



**Michigan Association of Planning
A Chapter of the American Planning Association**

Housing Policy

August 12, 2016

Adopted by the MAP Board of Directors

To thrive, communities need an adequate supply of housing close to employment, public transportation, and public facilities like libraries, parks, and 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 economic, cultural and demographic diversity. Communities must develop that housing stock without sacrificing sound regulations to protect the environment and public health.

Planners have the skills and ethical responsibility to contribute to the creation of communities and regions where diverse housing options are available to existing and future residents of all income levels. Planners must balance demands for new, market-rate housing units with the preservation and creation of units at various price points and sizes. We must carefully analyze current and predicted community and regional demographics to plan and zone for an adequate supply of housing. We must account for the cost of housing disinvestment and abandonment in established communities when building new greenfield subdivisions and we must consider the long term infrastructure maintenance costs local governments will have to incur for the life of the housing.

Planners must help elected leaders understand regional housing markets, and reach across municipal boundaries to forge cross-jurisdictional partnerships to develop housing policies that support a shared vision for housing and community development for the entire region. Communities must strengthen the policy linkages between housing and transportation, job centers and social services, and put in place the land use plans and regulatory solutions to create a more connected and prosperous region.

Planners must expand their arsenal of regulatory and programmatic tools to address the demographic changes posed by new immigrants, aging baby boomers, the changing composition of households and a need to keep and attract educated and skilled millennials and “gencen” populations.

1. Prioritize development of dense housing in core communities with access to employment, goods and services

1. The Michigan Association of Planning supports efforts that preserve the environment by encouraging residential construction that is consistent with the principles of Smart Growth. Planners should promote housing that is energy efficient and does not place undue demands on the environment. Regional, county, and local plans should promote compact and clustered development patterns while discouraging leapfrogging and sprawl development.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages housing strategies to revitalize urban

neighborhoods, while taking steps to minimize displacement of existing businesses and residents. Such strategies might include mixed use and infill development, mixed income housing, homeownership zones, urban homesteading, and housing rehabilitation. These strategies must take into account market demands and the need throughout Michigan for medium-density housing options in urban neighborhoods.

3. Residential development is a principal feature of communities, and should be represented in the master plan not only as a land use but also as an important element of community vitality and economic health. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages jurisdictions to develop and maintain a master plan housing element which analyzes housing needs for all types and price ranges, and recommends specific measures to address gaps in the housing supply in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
4. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages new employment centers in or near existing residential neighborhoods, provided such development can be achieved without displacement of existing residents and without negatively impacting infrastructure, health and quiet enjoyment of the land.
5. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages development of state and federal housing policies that recognize the diverse needs of urban, rural, and suburban communities. Specifically, qualification and scoring criteria for grant and incentive programs must take into account the context of communities.

Of particular interest to housing advocates, in September 2015 the FHA enacted a rule change that opens the door to government-insured mortgages for condominiums in mixed-use buildings with commercial footprints of up to 35 percent, up from the previous 25 percent limit. Exceptions may be granted for projects in which as much as half of the space is commercial. Developers hope this, along with other F.H.A. changes, will help revive condo sales just as the overall housing market is improving.

2. Housing must serve all members of communities

1. The Michigan Association of Planning supports efforts of jurisdictions to adopt and implement plans and policies that reflect federal and state requirements regarding housing, that promote residential stability, housing choice, and affordability across all price ranges and that make effective use of federal, state, and local programs and incentives to meet housing needs not adequately addressed through the marketplace.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning supports efforts to engage neighborhoods actively and meaningfully in planning for revitalization and in making use of collaborative planning tools and techniques that bring a wide range of interests and voices to the table, and that empower citizens to exercise influence in and access to the policy-development process.
3. The Michigan Association of Planning supports traditional homeownership models as well as nontraditional forms of homeownership such as limited equity cooperatives, co-housing, mutual housing, and community land trusts. Similarly, provision should be made for quality rental housing,

not only through traditional multi-family forms, but also through single-family, mixed-use, and mixed-tenure development.

4. The Michigan Association of Planning supports innovative approaches to financing and encourages development of new housing options, including public-private partnerships that address the housing needs of all segments of Michigan's population.

3. Housing is a long-term investment in communities

1. The Michigan Association of Planning promotes the development of quality housing that will continue to offer decent, affordable shelter throughout its entire life. Planners should be at the forefront of ensuring that housing not only has good immediate utility, but also represents a long-term value added investment to the neighborhood and the larger community.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning supports the use of objective measures to determine whether rehabilitation or clearance and redevelopment of severely blighted neighborhoods presents the most viable solution to urban blight. In making such an evaluation, planners should involve neighborhood residents, interest groups, and institutions in the planning process, and examine whether financing is in place to complete redevelopment activities after initial clearance of the site.
3. The Michigan Association of Planning supports adoption of new legislation that allows counties to enforce blight violations for the purpose of maintaining and improving housing stock.
4. The Michigan Association of Planning supports legislation that creates tax equity and consistent valuation among the various housing forms.
5. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages decision-making on new housing construction to include thorough evaluation of long-term infrastructure (utility delivery) maintenance costs.

4. Housing is best addressed regionally

1. The Michigan Association of Planning supports a cooperative and mutually supportive relationship among federal, state, and local governments based on the recognition that *funding* for housing programs is best implemented with regional coordination, while *programs* are best designed with local input, and *delivery* is best implemented at the local level.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning recognizes that housing is a regional issue in metropolitan areas, usually requiring inter-jurisdictional dialogue and cooperation. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages collaboration with non-profit housing providers to educate citizens and elected officials about affordable housing, the importance of high-quality workforce housing to local economies, and to eliminate negative perceptions and stereotypes.

3. The Michigan Association of Planning supports a regional fair share distribution of affordable housing, particularly in proximity to moderate- and low-wage jobs.

5. All Michigan residents must have access to high-quality housing

1. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages jurisdictions to adopt and enforce the Uniform Housing Code, or a similar regulatory code, and to inspect and repair unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages the state and local communities to inventory existing public and assisted housing stocks, including those units threatened by deterioration, prepayment, or opt-out of assistance contracts.
3. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages efforts to insure that housing for those experiencing homelessness is planned and developed in conjunction with a local continuum of care plan.
4. The Michigan Association of Planning supports efforts to identify, document, and eliminate impediments to fair housing contained within master plans and/or zoning regulations, including, but not limited to, limiting barriers to group homes, eliminating large lot zoning when used for the purposes of exclusion, allowing smaller minimum dwelling unit floor area requirements, and eliminating or restricting single family definitions.
5. The Michigan Association of Planning supports the accessibility guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act Amendments and other federal and state accessibility laws for new housing. Housing that is accessible and adaptable increases housing opportunities for physically disabled and frail elderly persons, while offering convenience to non-impaired persons. In the interest of promoting housing choice, accessibility measures should not be limited to rental development, but should be promoted in housing built or rehabilitated for homeownership as well.
6. The Michigan Association of Planning supports the creation of local policies to properly and promptly process reasonable accommodation requests under the Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAA)
7. The Michigan Association of Planning supports education for local officials on the zoning implications of the FHAA and the importance of providing fair housing opportunities as well as timely review.
8. The Michigan Association of Planning supports and encourages the application of local health and safety laws and the development of measures designed to achieve the rehabilitation and modernization of aging and substandard land lease communities, commonly referred to as mobile home parks, while addressing the displacement of residents.

6. Affordable housing options must be available in all regions with strong access to employment, goods, and services

1. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages national, state and local initiatives designed to preserve and expand affordable housing opportunities at a variety of income levels. Planners should work to ensure that scarce housing subsidies are used to provide long term benefits to those in need of assistance. In general, capital subsidies for construction or acquisition of housing should also be accompanied by measures that ensure long-term affordability.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning supports coordination of land use plans and housing and public transportation programs to ensure people have adequate access to employment and services. It is critical that affordable housing developments provide residents with reasonable access to employment, healthcare, essential services, healthy food, recreation, and other community amenities.
3. The Michigan Association of Planning recognizes the impact of transportation costs on Michigan families' ability to afford housing. We support programs that approach housing and transportation costs holistically and provide flexible solutions. The best transportation plan is a land use plan that allows convenient living (mixed used neighborhoods)
4. The Michigan Association of Planning supports efforts to expand affordable housing opportunities by facilitating the development and preservation of accessory dwelling units, reducing or eliminating minimum dwelling unit floor area requirements, and allowing cluster housing, manufactured housing, mixed-income housing, shared residences, and single room occupancy (SRO) developments.
5. The Michigan Association of Planning supports efforts to preserve the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), a critical tool for affordable housing finance, and to encourage accountability in the management of LIHTC projects.
6. The Michigan Association of Planning supports a wide range of programs and incentives that encourage private and non-profit development of affordable housing to supplement publicly owned and managed housing, and that complements local housing delivery systems. These measures include density bonuses, land donations, low-income housing tax credits, community land trusts, commercial linkage impact fees, and local requirements to keep a percentage of new units affordable within each new housing development.
7. The Michigan Association of Planning supports the use of manufactured homes where residential uses are permitted consistent with locally adopted plans, ordinances, and design requirements.
8. The Michigan Association of Planning encourages the development and adoption of model definitions [for manufactured housing], siting standards, and design standards to achieve local design and compatibility goals.