

Principles to Guide Housing Policy and Legislation for 2019

Over the course of the past several decades, the lack of new housing availability and affordability has reached crisis proportions in California due largely to a lack of production statewide—especially in coastal and urbanized areas. The housing crisis is creating greater socioeconomic inequities throughout the State, and as Californians “drive until they qualify” for housing, they are beginning to realize the significant impacts on the health of individuals, families, workers, and the State’s general economic outlook, especially given that wages have not kept pace with rising housing costs.

Housing is a basic human need and right. All Californians should have access to secure housing in California.

The California Planning Roundtable (CPR) has been actively engaged in the study of housing in California for many years. As an apolitical expert body, State agencies have sought the advice and guidance of CPR in the development of their respective guidelines. Examples include (but are not limited to) working directly with the Office of Planning and Research on the updated General Plan Guidelines (inclusive of SB 1000 implementation guidance) and with the Department of Housing and Community Development on the 2018 SB 2 Planning Framework.

CPR offers the following principles for consideration in the development of land use policy, with the goal of finding equitable solutions for housing in every city, town, community, and county.

All policies should be developed with equitable homeownership opportunities in mind. A keen focus is needed to ensure that any statewide policy results in housing production—and potentially ownership opportunities for all socioeconomic segments of the State—especially for those most disadvantaged.



The California Planning Roundtable advances planning practice and influences policy through innovation and leadership to create healthy, prosperous, and equitable communities.


Address issues of affordability and housing support for those with the most serious and emergent needs—especially for Californians living in disadvantaged communities, in addition to low-income households, minorities, and individuals with disabilities who are most at risk. Create a statewide framework for local implementation that allows for the consideration of displacement and inclusionary requirements without reducing production goals.

Provide broad legislative support for all types of housing development, especially where transit resources are the greatest since well-designed, transit-oriented housing is the most sustainable housing type. This includes manufactured and/or modular homes, co-living, micro units, and high-density apartments and condominiums. It also includes middle density typologies such as triplexes, quadraplexes, and townhomes.

Create a stronger statewide housing production framework that is responsive to rural, suburban, and urban communities, recognizing their different needs and contexts while strengthening statewide policies for housing production, such as process requirements pursuant to the Permit Streamlining Act and State Density Bonus Law.

Housing should be constructed using the most feasible sustainable materials and construction methods and should include smart technologies so that new homes may be operated more cost effectively and at higher levels of environmental sustainability.

Continue to establish expectations for the ministerial approval of housing by local agencies. Housing projects should not be political; rather, review processes should be technical from a production perspective.



Tie employment/commercial development growth to housing development, and ensure that housing typologies match the income categories being created by the jobs that are created. Communities should not be able to reap the economic and fiscal benefits of expanding local employment while exporting the impact of housing production to other jurisdictions.

Provide a statewide source of funds sufficient to subsidize the creation of housing to satisfy annual demand for below-market-rate housing in the State (targeted to very low- and extremely low-income households that will never be served by the market).

Local agency requirements for housing fees, exactions, and other requirements must be tied to demonstrated impacts. Affordable housing mitigation should be tied to employment growth and commercial development, and not burden housing production. Where fees are tied to housing production, they should be allowed only if an agency has demonstrated that those fees would not create infeasibility for housing projects near transit or on projects with below-market-rate units.

Reduce local discretion for agencies that have a track record of under producing housing (such as nonattainment of Regional Housing Needs Allocations or not attaining a jobs-to-employed-residents relationship). Retain local discretion for agencies that produce housing and have a more balanced jobs-to-employed-residents relationship.

Help housing pay for the services residents require by adjusting State funding formulas to be based on population (such as distributing taxes from on-line sales by population).