

Proven Local Actions for the National Housing Affordability Crisis

As Americans struggle to find affordable housing, cities and states throughout the country are searching for ways to rapidly increase their housing supply. Federal programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and Housing Choice Voucher Program provide much needed assistance, but more must be accomplished locally to alleviate the ongoing crisis. While historic barriers to new development like exclusionary zoning and density restrictions persist nationwide, local legislators continue offering short term remedies like rent control and other regulations that don't address the root of the problem: making it easier to build houses.

Here are 6 proven solutions that can help get more housing built:



- ✓ **Streamline Permitting Processes** to simplify and expedite approvals for new housing. Policies like by-right development and pre-approved design programs from local governments can get projects permitted up to 28% faster¹ than projects subject to discretionary review.



- ✓ **Provide Financial Incentives** that help builders and operators reduce their costs. Tax abatements, rebates and exemptions help ease the financial burden on developers and incentivize more exploration of affordable housing options. Philadelphia's 10-year tax incentive² caused development to increase by 376% since the incentive took effect. Philadelphia suburbs without the incentive saw an 11% decrease³ in building activity.



- ✓ **Provide Regulatory Incentives and Avoid Disincentives** that restrict development and stop builders from developing new housing. Perks like density bonuses, flexible design standards and reduced parking requirements can be combined to reduce costs for developers and lower housing prices⁴ for renters. Policies like rent control, for-cause eviction mandates and anti-price gouging measures stymie interest from developers and contribute to the ongoing housing shortage.



- ✓ **Eliminate Exclusionary Zoning and Discriminatory Land Use policies.** Exclusionary zoning policies⁵ maintain racial and economic segregation while also restraining the development of the various types of housing needed to end the national shortage. Repealing discriminatory land use policies can help ensure all neighborhoods in a community have access to new development that increases housing choice and position them to contribute equitably to their region's new housing goals.⁶



- ✓ **Identify and Utilize Public Land** to maximize the value of the parcel and achieve greater affordability in a region. Allocating public land for affordable housing can be an effective way to reduce development costs and meet housing needs with less need for public subsidy. California's public land policy, the Surplus Land Act, led to the acquisition and expected development of sites statewide, with over 70%⁷ of them being future sites for affordable homes.



- ✓ **Modernize Zoning, Density, and Design Standards.** Cities like New Rochelle, NY, have successfully spurred development and brought rents down by combining zoning reforms and flexible design rules. Adopting similar approaches elsewhere can open the door to diverse housing types, increase supply, and better integrate new construction into existing communities.

To learn more about proven housing solutions, visit HousingSolutionsCoalition.org

¹ UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies

² Building Industry Association of Philadelphia

³ Building Industry Association of Philadelphia

⁴ California Yimby

⁵ National Library of Medicine

⁶ UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation

⁷ California Department of General Services