

Written Comments for
Regular Public Comment Section
- **Consent Agenda**
- **Non Agenda Items**

From: [Brent Turner](#)
To: [Warren Slocum](#); [Dave Pine](#); [David Canepa](#); [Carole Groom](#); [Michelle Durand](#); [Don Horsley](#)
Cc: [CMO BoardFeedback](#); [Mike Richardson](#)
Subject: Brent Turner Public Comment for SMC Board of Supes 5/3/2022
Date: Monday, May 2, 2022 5:23:29 PM

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Hello All-

As a born and raised San Mateo County native, I am saddened by this breach of the public trust. It is NOT appropriate for County employees to use their power to attempt to trivialize or marginalize the citizenry.

I think Michelle and Alex should both resign, but history reminds me they will not.

It is not by choice the citizens are forced to point out the need for better performance from their government. It is shameful that the focus of the county employees / contractors is to denigrate the citizen advocates rather than using that energy toward addressing the actual problems

The below discovered e-mails are particularly disturbing as displaying concerted disregard and contempt for those citizens attempting to highlight pressing good government issues. Also it appears the local media took part to "warn" about the advocates to the office holders

Please advise-

Brent Turner

Half Moon Bay

I would give Don a heads up just in case they get out of line and he can keep order.
On Tue, Jan 25, 2022 at 8:44 AM Michelle Durand <mdurand@smcgov.org> wrote:

Good morning all

Just spoke with the WCM president who said ABC7 plans to join the meeting via Zoom bc they received a call from Brent Turner who said he plans to attend and question the decision to work with his organization. In James words, Brent said he wanted to "cause a ruckus." I told him Brent is not unfamiliar to the Board and staff.

Let me know if I should also alert Don or others.

Michelle Durand (she/her) Chief Communications Officer

County Manager's Office 400 County Center, 1st Floor

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Written Public
Comments for **Item No. 7**

From: [Kalisha Webster](#)
To: [CMO BoardFeedback](#)
Cc: [Jan Stokley](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 7 Public Hearing to Consider the FY 2022-2023 Moving to Work Annual Plan.
Date: Monday, May 2, 2022 9:29:02 PM
Attachments: [Draft MTW FY 2022-2023 Annual Plan Comments.pdf](#)
[Attachment A Annotated Tiered Subsidy Table.pdf](#)

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Please find attached Housing Choices comments (including Attachment A Annotated Tiered Subsidy Table) to the Board of Supervisors on Agenda Item 7 Public Hearing to Consider the FY 2022-2023 Moving to Work Annual Plan.



We have moved! Please note the new office address!

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May 2, 2022

San Mateo County Clerk and Board of Supervisors
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

boardfeedback@smcgov.org

Re: Comments on the Draft FY 2022-2023 MTW Annual Plan

Thank you for providing an opportunity for community members to provide comments on the Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo's Draft FY 2022-2023 Moving to Work Annual Plan. Housing Choices appreciates the work that the County has done to maximize the number of families and individuals served by this program so that they are able to continue to live in San Mateo County. However, we have concerns about the increased hardships placed on the lowest income households with fixed or extremely low incomes because of the Tiered Subsidy Table. In August 2020, Housing Choices submitted written comments and participated in meetings with DOH and HACSM to discuss these concerns, which we feel were not addressed in the current Draft Plan.

About Housing Choices

Housing Choices is a housing organization funded by the Golden Gate Regional Center to support people with developmental and other disabilities to be fully integrated in San Mateo County's affordable housing supply. We provide housing navigation services for both individuals and families. We also partner with affordable housing developers to make inclusive housing commitments for people with disabilities in their housing projects.

Part 1 Client Case Studies

I'd like to begin by providing you with real-life examples from the people we serve. I hope that these examples will provide context for our comments. Please note that in these examples we refer to 2021 Fair Market Rents (FMR) as HUD reported a decline in FMR in 2022 which has

occurred only 1 other time in San Mateo County (2013) over the last 15 years. From our experience during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic rental prices dropped significantly due to decreased demand for rental housing. However, we have seen that recently rent prices are beginning to increase back to pre-pandemic levels. Between 2008-2022 the median annual rent increase for a FMR one bedroom unit was around 6% with the lowest increase (2.5%) seen in 2019 (the last time the TST was updated) and the greatest increase seen in 2017 (33%).

Client 1: SSI only

This client depends entirely on SSI and is on a fixed income of \$1,040.21 per month with no other source of income and overwhelming barriers to “moving to work” due to the severity of his disability. With a \$400 deduction for disability per the Housing Authority guidelines, his total adjusted annual income is \$12,082.52.

The Tiered Subsidy Table provides a subsidy amount of \$2,120 for a one bedroom for this income level. According to HUD’s 2021 FMR, the FMR for a one bedroom in San Mateo County was \$2,923. In order to afford an FMR unit the client would need to pay \$803 per month for rent, which is 77% of his monthly income, exceeding the maximum that HACSM allows tenants to pay towards their portion of the rent and above the rate at which a tenant is considered Severely Rent Burdened.

If my client needed a live-in caregiver (as a reasonable accommodation for a disability) he would be virtually precluded from benefiting from the Moving to Work program. For a two bedroom apartment he would receive a subsidy amount of \$2,699. According to HUD’s 2021 FMR, the price for a two-bedroom apartment in San Mateo County was \$3,553. This means that for a two bedroom apartment, the client would need to pay \$884 per month for rent, which is 85% of his monthly income.

This scenario actually happened to a client with developmental disabilities using a MTW voucher to rent a two bedroom apartment with a live-in caregiver in the City of San Mateo. When the property changed hands, the new property manager reviewed the current FMR and increased the rent at all of the apartments with vouchers to the current FMR with approval of the Housing Authority. This client would have lost their housing but for advocacy from the Housing Choices staff, who convinced the new owner to negotiate a lower rent for the severely disabled resident with a live-in caregiver in order to prevent displacement.

Client 2: Part-time job with Reduced SSI

Our second client has a part-time job at The Cheesecake Factory. On average she makes around \$1,775 per month from wages. In addition she also receives around \$300 per month from SSI. This brings her total monthly income to \$2,075 per month. With a \$400 deduction for disability per the Housing Authority guidelines, her total Adjusted Annual Income is \$24,500.

According to the Tiered Subsidy Table at this income level the client would receive a voucher amount of \$1,820 for a one bedroom apartment. This means that for an apartment at the 2021 FMR the client would pay \$1,103 per month or 53% of her adjusted monthly income towards rent. While HACSM may allow tenants to pay up to 50% of their Adjusted Monthly Income towards rent most landlords require minimum incomes of 3 times the rent which would limit the clients housing search to rents under \$2,500 per month (approx \$400 less than the 2021 FMR).

Client 3: Full-time job

Client 3 is exceptional on our caseload in that she has an intellectual and developmental disability and has a full time job earning \$21.20 per hour or \$3,675 per month. With a deduction for disability, her total Adjusted Annual Income is \$43,696.

The Tiered Subsidy Table provides a voucher amount of \$1,370 for a one bedroom to this client. To afford an apartment at the 2021 FMR of \$2,923, she would pay \$1,553 per month or 42% of her monthly income.

According to her Affordability Worksheet provided by HACSM she should be able to afford an apartment between \$2,452-\$3,173. However, when applying for an apartment with a rent of \$2,903 she was initially denied because her income did not meet the property manager's criteria of making 3 times her portion of the rent, a requirement of most landlords and property managers in San Mateo County. Luckily, for this client the leasing agent was inspired by her story of having paid \$500 per month for 5 years to live in a basement unfit for human habitation in Redwood City while working part-time earning less than \$13,000 per year prior to getting her first full-time job and a Mainstream Voucher. The leasing agent advocated to her regional manager on behalf of the client who was then able to be approved and moved into her new apartment. However, not all voucher recipients are lucky enough to receive this type of support.

Part 2 Comments on the MTW Plan

Comment 1: The structure of the Tiered Subsidy Table unfairly burdens the most vulnerable people and implements a structural bias against those who because of age or lifelong disability have the lowest incomes.

As the above examples show, for people with incomes under \$23,000 per year (who are disproportionately seniors and people with disabilities), the Tiered Subsidy Table imposes a grindingly harsh financial toll as a condition of participation. For client #1, for example, with a monthly fixed income of \$1,040, even if he found an apartment at FMR where the landlord was willing to allow his share of the rent to be 77% of his monthly income, this would leave the client with only \$203.88 per month to pay for utilities, food, transportation, clothing, toiletries, phone and internet--all of which are basic necessities of living.

Compare this to Client # 3 who is earning \$3,675 per month. If she spends 77% of her income on her share of the rent, this still leaves \$845.25 for her other expenses each month.

Should a federally funded housing program provide the basis for the most vulnerable members of our communities to be told to go without food, clothing, and basic necessities because they are unable to work?

Comment 2 The Structure of the Tiered Subsidy Table is Inconsistent with Minimum Income Tenant Screening Guidelines. Most property managers in San Mateo County require applicants to have income of at least 3 times their share of the rent. These minimum income guidelines are designed to screen out tenants who, based solely on income, have a higher risk of being unable to pay their rent. The Housing Choice Voucher program is supposed to reduce this risk of instability and thus re-assure property managers that it makes business sense to rent to an extremely low income person.

But the Tiered Subsidy Table actually fosters the risk of instability for the lowest income participants. Rather than promoting housing access, the Housing Authority is using rules that enable property managers to deny housing opportunities to people with disabilities based on the indisputable fact that the Tiered Subsidy Table requires them to dedicate such a high percentage of their income towards rent.

Comment 3 The Tiered Subsidy Table Tends to Segregate the Lowest Income Participants in the Lowest Resource Areas and thus violates the purpose of the Moving to Work program . The premise of the Moving to Work program is that it creates incentives for people to move to areas of economic opportunity. But the structure of the Tiered Subsidy Table limits the geographic areas where the lowest income people can look for housing in San Mateo County and thus fosters historic patterns of segregation.

For example, according to 2020 TCAC opportunity maps, Foster City is considered a highest resource area while South San Francisco is considered a low to moderate resource area.

According to Zumper the 12 month average in South San Francisco for a studio is \$2,114 and \$2,660 for a one bedroom. During that same time period in Foster City average rents for a studio were \$2,628 and \$2,988 for a one bedroom.

By reducing access of the lowest income people to the areas in San Mateo County with the highest resource opportunities, the Tiered Subsidy Table leads to higher concentrations of poverty and lack of economic, educational and environmental opportunity for the lowest income households who are disproportionately people of color and people with disabilities.

Just as city and county leaders double down on efforts to address systemic racism in San Mateo County and Affirmatively Further Fair Housing through the Housing Element update, the Moving to Work program is having an exclusionary impact on people caught in the demographic intersectionality of race, income and disability.

Comment 4 The Five Year Time Limit should not be applied to seniors and people with severe lifelong disabilities.

While many disabilities are temporary, people with disabilities served by Golden Gate Regional Center have extensive professional documentation that they have a severe lifelong disability. People with other types of severe, lifelong disabilities may have similar documentation. Nor is old age, and the employment limitations it creates, a temporary condition.

Yet the Housing Authority requires people to seek a hardship waiver annually to extend the five year time limit of the Moving to Work program--even if their disability is lifelong. This waiver process can lead to termination of people who because of their disability may miss required appointments, etc. It is not a reasonable policy when by definition a person with developmental disabilities has been found to have a severe lifelong disability by the Golden Gate Regional Center after applying the criteria of California's Lanterman Act.

Furthermore, the policy can lead to Housing Authority staff applying different standards to different people based on their perception of the merits of the person's hardship. In 2019, a Regional Center consumer who is a single mother (of a child who also has a developmental disability) received only a two year extension of her MTW voucher, despite submitting proof of her diagnosis of a lifelong disability. In 2020 she received notice that she would be granted one final extension and that her voucher would expire in September 2021 without the option to extend any further despite the fact that due to her disability she would never be self sufficient forcing her into homelessness or displacement from the county.

We recommend that prior to the expiration of the five year time period, an individual with disabilities be given the opportunity to prove that their disability is lifelong. If they do so, they should not repeatedly be asked to prove this as a condition of continuing in the program.

We urge you to review the Tiered Subsidy Table and make changes so that it meaningfully addresses the housing needs of the Counties most vulnerable populations at the lowest income levels.

Sincerely,

Kalisha Webster

Senior Housing Advocate

Email: kalisha@housingchoices.org

Phone: 650-660-7088.

New-Move TST Effective 7/1/19

Tiered Subsidy Table for Tenant-Based Voucher Programs*

Includes project-based properties

Client 1
 SSI: \$1,040/mo
 Annual Adj. Income:
 \$12,083
 2021 FMR for 1 bd: \$2923
 Tenant portion of rent at
 FMR: \$2923-\$2120= \$803
 \$803/\$1040= 77% of
 monthly income

H		0	1	2	3	4	5
0	1,999	1941	2408	2987	3921	4148	4774
2,000	4,999	1878	2345	2924	3858	4085	4711
5,000	7,999	1803	2270	2849	3783	4010	4636
8,000	10,999	1728	2195	2774	3708	3935	4561
11,000	13,999	1653	2120	2699	3633	3860	4486
14,000	16,999	1578	2045	2624	3558	3785	4411
17,000	19,999	1503	1970	2549	3483	3710	4336
20,000	22,999	1428	1895	2474	3408	3635	4261
23,000	25,999	1353	1820	2399	3333	3560	4186
26,000	28,999	1278	1745	2324	3258	3485	4111
29,000	31,999	1203	1670	2249	3183	3410	4036
32,000	34,999	1128	1595	2174	3108	3335	3961
35,000	37,999	1053	1520	2099	3033	3260	3886
38,000	40,999	978	1445	2024	2958	3185	3811
41,000	43,999	903	1370	1949	2883	3110	3736

Client 2
 SSI: \$300/mo
 Wages: \$1775/mo
 Annual Adj. Income:
 \$24,500
 2021 FMR for 1 bd: \$2923
 Tenant portion of rent at
 FMR: \$2923-\$1820=\$1103
 \$1103/\$2075= 53% of
 monthly income

Client 3
 Wages: \$3675/mo
 Annual Income*: \$43,696
 2021 FMR for 1 bd: \$2,923
 Tenant portion of rent at FMR:
 \$2923-\$1370= \$1553
 \$1553/\$3675= 42% of monthly
 income

*Annual Adj. income includes \$400 deduction for disabled household