

Text of [Online Questionnaire](#) due 5:00 p.m., December 22, 2021:

Symbium Corp Plancheck Pilot Application

Intro: Now more than ever local jurisdictions are being required to accommodate more housing through historic RHNA numbers and they face [new consequences for non-compliance](#) with state housing laws. This has created pressure on local planning staff to process increasing volumes of residential permit applications accurately and efficiently with limited resources.

ABAG is contracting with Symbium Corp to provide up to 10 local governments with free licenses for an innovative online tool called [Plancheck](#) that streamlines residential site plan review for applicants and planners. Plancheck automates the legal analysis of properties against non-discretionary local zoning codes at the parcel level saving staff time, increasing consistent interpretation of codes, and enabling applicants to file more complete and compliant applications. Plancheck can also automate the creation of editable draft comment letters from planners to applicants and can integrate with existing permit tracking systems (i.e., Accela) to save time and decrease data entry errors. Plancheck makes training new planners much easier and increases job satisfaction by automating mundane, non-discretionary review allowing planners to focus on the more interesting and complex discretionary aspects of residential plan review.

Local jurisdiction staff would need to work with Symbium during the initial configuration stage to clarify code interpretations when needed but would not be required to actually configure the tool themselves. The level of local staff commitment will vary based on the complexities of local codes, and Symbium limits technical zoning code questions to not more than once per week. Staff commitment is not expected to exceed 12 hours over 3 months and may be significantly less.

Evaluation Criteria: ABAG will evaluate applications based on responses to this survey, specifically on the local jurisdiction's commitment to accelerating housing (measured by the number of prohousing policies adopted using HCD's definitions) and how Plancheck would be used to address existing bottlenecks in processing residential permits. If we are oversubscribed, failure to meet these threshold requirements set forth below will likely disqualify jurisdictions from participation in the pilot.

We will need this information by: 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 22, 2021.

Questions:

1. Contact information:

- Name of Jurisdiction
- County
- Name of staffer authorized to submit this application
- Title
- Email
- Phone

2. Threshold requirements: If we are oversubscribed, failure to meet these threshold requirements will likely disqualify jurisdictions from participation in the pilot.

- Does your jurisdiction have a GIS database that includes parcels and zoning? Y/N
- Is your jurisdiction's zoning code, including Special Districts and PUDs, codified online (Municode, AmLegal, etc.)? Y/N

- Will your jurisdiction commit up to 12 hours over 3 months of planning staff time (once a week) to clarify code interpretations that Symbium may have during the initial configuration phase? Y/N
3. **Prohousing policies:** HCD has established a [Prohousing Designation Program](#) that provides state-level incentives to cities and counties in the form of additional points or other preference in the scoring of competitive housing, community development, and infrastructure programs including AHSC, IIG and TCC grants. To further incentivize Bay Area jurisdictions to commit to accelerate housing, you must certify that your jurisdiction has adopted some of the following policies and programs defined by HCD as “prohousing” to be considered for participation in ABAG’s Symbium Plancheck pilot. ***Check all that apply to increase competitiveness.*** If we are oversubscribed, jurisdictions that have not adopted at least five of these will likely be disqualified from participation in the pilot.
- Sufficient sites, including rezoning, to accommodate 150 percent or greater of the current or draft RHNA, whichever is greater, by total or income category.
 - Permitting missing middle housing uses (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) by right in existing low-density, single-family residential zones.
 - Density bonus programs which exceed statutory requirements by 10 percent or more.
 - Increasing allowable density in low-density, single-family residential areas beyond the requirements of state Accessory Dwelling Unit law (e.g., permitting more than one ADU or JADU per single-family lot).
 - Reducing or eliminating parking requirements for residential development as authorized by Government Code sections 65852.2; adopting vehicular parking ratios that are less than the relevant ratio thresholds at subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of Government Code section 65915, subdivision (p)(1); or adopting maximum parking requirements at or less than ratios pursuant to Government Code section 65915, subdivision (p).
 - Zoning to allow for residential or mixed uses in one or more non-residential zones (e.g., commercial, light industrial). Qualifying non-residential zones do not include open space or substantially similar zones.
 - Modification of development standards and other applicable zoning provisions to promote greater development intensity. Potential areas of focus include floor area ratio; height limits; minimum lot or unit sizes; setbacks; and allowable dwelling units per acre.
 - Establishment of a Workforce Housing Opportunity Zone, as defined in Government Code section 65620, or a housing sustainability district, as defined in Government Code section 66200.
 - Demonstrating other zoning and land use actions that measurably support the Acceleration of Housing Production. IF CHECKED, DESCRIBE.
 - Establishment of ministerial approval processes for a variety of housing types, including single-family and multifamily housing.
 - Establishment of streamlined, program-level CEQA analysis and certification of general plans, community plans, specific plans with accompanying Environmental Impact Reports (EIR), and related documents.

- Documented practice of streamlining housing development at the project level, such as by enabling a by-right approval process or by utilizing statutory and categorical exemptions as authorized by applicable law (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21155.1, 21155.4, 21159.24, 21159.25; Gov. Code, § 65457; Cal Code Regs., tit. 14, §§ 15303, 15332; Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21094.5, 21099, 21155.2, 21159.28).
- Establishment of permit processes that take less than four months. Policies under this Category must address all approvals necessary to issue building permits.
- Absence or elimination of public hearings for projects consistent with zoning and the general plan.
- Establishment of consolidated or streamlined permit processes that minimize the levels of review and approval required for projects, and that are consistent with zoning regulations and the general plan.
- Absence, elimination or replacement of subjective development and design standards with objective development and design standards that simplify zoning clearance and improve approval certainty and timing.
- Establishment of one-stop-shop permitting processes or a single point of contact where entitlements are coordinated across city approval functions (e.g., planning, public works, building) from entitlement application to certificate of occupancy.
- Priority permit processing or reduced plan check times for ADUs/JADUs, multifamily housing, or homes affordable to lower- or moderate-income households.
- Establishment of a standardized application form for all entitlement applications.
- Practice of publicly posting status updates on project permit approvals on the Internet.
- Limitation on the total number of hearings for any project to three or fewer.
- Demonstration of other actions, not listed above, that quantifiably decrease production timeframes or promote the streamlining of approval processes. IF CHECKED, DESCRIBE.
- Waiver or significant reduction of development impact fees for residential development.
- Adoption of ordinances or implementation of other mechanisms that result in less restrictive requirements than Government Code sections 65852.2 and 65852.22 to reduce barriers for property owners to create ADUs/JADUs. Examples of qualifying policies include, but are not limited to, development standards improvements, permit processing improvements, dedicated ADU/JADU staff, technical assistance programs, and pre-approved ADU/JADU design packages.
- Adoption of other fee reduction strategies separate from those listed above, including fee deferrals and reduced fees for housing for persons with special needs.
- Promoting innovative housing types (e.g., manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, park models) that reduce development costs.
- Measures that reduce costs for transportation-related infrastructure or programs that encourage active modes of transportation or other alternatives to

automobiles. Qualifying policies include, but are not limited to, publicly funded programs to expand sidewalks or protect bike/micro-mobility lanes; creation of on-street parking for bikes; transit-related improvements; or establishment of carshare programs.

- Adoption of universal design ordinances pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 17959.
- Establishment of pre-approved or prototype plans for missing middle housing types (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) in low-density, single-family residential areas.
- Demonstration of other actions, not listed above, that quantifiably reduce construction or development costs. IF CHECKED, DESCRIBE.
- Establishment of local housing trust funds or collaboration on a regional housing trust fund.
- Provide grants or low-interest loans for ADU/JADU construction affordable to lower- and moderate-income households.
- A comprehensive program that complies with the Surplus Land Act (Gov. Code, § 54220 et seq.) and that makes publicly owned land available for affordable housing, or for multifamily housing projects with the highest feasible percentage of units affordable to lower income households. A qualifying program may utilize mechanisms such as land donations, land sales with significant write-downs, or below-market land leases.
- Establishment of an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District or similar local financing tool that, to the extent feasible, directly supports housing developments in an area where at least 20 percent of the residences will be affordable to lower income households.
- Directed residual redevelopment funds to affordable housing.
- Development and regular (at least biennial) use of a housing subsidy pool, local or regional trust fund, or other similar funding source.
- Prioritization of local general funds for affordable housing.
- Demonstration of other actions, not listed above, that quantifiably promote, develop, or leverage financial resources for housing.
- Policy that represents one element of a unified, multi-faceted strategy to promote multiple planning objectives, such as efficient land use, access to public transportation, affordable housing, climate change solutions, and/or hazard mitigation.
- Policies that promote development consistent with the state planning priorities pursuant to Government Code section 65041.1. IF CHECKED, DESCRIBE.
- Policies that diversify planning and target community and economic development investments (housing and non-housing) to improve lower opportunity areas. Such areas include, but are not limited to, Low Resource and High Segregation & Poverty areas designated in the most recently updated TCAC/HCD Opportunity Maps, and disadvantaged communities pursuant to California Senate Bill 535 (2012).
- Policies that go beyond state law requirements in reducing displacement of lower income households and conserving existing housing stock that is affordable to lower income households.

- Rezoning and other policies that support high-density development in Location Efficient Communities.
 - Rezoning and other policies that result in a net gain of housing capacity while concurrently mitigating development impacts on or from Environmentally Sensitive or Hazardous Areas.
 - Zoning policies that increase housing choices and affordability in High Resource and Highest Resource areas, as designated in the most recently updated TCAC/HCD Opportunity Maps.
 - Other policies that involve meaningful actions towards affirmatively furthering fair housing pursuant to Government Code section 8899.50, including, but not limited to, outreach campaigns, updated zoning codes, and expanded access to financing support.
4. Please describe in no more than 500 words how Plancheck would be used to address existing bottlenecks in processing residential permits and how it would impact housing production in the Jurisdiction. If available, include information about the volume of public inquiries received about non-discretionary zoning issues, the volume of residential permit applications pending, any existing backlog in processing residential permit applications, and staffing constraints (including turnover).