March 16, 2021

Re: Agenda Item 9 – EBHO in SUPPORT

Dear Council President Fortunato Bas and Councilmembers Kalb, Fife, Thao, Gallo, Taylor, Reid and Kaplan:

**EBHO strongly supports Councilmember Kaplan's resolution to examine allowing four-plexes in single-family neighborhoods, especially in high-resource areas of Oakland.**  As a historic hub of diversity and social justice activism, Oakland should join other local governments in working to undo the racist legacy of exclusionary land use.

Single-family homes, accessory dwellings, and small apartment buildings have long co-existed in many Oakland neighborhoods; allowing many housing types is one of many steps towards true racial, generational, and economic integration.  It's important that as we look to expand housing choices through appropriate density, we also protect against continued gentrification and displacement in hard-hit neighborhoods. We appreciate that Councilmember Kaplan's resolution focuses on high-resource areas and on anti-displacement measures.

We support integrating this study with the housing element process, as it will be one more tool in Oakland's efforts to identify sufficient sites with adequate zoning to meet RHNA goals and house a range of incomes.  We urge robust community involvement and efforts to ensure affordability, tenant protections, and inclusion as this moves forward.

During this important process, we urge Council to direct staff to look at the following questions such as:

To what extent are we talking about demolition and new construction vs. conversion of existing buildings into multiple units?  Would we have different rules for each?

What affordability requirements should be attached to such development?

How do we protect vulnerable neighborhoods where displacement risk is high?

What criteria should be used to define neighborhoods that should not be covered by the rezoning?

How do we protect existing renters from displacement, many of whom would be exempt from Just Cause?  What level of relocation assistance should be required?

What requirements should there be for replacement of existing housing that is “naturally occurring affordable housing”?

Finally, we think it would be useful for the City to do research and analysis to identify the location of existing 2-4 unit buildings and how that compares to current zoning.  There may be many neighborhoods where 2-4 unit buildings are existing, non-conforming uses in single-family zones, and we may want to consider whether there should be more focus on those places that have not included such housing in the past.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gloria Bruce, Executive Director and Jeff Levin, Policy Director

East Bay Housing Organizations