

City of Palo Alto
Office of the Mayor and City Council

Via email: sheminger@bayareametro.gov ; info@bayareametro.gov; casa@bayareametro.gov

December 19, 2018

Jake Mackenzie, Chair and Commissioners
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Re: Commission meeting of December 19, 2018, item 2b

Dear Mr. Mackenzie and Commissioners:

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I write today to thank you for the efforts of the Committee to House the Bay Area (CASA), and to respectfully ask that you not vote to authorize the Chair to sign the CASA Compact as proposed on item 2b this afternoon. Palo Alto agrees that preserving existing affordable housing and increasing housing production in the Bay Area are vital regional goals. In fact, our City recently revised our zoning code to allow for new minimum density standards for multi-family housing, among several other recent housing-supportive policy changes. This change to our local ordinance occurred after a deliberate public process and is an example of one City acting in a manner that best meets the needs of its residents. It is also the type of local decision-making we believe is lacking in the proposed CASA Compact.

Local land use ordinances and citywide housing planning are subject to a transparent, public process. It would be problematic for MTC, as an organization representing local governments, to advocate the sweeping legislative proposals embodied in the CASA Compact without clear and robust engagement opportunities for Bay Area communities. Members of our community can attend public meetings and submit written thoughts on how they would see the City proceed. Unfortunately, adhering to a CASA Compact, created without our City's involvement, would circumvent this public, community process. Additionally, the Compact does not appear to take into consideration the local land use laws of each Bay Area City, the plans each City has in place to meet its housing needs in the near future, or the housing needs of the residents in each city.

We are also concerned with the funding mechanism of diverting property tax growth. The City of Palo Alto uses this funding in part for our core services; there is no mention in the Compact about the financial consequences for cities. Indeed, there is little mention of any of the funding specifics.

As such, we ask that at today's Commission meeting, you not proceed with approval of the CASA Compact pending more inclusive engagement with the very cities the Compact will affect.

P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.329.2477
650.328.3631 fax

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liz Kniss", is written over a horizontal line.

Liz Kniss,
Mayor, Palo Alto

Cc: Palo Alto City Council
Steve Heminger, Executive Director
Dave Cortese Commissioner
Jeannie Bruins, Commissioner
Andi Jordan, Santa Clara Cities Association Executive Director