



Resource Document for Applicants

About this Document:

This document is a supplement to the program guidelines, and the purpose of this document is to aid applicants in preparing competitive applications for the Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards (RC:H2B) Pilot Program. This document provides some explanations with examples and sources of various tools and policies to help potential applicants for building the narrative to support how a proposal aligns best to program goals. The RC:H2B Program Guidelines outline the requirements of the program, whereas this resource document provides guidance on how to assist in providing quality responses in an application. This document is not meant to be all inclusive but is a compilation of some tools and alternatives that applicants may consider.

Community Involvement, Justice, and Prosperity

RC:H2B is designed to respond to community needs using a community-driven approach; therefore, applications should be derived from heavy community involvement. To demonstrate that the community was authentically involved in the application, applicants should use methods of engagement that facilitate direct participation of community residents, ensure interpretation and translation of meetings and materials as needed, schedule meetings at times that are convenient to community members, engage community members for ideation as well as outreach, and partner with and fund or contract community-based organizations to support community involvement steps. Ways to involve community in proposal development are stated as follows:

Assess Baseline Community Connectivity

Community connection can be assessed by asking the following questions to the communities:

- How do residents feel about their neighborhood?
 - What do residents value about the local social fabric and physical environment?
 - How attached do residents feel to their neighborhood and community?
 - What are neighborhood strengths and areas for improvement?
- What neighborhood changes have residents observed in the last five years?
 - What social and physical aspects (if any) of the community have changed?
 - Where are changes located on a map?
 - Have changes made neighborhood life or conditions worse and/or better?
- How is transportation infrastructure and nearby development impacting neighborhoods?
 - Have these investments resulted in positive or negative change?
 - Do residents feel that they can influence the planning and decision-making process?
 - How can planning processes be more responsive and build on community strengths?

Conduct robust, equitable local public engagement and evaluate process to identify priorities or needs of the community in the proposal and avoid exacerbating historical harms

- Survey and conduct a cognitive mapping exercise with residents to develop a resident-informed composite map of neighborhood conditions and change. Mapping methods can be geospatial or more rudimentary. Tools to assist with participatory cognitive mapping and surveying include, but are not limited to:
 - Field papers can be a potential tool for cognitive participatory mapping (<https://stamen.com/a-new-home-for-field-papers/>). As a printable atlas, Field Papers provides community mappers with a low-tech solution to field mapping. Mappers can annotate the map with notes and sketches and then later upload and add data to OpenStreetMap. This tool is free to the public.
 - A geospatial outreach platform that allows users to create maps individually or collectively in a common map gallery, allowing residents, constituents, community stakeholders, and others to provide map referenced comments.
 - Tools like these often require paid subscriptions but could be a worthwhile investment for applicants looking for ways to strengthen anti-displacement protections and community involvement in future land use and transportation decision-making.

Benefits of surveying and cognitive and participatory mapping:

- Results of this exercise can identify ways that planning processes can become more responsive to local concerns while promoting change of the transportation environment that builds on the resident-identified cultural spaces and important places and features of communities.
- This interview- or survey-based proposal can help develop benchmarks or historical review of neighborhood change and gentrification in disadvantaged/underserved areas in California.
- This method can help tell the story of how transportation barriers have transformed the neighborhood, spatially.

Guidance on surveying and cognitive participatory mapping:

- To recruit participants, applicants can plan to use a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, where applicants identify community groups to interview based on their preliminary outreach and snowballing from there to survey community leaders, elders, and other key stakeholders associated with the proposed improvement areas.

- Anticipate conducting interviews/surveys with the leaders of 5-7 community organizations in each area and attempt to survey 6-8 residents associated with each organization.
- Responses should be diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age, immigration status, and sex, and representative of the proposed improvement area.
- Identify where respondents have observed neighborhood change, record the type of change observed, and rank perceptions of the benefit and/or harm of such change. Some commonly used cognitive mapping methodologies include:
 - A Community Resource Map
 - Transect Walk/Walk Audit Exercise
 - Dream Map, Daily Activity Schedule
 - SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis
 - Other more specific methods, each with their own attributes, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, Rapid Rural Appraisal, a photo-based reconnaissance survey, a crowd-sourced digital feature map like Social Map, a daily activity schedule, pair-wise ranking, cause-effect diagrams, need assessments, impact diagrams, timelines

Prioritize community involvement as the proposal develops: Describe what steps would be taken to ensure heavy community involvement and engagement throughout the life of the proposal.

Think about the strategies and methods that would be used to involve residents and key stakeholders during each step of the proposal, from start to finish. Priority will be given to proposals that include a robust open governance structure, where a combination of activities serve to meaningfully engage community stakeholders. Consider the following:

- Mechanism(s) (group, advisory board, process, etc.) established to continuously inform and involve the community as well as to ensure ongoing participation of members of the community during the implementation of the proposal
 - Consider compensation factors, equitable governance, and election structures, and how this body would be authorized to inform implementation of the proposal
- Timeline of proposed community involvement activities
- The points (potential milestones) and ways in which community can provide feedback to weigh-in on the ongoing implementation of the proposal

- To ensure involvement is meaningful, it is important to highlight how and where community can inform implementation, throughout the lifespan of the effort, not just at the beginning
- Process(es) that will be used to receive formal feedback from the community
- How the public will be informed of implementation progress, including updates on proposal performance and other Indicators being tracked, like Displacement Avoidance and Community Involvement activities and outcomes
- Many methods exist to solicit input, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Activities to Inform Community Stakeholders and to Solicit Stakeholder Input
 - Public workshops/meetings (in-person and virtual)
 - Door-to-door canvassing
 - House meetings
 - Establish website and/or social media
 - Distribute flyers or other printed materials
 - Outreach to existing community groups
 - Resident surveys
 - Intercept surveys (in-person or virtual)
 - Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
 - Community working group (CWG)/CBO outreach team
 - (2) Activities to Engage Community Stakeholders in Development of Proposal
 - Design charrettes (intense period of design or planning activity)
 - Community-based participatory research
 - Participatory budgeting
 - Convene advisory body, community working group or shared decision-making body
 - Establish website and/or social media
 - Community benefits agreements
 - Additional activities to ensure community stakeholders have an opportunity to influence the proposal development
 - (3) Activities to ensure community involvement engagement or stewardship during implementation of application/proposal

- Establish website and/or social media
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Sub-contract with community-based organizations to conduct outreach
- Allocate staff positions focused on community engagement
- Create a community benefits agreement with accountability measures defined
- Hire people from within the community to implement the proposal
- Create a community land trust to provide more community control to land within the proposed improvement area
- Compensate community representatives who commit to regularly engaging on implementation
- Participatory budget steering committee
- Create a community advisory body or working group to share in decision-making about implementation
- Additional activities to provide community stakeholders an opportunity to influence the proposal development

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and Addressing Housing Needs

One goal of the RC:H2B program is to “create opportunities for implementation of affordable housing and affirmatively furthering fair housing” (Streets and Highways Codes, Sec 104.3). The State of California defines affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) as (Gov. Code, § 8899.50, subd. (a)(1)):

*Taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. **Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.** The duty to affirmatively further fair*

housing extends to all of a public agency's activities and programs relating to housing and community development.

While the RC:H2B program cannot directly fund the provision of housing, the funds can be applied in ways that support other aspects of AFFH, to increase access to opportunity. Use these tools from HCD to analyze and describe existing access to opportunity and proposal outcomes and objectives that intend to increase access to opportunity:

- AFFH 2.0 Data Viewer:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/834b33b812c949a0820ed25c8ee4eedd/?draft=true>
- Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC)/Housing and Community development (HCD) Opportunity Maps:
<https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/opportunity.asp>

The proposal should demonstrate an understanding of the area's housing need and how community reconnection actions would support needed housing solutions. Information about housing needs can be accessed in the local housing element of a community's general plan and their annual progress reports, in a region's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, in a region's Sustainable Community Strategy, and in local and regional homelessness planning documents.

- Housing Element Implementation Annual Progress Report Data Dashboard: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/housing-element-implementation-and-apr-dashboard>
- Homeless Population Report (California):
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/>

The proposal should consider and describe how proposed efforts would position the community to better address AFFH objectives and housing needs.

Climate Action and Resilience

Overall, an RC:H2B proposal should move the community closer to reaching climate action targets rather than farther away from state climate goals; therefore, applications should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of climate vulnerabilities and stressors threatening the community and address how the proposal will reinforce the proposed improvement area's resilience to these vulnerabilities or stressors.

- Trusted sources of this information are available, including but not limited to regional Caltrans Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Reports ([2019 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments | Caltrans](#))
- For example, if sea level rise is of big concern compared to wildfires, please specify.
- Demonstrate an understanding of any local or regional climate mitigation targets and address how the proposal will support progress towards meeting those goals.
 - Existing local or regional climate mitigation targets or strategies can be found in local or regional planning documents

Displacement Avoidance

When making an RC:H2B investment, one intent of the program is to benefit the community while protecting residents from displacement. Applicants must identify displacement vulnerabilities and then highlight any existing policies or plans that address displacement avoidance and policies or identify displacement avoidance mitigation programs or coordination that will result from the proposal.

RC:H2B Approach to Anti-Displacement

The RC:H2B program applications should identify economic, environmental, and public health burdens that may occur due to the work proposed that may lead to long-term physical or economic displacement of low-income households, small businesses, and cultural spaces. "Lead" being a key word here, indicating that anti-displacement assessment should be inclusive of indirect and longer-term displacement, not just immediate impacts. To address the assumed impacts, the program incentivizes two main pillars of protections against assumed and unavoidable indirect displacement impacts, and are strategies that will not further isolation in communities who feel they truly are not impacted by indirect displacement:

- 1) The support for production of new affordable housing and preservation of existing affordable housing stock; and,
- 2) Increased meaningful involvement with community by an agency with land use and transportation decision-making power.

These are things that could be implemented no matter what your applicant identity is. One centers around location (housing), and one centers around community stewardship models at the lead applicant organization level.

Additionally, several kinds of effective anti-displacement strategies and policies are highlighted below in the *Examples of Displacement Avoidance Strategies*

and Policies section of this document as examples of eligible costs/activities that vary in feasibility depending on who the implementing agency would be.

Best Practices for Anti-Displacement Planning for RC:H2B

- The application should identify and avoid substantial economic, environmental, and public health burdens that may occur due to the RC:H2B proposal AND that may lead to the physical or economic displacement of low-income households, small business and/or cultural spaces. This is inclusive of the unhoused as well.
- The application should describe displacement vulnerabilities within the community; and...
 - Utilize data from the Department of Housing and Community Development's AFFH 2.0 Data Viewer to inform the description, specifically referencing the layers within the "Disproportionate Housing Needs/ Displacement Risk" topic area.
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/834b33b812c949a0820ed25c8ee4eedd/?draft=true>
- The application should highlight any existing policies or plans to protect against displacement in the proposed area currently, if any; or...
- Activities proposed in the application should be focused on implementing additional or new policies and programs to protect residents from possible displacement due in part to RC:H2B investments, which may include, but are not limited to, new policies and strategies not yet adopted or programs that address implementation barriers of existing policies and programs and expanded efforts around such existing policies and programs.
 - Activities directly address the displacement vulnerabilities of the Proposed Improvement Area and the potential impacts of implementing the RC:H2B-funded Project.
 - Activities are located within the defined Proposed Improvement Area.
 - Activities are focused on engaging existing residents (can include the unhoused) and small businesses located or involved within the defined Proposed Improvement Area.
 - Applicants should, but not be limited to, select policies and strategies from examples provided below in the *Examples of Displacement Avoidance Strategies and Policies* section to prevent the displacement in ways that align to identified displacement vulnerabilities.
- If a proposal frees up land that is to be converted to a different land use, the description should include information about how the applicant would engage the community on the new uses of the land, how the new

uses align to local housing needs, and how the new use will be accessible to the community.

- The plan should identify entities responsible for and involved in implementing each new policy and program and how the implementing entities are affiliated with the RC:H2B Lead Applicant or Co-Applicants. Testimonials from partners on how they will support the implementation of displacement avoidance plan components is helpful for evaluation.
- The application should assess if the unhoused would potentially be displaced by efforts in the proposed improvement area, and if yes, detail plans for regular outreach leading up to any construction activities to connect individuals in the encampment there to health and human services such as a new place to move to, like non-congregate shelter or stable housing. This will likely require a partnership with the city, county, or local continuum of care in the applicant's region.
- Applicants are encouraged to define quantifiable goals for anti-displacement actions and should align to identified displacement vulnerabilities.
- The plan must include provisions of a robust mitigation plan if any construction-related displacement in the community occurs.
- An RC:H2B proposal may not directly displace affordable homes.
- As stipulated in SHC Sec. 104.3, this program needs to create opportunities for implementation of affordable housing and affirmatively further fair housing, so it works out well to utilize housing planning alignment to double as an intentional anti-displacement strategy.

Examples of Displacement Avoidance Strategies and Policies

The following is a list of example long-range and interim strategies and policies to avoid the displacement of very low and low-income households to address production and preservation of affordable housing, protect tenants, small businesses and spaces of cultural importance, and support neighborhood stabilization and wealth building. The following list does not equate to RC:H2B eligible costs and activities:

- Zoning incentives (Density bonus)
- Developer incentives
- Inclusionary zoning
- Adaptive reuse
- Housing production
- Impact plus linkage fees

- Housing overlay zones
- Land value recapture
- Community control of land/community land trusts (shared equity ownership)
- Land banking programs
- Development of new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Neighborhood preference legislation that gives existing residents within a certain circumference preference for newly built affordable units
- Neighborhood stabilization ordinances
- Dedication of a certain percentage of a housing bond to building housing in the RC:H2B project area
- Site acquisition and fee deferrals to develop 100% Affordable Housing (AH)
- Production of family-sized rental and ownership affordable units
- Allow AH on a limited number of underutilized Production, Distribution and Repair (PDR) parcels with a ground floor requirement for PDR
- Preservation of unsubsidized AH
- Federally funded housing
- Housing rehabilitation
- Housing bond to fund affordable unit development
- Rent control, stabilization ordinances and rent review boards
- No-net loss of AH units/net gain of affordable units (no net loss policies)
- Preservation of existing AH in the project area through the one-for-one redevelopment of distressed public housing; right-to-return policies for existing residents in good standing in redeveloped public housing; and commitment not to raise rents above pre-redevelopment levels for existing residents in redeveloped buildings
- Policies to preserve/protect Single Room Occupancy (SRO) and/or mobile home parks and to allow current residents in good standing to remain or return in the case of redevelopment
- Condominium conversion restrictions plus tenant opportunity to purchase
- Demonstration of application to local, state, and federal programs to fund preservation of AH
- Preservation of AH via acquisition and rehabilitation programs
- Agreements to maintain affordability in bond/affordability covenants

- Restrictions on short-term rentals
- Community benefits agreements
- Rental assistance programs
- Foreclosure assistance
- Restrictions on non-primary residences
- Anti-harassment policies for tenants
- Local housing allocation program
- Non-discrimination based on source of income
- “Just Cause” (or “good cause”) eviction policies
- Limiting of low-fault evictions
- Culturally appropriate tenant rights education
- Funding for tenant organizations
- Tenant legal services and right to counsel in eviction proceedings
- Limiting tenant evictions from AH
- Maximize acceptance of rental subsidies
- Review of occupancy requirements to create greater flexibility for tenants
- Identify opportunities to master lease privately owned and managed SROs
- Policies to preserve/create SRO housing
- Increase supportive services to tenants living in SROs that are not managed or master leased by the jurisdiction or non-profits
- Acquisition of privately owned and managed SROs
- Improve code enforcement in SROs
- Prioritize moving families from SROs into AH
- Development of family-sized units as percentage of new AH
- Tenant’s first right to purchase legislation
- Preserve rent-control units when major rehabilitation occurs
- Where applicable, assessing enforcement of nuisance policies and modifying as needed to ensure underserved populations are not being negatively impacted (Equity assessment for nuisance policies and code enforcement)

- Create an emergency housing response action plan for instances when code enforcement deems the properties uninhabitable (for properties that are out of compliance)
- Asset building opportunities for low-income residents
- Contracting with small/local/diverse businesses
- Development and promotion of micro-lending opportunities
- Development of worker cooperations
- Non-speculative homeownership opportunities
- Organizing community benefit agreements for new developments, where the workforce to construct and operate the new development is largely sourced from within the existing community