



ULI Housing Opportunity Conference

February 20–21, 2024

Austin, Texas

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries. More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About the Terwilliger Center for Housing

The mission of the [Terwilliger Center for Housing](#) is to ensure that everyone has a home that meets their needs at a price they can afford. Established in 2007 with a gift from longtime member and former ULI chairman J. Ronald Terwilliger, the Center's activities include technical assistance engagements, forums and convenings, research and publications, and an awards program. The goal is to catalyze the production and preservation of a full spectrum of housing options.

About the Housing Opportunity Conference

The Housing Opportunity Conference is one of the premier national meetings of the affordable housing development, lending, investment, and policy community. The conference brings together a diverse mix of private and nonprofit real estate developers, public officials, urban and regional planners, housing advocates, architects, investors, and lenders with one common goal: to expand opportunities for a full range of residential development in their communities. Participants can learn about cutting-edge research and best practices in the housing industry, engage with industry leaders, and tour innovative buildings and developments that showcase the best of the residential real estate industry.

The 2024 conference was held in Austin, Texas, reaching 530 registrants, with 51 speakers, 12 sponsors, and \$90,000 in sponsorship revenue. Over two days, the conference offered nine concurrent sessions, three general sessions, three tours, and numerous networking opportunities at meals and receptions. See the full [Knowledge Finder event library](#).

Session Summaries

General Sessions

Opening Keynote: State of the U.S. Housing Markets

Each year, the Housing Opportunity Conference opens with a general session titled “State of the U.S. Housing Markets.” Daryl Fairweather of RedFin and Dana Schoewe of RCLCO provided this year’s keynote. Daryl spoke to the national landscape, emphasizing housing demand and supply constraints, the effects of inflation on homeownership prospects, and climate concerns when choosing a place to live. Dana focused on the affordable housing picture by presenting findings from the [2024 Terwilliger Center Home Attainability Index](#). See [more information on this session](#) and [the presentation](#).

Austin: Past, Present, and Future

During this session, Austin’s history, growth, and future were discussed by a panel of local experts. The panel discussed historical issues such as redlining and restricted lending limiting the opportunities of minority communities, and the effects of freeway development and suburbanization. The panel then focused on current issues and how the city is responding to its population growth, including the reconstruction of Interstate 35 and downtown development. Moderated by Laura Beuerlein (Heritage Title Company of Austin Inc.) with speakers Dr. Lila Valencia (City of Austin Housing and Planning Department), Annick Beaudet (City of Austin), and Kevin Burns (Urbanspace Real Estate + Interiors). See [more information on this session](#) and [the presentation](#).

Fireside Chat with Ron Terwilliger and Henry Cisneros

The closing general session featured a fireside chat between Ron Terwilliger and Henry Cisneros, two titans of the housing industry, as they reflected on the latest issues and trends in the housing market, and what solutions and opportunities they believe can catalyze housing production and improve housing affordability. The session was moderated by ULI Austin chair Heidi Cisneros. The trio discussed the value of homeownership, the production shortfall raising costs, and the need for national and local policies to address housing affordability for Americans. See [more information on this session](#).

Concurrent Sessions

Innovative Partnerships to Leverage Land for More Housing

In many communities, land is scarce and expensive, driving up the cost of housing and limiting the opportunity to build more homes in areas of opportunity. Moderator Nina Janopaul (Capital Strategies Consulting) led the panel’s discussion of successful partnerships that have leveraged the real estate owned by houses of worship and schools to build more housing, while also investing in those communities. Panelists were Jeremy Striffler (Austin Independent School District), David

Bowers (Enterprise Community Partners), Carmen Romero (Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing), and Christopher Kennedy (Emmaus Projects). See [the session slides](#).

Construction Disrupters

With labor shortages, construction costs escalating, and interest rates rising, getting housing development to pencil has become even more difficult. While the real estate industry has had numerous false starts with innovative production techniques, this panel explored how tech and innovation advances and economic realities aligned to make new construction technologies and innovations a scalable solution for our housing shortage. The session was moderated by Richard Gollis (Concord Group), with panelists Alex Ohrn (Hines), Michael Harper (ICON), Allison Satt (Swinerton), and Steve PonTell (Parity Development). See [the session slides](#).

Homeless to Housed: Defining the Value and Impact of Deeply Affordable Housing

This panel explored the ways in which the development community can think differently about financing deeply affordable housing. Moderated by Beth Silverman (The Lotus Campaign), the panelists Claudia Lima (SDS Capital Group), Rosanne Haggerty (Community Solutions), and Sally Gaskin (SGI Ventures) shared how their firms have gone about building public and private relationships to acquire right-fit financing, understand their client needs, and build to suit those needs and the long-term needs of service providers helping clients in those developments. They also discussed how they help the communities they build to identify the challenges and opportunities they face and how these developments can promote equitable growth across their communities.

Addressing Housing Needs through Equitable Transit-Oriented Development and Suburban Retrofits

Transit-oriented communities create mixed-use neighborhoods centered around transit. They are purposefully designed to make it more convenient to take transit, walk, bike, or roll than to drive. This panel expanded on the traditional definition of transit-oriented development (TOD) to include a more targeted, equitable lens to the production of housing outside the city core. Many suburbs around the United States are exploring a mix of land uses to encourage the inclusion of more dense housing as an essential component of current suburban retrofitting strategies. Equitable TOD (E-TOD) policies are playing an important role in creating more diverse and inclusive communities. Sean Garretson (Pegasus Planning and Development) moderated the panel discussion with Geeti Silwal (Perkins & Will), Beth Elliott (Stantec), and Anna Lan (CapMetro). See [the session slides](#).

A Look Back on the Latest State and Local Housing Policy Innovations

State and local governments have been pushing zoning reform, new funding, and other proposals to advance attainable housing production and preservation in their communities. The session was moderated by Michael Wilt (Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation), with panelists Jen Weaver (Vivid Development Company), Nicki Hellenkamp (City of Boise Planning & Development Services), Tocarra Nicole Thomas (Smart Growth America), and Nicole Nosek (Texans for Reasonable Solutions). Tocarra provided a national overview of policy changes, particularly drawing from her expertise in form-based codes. Nicki shared the zoning and policy changes Boise has undergone to tackle their housing challenges. Jen and Nicole discussed local policy advances in Austin and Texas,

respectively, drawing on the city's density bonuses and the state's expedited permit review process as examples.

A Balancing Act: Leveraging Decarbonization to Create and Protect Housing Affordability

Climate change and housing affordability are two primary challenges that communities and the real estate industry are facing nationally. To combat these challenges, it is critical to create new housing supply and retrofit older, affordable housing with electrification and its associated infrastructure. The panelists discussed the importance of coordinated, neighborhood-scale decarbonization, human-centered sustainability, design practices that integrate sustainability and resilience, and finally, the historic opportunity offered by the Inflation Reduction Act to support clean energy and energy efficiency investments in multifamily housing. Ashley Besic (Building Decarbonization Coalition) moderated this panel with speakers Anna Lake-Smith (Foundation Communities), Roger Sherman (Gensler), and Ben Evans (U.S. Green Building Council). See [the session slides](#).

The Role of Housing in Creating Vibrant Urban Communities

It's everywhere in the news; downtowns are suffering. As the pandemic disrupted in-person office culture, less foot traffic in these areas has negatively impacted retail, small businesses, public space, transportation, and public safety. However, the focus has been on office-to-residential and other anchors to bring people back downtown. This panel focused on the opportunity for affordable and mixed-income housing to reshape their communities and provide economic mobility for their residents. With the right place-based strategies and intentional community partnerships, housing developments can be a platform for a community's soul and provide downtowns and urban centers with a new identity. The panelists shared strategies for leveraging mixed-income housing developments to create great places with amenities and economic opportunities, for residents and visitors alike. The session was moderated by Hannah Rangel (the Downtown Austin Alliance), with panelists Kimberly Driggins (Washington Housing Conservancy), Kristi Stotts (Winstead PC), and Donahue Peebles III (The Peebles Corporation).

Financing Tools to Make Affordable Deals Pencil

As costs escalate and public dollars dwindle, affordable deals have become increasingly challenging. Moderator David Steinwedell (Affordable Central Texas) led the discussion on tools and strategies to get more affordable housing built. Topics included community development banking, investments in housing stability, impact investing, collaborative investments, and diversification of multifamily loan programs. Panelists were Dillon Lorda (AEW Capital Management LP), Brian Allen (AJ) Jackson (LEO Impact Capital), Kelly Boyer (Jonathan Rose Companies), and Katherine Groves (PNC Bank).

Future-Proofing Communities

Nearly 15 million people live in a FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain and over 46 million homes are in the wildland-urban interface. Millions more are left in the dark, often in extremely hot or freezing temperatures, after severe storms disrupt power. As disasters continue to increase in frequency and intensity, protecting people and housing units from climate impacts is critical to preserving supply. This panel discussed strategies for protecting communities from fires, floods, and power outages, including insurance challenges, geothermal exchanges, and innovative technologies

that help create resilient communities. This session was moderated by Natalie Ambrosio Preudhomme (Moody's Analytics), with speakers Jay Bullock (Rancho Mission Viejo), David Currie (Taurus Investment Holdings LLC), and Leroy Moore (Tampa Housing Authority). See [the session slides](#).

Tours

2nd Street and Seaholm Districts

This tour walked through the 2nd Street and Seaholm districts. The 2nd Street District consists of six downtown blocks, mostly owned by the city, fronting West 2nd Street. The city developed the district from 2000 to 2012 through a series of public/private partnerships with the intent to bring a dense, walkable urban experience to downtown Austin. The 2nd Street District won ULI Austin's 2015 Impact Award for Most Influential Project. For more information, visit the [2nd Street District](#) website. The Seaholm Development District is a former industrial section of southwest downtown Austin that has transformed into a vibrant urban neighborhood. At the core of the district is the decommissioned Seaholm Power Plant and GreenWater Treatment Plant. Both have been redeveloped into landmark residential, office, and retail destinations. For more information, see [Seaholm Development District](#).

Austin's Homeless Solutions

This tour visited innovative permanent supportive housing solutions for those experiencing homelessness. Central to the tour was nationally recognized Community First! Village, a 51-acre master-planned community that provides affordable, permanent housing and a supportive community for men and women coming out of chronic homelessness. Housing includes micro-homes, recreational vehicles, canvas cottages, and 3-D printed homes by ICON. Community amenities and programs include Genesis Gardens, Art House, Cinema, Community Market, and Community Inn. Through these amenities, residents form community and are provided micro-enterprise opportunities to earn a dignified income, while also developing new skills and cultivating enduring relationships. For more information, visit [Community First](#).

Mueller Redevelopment

This tour explored Mueller, one of the nation's most notable mixed-income, mixed-use communities located in the heart of Austin. The 700-acre site of Austin's former airport has been transformed into a diverse, sustainable, compatible, revitalizing, and fiscally responsible master-planned community. The Mueller community is the product of an innovative, unprecedented collaboration between the city of Austin, its master developer, Catellus Development Group, and Mueller's neighbors and citizens throughout the region. With the assistance of some of the nation's best planners, consultants, and other experts, Mueller has created a new model for urban infill redevelopment in Austin and throughout the United States. For more information, visit the [Mueller](#) website.

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