

# Community Workshop #2

## Pasadena Housing Element Update

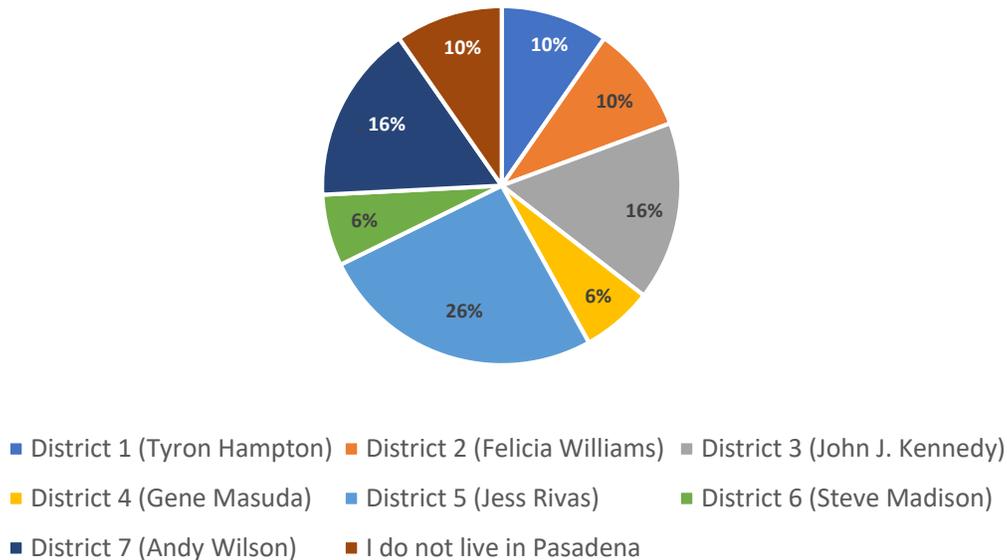
June 2, 2021



### Introduction

On June 2, 2021, the City of Pasadena Planning and Community Development Department conducted two simultaneous workshop sessions to engage the community in a discussion of local housing needs, focusing particularly on housing programs. The sessions were conducted in English and Spanish. Approximately 55 people participated in the English session and four in the Spanish session; a poll that was administered during the presentation collected information on their district of residence (shown in the chart). Both sessions involved a brief presentation from the City’s planning consultant, MIG, Inc., followed by facilitated discussions in breakout groups for the English session. Due to constraints on public gatherings imposed by COVID-19, both sessions occurred as on-line workshops.

Where do you live? (by District)



As required for every California city and county, the City of Pasadena updates its General Plan Housing Element on an eight-year cycle, with the update now underway covering the 2021-2029 planning period. The City’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation for this period is 9,429 housing units,

meaning that City land use policies, programs, and regulations must demonstrate capacity for this number of units, divided among four household income categories as follows: <sup>1</sup>

### Planning for 9,429 New Homes Over the Next 8 Years



### Income Categories

- Very Low – 31 to 50% of AMI
- Low – 51 to 80% of AMI
- Moderate – 81 to 120% of AMI
- Above Moderate – 120%+ of AMI

The breakout group format allowed participants to have detailed discussion about the following topics:

- Improving City processes;
- Easing development regulations;
- Creative housing solutions;
- Addressing special housing needs;
- Improving the existing housing stock; and
- Advancing housing equity and access.

Each breakout group consisted of a facilitator, City staff, and a note taker. The Spanish workshop did not have breakout sessions, but residents were asked to discuss and provide their thoughts on the topics presented.

The note takers recorded participants' ideas and responses in a format that allowed for easy consolidation of the discussion from each group. The following summarizes some of the responses, organized by the discussion topics stated above, as well as an "other comments" category and direct questions presented. A full list of participant responses is included in the appendix.

### Improving City Processes

- *"Educating the public, in general, about the planning and city processes."*
  - Participants expressed a need for proper educational/informational resources when it comes to the design, permitting, building, and inspection processes. They expressed frustration with several procedures and regulations, stating that certain aspects can be very complicated and can delay the development process.
- *"The City's website is not very user friendly."*

<sup>1</sup> AMI (Average Median Income for Los Angeles County, 2020). 1-person household = \$54,100; 2-person household = \$61,850; 3-person household = \$69,550; 4-person household = \$77,300.

- A discussion regarding the City’s website also accompanied the need for educational/informational resources. Residents expressed that their experiences navigating the website were too difficult. Some suggested that the City provide a step-by-step process diagram for building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Others expressed the need for a “flow chart” that illustrates the building processes and includes a timeline and description of potential “detours” one might run into during the process.
- *“Planning staff are very helpful, but it is difficult to access them.”*
  - Participants identified a lack of staff as a potential barrier in being able to get projects done in an efficient manner, stating that the City does not have sufficient staff in the departments, and that often they just are not available to help.
- *“Coordination/collaboration between city and affordable housing developers....”*
  - Some recognized the need for resources on potential partnerships as a means to support the development of affordable housing. They explained how this collaboration can help streamline the approval processes and help identify incentives for the development of affordable housing throughout the City.

## Easing Development Regulations

- *“Eliminate traditional zoning code....”*
  - When it comes to housing in Pasadena, a few participants expressed the need for the City to steer away from single-family housing. One person explained how this type of housing separates communities by income, which in turns separates communities by race. Others explained that the City needs to adjust the Zoning Code not only to focus on single-family housing but on religious organizations and their ability to develop housing on their underutilized lots, as plenty of capacity exists to build affordable housing on these properties.
  - Others expressed a need for emergency/bridge housing to support temporarily unhoused individuals in emergencies.
- *Restrictions related to Accessory Dwelling Units*
  - The City needs to reconsider development standards in specific zones to support ADU development over existing accessory structures. Limitations on height and number of stories creates barriers for residents who want to develop ADUs over garages.
- *“Re-evaluate the no overnight parking restrictions.”*
  - Residents expressed a need to re-consider the restrictions on overnight parking. Removing this restriction may support homes where there is a need for parking, such as homes with existing ADUs or future ADUs where the allocated parking per home does not support tenants.

## Creative Housing Solutions

- *“Housing has to be sensitive to the needs of the area that it is built in....”*
  - Participants expressed the need for new housing in a neighborhood to be sensitive to the needs of existing residents. This would mean building housing that accommodates residents with sufficient parking spaces so as not to exacerbate the existing demand for parking spaces by current residents.

- *“Allow affordable housing to be developed on land owned by religious institutions...”*
  - A proposition by several participants included the development of housing on land owned by religious institutions. They expressed that many of the churches throughout Pasadena have the capacity to do so.
- *“There is potential capacity for housing on . . . parking lots....”*
  - People also proposed utilizing parking structures for housing. This solution would utilize already developed land for new dwellings units.
- *“Adaptive/re-use of vacant hospital site . . . to support senior housing.”*
  - Another proposal for re-use of space and land involves redeveloping vacant hospital sites to accommodate senior housing, referencing the success of a Boyle Heights project with a similar concept.
- *“Que tengan la oportunidad de hacer viviendas en el área de arriba del espacio comercial o de venta.” (“People should have the opportunity to live above retail/commercial”).*
  - Residents suggested that the City incorporate more mixed-use zoning that allows residents to live above commercial/retail properties.

## Addressing Special Housing Needs

- *“Need permanent supportive housing....”*
  - Several people expressed a need to create permanent supportive housing for at-risk youth, as well as families, noting that supportive housing tends to be focused on individuals rather than entire families in need of emergency shelter.
- *Student Housing Needs*
  - A resident spoke out about the needs for students attending Pasadena City College, stating that there is inadequate housing for students. They cited potential funding opportunities and partnerships with companies like Amazon and Apple to help address housing issues for college students.

## Improving the Existing Housing Stock

- *“. . . [D]evelop programs/incentives that assist residents in purchasing their own homes across all income levels....”*
  - Participants suggested developing a resource that provides financial assistance to residents looking to purchase homes.

## Advancing Housing Equity and Access

- *“Public needs education to understand what development does.”*
  - Participants expressed the need for proper education of the public when it comes to development; this way there is a stronger understanding of their rights as homeowners and tenants.
- *“There needs to be income diversity as we are building housing.”*
  - Some stressed the importance of avoiding income silos and zoning that create separation between incomes throughout the city. They also mentioned the need to adequately distribute affordable housing and new development equally throughout the

City, stating that some areas are getting denser while others are seeing a small share of new housing development.

- *“¿Por qué la Ciudad de Pasadena no tiene control sobre los precios de los alquileres?” (“Why doesn't the City of Pasadena have control of rent prices?”)*
  - Residents advocated for the City to implement rent control to help protect tenants, referencing a local group, “Pasadena Tenants Union,” as a resource. Residents believe they need to be informed of the benefits of rent control and how it supports their ability to continue living in the City of Pasadena.

**Additional Comments:**

- *“Transit stations are inconvenient and feel unsafe. Focus on making the city more walkable.”*
  - Some stated that prioritization of pedestrians is insufficient, explaining that the City has focused primarily on long-range transportation and not enough on local transit. Others explained that the City should also focus on improving walkability and connectivity between different areas of the city.

# Appendix

## PASADENA HOUSING ELEMENT WORKSHOP - BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Improving City Processes

#### Group 1:

- Educate the public in general about planning and city processes.
- People do not even know what to do to pull a permit or build an ADU. It is very complicated.
- More education: Step by step online info about, for instance, building an addition.
- Renters need to understand development process.
- Planning staff are very helpful, but it is difficult to access them. The commenter noted that in going through the process of restoring her house, and it was so complicated, and it is hard to know ahead of time what is required.
- The city's website is not very user friendly.
- The commenter once was chair of the Design Commission, and it was a great way to learn how long the development process takes. However:
  - The public has no access to understanding what it takes to build something from the ground up.
  - The City's website is too difficult to navigate, and the staff are not available to help. He had to hire an expeditor. The City lacks compassion in understanding the user's perspective.
  - A flow chart would help in understanding the development process, including the timeframe. And including what the potential "detours" might be/what can go wrong (and how long it can take as a result).
- It seems like there is not sufficient staff in the departments to help with the development process and alleviate logjams.
- Current development standards can really slow down the development process.
- ADU standards, parking standards need addressing.
- Need transparency - it would be nice to know where properties are zoned for housing.
- Need a resource for people who own properties and developers to create partnerships and know what lots are available—and to help incentivize and reward the people whom the City serves. The landowners or developers who want to do good, and do not know how, can be matched to organizations, funding, or parcels—anything that helps support affordable development.

#### Group 2:

- District 4 has not done much for affordable housing; respondent is in favor of splitting lots.
- Use congregational land for affordable housing. Fast-track process for churches to build affordable housing.
- Affordable housing projects should not have to wait in line with other projects; streamline.
- Reduce ADU fees.
- Simplifying review process will backfire and will continue building patterns that are not compatible.

- ADU design and review process: approved designs to streamline process.

#### Group 3:

- Concerns that reducing fees or regulations might lead to lower-quality affordable housing.
- Promote home ownership as much as possible to encourage wealth building.
- Preservation of single-family neighborhoods.
- Support workforce housing programs.
- Make it easier to acquire permits and speed up the inspection process.
- Address any discrepancies in city documents/regulations, such as for ADUs and ensure city contacts are easy to access to ensure these issues are addressed; make sure the processes are easy to understand as well.
- Coordination/collaboration between city and affordable housing developers on how best to streamline the approval process for affordable housing.
- More incentives for affordable housing developers such as for offering housing to Section 8 voucher holders, or reduction in fees, etc.

## Easing Development Regulations

#### Group 1:

- Church overlay zone would help offer more capacity for affordable housing. There is a lot of capacity there.

#### Group 2:

- Form-based coding which is more in keeping in Pasadena's history (architectural character); traditional zoning is the modern equivalent of racial covenants.
- No purpose to single-family housing; it segregates the community by income (and therefore race).
- Single-family housing is not "sacred"- ADUs, bungalow courts, duplexes have not caused collapse.
- Eliminate traditional zoning code; abolish single-family zoning.
- Need emergency/bridge housing in our city. SB 2 requires the Housing Element to include allowing for emergency shelters to meet the city's need. We are not even close to meeting the need for bridge housing in our city.
- Outlaw parking for new construction; robust parking program already in place.
- City planning has only focused on long trips for transit, not local trips (school, shopping). Transit stations are inconvenient and feel unsafe. Focus on making city more walkable.
- Pedestrians overlooked in planning process. Spend money and planning efforts on pedestrian networks.
- Do not agree with ADU over a garage. This is a program that benefits homeowners (which tend to be rich, older); it continues to be a cost burden on renters based on rental rates (\$2,000). Would agree to incentivizing ADUs if restricted to affordable housing.
- Need to consider existing conditions of different areas of City when transit planning; some areas well connected, and others like Hasting Ranch need it.

- Consider district-specific needs: Pasadena's 7. But every district must participate in providing equitable and affordable housing.

#### Group 3:

- Re-evaluate the no overnight parking restrictions, particularly in North Pasadena; complicates things for those with visitors in multi-family developments.
- In favor of ADUs above garages; however, the city has restrictions on heights. Reconsider development standards in these zones to support taller ADUs.
- Change code on minimum square footage per unit/house.
- More transparency on regulations and how they are developed; more outreach when regulations are drafted or updated.
- More discussion/outreach/conversations on how housing is developed with local residents.
- Diversification of unit types, as there is concern that most recent development has focused on 1- and 2-bedroom developments; consider ways to incentivize a variety of unit types.

## Creative Housing Solutions

#### Group 1:

- There are grants available from \$1M to \$30M for housing from Amazon and Apple. These can be used to build student housing on the parking lots around PCC, for example.
- There is potential capacity for housing on the parking lots around PCC.
- Housing has to be sensitive to the needs of the area that it is built in, including parking needs.
- Street parking is not as regulated on the north side of the freeway. It is highly regulated on the south side and works better for the residents.
- We need to make sure that the people who are parked on streets are residents. There is also a safety concern with too much traffic in the alley.
- People value their neighborhoods, and we need parking that meets their needs.

#### Group 2:

- Build housing over I-210; close South Raymond Avenue and build housing there.
- Compact or consolidate office structures.
- See Cordova and S Los Robles parking structure. Wrap it to create housing.

#### Group 3:

- Concerns about an increase in homelessness among seniors; adaptive/re-use of vacant hospital site (St. Luke's) to support senior housing; Boyle Heights has a good example of such a project.
- United Dwelling is a program that will manage/assist homeowners in developing housing in their back yards.
- Providing more multi-generational housing to ensure young professionals have access to housing.
- Support for community land trusts as a way to provide affordable homeownership to low-income individuals.

- Allow affordable housing to be developed on land owned by religious institutions; ease restrictions for these sites.
- Many churches in Pasadena are ready to begin development.
- More education/outreach/and community buy-in to gain support from local residents on denser housing developments.
- Reconsider calling them adult dorms and instead use co-housing.

## Addressing Special Housing Needs

Group 1:

Students:

- 2018 Study by Temple University: "Still Hungry and Homeless in College." There are statistics about student hunger and lack of adequate housing. It is a national crisis.
- If the statistics were transposed to PCC, there are a lot of students in need. PCC has around 26,000 students.
- PCC does not have funding for housing right now but there are grant opportunities available. For example, from Amazon and Apple. There needs to be a better match between the capacity for student housing and ways of getting it funded and built.

People with Disabilities:

- Are the new developments going to meet ADA requirements?

Group 2:

- Can reduce opposition to affordable housing by using form-based codes.
- Specialty group should include 18 to 25-year-olds. Need permanent supportive housing for at-risk TAY youth; service component is important to have them succeed; see ACOF-A Community of Friends.
- Need permanent supportive housing for families, who are underserved. Supportive housing tends to focus on single individuals.
- Need to develop system to monitor/enforce affordable ADUs.

Group 3:

- Palette homes as a short-term solution to provide transitional housing.

## Improving the Existing Housing Stock

Group 1:

- Match grantors with people who own land or are looking to rehabilitate housing. Easier coordination.

Group 2:

No comments.

### Group 3:

- Explore/develop programs/incentives that assist residents in purchasing their own homes across all income levels; homeownership supports financial stability.

## Advancing Housing Equity and Access

### Group 1:

- Developers come in and take over: Renters need to understand what developers do and what the processes are.
- Public needs education to understand what development does.
- The city is supposed to be looking out for everyone, not just developers.
- Knowledge is power when it comes to understanding "how development gets in."
- How is a developer doing anything for those who are barely able to stay in their rental? The City is responsible for addressing this.
- How do developers serve the collective?
- Tenants need to understand their rights to their units and their recourses if they are being pushed out.
- The speaker was in one of the first of the 16 families who got a PTO (?). Jim Wong of the planning department helped the tenants understand what to do. He is a great staff person. The process was brutal, but the council helped, and Jim Wong helped.
- We need a lot more housing because the people with jobs cannot stay in the city. They risk becoming homeless because of affordability.
- There needs to be income diversity as we are building housing. We need to keep the character of the city diverse in terms of income and avoid income silos and segregation.

### Group 2:

- Strategies of up-zoning are not equitable; some areas are getting denser while others are getting a small share of new housing.
- Who benefits from ADUs? When designing housing, it has to be high quality. ADUs are not high quality and need to consider livable. Other types of housing for affordable housing (apartments, duplexes) consider these needs better.
- Affordable housing should be available everywhere, across all 7 districts.
- Need for bridge funding.
- Need to make sure SB2 which codifies providing emergency shelter is followed.

### Group 3:

- Ensure that housing is equitably distributed among all neighborhoods and that neighborhoods do not continue legacy of exclusivity.
- Ensure there is a broader portfolio of housing, such as moderate-income housing, to ensure housing is available across all income levels, not just for very low/low-income individuals.
- Ensure housing is accessible to those who work in Pasadena.

- Address potential displacement risks by subsidizing the development of junior ADUs on lower-income properties; this can provide revenue for lower-income property owners and reduces risk of displacement of homeowners.
- Ensure the quality of the architectural design of new housing stocks is maintained and not compromised due to less restrictions in development standards.
- Ensure affordability is incorporated across all potential solutions.
- Develop incentives to ensure those that grew up in Pasadena can stay in the city.

## Spanish

### Improving City Processes

- Donde tienen los negocios, que puedan vivir los dueños también (unidades asequibles). La idea de usos mixtos, áreas in Washington/ Norte de Fair Oaks/ Lincoln donde hay muchos negocios. Que tengan la oportunidad de hacer viviendas en el área de arriba del espacio comercial o de venta.
  - **Translation:** *Where there is business, business owners should be able to live there as well (affordable housing units). Having more mixed-use development in areas where there are lots of commercial/retail businesses (along Washington, North of Fair Oaks, along Lincoln). Business owners should have the opportunity to live above their retail/commercial spaces (businesses).*

### Easing Development Regulations

No comments.

### Creative Housing Solutions

- Construir viviendas sobre estructuras de estacionamiento que no se utilizan al máximo de su capacidad. Especialmente para estudiantes de universidades locales, como PCC. Donde el 19% de los estudiantes no están alojados.
  - **Translation:** *Building housing over parking structures that are not being utilized to their maximum ability. Especially for students in local colleges, such as PCC, where 19% of students are unhoused.*
- Usar las propiedades de la iglesia para crear más viviendas. Es muy importante que esto esté permitido. La ordenanza de zonificación no permite estos desarrollos, y esto debe ajustarse. Este debería ser un programa en el Elemento de Vivienda. Esto es urgente e importante. También tendrá que ser alojamiento para el estacionamiento en estos espacios.
  - **Translation:** *Using church properties to create more housing. It is very important that this be permitted. The zoning ordinance does not permit these developments, and this needs to be adjusted. This should be a program in the Housing Element. This is urgent and important. There will also need to be accommodation for parking in these spaces.*

### Addressing Special Housing Needs

No comments.

## Improving the Existing Housing Stock

No comments.

## Advancing Housing Equity and Access

- El control de alquileres es importante. Pero también no permitir el desalojo de las personas que están siendo desalojados debido a que el propietario quiere convertir unidades en condominios. Inquilinos actuales deben tener la capacidad de hacer estas compras en su lugar. Inquilinos actuales deben tener la capacidad de decir no a la conversión de unidades en condominios. Y que tienen asistencia financiera a ser capaz de pagar estos.
  - **Translation:** *Rent control is important. But also not permitting the eviction of people who are being evicted because the owner wants to convert units into condos. Current renters should have the ability to make these purchases instead. Current renters should have the ability to say no to the conversion of units into condos. And that they have financial assistance to be able to afford these.*
- ¿Por qué la Ciudad de Pasadena no tiene control sobre los precios de los alquileres? Sindicato de inquilinos de Pasadena trabajando para controlar los alquileres. Hay mucha desinformación y poca comprensión de los beneficios.
  - **Translation:** *Why doesn't the City of Pasadena have control of rent prices? Pasadena Tenants Union working towards rent control. There is a lot of disinformation and poor understanding of the benefits.*
- Registro de alquiler. El 58% de la ciudad son inquilinos, necesitamos saber cuánto está pagando la gente el alquiler.
  - **Translation:** *Rent registry. 58% of the City are renters; we need to know how much people are paying rent.*
- El legado del racismo en la vivienda está afectando las situaciones actuales con respecto a la capacidad de acceder a viviendas y recursos asequibles hoy en Pasadena. Reconocimiento del forro rojo.
  - **Translation:** *The legacy of racism in housing is affecting current day situations regarding the ability to access affordable housing and resources today in Pasadena. Acknowledgement of redlining.*
- Los miembros de la comunidad están trabajando durante reuniones importantes como estas, es importante que la Ciudad haga más alcance y salga a la comunidad para participar con ellos. Es necesario que haya más acomodación para que se escuchen más voces.
  - **Translation:** *Community members are working during important meetings such as these; it is important that the City do more outreach and go out to the community to engage with them. There needs to be more accommodation so that more voices are heard.*
- Las iglesias son buenos lugares para que las personas se reúnen y se encuentran en las proximidades de los residentes.
  - **Translation:** *Churches are good locations for people to convene and are in close proximity to residents.*
- La creación de incentivos para las personas a participar en importantes procesos de toma de decisión.

- **Translation:** *Creating incentives for people to participate in important decision-making processes.*
- Usar las escuelas y las reuniones de padres y maestros para transmitir mensajes a los residentes. Los correos electrónicos escolares son muy beneficiosos.
  - **Translation:** *Using schools and parent teacher meetings to get messages across to residents. School emails are very beneficial.*
- Crear “block parties” para transmitir mensajes a los residentes (cuando esté permitido).
  - **Translation:** *Creating block parties to get messages across to residents (when allowed).*