



# Cleveland 2030: A Housing Equity Plan

September 2021

## **CONSULTANT TEAM**

### **University of Pennsylvania**

Vincent Reina  
Akira Drake-Rodriguez  
Claudia Aiken

### **Local Partners**

Kirby Date, KM Date Community Planning  
Tracey Nichols, Project Management Consultants  
Kaela Geschke, Neighborhood Connections

### **Prepared for**

**City of Cleveland**

Department of Community Development

*Cover Photo: Erik Drost via Flickr Creative Commons*



“This Plan offers innovative and effective strategies to address our housing needs.”

*Fellow Clevelanders,*

I am pleased to present Cleveland 2030: A Housing Equity Plan. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic together, there is unprecedented need in Cleveland for equitable access to housing and housing resources, but also unprecedented energy, ideas, and resources to address that need. This plan outlines actionable strategies to:

- Create a housing stock that is accessible, affordable, and desirable to all residents
- Ensure that those who have historically been excluded from housing opportunities are prioritized for resources and protections
- Enable collaboration across agencies and service providers and efficiently leverage funds to achieve our goals

The creation of this Plan has been a joint effort between the City's Regional Development Cluster, including the Departments of Community Development, Economic Development, Building and Housing, and the City Planning Commission, and a broad coalition of community stakeholders. It reflects the input of thousands of Cleveland residents through public listening sessions, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Many generously devoted their time in working groups to develop the actions showcased here.

I am extremely proud of how Cleveland has come together to identify new housing solutions for our city.

Sincerely,

*Signature*

Frank Jackson  
Mayor

# PLAN FRAMEWORK

## ENVISION

The **Housing Equity Plan** is an action plan with a broad set of programs, policies, and investments that, over the next decade, will:

- Ensure that all Clevelanders—renters, homeowners, and those who are unhoused—have access to a **safe, healthy, and affordable home** in a **vibrant neighborhood**
- Tackle the **racial and geographic divides** that define the Cleveland housing market
- Promote growth that **lifts up individuals and communities that have been excluded** from housing opportunity, including the opportunity to participate in housing design and development
- Support Clevelanders who want to **remain in their homes**, and **attract new residents** to the city

## TARGET

**The need for new tools and resources to increase access to desirable and affordable housing is clear.** In Cleveland, about 9,300 homeowner households and 26,300 renter households are severely cost-burdened, meaning they pay over half of their income for housing each month. In addition, current trends suggest that 55,600 currently habitable homes will need substantial repairs by 2030, and that around 20,000 units would need to be built to replace those lost to severe deterioration. Finally, longstanding trends of population decline mean that, without new investments in homes and neighborhoods, the city is projected to lose 310 households every year between 2020 and 2030.

## COALESCE

**The Housing Equity Plan is a collaborative, community-wide effort to identify solutions.** The Plan was commissioned by the City of Cleveland's Departments of Community Development, City Planning, and Economic Development. One of the key objectives of the planning process has been to build a strong and broad coalition of housing stakeholders—including providers of market-rate and affordable housing, housing service providers, experts, and residents—to inform this plan's recommendations, drive implementation, and generate the capital to achieve our collective vision. The city and this coalition will now work together to continually revisit, update, and implement this Plan, drawing on the more than 140 recommendations developed in the planning process.

In addition to establishing new tools to stimulate housing investment in the city's neighborhoods, the Housing Equity Plan will be integral to the development of an updated comprehensive plan for the city.

# A SPOTLIGHT ON EQUITY

## DEFINITION

**What is an equitable housing market?** A robust housing market provides affordable, decent, and desirable housing. But an *equitable* housing market takes this one step further: all Clevelanders, regardless of race, ethnicity, family status, or disability, have access to a full range of housing choices and neighborhoods. Furthermore, those who have historically been excluded from opportunities like homeownership, participation in housing trades, and leadership in housing-related decision-making are prioritized for these opportunities going forward. The result is diversity and inclusion in every aspect of the housing market, from governance to production to consumption and wealth creation.

## EQUITABLE ACTIONS

**How does this Plan promote housing equity?** Many of the actions put forward in this Plan are specifically designed to promote equity in housing outcomes, as well as equitable access to housing resources and opportunities. Some examples include:

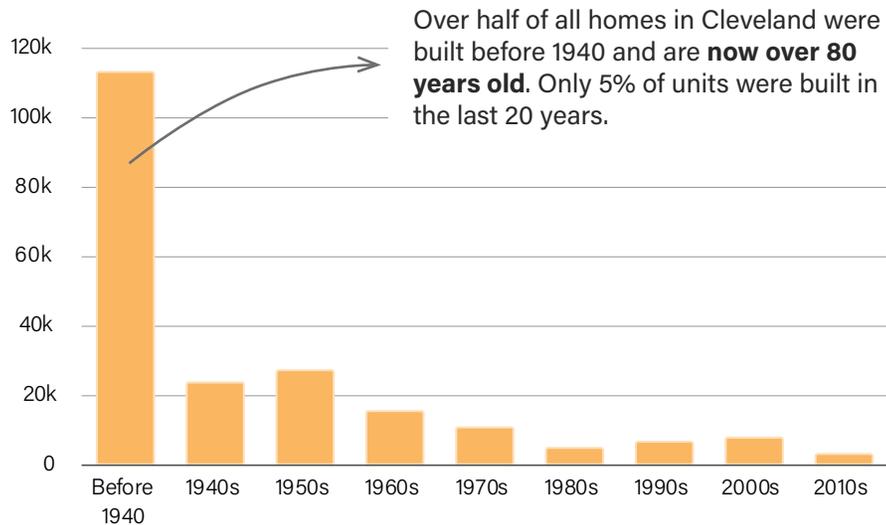
-  By the end of 2021, develop an **equity framework** to guide all housing programs and decisions.
-  Support **minority developers and contractors** through affirmative access to financing, technical assistance, and youth mentorship.
-  Include affordable, accessible options in high-opportunity neighborhoods, and **target underserved neighborhoods** for infrastructure improvements.
-  **Protect vulnerable households from displacement** via targeted tax relief for long-time homeowners and a suite of new protections for renters.
-  Assess progress using a **housing scorecard** that includes equity metrics, like the number of grants and loans provided to households of color and the volume and nature of investments in traditionally underserved communities.

**Equitable Participation in this Planning Process.** Equity and inclusion were at the forefront of each of the four phases that informed Cleveland's 10-Year Housing and Investment Plan, including:

- **A representative survey** of housing conditions, preferences, and concerns captured over 1,600 Cleveland residents, including over 807 residents of color and nearly 600 residents with incomes below \$25,000
- **In-depth analysis** of key housing metrics in Cleveland, including access to mortgages, loans, and low-poverty neighborhoods, by race and ethnicity
- **Two public listening sessions** with over 200 Cleveland residents
- **Interviews and focus groups** with over 180 housing stakeholders, including appraisers, realtors, prospective homebuyers, developers, disability and fair housing advocates, and affordable housing and service providers representing every community in Cleveland
- **Leadership** in the Advisory Committee and Stakeholder Working Groups that reflects a commitment to gender, racial, and ethnic diversity

# HOUSING NEEDS

## AGING HOMES



Over half of all homes in Cleveland were built before 1940 and are **now over 80 years old**. Only 5% of units were built in the last 20 years.



Cleveland has a vacancy rate of nearly 14%, compared to 7% in Cuyahoga County. As of January 2021, 7,700 units in the city were considered **vacant and distressed**.



Property surveys in 2015 and 2018 found that on the East Side, **the number of structures in "excellent" and "good" condition declined**, and the number in need of significant repairs increased.

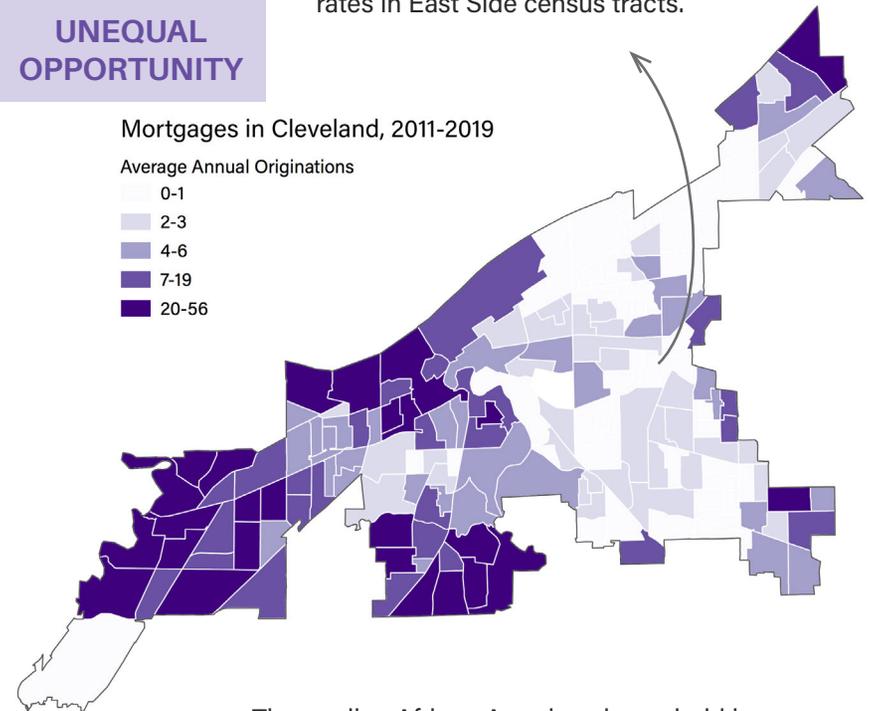
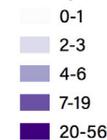


**Permits for alterations and repairs** are concentrated on the West Side of Cleveland, even though property surveys report the worst conditions on the East Side.

## UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Mortgages in Cleveland, 2011-2019

Average Annual Originations



The East Side of Cleveland, which is predominantly African American, continues to see **far lower rates of home mortgage lending**. There are both fewer mortgage applications *and* higher denial rates in East Side census tracts.



The median African American household in Cleveland had an income of \$23,600 in 2019, about half the median income for White households (\$42,300), **resulting in higher housing cost burdens** among African Americans.



About two thirds of African American, Latino/a, and Asian households **rent their homes**, compared to less than half of White households.

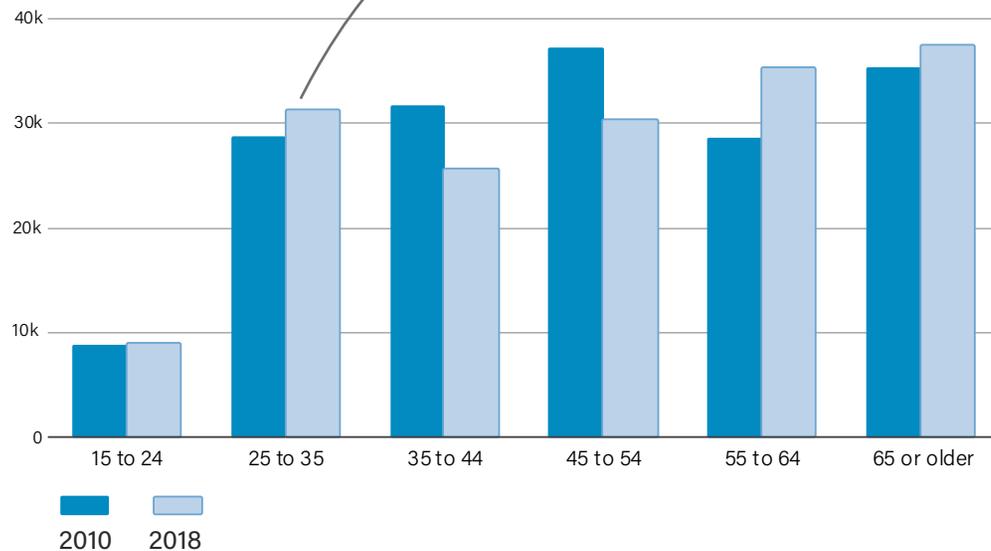


The majority of tenants **experiencing eviction** in Cleveland are African American women with children.

# HOUSING NEEDS

## CHANGING PROFILE

Since 2010, the city has seen an increase of 3,000 households headed by people aged **35 or younger**, and of 9,000 households headed by those aged **55 and older**.



## A NEED FOR INVESTMENT



The number of homes repaired through city-financed programs such as Repair-a-Home and the Senior Homeowner Assistance Program (SHAP) has **declined over time** due to new application requirements and a shrinking pool of qualified contractors. In 2019, 75 homes were repaired, compared to over 300 in 2009.



The number of Housing Trust Fund loans for the development of new housing **has declined since 2000**. In 2016, only 5 loans for a total of \$2.63 million were awarded to support the development of 151 units.



In its first 6 months, the Right to Counsel program provided free legal assistance to 323 tenants in Housing Court. **But Cleveland averages over 8,000 eviction cases per year.**



In FY 2018, HUD received \$27.4 million in federal entitlement funding for housing. It had another \$27.5 million left over from the previous year. But the city **spent only about 50% of these funds** by the end of the fiscal year.



**Households are shrinking.** 1- and 2-person households make up over 70% of households in Cleveland, and the share continues to rise. Non-family households make up over half of all households.



**A related trend is the rise in rentership.** About 60% of households in Cleveland rent their homes, and both the share and the total number of renters has been steadily rising.



**Cleveland is home to vulnerable populations.** As of 2018, 34% of Clevelanders are impoverished, up from 31% in 2010. Refugees, justice-involved individuals, and youth transitioning out of foster care are also especially vulnerable to housing insecurity.

# TARGETS

## TARGETS

In order to address these needs, the City of Cleveland has set a target to **protect**, **preserve**, and **produce 100,000 homes** over the next 10 years. These targets recognize that the need for housing interventions is deepest at the lowest income levels. The market will likely produce additional units at higher income levels without intervention.

- **Protect 35,600 housing units** through equitable affordability interventions, including down payment assistance, affordable home loans, renter protections and legal aid, rental assistance, and property tax exemptions.
- **Preserve 41,400 housing units** through housing quality interventions, including home repair assistance, small landlord loans, and compassionate code enforcement.
- **Produce 23,000 housing units** through new construction or substantial rehabilitation supported by targeted development incentives, revised zoning, and streamlined approval processes.

Achieving these targets also requires the city and its partners to **position** themselves to collaborate effectively across agencies and stakeholders, adequately fund new and existing efforts, and provide a welcoming environment for new investment.

### 2030 Housing Targets by Income Band

AMI Range	Household Income Range	Ownership Units			Rental Units			Total Units in 2030
		Protect	Preserve	Produce	Protect	Preserve	Produce	
<30% AMI	\$0 to \$22,000	7,800	9,000	500	25,700	17,400	6,300	68,100
30-50% AMI	\$22,000 to \$36,500	1,300	7,000	1,500	400	8,000	3,300	21,500
50-80% AMI	\$36,500 to \$58,400	250		2,500	100		2,200	4,650
80-120% AMI	\$58,400 to \$87,600	20		3,200	30		1,000	3,250
>120% AMI	Over \$87,600			1,800			700	2,500
Total	Total	9,370	16,000	9,500	26,230	25,400	13,500	100,000

# THE FOUR PILLARS

**EQUITY.** The actions in this Plan are designed to **protect** households from housing instability and displacement; to **preserve** existing housing as safe, livable, and affordable; to **produce** a range of housing types in all neighborhoods; and to **position** the City of Cleveland and its partners to achieve these goals. All four of these pillars are rooted in a vision for an **equitable** housing market in which those who have historically been excluded, and continue to be excluded, from housing opportunities are prioritized for those opportunities going forward.

## PROTECT

## PRESERVE

## PRODUCE

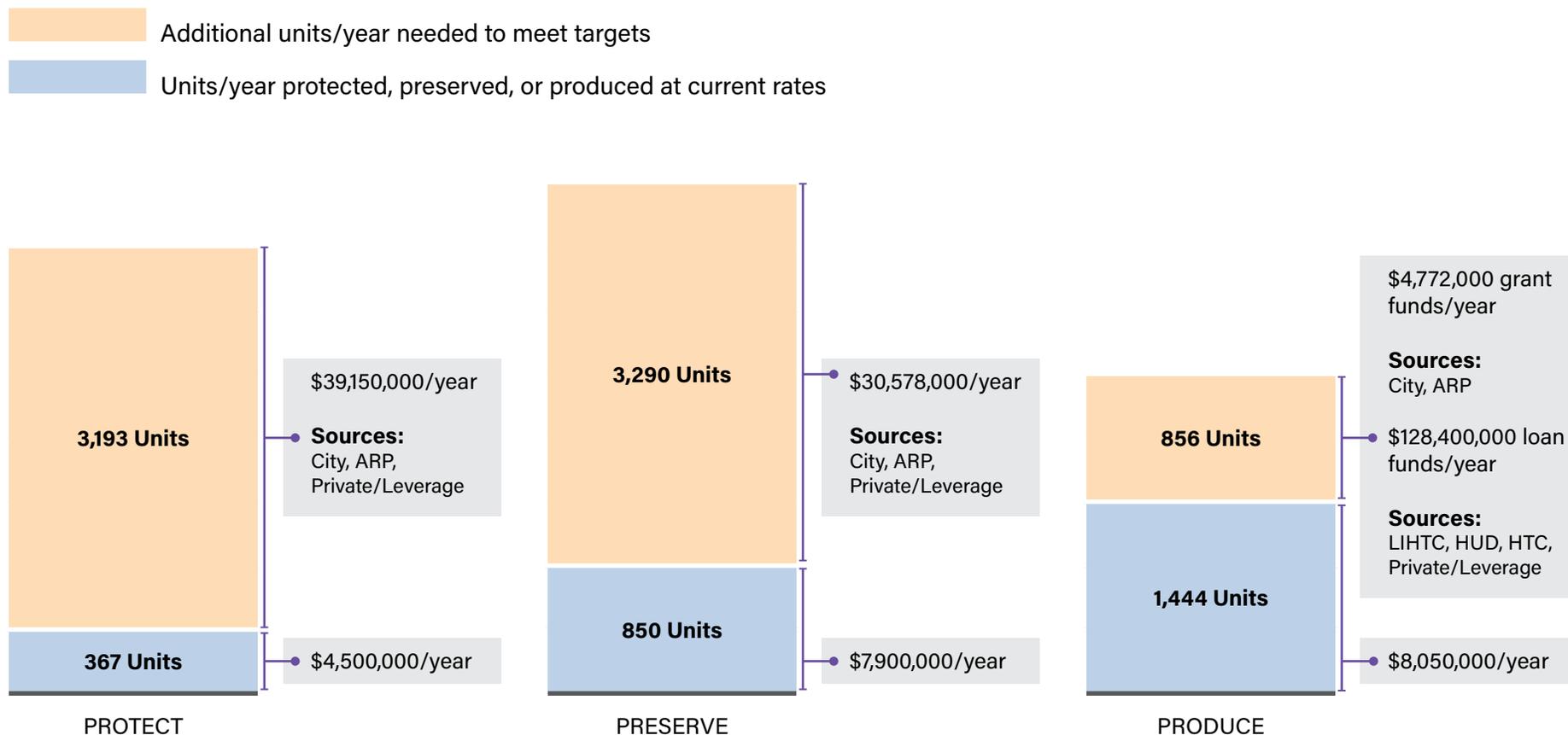
## POSITION

Ensure equitable access to housing resources.	Invest in the quality of existing homes.	Ensure equitable participation in housing development.	Invest in neighborhood infrastructure.
Enable equitable development without displacement.	Create and sustain a skilled repair workforce.	Create a range of housing choices in all neighborhoods.	Increase awareness of and access to housing programs.
Protect renters from forced moves and severe rent burdens.	Compassionately enforce housing quality standards.	Create a predictable, practical development process.	Adequately fund existing and new efforts.
	Address the appraisal gap.		Hold the city and its partners accountable to this Plan.

**CAPACITY.** The success of this Plan relies on the capacity of the City of Cleveland and its partners to implement its recommendations. For this reason, many of the recommendations themselves aim to build up this capacity through stronger partnerships, creative financing mechanisms, streamlined city processes, and accountability measures.

# RESOURCING THE PLAN

**Estimated Units and Cost per Year.** The Plan's 10-year target of protecting 35,600 units, preserving 41,400 units, and producing 23,000 units (for a total of 100,000 units) is estimated to require a total investment of approximately \$2.2 billion, including \$204.5 million in currently available funding and about \$2 billion in additional resources. Funding sources include American Rescue Plan (ARP) relief dollars, federal entitlement funds and tax credits, and public and private dollars invested in the expanded Housing Trust Fund or dedicated to specific programs and projects. The chart below breaks down the resources needed on an annual basis.



# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

## PLAN COMPONENTS

**Timeline.** The actions in this Plan are categorized as short-, medium-, and long-term. Short-term actions can be taken within 1-2 years of the Plan's adoption. Medium-term actions are envisioned to begin implementation by 2025. Long-term actions require the greatest degree of planning and coordination, and will be in place by 2030.

**Short-term:** ○

**Medium-term:** ○ ○

**Long-term:** ○ ○ ○

**Neighborhoods.** The Plan references three groups of neighborhoods, "**strong-market**," "**middle-market**," and "**underinvested**." Some actions in this plan are appropriate for strong- and middle-market areas, while others should target underinvested neighborhoods. These categories are based on the **Market Study** which accompanies this plan. However, the much more sophisticated and real-time [Middle Neighborhoods tool](#) should be used to inform investments in middle-market and edge communities.

**Housing Report Card.** The Plan is accompanied by a housing report card. The city will report its progress towards its targets by issuing a report card every year between 2022 and 2030.

**The Ten-Year Housing and Investment Plan is also accompanied by a full appendix.**  
The appendix contains the following materials:

- Community Engagement Overview (Including Working Group Recommendations)
- Analysis of Resident Surveys
- Analysis of Developer Surveys
- Review of Existing Housing Programs in Cleveland
- Report on Existing Housing Conditions in Cleveland
- Cleveland Housing Market Study
- Cleveland's Peer Cities Report

# PROTECT

An equitable housing plan will ensure that residents who have historically been excluded from housing opportunities are prioritized for resources and protected from negative outcomes such as eviction, foreclosure, and displacement.

- ✓ Ensure equitable access to housing resources.
- ✓ Enable equitable development without displacement.
- ✓ Protect renters from forced moves and severe rent burdens.

# PROTECT | Ensure equitable access to housing resources

## GOAL

**Ensure equitable access to housing resources.** A 2018 study of mortgage lending patterns conducted by the Fair Housing Center for Rights and Research notes that Cuyahoga County has a long history of racial segregation, mortgage redlining, and predatory lending based on race. The report found that “despite a demand for credit, people in predominantly African American neighborhoods [in Cuyahoga County] often cannot get mortgages to buy houses in their neighborhoods.” This is due in part to the fact that banks approve very few mortgages (less than 2%) for households earning less than \$25,000, and the median Black household in Cleveland has an income of only \$23,600. In addition, banks are typically unwilling to offer mortgages of less than \$50,000, and the median house value in many East Side neighborhoods is less than \$48,000. Without a significant shift in the availability of housing capital, a large share of Cleveland’s population will continue to be locked out of homeownership and other housing opportunities.

**Develop an equity framework to guide all programs and decisions.** Commit resources to develop and implement an [equity framework](#) by the end of 2021 that will prioritize resources and opportunities for communities with the greatest need, and set standards for community participation in decision-making. Annually report on the disbursement of resources, and on larger housing outcomes, by race and ethnicity.

**Timeline:** ○

**Expand down payment assistance.** Expand funding and other resources to down payment assistance programs for a broad range of buyers—not just seniors, veterans, or those who can be underwritten for a traditional first mortgage.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Expand access to home purchase and improvement capital.** Act as a subordinate or third lender, or capitalize a loan loss reserve, to underwrite small-dollar home purchase loans primarily under \$70,000. Similarly, support small loans to address systems and other repairs. Scale up alternative lending programs that serve prospective buyers with lower incomes and/or credit scores, such as CHN Housing Capital’s “Believe Mortgage.”

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Existing Down Payment Assistance.** In 2018-2020, CHN Housing Partners closed a total of 142 home purchase loans to buyers with incomes at or below 80% of AMI; 49 of these closed with down payment assistance. Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity closed 59 home purchase loans over the same period, 25 of which were accompanied by down payment assistance. Finally, Greater Circle Living (an employer-assisted housing program that incentivizes employees of the Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland University, Case Western Reserve University, and other University Circle employers to live in the neighborhoods surrounding these institutions) provided down payment assistance to a total of 56 households between 2018 and 2020.

**Believe Mortgage.** CHN Housing Capital’s “Believe Mortgage,” which launched in April 2021, provides small-dollar home purchase loans to borrowers with low incomes and moderate credit scores. CHN also helps borrowers tap down payment assistance programs to assemble the 3% down payment required for the loan. Early evidence suggests that the program can actually help lower families’ housing costs by helping them become homeowners, and prevent displacement by helping renters purchase their units.

# PROTECT | Enable equitable development without displacement

## GOAL

**Enable equitable development without displacement.** New development is essential for providing a range of housing options and amenities, and for generating revenue to support public programs. But increased property values and rents resulting from new investment can increase housing costs for incumbent households. Some census tracts in Cleveland's Downtown and on the near West Side have experienced significant increases in both housing values and rents since 2000. In the worst case, these cost pressures can result in the displacement of vulnerable households to lower-cost neighborhoods where they do not access the benefits associated with new development.

**Protect vulnerable homeowners against property tax increases.** Create a [tax relief program](#) to exempt low-income, long-time homeowners from increases in their property taxes, especially seniors and others with fixed incomes, and especially in areas with rapidly appreciating property values.

**Timeline:** ○

**Adopt additional legislation promoting tenant rights.** Reduce the negative outcomes associated with rent increases by adopting [source of income protections](#), [pay-to-stay legislation](#), and [fair chance laws](#) against discriminatory screening of residents with criminal histories.

**Timeline:** ○ ●

**Existing Tax Relief.** Currently, about 24,550 parcels in Cleveland benefit from the State of Ohio's Homestead Tax Exemption, which shields the first \$25,000 of a home's value from property taxes. However, this program is open only to qualifying senior and disabled homeowners.

**Existing Tenant Protections.** Cleveland tenants do not currently enjoy any protections beyond those set out in Ohio law. State law provides that landlords must keep their properties in livable condition; keep all electrical, plumbing, heating, and ventilation equipment in good working order; and give 24 hours' notice before entering a tenant's unit. If the landlord refuses to make necessary repairs within a reasonable timeframe, the tenant can hold rent in escrow without risk of eviction. In the event of lease violations, the landlord may not evict the tenant without serving a formal 3-day notice to vacate and filing for eviction in Housing Court. If the tenant vacates within 3 days, the landlord may not also file for eviction.

# PROTECT | Protect renters from forced moves and rent burdens

## GOAL

**Protect renters from forced moves and severe rent burdens.** Renters make up nearly 60% of Cleveland households, a share that continues to increase. Cleveland renters are disproportionately young and low-income, and can face housing instability due to rent increases, poor housing conditions outside of their control, and eviction. Refugees, justice-involved individuals, and youth exiting foster care are especially vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. Cleveland's eviction filing rate is substantially higher than the statewide rate; in 2019, over 8,000 eviction cases were heard in Housing Court, resulting in over 3,500 evictions. The Poverty Center has found that most evicted families in Cleveland are low-income single mothers of color.

**Fund a shallow rent subsidy.** Create a [shallow rent subsidy](#) to help tenants cover rent arrears, forward rent, or relocation costs in the event of an unexpected inability to pay rent. Prioritize renter households with children, especially those who have received an eviction notice or who are at high risk of homelessness.

**Timeline:** ○

**Explore rental insurance.** Consider other forms of support to protect renters against financial shocks, such as a [rental insurance](#) program that allows tenants to pay a small premium each month to insure against months when a loss of income or medical expense causes them to fall behind on rent.

**Timeline:** ○ ●

**Expand efforts to divert cases from housing court.** Expand and formalize [eviction diversion](#) efforts educating landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities, mediating landlord-tenant disputes, and connecting tenants with resources to pay rent, relocate, or access other homelessness prevention services.

**Timeline:** ○

**Expand Housing Court representation.** Work with the Legal Aid Society to expand the availability of free legal representation to all low-income tenants facing eviction.

**Timeline:** ○

**Emergency Rental Assistance.** A shallow rent subsidy will build on Cleveland's current emergency rental assistance program, which the Department of Community Development, EDEN, and CHN Housing Partners operate to distribute federal relief dollars to households that cannot pay their rent due to the impacts of COVID-19. The city-funded portion of the program assisted nearly 4,000 households between July 2020 and June 2021.

**Right to Counsel.** In its first six months (July-December 2020), Cleveland's Right to Counsel (RTC) program provided free legal services to tenants in 323 Housing Court cases; 93% of assisted clients seeking to avoid an eviction or involuntary move succeeded in doing so. However, this represents a small slice of need; in 2019, Housing Court heard 8,038 eviction cases and only 5% of tenants had legal representation (compared to 73% of landlords), according to court records. Because of limited funding, the RTC program is currently only available to Cleveland households with children and with incomes at or below the federal poverty line, which excludes about 62% of tenants who show up to Housing Court.



# PRESERVE

---

Cleveland has a large supply of housing, but the majority of homes are over 80 years old. Strategic investments in housing quality and human capital can preserve these homes as safe, affordable, and desirable for years to come.

- ✓ Invest in the quality of existing homes.
- ✓ Create and sustain a skilled repair workforce.
- ✓ Compassionately enforce housing quality standards.
- ✓ Address the appraisal gap.

# PRESERVE | Invest in the quality of existing homes

## GOAL

**Invest in the quality of existing homes.** Poor housing conditions are a significant challenge in Cleveland. Over half of all housing units in the city were built before 1940 and are now over 80 years old. Only a very small share (5%) was built within the last 20 years. A 2015 citywide property inventory conducted by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy graded over 6,000 as grades D or F because they exhibited major exterior cracks, rotting wood, broken or missing windows, open holes, or were filled with trash. In addition, 20,300 properties were only in “fair” condition (rated C). Worryingly, the number of C-rated properties had increased when WRLC re-inventoried neighborhoods on the East Side, at a rate of 1.3% per year. If this rate holds, over 40% of structures will be in only “fair” condition by 2030.

**Develop a credit enhancement program for purchase-rehab loans.** Provide a credit enhancement to lower the cost of **acquisition-rehab financing** for buyers who agree to live in the home that they purchase and renovate within a targeted neighborhood.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Create an emergency home repair program.** Draw on fast and flexible local funds (not entitlement funds) to offer up to \$20,000 of grant-based emergency home repair assistance per qualifying household. When a gap remains between the available emergency funding and repair need, assist the homeowner in accessing additional low-cost home repair financing (see below).

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Increase access to private home repair financing.** Seed a revolving public-private loan fund with a publicly subsidized loan loss reserve to offer small-dollar home repair and improvement loans, including deferred or forgivable loans tailored to low-income homeowners and low-cost amortizing loans to moderate-income homeowners.

**Timeline:** ○

### **Existing Home Repair Assistance.**

Currently, the City of Cleveland expends \$500,000 in the average year to make 10 home repairs via the Repair-a-Home program, which provides low-interest loans to homeowners at 30-80% of area median income. The Senior Homeowner Assistance Program (SHAP) provides about 100 repairs per year via \$1,250,000 in grants to low- and moderate-income owner-occupant seniors and adults with disabilities. Grants are provided via the Age-Friendly Home Investment Program to make about 100 small repairs per year for low-income seniors and adults with disabilities, averaging \$1,275,000 in annual spending. In addition, a variety of Cleveland organizations provide home repair assistance, including CHN Housing Partners (approximately 7,000 projects annually, totaling \$16.9 million in grant funds invested in weatherization and energy conservation repairs in 2020) and Community Housing Solutions (2,000 minor home repairs for low-income families and seniors per year).

The city's Lead Hazard Control Program makes an additional 85 repairs per year to remediate lead hazards to families at or below 80% of area median income that include children under the age of 6, for a total of \$750,000 in annual spending.

# PRESERVE

## Invest in the quality of existing homes, continued

**Create a small landlord loan or loan guaranty program.** Address housing conditions by providing [low-interest loans to small landlords](#) for needed repairs to affordable units and enforcing housing quality standards for rental homes. Provide education and technical assistance to help small landlords plan for and make periodic investments in their properties.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Invest in home repair and maintenance education.** Scale up existing home repair education efforts by the Healthy Homes Initiative, Community Housing Solutions, and others through better funding, outreach, tool-lending programs, and hiring/training skilled practitioners.

**Timeline:** ○

**Explore new strategies to preserve subsidized affordable housing.** Over 15,000 affordable units in Cleveland's private rental market may see their subsidy contracts expire by 2030. Explore innovative tools to preserve these units as affordable, including rules requiring owners of subsidized rental housing to report approaching expirations and establishing a [right of first refusal](#), as well as mechanisms to finance the acquisition and recapitalization of affordable housing projects.

**Timeline:** ○

### **Lead Safe Home Fund Loans and Grants.**

Administered by CHN Housing Partners, this program offers grants to income-eligible applicants and low-interest loans to qualified borrowers to facilitate lead-safe work in rental properties throughout Cleveland. The 10-year, \$19+ million loan fund is capitalized by private investors, philanthropy, and national Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). Grant funding is capitalized by the public sector and philanthropic dollars. This fund provides a model that can be leveraged for home repair, landlord loans, and similar efforts.

**Existing Home Repair Education.** The local nonprofit Community Housing Solutions provides tools for loan and home maintenance workshops to 2,500 households annually. The Home Repair Resource Center, which is based in Cleveland Heights, also operates a tool lending library to members, as well as home repair classes and free walk-in programs, as well as workshops geared specifically toward seniors.

# PRESERVE

## Create and sustain a skilled repair workforce

### GOAL

**Create and sustain a skilled repair workforce.** Maintaining a pool of qualified and insured contractors is essential to good home repair and rehabilitation. Some of the challenges that can limit contractor capacity include the large upfront costs associated with individual projects, which a contractor can wait a month or more to see reimbursed; regulatory requirements for certifications, insurance, and detailed work scopes that small-time contractors find difficult to meet; and the low profit margins associated with individual small-scale repair jobs.

**Invest in contractor capacity.** Work together with Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to invest in **contractor capacity** by providing a steady pipeline of bundled projects, providing advance capital, and creating a review portal that can be accessed to review contractors' prior work and skills without subjecting contractors to onerous documentation requirements for each new project. Work with providers of certified contracting and construction training to expand access for minority and women businesses and workers.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Contractors on the Rise.** The Village Capital Corporation, a subsidiary of Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, launched a new program in 2019 to provide minority contractors with a \$100,000-\$200,000 line of credit to conduct home repairs in Cleveland. In its first year, Contractors on the Rise enrolled nine minority contractors, seven of whom went on to purchase and remodel their first homes using the capital provided.

# PRESERVE | Compassionately enforce housing quality standards

## GOAL

### **Enforce housing quality standards without harming low-income property owners.**

Building codes are a crucial tool in ensuring that homes are safe and healthy to live in. But low- and moderate-income landlords and homeowners often lack the resources to keep their units up to code and issuing citations may further erode their financial stability. Another challenge is that the building code may be more difficult to enforce for some groups, such as investors who live in another state or country. While investment in Cleveland's housing stock is much-needed, research has shown that out-of-state investor purchases of foreclosed-upon or blighted homes in Cleveland are often associated with negative outcomes such as abandonment, condemnation, and tax delinquency.

**Implement a compassionate code enforcement program.** Increase staffing and adopt a customer-service approach ("how can we help you?") for **code enforcement**. Implement a proactive, publicly accessible tracking system, conduct periodic inspections in addition to responding to tenant complaints, and work cooperatively with small, low-income, and nonprofit owners to bring their properties up to code, tapping emergency and small landlord home repair programs when necessary.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Curb predatory investment.** Expand and enforce rental registry requirements in order to collect more information about absentee investors and their property managers. Use these data to target code enforcement and to make it more difficult for bad actors to secure additional deed transfers. Engage the Sheriff's Department to reduce bulk-buying sight unseen. Hold property managers liable for code enforcement violations.

**Timeline:** ○

**The Healthy Homes Initiative.** The City of Cleveland funds a team of neighborhood specialists to help renters, homeowners, and landlords identify and remove environmental hazards and bring homes into compliance with the housing code. Specialists help residents apply for housing resources and offer trainings and workshops on a variety of housing topics. In 2020, specialists inspected about 20,700 parcels, identified over 12,000 violations, and made referrals to more than 10 housing programs.

# PRESERVE

## Address the appraisal gap

### GOAL

**Address the appraisal gap.** An appraisal gap occurs when the appraised value of a home is lower than its asking price, or the cost of repairs needed to make the unit livable. Since banks are typically only willing to underwrite mortgages up to a proportion of the appraised amount, this leaves a gap that the buyer must cover with cash—an impossibility for many homeowners. The appraisal gap disincentivizes homebuying and slows down the revitalization of Cleveland neighborhoods, particularly predominantly African American neighborhoods where (according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland) homes are consistently appraised at lower values than similar properties in other neighborhoods.

**Improve appraisal accuracy.** Work with the appraisal industry to assemble comprehensive market data that can facilitate non-biased appraisals. In neighborhoods where the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) is an incomplete record, build better property profiles with up-to-date photos, so that these properties may be used as real estate comps.

**Timeline:** ○

**Create a priority for down payment assistance for prospective homebuyers facing appraisal gap issues.** Prioritize the allocation of down payment assistance funds in neighborhoods where appraisal gaps are widespread.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Appraisals.** In a 2020 study on single-family appraisals, Emily Braman and Alan Weiner found that there are several challenges facing the appraisal profession, including: 1) a shortage of appraisers entering the field; 2) a proliferation of sales under \$25,000 that were not reported through the Multiple Listing Service, and which sometimes included multiple transfers on the same day; 3) differences in appraisers' and realtors' perception of the value of certain amenities, and animosity between the two professions; 4) the potential for implicit bias among appraisers against predominantly African American neighborhoods; and 5) out-of-town investor purchases and investments, which are often made in cash and difficult to verify.

# PRODUCE

---

Building new homes is essential to a robust housing market. Cleveland can create a full range of housing choices in every neighborhood through targeted incentives, sensitive zoning, and streamlined, equitable processes for financing and approving new development.

- ✓ Ensure equitable participation in housing development.
- ✓ Create a range of housing choices in all neighborhoods.
- ✓ Create a predictable and practical development process.

# PRODUCE | Ensure equitable participation in development.

## GOAL

**Ensure equitable participation in housing development.** Despite regulations prioritizing small and minority-owned businesses for city contracts and HUD resources, structural barriers continue to exclude minority contractors and developers from participating in opportunities to build and rehabilitate housing in Cleveland. Some of the actions elsewhere in this Plan address these barriers by making the development process more transparent and predictable for everyone, and by investing in the capacity of all small contractors. But these actions must be part of a larger effort to actively empower minority contractors and developers.

**Support, and increase the number of, minority developers through financing and technical assistance.** Work with nonprofit partners to create an equitable development program with the explicit goal of empowering Black and minority developers. Provide access to flexible capital, knowledge of upcoming requests for development, and legal assistance, as well as one-on-one technical mentorships focused on project budgeting, navigating city processes, project management, and community engagement.

Timeline: ○ ○

**Create a minority youth developer program.** Create a program modeled on [Dream Builders 4 Equity](#) in St. Louis, which provides paid summer jobs to youth, enabling them to work alongside minority contractors to learn about real estate and construction. The program works with neighborhood associations to identify priority vacant properties for rehabilitation. The homes rehabilitated through the program are then sold by African American-owned brokerages to first-time homeowners. Finally, the revenue from home sales is used to start a college savings fund for each student participant.

Timeline: ○ ○

**Section 3 Program.** For \$200,000+ projects funded using U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Section 3 requires that 30% of new hires by participating contractors must be low-income Cleveland residents. It also requires that 10% of the total dollar amount for construction work must go to Section 3 businesses (businesses that are certified as either 51% owned and controlled by low- or very low-income persons, or have 75% of labor performed by low-income Cleveland residents). In addition, 3% of all non-construction awards must go to certified Section 3 businesses.

**Small, Minority-Owned, and Female-Owned Businesses.** The City of Cleveland's Office of Equal Opportunity offers a certification process for Cleveland Small Businesses (CSBs), Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), and Female Business Enterprises (FBEs). Currently, at least 30% of city construction contracts must go to CSBs or to bidders/proposers that have committed to subcontracting with certified CSBs; similarly, individual departments must promote the participation of MBEs and FBEs as both prime contractors and subcontractors whenever possible.

# PRODUCE | Create a range of housing in all neighborhoods

## GOAL

**Create a range of housing choices in all neighborhoods.** Cleveland currently has an overabundance of large, single-family homes. As of 2019, nearly half (47%) of all housing units in the city are standalone single-family structures. Yet Cleveland households are getting smaller (only about 55% of households today include more than one person) and older (a third of households are headed by persons aged 60 and older). A wide range of housing types, including housing accessible to those with disabilities, are needed to accommodate changing demands. At the same time, most new development has occurred in just a handful of neighborhoods and remains out of reach for many Clevelanders. More equitable development patterns can ensure that strong-market neighborhoods include affordable options, and that disinvested neighborhoods participate in the benefits of growth.

**Update zoning to allow for a greater variety of housing types.** Modify the zoning code to: allow for and encourage tri- and fourplexes and other forms of “soft density” citywide; allow for accessory dwelling units; maximize the potential of irregular lots; and provide flexibility for creative housing options that better match current and changing needs.

**Timeline:** ○

**Promote housing development in underinvested neighborhoods.** Deepen development incentives, such as acquisition and construction subsidies, for housing construction and rehabilitation projects in underinvested neighborhoods. Target these incentives in alignment with locally driven community revitalization and master plans.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Provide affordable housing options in strong-market neighborhoods.** In strong-market neighborhoods, implement [inclusionary zoning](#) requiring developers to include a certain share of affordable units in new projects. In other neighborhoods, incentivize the inclusion of affordable units, for example by permitting additional density, waiving parking requirements, and/or reducing fees in exchange for units reserved for low- and moderate-income households.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Existing Development Incentives.** In 2019, the city invested \$1.55 million to subsidize the development of 311 affordable housing units and in 2016 (the most recent year for which data are available), made five loans for a total of \$2.63 million to support the development of 151 new market-rate units. The majority of incentivized units have not been in underinvested neighborhoods but in strong-market neighborhoods.

In 2020-2021, the city piloted a construction/rehab gap financing program to close the difference between the cost of construction and appraised value basis for single-family homes. The program provided \$1.4 million in 2020.

**The Mayor’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative.** The NTI combines funding for housing with investments in mixed-use development, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship and workforce development in specific target neighborhoods (Glenville, Buckeye-Woodhill, East 79th Street Corridor, and Clark-Fulton). This holistic approach creates a vibrant ecosystem that inspires and sustains further private investment in the housing stock.

# PRODUCE | Create a range of housing, continued

**Preserve and improve the Cleveland Tax Abatement.** The tax abatement is required to be renewed by City Council in 2022. The city should take this opportunity to consider the recommendations put forward in the [Cleveland Tax Abatement Study](#) and explore scaling the size of the abatement by home type, price, and location in order to encourage its use for homes in a wider range of neighborhoods and price points.

**Timeline:** ○

**Require housing to be accessible to those with limited mobility.** Ensure that all newly constructed multifamily housing meets minimum FHA accessibility requirements and mandate the inclusion of extra-accessible units (meeting UFAS) in market-rate development.

**Timeline:** ○ ●

**Cleveland's Tax Abatement.** Currently, Cleveland's tax abatement program abates 100% of property taxes on new homes citywide, as well as on increases in property value as a result of certain rehabilitations, for 15 years. In 2019, the abatement was awarded for 625 new multi-family units, 117 new single- or two-family units, and 102 single- or two-family rehabs. These units were overwhelmingly concentrated in strong-market neighborhoods like Detroit Shoreway, Tremont, University Circle, and Downtown.

**Accessibility Requirements.** Under the Fair Housing Act, all rental housing built in structures with four or more connected units since 1991 should comply with the Fair Housing Act (FHA) [Accessibility Guidelines](#), which call for wheelchair-accessible entrances and common areas, bathroom walls strong enough for grab bar installation, kitchens and bathrooms that are maneuverable in a wheelchair, and accessible light switches and other controls. These requirements have not been strictly enforced, however. In addition, market-rate development is not currently required to include "extra-accessible" units, i.e., units that comply with [Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards](#) (UFAS). By contrast, federally assisted new residential construction with five or more units must build 5% of those units to meet UFAS.

# PRODUCE | Create a predictable development process

## GOAL

**Create a predictable and practical development process.** New housing development in Cleveland is contingent on narrow margins, so that unforeseen costs, delays, or requirements can render a new project infeasible. Listening sessions and surveys with Cleveland developers identified several barriers, including an outdated zoning code that necessitates variances and triggers design review, lengthy review times for permit applications, and inconsistency in the way design standards are applied. In addition, projects depend on developers' ability to access subsidies and secure adequate financing.

**Implement form-based zoning citywide.** Use a participatory process to adopt a [form-based zoning code](#) that allows desirable development by-right, minimizing the need to apply for variances.

Timeline: ○ ●

**Streamline the permitting process.** Improve and expand the online permitting system so that it is friendly to users and based on a standardized electronic workflow that all Building and Housing staff use and can access remotely. Ensure that new, standardized processes are accompanied with training and documentation for all staff.

Timeline: ○

**Expedite permitting for priority projects.** Advocate for a change to the Ohio Building Code to allow a "[green tape program](#)" that includes a fast-tracked development approval process and waivers for certain requirements and fees for projects with an affordability component.

Timeline: ○ ● ●

### Form-based Zoning in Cleveland.

Currently, the Cleveland Planning Commission is piloting form-based zoning in three neighborhoods based on extensive public engagement: Detroit Shoreway, Hough, and the Opportunity Corridor.

# PRODUCE | Predictable development process, continued

---

## **Reduce the complexity and cost of acquiring land from the Cleveland Land Bank.**

Shorten and simplify the land bank application process and reduce processing times to 2-3 weeks for proposals that meet predetermined, transparent standards for highest and best use. Base land bank acquisition costs on fair market value (FMV), determined via a routine process, rather than asking developers to shoulder the cost of appraisals. Forgive acquisition costs based on the desirability and/or performance of the development.

**Timeline:** ○

**Explore other cost reductions.** Consider reducing the cost of development and operation by lowering taxes and fees; supporting financing for development-related infrastructure investments in sewer, water, and other systems; and proactively remediating brownfields and assembling development-ready sites in target locations.

**Timeline:** ○

**The Cleveland Land Bank.** The City of Cleveland's Land Reutilization Program, commonly called the City Land Bank, acquires vacant lots with the goal of transferring them to responsible parties who can return them to productive use. As of September 2020, the City Land Bank holds nearly 16,000 vacant parcels, for a total of about 1,840 acres of land. At the same time, the Land Bank sells only about 225 parcels per year. Most dispositions take the form of leases, not sales. Among parcels sold, only about half are developed for new housing; the rest are sold for yard expansions, greening, or non-residential development.

A photograph of the Cleveland skyline, featuring the Key Tower and the City Hall tower. A large green rectangular overlay covers the middle portion of the image, containing text. The background shows various skyscrapers and a clear sky with some clouds.

# POSITION

---

A strong and equitable housing market will require the City of Cleveland to effectively collaborate across agencies and service providers, provide a predictable environment for developers and other stakeholders, and efficiently leverage available funding.

- ✓ Invest in neighborhood infrastructure.
- ✓ Increase awareness of and access to housing programs.
- ✓ Adequately fund new and existing efforts.
- ✓ Hold the city and its partners accountable to this plan.

# POSITION | Invest in neighborhood infrastructure

## GOAL

**Invest in neighborhood infrastructure.** The quality of a home is a function not just of housing conditions, but also of neighborhood conditions. Uneven investments in neighborhood amenities like trees, streets, broadband infrastructure, libraries, and schools have contributed to strong housing markets in some areas of Cleveland, but out-migration and neglect in others. An estimated 7,700 vacant and distressed housing units (as of January 2021) also affect home values and quality of life in affected neighborhoods.

**Make basic neighborhood infrastructure upgrades.** Create a robust program of basic neighborhood infrastructure upgrades, such as roads, sidewalks, parks, lighting, trees and internet, particularly in underinvested neighborhoods. Work with partners to support quality transit, libraries, schools, and Metroparks.

**Timeline:** ○ ● ● ●

**Coordinate infrastructure investments with investments in housing.** Align the street maintenance schedule, the development of new transit routes and multimodal infrastructure, as well as the delivery of broadband infrastructure with major housing investments to ensure that the housing stock is not only diverse, but also desirable and accessible.

**Timeline:** ○ ●

**Selectively demolish abandoned housing.** Target demolition to eliminate vacant and abandoned housing units that would be especially difficult to rehabilitate, and whose lots can best be redeveloped to provide more diverse, accessible housing options.

**Timeline:** ○

**Demolitions.** Between 2015 and 2018, federal funding via the Hardest Hit Fund to county land banks in Ohio resulted in 3,750 demolitions in East Side neighborhoods. The Western Reserve Land Conservancy estimates that a residential demolition costs approximately \$10,000 per house.

# POSITION | Increase awareness of and access to programs

## GOAL

**Increase awareness of, and access to, Cleveland's housing programs.** Listening sessions with residents and other stakeholders suggest that many of Cleveland's housing programs are currently underutilized because of a lack of outreach, difficulties completing complex applications, and lack of coordination between city departments and with external partners, which slows down the delivery of assistance. A more collaborative ecosystem of service providers can maximize Cleveland's capacity to manage outreach, intake, and delivery of housing resources.

**Create a universal application for housing programs.** Rather than having separate applications and reviews for each program and service, create a universal application that is available on the city's website, at city offices, and via partner organizations.

**Timeline:** ○

**Address barriers to application completion.** Reduce overly burdensome documentation requirements and provide additional support to help residents navigate the application process. Require that this process passes a user test for language and disability access, as well as meeting standards for maximum completion time.

**Timeline:** ○

**Increase awareness of available housing resources.** Launch an effective neighborhood-based outreach strategy modeled on the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Partner with United Way 2-1-1 to create and maintain a comprehensive housing resource directory that is accessible to all residents via the 2-1-1 system. Better integrate data gathered via 2-1-1 to understand residents' most pressing housing needs and to inform responses.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**United Way 2-1-1.** The United Way 2-1-1 Help Center provides free and confidential access to a bilingual (English-Spanish) Community Resource Navigation Specialist who will review the caller's situation, help them develop a plan, and act as their advocate if they are faced with any barriers to service. In 2015, Navigation Specialists responded to more than 250,000 contacts across four Ohio counties. The most common topic callers needed help with was housing, especially utility and rent payment. Nearly all (97%) of the callers surveyed said they would contact 2-1-1 again if they needed assistance.

**Universal Application.** The Department of Community Development has already begun moving toward a universal application for home repair and other programs via a platform called Neighborly. Once an applicant completes their request, the Neighborly system can direct it to the home repair provider that best fits the particular request. The system also allows applicants to check on the status of their request at any time.

# POSITION | Increase awareness and access, continued

**Integrate service delivery across providers.** Work with service providers to build an integrated delivery system (a “**one-stop shop**”) for home repairs and other housing services that facilitates easy access to layered resources—including public and nonprofit subsidies—for residents. Back this public-facing housing services “shop” with a robust data-sharing and referral system among providers.

**Timeline:** ○ ● ●

**Maintain a strong Continuum of Care to address ongoing homelessness needs.** Sustain current funding levels to the Cleveland/Cuyahoga Continuum of Care (CoC). Complete the Housing First Initiative’s goal of ending long-term homelessness by building permanent supportive units, and work to address needs in family and youth homelessness. Ensure that outcomes are equitable across the population of those experiencing homelessness by tracking key metrics by race, gender, and other characteristics, and by using these data to inform resource targeting and provider training.

**Timeline:** ○ ●

**Cleveland/Cuyahoga Continuum of Care.** The **Continuum of Care** (CoC) is a network of agencies led by the County’s Office of Homeless Services that receives HUD funding to prevent and resolve homelessness. The CoC provides emergency shelters, rapid re-housing services, permanent supportive housing and services, and programs to reduce youth homelessness. NEOCH (North-eastern Ohio Coalition for the Homeless), a CoC member agency, reports that in 2020, 3,805 adults and 1,292 children went through the CoC’s coordinated intake process. This likely represents a small share of all those who experienced homelessness at some point during that year.

**Housing First Initiative.** In 2002, a coalition of housing developers and service providers launched an initiative to end chronic homelessness in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County by providing subsidized permanent housing with wrap-around services. The **Initiative** has produced over 780 units in 13 buildings, plus over 280 scattered-site units. Since the first building was opened in 2005, Cuyahoga County has seen an 80% drop in long-term homelessness.

# POSITION | Adequately fund new and existing efforts

## GOAL

**Adequately fund new and existing efforts.** The actions described in this Plan require capacity to actively pursue and efficiently allocate federal and state funds, such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Improvement Program funds, as well as COVID-19 relief funds that are meant to support housing stability. They also require the assembly of flexible financing that is less restricted by federal requirements and that leverages non-public sources.

**Expand the Housing Trust Fund.** Significantly expand the city's Housing Trust Fund (HTF) to support this plan's recommendations, including providing small landlord repairs and do, investing in CDFIs, providing down payment assistance, and incentivizing priority development. Structure the HTF with three tiers. Public funds, including general operating dollars and federal entitlement funds, provide a loan loss reserve ("Class C"). These funds are leveraged to attract more flexible funds from foundations, CDFIs, and other civic organizations in a second loss position ("Class B"), as well as more traditional loan funds from banks and businesses in the priority return position ("Class A").

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Expand available non-public capital.** Strengthen CDFIs—both by investing in existing local CDFIs and by attracting regional and national CDFIs—and broaden the pool of institutional investors.

**Timeline:** ○ ○ ○

**Get public dollars out the door.** Adopt rules that give staff the authority to approve financing deals meeting predetermined standards in order to reduce approval delays. For large and/or mixed-use projects, implement a streamlined review process and funding formula, and create a clear process for approving additional funding for projects that have already passed through the application pipeline but require further support. Finally, publish housing trust fund and entitlement spending data on a monthly basis to increase transparency.

**Timeline:** ○ ○

**Housing Trust Fund.** Currently, Cleveland's Housing Trust Fund only includes federal entitlement funds, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership, and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) dollars. These funds are used for housing development loans in a competitive proposal process administered by the Department of Community Development. In 2020, the HTF held about \$16 million as a result of COVID-19-related increases in federal funding. However, in prior years, funding awarded through the HTF has been as low as \$2.63 million (2016).

# POSITION | Hold the city and its partners accountable

---

## GOAL

**Hold the city and its partners accountable to this Plan.** Sometimes, communities engage in an intensive planning process only to have the final document sit on a shelf, never to be implemented. One of the key strategies of this particular Plan is to integrate tools—such as a clear timeline, straightforward benchmarks, regular progress updates, and greater public access to information—that allow the Plan’s stakeholders to hold each other, and themselves, accountable to their shared goals.

**Issue a housing report card.** Create accountability for this plan’s implementation by releasing an annual **housing report card** that details progress towards each recommendation and towards overall targets and by using the city’s website to share housing trend data at the neighborhood level in an easy-to-understand format.

**Timeline:** ○

**Existing Data Sources.** Cleveland is fortunate to have excellent data infrastructure in the form of **NEOCANDO**’s Neighborhood Data Warehouse and Property Data Portal, as well as robust **property inventories** conducted by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. These existing data systems can inform a detailed housing report card.

# GLOSSARY

---

**Property Tax Relief.** Localities have developed a variety of tools to protect households from displacement or tax foreclosure in areas with rapidly rising property values. One tool is a “circuit breaker,” which caps a qualifying household’s property tax based on their income. Another is a tax exemption like Philadelphia’s [Longtime Owner Occupants Program](#) (LOOP), which limits the increase in a home’s property tax assessment, and locks in that assessment, for low-income homeowners who have occupied their home for 10 years or more. Tax relief often requires specific state authorization. Tax relief programs can be paired with tax payment installment plans or payment agreements to help qualifying homeowners stay current.

**Source of Income Protections.** Laws prohibiting discrimination against tenants based on their source of income (“[SOI laws](#)”) exist in various forms in 20 states and in over 100 cities and counties across the U.S. These protections forbid landlords from denying prospective tenants or otherwise treating these tenants differently because they have a housing voucher or other public assistance.

**Pay-to-Stay Legislation.** Many evictions in Cleveland occur on the basis of just [one missed rent payment](#). Pay-to-stay laws give tenants the chance to pay their rent in full up until their eviction hearing. Yellow Springs, Toledo, and Lakewood, and other Ohio jurisdictions have [adopted](#) such legislation, while South Euclid, Cleveland Heights, Maple Heights, and others are considering it.

**Fair Chance Laws.** “[Fair chance](#)” laws limit landlords’ right to ask about or discriminate on the basis of tenants’ criminal history (typically, an exception is made for sex crimes). Such laws have been enacted in Seattle, Detroit, Cook County, New Jersey, and other jurisdictions.

**Shallow Rent Subsidy.** [Shallow rent subsidies](#) are particularly effective for households on fixed incomes, those with volatile income or employment, and other unstably housed or recently rehoused tenants. They can be flat dollar amounts or vary based on fair market rent, income, or unit size, but differ from vouchers in that they provide a lower level of assistance, usually for a set duration. Shallow rent subsidies often target specific populations such as veterans or those who have received rapid rehousing assistance. They have been [piloted](#) in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and other cities.

**Rental Insurance.** Public rental insurance is a relatively [new concept](#). The idea is that a tenant pays a small insurance premium so that if some predetermined event like a job loss or major illness causes them to fall behind on rent, the insurance pays the landlord a fixed amount for a fixed number of months. While this concept remains largely untested, the City of Cincinnati recently passed a “[Renters Choice](#)” ordinance requiring landlords to accept rental security insurance or a small monthly fee each month instead of requiring a security deposit, in order to lower housing search barriers; a similar law exists in [Atlanta](#). Like rental insurance, these ordinances spread the cost of risk over a longer period.

**Eviction Diversion.** [Eviction diversion programs](#) typically pair legal assistance and housing or financial counseling with financial assistance to help tenants and landlords avoid evictions. Programs that include mediation place tenants and their advocates face-to-face with landlords to work out a resolution such as a rent payment plan. A good example is the [Ramsey County Housing Court Clinic](#) in Minnesota, which runs every Tuesday and Thursday in Housing Court, to help tenants apply for emergency assistance, refer them to other services, and facilitate negotiations with landlords.

**Equity Framework.** Equity frameworks help policymakers make decisions and allocate resources in an equitable manner. An example is San Antonio’s [COVID-19 Equity Framework and Rapid Response Tool](#), which creates a protocol for decision-making that requires equitable participation and an “equity impact” analysis of resource accessibility, who benefits and/or is burdened, and what strategies can improve equitable implementation. In Cincinnati, the Peaslee Neighborhood Center’s [Equitable Development Rubric](#) helps stakeholders and policymakers score new development projects.

**Purchase-Rehab Loan Programs.** Pittsburgh's [Community Acquisition and Rehabilitation Loan Program](#) (CARL) is a pilot program that offers combined mortgage and rehab financing up to \$300,000 in targeted census tracts through the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, and local lenders. The URA provides a 15% loan guarantee (allowing participants to avoid purchasing private mortgage insurance) as well as technical and inspection assistance. First-time homebuyers and those with low credit scores must take a homebuyer class.

**Small Landlord Loan Program.** The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA)'s [Small Landlord Loan Program](#) (SLLP) is an example of a program offering loans and technical assistance to small landlords (those owning four units or fewer) for health and safety-related repairs. All loans must be made to properties with rents affordable at or below the city's median income, and one-third of loans must be to properties affordable at or below 50% of median income. The redevelopment authority provides a loan loss reserve fund covering all losses on 20% of the loan portfolio for the participating lender(s).

**Support for Small Contractors.** The [Construction Career Pathways Project](#) (C2P2) brings together a variety of agencies, including governments and school districts, in the Portland metro area to eliminate barriers to accessing and sustaining construction careers for women and people of color. Strategies include ensuring a steady funding stream to pre-apprenticeship programs, investing in ongoing support to apprentices, and improving job site culture through workplace trainings. In Connecticut, the [New Haven Regional Contractors Alliance](#) helps small, minority, and women contractors access practical training and mentorships and stay informed about the latest opportunities and regulations through a computerized database and a newsletter.

**Compassionate Code Enforcement.** [Best practices](#) in compassionate code enforcement include adopting proactive rental inspection programs, developing cooperative compliance models, and partnering with community organizations. The City of Greensboro, North Carolina, partners with the Greensboro Housing Coalition, a local nonprofit organization, to conduct public education about code requirements, and code enforcement staff and GHC counselors to work together to solve housing issues and prevent displacement. The Alameda County Healthy Homes Department trains code enforcement officers to help property owners understand the elements of healthy and housing and identify resources to bring the property into compliance.

**Right of First Refusal.** A right of first refusal grants qualified non-profit developers, government agencies, or tenant associations priority in purchasing a subsidized rental property if the property's owner decides to opt out of the subsidy program. The right can be to an exclusive period during which to make an offer, or the option to match offers made by private buyers. Either way, the goal is to allow entities that will preserve the property's affordability time to assemble financing without having to compete with market-rate developers. Washington D.C.'s [Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act](#) (TOPA) is paired with a loan program and free technical assistance to help tenants exercise their right of first refusal.

**Inclusionary Zoning.** [Inclusionary zoning](#) (IZ) policies require a given share of new residential construction to be priced below market rate for a certain period of time. They usually apply only to projects with at least ten units, and the requirements may differ for rental and for-sale projects. Some IZ programs allow developers to build the required affordable units off-site, or to contribute to a cash fund for affordable housing in lieu of providing these units themselves. IZ policies do not produce affordable housing on a large scale, and the units they do produce typically do not serve the lowest-income households, but they can be critical tools for ensuring that high-opportunity areas remain inclusive. IZ may be tied to density bonuses or other benefits in areas where the market cannot support a mandate (see Austin's [Affordability Unlocked](#) program).

**Form-based Codes.** Instead of regulating land uses like traditional zoning codes do, [form-based codes](#) regulate the form and mass of buildings, the relationship between building facades and public space, and the scale and type of streets and blocks. The code is accompanied by clear diagrams and examples, as well as a glossary. An example is the [Land Development Code](#) for Peoria, Illinois.

**Green Tape Programs.** Fee waivers, expediting, and code relief can all decrease the cost of construction, and are usually used to enable desirable but less profitable forms of development (green buildings, affordable housing, and ADA-accessible housing). Austin's [S.M.A.R.T Housing](#) program combines all three tools for projects certified as "Smart," i.e., affordable, accessible, and transit oriented. The program scales fee waivers to the percentage and type of units that are affordable. Smart projects enter a special accelerated development review process.

**One-Stop Shop for Housing Resources.** The [Harris County Housing and Community Resource Center](#) is an example of a one-stop shop, offering an affordable housing search tool for renters, free listing opportunities for landlords, access to homebuyer education and financial assistance, emergency shelter, and other resources. Residents can call or email a resource navigator for personal assistance.

**Housing Reports and Dashboards.** The [Boston Indicators Project](#) is an example of an accountability mechanism. It was created in 2000 through a partnership between the City of Boston, the Boston Foundation, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to curate an online database of 350 measures of wellbeing, and grew to include the annual [Greater Boston Housing Report Card](#).

# HOUSING REPORT CARD

## TARGETS

Annual progress towards housing targets.

	Metric	Total Number	Share in Strong-Market Neighborhoods	Share in Middle-Market Neighborhoods	Share in Underinvested Neighborhoods	Share Persons or Households of Color (if applicable)
Protect	Down payment assistance grants					
	Affordable purchase loans					
	Households given rental assistance					
	Households given property tax protection					
	Households given free legal counsel		n/a	n/a	n/a	
Preserve	Home repair grants					
	Home repair loans					
	Small landlord loans					
	Construction and rehab workers trained		n/a	n/a	n/a	
Produce	Total new/gut rehab units					
	Purchase-rehab loans					
	New affordable units					
	New accessible units					

## TARGETS 2

Annual progress towards housing targets.

	Metric	Value
Position	Housing trust fund total – public dollars	
	Housing trust fund total – private dollars	
	Share of CDBG, HOME, ESG allocation spent	
	Share of universal housing resource applications completed	
	Average # days to process universal housing resource application	

## EQUITY

Annual progress toward promoting equity.

	Metric	Value
Equity	Share of mortgage originations to applicants of color	
	Share of cost-burdened households that are households of color	
	Share of evictions affecting tenants of color	
	Number of certified minority-owned contractors/developers	
	Share of city contracts to minority-owned contractors/developers	

## STATUS

Programs and policies launched, ongoing, and completed.

	Action	Status	STATUS KEY
<b>PROTECT</b>	Develop and implement an equity framework to guide assistance		<div style="background-color: #c6e0b4; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Launched</div> <div style="background-color: #a6c9ec; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Ongoing</div> <div style="background-color: #c4c4c4; padding: 2px;">Completed</div>
	Expand down payment assistance		
	Expand access to home purchase and improvement capital		
	Protect vulnerable homeowners against property tax increases		
	Adopt additional legislation promoting tenant rights		
	Fund a shallow rent subsidy		
	Explore rental insurance		
	Expand efforts to divert cases from Housing Court		
	Expand Housing Court representation		
<b>PRESERVE</b>	Develop a credit enhancement program for purchase-rehab loans		
	Create an emergency home repair program		
	Increase access to home repair financing		
	Create a small landlord loan program		
	Invest in home repair and maintenance education		
	Explore new strategies to preserve subsidized affordable housing		
	Invest in contractor capacity		
	Implement a compassionate code enforcement program		
	Curb predatory investment		
	Improve appraisal accuracy		
	Create a priority for down payment assistance to those facing appraisal gap issues		

## STATUS

Programs and policies launched, ongoing, and completed.

	Action	Status	STATUS KEY
<b>PRODUCE</b>	Support minority developers through financing and technical assistance		<div style="background-color: #c6e0b4; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Launched</div> <div style="background-color: #a6c9ec; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Ongoing</div> <div style="background-color: #9999cc; padding: 2px;">Completed</div>
	Create a minority youth developer program		
	Update zoning to allow for a greater variety of housing types		
	Promote housing development in underinvested neighborhoods		
	Provide affordable housing options in strong-market neighborhoods		
	Preserve and improve the Cleveland Tax Abatement		
	Require housing to be accessible to those with limited mobility		
	Implement form-based zoning citywide		
	Streamline the permitting process		
	Expedite permitting for priority projects		
	Reduce the complexity and cost of acquiring land from the Cleveland Land Bank		
	Explore other cost reductions to promote development		
<b>POSITION</b>	Make basic neighborhood infrastructure upgrades		
	Coordinate infrastructure with housing investments		
	Selectively demolish abandoned housing		
	Create a universal application for housing programs		
	Address barriers to application completion		
	Increase awareness of available housing resources		
	Integrate service delivery across providers		
	Expand the Housing Trust Fund		
	Expand available non-public capital		
Get public dollars out the door			