CLIMATE ACTION
CAMPAIGN

SOLVING
SPRAWL

BUILDING HOUSING FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE SAN DIEGO

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report discusses policy recommendations for the use of land in what is now known as San Diego County, the unceded territory and homelands of the Kumeyaay, the Payómkawichum, the Cupeño, and the Cahuilla.

Climate Action Campaign acknowledges the past and present harm done to the original peoples of this land, who have endured displacement, genocide, persecution, and systemic oppression due to settler-colonialism, racism, and capitalism.

Climate Action Campaign honors the Kumeyaay, Payómkawichum, Cupeno, and Cahuilla peoples, who from time immemorial, have been the sustainable stewards of this land.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Diego region is experiencing, along with the rest of the world, an accelerating climate crisis. In August 2021, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report that the UN Secretary-General called a "Code Red for Humanity." The report's warnings about irreversible climate change are mirrored in extreme weather-related situations occurring worldwide, including San Diego where climate impacts include extreme heat, deadly wildfires, rising sea levels, and drought.

July 2021 set the record as the hottest month on record, 2020 tied 2016 for the hottest year on record, and the last seven years were the hottest seven years on record. 2020 also set the record for the most billion-dollar climate-related disasters in the US: twenty-two. In California alone, 2020 recorded 4.2 million acres burned, the equivalent of the entire area of Los Angeles, Orange, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties combined. At the time of publication of this report, the Dixie Fire is noted as the single largest fire on record in the State, spanning an area larger than New York City.

In addition to the climate crisis, San Diego is also facing a severe housing affordability crisis. In 2020, only 26% of residents could afford to purchase a home in San Diego County, a drop from 29% the year before. Also, in 2020, San Diego renters needed to earn $36.62 per hour—2.8 times the City of San Diego's minimum wage— to afford the average rent of $1904 (numbers that have likely increased during the COVID-19 pandemic). Meanwhile, San Diego still struggles with the number of people experiencing homelessness, which doubled in 2020 to 4,152. Both burdensome rent and homelessness disproportionately affect people of color.

To help reduce existing inequities, the San Diego region needs to accelerate affordable and safe housing construction. However, sprawl development is not the answer. For years, sprawl—the outward expansion of low-density residential and commercial development—has proved to be unsustainable, dangerous, costly, inequitable, and destructive, especially in recent years as Californians face the impacts of an accelerating climate crisis.

San Diegans don't have to choose. It is commonly asserted that San Diegans must choose between affordable housing and protecting the environment, but proven solutions tell a different story. While there is no single solution to solve the climate and housing affordability crises, this report provides proven strategies and policies to create more affordable housing, advance equity and sustainability, and promote public health.

EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE TWIN CLIMATE AND HOUSING CRISES:

Build More Homes in Existing Cities:

To avoid the many failures of sprawl development and promote equitable, affordable, climate-friendly housing, local governments must implement solutions to build more homes within existing cities. Strategies to do so require a suite of policy solutions, including better planning, permitting more types of homes, funding affordable housing, leveraging public lands, and exploring social housing.

Invest in Existing Communities and Prevent Displacement:

A repercussion of the housing affordability crisis, as well as the development of new housing, is the displacement of working-class people of color and other vulnerable populations. To ensure vulnerable populations stay housed, local governments must implement intentional protections, which include identifying vulnerable communities, expanding existing programs, preserving existing affordable housing, empowering community ownership and tenants, and exploring rent control and stabilization policies.

Promote Equity, Justice, & Health:

The climate and housing affordability crises disproportionately impact working-class people of color, but if implemented correctly, the solutions can also equitably benefit these communities, create good middle-class jobs, and improve public health. Strategies include supporting home ownership for people of color, committing to robust community engagement, ensuring everyone lives in a healthy and climate resilient home, promoting environmental justice, and creating good jobs for all.

INTRODUCTION: SAN DIEGO'S CLIMATE AND HOUSING CRISES

The San Diego region faces a climate emergency, which comes at a time when many residents are unable to afford high rents and home prices. In 2020, renters needed to earn $36.62 per hour to afford an average rent of $1,904. Meanwhile, the median sales price for a single-family home increased almost 20% since July 2020 and is now $860,000.

High housing costs affect all San Diegans, including long-time residents, first-generation community members, immigrants, refugees, college students, and retirees—all who are left with less money to use for food, healthcare, or savings.

The housing affordability crisis largely results from poor land-use policies that limit the construction of multi-family homes near business centers. Currently, the San Diego region is missing approximately 88,400 units – or roughly 7% of the regional housing stock—and the vast majority of the missing homes are needed for lower-income and middle-income households.

"Currently, the San Diego region is missing approximately 88,400 units—or roughly 7% of the regional housing stock—and the vast majority of the missing homes are needed for lower-income and middle-income households."

Poor land management not only limits housing supply but also encourages the use of fossil-fuel based vehicles. In the San Diego region, transportation is the primary source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, whose high concentration accelerates the biggest threat of our time: climate change.

WHY IS SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT BAD?

1) SPRAWL IS UNSUSTAINABLE

2) SPRAWL IS DANGEROUS

3) SPRAWL IS COSTLY

4) SPRAWL EXACERBATES ECONOMIC AND RACIAL INEQUALITY

5) SPRAWL IS UNHEALTHY

6) SPRAWL IS DESTRUCTIVE

Sprawl pulls public and private investment away from the urban core, inducing higher car dependency and longer commute distances between residents, jobs, schools, and other essential amenities. In simpler terms, sprawl converts land from non-urban uses such as farming, forests, and wetlands into buildings and highways.

Sprawl does not happen on its own. It is driven largely by exclusionary zoning policies—laws that place restrictions on the type of homes that can be built in a certain neighborhood—and other regulations that reduce construction, raise housing prices, and alter the urban form.

Above: a wall of fire surrounds San Diego's Scripps Ranch neighborhood during the 2003 Cedar Fire. (K.C. Alfred)

Sprawl primarily takes the shape of low-density residential buildings (single-family homes) located far from the city center amenities and most job centers, requiring people to rely heavily on roads and highways to carry on daily activities. Because these communities are so dispersed, there is no efficient way to distribute services to them, making municipal services such as sewer pipelines and fire protection more expensive.

Beyond financial implications, sprawl impacts the environment and health in different ways. First, cities built around car use provide fewer opportunities to exercise than walkable and bikeable cities. Research shows that each additional hour spent in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity. Second, driving increases vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which worsens traffic congestion and GHG emissions, leading to global warming and poor air quality. Third, because sprawl projects are often placed in fire-prone areas, they raise ignition risks, endangering people and harming ecosystems and wildlife. Today, nearly one-third of San Diego County is located at a very high risk of fire.

San Diego's population keeps growing and needs more housing; however, this does not mean the region should use land inefficiently. To make San Diego a more sustainable and equitable place, it is urgent that elected officials stop sprawl by facilitating infill development—homes in areas that are already urbanized—closer to jobs, transit, and amenities.

Unlike sprawl, infill development can tackle both San Diego's climate and housing crises by allowing the right kinds of development in the right places. In the face of layered ongoing crises, now is the time to stop wasteful land-use policies and invest in more efficient development patterns that can help San Diego build healthier, thriving, and climate-safe communities.

SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT

CAR-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES FAR FROM JOBS, SCHOOLS, TRANSIT, AND STORES.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

MIXED-USE COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE CAN WALK, BIKE, OR TAKE TRANSIT FOR THE MAJORITY OF TRIPS.

Credit: Malick Infill Development

UNSUSTAINABLE: HOW DOES SPRAWL *ACCELERATE* THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

In August 2021, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a scientific report to the UN Secretary-General called "Code Red for Humanity", which confirms that the climate crisis has arrived and that it will get worse before it can get better.

Specifically, the IPCC report explains that global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO2) and other GHG emissions occur in the coming decades. Disastrously, sprawl makes this goal impossible because it develops outside the city center and innately requires long commutes by car to jobs, shopping, and other amenities.

In the United States—one of the world's largest polluters— cars, trucks and other petroleum-based vehicles are largely responsible for GHG emissions. This dependence on petroleum based vehicles has not happened on its own. For decades, sprawl has become the default, with cities across the nation designed to prioritize cars and highways at the expense of public transit and pedestrians.
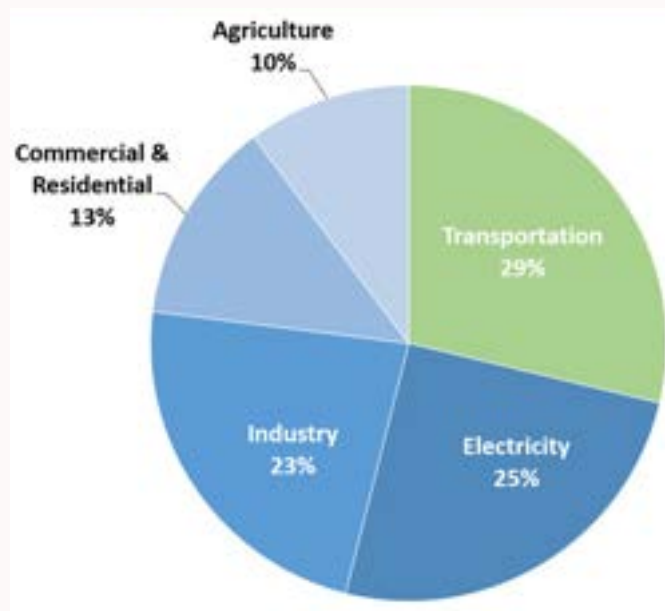
Total U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector in 2019.

As IPCC experts claim, tackling the climate crisis will be impossible without slashing carbon emissions. The San Diego region must implement data-based policies that contribute to the fight against climate change. San Diego can do this by altering its growth patterns to lower vehicle miles traveled (VMT), increasing the supply of affordable, multi-family housing in existing neighborhoods and encouraging active transportation such as biking and walking.

Unlike sprawl, housing near jobs and transit can help the region reduce GHG emissions that pollute the environment by giving people alternatives to driving. Most importantly, new forms of housing that are affordable and accessible will help close the climate gaps that make working-class people of color more vulnerable to the threats of climate change.

A NOTE ON CARBON OFFSETS:

Carbon offsets are an action intended to compensate for greenhouse gas pollution due to industrial or other human activity, typically traded as part of a government-approved program.

Examples of a carbon offset may be a sprawl developer in Fallbrook purchasing acres of rainforest in Brazil to offset the emissions their project will create, or an industrial polluter in Barrio Logan restoring wetlands in Imperial Beach to offset their pollution. While this may seem to work on paper, international and local carbon offset schemes have been deemed limited at best, if not outright illegal.

The California Supreme Court, California Attorney General, and countless courts have deemed international carbon offset schemes for mitigating new sprawl as illegal under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Meanwhile, multiple reports have made clear that local carbon offset opportunities are limited or unable to meet the necessary protocols to be effective mitigation measures.

Policymakers must avoid carbon offset schemes and focus on core mitigation strategies instead. This recommendation is also shared by leading state environmental agencies and environmental justice organizations.

San Diego is in the midst of its sixth driest rainy season on record, and according to scientists, droughts and heatwaves are inextricably related, especially in inland urban and rural areas where heat waves are becoming more frequent. Heatwaves in Southern California increase wildfire frequency by 42% and length by 26% during extreme drought conditions, exposing populated regions to the risks of extreme heat, wildfire, and pollution.

California has responded to some of these climate risks through fire and building code requirements that increase the rate of "fire-resistant" homes. However, past wildfires show that where cities are built and not how they are built is the main determinant of whether a house will burn. According to CalFire, 80% of the houses destroyed in the 2018 Thomas fire in Ventura County had fire-resistant exteriors, and 90% had fire-resistant roofs.

The combination of extreme weather and wildfires causes considerable harm to residents and their property, with working-class people of color experiencing the worst of it. Latinos in Western states, for example, are disproportionately vulnerable to fires since they are twice as likely to live in areas most threatened by wildfires relative to the overall U.S. population.

Today, much of the San Diego region is in fire-risk zones, with nearly one-third of the County at a very high risk of fire and another 270 square miles remaining at high risk (Figure 1).
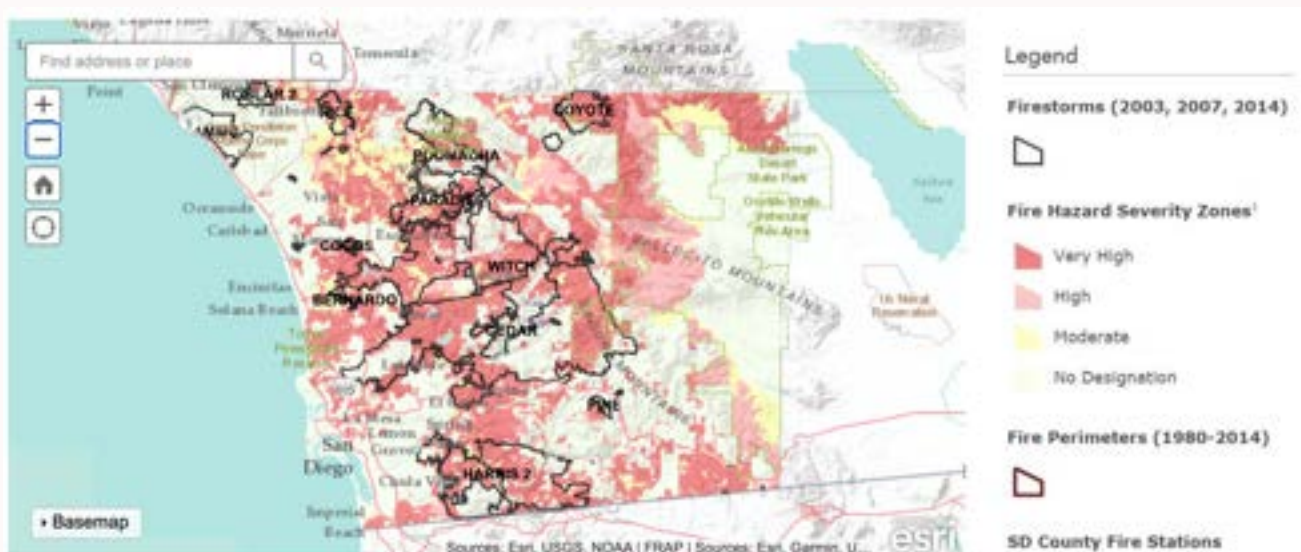
Figure 1. Wildfire Hazard Map Tool

CASE STUDY: HARVEST HILLS PROJECT

Despite the link between sprawl and wildfires, housing developers continue to seek approval for sprawl projects in high hazard zones. One clear example is the Harvest Hills sprawl project proposed north of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park near Escondido. The project site, where developers plan to build 550 homes, was designated by CalFire as a very high hazard severity zone.

The Harvest Hills property (formerly Safari Highlands Ranch) is located in San Diego County's unincorporated area. However, the San Diego Union Tribune reported that the developer intends to annex the land into Escondido as part of the approval process.
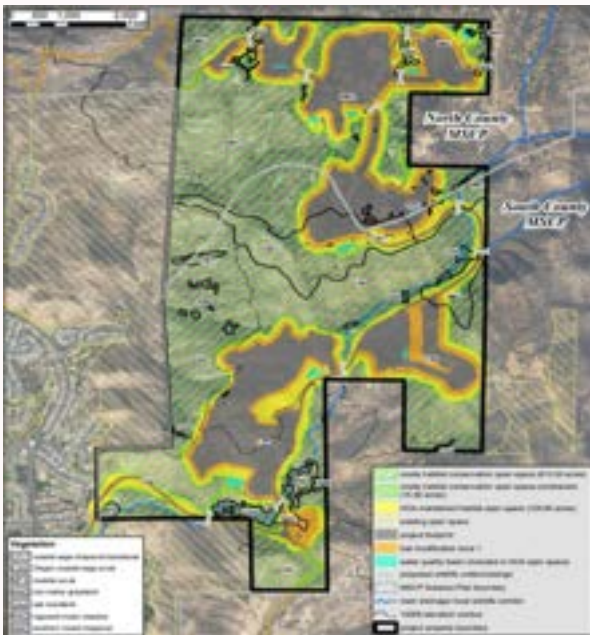
In addition to the wildfire risks, much of the wildlife value of this area will be destroyed if the Harvest Hills project is approved.

While wildfire seasons intensify, cities that continue to build new homes in high fire-prone areas, like Harvest Hills, will put more property and people in harm's way, including residents, first-responders, and firefighters tasked with protecting new developments.

Environmentalist and community organizations are urging the City of Escondido to deny the approval of the Harvest Hills sprawl project.

COSTLY: WHAT DOES SPRAWL MEAN FOR TAXPAYERS' POCKETS?

Living in a sprawling region can be expensive. In San Diego, households spend an average of 55% of their income on housing and transportation, compared to the 45% limit that is considered affordable. While prices across the United States vary depending on neighborhood characteristics, research shows that people who live in location-efficient neighborhoods— compact, mixed-use, and have easy access to jobs, services, public transit, and amenities—tend to have lower transportation costs. The high housing and transportation costs in a sprawling region like San Diego County have a significant impact on personal finances, affecting low-income households the most.
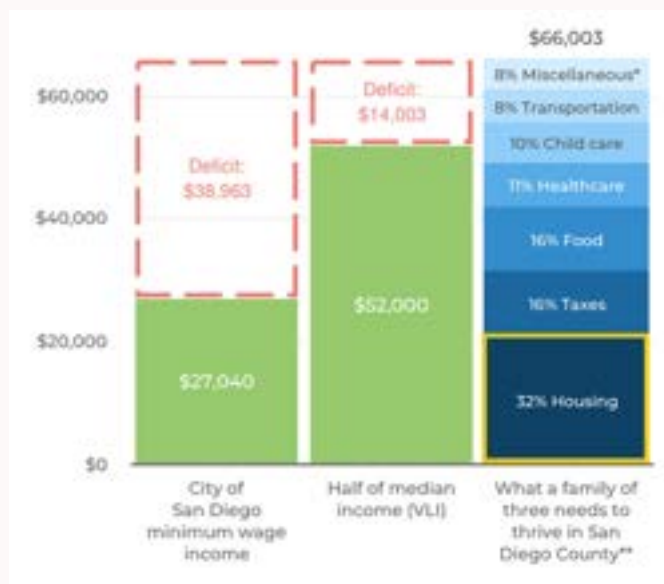
"After paying the high cost of housing, very low-income households in San Diego County are short $14,003 annually for basic needs."

Source: SAN DIEGO COUNTY 2020 Affordable Housing Needs Report

Apart from housing and transportation costs, sprawl has a substantial impact on a local government's budget. When a community expands further out from the city center, it increases taxpayer costs, requiring governments to build and maintain roads and extend public services to remote places. A Smart Growth America report found that, on average, roads, sewers, and water lines for sprawl projects cost 38% more up-front and ongoing services like garbage removal cost 10% more because of the added distance traveled to serve residents.

Sprawl also results in the loss of natural space, threatening ecosystems including forests and other green spaces which provide free water filtration, flood control, and waste management. In other words, sprawl diverts public resources that could otherwise improve the quality of life in existing communities.

The costs of sprawl indicate the urgent need to use land more efficiently. The San Diego region is in desperate need of housing in existing neighborhoods where everyone can live, work, shop, and play—all within a short walk or bike ride.

ECONOMIC & RACIAL INEQUITY: HOW DOES SPRAWL IMPACT WORKING-CLASS PEOPLE OF COLOR?

Historically, economic inequality in the United States has been racial. While sprawl advocates may argue that it benefits minorities, exclusionary zoning laws that limit housing supply in existing cities are often discriminatory and create greater social disparities. For example, restrictions to housing supply hinder upward mobility because lower-income employees cannot afford to relocate to higher-productivity cities due to high housing prices. As a result, many workers are forced to live in lower-productivity areas.

Indeed, economic inequality in San Diego is well-illustrated by the gap between job opportunities and housing location. When jobs are far, low-income residents (often working-class people of color) with limited transportation options are trapped into long commutes that impact their ability to access good jobs. In San Diego, for example, a car owner can access up to thirty times more jobs than transit users, a staggering number considering that 1 out of every 5 commuters in San Diego does not have access to a vehicle.

Currently, only 12% of low-income residents in San Diego County live within half a mile of a commuter rail, light rail, or Rapid transit stop. Unless the region expands its public transit, most San Diegans will continue to depend on cars to access jobs. Commuting long distances does not work for everyone, which is why jobs and housing need to be close to each other.

Aside from isolating the working-class from jobs, sprawl also contributes to racial segregation. As discussed earlier, sprawl areas grow at the expense of taxpayers, with new developments requiring costly infrastructure. As new developments occur, the populations moving to newly developed areas are often homogenous, with whiter, more affluent families living in suburbs and poorer, working-class people of color remaining in the cities. These developments, in turn, explains much of the racial inequality that exists in the United States today.

UNHEALTHY: HOW DOES SPRAWL AFFECT PEOPLE'S HEALTH?

Sprawl-induced car dependency is extremely harmful to health in the San Diego region, where transportation accounts for 42% of GHG emissions and thus contributes to the region's exceptionally poor air quality.

This year, the American Lung Association ranked the San Diego region as the 7th most polluted metropolitan area in the United States due to its high number of ozone days. While San Diego's poor air quality affects everybody, it disproportionately harms working-class families and people of color who have an increased likelihood of asthma episodes and subsequent hospitalizations.

Since 2018, the areas with the highest asthma hospitalization rates have been Lemon Grove, College Grove, Linda Vista, City Heights, and Logan Heights, all neighborhoods whose median annual income remains below that of the San Diego region.

Poor health outcomes are strongly associated with the use of cars. A recent study showed that asphalt roads make city air pollution worse, especially during hot summer seasons when there can be a 300% increase in emissions of secondary organic aerosols, an air pollutant that is harmful to health.

While the rapid increase in electric vehicles (EVs) sales might seem like the simple remedy that will solve traffic-related air pollution, the reality is that most people will continue to drive gas-powered cars for decades to come. Even when EVs can help mitigate GHGs, mining the raw materials used to make rechargeable batteries raises environmental and social concerns, particularly in the developing countries that manufacture those rare minerals.

Urban Heat Island Effect (UHI)

When cities replace natural areas and land cover with pavement and buildings, they become "Urban Heat Islands" (UHI), which absorb and retain heat. The UHI effect raises energy prices (air conditioning for example), air pollution levels, and heat-related sickness and mortality.

In recent years, coastal cities in California have documented a major increase in hospital and emergency room visits during heat waves. The City of San Diego, along with other regional city governments, needs to increase its knowledge of the UHI effect and develop a plan to build green infrastructure to mitigate this issue.

DESTRUCTIVE: HOW DOES SPRAWL HARM ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY?

Sprawl destroys natural habitats, provides an opening for invasive species to supplant endemic species, and brings greater wildfire risks to adjacent natural lands.

San Diego County is the most biologically diverse region in the continental United States and is home to 200 imperiled plants and animals, the most of any county in the nation. Existing sprawl has already devastated what is essentially the Amazon rainforest of the U.S., and further encroachment will only hasten the extinction of life found nowhere else on earth.

While regional Multiple Species Conservation Plans (MSCPs) have been proposed and developed to protect what natural space is left, these plans are regularly delayed, ignored, underinvested in, and challenged by poor land-use decisions that have cut off key wildlife corridors between ecosystems.

In addition to halting all new sprawl development, local governments should fully fund and implement MSCPs, purchase, heal, and maintain natural lands, and explore stronger state and federal protections, including the creation of a national monument for chaparral lands and other sensitive habitats. To be effective, these efforts should be made in close consultation with tribal governments whose traditional knowledge can contribute to a better understanding of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Urban growth boundaries (UGBs) are the most powerful tool to stop sprawl. They put a limit on how far a city can expand by separating urban areas from surrounding natural and agricultural lands, encouraging the building of affordable and thriving communities within city limits.

The states of Oregon, Washington, and Tennessee mandate cities to have UGBs. The City of Portland, for example, established its UGB in 1979 to create housing and job opportunities to fit people's needs while protecting its natural spaces. Today, Portland's UGB is considered a model for the rest of the country.
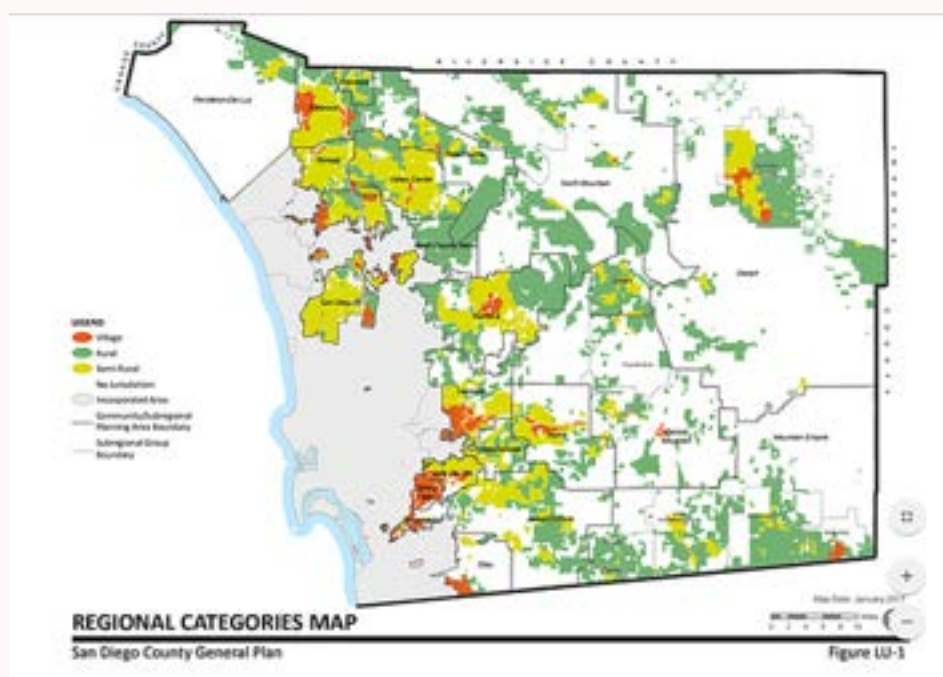
Above: San Diego County's General Plan Land Use Map, 2011

As the region's population and economy grow, San Diego should consider establishing a UGB to help manage urban growth, encourage economic investment in existing neighborhoods, and create more affordable and sustainable housing options that fit residents' budgets and needs.

Locally, Save Our Forest And Ranchlands (SOFAR) and other environmental advocates led two campaigns in the 1990's and 2000's to establish a UGB in San Diego. While those campaigns were unsuccessful, they forced regional governments to slow and control the spread of sprawl, saving countless precious natural places from destruction.

EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE TWIN CLIMATE AND HOUSING CRISES:

The San Diego region has long attracted people looking to enjoy its beautiful weather and economic opportunities. Unfortunately, like much of California, San Diego has been built in ways that are inequitable and unsustainable through policies that are inconsistent with the region's climate and housing needs.

Today, San Diego is in the middle of dual climate and housing crises that have been exacerbated by sprawl. As discussed earlier in this report, sprawl development does not consider the full range of environmental and social impacts associated with uncontrolled urban development, such as environmental degradation, social inequity, and poor health outcomes. To rectify these effects, officials in the San Diego region must draw on evidence to make policy decisions that provide safe housing to all residents without compromising local and regional climate goals.

The following section presents strategies and approaches to solve the twin climate and housing crises. Unlike sprawl, which focuses on outward urban development and car-dependency, the strategies outlined in this section involve a range of steps for planning cities in ways that prioritize the building and preservation of affordable housing in strategic locations near jobs and transit.

It is important to point out that there is not one single solution to the ongoing climate and housing crises. Local governments and community-based organizations can choose which approaches best suit their needs and goals. Nevertheless, it is still crucial that local authorities, the community, as well as developers address the climate and housing crises concurrently. Doing so will ensure that housing is not built in areas that put residents in the path of climate disasters and will foster a more sustainable and equitable region.

SOLUTIONS:

1 BUILD MORE HOMES IN EXISTING CITIES

2 INVEST IN EXISTING COMMUNITIES & PREVENT DISPLACEMENT

3 PROMOTE EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND HEALTH

STRATEGY #1: BUILD MORE HOMES IN EXISTING CITIES

To create a more sustainable and equitable San Diego, local governments must end the unsustainable growth pattern of car-dependent communities, which are not only costly to serve but also create inequities and contribute to the climate crisis. This section provides twelve policy recommendations to help local governments implement solutions to end restrictive land policies to advance the supply of affordable housing within existing cities. Following these measures can help local governments comply with state regulations, legally binding Climate Action Plans, and regional housing goals.

DEVELOP EFFECTIVE "COMMUNITY PLANS"

In California, "Community Plans" are hyper-local development and infrastructure roadmaps for individual neighborhoods. In the City of San Diego, there are nearly 50 Community Plans developed by the City's Planning Department with input from residents, businesses, and community groups. These plans are updated periodically to meet the needs of current and future residents. Community Plan Updates (CPUs) and Specific Plan Amendments (SPAs) are critical tools to plan for, implement, and scale the policy recommendations to increase housing in existing cities identified in this paper, as well as plan to align with a city's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In the past, numerous CPUs and SPAs have passed with weak or non-existent plans for meeting housing needs and climate goals, but this can be fixed by leading with key targets at the beginning of the CPU or SPA process. These key targets should identify goals to increase housing, biking, walking, transit, and shade trees, especially if those goals are tied to a legally-binding Climate Action Plan (CAP) targets, CEQA, and state law.

In July 2021, the City of San Diego announced "BlueprintSD," a new approach to community planning that will theoretically "further the City's [CAP] goals by encouraging housing and new development where people can walk, bike, or take transit." This action may result in better climate and housing outcomes. **However, policymakers must ensure that "BlueprintSD" results in CPUs' planning and achieving legally-binding CAP biking, walking and transit targets, and state Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goals.**

A note on Community Planning Groups

Community Planning Groups (CPGs) are city-sanctioned, elected neighborhood-level councils that advise local governments on various land-use and other related matters within their community. CPGs are an important part of local democracy but can be unreflective of the communities they are supposed to represent. Local governments should explore CPG reforms to increase the input and participation of working-class people of color, renters, immigrants, refugees, and youth. Circulate San Diego's "Democracy in Planning" report provides helpful strategies to make CPGs more accessible and inclusive.

COMPLY WITH RHNA REQUIREMENTS

State law requires every Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), city, and county to participate in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) planning process. San Diego's MPO, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), is responsible for the preparation of RHNA in partnership with its member governments.

The current RHNA cycle covers an eight-year planning period from 2021 to 2029. By state law, all cities are required to develop Housing Elements (plans) to meet their RHNA housing goals; however, not every city plans with integrity.

In 2020, Coronado—a city that is 87% white and a median home value of $1,617,000—sued SANDAG in 2020 to lower its RHNA housing allocation goals. The lawsuit occurred despite the fact that Coronado's hotels, shops, and restaurants are mainly operated by low-wage workers who cannot afford to live near their jobs due to high housing prices.

Coronado should stop flouting California's affordable housing requirements and collaborate with the region to build more affordable housing. Refusing to do so will push more residents to drive far distances to access job centers, and contribute to racial segregation, economic inequality, and GHG emissions.

END EXCLUSIONARY ZONING

Exclusionary zoning laws place restrictions on the types of dwellings that can be constructed in a particular neighborhood. Some examples include minimum lot size requirements, minimum square footage requirements, prohibitions on multi-family homes, and limits on the height of buildings. Historically, exclusionary zoning has been used to discriminate against people of color and to maintain home prices in suburban and urban areas.

In San Diego, 53% of residential land is zoned for detached single-family homes, making it harder for working-class people of color to find housing they can afford. To address discriminatory and exclusionary land-use practices, all single-family zoned areas should be rezoned to permit gentle home increases with ADUs, lot splitting, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and other forms of missing middle housing (defined as house buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods).

A Note on Redlining in San Diego:

Redlining was a practice in which the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal organization, assigned ratings to neighborhoods to guide investment. The practice was named after the "red" neighborhoods that were deemed the most "hazardous," which were typically populated by people of color. For decades, redlining made it difficult for people of color to obtain loans for home purchases or maintenance, resulting in cycles of disinvestment.

In San Diego, redlining maps from the 1930's show how neighborhoods were assigned colors based on the level of risk that banks would face by investing in the region, with green color representing the best areas for investments and red color representing areas linked with hazardous or high-risk loans (Figure 2). Today, redlining maps look almost identical to the socio-economic maps of the region today, with areas in Southeast San Diego being majority working-class neighborhoods.
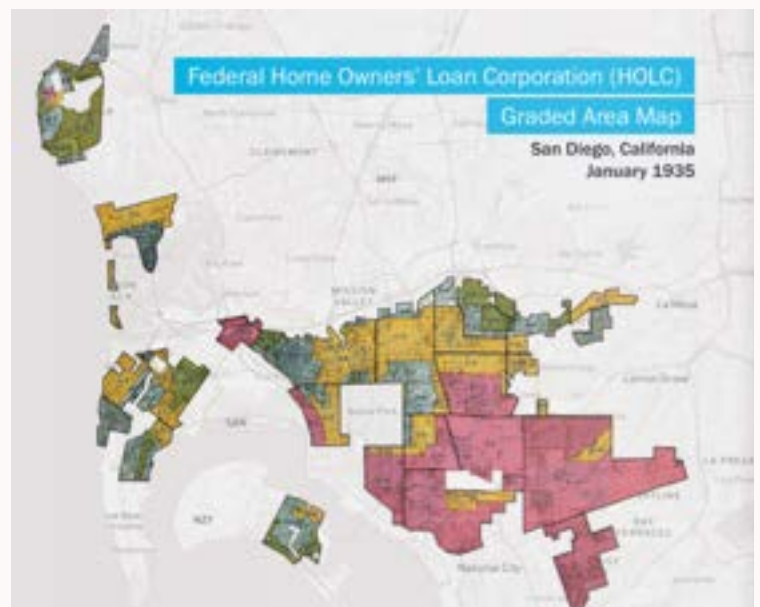
Figure 2: Shows 1935 HOLC Investment areas colored by grade with A (green "best") and D (red "hazardous"). The map shows red areas considered high-risk for lenders, are in the southeastern neighborhoods of San Diego, including Logan Heights and Paradise Hills. In contrast, areas in La Jolla, Point Loma, Mission Hills, and Coronado, were given the highest scores. Source: Mapping Inequality Redlining in New Deal America. LISC San Diego.

PERMIT LOT SPLITTING AND BUILDING MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Some cities across the West Coast are adopting zoning reforms to fight segregation through infill development. A notable example is the City of Portland's "Residential Infill Project," which sets a new standard by allowing the construction of up to four homes on almost any residential lot. This type of reform re-legalizes the construction of missing middle housing, including ADUs, duplexes, fourplexes, six plexes, and cottage courts (See Figure 3)..

San Diego, like Portland, should allow all homeowners to subdivide their property into a minimum of four parcels of land, with the option to develop additional dwellings on each plot for financial benefits. Over time, smaller, well-designed units will help keep housing prices down and attract a diverse market of buyers and renters, including seniors, single people and first-time homebuyers.

A note on California's Senate Bills 9 and 10

In 2020, California legislators introduced Senate Bill 9 to permit lot splitting for duplexes and fourplexes, and Senate Bill 10 to permit small apartment buildings near transit. These bills are modest attempts to end exclusionary single-family zoning and build more housing near transit. Policymakers should support these bills, or local iterations of them, to create more naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) for first-time homebuyers and working-class people of color, desegregate neighborhoods, and reduce VMT and GHG emissions.
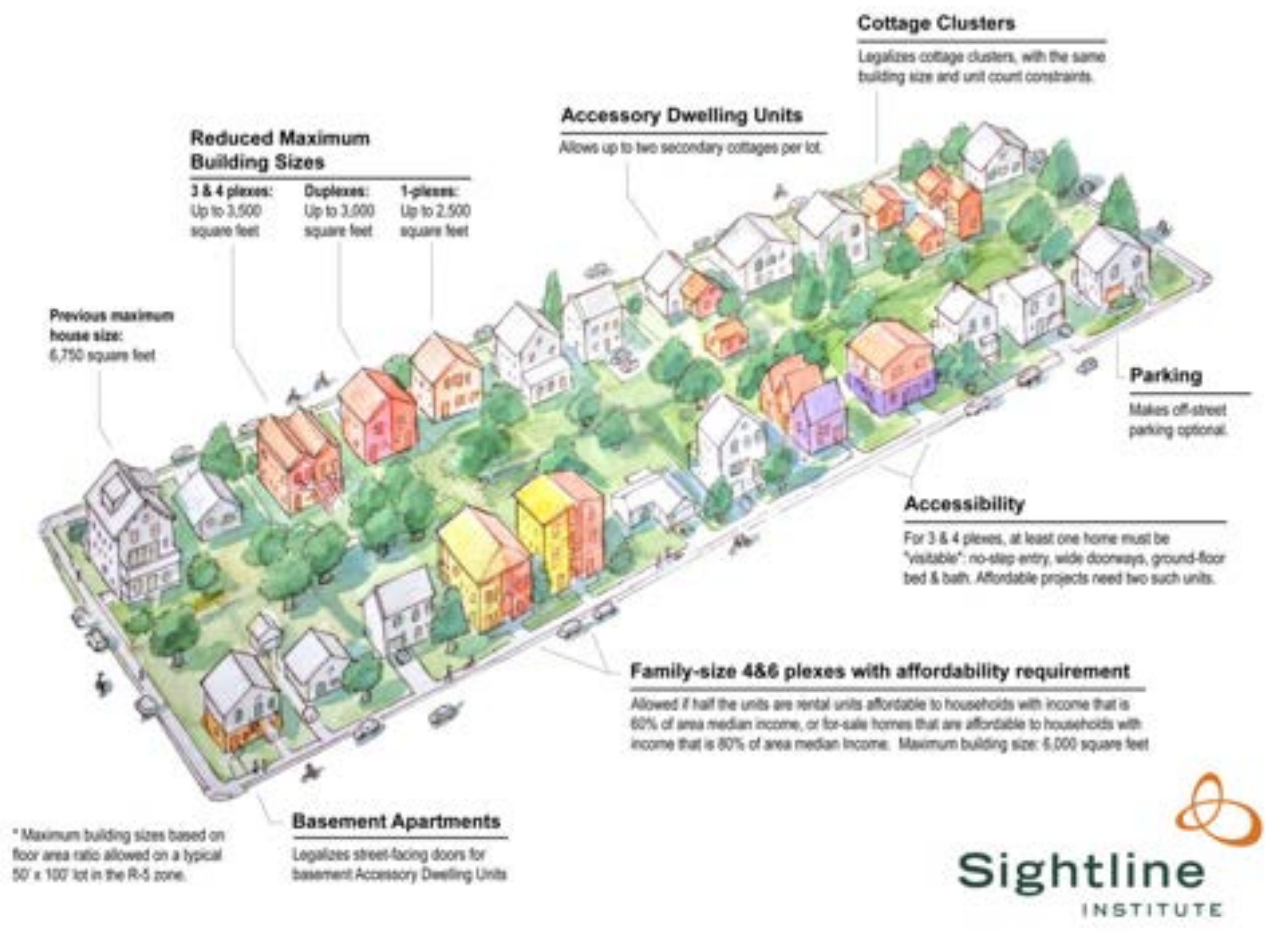
Figure 3. Source: Portland's Residential Infill Project, Sightline Institute

BUILD MORE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also known as "granny flats," "backyard cottages," and "casitas," are smaller, more affordable homes built on existing single family home lots. They may be free standing or attached to the main house and have been identified by local and state governments as a key strategy to address the housing crisis.

ADUs have the potential to provide high-quality housing at a low cost, particularly in areas where new development is severely restricted and single-family homes are frequently out of reach for many. ADUs are inherently affordable because, in addition to being small and cheaper to construct, they make use of existing land, buildings, and infrastructure.

California has passed many pieces of legislation to permit and expedite ADU construction in existing communities. For instance, the City of San Diego adopted groundbreaking local ADU rules and regulations, particularly through its ADU Bonus Program, which allows building more deed-restricted and naturally affordable ADU homes in existing communities near jobs and transit.

Nevertheless, barriers still exist for working-class people of color. Policymakers need to explore additional incentives, financing options, and grants to make ADUs more accessible to more homeowners and renters.

A note on Single Room Occupancy homes:

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) homes are a form of housing typically aimed at low-income residents who rent small, furnished single rooms with a bed, some furniture and small appliances, typically with communal kitchens and restrooms. In San Diego, many SROs are located in downtown San Diego, are much older housing stock, and are the last option before homelessness for vulnerable residents. Policymakers should preserve, rehabilitate, and build more SROs to improve and expand this critical housing safety net to reach housing and climate goals. More modern examples of communal housing should also be explored.

REMOVE RESTRICTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

To create more sustainable deed-restricted and naturally occurring affordable housing, cities must remove restrictive design standards. Restrictive design standards may include setting arbitrary height limits, building setback requirements from property lines, and floor-area ratio (FAR) restrictions that can limit the amount of housing a lot may have.

Unfortunately, these design standards are still being perpetuated in modern planning. For example, under the City of San Diego draft Clairemont CPU, "Building height shall transition under an established 45-degree angled building envelope plane sloping inward from the first 30 feet of a structure to the maximum structure height, along a major street facing opposite to residentially zoned property." To allow for more homes, cities should revise these and other restrictive design standards, including height limits and setbacks.

Alternatively, form-based codes and other innovative building design standards should be explored by city planners. The Form-Based Code Institute's "Library of Codes" has resources on designing vibrant mixed-use and integrated cities.

SUPPORT INCLUSIONARY HOUSING POLICIES

Inclusionary housing policies are a variety of strategies to create more deed-restricted affordable housing. Generally, these policies require a percentage of new housing development to be deed-restricted affordable, pay an in-lieu fee toward an affordable housing fund, or develop or contribute to an off-site affordable housing project. They may be a city-wide policy, be included in Community Plan Updates or Specific Plan Amendments, or be project-specific. These policies are important because they help the community capture some of the increased land value that may occur from redevelopment and help prevent displacement.

Well-designed inclusionary ordinances may also mandate onsite affordable housing construction that encourages economic and social integration. These ordinances are important because allowing developers to build affordable housing off-site in already segregated communities may perpetuate existing disparities.

In the San Diego region, many cities do not have an inclusionary housing policy. To meaningfully increase affordable housing production, all jurisdictions should adopt these policies to allow more homes near jobs and transit. Additionally, neighborhood-specific inclusionary percentages may be best for larger municipalities such as San Diego and the County, where socioeconomic conditions and needs vary greatly.

The City of San Diego's inclusionary housing requirement is only 4% despite the fact that housing requirements in California generally range from 10-15%. A more robust percentage requirement will be needed to help the city meet the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Assessment target of 108,036 homes for the 2021-2029 period.

A note on Inclusionary Housing:

Policymakers should be mindful not to set too low or too high an inclusionary requirement, resulting in less affordable housing or deter any new housing construction. The exact percentage should be set in consultation with affordable housing advocates, homebuilders, and the community, to ensure enough affordable housing is built and that home builder pro-formas still pencil.

DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUSES

Cities can incentivize developers to produce more deed-restricted homes through affordable housing bonus programs. These programs typically allow developers to build more homes in a project in exchange for guaranteeing a percentage of homes are affordable. Other bonus incentives may include fast-track permit approvals, lower parking requirements, and impact fee waivers or deferrals.

A well-designed affordable housing bonus program can generate numerous benefits for communities seeking to increase housing affordability and develop diverse neighborhoods. It can mitigate the symptoms of racial and economic segregation plaguing cities today, including crime, failing schools, and social instability, by permitting more affordable homes in job and opportunity rich areas.

The City of San Diego has a robust affordable housing bonus program other cities should emulate. The city's program allows for a maximum of 50 percent more homes if a home builder ensures 15 percent of the base density units are affordable. The program has resulted in a significant increase in projects and deed-restricted affordable housing. Governments should develop similar programs designed to their local context and consider ways to implement AB 2345, a 2020 law that expands the state's density bonus law.

REPURPOSE PUBLIC LAND FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT

Land is one of the most valuable resources available to governments and agencies to fight against the climate and housing crises. Specifically, public land can provide ample opportunities for more affordable housing near jobs and transit due to the reduced to eliminated upfront cost of purchasing land. However, without consistent policies centered on equity and sustainability, public lands may end up being underutilized. An unfortunate example of this is SDSU West.

SDSU West is a major redevelopment project on once City-owned land near existing jobs and transit in Mission Valley. While there are laudable community benefits included in the project, the City of San Diego could only secure a 10% deed-restricted affordable housing commitment. Additionally, the project site (135 acres with a dedicated trolley station) could have accommodated much more housing than the 4,600 units permitted.

Moving forward, similar projects on public land at Tailgate Park in the East Village, Sports Arena in Midway, and the NAVWAR Revitalization Project in Old Town should require a higher inclusionary housing percentage and maximize housing potential. Governments should also partner with affordable housing developers and subject matter experts on how to further maximize public lands for affordable housing by leveraging existing state and federal tax credits and other programs.

Transit Agencies as Housing Agencies

Local transit agencies, Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD), are exploring and/or developing housing projects on transit station adjacent, agency-owned land. This is a key step to alleviate the housing crisis while incentivizing transit use and building more sustainable communities.

MTS and NCTD would benefit from hiring housing experts onto staff. Housing development is a complex issue, and having internal staff with expertise and focus on housing can more efficiently and effectively maximize transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities on agency-owned land near transit stops.

REPURPOSE MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSES

With more than 72 golf courses throughout the San Diego region, repurposing unused or underutilized golf courses is a unique opportunity to meet the region's ambitious housing needs and address water scarcity at a time when golf is losing popularity and water prices continue to rise.

Many municipal golf courses in our region operate at a loss and must be subsidized by taxpayers. The JC Resorts-operated Crossings at Carlsbad, for example, had net losses of $3 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 (before the start of the coronavirus pandemic). According to numbers reported by the golf industry itself, only a reported 67% of all public-agency golf facilities made enough revenue in 2019 to cover all onsite expenses.

Repurposing municipal golf courses will help alleviate financial impacts to taxpayers and, most importantly, provide space for the construction of affordable housing units and parkland. Additionally, cities could benefit by saving water and natural resources used to maintain those golf courses.

Riverwalk San Diego

The City of San Diego is taking steps to shift regional planning from car-oriented development to transit-oriented development with projects such as Riverwalk San Diego, which is anticipated to transform the Riverwalk Golf Course in Mission Valley into a 200-acre transit-oriented, walkable neighborhood with integrated, deed-restricted affordable housing units onsite.

However, while the housing development proposal on Riverwalk would yield 10% of onsite affordable housing, municipal golf courses region-wide represent untapped potential for the type of affordable housing units needed to combat the housing and climate crises.

The Environmental Impact of Golf Courses

Golf courses have negative impacts on the environment due to pesticide and immense water usage. According to a 2015 CBS News article, "an average 18-hole course uses 90 million gallons of water each year. That's enough to fill 136 Olympic-sized swimming pools." Many golf courses abuse or utilize sensitive habitats. In San Diego, "ReWild Mission Bay" is a campaign to restore the natural wetlands in the northeast corner of Mission Bay, which advocates for the Mission Bay golf course to be moved entirely to accommodate sea-level rise.

ESTABLISH COMMERCIAL LINKAGE FEES

New commercial development generates new jobs, many of which are low-wage, creating a demand for housing for new workers. When this happens, developers can be required to pay "commercial linkage fees" or fees charged to developers of new office or retail properties to fund affordable housing projects. All new non-residential development, including retail centers, industrial or manufacturing facilities, and other commercial projects, may be subject to linkage fees.

Commercial linkage fees are a popular approach to produce housing near jobs. A regional commercial linkage fee has the potential to generate thousands of low-income housing units near new jobs that are created in San Diego. This approach would particularly benefit municipalities that lack the resources and funds to increase their affordable housing supply.

Currently, the City of San Diego is the only city in the region with commercial linkage fees. However, its set fees are at a lower level than what is economically and legally feasible. San Diego should re-evaluate its set fees, and other jurisdictions should research and adopt similar fees or coordinate on developing a regional fee.

ON THE HORIZON: EXPLORE SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

While the above recommendations play an important role in market solutions, it is also critical to acknowledge that market solutions alone cannot solve the housing affordability crisis, and local governments must explore building government-owned housing, also known as social housing. To date, the United States has failed to learn from successful models that many developed countries employ to provide affordable, inclusive, and well-maintained public housing.

Approximately 1.2 million households are living in public housing units across the United States (the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) administers about 200 public housing units).   This number is simply not enough for a country with a population of over 330 million.

For decades, the U.S. approach to public housing as "poor-only" housing has proved counterproductive, increasing racial segregation and concentrated poverty in lower-income neighborhoods. Instead of employing public housing as a program for the poor, cities in the U.S. should approach public housing as a key policy solution to increase the affordable housing supply in all neighborhoods.

Social Housing Key Points:

- Social housing is large-scale housing built and owned by a government authority.
- Social housing models can be universalist (open to a broad cross-section of the population) or targeted (primarily available to low-income, vulnerable populations, etc.).
- Social mixing is a key objective of social housing in many countries. In cities like Vienna, Austria, social housing is available to people of broad incomes, and it is located in desirable areas near transit, shops, and schools.
- Social housing's three main sources of financing include 1) rental income from tenants; 2) borrowing by the social housing provider; 3) payments and /or subsidies from others, including governments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of safe, quality, and affordable housing as a critical kind of infrastructure for families and communities to thrive. As California's economy moves forward, exploration and investment in social housing development could be a key component of a more sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, where all residents have a safe, affordable place to call home.

A note on Social Housing Legislation in California:

On February 2nd, 2021, Assembly Member Alex Lee introduced the "Social Housing Act of 2021" (AB-387), a bill that would establish a California Social Housing Council within the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency to study and recommend social housing policies to the legislature by 2024. If passed, this bill would change the state's housing system at a time when the housing market—dominated by private developers—has failed millions of California households.

Case Study: Social Housing in Vienna, Austria

Social housing has proved extremely successful in the city of Vienna, Austria, which, in 2019, was named the best city for quality of life for the tenth year in a row. In Vienna, private developers who work with the city government to build social housing must allow the city to rent out half of the new developments to low-income residents; the developer will then rent the remaining units to low- and moderate-income households, allowing affordable housing to be accessible to people at all income levels. The city government controls rents so no one pays more than 20 to 25 % of their income for housing.

Even if their household income rises, inhabitants in Vienna's social housing projects are never required to leave, allowing a large number of low- and moderate-income households to live in affordable housing. The mixture of residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds aids in social integration and ensures that social housing projects do not devolve into middle-class enclaves or become concentrations of poverty.

Above: Wohnpark Alt-Erlaa Social Housing in Vienna

STRATEGY #2: INVEST IN EXISTING COMMUNITIES & PREVENT DISPLACEMENT

Investing in existing communities and neighborhoods rather than in new sprawl developments outside of urban areas can improve the quality of life for low-income and overburdened people while also preventing resident displacement. This section provides a number of strategies to support and revitalize existing communities, as well as a call to action for local governments to preserve affordable housing and strengthen tenant protections.

IDENTIFY VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Before anti-displacement policies can be developed, governments and agencies need to identify which vulnerable communities are at risk from displacement. Historically, displacement may occur when new private and/or public capital investment enters a community, bringing new residents and increasing the area's cost of living while forcing existing residents to move someplace less desirable.

Today, displacement may occur in areas where key infrastructure is threatened by climate change (water scarcity, road and rail erosion, flooding, pest infestation, etc.). Cities must address the threat of displacement to working-class people of color, who are particularly vulnerable to rising housing costs and the climate crisis.

Cities should also be proactive in engaging with community and place-based organizations and residents in determining the level of risk displacement may pose to their communities. Once identified, residents and policymakers can begin to craft anti-displacement policies specific to a community's unique needs.

The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership's "Guide to Measuring Neighborhood Change to Understand and Prevent Displacement" provides helpful context, definitions, and resources for cities to identify, track, and prevent displacement.

PRESERVE EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Municipal governments and local agencies must pursue funding from federal, state, and local sources to preserve affordable housing, stabilize communities of concern, and prevent displacement. Retaining both deed-restricted and naturally occurring affordable housing in revitalizing neighborhoods near transit will also ensure that low-income families and individuals have access to better housing opportunities and quality of life benefits. In addition, programs that prevent or limit housing deterioration can be more cost-effective than building new affordable housing units.

Federal agencies, particularly the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), can provide considerable assistance, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), to finance affordable housing rehabilitation and preservation. These programs can also help keep homes well-maintained with safe roofs, working plumbing, and electrical systems to keep residents healthy and safe.

Locally, governments and agencies should consider emulating or partnering with the County of San Diego's "Innovative Housing Trust Fund," which in 5 years has spurred $560 million in private and public investment to support 1,400 homes across 20 affordable housing projects, all from $50 million County funds.

Above: affordable, for sale housing (Credit: San Diego Housing Commission)

Above: affordable housing, credits: City Heights CDC (left) San Diego Housing Commission (middle, right)

SUPPORT AND EXPAND EXISTING PROGRAMS

Programs such as HUD's Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), known more commonly as Section 8 vouchers, should be supported and expanded. HCVs are a housing subsidy paid to the landlord directly by local public housing agencies, who are authorized by HUD to expand them on behalf of the participating tenants. Both tenant-based and project-based HCVs, emergency COVID-19 rental assistance programs, and other state and local programs designed to keep families in their homes must also be promoted and shared widely to ensure vulnerable populations are aware of these resources.

A note on Source-of-Income Discrimination:

In California, it is illegal to discriminate against a person's source of income in determining rent-worthiness. State and local laws prevent landlords from declining a tenant based on a household receiving rental assistance from any federal, state, local or nonprofit-administered benefit or subsidy program. Discrimination against income sources only perpetuates housing injustice, and local governments and agencies should strictly enforce source-of-income discrimination laws.

PROMOTE COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Community land trusts (CLTs) are non-profit organizations that work together with community partners, city governments, housing developers, and other non-profits to secure land in which affordable housing can be built and preserved for generations. These organizations enforce housing requirements, such as mandating the number of affordable units and restricting resale prices and are a key anti-displacement tool.

Today, there are more than 260 CLTs in the U.S. Successful examples of CLTs creating housing opportunities in California include:

- In 2006, the Irvine City Council established the Irvine Community Land Trust (ICLT). Since then, the ICLT has created 407 units of permanently affordable housing units. An additional 68 ownership townhomes are projected to open in 2022.
- The Oakland Community Land Trust (OakCLT) in Alameda County. OakCLT assists Oakland residents in finding affordable homes, becoming homeowners, building wealth, and leaving a nest egg for their families.

In addition to preserving affordable housing, CLTs can also play a significant role in helping cities with green infrastructure such as community solar. A notable example is the Homestead Community Land Trust in King County, Washington, which has collaborated with a local non-profit to facilitate bulk purchasing and installation of solar panels for interested CLT homeowners.

Cities in San Diego can elevate the work of CLTs through policies that facilitate CLTs' access to land, provide seed funding and technical assistance, help CLTs access various funding sources, and provide tax initiatives.

Irvine Community Land Trust (ICLT) development project.

> **A note on Housing Co-operatives**
>
> Renting or buying a home are not the only two options people have to secure shelter. One form of living arrangement that can also provide housing for community members is housing co-operatives (housing co-ops). Housing co-ops operate as democratically controlled corporations in which each household owns a share which entitles them to a housing unit.
>
> The term "cooperative" refers to the enterprise's organizational structure, not the unit type. This model can be used for single family homes, townhomes, apartments, mobile home parks— virtually any type of housing construction.
>
> Because they operate on an at-cost basis, co-ops are often less expensive than rental apartments and maybe a financially appealing option in cities where the cost of living is high.

ESTABLISH A TENANT PROTECTION BOARD

A Tenant Protection Board can serve as a mediation and arbitration resource for tenants, helping them navigate issues like landlord abuses and wrongful evictions that can lead to displacement. It offers a more equitable process for low-income and non-native English speakers who may struggle to understand and exercise their rights. Major cities such as New York and San Francisco have already established tenant protection boards.

The enactment of a San Diego Tenant Protection Ordinance would align the City of San Diego's current "Tenants Right to Know" policy with state law (AB 1482), and also offer an opportunity to strengthen the local Just Cause ordinance, which is an important policy tool to prevent displacement and promote neighborhood stability.

CREATE A RENT REGISTRY

As housing becomes out of reach to more San Diegans, rent control and rent stabilization policies may offer a solution to maintain affordability. The definitions of rent control and rent stabilization can be grey and vary by jurisdiction, but generally, rent control sets rent increases at a specific rate, while rent stabilization allows for rent increases of a fixed amount over time. Both policy umbrellas have been heavily debated and well-researched and come with many proclaimed benefits and drawbacks.

Policymakers should fully explore rent control and rent stabilization policies to determine the specific pros and cons for San Diego families. The Urban Institutes' "Rent Control: What Does the Research Tell Us about the Effectiveness of Local Action?" report offers helpful insights on the history, past implementation, and outcomes of rent control and stabilization policies in the United States.

The housing crisis requires all policy tools to be explored, and all parties should be willing to suspend previous notions to understand what may help in today's inequitable housing market.

ON THE HORIZON: EXPLORE RENT CONTROL AND STABILIZATION POLICIES

Another strategy to protect tenants involves the creation of a city-wide Rent Registry. Property owners would be required to annually update their property information in the Rent Registry during a time period determined by the City and update information in the registry whenever there is a change in tenancy or rent. A Rent Registry will allow San Diego to better monitor housing data such as housing vacancies, rental rates, evictions, and tenant turnover.

More current information about the rental market, renter's living conditions, and eviction data will provide real-time information to policymakers and will increase the effectiveness of programs for renters, such as rent relief, code enforcement efforts, and more result in more informed tenants. The registry may also be able to track displacement trends in the community, alerting policymakers for possible interventions.

STRATEGY 3: PROMOTE EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND HEALTH

Equitable, just, and healthy communities are the ultimate goals of environmental justice. Approaches that integrate equity, justice, and health are crucial to protect vulnerable populations and bring benefits to create a more sustainable San Diego region. This section covers eight approaches for promoting home ownership, community engagement and good jobs for people of color, as well as recommendations to build energy-efficient homes and expand tree coverage in neighborhoods.

PROMOTE HOME OWNERSHIP FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

The racial wealth gap between White and Black households and other minorities is wide and persistent. A 2019 survey by the Federal Reserve showed that the median white family had eight times the wealth of the median Black family and five times the wealth of the median Latino or Hispanic family.

Homeownership is a significant driver of wealth creation in the United States, and decades of housing discrimination is part of the reason why Black and Latino or Hispanic families are less likely to own their homes than white families with comparable incomes.

The San Diego region, much like the rest of the United States, needs to advance policy solutions to rectify years of discrimination and racial segregation that continue impacting communities of color today. Actions include:

1. Targeting homeownership subsidies for first-time homebuyers.
2. Advancing policies that increase access to down payment assistance, and increase access to affordable credit.
3. Partnering with lenders, financial institutions, and affordable housing and community organizations to share program information with working-class people of color.
4. Ending exclusionary zoning laws to permit more affordable mixed-income housing options.

Promoting homeownership for communities of color is a key step to achieve a sustainable and equitable region. A helpful resource is the State of Oregon's "Report on Addressing Barriers to Home Ownership for People of Color," which offers a clear analysis of existing barriers and concrete recommendations to expand housing opportunities and provide financial security to Blacks, Latinos, and other historically discriminated groups.

CONDUCT ROBUST COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

For too long, working-class people of color have been left out of meaningful opportunities to inform and shape key policies and projects impacting their neighborhoods, including housing. Moving forward, governments and agencies should invest in authentic engagement and outreach practices, including:

- Establishing relationships and partnering with community and place-based organizations to conduct outreach in communities inhabited by working-class people of color.
- In collaboration with community and place-based organizations, facilitating paid focus groups composed of community members to listen and understand their lived experiences in relation to proposed policies and projects.

Following equitable community outreach strategies outlined in The Greenlining Institutes' "Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs" guidebook and "Coping with Climate Disasters through Community Partnerships" guide to ensure inclusive best practices are in place.

ENSURE GOOD JOBS

Access to affordable housing is critical for any community, and it requires both providing adequate housing and raising the incomes of working families. Infill development is the most effective way to achieve this, and ensuring that there are strong job quality standards including prevailing wage and skilled and trained workforce, or Project Labor Agreement (PLA) requirements on any new or rehabilitated housing—especially those receiving any public support or benefit—creates a long-term pipeline of quality jobs that puts housing in reach for more working families.

CREATE JOBS PIPELINES FOR WORKING-CLASS PEOPLE OF COLOR

Equally important to ensuring good jobs is asking the question: Good jobs for whom?

Working-class people of color deserve equitable access to good jobs in the green economy, which will require a concerted effort by governments, workforce and educational institutions, unions, and community organizations to create viable jobs pipelines from communities of concern.

Key stakeholders should work together in good faith to equitably address existing barriers for low-income workers looking to enter lucrative fields in the building and construction trades. That may include pre-apprenticeship programs located in working-class neighborhoods, partnerships with community-based workforce organizations, robust community outreach, and project-specific workforce requirements to ensure diversity and inclusion in key industries.

Racial justice is worker justice, and the transition to a green economy should not perpetuate long-standing inequities in the workforce.

CREATE HEALTHY, ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

For far too many people, not only is renting or buying a home pricey, but the home itself is unhealthy, expensive to operate, and not climate-resilient. As the movement to electrify homes grows, policymakers must also address asbestos, lead, mold, and other dangerous living conditions, as well as associated energy inefficiency costs that come with older housing stock.

Above: an electric heat pump, an efficient way of heating and cooling a home

This change may be accomplished through federal programs including:

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Home Program
- The Department of Health and Human Services' Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program
- The Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program
- The Department of Energy's Weatherization Readiness Fund

Local governments should research and understand how they may further leverage and advocate to expand these programs for San Diegans, with an emphasis on prioritizing working-class people of color.

PLAN FOR AN ALL-ELECTRIC FUTURE

With natural (methane) gas being the third-largest source of emissions in the region and electricity becoming cleaner, it is critical that San Diego transition to all-electric homes. To ensure equity is centered, and workers are not harmed in this transition to clean energy homes, all-electric policies must follow careful steps and be vetted by communities and people most impacted, namely:

1 Engage Working-Class People of Color and Workers: Communities and workers most impacted by all-electric policies should be engaged from the beginning to understand their unique needs, address their concerns, and ensure a just transition for all.

2 Adopt All-Electric Reach Codes for New Construction: Communities should adopt all-electric reach codes requiring the installation of electric appliances and wiring in all new construction, with limited to no exemptions. Over 50 California cities have adopted these codes, providing an easy template to advance building electrification.

3 Create Municipal Retrofit Plans: Local governments should develop Municipal Retrofit Plans to electrify government buildings, starting in communities populated by working-class people of color and with high-paying union jobs. These plans may be completed with an audit of City buildings, and tied to other energy efficiency strategies.

4 Create Community Retrofit Plans: Existing building retrofits will be the most difficult step to electrifying housing stock and meeting climate goals, but a critical one. Local governments should consult with subject matter experts and the community before engaging in this action, and should be proactive in tracking on-going state and federal conversations about how to develop all-electric retrofit plans for private buildings.

All-electric policies will take time and must address the interlinkages between energy, poverty, and inequity. Cities should be patient and commit to robust engagement that centers equity and sustainability to create climate resilient homes.

PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICIES

As a result of discriminatory land-use planning, numerous communities inhabited by working-class people of color are located near dangerous and toxic facilities that harm these San Diegans in their own backyards.

Governments and agencies should utilize existing laws, regulations, and tools to identify these communities and prioritize investments and land-use changes to clean up these neighborhoods to promote environmental justice and public health.

Cities should also avoid permitting new homes near freeways, high-traffic and truck routes, recycling and waste disposal facilities, heavy industrial and manufacturing centers, and fossil fuel infrastructure. The California Environmental Justice Alliance "Environmental and Housing Justice Policy Platform" includes various solutions to consider to center environmental justice policies in housing and land-use planning.

PROTECT AND INCREASE SHADE TREES

A common concern about building more homes in cities is that it leaves less space for trees and other urban greenery. Fortunately, there are great examples of West Coast cities where housing infill and tree infill can go hand in hand. For instance, City data from Seattle's urban areas indicates that trees remained the same in areas that have been zoned for commercial and multi-family housing growth. Meanwhile, tree coverage dropped in Seattle's suburban single-family zones, where density remained the same.

Coupling infill development and shade trees is only possible through intentional policymaking. Portland, for example, has established laws requiring developers to meet a minimum tree cover density next to new developments. As a result, the city has protected its urban forests while expanding its housing supply. Evidence from Seattle and Portland shows that San Diego can embrace infill development and increase tree cover in its neighborhoods.

It is estimated that San Diego—where tree coverage is mostly in white, wealthy neighborhoods—needs to plant 4 million trees to achieve tree equity. As the region grows and climate changes, it will be crucial to accelerate efforts to conserve and increase shade trees. Cities that want to start or further their urban forestry efforts can turn to organizations like Cities4Forests for technical assistance, financial advice, peer-to-peer learning, and scientific advice. The nonprofit Tree San Diego can help inventory, plant, and care for urban forests through community partnerships.
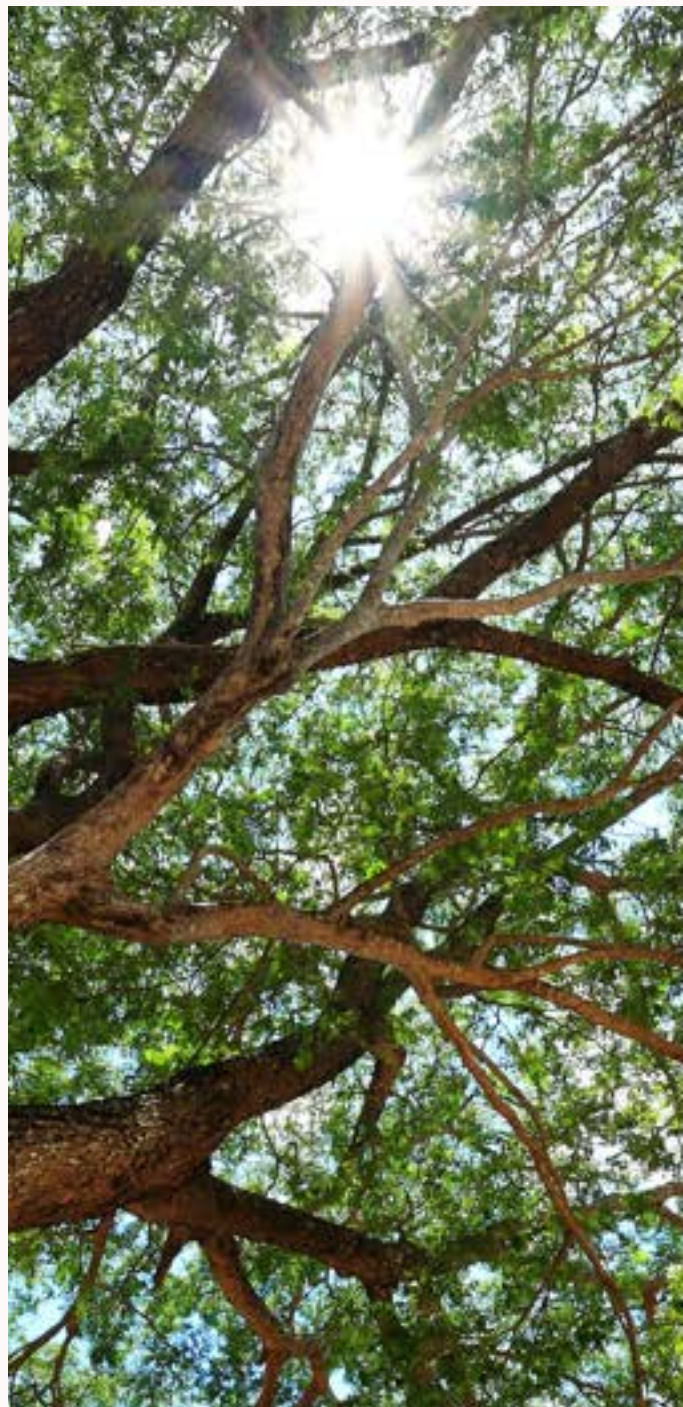
DID YOU KNOW?

Planting trees can be used as a climate mitigation tool to cool lower-income neighborhoods experiencing the urban heat island (UHI) effect, which increases energy costs (e.g., for air conditioning), air pollution levels, and heat-related illness and mortality.

CONCLUSION

How and where the San Diego region develops in the years ahead will determine progress on key environmental, economic and social issues, including affordable housing and climate change. To tackle the region's housing and climate crises, cities must recognize and address the negative impacts of sprawl, change their local development practices, and advance bold policies to accelerate housing construction in existing communities.

COMPLEMENTARY POLICIES TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT, CREATE GOOD JOBS, AND ADVANCE EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH ARE NECESSARY TO CREATE THRIVING, CLIMATE-SAFE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL.

These local efforts will be crucial to achieving other significant targets, including the new National Climate Task Force 2030 GHG reduction goals, the globally adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Accords, and new efforts to align with UN IPCC's recommendation to limit warming to 1.5 °C as outlined in the report, Global Warming of 1.5 °C.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADUs - (Accessory Dwelling Units). A subsidiary housing unit attached or on the same lot as a primary housing unit.

Affordable Housing - Housing that according to California state law does not exceed "more than 30 percent of gross household income with variations".

CAL Fire - (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). A statewide government-run organization that responds to emergencies and fire-related incidents.

CAP - (Climate Action Plan). Climate Action Plans are strategic plans implemented by various levels of government to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and other harmful environmental effects.

CEQA - (The California Environmental Quality Act). Legislation passed by the California state government that created various regulations to promote environmental protection.

CLTs - (Community Land Trusts). Community-led nonprofit organizations designed to hold land in trust for the benefit of a community.

CPUs - (Community Plan Updates). According to the City of San Diego are plans made by a community that "contains specific proposals for future land uses and public improvements in a given community."

DRAH- (Deed-Restricted Affordable Housing). Refers to affordable housing that is kept affordable through mechanisms such as government or philanthropic subsidy.

Exclusionary Zoning - Laws that place restrictions on the types of homes that can be built in a particular neighborhood.

UD - The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Inclusionary Housing - Refers to programs and strategies that promote the creation of affordable housing when new developments occur.

IPCC - (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). The United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.

NOAH - (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing). Refers to residential rental properties that are affordable, but are unsubsidized by any federal program. Their rents are relatively low compared to the regional housing market.

Redlining - A discriminatory practice that puts services (financial and otherwise) out of reach for residents of certain areas based on race or ethnicity.

RHNA - (Regional Housing Needs Assessment). An assessment required by each jurisdiction in California that determines how much housing is needed in a specified jurisdiction.

Sprawl - Generally refers to uncontrolled, outward expansion of commercial and residential areas that converts rural undeveloped land to urban land.

UGB - (Urban Growth Boundary.) A policy tool that separates urban areas from the surrounding natural and agricultural lands, or greenbelts.

UHI - (Urban Heat Island Effect). Occurs when cities replace natural land cover with dense concentrations of pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat.

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