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September 19, 2016

The Honorable Clifford Lentz, City of Brisbane  
Brisbane City Hall  
50 Park Place  
Brisbane, CA 94005

**Re: Support Housing at Brisbane Baylands**

Dear Mayor Lentz,

The San Francisco Housing Action Coalition (SFHAC) is a 17-year-old, 300-member non-profit that advocates for the creation of well-designed, well-located housing at all levels of affordability that meets the present and future needs of our residents. Our organization has never taken a position on a development located outside San Francisco's borders until now. Because of the regional importance of the Brisbane Baylands project, its proximity to San Francisco and its potential impact on housing and transportation, it is imperative that we weigh in.

The Bay Area must retain low- and moderate-income residents in order to remain a diverse and economically competitive region. In addition, our cities must produce significantly more housing close to jobs and transit if we are to address the enormous environmental and social challenges that face us. It is frustrating that local municipalities throughout the region continue to approve large commercial or office complexes that create thousands of new jobs, while neglecting to add any housing to accommodate the influx of new workers for which they are designed. These choices result in sprawl, longer commutes, environmental degradation and increasingly unaffordable housing. It is our understanding that Brisbane supports a proposal that would build up to two million square feet of commercial-office space, with zero housing. This would only exacerbate the region's already severe problems.

Alternatively, there is before you a proposal for a mixed-use development that includes over 4,400 homes, integrated with office buildings, hotels, retail and significant amounts of parks and community space. We urge the City of Brisbane to choose this alternative proposal instead. This plan aligns with standard best-practice urban planning guidelines and SFHAC's own values.



The San Francisco Housing Action Coalition advocates for the creation of well-designed, well-located housing, at ALL levels of affordability, to meet the needs of San Franciscans, present and future.

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The SFHAC's Project Review Committee formally examined the alternative proposal for Brisbane Baylands recently, evaluating it according to our long-established endorsement criteria. These include the following:

### **Land Use**

The Brisbane Baylands site consists of 684 acres of vacant, underutilized land that is largely inaccessible to the public. The "Plan Bay Area 2013" identified it as a Priority Development Area, as it has the potential to contribute to the growth and vibrancy of the region in a responsible way. It is near several important residential developments that are currently being built, including Schlage Lock, Executive Park, and Candlestick Point. A mixed-use community at Brisbane Baylands would connect with these emerging neighborhoods and, most importantly, build a multi-modal transit node at Caltrain's Bayshore Station, one of the least used stations along its line.

### **Density**

The proposal's highest density is located immediately adjacent the Caltrain station and decreases away from it. We would support a project that increases housing density near the Caltrain station as well as to the south near Brisbane's center, so residents would be within walking distance of local amenities. For comparison, the anticipated density of Brisbane Baylands is about half that of San Francisco's Mission Bay community and about equal to the nearby Schlage Lock site. The SFHAC believes that the alternative proposal's density represents best land use practice.

### **Affordability**

The proposal is currently projected to build about 4,400 homes, with at least 15 percent of them being permanently affordable through private subsidies. The SFHAC strongly supports including subsidized homes for middle-income residents, from about 80 to 120 percent of the area's median income. It is important to consider that overall the proposal's homes will be affordable to far more people than comparable housing in San Francisco.

### **Parking and Alternative Transportation**

The project would be built around and significantly invest in improving the existing Caltrain Bayshore Station. This would convert the least-used station in their system to a multi-modal, regional transit node that would connect the project with San Francisco and cities along the Peninsula. This station is currently underutilized because there is very little housing or employment in the immediate vicinity. It is a logical place to increase density. A transit improvement like this would offer a significant future benefit to Brisbane.

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Successful cities across the country are investing in improvements to transit that give their residents alternatives to private car use. As a region, we cannot afford to plan for the past.

### **Historic Preservation**

The SFHAC understands that the proposal includes a commitment to restoring the Southern Pacific Roundhouse with a plan that will transform it into an attractive civic and cultural amenity.

### **Urban Design**

Our members were pleased that the proposal adheres to a form-based code that encourages active pedestrian and bicycle use in its interior streets. While we understand this proposal must strike a balance between the suburban nature of the existing community and proposed urban land use patterns, we strongly encourage a project that prioritizes pedestrian uses that would create a greener, more livable neighborhood. Such features should include narrow streets, wide sidewalks, active ground-floor uses, buried parking and proper building setbacks.

### **Environmental Features**

We understand the project sponsor has committed to developing an environmentally modern project that emphasizes sustainable practices and resource usage. About 80 percent of the housing and office space would be located within a quarter mile of the Caltrain Bayshore Station and about 95 percent within half a mile. The project sponsor would pursue a rating from the "One Planet Living Program" which incorporates state-of-the-art energy and water conservation methods and technologies.

### **Community Input**

The SFHAC places high importance on any project sponsor making a good-faith effort to seek the views of the surrounding community. This project sponsor began the Environmental Impact Report scoping sessions in 2006, 10 years ago. To say their community outreach efforts have been robust would be an understatement. Their team regularly hosts tours of the site and has opened an information center where residents can ask questions, make suggestions and learn more about the proposal. There has been and continues to be ample opportunity for the community to offer their views on how make a better project.

The decision made by Brisbane for this site will have an impact that extends far beyond its borders. A project of this scale that includes only office-commercial uses with no housing would cause significant harm to the region. It would perpetuate practices that force longer commutes, sprawling development, and spiraling housing prices. Given the

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challenges the Bay Area faces, it would be an irresponsible use of this important site because it asks surrounding communities to bear the problems worsened by Brisbane's choice. We respectfully urge you to choose a new direction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Colen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim Colen  
Executive Director

CC:

John Swiecki, Brisbane Community Development Director  
Brisbane Planning Commission  
Brisbane City Council  
Senator Jerry Hill  
Assemblyman Kevin Mullin  
Mayor Edwin Lee, San Francisco  
Mayor Sam Liccardo, San Jose  
Mayor Libby Schaaf, Oakland

## SFHAC 2016 Business and Organization Members

### **Architects and Designers**

AXIS Architecture + Design  
BAR Architects  
Christiani Johnson Architects  
David Baker Architects  
Fougeron Architecture  
Handel Architects LLP  
Heller Manus Architects  
HKIT Architects  
HKS Architects  
Gould Evans  
Kava Massih Architects  
Kwan Henmi Architecture/Planning, Inc.  
Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects  
Macy Architecture  
Matt Hollis Architects  
Miller Company Landscape Architects  
Mithun | Solomon  
Office of Charles F. Bloszies  
Page & Turnbull  
Paulett Taggart Architects  
Perkins + Will  
Pyatok Architects  
Solomon Cordwell Buenz  
Stanley Saitowitz | Natoma Architects Inc.  
Steinberg Architects  
Van Meter Williams Pollack  
Woodford Studio Inc.

### **Attorneys**

Arent Fox LLP  
Coblentz Patch Duffy & Bass LLP  
Farella Braun + Martel LLP  
Gordon & Rees  
Hanson Bridgett LLP  
Holland & Knight  
J. Abrams Law  
Nixon Peabody  
Pelosi Law Group

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman  
Reuben, Junius & Rose

### **Consultants**

Badiner Urban Planning  
Baker Street Associates  
Charles M. Salter Associates  
Curtis Development and Consulting  
Frank Noto  
Jay Wallace  
Jonathan Moftakhar  
Kathleen Houlehan  
Pantoll Advisors  
Prowler, Inc.  
Patrick Valentino  
Patricia Delgrande  
Sharon Polledri  
stok

### **Contractors**

Cahill Contractors Inc.  
Fisher Development  
James E Roberts-Obayashi Corporation  
Lend Lease  
Nibbi Brothers General Contractors  
Occidental Express  
Pankow Builders  
Plant Construction  
Swinerton Builders  
Suffolk Construction

### **Engineers**

ENGEO  
KPF Consulting Engineers  
Santos & Urrutia Structural Engineers, Inc.

### **Home Builders**

4Terra Investments  
AGI Avant  
Align Real Estate

Build Inc.  
Cathedral Hill Associates  
Community Housing Partnership  
Crescent Heights  
DDG Partners  
DIVCO Group, LLC  
DM Development Partners, LLC  
Emerald Fund  
Encore Capital Management  
Equity Community Builders  
Equity Residential  
Forest City  
Genesis Real Estate Group  
Greystar  
Grosvenor Americas  
Group i  
Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco  
Hanover Company  
Hines  
JS Sullivan Development  
Lennar Multifamily Communities  
Lennar Urban  
Local Development Group  
Martin Building Company  
Maximus Real Estate Partners LLC  
Mercy Housing CA  
Mill Creek Residential Trust  
Mission Housing Development Corporation  
Nick Podell Company  
One Vassar LLC  
Oryx Partners, LLC  
Pacific Eagle Holdings Corporation  
Panoramic Interests  
Paragon Real Estate Group  
Parkmerced Investors Properties LLC  
Pillar Capital  
Pocket Development LLC  
Prado Group  
R Group Inc.  
Realtex, Inc.  
San Francisco Giants  
Shorenstein Residential

Starcity  
SKS  
Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation  
The John Stewart Company  
Thompson | Dorfman  
Tidewater Capital LLC  
Tishman Speyer  
Trumark Urban  
Universal Paragon Corporation  
Urban Green Development  
Westlake Urban

### **Community Groups**

Civic Center Community Benefits District  
Construction Industry Workforce Initiative (CIWI)

### **Public Affairs Firms**

Barbary Coast Consulting  
BergDavis Public Affairs  
GCA Strategies  
Goodyear Peterson & Hayward

### **Real Estate Services**

Beckett Capital Inc.  
Better Homes & Gardens J.F.F. Realty  
DZH Phillips  
Fundrise  
Hearst  
San Francisco Association of Realtors  
The Mark Company

### **Sales Company**

Mega Western Sales

### **Technology Firms**

Owlized

### **Trade Unions**

Local Union No. 38  
San Francisco Building & Construction Trades Council

San Francisco Electrical Construction  
Industry Local 6  
Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No.  
104  
Sprinkler Fitters Local and Apprentices  
U.A. Local 483

**Urban Livability Groups**

Building Owners and Manager  
Association (BOMA)  
Catholic Charities CYO  
Coalition for Better Housing  
Friends of the Urban Forest  
Non-Profit Housing Association of  
Northern California  
Northern California Community Loan  
Fund  
PG&E  
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition  
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce  
San Francisco Parks Alliance  
SPUR  
Walk SF