



Affordable Housing for All
Coloradans

Affordable Housing Transformational Taskforce

I'm one of the four prime co-sponsors of HB 21-1329 creating the Affordable Housing and homeownership cash fund and a task force that is currently making suggestions for the next legislative session. I also co-sponsored another bill that expands those who are eligible to benefit from the rental assistance and tenancy support programs to include individuals experiencing homelessness.

As Colorado emerges from the pandemic, focusing on Housing resources for All Coloradans will guarantee a better economy, job access, and quality of life for all whom call this state home.

What are the issues concerning Colorado's housing and renter markets?

The United States census found that Colorado gained an additional 1.6 million residents since 2010.

The state has not been able to maintain or keep up with incoming residents and new residential construction, as such property and rent values have skyrocketed across the state.

Exclusionary zoning has not allowed for more housing options to be made available in metro areas along with mountain communities. Combined with rising costs, stagnant wages, and costs of transportation, economical housing is becoming few and far between for a majority of the state's residents.

Sheridan Station Apartments Lakewood

133 units for households earning 30-60% AMI
Adjacent to light rail station and bike path



From Telluride not being able to house workers to Denverites not being able to afford the city, all Coloradans have been affected by the states rise in living costs. Disposable monthly income has dropped for the majority of residents and what one must work to afford their rent has increased dramatically. Across Colorado, the average a minimum wage worker must work per week is 72 hours in order to pay for a modest 1 bedroom apartment at fair market rates. In the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA one must work 81 hours a week. If we want our state to grow equally, inviting, and accepting to all residents, we must tackle the affordability crisis harming all who live here.

Annual Income Needed to Afford

	<i>Colorado</i>	<i>Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA</i>
ZERO-BEDROOM	\$41,595	\$47,160
ONE-BEDROOM	\$46,148	\$52,160
TWO-BEDROOM	\$57,208	\$64,200
THREE-BEDROOM	\$78,646	\$87,440
FOUR-BEDROOM	\$90,931	\$99,440

“Rising rents and limited affordable housing units in Fountain are driving the city’s housing challenges. Since 2016, the cost per unit for the housing available to voucher holders has increased by 52%, from \$591 per month in 2015 to \$901 in 2021.” (Clark 2021)

What are the solutions?

What isn’t working for Coloradans?

With the Affordable Housing Transformational Taskforce, law makers and other stakeholders are discussing solutions and new programs to address 4 key areas.

- Expanding Capacity
- Stabilize Existing Affordable Housing
- Strengthening the Safety Net
- Equity and Access

Expanding Capacity

We need to build more housing. To maintain the open spaces, natural resources, and community we all strive for, building more housing and removing exclusionary zoning laws will increase Colorado's capacity for newcomers and increase affordable housing units available for current residents.

Expanding Capacity

The Affordable Housing Transformational Taskforce is also looking to fund purchases and land banking for development of affordable housing for those at 30% AMI.

For every 100 residents at 30% AMI looking for housing there is only 30 units of housing available. Compare this to residents at 80% AMI with 94 units of housing available to them per 100 residents.

Colorado has a shortfall of over 113,000 affordable housing units available that are currently needed by low income residents. The purchase and redevelopment of current buildings and spaces will also be considered to maintain local connectivity and reduce sprawl.

Stabilize Existing Affordable Housing

Maintaining our current Affordable housing stock is another key area we must change policy for to attain and allow for different ownership models to improve housing options and affordability for all homeowners.

Policies that help tenants band together to purchase housing units, assisting mobile home park residents with their purchases, and otherwise ensuring that existing affordable housing stays affordable are key to keeping our current supply of affordable housing from being lost to the market.

Blue Dot Place
Colorado Springs
4 story, 33 Unit mixed use
redevelopment of former retail
and surface parking on
downtown Colorado Springs



Housing units like these are just one example of smart redevelopment we can do today throughout Colorado.

Redesigning motels, hotels, and other commercial spaces for housing cuts costs for new infrastructure, transit, and other costs that go into development. This also maintains or improves the community around it and ensures we are investing equitably across all of Colorado.

Strengthening the Safety Net

Improving the rights of tenants and providing them with legal assistance and eviction defense was our first step to maintaining the Safety Net.

The Next step will be to require housing transition services/planning for institutions so people are not discharged in homelessness in the first place.

Requiring localities that receive housing funds use a Housing First Approach will also ensure these funds are used to give those experiencing homelessness a chance to get back on their feet instead of floundering in the streets.

Strengthening the Safety Net

A Denver Housing First program has been successful in permanently housing 260 people since 2016.

Wrap around services are essential, and we're working with the behavioral health task force to coordinate our efforts.

When wrap around services are offered, affordable housing has dramatically cut total costs from city. Instead of paying for police, jail, ambulance, and detox services, many participants experienced fewer adverse incidents with law enforcement because of being housed and not on the streets.

If we don't allow people to slip and become homeless in the first place, overall costs will be reduced along with reliance on local services.

Equity and Access

To ensure every Colorado resident has the ability to house themselves, additional state laws to facilitate tiny homes and the legality of Additional Dwelling Units will increase density of housing, create new affordable housing units, increase diversity, and maintain and develop current residential areas.

The State also needs to remove barriers to undocumented and mixed status homes for rental and housing programs to raise participation by the communities most prioritized.

Leveraged Funding

The best measure the state can do is leverage its funds to remake communities. First is to develop permanent affordable housing units for those under 30% AMI.

Other tenant based communities the state can and should develop are Resident Owned Communities, Community Land Trusts, Limited Equity Cooperatives, and Mixed-Income Neighborhood trusts.

The Transformational Housing Taskforce plans to look at all of these measures to develop the best plan moving forward for Colorado's residents. This is an issue affecting livability in all corners of our state. Making the correct investments now is how we avoid any further homelessness or affordability issues facing us in the future.

References

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