

**Host:** Housing Legislative Working Group Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, April 25, 2019 7 PM-9:30 PM

**Location:** Board Room, MTC

**Staffing:** Julie Pierce, HLWG Chair

Jake Mackenzie, HLWG Vice Chair

Cindi Segal, General Counsel

Rebecca Long, Government Relations Manager

Brad Paul, Deputy Executive Director

Alix Bockelman, Deputy Executive Director

Fred Castro, ABAG Clerk of the Board

Notes taken by Lily Rockholt, Civic Edge Consulting

**Attendance:** Approximately 21 committee members, including call-ins.

**Chair's Report:** Reviewed meeting structure for members.

### **Report on Housing Bill Landscape (Updates)**

**Long:** Stated the most recent amendments to SB 50 (Weiner) are not yet available, so they are not fully incorporated into the presentation and instead staff is working from a summary document. Offered an opportunity to answer any follow-up questions about the last meeting (April 18). Provided an overview of recent amendments to bills.

#### **Alameda:**

- Stated that AB 1487 seems to indicate that the Housing Alliance for the Bay Area (HABA) would be collecting money, but there is no directive as to how or what HABA would do with the funding nor any indication of who the HABA members will be.

#### **Sonoma:**

- Asked if .5 parking space/unit requirement in SB 330 takes into account transit access.
  - **Long:** Stated that the bill has changed to allow local governments to enforce parking restrictions of up to a .5 space per unit with new developments, but it has not placed further limits near the nexus of transit.
  - **Chair Pierce:** MTC staff will check further and provide HLWG with more information.

#### **San Mateo:**

- Asked if .5 parking space/unit requirement applies to shared parking or personal parking.
  - **Long:** Stated staff would review further and provide HLWG with an answer.

### **Report on Production Related Housing Bills**

#### **Long:**

- SB 4 (McGuire and Beale) has been dropped with many of its provisions now to be incorporated into SB 50, so the discussion will focus on that bill.

- Noted additional amendments are planned to SB 50 to clarify how it interacts with current density bonus law and housing affordability requirements.
- Noted SB 50 was amended to impose more rigorous standards to designate High Quality Bus Transit (i.e. minimum of 10 minute headways during the peak commute hours) and limiting the SB 50 height requirements related to rail and ferry stations to counties greater than 600,000 people. The North Bay would not have the extra height provisions for Major Transit Stops.
- Noted there is a "jobs-rich" component which has not yet been explicitly defined. The UC Berkeley Turner Center live link included in the presentation is the closest example to what Senator Weiner's office is considering. Exclusion areas, fire hazard areas, coastal zones are excluded. In the North Bay (counties with less than 600,000 in population) there is some upzoning mandated (one story above current zoning) but only in cities less than 50,000 in population sizes.
- Another amendment allows by-right fourplexes on any vacant residentially zoned property or thru conversion of existing homes. For existing properties, 75 percent of exterior walls must remain intact, but can build up as far as local zoning permits.

## Discussion related to SB 50

### San Mateo:

- Asked for clarification if the bill applies to homes that are currently used as rentals.
- Asked if ADUs could be built within each fourplex unit, effectively allowing eight-plexes.
  - **Long:** Stated that MTC staff will investigate this and the interaction of these bills and report back to the HLWG. Stated that local design requirements remain intact unless they undermine the height or density allowed in the bill.
- Stated they need clarification on the jobs-rich language in SB 50.
- Noted SB 50, as well as the other bills discussed, do not address the major jobs producers or their significant role in creating the jobs-housing imbalance.
- Stated HLWG members would like staff to provide more detailed maps (with street names) for individual cities.
  - **Chair Pierce:** Stated Turner Center map has this level of detail.
  - **Long:** Stated that MTC has an online map that they are trying to overlay, it is at the parcel level, that staff will share the URL for this Friday, April 26. [Map is posted and available [here](#).]
- Suggested the state should contribute more money to build affordable housing and to buy down existing market rate units (adding affordable units more quickly).
- Expressed frustration that the county-based population thresholds that exclude the North Bay. Feels like the bill is rewarding Marin County for not building BART and picking on the Peninsula. Instead, would like to see a universal standard for the entire region based on jobs/housing balance.
- Prefer that other metrics be used to determine exemptions and mandatory rezoning, like proximity to jobs rich areas, and past performance regarding building and zoning.

- Expressed concern that allowing fourplexes would diminish the opportunity for “smaller entry level homes” for first time home buyers.
  - **Chair Pierce:** Noted SB 50 doesn’t allow for complete demolitions of homes.
- Noted they think “home share” would be a viable alternative to fourplexes that the state should incentivize.
- Felt threat of these bills made cities get their act together and approve more housing.
- Stated that if a city rezones in a different way using local input and that rezoning results in increased housing numbers, the state should accept that approach.
- Urged the state to put up more of its money to pay for cities to plan and rezone.
- Expressed frustration that the state keeps enacting housing bills, year after year, and moving the goal post.

### **Contra Costa:**

- Asked for clarification on what constitutes a multi-family projects/homes.
- Thought that combining SB 4 and SB 50 was a good idea.
- Requested reevaluation and a better definition of Sensitive Communities boundaries.
- Stated that giving extra height doesn’t always get you more units since developers feel bigger units sell better (with greater profit). Suggested setting density requirements instead.
- Concerned about fourplexes changing character of existing neighborhoods.
- Stated developers should be limited to height increases of no more than 50% of the height of adjacent buildings, noting these heights would gradually increase over time.
- Stated there needs to be a better definition of “historical” buildings and districts.
- Stated mixed reaction to carve outs for counties under 600,000 people, particularly carve outs for Marin County, given its proximity to San Francisco.
- Asked if a house burns or needs to be demoed, can it be made into a fourplex when the property is being rebuilt?
- Urged staying out of parking issues since building near transit does not automatically reduce the need for parking (we can’t make people ride transit). Local staff see three bedroom units with one parking space become home to families with 3-4 cars.
- Cities need authority to set parking standards based on the specifics of each project.
- Asked how hook-up fees would work when a single-family home was being changed to a fourplex if three extra units required higher capacity water pipes/sewer laterals.
- Stated legislation needs to address root financial causes of housing crisis including changing lending practices and loss of construction labor force after last recession.
- Stated that their jurisdiction had 500 units entitled but they aren’t being built.
- Noted last week a developer with housing development that was approved in 4 months asked for 2-year extension because banks only willing to loan 40% on project.
  - **Chair Pierce:** maybe we need a state bank to make construction loans.

**Marin:**

- Asked how the bill considered disabled folks, especially their parking needs.
- Stated that Marin's jobs/housing imbalance is not as large as that of the large 5 counties (San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo and Contra Costa).
- Thought SB 50's population thresholds give smaller cities a rational, flexible path to address housing problems, including building duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes.
- Stated support for requiring developers to simultaneously pull permits for both their market rate and related affordable housing.
- Showed support that there would be adjustment to the ways that developers could pay in lieu funds instead of incorporating affordable units into their projects.
- Stated that McGuire and Weiner should work with HCD to figure out how to track outcomes and measure the success of SB 50.
- Support for fourplexes if 75 percent of exterior walls must remain intact, they comply with local zoning ordinances and with historic districts in place since 2010.
- Showed support for the Historical Building exemptions.
- Thought that the addition of the fourplex is a valuable way to add more housing and lessen the housing crisis.

**Napa:**

- Asked how the regulations about housing close to rail would impact the area around the Napa Valley Wine Train.
  - **Long:** Stated that MTC staff would research and check back in with Napa. [Does not count as a rail station for purposes of SB 50]
- Stated that by right fourplexes would be a big problem.
- Asked how other local zoning regulations will function if fourplex by-right supersedes.
  - **Long:** Stated that SB 50 was mainly aiming for vacant lots. Gave the examples that the setback requirements would be maintained, if the existing structure was there, a homeowner can convert it.
  - **Chair Pierce:** Stated any residentially zoned parcel could increase their units up to four if its largely within the original blueprint.
  - **Long:** Stated the amendments to SB 50 allow for up to 15 percent square footage increase on the ground, or within a second floor for single family units. (Stated staff would clarify that the 15 percent square footage increase is based on existing structure)
- Stated that for smaller cities with smaller staff, these kinds of changes are difficult to track. The rapid pace of revisions is posing a challenge to small city staffs that are reviewing and implementing them.

**Alameda:**

- Expressed concern that new carve outs by county population size don't fully address one-size-fits-all problem, would prefer sorting by small, medium, large, really large and isolated cities,
- Asked if bill might have unintended consequence of incentivizing current transit-poor communities to delay or avoid any transit improvements.
- Stated jobs-rich provision doesn't address the need to move jobs from West to East Bay, focusing on housing without transportation doesn't address jobs-housing balance.
- Recounted Scott Wiener's statements from April 24 related to share of state's children who are homeless and other shocking statistics (people having to work 2-3 jobs and live in cars) and why SB 50 is so important.
- Stated that with some amendments, SB 50 deserves our support.
- Noted that greenhouse gas reduction was a major consideration of this bill.
- Stated that fourplexes seems like "low hanging fruit" to address the housing crisis.
- Stated that the smaller units created by the fourplex regulation would be more affordable by design, especially if they must be built within the original blueprint of a house.
- Wondered if there was a way to guard against unintentionally incentivizing poor transit, for example, tying regulations to conditions dating back five years.
- Stated bill seems to punish cities that have the best jobs-housing balance in the region.
- Noted that Fremont will be adversely impacted by SB 50, despite having created 5,000 units of housing next to BART and feels past success is not being accounted for at all.
- Stated bill does not look at ways to use existing reverse commute capacity.
- Expressed concern that population increases that follow upzoning require more public safety officers, teachers, schools, etc. but bill doesn't identify new funding sources for them.

#### **Santa Clara:**

- Thought this bill was trying to achieve too much to be truly successful.
- Wondered if adding the fourplex component to this bill made it less politically palatable.
- The broken transportation system largely contributed to longer commute times and people being more car-dependent, which is why the parking needs to be local decision. While the VTA comes every 15 minutes, it's so slow between stations no one uses it.
- Mountainview stated that they are just under 50,000 in population in larger county with more than 600,000 people. Asked how the population threshold levels affected them.
  - **Long:** Stated there are no special provisions for smaller cities in larger counties.
- Asked how this bill interacts with SB 330 limits on fees charged to developers.
- Asked if SB 50 will supersede local regulations and requirements related to affordability.
  - **Long:** Stated that more strict local requirements still stand.
- Stated that given there is less land for affordable housing, supports developers paying in lieu fees with cities deciding where to put those fees (½ mile radius would be too hard).
- Supported the scaling up of affordable units required based on the size of project.
- Expressed concern that SB 50 doesn't take into account built out cities versus cities with undeveloped land or jobs-housing balance of each city.
- Would like to see a more even distribution of housing across the region.

- Several people stated that adding housing near jobs doesn't guarantee that people living in that housing will work nearby. The only way to achieve that goal might be for the large employers to build worker housing directly tied to employment with that company.
- Stated that ADUs with no parking is a problem, fourplexes with no parking is a disaster.
- Asked how building additional units changes property taxes for certain properties.
- Upzoning through automatic height increases next to transit hubs goes against form-based zoning principles and will result in a proliferation of tall, square boxes.
- Stated bill needs bigger focus on improving/funding transit to reduce traffic congestion.

#### **Solano:**

- Stated that when you start adding language to secure votes you create more problems.
- Stated they were suspicious that the financial aspects of the revised SB 50 would cover the costs associated with the mandatory re-zoning.
- Stated Solano County needs funding to build the many houses that have already been permitted and will struggle to cover additional costs associated with new development.
- Expressed concern that there is not a viable funding element in SB 50.
- Asked for clarification on if fourplexes would be allowed in rural areas.

#### **San Francisco:**

- Asked where fourplexes would be by-right allowed if SB 50 passes.
  - **Long:** Stated that they would be allowed by-right anywhere in the state besides the specific areas excluded, such as high fire-risk, flood zones, etc.

#### **Sonoma:**

- Asked how the fourplexes will work in unincorporated areas.
  - **Long:** Noted fourplexes would be allowed anywhere that is zoned residential.
  - **Chair Pierce:** Mentioned that likely unincorporated properties were not included in residential permitting.
- Asked if lower parking requirements near transit included disabled parking.
- Stated they appreciated the conversation but do want to keep eye on the low- and very low-income requirement and affordability.
- Stated they worry about the population threshold levels, stated there should be a middle threshold number; it's a large jump from 50,000 to 600,000.
- Asked for clarification on by-right fourplex zoning, and how this interacts with other bills.
- Stated that large colleges in the county haven't done their part to address increasing student housing needs in recent years and worries the fourplex provision will encourage wholesale conversion of adjacent single family neighborhoods to student housing.
- Stated that fourplexes could change the feel of current residential areas.
- Believed they should look at transit in the same way as they look at jobs-rich areas in the new amendments to SB 50.
- Wondered if anything could be done to address second homes and vacation houses (e.g. AirBnB, VRBO) to that are removing much-needed housing.

- Stated that housing that cities have permitted takes years to build but housing units illegally converted to AirBnB can return to housing in 90 days with focused code enforcement.

#### **Public Comment:**

1. Veda Florez stated that she believed SB 50 should pass, and that she wanted the HLWG to vote in favor of it.
  - **Chair Pierce:** Reminded the HLWG that they are not taking a vote on any of these topics. Purpose is to hear about the bills and gather feedback to inform MTC and ABAG about local perspectives across the region.
2. Ken Bukowski: Stated he did not agree with the previous speaker, that these new zoning regulations, especially the fourplexes, won't fit into cities as they currently are.
3. Jordan Grimes: Stated that as a younger person who must live with the consequences of the lack of affordable housing, he was disappointed in most of the comments he heard in the HLWG meetings about this.
4. Jane Cramer: Stated this is a complicated issue for her, she does not want the neighborhood she lives in to change more, or for a one size fits all model to apply and remove what keeps the individual cities unique. Suggested cities should think about shared housing and shared vehicles.

#### **Adjournment/Next Meeting:**

##### **For next week's meeting they decided:**

- HLWG members should send in their opinions ahead of time so staff can include these in the presentation and share with other HLWG members
- The agenda would include public lands legislation and streamlining, as well as bills not covered in this meeting.
- They would discuss the housing bill landscape
- MTC Staff would look into extending the meeting in light of some time constraints to make last minute adjustments with the contract for the audio-visual team