

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



Housing Element Update - 2020 Launch / Vision Feedback and Comment Summary

Introduction

Last October the City of Los Angeles launched the 2021-2029 update to the Housing Element of the General Plan, the Plan to House LA. This plan identifies Los Angeles's housing needs and establishes clear goals and objectives to inform future housing decisions. This update effort must be completed every 8 years and is a collaboration between Los Angeles City Planning (LACP) and the Housing + Community Investment Department (HCIDLA).

The Housing Element update requires vital public and stakeholder input, collected through digital and in person engagement. Between January and July 2020, over 1,800 people clicked, commented, and participated in the initial outreach phase of the Plan to House LA.

Kick-Off Workshops

Earlier this year the city hosted three in person open house Kick-Off Workshops:

- February 24th - Central LA: Pico House / 424 North Main St.
- February 27th - Valley: Sherman Oaks East Valley Adult Center / 5056 Van Nuys Blvd.
- March 4th - South LA: Jim Gillian Recreation Center / 4000 South La Brea Ave.

Over 150 people attended to learn about the current Housing Element and how it shapes housing outcomes in the City. Attendees asked questions and shared comments in both English and Spanish.

Information presented included:

- The state of housing in Los Angeles;
- Demographics and socio-economic characteristics of City residents;
- Housing characteristics, including affordable housing production information;
- The amount of housing the City of Los Angeles needs to produce based on state housing targets known as the [Regional Housing Needs Assessment \(RHNA\)](#);
- Common constraints to housing production and preservation
- The existing [2013-2021 Housing Element's](#) vision, goals, and objectives.

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



People who were not able to attend the in-person Workshops were able to access an online workshop that provided the same information, materials, and opportunities to submit feedback. This online tool was launched last March in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). The online workshop has now been viewed well over 2,200 times.

Webinars with Live Q&A

In May and June, the city hosted five webinars with live Q&A for the public to participate from the safety of their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 300 people attended. Webinars in English were held on May 27th and 30th, and on June 17th. Webinars in Spanish were held on June 9th and 16th. Recordings are available on our website in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Task Force Subcommittee Meetings

Another public engagement component of the Housing Element update is the Housing Element Task Force. The [63 member Task Force](#) is a diverse group of housing-related professionals and community leaders selected from over 280 applicants. This group assists the City in evaluating the viability and impact of potential new and updated policies related to housing preservation and production, tenants' rights, homelessness prevention, zoning and other important housing-related issues. The Task Force is organized into four subcommittees representing different aspects of the Housing Element:

- Housing Stability and Tenure Subcommittee
- Housing Production and Construction Innovation Subcommittee
- Livability, Sustainability & Resiliency Subcommittee
- Homelessness & Special Needs Subcommittee

The first Task Force meeting was held in [January](#) for members to share ideas that they would like to explore throughout the 2021-2029 Housing Element update. In [April](#), [May](#), and [July](#) the Subcommittees then met to review and discuss:

- Community feedback and key themes that emerged from outreach events
- Ideas for developing a potential vision for housing security, accessibility, production, and livability through the lens of the overarching priorities detailed below.

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



- Existing housing constraints, such as zoning, permitting processes, financing, construction costs, and housing opposition
- The existing Housing Element methodology for RHNA site selection
- Current housing related policies and implementation programs
- Other topic areas and data for potential study

Summary of Input Themes and Comments

Through these extensive outreach activities we are able to begin drafting a collective vision for housing in Los Angeles. Participants at all events were asked to share their frustrations with the current housing landscape and their vision for future improvements. This section summarizes the specific feedback and comments received from the public and Task Force during the Launch/Vision phase of the Housing Element Update. Within the comments and feedback, the following common topics emerged:

- **Protecting Renters & Preventing Displacement**
- **Producing More Housing, Especially Affordable Housing**
- **Zoning for Inclusive Communities**
- **Serving the Most Vulnerable**
- **Addressing the Homelessness Crisis**
- **Promoting Livable and Resilient Neighborhoods**
- **Promoting Ownership**

Below, comments are grouped by these key emerging themes that Angelenos expressed interest in exploring. Some of the comments touch on multiple themes and are included more than once. This valuable input will help to guide the development of the Plan to House LA.

Protecting Renters & Preventing Displacement

Participants repeatedly voiced concerns about displacement and eviction; urging the City to expand renter protections, prevent evictions, establish eviction defense, and protect tenants from displacement due to new acquisition and development. Many commenters said that in order to protect tenants and communities, the City should develop new models for individual and community ownership like land trusts, cooperatives, and homebuyer assistance.

Participants were also concerned about affordable housing developments that had expiring

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



affordability protections (covenants) and suggested the City require lifetime covenants and use eminent domain to acquire affordable developments at-risk of converting to market rate.

Producing More Housing, Especially Affordable Housing

Many participants recommended specific strategies the City could use to increase housing production including: increasing zoning capacity, allowing for more “missing middle” housing (smaller multifamily), expanding the areas where housing is allowed, and updating community plans more regularly. There were also suggestions on how to reduce construction costs such as allowing for modular housing, 3D printed homes, container conversions, adaptive reuse, and other new models for home development.

Many participants said that the need for affordable housing is dire and the city should do more to finance and incentivize affordable housing development. Suggestions included: developing new sources of funding, developing a public land bank, establishing affordable housing requirements in all new development (inclusionary zoning), utilizing public land for affordable housing, removing process barriers such as site plan review, and requiring higher percentages of affordable housing in exchange for incentives (like TOC and density bonus).

Zoning for Inclusive Communities

Several participants expressed concern that affordable housing is not available in all communities in the City - particularly in areas like the West Side, Mid City, and the South Valley. They suggested requiring affordable housing to be included in all new developments (inclusionary zoning), eliminating low density zoning, and providing incentives/removing barriers for affordable housing developments to locate in wealthier, resource and job-rich areas of the city.

The issues of historic preservation and community character came up during the outreach sessions. Some participants expressed their desire to promote livable communities, protect single-family neighborhoods, and preserve the character of communities. Other participants voiced frustration that these concerns are used to prevent the development of affordable and multifamily housing in wealthier areas of the City.

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



Serving the Most Vulnerable

Many participants said that more housing needs to be available to people who have special needs or face barriers to accessing housing - including extremely low income households, unhoused populations, individuals with disabilities, seniors, undocumented people, larger families, and lower-income young people.

Addressing the Homelessness Crisis

Many participants had suggestions on how to address homelessness including: developing more permanent housing for unhoused people, incorporating social services with housing, and equitably distributing shelters and permanent supportive housing throughout the City. Several participants stressed the need to conduct more outreach to unhoused residents and many participants voiced concerns about the criminalization of people living on the street.

Promoting Resilient and Sustainable Neighborhoods

There were a lot of suggestions on how housing can contribute to the surrounding neighborhood such as: allowing for more commercial uses in and near residential buildings, increasing street lighting, requiring green space, and requiring amenities like markets and daycares. There was also interest in protecting cultural and historic resources by exploring the expansion of the adaptive reuse ordinance and preserving existing rent stabilized multifamily housing. Some participants also had suggestions for how housing can reduce the city's carbon footprint by requiring sustainable design (i.e. all solar, LEED-certified) and increasing education for homeowners about sustainability.

In addition, participants emphasized re-imagining public safety to ensure that vulnerable populations and renters are able to live in their communities free of harassment and criminalization.

Promoting Ownership

Many participants voiced concerns about the high cost of housing and the inability to purchase a home. Some participants said that preserving single-family housing would increase homeownership opportunities, while others said the city should prioritize denser ownership models such as condominiums. Participants also suggested that alternative ownership models such as land trusts and co-ops could assist lower-income residents and said that the city should continue or expand Home Buyer Programs and other assistance programs for first-time buyers.

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



Next Steps

Based on the feedback received and the state regulatory requirements for the Housing Element staff will prepare Concepts for the Plan to House LA. The Concepts phase of the outreach process will begin in the Fall of 2020. This phase is an opportunity for the public to review, comment, and help shape the draft Concepts and strategies for the 2021-2029 Housing Element. Outreach will continue throughout the Housing Element Update process and there will be many more opportunities to help identify LA's housing needs. You can learn more about the effort and sign up to get involved [here](#) or email housing.element@lacity.org to share any comments and feedback.

Appendix

Public Comment

Note: This appendix includes a more detailed accounting of comments from the general public received during the launch phase of engagement. Please note these are listed in no particular order.

PROTECTING RENTERS & REDUCE DISPLACEMENT

- Expand eviction protections through relocation assistance, eviction defence programs, and other tools
- Ensure residents can stay in their own communities
- Work with LA County to organize an LA County Rent-Registry
- Provide more information on affordable housing inventory
- Financially support non-profits that protect tenants from evictions (i.e. Unidad Coalition, People's Plan)
- Establish a right to counsel provision to ensure that evictions are fair and that protected classes are not being taken advantage of
- Develop protections for renters of units removed by TOC program
- Address vacancy through financial penalties (vacancy tax)
- Use community land trusts to ensure long term affordability for for-sale properties
- Preserve existing affordable housing

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



- Prohibit discrimination based on family size, age, race, and income
- Establish and enforce discrimination penalties for landlords
- Prohibit discriminatory lending practices
- Prioritize housing for extremely low income households
- Preserve housing for seniors
- Educate property owners about renting to section 8 residents
- Encourage and facilitate local community engagement programs
- Expand housing education and offer in multiple languages
- Provide funding for frequent tenant's rights workshops

INCREASING PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY AFFORDABLE PRODUCTION

- Produce more market-rate and affordable housing in all areas of the city
- Provide a higher percentage of affordable units in private multi-family developments
- Make market rate housing and newer housing construction within reach of minorities
- Create more moderate/workforce income housing units
- Address missing-middle housing
- Plan for housing needs beyond the 8 year RHNA housing projection period
- Site selection should also consider prioritizing areas for housing (preservation or production) on all-hazards risk - such as liquefaction zones, fault lines, flooding areas, wildfire risk, distance from highways, and urban heat
- Explore how the absence of restrictions and increased land values has affected housing development
- Incentivize homeowners who create ADUs with tax credits
- Provide financial incentives for ADU production (i.e. lower permit costs)
- Remove height restrictions for ADU's
- Allow 3D printed, container conversion, and prefab homes to reduce housing costs
- Look at utility constraints and creative ways to facilitate relocation to make housing development cheaper and faster
- Promote different housing typologies for different incomes and lifestyles
 - Allow microunits
 - Allow tiny homes
 - Support co-living developments (i.e. boarding houses)
 - Buy and allow shipping containers to be used for housing on public land

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



- Allow bungalow courts with no parking
- Allow conversion of strip malls into housing
- Expand RV and trailer parks
- Expand financing programs for all-affordable housing development projects
- Reduce construction costs for developers
- Establish a dedicated source of general funds for affordable housing production
- Divest or use eminent domain to acquire surplus property for use as 100% affordable housing and allow developers to remediate properties
- Create a framework for housing funding priorities
- Collaborate with businesses to produce affordable housing
- Utilize publicly-owned land for all-affordable housing development
- Consider how to facilitate the production of low income condos
- Educate property owners about renting to section 8 residents
- Encourage and facilitate local community engagement programs

ZONING FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

- Develop a mandatory inclusionary housing ordinance, paired with a grassroots neighborhood by neighborhood planning process
- Distribute affordable housing throughout the city
- Establish a housing goal (similar to RHNA) and requires each community plan area to zone for a specific level of housing, including market rate and affordable
- Include affordable housing in high-resource, high-opportunity neighborhoods
- Eliminate single-family zoning in areas with a history of exclusionary racial covenants

SERVING THE MOST VULNERABLE

- Expand targeted services and early interventions to those at highest risk of homelessness, including: people impacted by the criminal justice system, people at risk of eviction, people with disabilities, and transition-aged-youth
- Provide more senior housing
- Prioritize housing for extremely low income households
- Protect and plan for undocumented residents/immigrants
- Develop affordable housing programs to retain younger residents in LA
- Explore and be aware of poverty in younger generations
- Help seniors age in place

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



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- Establish and enforce discrimination penalties for landlords
- Prohibit discriminatory lending practices
- Educate property owners about renting to section 8 residents
- Encourage and facilitate local community engagement programs

ADDRESSING THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

- Incorporate social services component of addressing homelessness
- Add language that focuses on the homeless
- End the criminalization of unhoused people
- Increase outreach directly to the homeless
- Conduct outreach to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies regarding homelessness community
- Communicate the public benefits of funding programs to house the homeless
- Educate community about homeless discrimination
- Renovate and upgrade commercial dwellings to house the homeless (adaptive reuse)
- Equally distribute shelters, supportive housing, and any other housing designated for the homeless needs in every Council District/Community Plan Area
- Diversify shelter/housing options

DESIGNING FOR LIVABILITY

- Increase visibility of community preservation and the importance of livable communities
- Embrace existing buildings, particularly historic ones, as an essential part of our housing stock
- Protect cultural resources
- Preserve the character of low density neighborhoods
- Allow more property tax to flow into the community
- Legalize non-conforming units
- Replace setbacks and parkways with usable space
- Allow more mixed-use buildings
- Require open space, landscaping and preservation of trees in any development
- Keep sidewalks and walkways clear and in good condition
- Consider more retail space at street level
- Facilitate passive, living green buildings, and biophilic design

Housing Element 2021- 2029:

The Plan to House LA



- Promote local educational programs for sustainable living
- Encourage adaptable, flexible, and sustainable design (i.e. all solar, LEED-certified)
- Give assessments to homeowners on how they can make their homes more sustainable
- Reduce design requirements
- Support design that increases sense of safety and community
- Provide more street lighting

PROMOTING OWNERSHIP

- Prioritize single-family housing preservation
- Prioritize denser ownership models such as condominiums
- Explore alternative ownership models (Land trusts, Co-ops, etc)
- Review all the things that contribute to the cost of building/owning in LA
- Fund Home Buyer Programs and other assistance programs for first-time buyers
- Focus on programs that will help residents invest and purchase in low-moderate income areas
- Educate single family homeowners about the development potential of their sites, including ADU or potential for a second unit
- Define housing/homeownership equity more clearly