

BUSTING SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Misconceptions about affordable housing drive neighborhood opposition (NIMBYism) to new development and by extension stall construction of much-needed units. This has led to increased development costs and project failures. Resistance to affordable housing is often rooted in a misguided understanding of the true impact of affordable housing.



MYTH #2: DENSITY WILL CHANGE NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

FALSE

Firstly, not all affordable housing is high-density, and not all high-density housing is affordable.

Development of affordable housing in neighborhoods traditionally zoned for single-family homes may change the built environment, but "neighborhood character" is a dog whistle term used by NIMBYs to maintain the status quo, i.e. low density and exclusionary zoning codes. Constructing LIHTC development attracts higher income homebuyers in low-income areas, and lower income residents in higher income areas with low minority populations.

Source: [Stanford GSB](#)



MYTH #4: HOUSING WILL BE SUBSTANDARD AND POORLY MAINTAINED BY AN ABSENT LANDLORD

FALSE

Affordable housing is a public asset that is built to a high standard to meet requirements of multiple funding sources.

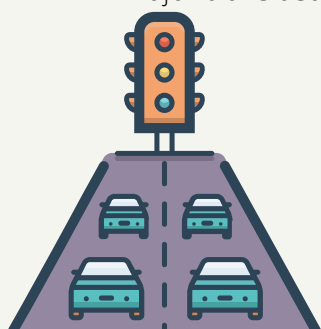
Unlike private, market-rate developers who flip their property for the quickest profit, nonprofit affordable housing developers maintain their property portfolios over the lifespan of the building so that residents can count on long term stability and affordability for 55 years. Mission-focused nonprofits developers, like SCANPH members, provide essential services and maintenance for residents. Many residents moving into LIHTC buildings experience higher quality living standards compared to housing available to voucher holders in the private market. Source: [Turner Center](#)



MYTH #6: PARKING WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO FIND

FALSE

People who live in affordable housing often own fewer cars and drive less. There are few studies with any evidence that prove a demonstrable impact on parking, as affordable housing developers are also required to meet minimum parking requirements established by local zoning codes and state law. The typical household who lives in a LIHTC property spends on average 15% of their income on transportation. AB 744 encourages transit use by reducing parking minimums if a project is located within a half-mile of a major transit stop. Source: [MDPI](#)



MYTH #1: CRIME WILL INCREASE

FALSE

Studies show that affordable housing does not impact crime rates. Research of more distressed neighborhoods finds that affordable housing funded by the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) actually increases surrounding property values and reduces crime rates. In high-opportunity neighborhoods, LIHTC housing has no effect on crime rates. Design features like balconies, open hallways, and common spaces with many visibility points can increase resident and community safety. Source: [National Association of Homebuilders](#)



MYTH #3: THE AREA WILL BECOME A SLUM

FALSE

The term "slum" is a stigmatized slur often used to describe low-income, working class communities of color.

City planners now promote the concept of mixed-income communities because past over-concentration of affordable housing in any one neighborhood does not produce ideal outcomes and communities thrive when they are accessible and inclusive for people of all incomes. LIHTC development revitalizes low-income communities and ensures housing is available for racially and income diverse populations. A study finds that the introduction of affordable housing leads to decreased segregation in lower-income areas.

Source: [Stanford GSB](#)

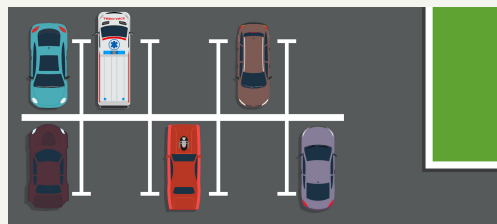


MYTH #5: PROPERTY VALUES WILL DECREASE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

FALSE

Studies have found that affordable housing doesn't have any impact on property values — and in some cases there's a net positive impact, according to the Furman Center for Housing Policy.

Attractive and modestly sized developments constitute the bulk of newly produced affordable housing today. Rehabilitation of distressed properties for affordable housing has proven beneficial to neighboring home values. Neighbors are likely to view quality, affordable housing as preferable to vacant lots or dilapidated buildings. Source: [National Housing Conference](#)



MYTH #7: TRAFFIC WILL GET MUCH WORSE

FALSE

Local governments undergo substantive review processes to examine the impacts of any housing development on the neighborhood to consider potential impacts. Impact fees are often imposed on developers to mitigate any costs or improvements needed, such as pedestrian safety. California addresses traffic congestion by investing in amenities that provide transportation choice, making it safe to walk, bike or ride public transit. A 2018 study found that density and income levels had a significant impact on the number of car trips made by a household. In urban spaces, and as income levels decline, car trips decline. Source: [Portland State University](#)