

**Santa Clara County Collaborative on Affordable Housing and Homeless Issues  
Bylaws Working Group Progress Report  
March 18, 2010**

**Initial Process and Recommendation**

On January 21, 2010, the Santa Clara County Collaborative on Affordable Housing and Homeless Issues (Collaborative) called for a working group to review the group's bylaws and make recommendations to the bylaws that would reflect the Collaborative's current practices. Collaborative members were invited to participate in the Bylaws Working Group; interested members agreed on a process, reviewed the version of the bylaws understood to be official, and met twice to address questions, recommendations, or concerns with the current bylaws.

As a result its work thus far, the Bylaws Working Group has concluded that the bylaws cannot be updated such to effectively advance the goals of the Collaborative without a more thorough examination of the Collaborative, including clarifying and coming to agreement on various practices and principles. The Bylaws Working Group recommends that the Collaborative Steering Committee direct it to:

- Conduct a more thorough examination of the Collaborative,
- Present to the Steering Committee recommendations which would position the Collaborative to more effectively advance its goals, and
- Update the Collaborative's bylaws to reflect recommendations approved by the Steering Committee.

**Guidance for Ongoing Discussion**

Should the Steering Committee approve the recommendation above, the Bylaws Working Group requests its feedback and guidance regarding the group's topics of discussion to date. The subsequent pages of this report describe Collaborative's current practice in a certain topic area, suggestions that have been brought forward, and the reasoning behind those suggestions. It should be noted that these are not recommendations of the Bylaws Working Group at this time. Rather, these are topics that have generated honest and forthright debate and will continue to be explored.

**Bylaws Working Group Discussion Topics as of March 18, 2010**

<b>Formalizing Membership</b>		
<u>Current Practice</u>	<u>Suggestions Discussed</u>	<u>Reasoning</u>
There is not a formalized process for joining the Collaborative as a member or for identifying members.	Require each member to submit a membership application or enrollment/information form.	Formalized membership (and the practice of it through a form and dues) begins to generate ownership and buy in, clarifies the expectations of members, and clarifies the benefits of participation for members.
No dues are required or collected.	Collect membership dues from each member, waived for financial hardship and/or for unhouseed members.	Membership dues would provide the Collaborative with a small fund to cover some of the costs now incurred by individuals/member organizations or could be used as needed to effectively advance the goals of the Collaborative.

<b>Organizational Structure, Governance Roles and Planning</b>		
<u>Current Practice</u>	<u>Suggestions Discussed</u>	<u>Reasoning</u>
There is a lack of clarity about the role of the Steering Committee and the role of the Executive Committee in relation to each other and in relation to the Collaborative.	Clarify the roles of the Steering and Executive Committees and change the expectations of members of those committees.	Clarifying roles would increase transparency and could improve effectiveness in the Collaborative's operations
Planning is a reactive process rather than a proactive process. Various committees take and recommend action, the results and content of which are recorded by Homebase and approved through the NOFA application process as the	Charge the Steering Committee (or its designee) with conducting an annual, proactive, coordinated planning process.	Clarifying goals would help to align members in being intentional about the work that the Collaborative undertakes

<p>Collaborative's goals. A regular planning process with clarified goals does not take place.</p> <p>There is not a member contract. Steering Committee members are often nominated by others and have an incomplete understanding in what is expected and how they can/should participate.</p> <p>The Steering Committee is currently comprised of a maximum of 36 members, voted on annually. Only elected Steering Committee members have votes on the business of the Collaborative.</p>	<p>Implement and enforce a Steering Committee member contract describing the Collaborative's expectations of Steering Committee members (including committee involvement, attendance, level of participation, etc.); consider coordinating with a self-nominating process.</p> <p>Modify the Steering Committee composition such that each member organization identifies a representative and each representative has a vote; individual members would also have a vote; may necessitate looking into an alternate governance structure.</p>	<p>If the Steering Committee is to be the governing body of the Collaborative, its members should actively participate in conducting the work of the Collaborative. Participants who self-select are more likely to be actively engaged.</p> <p>Every organization could have a vote in the business of the Collaborative, increasing inclusiveness.</p>
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<b>Committee Expectations</b>		
<u>Current Practice</u>	<u>Suggestions Discussed</u>	<u>Reasoning</u>
<p>Committees generally operate independently, without direction from the Steering Committee.</p> <p>Interaction between the Steering Committee and other Collaborative committees consists of basic reports at</p>	<p>The Steering Committee should guide/lead the committees in the direction of their work on an annual basis.</p> <p>Committees should be expected to prepare more substantive reports -- including advocacy, action, or decision requests -- for</p>	<p>If there is coordination between the committees, work at the committee level could more effectively advance the goals of the Collaborative and committees could get more Collaborative-wide support.</p> <p>More substantive reports from the committees would help to bring the level of the Steering Committee meetings from</p>

Steering Committee meetings.	Steering Committee meetings.	operational to strategic. Operational discussions should happen at the committee level. The Steering Committee should be having strategic discussions.
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<b>Ex Officio Officers</b>		
<u>Current Practice</u>	<u>Suggestions Discussed</u>	<u>Reasoning</u>
<p>The Collaborative's current composition of Ex Officio Officers includes the Homeless Coordinators for Santa Clara County and the City of San Jose, and representatives of Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara, United Way Silicon Valley, South County Collaborative, Affordable Housing Network of Santa Clara County, and Blue Ribbon Commission (Destination: Home).</p> <p>Ex Officio Officers are voting members of the Steering and Executive Committees.</p>	<p>Reduce the number of Ex Officio Officers to include the Homeless Coordinators for Santa Clara County and the City of San Jose and a representative of the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara.</p> <p>Limit the composition of the Executive Committee to elected officers and committee chairs only, and make the purpose of the Executive Committee be the preparation and coordination of the Steering Committee's monthly meeting agenda.</p>	<p>The number of Ex Officio Officers is large and, while participation from these groups as members is important, it may not necessitate an ex officio position.</p> <p>If the Steering Committee is the governing body of the organization, the Executive Committee should be directed by the Steering Committee. All the central business of the Collaborative should be conducted at Steering Committee meetings. If the Executive Committee's role is simply to prepare the agenda, participation of Ex Officio Officers on that committee is unnecessary.</p>