



April 2021

Michigan Association of Planning
A Chapter of the American Planning Association

Housing Linkage Statement Policy Rationale

Each year, the Michigan Association of Planning Board of Directors identifies priority issues it wishes to learn more about and then seeks input from industry leaders, stakeholders and others to inform itself, and begin the process of developing or improving organizational policy. At its January 2021 meeting the MAP board identified HOUSING as a priority issue and they will now initiate “linkage” efforts to elevate organizational acumen and evaluate next steps.

Planning and Housing

Planners have the skills and ethical responsibility to create communities where diverse housing options are available to existing and future residents.

“In order for communities to function, there must be an adequate supply of housing in proximity to employment, public transportation, and community facilities, such as public schools. The housing stock must include affordable and accessible for sale and rental units, not only to meet social equity goals, but in order to ensure community viability. The development of a diverse and affordable housing stock must be carried out without sacrificing sound regulations that are in place to protect the environment and public health.” *

* American Planning Association - Housing Policy, 2006

Problem Statement:

Housing demand has been growing in many markets throughout the country, even as new construction lags well below historic averages, resulting in housing shortages for a broad range of household types. These shortages are driven by trends that have impacted both the demand for housing and new construction nationwide:

- The high and growing costs of building materials, land, infrastructure, and taxes make development too expensive for housing to be affordable to many people across a broad range of incomes
- High costs, complex development processes, and a shortage of skilled labor have suppressed new construction, with new home starts well below a 50-year average
- Because household sizes are shrinking, more homes are needed to house the same or fewer numbers of people – and, those smaller households are looking for smaller housing types that meet evolving family composition needs.
- National population and household growth contributes to an increased demand—particularly from young adults that are ready to form their own households

- Local policies and community opposition limit the construction of smaller or more dense housing types needed by young adults, small households, and seniors
- The market for second homes has been strong and growing, and is predicted to continue to grow with the rise of short-term rentals – taking existing housing units off the market for year-round use
- Seniors are transitioning out of their homes more slowly—partially due to lack of options—resulting in fewer homes “cycling through” the market to first-time homebuyers

These trends have created housing demand in nearly every market, leading to an increase in prices, and, in some communities, stiff competition for any available homes. At the same time, communities that have experienced disinvestment or decreases in property values find themselves struggling not only with limited housing stock, but experiencing further complications in financing redevelopment or rehabilitation of deteriorating homes, due to appraisal and lending practices.

Like so many other conditions, the pandemic exacerbated housing demand and need. As the economy started to re-open, housing markets across the country began to see an increase in sales, even as many households lost income, leaving them at risk of eviction. Meanwhile, building costs skyrocketed, and home construction has become even more costly. And, as the large-scale shift to remote work creates opportunities for individuals and families to leave the communities where they work, there is the potential for major changes to migration patterns that could further impact housing markets throughout the country.

Today’s housing shortages and costs come with far-reaching impacts on nearly every facet of our lives, from earnings, job opportunities, educational attainment, health, and safety. And housing development practices themselves underlie and perpetuate many of our communities’ and nation’s racial and economic inequities. But, they are rooted in a system of policies, practices, and beliefs at the local, state, and federal level that extend far beyond the reach of a single jurisdiction.

As planners face the reality that housing development and redevelopment issues challenge nearly every aspect of community vitality and sustainability, the MAP Board seeks replicable approaches to mitigating housing development costs, ensuring equitable access to housing and the opportunities it creates, creating equitable development and redevelopment in low-income communities, building support for new housing solutions, and creating impactful, state (and, through partnership with the national APA, federal) policy to address the systemic roots of our current housing crisis. To that end, the MAP Board seeks to learn from community representatives, regions, housing-related interest groups, affordable housing developers, lenders, and community groups about issues including:

- What are some examples of successful housing development that offers opportunities for equity, affordability, and opportunity?
- What innovative approaches has your community, region, or organization taken to address housing costs? What are the limitations of these approaches? How might they

be improved or brought to scale?

- Zoning changes
- Public-private-nonprofit partnership (i.e. with land bank authorities, skilled trades training programs, etc)
- New resources, like housing millages (Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo)
- How might planners address housing needs in low-income communities that face declining property value and significant home rehabilitation needs, while preventing displacement and gentrification?
- What are some communications approaches that have worked to minimize or resolve community opposition?
- What policy changes at the state level and federal level are needed to provide more tools and resources to communities? (including, for example, issues related to: tax code; securitization of
- mortgages for single and multi-family units; regional cooperation on fair-share, neighborhood services, and sprawl-prevention; support for manufactured housing; etc)
- What creative solutions have been tried/implemented to address high land costs in densely populated areas? (like NYC's Big Ideas for Small Lots)
- What local regulations unnecessarily contribute to the cost of construction that can be removed/change to bring down the cost new housing?
- What are some collective ownership models proven successful and what elements of the model were most important?
- How to balance City-wide housing goals with the needs of a specific neighborhood ?
- How can new housing impact individual/family wealth generation?
- How do we expand housing opportunities in the non-A markets?