

POLICY DIGEST

A monthly snapshot of housing-related policy research



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2021 CALIFORNIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS REPORT

New summary analysis from the California Housing Partnership tell a clear story: the pandemic impacts have only worsened an already untenable situation facing low-income California renters, with rising homelessness and cost burdens leading to increased housing fragility and worsening racial inequality.

California needs 1.2 million more affordable rental homes by 2030 to keep pace with demand.

- 78% of extremely low-income (ELI) renter households are paying more than half of their income on housing costs compared to 6% of moderate-income renter households.
- Black renter households are nearly 50% more severely cost burdened than white renter households.
- Median rent in California has increased 35% since 2000 while median renter household income has only increased by 6%.

[Read more here.](#)

SAVING BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP

JUST AND FAIR PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY

March 4, 2021 | UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge & Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County



CURRENT AND PRE-PANDEMIC HOMEOWNERSHIP PATTERNS

Homeownership remains a critical source of asset accumulation. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated disparities in access to Black homeownership in Los Angeles County. Black households in Southern California experienced more pandemic job losses resulting in difficulty paying for usual household expenses. African Americans are nearly one and a half times as likely to have trouble affording a mortgage than non-Hispanic Whites.

PANDEMIC PRE-FORECLOSURE ANALYSIS

Foreclosure notices are often distributed with systemic disparities. High pre-foreclosure rates exist in Black communities, most notably in majority Black neighborhoods. The eviction moratorium presents temporary relief for communities disproportionately impacted by evictions, but fails to provide long-term protection. In the near future, thousands of African Americans will lose their homes if no actions are taken.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of pre-foreclosure notices during the pandemic indicates that communities hardest hit by the last foreclosure crisis are occurring in the same communities now at risk of another foreclosure crisis due to the pandemic. Black neighborhoods are among those most at risk. The following recommendations seek to provide equitable solutions for Black homeowners.

1. Federal officials must **extend temporary protections** until full economic recovery is reached
2. Greater collaboration and analysis to **identify vulnerable homeowners and neighborhoods** in which homeowners may fall behind on payments due to COVID-19
3. **Funding for educational programs** to help homeowners better understand foreclosure risk
4. **Require lenders to disclose to mortgage holders resources** for housing finance management
5. **Strengthen policy language**, such as SB 1079, to expand access for Black homeownership and wealth building

[Read the entire report here](#)



THROUGH THE ROOF

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF RENTAL HOUSING IN AMERICA

March 2, 2021 | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy



POLICY INTERVENTION: CONFRONTING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

Millions of households face unsustainable cost burdens. This report provides a policy framework for local housing reform that seeks to address the housing affordability crisis. **Nearly half of American renters struggle to afford monthly payments, double the number in 1960.**

Today, low-income renters have less residual income than they did in 2000. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in late rent and mortgage payments. Meanwhile, tenants are provided only *temporary* eviction protections.



Regulations on new dwelling constructions limit housing stock, resulting in costly housing that is unaffordable for low-income renters and homebuyers. Factors that contribute to the high cost of housing include **availability of land, limited construction sector innovation, rising income inequality and stagnant wages.**

LOCAL HOUSING REFORM FRAMEWORK:

1. Create and preserve dedicated affordable housing units

Creating and preserving housing that stays affordable requires direct subsidies, inclusionary housing and shared equity models, (i.e. community land trusts)

2. Reduce barriers to new supply

Relaxing zoning and other regulations incentivizes desired housing, shifting property taxes to encourage the sale of vacant parcels

3. Help households access and afford private market homes

Ensure assistance for lower-income residents to afford private rentals, help families become homeowners and enforce fair housing laws

4. Protect against displacement and poor housing conditions

Enact rent protections to minimize rent increases, assist low-income homeowners through property tax relief and encourage landlords to maintain, not convert, apartments

[Read the entire report here](#)

AN EVALUATION OF LOS ANGELES' TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES PLAN

IN 2016, LA COUNTY VOTERS PASSED A LOCAL BALLOT MEASURE, MEASURE JJJ, WHICH CREATED A NEW INCLUSIONARY ZONING PROGRAM NEAR RAIL TRANSIT.

2021 | Cityscape & U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research

New research shows TOC resulted in almost as many building permits over its shorter life than the longer-lived density bonus program.



The TOC program has provided the right type of balance to incentivize private construction of affordable units without giving market-rate developers a windfall.

Analysis of TOC building permits and entitlements suggests that developer take-up of the TOC program is indeed high. Despite being a recent program, TOC projects have entitLED and approved almost as many affordable units as the comparable but longer running Density Bonus program. This high take-up is consistent with financial simulations that suggest that developers should prefer, in some instances, the TOC program to pure market-rate development. However, the entitlement data show an added benefit not captured by simulations: decreased entitlement costs and risks. The TOC program provides a tenable solution by allowing for by-right and expedited discretionary entitlement processes, which enable developers to eschew the risky and lengthy process of entitling a project.

KEY FINDINGS:

1

Developers are drawn to build in moderate-low markets to take advantage of low construction costs.

In affluent neighborhoods, **cost savings from using less land per unit exceed the income losses from the affordable units required.**

2

TOC projects can **accommodate more affordable units and remain financially more attractive** than market-rate projects

TOC projects can **tolerate lower inclusionary fractions.**

The difference in internal rate of return between projects with and without affordable units is less sensitive to the inclusionary fraction in moderate-low markets.

3

The TOC program **allows for a reduction in land costs per unit**, speeding up project permitting and thus, reducing project costs.

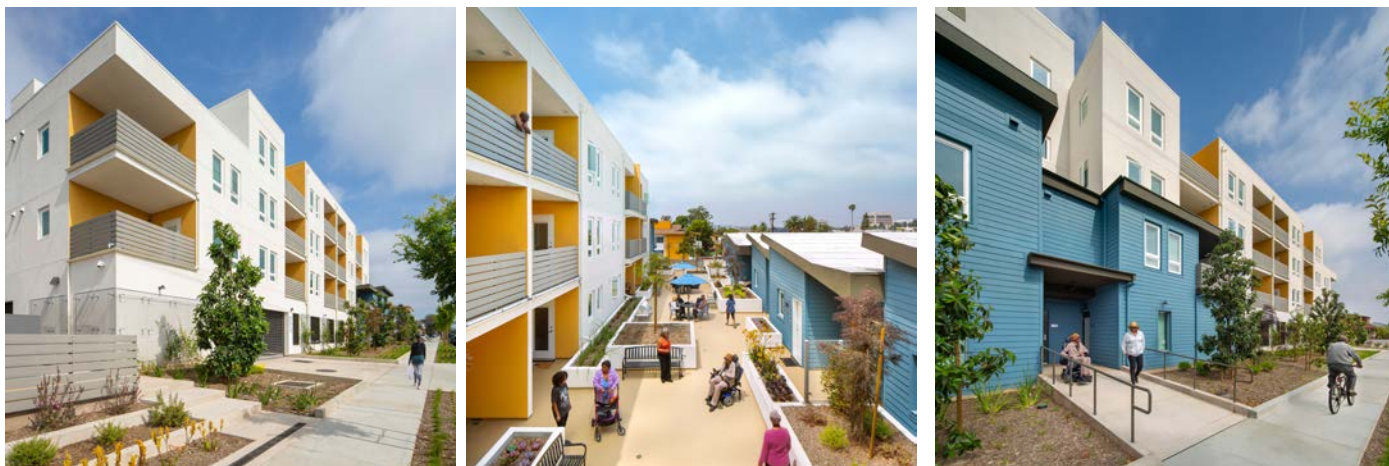
TOC results in **increased unit production and encourages development** to help resolve the region's housing shortage.

[Read the entire report here](#)

“I WOULD, IF ONLY I COULD”

HOW CITIES CAN USE CALIFORNIA’S HOUSING ELEMENT TO GET NEW HOUSING BUILT

December 14, 2020 | UCLA Lewis Center



FOUNDATIONS: HOUSING ELEMENTS WITH THE FORCE OF LAW

California requires that cities regularly adopt state-approved plans, called a housing element, to accommodate the city's share of regional housing need. City councils and planning departments can use California's Housing Element Law to remove barriers to housing supply and access to opportunity. In this new report, the authors argue that the housing element update creates an unusual policymaking window for city officials who appreciate the need for new and denser housing, but who worry about political resistance to providing for it. Cities can use the housing element to: (1) incentivize compromises by constituents who might otherwise oppose denser housing; (2) credibly commit future city councils to prohousing policies; (3) produce information about local land-use regulation that can advance prohousing reform; and (4) encourage participation by those who would benefit from more housing.

THE LOCAL POLITICS OF HOUSING

Municipal land-use policy often results in member privileges, leaving zoning decisions to the discretion of city council members. This report argues that zoning codes should allow for greater density in residential neighborhoods currently reserved for single-family homes. Shifting these areas to accommodate small apartments and condos through "gentle density" will lessen the amount of housing stock that currently exists as restricted single-family use. **Single family zones should accommodate unobtrusive multifamily housing**, which in turn, may enhance socioeconomic mobility.

Cities would adopt better land-use policies if they could establish a procedural framework for managing citywide deals, which would motivate pro-housing groups to engage in the decision process. As a result, the local stakes for any one neighborhood would be less defined, compared to more specific projects under production.

HOW HOUSING ELEMENTS CAN MELIORATE THE LOCAL POLITICS OF HOUSING

The housing element law shifts away from local housing politics to ensure an ample supply of housing to best serve constituents. This report suggests that municipal officials consider electoral reforms to reduce the overrepresentation of homeowners and neighborhood interest over renter and citywide needs. As cities rewrite their housing elements, considerations should align with the use of the housing element to obtain pro-housing policies.

[Read the entire report here](#)

TOGETHER WE CAN END THE PANDEMIC

OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, SCANPH WILL EXECUTE A CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES.

COVID-19 VACCINE IS HERE

STAY INFORMED. KEEP WEARING YOUR MASK.

- Validated by the nation's top medical experts to be safe and effective
- Provided at no cost
- Phased distribution plan based on risk and level of exposure
- Widely available later in 2021

covid19.ca.gov/vaccines

Vaccinate ALL 58

We will count on SCANPH members to help spread the word to residents of affordable and permanent supportive housing.

Help resident stay informed and safe.

COVID-19 vaccines have arrived in California and hope is on the way. Vaccines will be distributed and administered fairly and as quickly as possible. Together, we can #EndThePandemic – in all of California’s 58 counties.



CA COVID-19 RENT RELIEF

NEW PROGRAM SUPPORTS HOUSING STABILITY FOR MOST VULNERABLE

- CA COVID-19 Rent Relief provides financial assistance to income-qualified tenants experiencing housing instability. The program provides rent reimbursement to landlords for unpaid rent accrued between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.
- Landlords are eligible to receive 80% of unpaid rent, as long as they agree to waive the remaining 20% of unpaid rent.
- Eligible tenants whose landlords don't participate in the program can still receive 25% of unpaid rent accrued between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021.
- Paying the 25% of past due rent by June 30, 2021 can help keep you in your home under the extended eviction protections provided in SB91.
- Eligible tenants can also receive future rent assistance equal to 25% of their monthly rent. •Verify eligibility and apply starting March 15, 2021 at HousingIsKey.com.

HOW TO APPLY:

- Tenants and landlords can determine eligibility and apply for funds directly at HousingIsKey.com.
- If you don't have access to the internet, you can call the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Call Center, 1-833-430-2122 for information on the help center nearest to you to help you access an application.