

# Pima County Affordable Housing Taskforce Recommendations

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Submitted June 10, 2022

County Administrator Jan Leshner empaneled a 21-member taskforce of local industry experts from February 4 through May 27, 2022, to recommend means of improving housing affordability in Pima County. Pima County Community and Workforce Development retained Donelson Consulting to facilitate the process, by which the taskforce arrived at consensus-based recommendations with supporting documentation.

Given the critical need for housing across the entire spectrum of affordability, the taskforce stressed the urgency and importance of county leadership immediately identifying a comprehensive funding approach to begin addressing affordable housing. The taskforce recommends the county proceed with a PAYGO strategy. Pima County has an Integrated Infrastructure Plan in place, which is currently silent on affordable housing, but could incorporate these needs.

Over six working meetings from February 18 through April 29, the taskforce identified two strategies for action: 1) to quickly produce more housing across the housing continuum and 2) to improve access to affordable housing.

## Build More Across the Housing Continuum

The taskforce recommends building more housing across the housing continuum. This includes producing not only affordable housing, but market rate housing more quickly, since insufficient supply is squeezing affordability in all parts of the market.<sup>1</sup> As part of their work, the taskforce defined needs across the affordable housing continuum.

- **Recommendation #1: A regional housing body facilitates building more housing** - As noted in the Action Plan, the City of Tempe provides a strong governance framework; the City of Tucson is also a potential partner, as they recently established a nonprofit development entity for this purpose. Establish a regional housing affordability body that facilitates the production and development of and integration of housing related services. Already, Pima County has begun an inventory of its real property for this purpose. The regional body (including Marana, Oro Valley, and other jurisdictions) could promote solutions for faster production of housing across the continuum.
- **Recommendation #2: Streamlined development processes promote housing density, infill, and more affordable housing** - The first step in this process is to gain a clearer understanding of what developers need. A starting point is to build upon the City of Tucson's recent surveys of the development community (see supporting document #9). The Action Plan recommends ways to assess needs of both affordable and market rate housing developers. Strategic updates can be made to the zoning code and faster-track regulatory processes implemented to incentivize affordable housing to meet the taskforce's stated goal of promoting de-concentration and integration of desegregation. Affordable housing goals should be prioritized within the context of broader regional goals for water conservation and open space management.

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<sup>1</sup> "At present, we have a 20-year low in MLS supply and a 20-year low in new home community counts, and unfortunately, neither of those problems are going to be solved anytime soon... Prices are currently at historic levels, and while this occurs for a variety of reasons, the main culprit is supply." [Will White of Land Advisors Organization Answers Questions on State of Tucson New Home Market, May 20, 2022.](#)



- **Recommendation #3: Housing market dashboard drives investment across the continuum** - The first step is to gather baseline data to understand gaps in the market. Although partial data on need exists<sup>2</sup>, core questions and projections remain unanswered. It is not known how much market rate, workforce housing, affordable housing and housing bridging from homelessness is needed now, regionally, and within the next five to ten years. To address these questions, the Action Plan recommends immediately conducting a Value Market Analysis – that is, an assessment as to where different types of housing development investment or intervention strategies are needed to be most effective. This information is also important for neighborhood-level scale understanding of existing concentrations of affordable housing, areas of opportunity to build and places to target regulatory changes within Pima County and across jurisdictions.

### Improve Access to Affordable Housing

The Affordable Housing Taskforce also prioritized the need for improved access to affordable housing. It prioritizes an integrated regional strategy that helps individuals and families make the most of income, promotes timely service delivery, and reduces barriers to attaining safe, adequate housing. The taskforce urged the importance of leveraging local innovations to keep people housed.

- **Recommendation #4: Keeping people housed by reducing barriers to affordable housing** - The first step is to gain a clearer understanding of barriers that prevent maximizing income and hinder timely provision of housing services, especially from the perspective of small landlords. Taskforce members agreed this includes leadership of a regional housing affordability body to guide this work. The Action Plan identifies ways to gain clarity about needs and strategies to support landlords, nonprofit providers, tenants and homeowners. The taskforce recommends controlling more housing for those at risk for housing displacement and providing targeted housing services to keep people housed.
- **Recommendation #5: Leverage innovations** - Taskforce members agreed they would like to understand the impact to date of Community Land Trusts, regionally, as solutions for permanent affordable housing. The University of Arizona and other universities could evaluate this work.

An Action Plan, which accompanies these recommendations, identifies specific funding strategies and actions steps. The Action Plan is a working document meant to guide staff as the County leads the implementation of taskforce recommendations and reports quarterly on measurable short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes with time frames determined by the county and the regional housing body. Additionally, these recommendations include a draft charter document based upon the taskforce’s agreement about shared values essential to carrying out its recommendations with fidelity.

### List of Work Products and Supporting Documents

1. [Overview of Strategic Recommendations: Build More and Improve Access](#)
2. [Key Terms and Definitions](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Housing needs identified: Pima County needs at least 27,500 finished lots within the next 5 years for housing; with existing permitting activity of 5,500 homes per year, Pima County is expected to need 27,500 lots within the next 5 years.

Affordable housing needs identified: 12,000 units are available to low-income households and 75,000 units are needed (sources: [People, Communities, and Homes Investment Plan Investing in Tucson’s Infrastructure of Opportunity](#). Adopted by the Tucson Mayor and City Council on January 20, 2021 and [Housing Affordability Strategy for Tucson](#) Adopted by the Tucson Mayor and City Council on December 21, 2021.

Bridging homelessness into housing needs identified: 2,546 supportive housing beds are available in Pima County as of 2018 (last pre-pandemic homelessness count), and 2,000 beds are needed within the next 10 year (source: Scaling Smart Resources, Doing What Works: A system-level path to producing supportive housing in Tucson and Pima County. [Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness Gaps Analysis 2019](#). [Compass Affordable Housing](#).



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3. [Implementation Action Plan](#)
4. [Draft Charter](#)
5. [List of Empaneled Taskforce Members](#)
6. [Taskforce Meeting Process \(including public engagement strategies\)](#)
7. [Draft RFP Structure: Value Market Analysis](#)
8. [Financial Access and Barrier Reduction Strategies for Multi-stakeholder Affordable Housing Coalitions to Consider](#)
9. [Scope of Work Considerations for Needs Analysis of Housing Developers](#)
10. [List of Taskforce-identified Stakeholder Coalitions and Networks to Engage](#)
11. [LIHTC Developers List](#)
12. [Summaries of Data Informing Taskforce Priorities](#)
13. [Knowledge Graph Lit Review of Key Reports](#)

