



## **Mountain Housing Council Policy Platform**

### **What is the Policy Platform?**

The Mountain Housing Council (MHC) Policy Platform (Platform) establishes the purpose and goals of the MHC's Advocacy Tiger Team (Tiger Team) and the policy-related priorities and interventions the team will use to address the achievable local housing problem in the Tahoe-Truckee Region (see Exhibit A for region boundaries). The Platform is a document approved by Mountain Housing Council members and lays a framework for how the Tiger Team proposes to represent the region in its advocacy efforts in both broad categories and specific issues. This allows the Tiger Team to recommend formal positions on legislative and administrative proposals and act efficiently as opportunities arise.

### **What is the Mountain Housing Council Advocacy Tiger Team?**

The MHC, a project of the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, brings together 28 diverse stakeholders – including businesses, local governments, community groups, special districts, and housing advocates - to take on the unique and pressing challenges of achievable local housing in the North Tahoe-Truckee region. The MHC's goal is to build on needs identified in a 2016 Regional Housing Study and accelerate solutions to housing problems of availability, variety, and affordability.

The Advocacy Tiger Team is a subcommittee of the MHC formed to advocate on state and federal policy solutions to increase achievable local housing solutions for the region. The Tiger Team monitors and lobbies on legislation, agency processes, and funding opportunities that affect the region's ability to access and implement achievable local housing solutions. Membership on the Tiger Team is voluntary and new members may join anytime.

### **What is the Tiger Team's Goal?**

The goal of the Tiger Team is to create and broaden relationships with state and federal decision makers and organizations outside the Tahoe-Truckee region in an effort to build influence, change policy, attract funding to the region, and ultimately result in the completion of achievable local housing projects.

### What is the achievable local housing problem in the Tahoe-Truckee Region?

Affordable housing is a crisis facing the nation, the state, and the Tahoe-Truckee region. The North Tahoe-Truckee region has a population of roughly 30,000. On holiday weekends, those numbers swell to around 100,000. For full and part-time residents as well as vacationers, there are 33,300 housing units – mostly single family homes built before 1979. 65% of them are vacant more than half the year.

Locals are struggling to find housing in our community - with estimates showing a potential shortfall of more than 12,000 units to serve the local workforce. Teachers, firefighters, police officers, business owners, and many more can no longer afford to live in the region. They are forced to move away or live elsewhere and commute, leaving employers unable to find staff, emergency responders struggling with response times, and a rippling impact on our region's economy, environment, culture, and vitality.

To address this shortfall, the community needs to increase the number and diversity of available new and old units and help people move from renters to home-owners. The Tiger Team seeks to be proactive to maximize the ability for the Tahoe-Truckee region to capitalize on policy solutions proposed and enacted at the state and federal level.

The Tiger Team will support policies that address all income levels defined as "achievable local housing" as shown below and described in the MHC's [2016 Policy Brief](#) titled "Achievable Local Housing".



County	2018 Area Median Income (AMI) for family of four:
Nevada	\$73,500
Placer	\$80,100
El Dorado	\$80,100

### **How does the Advocacy Tiger Team achieve its goal?**

The Policy Platform objectives for advocacy outside of the region will help the advocacy team complement the Mountain Housing Council's work within the region. These objectives correspond to barriers to achievable local housing that cannot be changed at the local level, but are changeable at the state or federal level. Each objective will be pursued by supporting various policy interventions in legislative and agency processes, which are enumerated below. (Objectives and interventions often overlap in that actions that achieve one intervention or objective may also achieve other interventions or objectives, like working with the Smart Growth Task Force to comment on Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program guidelines for example).

This document outlines the objectives of the Tiger Team. A separate complementary document, called the "Annual Workplan", will be developed in January of each year and will identify and describe the Tiger Team's positions on specific pieces of legislation, administrative actions, and funding programs for that year. Positions on these activities will be informed by and consistent with this Policy Platform. The Annual Workplan may be updated periodically throughout the year as proposals evolve or introduced.

The Tiger Team will strive to make decisions on the Annual Workplan and any updates to it through a consensus model, facilitated and documented by the facilitator of the group (Sierra Business Council).

1. The definition of consensus spans the range of: strong support to "I can live with it." Any of these statements by a Tiger Team member constitutes consensus.
2. Many Tiger Team representatives cannot act independently on behalf of the agencies and organizations that they represent. Therefore, official communications of MHC policy positions will also include language recognizing that the position conveyed is the general consensus of the MHC but does not necessarily reflect the official endorsement of every MHC participant. When the Tiger Team uses a vote to determine a course

of action, the meeting notes will reflect the voting detail of those who approved, opposed and abstained.

3. This decision-making process will encourage the early articulation of concerns, which maximizes the chance of understanding and accommodating the views of all parties.

**Objective 1: Build political identity and influence outside the region.**

Two overarching conditions exist with regard to our region's ability to achieve the objectives of this Policy Platform: first, the Tahoe-Truckee region's small population is a barrier to gaining political influence, and second, to date, the region has not had a unified message on housing priorities when engaging with state and federal policy makers.

To counteract these two factors, a major priority of the Tiger Team will be to build strategic partnerships with organizations outside the region and statewide organizations with similar goals to achieve our objectives. The Tiger Team, through this Policy Platform and the Annual Workplan, will develop unified messages and priorities so that efforts will be consistent among all Tiger Team and MHC partners.

As such, the Tiger Team supports activities that achieve the following:

1. Leverage members' current relationships and lobbying experience. The Tiger Team has identified existing partnerships and lobbying relationships that will be essential to collaborating with to achieve its goals.
  - o *Ex: At the beginning of each legislative session and periodically during the year, the Tiger Team will distribute the Annual Workplan to all of these partners and seek help implementing each goal.*
2. Support statewide coalitions with similar priorities.
  - o *Ex: Prop 1 & 2 Fundraising event and other activities in coordination with Housing California; Coordination with Rural County Representatives of California, CA Rural Housing Coalition/Rural Smart Growth Task Force, California State Association of Counties, and League of California Community Foundations.*
3. Coordinate and build relationships with legislators representing our region and those from outside our region with similar goals.
  - o *Ex: Regular meetings with Assembly Member Dahle and Senator Gaines to identify shared priorities; Support efforts by housing "champions" in the legislature to build relationships and*

*understanding of Tahoe-Truckee issues; Organize annual lobby day; Find sponsor to introduce "Rural Housing Week" resolution.*

4. Build and maintain relationships with state agencies implementing funding programs and regulations impacting achievable local housing.
  - o *Ex: Regular meetings and/or tours with staff at the California Department of Housing and Community Development, Strategic Growth Council, and Office of Planning and Research.*
5. Build education and awareness among MHC members of local barriers to implementing state policies that could benefit achievable local housing solutions.
  - o *Ex: Creating educational briefing papers that help local governments, developers, and MHC members understand state policies and local barriers to implementation of those policies.*

**Objective 2: Change or remove policy barriers to implementing achievable local housing in the region.**

Local governments, developers, and other organizations involved in housing development in the region face regulatory barriers that increase the difficulty, cost, and time needed to implement achievable local housing projects. This objective focuses on removing regulatory – not funding – hurdles to implementing achievable local housing projects.

As such, the Tiger Team supports policy interventions that achieve the following:

1. Streamline permitting processes for achievable local housing projects.
  - o *Ex: Passage and implementation of bills and programs that create or expand streamlined permitting processes for achievable local housing projects.*
2. Create, expand, or modify technical assistance or capacity building programs for local governments and housing projects to meet regulatory requirements.
  - o *Ex: Support policies and funding that build capacity at the local level to address achievable local housing needs; CEQA technical support programs;*
3. Engage on state policies affecting zoning requirements or other local government ordinance requirements to allow implementation or continued maintenance of achievable local housing.
  - o *Ex: Support policies that allow local governments to adopt ordinances that require new developments to include certain*

*percentage of units that are affordable to people of various low or moderate income levels.*

4. Engage on state policies that seek to help local governments collect regionally-relevant data and utilize planning tools which support efforts to construct achievable local housing.
  - o *Ex: Support policies that help local governments collect more precise data on regional communities which helps local governments better compete for state funding and helps policy-makers at the state and local levels better analyze regional needs.*
5. Support policy that provides state and/or federal funding and resources to local governments to more accurately collect data and address the needs of the homeless population in their communities.
  - o *Ex: Engage on guideline development process for Proposition 2 implementation (if passed) and coordinate with Placer, Nevada, and El Dorado counties to maximize funding allocated to our region.*

**Objective 3: Remove barriers to attracting funding for achievable local housing projects in the region.**

Local governments, developers, and other organizations involved in housing development in the region face lack of funding, regulatory barriers to access funding, lack of capacity to access funding, and capital deserts. Housing policies and funding programs are often designed for higher-density, urban parts of the state. Activities under this section will focus on ensuring that rural areas can compete fairly for funding.

As such, the Tiger Team supports policy interventions that achieve the following:

1. Streamline financing opportunities for achievable local housing development.
  - o *Ex: Engage in and support legislation that streamlines permitting processes for transit-oriented or transit-corridor development; Engage on policies that create streamlined permitting processes in jurisdictions to meet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirements.*
2. Maximize the ability for regional residents, developers, nonprofits, and local agencies to secure financing to purchase homes and develop and/or expand achievable local housing projects.

- *Ex: Support passage and implementation of Propositions 1 & 2 (on the November 2018 ballot); Weigh in on draft funding program guidelines for SB2 (2017) and SB 540 (2017); Weigh in on income levels for first time home buyer assistance programs to account for regional needs.*
3. Create or expand achievable local housing development incentives, tax credits, and other financing mechanisms.
    - *Ex: Weigh in on implementation of policies that allow local governments to provide financial incentives for developments that incorporate affordable units; Involvement in the feedback process related to TCAC Opportunity Areas Map and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program; the Federal Opportunity Zones tax credit; passage of AB2920 (2018)*
  4. Modify grant guidelines to be more inclusive and accessible to rural applicants.
    - *Ex: Providing feedback on the annual draft grant guidelines for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program and the Transformative Climate Communities Program; Monitor CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) processes.*

### Exhibit A: Tahoe-Truckee Region Boundaries

The region represented by the Mountain Housing Council is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, 100 miles northeast of Sacramento, and 35 miles west of Reno, Nevada. It spans portions of Nevada, Placer, and El Dorado Counties.

The region's boundaries stretch from Hobart Mills, eight miles north of Truckee to Emerald Bay, near South Lake Tahoe; and from Cisco Grove, twenty miles to the west, to Floriston, fifteen miles to the east. The region encompasses more than 720 square miles.

