I.   Best Practices

Best practices for public land policies involve principles that ensure transparent, equitable, and community-centric land use, maximizing public benefit. Best practices research is based upon the examination of existing public land policy models in San Francisco, Oakland, Irvine, and Washington D.C. as well as public land policy best practice research and technical assistance documents. Here are some of the key best practices:

Community Engagement: Involve local communities and stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes for public land. This fosters transparency, builds trust, and ensures that community needs and preferences are considered.

Affordable Housing Prioritization: Prioritize the development of affordable housing on public land, particularly for very low, low, and moderate-income households. Affordable housing is often a critical need in many communities.

Permanence and Affordability: Promote permanent affordability through mechanisms such as community land trusts or long-term affordability covenants. This ensures that the benefits of affordable housing endure over time.

Transparency: Maintain clear and accessible records of land disposition processes, decisions, and outcomes. Transparency is essential for public accountability.

Alignment with State Laws: Ensure that public land policies align with state laws, especially when it comes to the disposition or lease of surplus land.

Public Benefit Assessment: Conduct assessments to evaluate the public benefit derived from land lease or disposition. This can include economic and social assessments to inform decision-making.

Competitive Bidding: Use competitive processes, such as request for proposals (RFPs) to select developers or entities for public land projects. Competitive bidding can help secure the best value and benefits for the community.

Anti-Speculation Measures: Implement measures that discourage land speculation by developers. These measures can include restrictions on reselling, transferring, or subleasing property at a profit.

Equity Considerations: Prioritize equitable development that addresses historic and current socioeconomic disparities and ensures that the benefits of public land use are accessible to all residents, regardless of socioeconomic background.

Data Transparency: Make information on public land availability, usage, and development plans readily accessible to the public. Digital platforms and open data initiatives can help achieve this.

Long-term Planning: Incorporate public land use into comprehensive long-term city planning and zoning processes. Public land should align with broader city development goals.

Sustainability: Emphasize environmentally sustainable practices in public land use, such as transit-oriented development, green infrastructure, and energy-efficient building standards.

Evaluation and Adaptation: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of public land policies and be willing to adapt them as needed to address changing community needs and circumstances.

Legal Safeguards: Establish legal safeguards, including anti-corruption measures and to ensure the integrity of public land disposition processes.

Interagency Collaboration: Foster collaboration among city agencies, nonprofits, and housing authorities to ensure a holistic approach to affordable housing development and community services.