

1.2 Housing

Goal: Improve the quality and diversity of new and existing housing

Philadelphia has an aging housing stock with over 75 percent of houses more than 50 years old. This, coupled with large amounts of vacant land and structures in parts of the city, makes strong housing policies very important. As vocalized very clearly in the *Philadelphia2035* community meetings, Philadelphians want existing housing and infill housing to be the City's priority. The housing priorities of *Philadelphia2035* reflect the desire to have quality housing choices that strengthen the fabric of all neighborhoods. Most importantly, the location of new housing, particularly housing supported by government funding, should be prioritized based on adjacency to existing community assets and strengths: commercial corridors, transit stations, and stable residential blocks.

1.2.2.a

Definition | *Housing Choice*

The ability to have a choice of quality, safe and affordable housing for either lease or purchase, regardless of income.

1.2.2.d

Definition | *Accessory Dwelling Unity Unit*

A secondary housing unit on the same site often known as "in-law suite." The draft new Zoning Code includes one 800 sq. ft. or less accessory dwelling unit per single-family detached or twin home as a defined use.

1.2.2.e

Definition | *Accessible Housing*

Housing that allows persons with physical disabilities to enter and move within their home.



MLK Housing Development
(Source: www.phila.gov/ohcd/)

Objectives >

1.2.1 Stabilize and upgrade existing housing stock.

- a Shift public investments towards housing reuse and rehabilitation.
 - For the past 10 years, the City has spent 64 percent of its subsidized housing funds on new construction projects. Over the past three years, that rate has increased to 87 percent.
- b Expand housing preservation and rehabilitation incentive programs.
- c Retrofit housing to improve energy efficiency.

See [RENEW 8.1.1](#) for more information on preserving cultural, historic and architectural assets.

1.2.2 Ensure a wide mix of housing is available to residents of all income levels.

- a Promote mixed-income housing developments and a broad range of housing choice throughout the city.
- b Reduce concentrations of poverty.
 - Consider existing poverty levels when siting new affordable housing developments.
- c Expand existing property tax programs for low- and moderate-income property owners.
- d Provide a wider variety of housing options for an aging population such as aging-in-place programs and accessory housing options.
 - The Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) expects the population 65 and older to increase from 13 percent of the total population, as measured in 2005, to 16 percent in 2025 (PCA, 2006).
 - Seventy-eight percent of seniors age 60 and older own their own homes. Seniors 65 and older make up 30 percent of total homeowners citywide. The PCA expects to see a trend away from institutional living for seniors (PHA, 2006).
- e Expand accessible housing choices, including "visitable" units, which allow for barrier-free access into the first floor and to a first-floor toilet room.
- f Work with developers to create mixed-income developments at transit stations to improve access to transport, jobs, and services for all Philadelphians.
 - The proposed new Zoning Code includes density bonuses for the provision of affordable housing in select commercial mixed-use zoning districts at TOD zones and in the Metropolitan Center.

1.2.3 Promote new affordable housing developments to strengthen existing neighborhood assets.

- a Locate new affordable housing near commercial corridors and transit stations.
- b Prioritize infill of gap vacancies on otherwise stable blocks over large subdivision developments.

1.2.3.b Definition | Infill

Construction on vacant or underutilized parcels of land within areas that have already been substantially developed.

1.2.3.b Case Study Mixed-Income Infill Housing

The Bookmark Apartments is a 47-unit mixed-income, mixed-used development located in Portland, Oregon. Built in 2002, it has 28 market-rate units and 19 affordable units. The ground floor contains a public library, retail space, and shared open space. The building is located near transit, entitling the developers to a density bonus through Portland’s transit-friendly zoning code.



(Source: www.bookmarkapartments.com)



Thin Flats, Northern Liberties



Infill, Manayunk



Infill, 21st Street

1.2.2.b Poverty and Affordable Housing Concentrations

High concentrations of affordable housing are often located in census tracts with high levels of poverty.

