



**League of Women Voters, San Diego Region
HOUSING ACTION POLICY**

Adopted May 2021

Position in Brief:

The League of Women Voters of San Diego and North County San Diego recognizes that the price and availability of housing can profoundly affect the public's well-being, and the region's quality of life and vitality. The League supports housing as a basic human need and fundamental component of the region's infrastructure.

To implement the League's housing position this action policy will outline strategies and steps to create and preserve housing for all income levels as a foundation for all other economic and social activities. Justifying these actions are national, state, regional, and city League positions.

The Housing Action Policy supports these overall goals:

1. **Create a sufficient affordable housing supply** and livable communities for people of all income levels, distributed throughout the region.
2. **Preserve existing affordable housing** by advocating for preservation incentives, fair tenant and landlord protections, and strategies to address displacement and gentrification.
3. **Safeguard equal, equitable, and fair opportunity of access to housing and remedy discriminatory housing practices** by advocating for government action at all levels.
4. **Promote the use of available and underutilized land resources** in compact development patterns that discourage urban sprawl, match jobs and housing, and reduce vehicle miles traveled.
5. **Advocate for climate action plans and goals** by locating housing near transit and major employment centers, and by the use of sustainable materials and energy sources.
6. **Influence community actions that strengthen the link between housing and health, safety, and well-being**, especially when housing costs are 30% or more of a household's income.
7. **Promote, maintain, and improve existing infrastructure** to fairly distribute costs and amenities to safeguard and benefit the quality of life of all communities.
8. **Educate the public** about the link between affordable housing and the economic vitality of the region, and how affordable housing developments are designed, maintained, and managed according to accepted standards.¹

¹ See Resource section for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) affordable housing standards for design, maintenance, and management.

LWV Positions Justifying Housing Action Policy

(Click links to see all details of a position.

Positions are numbered for linkage within the Housing Action Policy document.)

1. LWVUS
 - a. [Meeting Basic Human Needs](#) as it relates to Housing Action
Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.
 - b. [Resource Management](#) as it relates to Housing
Promote resource conservation, stewardship, and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government. Consideration of environmental, public-health, social and economic impacts of proposed plans and actions; Protection of private property rights commensurate with overall consideration of public health and environmental protection.
 - c. [Urban Policy](#) as it relates to Housing
Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life
2. LWVC
 - a. [Housing and Homelessness](#) as it relates to Housing Action
Support of equal opportunity in housing. Support of measures to provide state programs to increase the supply of safe, decent, and adequate housing for all Californians. Support for action at all levels of government for the provision of affordable housing for all Californians.
 - b. [Homelessness Action Policy](#) as it relates to Housing Action
Support actions to reduce and eliminate homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, throughout the State.
 - c. [Intergovernmental Relationships](#) as it relates to Housing
Flexibility for regional and local governments when administering state authorized and/or funded programs to determine needs, priorities, and the use of funds, consistent with state program objectives.
 - d. [Land Use](#) as it relates to Housing
Support state land use planning that recognizes land as a resource as well as a commodity. The state should establish guidelines and standards for land areas of more than local concern.
 - e. [State & Local Finance](#) as it relates to Housing
Support measures: to ensure revenues both sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services; that contribute to a system of public finance that emphasizes equity and fair sharing of the tax burden as well as adequacy; that include long-range finance methods that meet current and future needs while taking into account the cumulative impact of public debt.
3. LWV San Diego County Regional

- a. Regional Planning as it relates to Housing Action (see page 10)
Review of local housing elements for compliance with state housing element law, which includes addressing regional share goals.
 - b. [Transportation Action Policy](#)
Supports actions that connect people and commerce throughout the region.
4. LWV of San Diego (City League Position) (*Entire position is shown here as contained in the source document.*)
 - a. Housing as it relates to Housing Action (see page 15)
The League of Women Voters of San Diego supports:
 - the development of economically and racially balanced communities in all parts of a city as well as in newly developing areas;
 - inclusionary zoning as a tool to implement a balanced community policy;
 - the use of city-owned land to facilitate the development of low and moderate income housing which includes the following guidelines:
 - long-term leases to developers with discounts to encourage and enable maximum development of low and moderate-income units
 - a minimum of 30% of the units in every development to be made available for low and moderate income housing at rentals set at HUD Section 8 existing fair market rates
 - below-market financing wherever feasible;
 - a more active role by cities in the application for and utilization of available state and federal subsidy programs and innovative financing to increase the supply of low and moderate income housing;
 - restrictive codes or ordinances that would slow down the conversion of apartments to condominiums;
 - public housing as a high priority to assist low income families, elderly, and people with disabilities;
 - modifications in the municipal codes and zoning regulations that would facilitate the development of (1983, 1993) manufactured or modular housing in order to increase the supply of low and moderate income housing;
 - development of manufactured or modular housing on city-owned land to accommodate low and moderate income households. (1978)

LWV San Diego Region Housing Action Policy

Goal 1: Create a sufficient affordable housing supply and livable communities for all income levels, distributed throughout the region.

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a , 1b	2a , 2b , 2c, 2e	3	4

Actions:

- *Create a League Housing Committee to implement the actions in this document*
- *Pursuant to the Housing Element Update process, monitor individual jurisdictions to ensure that they adopt Housing Elements which accommodate their assigned RHNA goals in all income categories; and have meaningful programs to achieve those goals. This will help ensure that sufficient land is designated and zoned with adequate sites to accommodate assigned RHNA goals.²*
- *Monitor implementation of the adopted Housing Elements using the annual progress reports submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development.*
- *Promote the adoption of inclusionary zoning in all jurisdictions countywide.*
- *Advocate for funding at the local, state, and federal levels for affordable housing for lower-income households.*
- *Zone for more affordable and higher density housing in high opportunity communities.*
- *Improve the quality of schools & services in low-income communities.*
- *Broaden zoning in single-family neighborhoods to allow additional forms of housing such as duplexes, rowhomes, townhomes, and bungalow courts.*
- *Set in-lieu fees at a rate sufficient to incentivize developers to build affordable housing.*
- *Support policies such as lowering parking requirements for low/moderate income housing, micro-unit projects, and housing located near transit.*
- *Support innovative housing products and solutions like repurposed shipping containers, modular homes, tiny homes, community land trusts, and co-housing.*
- *Support policies to simplify and streamline permit approval processes in order to reduce costs and create more certainty in the development approval process.*
- *Plan future affordable housing opportunities in an equitable manner throughout the region, preferably in mixed-income communities. Discourage concentration of lower-income units in individual communities.*
- *Support the Housing First policy approach to address the needs of homeless households.*

Goal 2: Preserve existing affordable housing and advocate for fair tenant and landlord protections to address the potential loss of affordable units, displacement, and gentrification.

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a	2a , 2b	3	4

Actions:

² The State Department of Housing and Community Development uses 30 dwelling units per acre as a proxy for identifying sites for low-income housing.

- *Support creation of a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing preservation.*
- *Support naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) incentives for property owners.*
- *Advocate for the preservation of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels when such properties are proposed for conversion to other uses and support the development of new SRO units.*
- *Support programs that minimize relocation and displacement impacts of residents and provide rental priority for those affected by redevelopment.*
- *Fund building code safety and health inspection services sufficiently to monitor and enforce remedial actions to ensure habitable housing for all income levels.*
- *Balance the development of market-rate multi-family housing with incentives to replace any lost affordable units with new affordable units in the same price range.*
- *Maintain an appropriate ratio of long-term rental to short-term rental housing units in order to meet permanent housing needs in all income categories.*
- *Create sufficient incentives to keep vacant units occupied.*

Goal 3: Safeguard equal, equitable, and fair opportunity of access to housing and remedy historic discriminatory housing practices by advocating for government action at all levels.

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a	2a, 2b	3	4

Actions:

- *Advocate for meaningful actions to address significant disparities in housing needs and access to opportunity. Such actions include replacing segregated housing patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.*
- *Support policies, programs, procedures, and laws that address significant disparities in housing needs and access to opportunity consistent with HUD and RHNA goals by providing very-low, low, and moderate-income housing in mixed-income communities.*
- *Review the specific history of housing segregation/inaccessibility studies in the San Diego region, and support policies and procedures to establish and maintain affordable housing.*
- *Monitor developer in-lieu fees collected and how they are spent.*
- *Call for the construction of affordable units in large housing developments.*
- *Encourage the region's jurisdictions to work with financial institutions to rework and reform lending practices that affect low and very low-income residents to make homeownership more attainable as called for in the San Diego Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.*

Goal 4: Promote the use of available and underutilized land resources in compact development patterns that discourage urban sprawl, match jobs and housing, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a 1b	2a, 2b 2d	3a 3b	4

Actions:

- *Monitor the enforcement of the provision in the Surplus Lands Act which requires public entities to offer land to low/moderate income housing developers before offering it to the general market.*
- *Promote an improved intraregional relationship between jobs and housing with a balance between the location of low-wage jobs and the number of housing units affordable to low-wage workers.*
- *Support multi-family housing in transit priority areas.*
- *Support rezoning to repurpose land for affordable housing which had formerly been used for retail, commercial, or other purposes.*
- *Future housing opportunities should be focused in existing and planned urban centers and villages rather than in low density rural areas in order to promote growth in a more compact manner. In addition to reducing VMT and greenhouse gas emissions, such a policy also promotes the preservation of sensitive habitat, open space, cultural resources, and farmland, and protects people and structures from wildfires*
- *Promote mixed-use development as a means of further encouraging a compact growth pattern.*
- *Monitor regional plans to assure that land use, transportation, and housing are integrated with employment opportunities.*

Goal 5: Advocate for climate action plans and goals by locating housing near transit and major employment centers and ensuring the use of sustainable materials and energy sources.

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a	2a, 2b	3a 3b	4

Actions:

- *Advocate for effective climate action plans throughout the region that significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*
- *Support infill housing near transit, jobs, and services to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change.*
- *Support public policy that encourages LEED certification for new housing and uses sustainable building materials and technologies.*
- *Advocate for clean energy and conservation solutions to provide power to our homes and communities.*
- *Endorse policies to reduce materials that cause deterioration of the ozone layer.*
- *Support policies for clean air and water.*
- *Support policies for noise reduction in high-traffic living and working environments.*
- *Encourage new housing developments that are net energy neutral and located near public transit and jobs to mitigate climate change.*
- *Support funding for retrofitting existing housing units to adapt to changing climate, energy sources, and resource conservation.*
- *Advocate for policies to discourage development in wildfire-prone urban wildland interface areas.*

Goal 6: Influence community actions that strengthen the link between housing and health, safety, and well-being, especially when housing costs are 30 percent or more of a household's income.

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a 1c	2a, 2b	3	4

Actions:

- *Recognize that housing affordability is a vital component to creating a well-rounded community which includes the following elements:*
 - o *a stable home for children.³*
 - o *proximity to public transit to enable access to quality jobs, amenity-rich neighborhoods, critical community services and improved health.*
 - o *access to healthy food including full-size grocery stores and produce markets*
 - o *energy efficient resources, including green building materials to lower operational costs and reduce respiratory illnesses and greenhouse gas emissions.*
 - o *reduced numbers of liquor stores in overburdened communities to reduce crime and promote a healthy lifestyle.*
- *Support Complete Streets as an important transportation policy to promote transit and pedestrian options so that residents of all ages and abilities have access to safe, alternative transportation.*
- *Advocate for walkable and bikeable communities that not only reduce trips but also enhance health and offer nearby opportunities for safe and clean parks and recreation.*
- *Support policies that encourage good air quality, non-toxic building materials, and reduction of overcrowded households.*
- *Assure that each city has a comprehensive emergency and evacuation plan that is integrated with the County emergency and evacuation plan.*

Goal 7: Promote and fund new and legacy infrastructure, to distribute costs and amenities fairly to benefit and safeguard all communities.

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a	2a, 2b 2c	3	4

Actions:

- *New infrastructure and public facilities should be planned concurrent with major housing development and infill. This requires a complete rethinking of how such facilities are funded.*
- *New infrastructure projects should be analyzed to include long-term resources, including revenue needed to protect and maintain the life of the asset (operations and maintenance costs).*
- *Promote innovative policies to broaden available funding resources beyond impact fees for infrastructure and public facilities to address deficiencies in underserved communities.*
- *Support financing strategies to address the structural gap between capital and operating budgets.*
- *As communities are planned for revitalization and additional density, support a land value capture policy so that increased value of land is invested back into the community for improvements and enhancements (such as additional affordable housing and parks).*

³ When there is stability in the home children have the opportunity to better focus on school and gain a better education. [Enterprise Community Partners Report, Impact of Affordable Housing on Families and Communities, 2014](#))

- *Housing development policies should include consideration of costs not only related directly to development but also costs to create equality of opportunity to internet access throughout the region.*

Goal 8: Educate the public about the link between affordable housing and the economic vitality of the region, and how affordable housing developments are designed, maintained, and managed according to accepted standards.⁴

Cross-reference to Positions	LWVUS	LWVC	LWV Regional	LWV City
	1a	2a, 2b	3	4

Actions:

- *Educate the public, including tenants and landlords, about the need for affordable housing throughout the region and government policies to achieve this.*
- *Support programs to educate the public about the importance of locating affordable housing throughout the region consistent with smart growth principles.*
- *Affiliate with communities and programs to educate the League about the importance of taking action on affordable housing goals.*

Housing Glossary of Terms

Climate Action Plan (CAP) - AB 32, passed by the Legislature and signed into law by then Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2004, requires the State of California and local government to prepare plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet or exceed the state targets specified in AB 32.

Complete Streets - Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders.

Density: Number indicates dwelling units (du) per acre, e.g. 5, 10, or 20 du/acre, etc.

Displacement - Displacement occurs when a household is forced to move from its residence by conditions which affect the dwelling or immediate surroundings, and which: 1) are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent; 2) occur despite the household having met all previous conditions of occupancy; and 3) make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable.

Gentrification - A process of neighborhood change that includes economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood by means of real estate investment and new higher-income residents moving in, as well as demographic change (income level, education level or racial make-up of residents).

High-Opportunity Communities – Place-conscious programs and policy reforms to advance goals of reducing neighborhood disparities, improving health, and ensuring that low-income families can afford and feel welcome in neighborhoods of opportunity. May be measured by statistical attributes of high-work, high income, high education, and high-job density within a census tract.

⁴ See Resource section for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) affordable housing standards for design, maintenance, and management.

The California Department of Housing & Community Development created an [“opportunity map”](#) to evaluate access to opportunity, racial segregation, and concentrated poverty on 11 evidence-based indicators related to long-term life outcomes. The opportunity map covers every region of the state whose characteristics have been shown by research to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income families—particularly long-term outcomes for children.

Housing Element - An analysis and plan for a community’s housing needs for all income levels. It is a required element of a jurisdiction’s overall General Plan. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) reviews and approves Housing Elements to ensure each community accommodates its fair share of affordable housing. If a jurisdiction fails to substantially comply with the State’s Housing Element Law, its General Plan can be deemed inadequate, and therefore invalid and subject to lawsuit. A court may impose requirements for land use decisions until the jurisdiction brings its General Plan—including its Housing Element—into compliance with State law.

Infill - “Infill development” refers to building on unused and underutilized lands within existing development patterns, typically but not exclusively in urban areas. Infill development is critical to accommodating growth and redesigning our cities to be environmentally- and socially-sustainable.

Infrastructure - Facilities and systems that support the sustainable function of a community such as roads, railways and transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, parks, police and fire stations, libraries, schools, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and telecommunications (including Internet connectivity and broadband access). Revenue to fund infrastructure comes from property tax, developer levies and fees in new communities and developed communities, monthly utility payments from property owners, user fees, and federal and state government grants.

Land Value Capture - A policy approach that enables communities to recover and reinvest land value increases that result from public investment and government actions. Land value capture is rooted in the notion that public action should generate public benefit. (Also referred to as “land value recapture” and “public benefit zoning.”)

Livable Communities - A livable community is one that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services.

Mixed Use Development - Urban planning concept that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses into one space, where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian connections.

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) - Residential rental properties that are affordable, but unsubsidized by any federal, state, or local program. Their rents are relatively low compared to the regional housing market. NOAH units are at greatest risk of being lost due to market speculation and upgrades that result in higher rents and lost affordability.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) - The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is a state-mandated planning process that quantifies existing and future housing needs within a region and requires local governments to plan for enough housing to meet the region’s need. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is responsible for overseeing the RHNA process for the San Diego region, which is used by local jurisdictions in preparing the Housing Elements of their General Plans.

RESOURCES

Local

City of San Diego Housing Affordability Toolkit

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/housing/toolkit>

City of San Diego Housing Commission - Addressing Affordable Housing Crisis November, 2015

https://www.sdhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2016-01-04_SDHC-Housing-Affordability-Crisis-Action-Plan_web.pdf

City of San Diego Housing Element - 2021-2029

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/he-print-view-smaller.pdf>

City of San Diego Housing Commission - Preserving Affordable Housing - May 2020

<https://www.sdhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Affordable-Housing-Preservation-Study.pdf>

Regional

Affordable Homes in Our Neighborhoods, SANDAG and San Diego Housing Federation, 2008

https://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_1902_18451.pdf

Regional Housing Needs Assessment 6th Housing Element Cycle 2021-2029

<https://www.sandag.org/index.asp?classid=12&subclassid=116&projectid=189&fuseaction=projects.detail>

Regional Housing Progress Report

<https://www.sandag.org/index.asp?classid=12&subclassid=116&projectid=421&fuseaction=projects.detail>

San Diego Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice - August 2020

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/fhaifinal2020.pdf>

SANDAG Smart Growth Tool Box: Smart Growth Concept Map and Visualization Tools

<https://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=334&fuseaction=projects.detail>

Federal - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Design

Fair Housing Design Standards

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/PDF/FAIRHOUSING/fairfull.pdf>

2020 Mandatory Design Standards for Multi-Family Housing

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-Mandatory-Design-Standards-Multifamily-Housing.pdf>

Maintenance

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Maintenance Standards for Public Housing

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/administration/hudclips/guidebooks/PIH-95-66

Management

Management Agent Handbook

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/administration/hudclips/handbooks/hsgb/4381.5

Appendix K: Property Management Standards

https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_19483.DOC