

Land Use and Zoning Rules

Issue Overview

Policies such as single-family zoning, minimum lot size requirements, density caps, and burdensome design mandates have effectively restricted the types of housing that can be built across vast swaths of the country. These approaches not only limit housing supply but also drives up land and construction costs, exacerbating affordability challenges. Furthermore, these regulations often exclude smaller, more attainable housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units, from being built in areas close to jobs, transit, and amenities. The cumulative effect has been a housing landscape that is inefficient, inequitable, and unable to meet the diverse needs of today's population.

Solutions

- Expand the availability and use of federally owned lands. The federal government owns approximately 28% of the land in the United States, with significant portions located in areas where housing demand is high. By repurposing underutilized federal land for residential use, policymakers can create affordable and market-rate housing while reducing development costs associated with land acquisition.
- Improve coordination between federal, state, and local governments to support housing supply.
 - Condition federal funding on local governments implementing pro-housing zoning and permitting reforms that allow higher-density and by-right housing approvals, streamlined permitting processes and reduced subjectivity.
 - Authorize and expand programs like the PRO Housing Program to provide funding for cities and towns that are removing barriers to housing production.
 - Pass and expand competitive grant programs like the Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY) Initiative to reward communities that promote market-rate and workforce housing production.
- Incentivize entry-level home construction.
 - Expand funding programs that focus on workforce, entry-level and affordable housing.
 - Offer expanded federal tax credits or grants for builders constructing homes below a specified price threshold.
 - Provide subsidies for small-scale housing projects, such as single-family starter homes or small multifamily buildings, to encourage diversity in housing stock.