



ULI Housing Opportunity Conference

February 25-26, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia

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 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 increase the supply of housing 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 2025 conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia, reaching 574 registrants, with 68 speakers, and 14 sponsors. Over two days, the conference offered twelve concurrent sessions under four

different thematic tracks – market-rate, innovation, finance, affordable housing – three general sessions, four tours, and numerous networking opportunities at meals and receptions. See the full Knowledge Finder event library.

Session Summaries

General Sessions

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

Each year, the Housing Opportunity Conference commences with a general session titled “The State of the U.S. Housing Markets.” Ken Rosen, Chairman of Rosen Consulting Group, and Adam Ducker, CEO of RCLCO provided this year’s keynote remarks. Mr. Rosen and Mr. Ducker presented national economic trends including: the political landscape and how the new Administration’s policies could affect government efficiency, tariffs and immigration; top of mind concerns such as inflation, taxes, interest rates; and analyses on employment and job growth, migration and population trends, construction costs, single and multifamily starts, and other industry data points; and shared macroeconomic scenarios, rate expectations; and other forecasts. Mr. Ducker focused on the findings from the latest [ULI Home Attainability Index](#), including the three top takeaways for affordable housing in the U.S. [See the session recording.](#)

The Atlanta Model

This general session featured a dynamic conversation between Egbert Perry, Renee Glover, and Josh Humphries, moderated by NPR’s “Closer Look” host, Rose Scott. Mr. Perry, Ms. Glover and Mr. Humphries discussed their experiences in transforming communities through mixed-income housing, revitalization efforts, and the importance of equitable development to lift communities out of poverty, improve safety, and create economic opportunities for residents. In particular, Mr. Perry and Ms. Glover’s work in places like Centennial Place (first HOPE VI community) were discussed as an example of successful urban renewal and specifically how Atlanta set the stage for the HOPE VI model nationally. Mr. Humphries shared solutions for scaling affordable housing efforts that the City of Atlanta has undertaken. The conversation focused on what policies and strategies benefit both current and future generations. [See the session recording.](#)

Federal Housing Policies

The Conference closed with a dynamic fireside chat between Dennis Shea, Executive Director of the Bipartisan Policy Center’s J. Ronald Terwilliger Center for Housing Policy, and Raphael Bostic, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Mr. Shea and Mr. Bostic spoke on big picture issues facing Americans, including inflation, interest rates, employment, housing construction and affordability, the growing concerns on home insurance coverage and rising costs, and what measures and strategies could ease some of the housing challenges for Americans. [See the session recording.](#)

Concurrent Sessions

Market-Rate Track

The Evolving Single-Family Rental Landscape: Balancing Growth, Sustainability, and Market Dynamics

This panel explored the evolving single-family rental (SFR) industry, highlighting the breadth and complexity of players and product types involved in this asset class. Panelists discussed the variety of product types, including cottage courts, attached townhomes, and single-family homes, as well as the diversity of customers, including traditional apartment renters, young professionals, families, retirees, and Section 8 voucher holders. The panel also discussed the difficulty of getting investors to understand this asset class, trends in capital markets, and the impact of single-family rentals on the housing market. [See the session recording.](#)

New Product Types in the Market: Missing Middle, Modular, and Manufactured Housing

This panel explored emerging housing solutions to address the persistent shortage and affordability crisis in the U.S. housing market. Panelists discussed the growing demand for new housing types, including modular, manufactured, and missing middle housing, and the barriers that have limited their widespread adoption. The conversation focused on innovations in design, construction, and supply chains, as well as the role of zoning reform and creative financing strategies in scaling these housing solutions.

Key insights included the potential for modular housing to significantly reduce construction time and costs, the benefits of manufactured housing in expanding homeownership opportunities, and the importance of incremental development in fostering diverse, attainable housing options. The discussion also highlighted challenges such as financing constraints, regulatory hurdles, and industry misconceptions that have slowed progress in these sectors. [See the session recording.](#)

High Growth Suburbs: Best Ideas in Policy, Planning and Practices for Embracing Growth

This panel featured a robust discussion on how magnet suburbs manage increasing population growth, changing demographic profiles, and land use pressures. Stakeholder engagement, planning and entitlement, and design and density strategies were explored by each of the panelists, who brought to life their successful developments. Ms. Kathi Cook shared the evolution of Alpharetta's growth and transformation, including the emphasis on connectivity and walkability, using small area plans, lane diets and amenities through impact fees. Mr. Tom Walsh walked through the nuts and bolts of Cadia Matthews development in Charlotte, which included the entitlement process and communication strategy to get community buy-in. Mr. Walter Ploskon and moderator, Mr. Richard Gollis, shared other suburban examples from ULI's Suburban Development

and Redevelopment Product Council, covering the project approval process, community engagement strategies, partnerships with public agencies to shape zoning policy, and creative density and design solutions. [See the session recording.](#)

Finance Track

Unlocking Housing Potential: Barriers and Opportunities in U.S. Capital Markets

In this session, industry leaders provided real-time financing solutions for constructing and acquiring affordable and market-rate housing. They provided insights and analyses of current market conditions relative to interest rates, capital flows, and lending conditions, and the implications of each for housing financing. [See the session recording.](#)

Double Bottom Line — Private Investments to Generate Housing Affordability and Financial Returns

This panel, moderated by AJ Jackson of LEO Impact Capital, explored innovative investment strategies that balance social impact with financial viability, addressing the urgent need for affordable housing. Experts from the Atlanta, Charlotte, Southeast, and national markets discussed investment strategies, investor demographics, opportunities for fund growth, market differences, and non-financial metrics that matter to investors. They also discussed obstacles the affordable housing industry is facing, and opportunities for social impact capital to close the funding gaps needed for acquisition and rehabilitation of expiring tax credit properties, new construction, and service provision. [See the session recording.](#)

Pink Collar Housing and Issues Affecting Women of Color in Commercial Real Estate

This engaging roundtable, led by Lisa Benjamin and Althea Broughton, brought together top African American Executive Women who are fostering innovation and leading in the commercial real estate (CRE) industry to explore the challenges and opportunities in housing development, investment, and economic mobility. Panelists discussed barriers to entry, access to capital, and workforce housing disparities, particularly the impact of Pink Collar Housing - affordable housing critical for women in professions like teaching and nursing. The discussion also addressed systemic challenges facing women developers and CRE professionals, including navigating capital markets, overcoming bias in deal-making, and scaling projects. The panelists examined how shifting policies and the evolving political landscape shape funding, tax incentives, and regulations affecting women entrepreneurs and affordable housing development. [See the session recording.](#)

Affordable Housing Track

Homeless to Housed: Marrying the Money with the Deal

Securing financing and building the right capital stack are critical to catalyzing the supply of deeply affordable housing connected to supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness. A panel of public, private, and nonprofit leaders discussed impact investing, risk-adjusted returns, and converting market-rate properties to affordable housing. The discussion highlighted how these strategies promote equitable growth, strengthen communities, and create lasting change. [See the session recording.](#)

Closing the Racial Homeownership Gap

This panel examined the ongoing effects of inequitable public and private policies that have contributed to the homeownership gap for communities of color in the U.S. Moderated by Amanda Rhein, this panel kicked off the conversation using research from the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Framework, presented by Jung Choi, Principal Research Associate at the Housing Policy Center. The panel emphasized localized progress. An increase in homeownership is happening through thoughtful partnerships and the inclusion of a more diverse group of decision-makers, especially in the lending sector. Ultimately, there is a compelling business case for addressing this gap, considering the growing percentage of people of color in the total U.S. population. [See the session recording.](#)

Unlocking Housing in Unlikely Places

This panel explored how houses of worship can help address the housing crisis by leveraging faith-owned land to develop affordable housing. Panelists discussed common problems faced by houses of worship who are considering redevelopment, including being "land-rich and cash-poor", internal decision-making processes, level-setting expectations and mission alignment, and the importance of trust and a strong relationship in the church-developer partnership. Panelists also discussed case studies of successful house of worship redevelopments, and opportunities for conversions to affordable and workforce housing without subsidies. [See the session recording.](#)

Innovation Track

Policy Innovations to Increase Production

This panel discussed how cities and states are leveraging policy innovations to overcome housing supply constraints, promote affordability, and create sustainable growth. Panelists highlighted the effectiveness of zoning reform, financial incentives, public-private partnerships, and data-driven decision-making in expanding housing production. The discussion also emphasized the role of regulatory changes in unlocking new development opportunities and balancing housing needs with economic development goals.

Key insights included strategies to streamline permitting processes, the importance of leveraging public land for housing, and the impact of light-touch density policies in increasing supply. Panelists shared national and local examples, including Atlanta's housing initiatives, to illustrate how data, technology, and strategic planning can drive meaningful change.

The conversation concluded with a forward-looking discussion on the future of housing policy, emphasizing the need for cross-sector collaboration, scalable solutions, and innovative financing mechanisms to create a more balanced and resilient housing market. [See the session recording.](#)

PropTech & AI

This session focused on how technology is changing the landscape of how housing is designed, leased, managed, and financed. Experts shared the benefits of using technology to optimize operations, support sustainability, and increase housing access. Moderated by UDR's CEO, Tom Toomey, each panelist shared how new technologies and systems are driving the housing industry. Mr. LeBlanc shared how tech improves the spaces that already exist to allow for shared housing opportunities at more affordable costs. Mr. Richard-Yu discussed the platforms that allow Jamestown to improve operations and management of their properties from leasing to concierge and amenities. Ms. Ross demonstrated the technology bringing design to life for HKS, allowing the company to visualize experiences before construction, particularly to improve residents' health. Mr. Kruger shared how SK Collaborative sees technology and AI software as tools to improve buildings – from inspections to modeling. This dynamic conversation not only showed the audience what technology can do to optimize housing for operators and residents but also provided a forum for discussing other potential benefits from the right technology and AI. [See the session recording.](#)

The Future of Technology and Affordability in Real Estate Development

This engaging panel was moderated by Rick Porter, Director of the Master of Real Estate (MRED) Program at Georgia Tech's College of Design. It highlighted how new software and hardware technologies offer real opportunities for real estate development. Through its faculty and student projects, Georgia Tech's MRED program is researching how the intersection of technology and the housing development process can increase supply and support broader affordability. This panel was joined by Astro, a robotic dog prototype. The discussion showed how different technology solutions increase efficiency in entitlement, design, and asset management processes. [See the session recording.](#)

Tours

Sweet Auburn + Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic District Tour

This tour was hosted by Civitas and included stops at Auburn Point, Civic Center, Marchon, The Front Porch at Auburn Avenue, and Thrive Sweet Auburn.

Bike Tour of the Atlanta BeltLine Westside Trail

This bike tour of the Atlanta BeltLine was hosted by Amanda Rhein of the Atlanta Land Trust. Tour stops included: Capitol View, The Avenue at Oakland City, Murphy Crossing, and other points of interest.

Tour of Trilith

This tour of Trilith, hosted by Trilith Foundation and Trilith Development, allowed attendees to experience and learn the vision of moving from a movie studio to a new urbanist community. Designed for the film and creative industries, this unprecedented community features filmmaking studios, homes, shopping and dining, trails, and parks. Tour stops included neighborhood, home, studio sound stage, and site of the USSF headquarters.

Downtown Atlanta Mega Tour

The Downtown Atlanta Mega Tour, hosted by Central Atlanta Progress, included stops: Lofts at Centennial Yards, The Melody, Redevelopment of Underground and 2 Peachtree, and South Downtown.

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