CASA Community Engagement:
A Regional Snapshot

**Goals for the Community Engagement Process**
- **Provide Transparency:** Residents should be privy to discussions about current issues and proposed policy solutions that directly affect them.
- **Understand Community Needs:** Residents can best articulate the challenges they confront and their communities’ needs.
- **Develop Effective Solutions:** Impacted residents know best which solutions will be most effective at addressing the challenges they face and how to avoid unintended consequences.
- **Enable Smooth Implementation:** When residents are involved in the process, they will have more buy-in to implement the solutions that come out of CASA.
- **Build Power:** Residents can bring tools, knowledge and relationships to their communities to achieve local change.

**Meeting Overview**
- **Hosts:** Host organizations were well-organized, community-based, grassroots groups, who are crafting place-based solutions to the displacement and housing affordability crisis.
- **Accommodations and Inclusivity:** Meetings were held in community spaces during the evening. Dinner and childcare were provided. Materials were multilingual, and interpreters provided live translation.
- **Format:** Intro presentation on CASA, followed by group breakouts (both English and Spanish-speaking) to discuss set questions based on the 3 Ps, and brainstorm solutions and identify top 3 priorities.
- **Attendance:** Turnout exceeded expectations with well over the intended maximum of 20-25 community members showing up to each meeting. Meetings engaged over 150 participants total.
- **Cross Section of the Community:** A mix of renters, homeowners, landlords, and people who are currently unhoused attended the meetings. Children, seniors on fixed incomes, workers, city leaders, and students joined the conversation. The majority of attendees were renters. Many people commute to work in a different city.

**Shared Regional Priorities and Distinct Sub-Regional Differences**
Priorities raised during the meetings highlighted shared regional solutions, while also exposing unique local needs and distinct sub-regional differences. The need for baseline tenant protections (e.g. rent control, just cause, and legal services) and housing affordable to no-income and low-income residents rose to the top of the priority list at all four meetings. At the same time, the themes of each conversation differed. For example, community members in San Jose and East Palo Alto highlighted the impact of tech companies on their communities, the need for companies to be part of the solution, and jobs-housing-wages fit, whereas communities in Concord and Santa Rosa highlighted landlord-tenant power imbalances (especially for undocumented tenants), and the resulting need for protections against harassment, retaliation, and discrimination, and a pathway to solve health and safety violations.

**San Jose: Sacred Heart**
- June 11, 2018
- Approx. 35 attendees
- 4 break-out groups: 3 English, 1 Spanish
- Highlighted responsibility of private tech companies

**Santa Rosa: NBOP**
- July 9, 2018
- Approx. 30 attendees
- 4 break-out groups: 3 English, 1 Spanish
- Highlighted impact of fires & importance of tenant protections & legal services

**Concord: Monument Impact**
- June 18, 2018
- Approx. 40 attendees
- 4 break-out groups: 2 English, 2 Spanish
- Highlighted discrimination & harassment by property managers, & need for protections

**East Palo Alto: YUCA**
- July 11, 2018
- Approx. 50 attendees
- 4 break-out groups: 1 English, 3 Spanish
- Highlighted corporate responsibility, jobs-housing fit, & cultural preservation
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**Key Takeaways and Important Perspectives**

- **Put Protections and People First:** Every community group identified tenant protections, including rent control, just cause for evictions, and a right to legal counsel in eviction proceedings as top priorities.
- **Interrelated Needs:** All four host communities noted the importance of addressing needs interrelated to housing affordability, specifically, the need for (1) liveable wages and (2) improved public transit.
- **Racial Justice & Cultural Vibrancy:** Participants in every community highlighted the importance of centering racial justice and cultural vibrancy in policy solutions.
- **Data to Support Progress:** Communities cited a need for more data and technical assistance to inform policy interventions.

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**Shared Policy Priorities**

Community groups brainstormed extensive lists of unique solutions for both local and regional needs. Similar themes and policies, especially those identified as the “top 3” priorities, emerged across separate communities and breakout groups repeatedly.

**Common themes and policies included:**

**Housing & Land Use that Reflects Community Needs**
- Mixed-income housing and inclusionary zoning
- Multi-family housing with family-sized units
- Prioritize affordable housing for no-income, extremely-low, very-low, and low-income tenants
- Supportive housing and services (e.g. for seniors, persons with disabilities, returning community members, & folks who are currently unhoused)
- Creative use of public and private land:
  - Private: Repurpose vacant and underutilized land for housing
  - Public: Land trusts, social housing, and affordable housing
- Open up vacant units (e.g. vacancy tax) and short-term rentals
- Mobile, modular, ADU, and seasonal worker housing options

**Tenant Protections to Keep People in Healthy Homes**
- Rent stabilization
  - Repeal Costa Hawkins
- Just cause for eviction
- Tenants’ rights protections through access to legal counsel and “know your rights” trainings
- New and enforced protections from retaliation, discrimination, and unsafe and unhealthy conditions
- Emergency financial assistance to help people stay in their homes and to cover upfront costs (e.g. security deposit) to help people access a home
- Longer timeline for Unlawful Detainer actions

**Community-Focused Financial Support**
- Better, liveable wages
- Funding for affordable housing
- Financial assistance for renters
- Support for housing and transportation from private sector corporations