



## **2023 Mountain Housing Council Policy Platform**

The goal of the Mountain Housing Council (MHC) Policy Working Group is to increase opportunities to build achievable and affordable housing in the North Lake Tahoe Truckee region. Policy is one tool to improve the conditions necessary to build housing.

The Policy Working Group will build on the data and strategies developed as part of the 2016 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, the 2021 update of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, the 2021 Regional Housing Action Plan, and outreach and coordination with other statewide housing advocacy organizations to establish targets for action, through the development of a regional policy platform.

The MHC Policy Platform (Platform) establishes the objectives of the MHC's Policy Working Group and the related priorities and interventions the team will use to address the achievable local housing problem in the Tahoe-Truckee Region. The Platform is a document approved by Mountain Housing Council members and lays a framework for how the Policy Working Group proposes to represent the region in its advocacy efforts in both broad categories and specific issues. This allows the Working Group to recommend formal positions on legislative and administrative proposals and act efficiently as opportunities arise.

### Principles

The policy platform is based on a set of core principles or understandings to advance its work.

- We seek to support policy that will increase the supply of affordable and achievable housing and advance housing equity
- We seek to increase access to housing for local workers and residents as established by the MHC definition of achievable local housing that includes the range of unmet housing needs in the region from those who are unhoused up to middle-income salary earners.



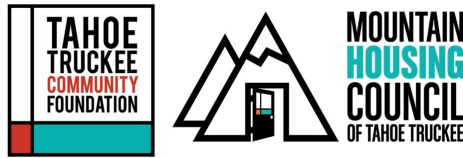
- We seek to increase access to a wide range of housing types--from Accessory Dwelling Units to Single Family Residential, to small scale multifamily 2-4 units, to Multi-family housing
- We seek to reduce homelessness by supporting housing and services to serve the unhoused community
- We seek to retain existing affordable and achievable housing, including existing affordable housing and affordable by design housing such as secondary units and mobile home parks, and the development of a wide range of tools including deed restrictions to retain that housing
- We seek to advance and encourage a planning, zoning and permitting environment that is clear and predictable to the applicant and can enjoy broad based support from local jurisdictions implementing those policies

#### What is the achievable local housing problem in the North Lake Tahoe Truckee region?

Affordable housing is a crisis facing the nation, the state, and the Tahoe-Truckee region. The North Tahoe-Truckee region has a population of more than roughly 30,000. On holiday weekends, those numbers swell to around 100,000. For full and part-time residents as well as vacationers, there are 34,191 housing units – mostly single-family homes built before 1979. Around 60% of them are vacant for more than half the year.

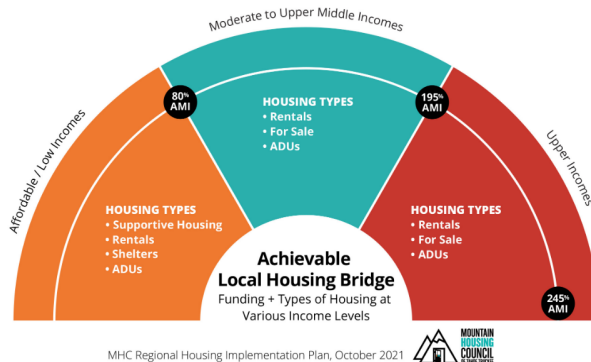
Those looking for long-term housing in our region and existing local residents are struggling to find housing in our community - with estimates showing a potential shortfall of more than 9,528 units to serve the local workforce. Teachers, firefighters, police officers, business owners, and many more can no longer afford to live in the region. They are forced to move away or live elsewhere and commute, leaving employers unable to find staff, emergency responders struggling with response times, and a rippling impact on our region's economy, environment, culture, and vitality.

To address this shortfall, the community needs to increase the number and diversity of available new and old units to preserve an adequate portion of our housing stock as workforce housing, and to help people move from renting to homeownership. The Policy Working Group seeks to be proactive and maximize the ability for the Tahoe-Truckee



region to capitalize on policy solutions proposed and enacted at the state and federal level.

The Working Group will support policies that address all income levels defined as “achievable local housing” as shown below and described in the MHC’s 2016 Policy Brief titled “Achievable Local Housing”. County 2022 AMI for family of four: Nevada \$98,400 Placer \$102,200



### How Does the Policy Working Group Seek to Achieve Its Goals?

The Policy Platform objectives for advocacy outside of the region will help the team complement the Mountain Housing Council’s work within the region. These objectives correspond to barriers to achievable local housing that cannot be changed at the local level but are changeable at the state or federal level.

This document outlines the objectives of the Policy Working Group. A separate complementary document, called the “Annual Work Plan”, will be developed in January of each year and will identify and describe the Working Groups positions on specific pieces of legislation, administrative actions, and funding programs for that year. Positions on these activities will be informed by and consistent with this Policy Platform.



The Annual Work Plan will be updated periodically throughout the year as proposals evolve or are introduced.

The Policy Working Group will strive to make decisions on the Annual Work Plan and any updates to it through a consensus model, facilitated and documented by the facilitator of the group (Sierra Business Council), with the following understandings:

- The definition of consensus spans the range of: strong support to “I can live with it.” Any of these statements by Working Group members constitutes consensus.
- Many Policy Working Group representatives cannot act independently on behalf of the agencies and organizations that they represent. Therefore, official communications of MHC policy positions will also include language recognizing that the position conveyed is the general consensus of the MHC but does not necessarily reflect the official endorsement of every MHC participant. When the Policy Working Group uses a vote to determine a course of action, the meeting notes will reflect the voting detail of those who approved, opposed and abstained.
- This decision-making process will encourage the early articulation of concerns, which maximizes the chance of understanding and accommodating the views of all parties.

The Policy Working Group will use a variety of public outreach and education channels to deliver its message. The primary method will be verbal and written communications with legislators, legislative staff, agency staff and in legislative hearings. In these cases the Annual Work Plan and agreements reached in the Policy Working Group on the specific positions will be represented as the direction of the group. In cases where written communications are delivered every effort will be made to have Policy Working Group members review those communications in advance with an “opt out” opportunity provided.



### Anticipated Actionable Priorities

Objective #1: Build political identity and influence outside of the region. Three overarching conditions exist with regard to our region's ability to achieve the objectives of this Policy Platform: first, the Tahoe Truckee region's small population is a barrier to gaining political influence; second, the regions relatively high income compared to other regions of the state make it difficult to advance our priorities; third, to date, the region has not had a unified message on housing priorities when engaging with state and federal policymakers.

To counteract these three factors, a major priority of the Policy Working Group will be to build strategic partnerships with organizations outside the region and statewide organizations with similar goals to achieve our objectives. The Policy Working Group, through this Policy Platform and the Annual Work Plan, will develop unified messages and priorities so that efforts will be consistent among all Working Group and MHC partners.

As such, the Working Group supports activities that achieve the following:

1. Leverage members' current relationships and lobbying experience. The Working Group has identified existing partnerships and lobbying relationships that will be essential to collaboration to achieve its goals.
2. Support statewide coalitions with similar priorities.
3. Coordinate and build relationships with legislators representing our region and those from outside our region with similar goals.
4. Build and maintain relationships with state agencies implementing funding programs and regulations impacting achievable local housing.
5. Build education and awareness among MHC members of local barriers to implementing state policies that could benefit achievable local housing solutions.

Objective #2: Support the implementation of the 2022 California State Housing Plan "A Home for Every Californian" released in March 2022.



In March of 2022 the California Department of Housing and Community Development released its updated 5-year statewide housing plan titled “A Home for Every Californian”. The plan includes several specific recommendations to speed the development of affordable, workforce, and achievable housing. Although there are many important recommendations in the report the Policy Working Group will focus on advancing the following:

1. Streamlining development in areas not building enough housing, through policy tools such as ministerial approvals and CEQA exemptions
2. Providing financial resources, such as grant funding, and incentives to local governments to support policy or process improvements that accelerate production of housing for all income levels
3. Allowing for missing middle housing production in formerly single-family zoning districts through state-level up-zoning legislation
4. Providing funding for infrastructure, parks, and other non-housing community benefits as a reward to cities and counties that produce and preserve affordable housing (Transformative Climate Communities; Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities; SB 2 incentive programs)
5. Offering matching funds for cities and counties that utilize existing resources that facilitate housing investment (Local Housing Trust Fund)
6. Making grants available for income qualified homeowners to incentivize ADU construction (CalHFA ADU Grant Program)
7. Creating a permanent source of funding to subsidize mixed-income housing projects (CalHFA Mixed Income Program established by SB 2)
8. Unlocking excess state land available for affordable housing ( Executive Order N-06-19)
9. Promoting community resiliency and adaptation to climate change and natural disasters within state and local strategies

Objective #3: Maintain the funding pledged in the 2021-2022 budget during the 2022-2023 budget cycle.



The 2020-2021 California state budget increased funding over previous years for housing and homelessness programs by approximately \$1.75 billion. In the 2021-2022 budget expenditures were increased by another \$1.5 billion, to more than \$10 billion, making 2021-2022 the highest proposed housing budget as a percentage of the overall budget in California state history. The budget in 2022-2023 is fluid due to a projected \$24 billion budget deficit. The Governor's proposed 2022-23 budget pares back funding in some key areas. The Policy Working Group will focus on restoring funding to a few of these key areas, or ensuring that delayed funding is secured in legislation.

Top priorities in the budget bill for our Policy Working Group would include:

1. Restore the \$250 million General Fund out of a total of \$1.5 billion General Fund to 2024-25 for the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program proposed to be delayed
2. Restore a portion of the \$480.7 million General Fund proposed to be delayed to \$240.4 million in 2024-25 and \$240.3 million in 2025-26 for behavioral health continuum infrastructure capacity grants
3. Restore the \$130 million General Fund proposed to be delayed for the California 25x25 Community Health Worker Initiative Grant program
4. Support maintaining \$1 billion to the Department of Health Care Access and Information to strengthen and expand the state's health and human services workforce to increase nurses, community health workers, and social workers, as well as support new individuals coming into the workforce in behavioral health.
5. Restore the \$200 million proposed to be cut from the previously approved \$500 million Dream for All to provide shared-appreciation loans to help low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers achieve homeownership
6. Restore the \$100 million proposed to be cut from the CalHome Program to provide local agencies and nonprofits with grants to assist low- and very-low-income first-time homebuyers with housing assistance, counseling, and technical assistance
7. Restore the \$50 million proposed to be cut from the California Housing Finance Agency's Accessory Dwelling Unit Program
8. Continue to support budget allocations to the following. Programs funded in 2021-2022:



- a. The Infill Infrastructure Grant Program (\$500m);
- b. Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (\$500m);
- c. Technical assistance to enable homeowners to access the National Mortgage Settlement Program;
- d. The Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Program (\$426m);
- e. The Homekey Program (\$750m);

Objective #4: Change or remove policy barriers to implementing achievable local housing in the region.

There are three major barriers to achievable local housing that are of primary importance in our region. The first is access to capital, both public and private, to achieve housing goals. The second is land use regulations that restrict access to land for housing. The third is the conversion of achievable housing to high-income housing. The working group will address the first two barriers via the following:

- 1. Access to capital:
  - a. State funded programs
    - i. Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities program: secure increased funding and continuous appropriations for the program; maintain and seek to expand the “rural set aside” portion of the program;
    - ii. Advocate for including “rural set aside” language in the guidelines for the Infill Infrastructure Grant Program, the Multifamily Housing Program, and the Local Housing Trust Fund Program;
    - iii. Advocate for the creation of a Middle Income Housing Tax Credit Program;
    - iv. Low Income Housing Tax Credit program: intervene in the Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) Opportunity Area mapping process to expand the portion of the MHC geography scoring in the high opportunity areas; Influence criteria for affordable housing to better meet unmet demand by income and unit size



- v. Supportive Housing: seek to expand permanent sources of funding for projects serving homeless individuals and families.
    - vi. Area Median Income determination: Establish a state-recognized Truckee-North Tahoe specific Area Median Income (AMI) to reflect the significantly higher cost of living in the Truckee region (eastern Nevada County) compared to the County as a whole.
  - b. Federally funded programs
    - i. Seek to expand access to funding through expanding access to rental assistance programs, funding for states and localities, and housing financing and homeownership assistance.
  - c. Leveraging private capital
- 2. Land Use Regulation:
  - a. High Hazard Zones: Track and intervene in landscape oriented regulatory and policy actions across the “fire transect,” from built environment to landscape level, that seeks to limit development in high hazard zones with the goal of ensuring that appropriate mitigations are recognized and policy is developed to allow for and incentivize the transfer of development from high hazard zones to community centers;
  - b. Community Fire Safety: Identify and track needed regulatory mechanisms. Possibilities include: addressing land use and development patterns; increasing home hardening and defensible space; expanding incentive programs, and exploring insurance-based cost avoidance models;
  - c. Planning, Zoning and Development Law: Identify and track and selectively intervene in proposed new planning, zoning and land use law that will impact access to affordable and achievable housing. Possibilities include proposed legislation affecting hazard mitigation planning, climate action planning, state definitions of infill development, up-zoning single-family residential lots, accessory dwelling units, short-term rentals, insurance regulations, and conversion of affordable and achievable housing.
  - d. Fire Insurance Reform: support legislation that will mandate reduced fire insurance rates for property owners that maintain fire safe properties as determined by the Wildland Hazards & Building Codes



- e. Consideration of unique climatic conditions in land use legislation:  
Advocate for legislation to provide high-elevation zones with reasonable exemptions to mandates that would create life safety hazards within areas with high snow loads. This could include legislation that restricts such a jurisdiction from requiring on-site residential parking, or legislation that reduces setbacks beyond the minimum distance necessary for roof snowshed.
- f. Short-term rental regulations: Support legislation that will enhance local government ability to regulate the loss of available long term housing units to the short-term rental and fractional ownership industries.