation of housing programs (Program 6.G).</p>

As noted in the cover letter, in 2018, following the implementation of the TCAC Opportunity Maps, entire cities around the state were categorized as “Low” or “Moderate” Resource as is the case in Richmond. As a result, Richmond based

affordable housing projects have become less competitive in the application process for LIHTC. In the five years prior to the 2018 implementation of the Opportunity Map (2013-2017), Richmond was awarded 13 LIHTC credits through both the 4percent and 9percent programs. In the five years following the implementation of the Opportunity Map, Richmond was rewarded only 3 LIHTC credits to fund affordable housing projects.

Despite this major challenge in accessing the primary form of financing affordable housing, Richmond attained 100 percent of its very low and 70 percent of its low-income targets during the 5th Cycle planning period covering 2015-2023.

6. Zoning changes are generally addressed only when a project is presented for development. Zoning obstacles include: a) Housing element plans that offer poor land choices for AH development; b) Restrictive height and high-density zoning policies; c) Lack of inclusionary housing ordinance(s) in many cities.

Response: *We partially disagree with this finding; Most jurisdictions consider amending/changing the zoning while reviewing their Housing Element and/or updating the General Plan or Specific Plans, not just when a project is proposed for development.*

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2(b), Housing Element sites must include information on the number of dwelling units that a site can realistically accommodate, the RHNA income category the parcel is anticipated to accommodate, whether the parcel has available or planned and accessible infrastructure, and the existing use of the site, amongst other details. When selecting sites to accommodate the lower income RHNA, HCD provides jurisdictions with best practices to consider factors such as:

- (1) Proximity to transit*
- (2) Access to high performing schools and jobs*
- (3) Access to amenities, such as parks and services*
- (4) Access to health care facilities and grocery stores*
- (5) Locational scoring criteria for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (TCAC) Program funding*
- (6) Proximity to available infrastructure and utilities*
- (7) Sites that do not require environmental mitigation*
- (8) Presence of development streamlining processes, environmental exemptions, and other development incentives.*

In addition to the above requirements and pursuant to AB 686 (Government Code Section 65583(c)(10)), Housing Elements due on or after January 1, 2021, sites must be identified throughout the community in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing (AFFH).

According to State Density Bonus Law (SDBL), local agencies are required to allow increased density, reduced standards, and development incentives based on the number and type of affordable housing units proposed in a project. The SDBL applies to housing projects, including mixed-use developments, new subdivisions, or common-

interest development. Developers may request incentives and concessions from the jurisdiction’s regulatory or development standards that result in actual and identifiable cost reductions to provide for affordable housing costs or rents. The number of required incentives is based on the percentage of affordable units provided in the qualifying project. For example, developers may ask for increased height above that allowed by the zoning regulations. As such, height and density do not represent a restriction to development. Furthermore, many sites are located in transit-oriented neighborhoods where recent State laws have preempted restrictions on height and density.

Lastly, item (c) is not an obstacle in Richmond because the City already has an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in place for both rental and for-sale housing. (Richmond Municipal Code Article 15.04.603). Richmond’s Inclusionary Housing Ordinance was adopted in November 2020. The City collected \$314,143.63 of inclusionary housing in-lieu and non-residential linkage fees during the 2022 calendar year.

7. Penalties directed at cities and the County (financial, loss of control over local planning) are tied to not meeting state deadlines for Housing Element plan approval.

Response: *We partially disagree with Finding 7 because there are other penalties that are not directly tied to the statutory deadline. There are penalties associated with lawsuits, which are rarely brought forward for simply missing the statutory deadline, but more due to a perception of continued inactions. Penalties also include eligibility for funding.*

In addition, depending on specific programs, eligibility for some state funds requires a certified Housing Element (such as PLHA and State HOME funds). Finally, loss of local control is not limited to jurisdictions that do not meet specified timeframes for a certified housing element. For example, SB 35, the Housing Accountability Act, the No Net Loss Act, Density Bonus Law, and AB 2011/SB 6 specify what types of projects local jurisdictions must approve and where such projects must be approved, regardless of whether jurisdictions meet state deadlines for Housing Elements.

8. Builder’s Remedy and SB 35 projects do not address ingrained local obstacles identified in this report that prevent the completion of approved AH projects.

Response: *We partially disagree with this finding. While Builder's Remedy and SB35 projects are valuable tools that can expedite affordable housing development, it is true that they may not comprehensively address all the ingrained local obstacles identified in this report that hinder the completion of approved AH projects. In Richmond, however, the application of SB 35 recently resulted in a streamlined, ministerial planning approval for the TBV: Villas at Renaissance Apartments Project (105 units along Colusa Avenue). There are two other SB 35 projects currently under review that are expected to receive non-discretionary approval in the next few months – the Central Avenue*

Project (102 units along Central Avenue) and the Bob Dabney Plaza Project (32 units along Macdonald Avenue).

- 9. When local Redevelopment Agencies (RDA’s) were discontinued by the state in 2012, the County and cities did not address the loss of funding for affordable housing or find alternative funding to support affordable housing projects until voters passed Measure X in November 2020. Projects that target very low- and low-income residents were particularly impacted.**

Response: We partially disagree with this finding. We agree that funding limitations continue to be a great barrier to producing more affordable housing. As noted, earlier the TCAC Opportunity Maps disadvantage Richmond-based affordable housing projects competing for LIHTC financing. Despite the challenges, Richmond has taken action to address the lack of funding for housing. Richmond’s Inclusionary Housing Ordinance has provisions for requiring affordable units to be built as part of for-sale projects in areas south of I-580, a housing in-lieu fee for rental projects, and non-residential linkage fee. The fees collected through the ordinance are intended to fund affordable housing projects throughout the City. Additionally, the City has applied for the State Prohousing Designation which will give Richmond priority for: 1) the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Program; 2) Infill Infrastructure Grant Program; 3) Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program and other housing related funds. It should be noted that the City of Richmond was recently awarded the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant for an affordable housing project near the Richmond BART Station. However, these grants remain small and do not eliminate the need for additional subsidy to make affordable housing projects feasible.

- 10. Measure X housing funds are not fully dedicated to building AH for very low- and low-income residents.**

Response: We agree with this finding as Measure X monies can also be utilized to fund regional hospitals and community health centers; support crucial safety-net services; invest in early childhood services; protect vulnerable populations; and fund other essential county services.

- 11. Local funding provided by bonds like Measure X Housing Fund is a critical component of a developer’s overall ability to raise funds for an AH development.**

Response: We partially disagree with this finding. While local funding provided by bonds like Measure X Housing Fund in Contra Costa County are a beneficial component to help fund affordable housing construction, the amount of funding available from Measure X is not high enough to be a critical factor in a developer’s overall ability to raise funds for an affordable housing (AH) development. Under the Measure X Program Allocation Summary, only \$10 million dollars (about 13 percent of FY 2022-23 funding and about 4.5 percent of total funding) were allocated to a Local

Housing Trust Fund; for FY 2023-24, \$12 million dollars were allocated. The Measure X Housing Funds are to be dispersed by the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) and Contra Costa Health Services’ Health, Housing and Homeless Services (CCHS-H3) and the Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa.

12. Cities that proactively engage citizens, address zoning obstacles, make reasonable zoning concessions, work collaboratively with developers, provide local funding support, and are united in addressing NIMBY opposition, have been successful in attracting AH projects.

Response: We partially disagree with this finding. The City of Richmond agrees that proactive strategies can help attract affordable housing developers and mitigate the barriers to housing production; however, proactive strategies alone do not result in affordable housing projects being constructed. For example, while Richmond engages in all of the above, a variety of other obstacles towards affordable housing development exist beyond a local jurisdiction’s control. This includes the gap in financing between constructing market-rate versus affordable housing. Additionally, as noted earlier, the TCAC Opportunity Maps disadvantage Richmond-based affordable housing projects applying for LIHTC funding.

13. The latest RHNA targets for cities and unincorporated Contra Costa County show a significant increase in the number of units that are expected to be permitted for very low- and low-income housing.

Response: We agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each city and the County should consider assigning a staff position with clear leadership, ownership and accountability to achieve allocated RHNA targets. The individual in this position would be responsible for establishing and promoting an operational plan to achieve the RHNA goals set forth in the housing element plan.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Richmond has a Housing Coordination Team that oversees development opportunities and the implementation of the Housing Element. While cities and the County are not responsible for the development and construction of housing to achieve the allocated RHNA targets, the City of Richmond diligently works to coordinate development, and routinely reviews its development regulations to ensure they facilitate housing development.

2. Each city and County should report AH progress and lack of progress using data across all four measured income groups. Special attention should be paid to tracking the housing needs of residents categorized as very low- and

low-income. Cities and the County should communicate their progress, biannually, against RHNA targets at council and supervisor meetings.

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. State Law (§65400) requires each jurisdiction (city council or board of supervisors) to prepare an annual progress report (APR) on the jurisdiction’s status and progress in implementing its housing element (HE) using forms and definitions adopted by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Through the forms and tables provided by HCD ([link](#)), jurisdictions must report annual data on housing in the APR, including the following:*

- *Housing development applications received (including proposed number of units, types of tenancy, and affordability levels)*
- *Building/construction activity*
- *Progress towards the RHNA*
- *Sites identified or rezoned to accommodate a shortfall in housing need*
- *Program implementation status*
- *Local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing*
- *Projects with a commercial development bonus*
- *Units rehabilitated or preserved*
- *Locally owned lands included in the sites inventory that have been sold*
- *Locally owned surplus sites*

The City of Richmond’s Housing Element Annual Progress Report (APR) is presented to the City Council once a year before it is submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development in accordance with State law.

3. Each city and the County should consider creating a dedicated AH commission composed of a multi-disciplinary team of diverse citizens and led by a current, nonelected, city expert in planning.

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Richmond has the following housing related commissions:*

- *Housing Advisory Commission (HAC)*
 - *The purpose of the HAC is to advise the Richmond Housing Authority on matters concerning the provision of decent affordable housing for low- and very low-income households. The HAC consists of seven commissioners appointed by the City Council and meets monthly.*
- *Rent Board*
 - *The Rent Board sets and regulates fair and equitable rent levels to achieve housing affordability and promotes stability for Richmond residents living in housing covered by the Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause Eviction and Homeowner Protection Ordinance. The Rent*

Board consists of five members appointed by the mayor and meets monthly.

- *Commission on Aging*
 - *The purpose of the Commission on Aging is to improve and develop programs, services, and opportunities for the elderly within the City of Richmond, including monitoring and elevating senior housing needs. The Commission on Aging consists of 13 members appointed by the mayor and meets monthly.*
- *Design Review Board*
 - *The purpose of the Design Review Board is to review and/or approve the design of exterior construction or modifications for which a building permit, zoning permit, certificate, or discretionary planning approval is required. This includes ensuring affordable housing projects meet objective design standards. The Design Review Board consists of seven members appointed by the mayor and meets twice monthly.*
- *Planning Commission*
 - *The purpose of the Planning Commission is to prepare, adopt and maintain a long-range, comprehensive general plan for the physical growth and development of the city; to serve as an advisory body to the City Council on matters related to the City growth and development; and to promote public interest in planning. The Planning Commission also exists to consider applications for certain city discretionary approvals, including conditional use permits, subdivisions, and zoning and general plan amendments, including those related to affordable housing projects. The Planning Commission consists of seven commissioners appointed by City Council and meets monthly.*
- *Economic Development Commission*
 - *The purpose of the Economic Development Commission is to recommend long-term economic development goals to the City Council and City officials as it concerns the overall economic development of the city, which includes programs that may enhance employment of Richmond residents that can contribute to eliminating housing cost burdens and housing production. The Economic Development Commission consists of 15 commissioners appointed by City Council and meets monthly.*
- *The Partnership for the Bay’s Future (PBF) Site Team*
 - *The purpose of the PBF site team is to develop and pass a public land policy that will inform the process by which the City sells or leases City-owned land to prioritize affordable housing production. The site team consists of cross-departmental city leadership from the Community and Economic Development Departments as well as local community-based organization partners. The site team is*

*facilitated by Richmond’s PBF Breakthrough Grant Housing Fellow.
The site team meets twice monthly.*

Each of these boards and commissions touch on issues related to affordable housing development and support an interdepartmental and inter-disciplinary approach to affordable housing preservation and production within the City. Due to the abundance of commissions focused on various aspects of affordable housing, it is not necessary to establish another.

- 4. Each city and the County should consider reviewing existing processes and identifying changes that would address or resolve the specific obstacles identified in this report that hinder achieving RHNA allocation targets for very low- and low-income housing in their community.**

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. As required by State Law, Richmond reviewed existing processes and identified programs to address any potential constraints to development through the Housing Element’s Constraints and Zoning Analysis. Appendix C of the City’s 6th Cycle Housing Element Update analyzes City policies and regulations (such as the Zoning Code) and market factors outside of the City’s control that constrain the production of housing in Richmond (including very low- and low-income housing). Section IV of the City’s 6th Cycle Housing Element Update establishes programs intended to address these constraints.*

- 5. Each city and the County should consider developing a public dashboard to report progress against RHNA targets.**

Response: *This recommendation has already been implemented. The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) maintains an online tool called the “Housing Element Implementation and APR Dashboard”. The dashboard provides a high-level overview of California’s housing production data, including progress towards meeting RHNA targets at the regional and local jurisdiction levels. Additionally, the City reports affordable housing production on the website [Transparent Richmond](#). There are other public dashboards available that report production progress against RHNA targets. For example, the [Housing Readiness Report](#).*

- 6. Each city and the County should consider, in their individual Housing Element plans, putting forth land zoned “suitable for residential use,” without development obstacles, and located strategically close to existing services, for AH purposes.**

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. The adopted 6th Cycle Housing Element Update includes a sites inventory that meets affordable housing needs and programs that further facilitate the development of deeply affordable housing, such as the Equitable Public Land Policy (Program 6.R); pre-approved small lot plans (Program 2.G); density bonus (Program 3.D); and more.*

- 7. Each city and the County should consider reviewing their zoning policies to identify restrictive zoning policies unique to their jurisdiction that impede AH projects and consider making zoning changes in light of that review that will support AH in their community.**

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. Through the Housing Element process, Richmond reviewed zoning policies and identified potential affordable housing development constraints. The Housing Element Program Section outlines forthcoming changes to zoning policies with specified timeframes to address the identified constraints. See response to Recommendation No. 4.*

- 8. Cities should consider adopting an inclusionary housing ordinance as part of their standard development policy by the end of 2023 (if not already in place).**

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Richmond’s inclusionary housing ordinance is codified in Richmond Municipal Code Article 15.04.603. Since its implementation, the inclusionary housing ordinance has resulted in notable outcomes. Several new residential developments have included affordable housing units, significantly contributing to the expansion of affordable housing options in our city. The ordinance has also generated in-lieu fees that are being allocated towards funding affordable housing projects and initiatives.*

- 9. Each city and the County should consider how to prioritize the implementation of housing projects that promote development of very low- and low-income housing.**

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. The Richmond Housing Authority Board and City Council hold joint meetings to discuss matters related to the provision of very low- and low-income housing, including prioritization, funding, and implementation. The City’s 6th Cycle Housing Element Update further prioritizes provision of very low- and low-income housing through several programs and policies. Specifically see:*

Program 1.K Housing for Extremely Low-Income Households - Acquire and/or assist in the development of one or more properties for housing affordable to extremely low-income households. Specific actions the City will undertake to pursue this effort include:

- *Conduct outreach to and coordinate with non-profit housing developers to facilitate housing affordable to extremely low-income households through discussions regarding potential incentives, programs, financial support, etc.*
- *Direct outreach to religious institution property owners or operators to inform them about AB 1851 and any other regulations that encourage housing development on these properties.*
- *Actively assisting and supporting developers with funding applications to support the development of extremely low-income housing.*

- *Facilitate funding of site acquisition and project construction through strategies such as issuance of tax-exempt bonds or other financing mechanisms to support land acquisition and/or construction of housing units affordable to extremely low-income households.*
- *Grant incentives and concessions to housing developments that include units affordable to extremely low-income households (e.g., State density bonus law provisions).*

Policy 2.1: Supply of Affordable Housing - Promote the development of homes that are affordable to extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households in all new residential developments as well as in existing single-family neighborhoods.

Policy 2.5: Rent Subsidies for Affordable Housing - Identify and secure funding to provide rent subsidies that assist extremely low and very low-income families, seniors, and persons.

Program 6.A: Community Land Trust - Design and implement strategies to enable community land trusts that will preserve or create affordable housing opportunities to acquire public land, create an inventory of vacant and blighted properties, and create a Community Land Policy package to encourage and enable production and preservation of permanently affordable housing. See also 6.R (Equitable Public Land Policy) and 6. K (Neighborhood and Land Stabilization Program). Responsible Party: Community Development Department Funding Source: Breakthrough Grant • Time Frame: Second quarter of 2024. As noted in Program 6.K, pilot at least one acquisition for community land trust (either vacant or developed property) to benefit a minimum of two low-income family households by December 2026. See other related time frames in Program 6.K and 6.R.

Program 6.R: Equitable Public Land Policy Develop an Equitable Public Land policy, in compliance with the Surplus Land Act, with guidelines and preferential criteria for the disposition or use of publicly owned land for affordable housing. Also see Program 1.J (Surplus Land Act Sites) and Program 6.A. (Community Land Trusts). Responsible Party: Community Development Department Funding Source: Breakthrough Grant funding, comprehensive planning fee Time Frame: Conduct spatial inventory of publicly owned land by December 2022. Conduct robust community engagement, including engaging a minimum of 300 residents from Richmond’s lower income neighborhoods by December 2023. Adopt new Equitable Public Land policy in consultation with Community Land Trusts, Limited Equity Cooperatives, and other non-profit entities that prioritize permanently affordable housing while supporting homeowner equity attainment and renter stabilization; or immediate and long-term housing solutions for unhoused residents. Issue annual Notice of Availability, for one to two parcels to provide a minimum of six units beginning September 2024. Quantified Objective: Conduct robust community engagement, including engaging a minimum of 300 residents from Richmond’s lower income neighborhoods. Issue annual Notice of Availability, for one to two parcels to provide a minimum of six units.

10. Each city and the County should consider prioritizing Measure X funding requests that support projects that address RHNA targets for very low- and low-income residents. Each city and County should consider reporting regularly to their residents on the use of Measure X funds for such purposes.

Response: *This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Moving forward, the City's Housing Division of the Community Development Department will publish an online report summarizing the City's use of Measure X funds for very low- and low-income housing projects and programs.*