

June 5, 2023

City of San José  
Housing & Community Development Commission  
200 East Santa Clara Street  
San José, CA 95113  
*Sent via email to: Luisa.Cantu@sanjoseca.gov*

Dear Commissioners:

**Re: Draft 2023-2031 Housing Element, REAL Coalition Comment Letter**

This letter was prepared by the Housing Justice Workgroup of the nonprofit Race Equity Action Leadership (REAL) Coalition on behalf of the Coalition. We write to provide comments on the City of San José's Draft Housing Element, 2032-2031.

The REAL community of nonprofit leaders and allies was created in June 2020 to use our positional power to advocate for a more racially-just and equitable society; to establish a peer network of leaders committed to fighting white supremacy and systemic racism in ourselves and our institutions; and to hold each other accountable to the promises we made in the Nonprofit Racial Equity Pledge. The REAL coalition is broadly representative of the nonprofit community including human and community services, behavioral health and health, arts and culture, domestic violence, older adults, food distribution, education, environmental, farming, legal, disability rights, LGBTQ rights, ethnic, immigrant rights, housing and homelessness, criminal justice reform, urban planning, and intermediary organizations, and others. Over 125 organizations have participated in the REAL Coalition.

Our comments, described in the attached spreadsheet, are centered around priorities related to:

- Wealth-Building for Historically Disadvantaged Communities
- Racial Justice, Equity, and Fair Housing
- Tenant Rights

We would like to draw the Commission’s attention to the fact that the City greatly diminished its comprehensive anti-displacement strategy adopted in August 2020 when it failed to pursue a Community Opportunity to Purchase Act policy (COPA) as one of its preservation strategies—despite hundreds of community members speaking at various City Council meetings in favor of establishing such a policy. We are asking the City to reinstate COPA as a housing element program so that the City can continue evaluating COPA as part of its long-term anti-displacement and preservation strategy. Just because the current Council chose not to move forward does not mean that future Councils should not consider the policy over the next 8 years of planning and response to our ongoing housing crisis. We also want to highlight that we are asking that the City strengthen the proposed preservation strategies to protect funding for permanent affordable housing solutions, including a robust preservation fund.

In framing our comments, we consulted with Sacred Heart Housing Action Committee (SHHAC) and the COPA Coalition.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please direct any questions you might have to Yvonne Jimenez [yvonnej@svcn.org](mailto:yvonnej@svcn.org) or Matt King [mattk@sacredheartcs.org](mailto:mattk@sacredheartcs.org).

Submitted by the Racial Equity Action Leadership (REAL) coalition.

cc:

HousingElement@sanjoseca.gov

[Ruth.Cueto@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Ruth.Cueto@sanjoseca.gov)

Michael.Brilliot@sanjoseca.gov

Kristen.Clements@sanjoseca.gov

Joshua.Ishimatsu@sanjoseca.gov

[housingelements@hcd.ca.gov](mailto:housingelements@hcd.ca.gov)

Members of the City Council and Mayor