



ENCOURAGE CREATIVE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

ISSUE

As the building industry struggles to meet our population's housing needs, the lack of adequate residential development sites has stymied housing production efforts and increased development process time, costs and uncertainty as developers are forced to pursue zone and plan amendment changes to accommodate housing.

BACKGROUND

Many parcels of land have essentially been taken off the market for residential development due to downzoning and other restrictive zoning policies. In addition, many landowners have higher money-making, non-residential development uses on their land that could potentially be used for residential but are not willing to sell at prices low enough to make housing projects feasible; this makes residential developable land even scarcer.

SOLUTION

The Los Angeles region will grow from its current level of 10.2 million residents to nearly 11.2 million residents by 2035. To meet the projected need for housing, we will need to build hundreds of thousands of units to accommodate all income levels. New opportunities can be created if we:

- 1. Adequately Update Planning/Zoning Documents.** General Plans and other zoning documents are sorely outdated across the region. We can increase housing development sites while still maintaining community character during zoning document update processes by realistically accommodating housing needs and standing up to calls for NIMBYism.
- 2. Local & State Government Entities Should Sell/Lease Their Surplus Land and Eliminate/Ease Zoning Restrictions on Them.** Many local governments and agencies have numerous parcels of land that sit blighted or underdeveloped. Auctioning off this land with a mandate to develop diverse residential housing types would create additional housing stock. Furthermore, cities and counties could enact local legislation which eases or eliminates costly regulatory or zoning barriers on their formerly owned parcels.
- 3. Establish More By-Right Development.** Streamlined, ministerial approval processes for development *work*: we have seen the proof in Los

Angeles' Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) program. Encouraging by-right residential development, rezoning commercial and under-utilized industrial zones for residential use, and supporting state legislation that will increase height/density near transit will naturally increase housing production by removing costly and onerous regulations.

4. Work with City/County Agencies to Find Creative Solutions to Develop Available Land.

TOD is usually defined as being within ½ mile of public transportation. However, many jurisdictions are much more restrictive. For example, LA City TOC defines a "major bus stop" as "an intersection of 2 bus lines with 15-minute peak headways." Many Metro bus routes intersect only every 16 minutes! TOC maps could be expanded by revising the definition of a major bus stop such that it does not require two bus lines to intersect. Currently, TOC areas cover only 9% of the City of LA.

5. Update Local Density Bonus Laws. More incentives should be offered to encourage additional density and affordable housing. The City of LA's TOC program could serve as a model to emulate. However, more attention should be paid to the 80-120% category. Additionally, a separate category should be added to the affordable housing scale: that of the missing middle, at 120-200% AMI. This would prevent middle-class housing and luxury housing from being characterized as the same monolithic category.

6. Maximize Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) have been given the green light by the State, however, many localities intentionally provide obstacles to prohibit ADU development. For example, requiring new footings on all ADU garage conversions. In addition, ADU permitting fees are the biggest deterrent with some cities keeping them high to discourage development. Housing opportunities can also be maximized by expanding the housing types that can be built in traditional single-family zones to allow up to two ADUs per parcel or to include up to 4 units.

7. Allow for Creative Building Types. Shipping containers and modular homes may decrease the cost of the building equation related to labor and materials. Promoting the Production of Micro-Units and Cohabitated Living offer innovative housing typologies with higher occupancy rates.