



## **Pro-Housing Policy Agenda for the City of Los Angeles (August 2017)**

**LA's housing crisis requires bold, multi-faceted reforms.** By some measures Los Angeles is the least affordable city in the United States. Due to decades of too few new homes being built and a lack of economic opportunity for many residents, we face low vacancy rates, rising homelessness and rents, and cost pressures that are forcing residents to leave LA and blocking newcomers from moving here. Abundant Housing LA advocates for more housing of all types. We want lower rents and a more sustainable and prosperous region, where everyone has more choices of where to live and how to pursue their dreams. No single fix can address LA's housing crisis. To achieve a city with space for all our diverse residents, we need a multi-faceted package of reforms that substantially improves how we plan, how we approve homes, and how we fund affordable housing.

We believe that an impactful package of pro-housing reforms must: make 'more room' for homes; make it easier and faster to build homes; raise money for affordable homes; protect tenants; and encourage innovation. To help advance a pro-housing agenda, we consulted with our members on potential pro-housing policy changes and funding sources. We developed this balanced package of policy reforms intended to advance more homes and homes that are more affordable.

**A. Plan and zone for more homes.** LA is a big city but our plans and outdated zoning do not allow enough new homes to be built.

1. Increase the city's zoned capacity to at least 50 percent above LA's projected 2040 population. Set this target in the general plan and ensure that each community plan update does its part in reaching this goal.
2. Eliminate parking requirements within ½ mile of major transit stops.
3. Set minimum density within ½ mile of major transit stops at 1 unit per 1250 sf of lot size, so as to allow small multi-family housing.
4. Expand use of density bonuses by doubling bonus density and making all incentives subject to ministerial review.
5. Pass the Transit Oriented Communities Program and expand the bonus to 8 market units per low-income units in low and moderate income areas.

**B. Make it easier to build homes.** LA's complex approval process makes it difficult, time-consuming and expensive to build affordable homes, market rate homes, and permanent supportive housing.

6. Increase the city's threshold for site plan review, which triggers an environmental review under CEQA, to 100 housing units.
7. For developments that (a) have at least 11% permanent supportive or affordable units, (b) are located in the City's Promise Zones, (c) are located in the City's Transit Priority Areas, (d) that propose a higher density that is authorized in a community plan, or (e) incorporate voluntary Tier 2 sustainable development standards pursuant to CAL Green Building Code, the threshold should be de-linked from the number of housing units. Site plan review should only apply to sites of more than 15 acres or ecologically sensitive land.

**C. Raise money for affordable homes.** LA needs dedicated sources of local money to provide subsidies and to build and preserve affordable homes. We recommend raising at least \$100 million annually. To ensure that we are facilitating more homes of all types, funding sources should not add costs to new home construction.

8. Dedicate 90 percent of funds from tax on short term rentals to the trust fund.
9. Make real estate transfer fee progressive by raising rate on larger sales. The rate should be doubled for sales above \$1 million and potentially increased more for sales at higher tiers.
10. When leasing city-owned public opportunity sites at market or subsidized rates or selling these properties, dedicate 90 percent of revenues to the trust fund.

**D. Protect tenant rights.** Adding more homes and funding will help tenants by increasing vacancy rates and reducing landlords' power to raise rents. We also need to enforce existing rights and expand rights to that tenants benefit from housing reforms.

11. Give tenants in rent-stabilized units displaced by new development right to return to replacement affordable units.
12. Require replacement of all rent stabilized units removed by new development with deeded affordable units on a 1 for 1 basis.
13. Within 5 years, provide all tenants facing eviction with the right to publicly funded lawyers for court appearances related to eviction proceedings.

**E. Encourage innovation in design and construction.** The city can encourage more and better homes through a more innovative and flexible building code and partnerships and pilot programs.

14. Partner with design, research and academic organizations, community groups, and the private sector on competitions, challenges and prototyping to test innovative housing types and construction methods.
15. Establish a public-private sector committee to review the city's building code for opportunities for designs and materials that allow more rapid and efficient construction and better use of space, without reducing safety performance.

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