

## Metropolitan Equity Highlights from 2015

Our metropolitan equity team has been at the forefront of statewide, regional and local efforts to secure policies and funding to promote affordable housing enhance transit service, prevent continued residential displacement and advance equitable and sustainable development for the benefit of low-income communities.

- **Climate Investments in Disadvantaged Communities:** Last year's win of a continuous appropriation of Cap and Trade revenues in the state budget for affordable housing and transit operations continued to yield major dividends, with \$500 million appropriated to those programs in this fiscal year. Of the \$2.3 billion in anticipated funds to be deposited in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) in FY16, \$400 million will be allocated to the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program and \$100 million to the Low Carbon Transit Operating Program. This is a significant boost from last year, when the advocacy of Public Advocates and its coalition partners (the SB 535 Coalition and Sustainable Communities for All) yielded FY15 funding levels of \$130 million and \$25 million, respectively.
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- **\$120 million in Affordable Housing Projects Funded:** This year we also celebrated the announcement that 28 projects had received over \$120 million in GGRF funding from the "Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities" program. As noted in our [joint press release](#) with APEN, Coalition for Clean Air and Greenlining Institute, 3/4 of the funding goes to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, and 24 of the 28 projects funded are 100% affordable housing projects. Of the 2,024 affordable units this funding will produce, 25% are deeply affordable at the "extremely low income" level. The funding will also provide 832 annual transit passes. Altogether, the projects are estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 723,286 metric tons, equal to taking over 140,000 cars off the road.
  - **Public Advocates and Partners Win Significant Victory in the Final ARB Guidelines:** In early July 2015, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) released a draft of its Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) Guidance – building on the interim Guidance it adopted a year ago. The Guidance will govern the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars in GGRF funds and is intended to ensure faithful implementation of SB 535 (de León, 2012), which requires at least 25 percent of cap-and-trade auction revenues to be invested to benefit disadvantaged communities.

We provided [recommendations](#) to ARB in June that asked for a number of changes. At the final ARB Board hearing on September 24, we successfully advocated for two remaining high-priority

asks: (1) ensuring that only investments that met important needs of underserved communities count toward the SB 535 set aside, and (2) requiring state implementing agencies to incorporate anti-displacement policies into their funding guidelines. We worked with ARB Board members to make sure that staff incorporates these principles into the guidelines and are now awaiting their release.

- **The 6 Wins Network Breaks New Ground at MTC:** In connection with the 6 Wins’ campaign to win equitable investments and policies in the current update of Plan Bay Area, Public Advocates has been busy developing proposals, testifying at public meetings, and developing and coordinating campaign strategy. Our team has weighed in with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) at various time on near-term decision points that include: equity-based [performance targets](#); [anti-displacement project performance assessment criteria](#); and (in a [letter](#) and [technical recommendations](#)) the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program. Co-leading the 6 Wins Network’s Plan Bay Area campaign are Public Advocates and Urban Habitat.



More broadly, we have worked with our 6 Wins partners to develop an updated version of the [Equity, Environment and Jobs \(EEJ\) scenario](#), and delivered a first-ever [community response to MTC’s call for projects](#) that proposes to set aside \$2 billion in the first four years of the new Plan to fund community-identified projects and programs. The 6 Wins recently organized an advocacy day with local elected representatives. That political advocacy, together with ongoing policy advocacy, has helped move MTC and ABAG to adopt a new anti-displacement target and a first-ever jobs performance target; and the OBAG program includes stronger affordable housing hooks. We are now in discussion with our partners about helping to educate MTC Commissioners at workshops on displacement and economic opportunity. Finally, we are working to use the study of a proposed merger of MTC and ABAG as an opportunity to effectuate much-needed regional governance reform in the Bay Area, with potential national implications.

- **Winning Affordable Housing in Oakland.** This summer, we persuaded the Oakland City Council to halt its approval of the development of a luxury apartment tower with no affordable housing on publicly owned land near Lake Merritt. Together with our community partner, Eastlake United for Justice (EUJ), we leveraged the power of resident organizing with legal pressure to reopen the bidding process and secure proposals from affordable housing developers, as required by the Surplus Land Act. The result: the City now has [5 new development proposals](#), all of which include substantial amounts of affordable housing on-site. One [proposal](#) resulted from an amazing [collaboration](#) involving residents, volunteer architects and planners who eventually partnered with an affordable housing developer to create a site plan for mixed-income residents that contains 100% affordable housing. The process was spearheaded by Eastlake United for Justice in coalition with other groups.

To find out more about this affordable housing campaign, read our [letter to the City Council](#) outlining its legal obligations regarding the publicly-owned parcel, a more recent [letter](#) about the disposition of



the property, an [OpEd](#) in the Oakland Tribune by Senior Staff Attorney Sam Tepperman-Gelfant, and sample news coverage: [Staff Attorney David Zisser on KQED](#); [Inside Bay Area News article](#); [East Bay Express article](#).

**Public Advocates staff members from the MetroEquity Team were featured speakers at prominent gatherings and important venues including:**

- *Managing Attorney Richard Marcantonio, keynoted the opening plenary of Portland State University's "Transportation & Communities Summit" presenting a new model for achieving and assessing equity in transportation funding plans*
- *Senior Staff Attorney Sam Tepperman-Gelfant and Richard Marcantonio's article entitled ["Seizing the Power of Public Participation"](#) was published by the Shriver Center. The article lays out the key elements that inform Public Advocates' "community partnership model"*
- *Former Staff Attorney Marybelle Nzegwu both spoke at the SB 535 Coalition convening "Leading with Equity: Evaluating & Advancing California's Climate Investments"*
- *The NYU Furman Center published Sam Tepperman-Gelfant's article ["Local Preferences Require Local Analysis."](#)*
- *In October, Public Advocates staff including Guillermo Mayer and Richard Marcantonio spoke at Policy Link's 2015 Equity Summit in Los Angeles.*

Public Advocates was also proud to be recognized as an awardee by our long-time partner, East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO) at its 2015 Affordable Housing Week kickoff for "leadership in creating affordable, inclusive communities."