

Community-Driven Housing Solutions in Antioch

A Roadmap for Collaboration
and Policy Innovation

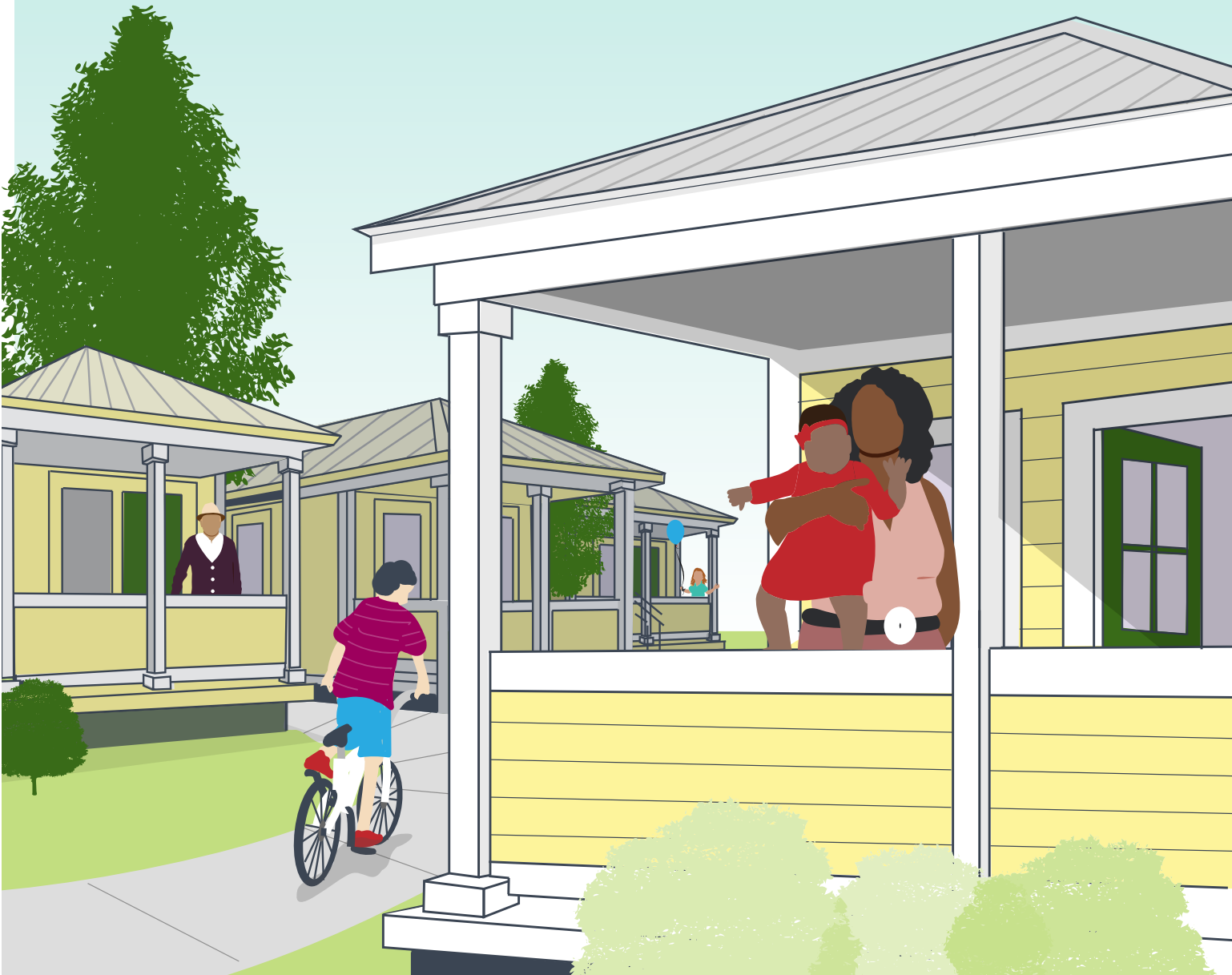
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OPPORTUNITY LIVES HERE

March 2024



Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

In this report, The Antioch Policy Grant team, comprised of Hope Solutions, Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition, and the City of Antioch, presents an overview of the affordable housing crisis in Antioch and the results of a nine-month listening campaign focused on obtaining community feedback on potential solutions. The findings underscore the urgent need for innovative, scalable solutions that can be tailored to meet the unique needs of Antioch's community. By leveraging the potential of cottage communities on faith-owned land and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), the team proposes an approach to expand the form affordable housing may take and the options where it may be built. This initiative not only aims to increase the housing stock but also to foster community engagement and organizing, with an emphasis on incorporating diverse voices in shaping policies.

Key Findings:



1. **Cottage Communities on Faith-Owned Land.** The proposal for cottage communities on faith-owned land received overwhelming support, with faith leaders and communities eager to contribute. Many emphasized the critical role of onsite professional supportive services to be delivered with cottage communities, and the unique positions faith institutions hold in the community to contribute to the success of these projects.
2. **ADUs.** While ADUs present a viable housing solution, knowledge gaps and barriers exist, particularly among low-income homeowners. Increased education, simplified permitting processes, and financial assistance could encourage ADU construction.
3. **Impact of Community Voices.** Listening sessions, surveys, and conversations with diverse stakeholders were used to reach formerly homeless individuals, faith leaders, community organizations, low-income homeowners, and other diverse Antioch residents. These activities were co-designed and co-facilitated with local leaders in Hope Solutions' Resident Empowerment Program. Community feedback informed several aspects of the cottage community policy, including requirements for open space, unit size, and affordability. Moreover, the entire listening campaign experience motivated the Policy Grant team to create new systems and networks for sustained community-driven policymaking.
4. **Policy Outcomes.** Based on findings, the team proposed new regulations for cottage communities which were adopted by the Antioch Planning Commission and City Council, initiatives to spur ADU development, and the formation of advisory groups involving faith leaders and community members.

The Antioch Policy Grant team's comprehensive approach, rooted in community voices, demonstrates a commitment to addressing Antioch's housing crisis through innovative and inclusive solutions. This report provides a recommendation for future actions, emphasizing the transformative impact of coalition building and collaboration.

Introduction



Everyone deserves a decent place to live. Yet, the housing crisis, fueled by an inadequate supply, escalates housing instability and homelessness across California. Approximately 1.2 million new affordable homes are needed by 2030¹ to meet the housing needs of low-income Californians. To meet this urgent need, California must implement innovative approaches at scale to create more affordable housing units.

Within Contra Costa County, the affordable housing crisis continues to worsen with a current shortfall of more than 34,000 homes for those most in need – extremely- and very low-income individuals and families. This shortfall is pushing people into tenuous economic situations, overcrowded and unsafe housing, and homelessness. The 2022 Contra Costa Point-in-Time Count revealed there were nearly 3,100 homeless individuals living in the county,² a figure experts believe is significantly underestimated and may be closer to 10,600. Notably, Antioch has seen over 1,160³ people lose their homes according to the 2022 count.

Compounded by soaring raw material costs, the traditional on-site construction approaches to building housing take too long and cost too much to fully address the shortage. Recent reports suggest that in California, a one-bedroom affordable housing unit can cost close to \$1M to build after incorporating all the required approvals, procedures, and government requirements.⁴ This financial burden and regulatory complexity deter affordable housing development, despite an unprecedented demand.

In response to this crisis, the Partnership for the Bay's Future awarded Hope Solutions, the Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition, and the City of Antioch a Policy Grant, which provided \$500k, technical assistance, and added capacity through a housing policy fellow. These two-year grants allow local governments to build trusting, effective partnerships with community partners to develop equitable policies and ensure those often excluded from the policy process are at the center of efforts for change. This grant enabled the Antioch Policy Grant team to pursue two initiatives to increase affordable housing inventory:

1. Streamlining and building cottage communities on faith-owned land and
2. Making the process of building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also known as backyard cottages, more feasible and accessible to lower-income homeowners who want to add to the affordable housing inventory and generate new incomes streams for themselves.

Community engagement and organizing underpin both initiatives, with a priority to elevate the voices of individuals and communities with lived experience to contribute to the planning and execution of these initiatives. Involving the community in policymaking ensures that solutions are designed with a deep understanding of the actual challenges faced, making policies more responsive and effective. This equitable approach directly involves those most affected by housing crises, addressing racial and economic disparities by empowering underrepresented voices to shape policies that directly impact their lives.

¹ *Housing California and California Housing Partnership, 2022. "A roadmap to thriving communities for California."* roadmaphome2030.org.

² *Contra Costa County and ASR, 2022. "Contra Costa 2022 Homeless Point-in-Time Count & Survey."* drive.google.com/file/d/1n5jEB2pJ07O_54Fjky57EQHujbrfMMpq/view?usp=drive_link.

³ *Contra Costa County Continuum of Care - Health, Housing & Homeless Services, 20220 "2022 Annual Report."* cchealth.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10725/638273984449670000.

⁴ *Seiler, John, 2023. Pacific Research Institute. "Why California's "Affordable" Housing Costs \$1 Million a Unit."* pacificresearch.org/why-californias-affordable-housing-costs-1-million-a-unit/#:~:text=So%20it's%20no%20wonder%20a,Californians%20who%20need%20help%20paying.

Antioch Background



Since 1990, Antioch's population has nearly doubled to 112,000 residents.⁵ This growth is largely the result of an influx of low-income residents – predominantly people of color – who were displaced from the Bay Area's major urban and employment centers. This demographic shift has transformed Antioch into one of the East Bay's most racially and ethnically diverse jurisdictions,⁶ marked by a higher representation of Black and Hispanic populations compared to both Contra Costa County and the broader East Bay.⁷

The magnitude and diversity of Antioch's population growth stands in contrast to the city's capacity to provide adequate housing. Recent community assessments have highlighted a significant challenge: many Antioch residents – particularly renters, low-income families of color, and households with young children – are severely cost-burdened (contributing more than 50% of their gross income on housing).⁸ Addressing this issue requires a concerted effort to expand the city's affordable housing stock, ensuring it meets the diverse needs of its growing population.

Innovative Affordable Housing Solutions



As Antioch grapples with this housing affordability crisis, the Antioch Policy Grant team has identified possible new and innovative solutions in the form of what is permitted to be built in Antioch (i.e., the forms new housing may take) and where it may be built. Small foot-print, factory-built homes; faith-owned land; and the backyards of single-family homes are all parts of this recipe, as discussed below. These new and innovative options are just some among the many needed, but they are particularly well suited for Antioch's suburban context and high construction costs.



⁵ City of Antioch, 2022. 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (May 2022).

antiochca.gov/fc/community-development/planning/housing-element/AntiochHousingElement_PubReviewDraft-App_final_reduced.pdf

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Gordon et al. 2022., "Antioch CHANGE. A Community Housing Assessment and Needs, Gaps and Equity in Antioch." first5coco.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Antioch-CHANGE-Report-DIGITAL-FINAL-Eng-6.17.22.pdf

What? Small Housing



Small housing, especially when built in factories, represents an innovative, cost-effective approach to housing, offering smaller, more efficient living spaces that can be rapidly produced to high-quality standards. These small homes rent at lower rates than other options on the market.⁹ We define a small home as a detached, self-contained home that is less than the size of an average single-family home (1,940 square feet in Antioch) with its own kitchen and bathroom. In this paper, we refer to these homes as cottages. They are also known as micro-homes or tiny homes. We consider ADUs to be one type of small housing. “Cottage communities” made up of three or more cottages are another type of small housing.

Cottages are not tuff sheds or temporary shelter dwellings. They are high-efficiency homes equipped with essential amenities including kitchens, bathrooms, living spaces, and private bedrooms, along with attached outdoor living spaces. Hope Solutions uses manufactured homes in their development projects. These homes are certified and approved by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). They are 100% electric, air-conditioned, and meet stringent energy standards, presenting a sustainable and dignified housing solution at significantly reduced costs and environmental footprints.

When built in a factory, cottage community developments gain time and cost efficiencies by being able to perform site work while homes are simultaneously built off-site. In traditional construction, homes cannot be built until site clearing, grading, exaction, utility installation, and foundation work are complete.



*Example of HUD
Manufactured Home built in a factory
that Hope Solutions has proposed in their cottage
community developments.*

*Rendering of a cottage community proposed by Hope
Solutions in Pittsburg.*



⁹ UC Berkeley Terner Center for Housing Innovation, 2022. “Unlocking the Potential of Missing Middle Housing.” ternercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Missing-Middle-Brief-December-2022.pdf

Where? Faith-owned Land

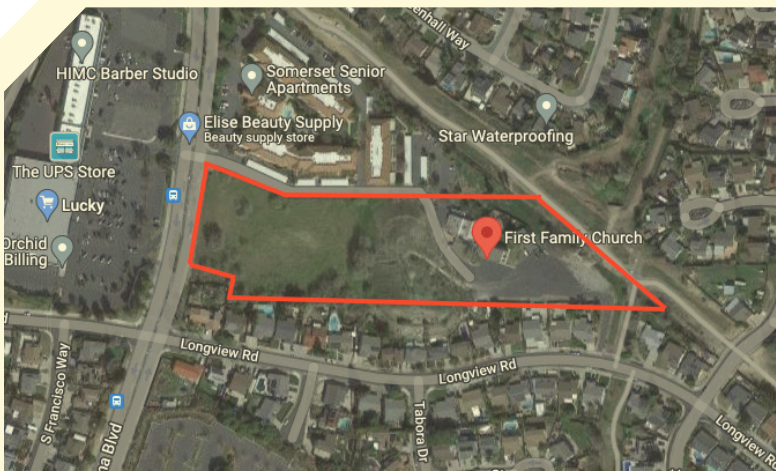


Across California, many faith-based organizations (FBOs), such as churches, synagogues, and mosques, are exploring new and innovative ways to leverage their resources and assets to impact major societal challenges like homelessness. Building on long histories of providing food pantries, clothing drives, safe parking lots, homeless shelters and more, FBOs are seeking to partner with affordable housing developers to build critically needed affordable homes on their land. Developing cottage communities on faith-owned land advances FBOs' missions by providing affordable, stable, and permanent housing for unhoused and very low-income residents.

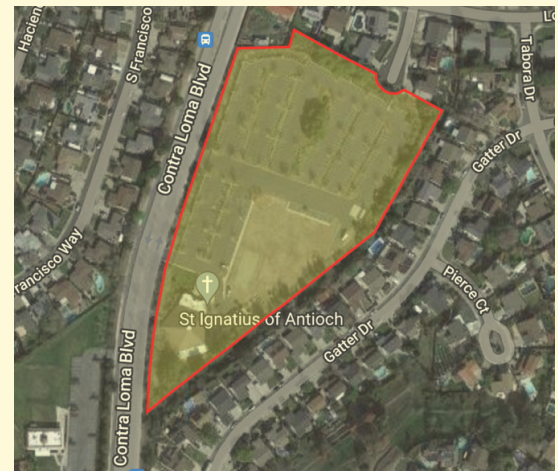
Significantly, the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley (Turner Center) published a study identifying nearly 40,000 acres of developable FBO-owned land, with a significant share (45%) located in the state's high opportunity areas.¹⁰ These areas are distinguished by lower poverty rates and higher educational, environmental, and economic outcomes.

Integrating affordable homes in these high-resource neighborhoods could enhance economical and racial diversity, offering more individuals access to opportunities for advancement.

In Antioch, the potential to leverage faith-owned land is very promising: nearly 50 FBOs are situated on more than 100 acres of total land, offering a substantial opportunity to develop cottage communities. Large swaths of these 100 acres are big surface parking lots that are empty most of the year, while other portions are vacant. With the support of faith leaders and their congregations, this land could be donated, leased, or otherwise availed to construct hundreds of affordable homes. This is particularly attractive in areas with access to essential amenities and services. Cottage communities on faith-owned land could be especially transformative when coupled with onsite professional supportive services such as mental health care, substance use treatment, employment support, financial well-being services, and more.



First Family Church in Antioch owns three parcels of land totaling almost 7 acres. Most of their land is vacant. It is across the street from a grocery store and adjacent to bus stops.



St Ignatius Catholic Church owns 8 acres of land, most of which consists of surface parking. Many FBOs report their parking lots are full only a few times per year.

¹⁰ Turner Center for Housing Innovation, 2020. "Mapping The Potential And Identifying The Barriers To Faith-Based Housing Development." turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Mapping_the_Potential_and_Identifying_the_Barriers_to_Faith-Based_Housing_Development_May_2020.pdf

Backyards of Single-Homes



ADUs, also known as granny flats or in-law units, offer a unique solution for increasing affordable housing within existing neighborhoods. These compact, independent homes share the lot with a primary residence and come equipped with essential amenities, including a separate entrance, living area, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. They can be created by converting spaces such as garages or basements, attaching them to the main house, or building them as standalone structures. Building an ADU does not require buying land or paying for major new infrastructure, parking structures, or elevators, making ADUs less expensive to build than other types of housing. A 2017 UC Berkeley report found that a unit of affordable housing in the Bay Area is four times more expensive to build than an ADU.¹¹ Remarkably, ADUs typically rent for below-market rates without requiring public subsidy.¹²

While ADUs are beneficial to homeowners, tenants, and the larger community for several reasons, they are particularly important to low-income homeowners and community members:

1. Renting out an ADU can provide homeowners with additional income, which is especially beneficial to those struggling to meet their financial needs.
2. ADUs increase the value of homes by an estimated 20%¹³, enabling homeowners to tap into greater wealth and providing short- and medium-term benefits related to insurance and home equity.

3. Neighborhoods can be stabilized through ADUs by offering affordable rental options, supporting aging in place, and allowing homeowners to house family or friends at risk of displacement.
4. ADUs provide flexible housing solutions to accommodate changing family dynamics, such as housing adult children, aging parents, or caregivers at various life stages.
5. ADUs increase the supply of affordable housing. They can be built more quickly and cost-effectively than traditional housing projects, often renting below-market rates.
6. Adding more affordable housing options in high opportunity neighborhoods enables a more diverse range of households to reside in single-family neighborhoods, enhancing community diversity and inclusion.
7. Because they utilize existing infrastructure and have a smaller environmental footprint, ADUs have less environmental impact compared to other types of homes.

Despite the benefits, the proliferation of ADUs in the Bay Area has predominantly been among higher-resource households, with barriers such as access to capital, information, and professional services limiting their adoption by lower-income and minority homeowners¹⁴.



Detached



Basement or Attic Conversion



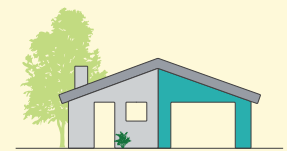
Above Garage Apartment



Attached



Remodel Expansion



Garage

11 Garcia, David, 2017. "ADU Update: Early Lessons and Impacts of California's State and Local Policy Changes." turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/ADU_Update_Brief_December_2017_.pdf

12 Association of Bay Area Governments, 2021. "Draft Affordability of Accessory Dwelling Units: A report and recommendations for RHNA 6." 21elements.com/documents-mainmenu-3/housing-elements/rhna-6-2022-2030/1327-draft-adu-affordability-report-sep-8-2021-1/file

13 Healey, Jon. Los Angeles Times. "What Will an ADU do to Your Property Taxes and Resale Value?" latimes.com/business/real-estate/story/2023-05-12/what-is-an-adu-worth-there-no-simple-answer-yet#:~:text=After%20controlling%20for%20factors%20such,depending%20on%20the%20ADU's%20size.

14 Greenberg et al., 2022. Turner Center for Housing Innovation. "ADUs For All: Breaking Down Barriers To Racial And Economic Equity In Accessory Dwelling Unit Construction." turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ADU-Equity-August-2022-Final.pdf

Needed Policy Changes



The Antioch Policy Grant team recognized the necessity for policy modifications to officially allow cottage communities on faith-owned land as an accepted form of affordable housing and to simplify the process for their approval. Without policy change, zoning restricted the number of homes faith institutions could build on their sites and cottage communities would be treated like subdivisions of multiple single-family homes subject to lengthy approval processes and public hearings. Moreover, targeted programs or new approaches were needed to remove barriers to ADU construction for lower-income homeowners. Initiatives were needed to bridge the capital and information gaps to ensure equitable access to the benefits of ADUs across socio-economic and racial groups.

In the next section, we discuss how community voices were needed to ground truth our vision and co-architect policy changes.



Leveraging Community Voices to Inform Solutions



Successful policy-making hinges on actively engaging communities to define their needs and identify viable solutions, sometimes necessitating a shift in previously held narratives by policymakers. By incorporating the voices and experiences of Antioch residents and community leaders, the Antioch Policy Grant team sought to inform new policies, processes, and programs that spur the production of affordable housing. This approach underscores the importance of systemic and sustainable change emerging from within the community, with individuals who have firsthand experience being integral to crafting solutions. This necessitates the inclusion of residents, FBOs, community-based organizations, and those directly impacted by housing insecurity in the dialogue to ensure that the strategies reflect the real needs and aspirations of the community.



Community Engagement Strategies



The organizing process began by engaging individuals with personal experiences of homelessness enrolled in the Hope Solutions' Resident Empowerment Program (REP). This program empowers affordable housing residents and individuals with lived experience of homelessness to advocate for the creation and retention of affordable housing and supportive services. Through public speaking and leadership skills training, the program equips and supports new leaders (REP Leaders) to speak truth to power. Beyond providing invaluable policy recommendations, the REP Leaders also played a pivotal role in designing listening sessions and facilitating community engagement. Their lived experiences and authentic insights lent credibility and legitimacy to the Antioch Policy Grant team's efforts, creating safe spaces and building trust with the community.

To gather diverse perspectives on the cottage community initiative on faith-owned land, the team engaged faith leaders. These faith leaders were instrumental in organizing listening sessions with their congregants and highlighting the moral imperative of accessible, affordable housing. Their support played a crucial role in understanding community responses to building new housing on their land.

Through listening sessions, the Antioch Policy Grant team sought feedback from both current and former unhoused residents of Antioch, where they presented and discussed the proposed cottage communities. These sessions, conducted in familiar community spaces, provided a platform for residents to voice their opinions and concerns, ensuring a broad range of community perspectives was considered.

In addressing the topic of ADUs, the team facilitated discussions across various community groups, including homeowners of different income levels, renters, and unhoused individuals. These sessions aimed to understand the community's awareness and perceptions of ADUs, as well as the barriers low-income homeowners face in utilizing permissive ADU permitting policies.

Finally, a survey was issued at the end of each listening session. The survey was used to collect quantitative data on the cottage communities on faith-owned land and ADU initiatives, as well as key demographic information to ensure diverse residents reflective of Antioch were represented.



The Profound Impact of Setting the Tone for the Conversations



The Antioch Policy Grant team's approach was to begin discussions by asking participants to define "home," which proved impactful. Some of the most common responses included terms like safety, security, community, sanctuary, anchor, and healing. This strategy not only focused the conversation on the human aspect of housing but also helped bridge differences among participants. By framing the dialogue around shared human values and needs, the team shifted the focus from mere housing units to the concept of home as a sanctuary, fostering a deeper, more empathetic understanding of the housing issue.

A home is more than a structure; it goes beyond four walls. It is a place to choose your direction.

– Antioch Resident

Who Did We Engage?



Consistent with our goals of amplifying the voices of those most impacted by housing insecurity, survey data collected at the listening sessions indicated that extremely- and very low-income households and unhoused residents were engaged more than other groups. Almost 70% of survey respondents indicated that they were experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness and over 80% of participants were considered extremely- or very low-income when adjusted for household size.

Survey data also reveal that 21% of respondents identified as Black or African American, which matches 2015-2019 Census data indicating 21% of Antioch's population at large as Black or African American. However, respondents who identified as Asian and Hispanic or Latino were underrepresented in the survey, while those identifying as White were overrepresented.

The Policy Grant team consulted the demographic information throughout the listening campaign to ensure participation of diverse populations. After consulting the data halfway through the campaign, listening sessions with Black churches and with the Antioch Council of Teens were planned and sessions with Hispanic FBOs were attempted. The data indicate we were successful in engaging those who are economically disadvantaged but that additional efforts were needed to more deeply engage BIPOC residents, and Hispanic and Latino residents especially.





Listening Campaign Findings



Over a nine-month period, the Antioch Policy Grant team, with the support of FBOs and community groups, conducted 13 comprehensive listening sessions. These sessions, attended by over 400 community members, were strategically held across various locations, including faith institutions, community-based organizations, known gathering spaces, and an Antioch Council of Teens meeting. The team also gathered insights from almost 100 participant surveys distributed at the end of each listening session. The listening campaign resulted in robust feedback relative to what the Policy Grant team was proposing (i.e., cottages and ADUs) and where they were proposed (i.e., faith-owned land and the backyard of single-family homes).

Reactions to Cottages



Listening session attendees responded positively to the concept of cottages. An overwhelming 86% of survey respondents expressed that they would live in a cottage, with many respondents viewing them as an improvement to their current living conditions. The team noted that for many participants, the size of the cottage was not a primary concern, as they were accustomed to living in cramped or overcrowded conditions or had lived in small spaces before. However, a minority did raise concerns about space, particularly in relation to storage and accommodation of larger families or work-from-home arrangements.

Price, pets being allowed, and location were the top three factors survey respondents identified that would motivate them to choose a cottage over other types of housing.

Reactions to ADUs

Barriers to Development



The Antioch Policy Grant team's findings regarding ADUs demonstrated significant disparities in awareness and implementation of ADUs between high-income/resource households and their low-income counterparts, which echos the Turner Center's research.¹⁵ Through the listening sessions, the team learned that approximately 45% of homeowners stated that this was their first time learning about ADUs. Of the homeowners who had not heard of an ADU, 60% were lower income homeowners (making 80% of the median income or less). These participants expressed a keen interest in learning more about ADUs and a need for dependable information. The primary challenge identified was disseminating information effectively, as the survey highlighted "lack of information" as the foremost obstacle to pursuing ADU construction. To motivate homeowners – especially those with lower incomes – to build ADUs, local authorities are encouraged to develop outreach strategies and plans.

Furthermore, the listening sessions revealed the necessity for financial sources and technical support. It was also emphasized that local governments must streamline and reduce the costs associated with ADU permitting to ensure equitable adoption. The top policy recommendations derived from the Antioch residents' feedback include:

1. Enhancing ADU education and awareness
2. Simplifying and streamlining the permitting process
3. Establishing low-interest loans or grant programs to alleviate cost burdens
4. Promoting cost-effective manufactured or factory-built solutions

I'm a father of two children, currently homeless...we should be helping people by building homes...I don't need that much space, what matters to me is having a strong community structure for my kids. [...These communities] should have strong property management and supportive services.

– Antioch Resident

¹⁵ Greenberg et al., 2022. Turner Center for Housing Innovation. "ADUs For All: Breaking Down Barriers To Racial And Economic Equity In Accessory Dwelling Unit Construction." turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ADU-Equity-August-2022-Final.pdf

An Opportunity to Significantly Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing through ADUs



The Antioch Policy Grant team’s survey findings revealed that 70% of surveyed homeowners – at all income levels – said they would build an ADU. Importantly, 72% of surveyed individuals expressed a willingness to offer ADUs on their property at reduced or no cost to family or friends, thereby augmenting the availability of affordable housing. However, current trends, as observed by the City of Antioch Building Division, show that the majority of ADUs are constructed primarily for rental income, with over 40% being added by landlords rather than owner-occupiers. This underscores the need for strategic engagement with the faith community and organizations that assist low-income groups to promote ADUs for more altruistic purposes like multi-generational living or affordable rentals.

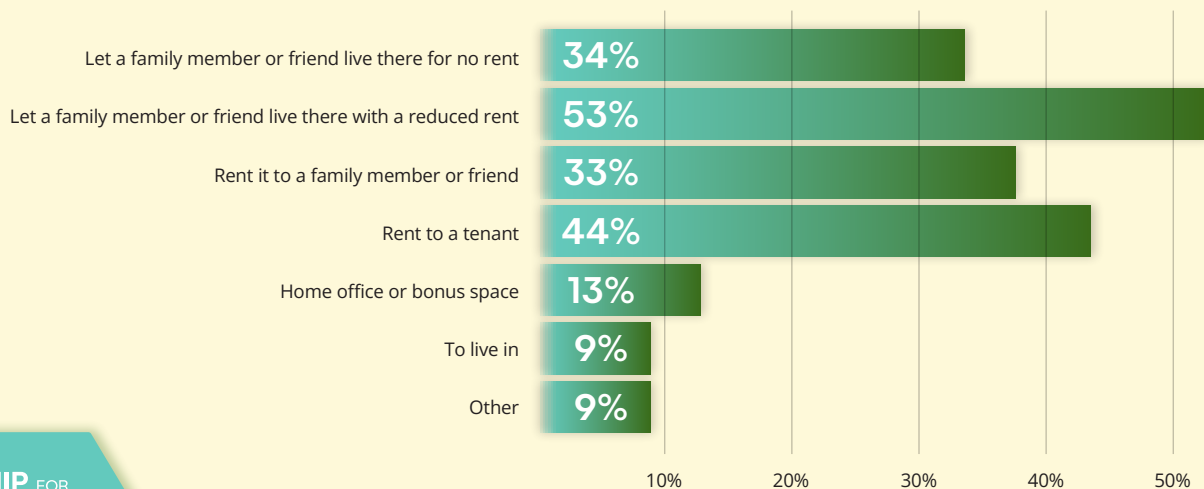
Listening sessions further highlighted how ADUs can meet diverse needs that may change over time, with participants considering ADUs for various uses, including as rental units for tenants, home offices, or primary residences while renting out their main houses. Almost half (47%) of survey respondents selected multiple answers for how they would primarily use an ADU on their property, thus underscoring the flexible role ADUs can play.

Who Has Taken Steps to Build an ADU in Antioch?



Of the 50 homeowners who responded to the listening session survey, only one homeowner had initiated steps towards building an ADU. The vast majority of surveyed homeowners who had not commenced any ADU-related endeavors spanned various races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Notably, more than half of those who hadn’t started building an ADU belonged to extremely low- or very low-income households. This emphasizes the pressing need to simplify and support ADU construction for lower-income groups, reinforcing the overarching mission of making housing more accessible and affordable.

Reasons Antioch Homeowners will Choose to Build an ADU



Reactions to Faith-Owned Land

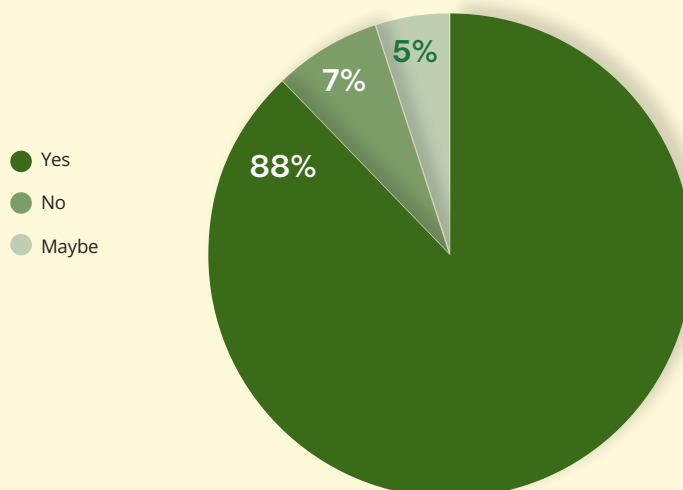


The proposal for cottage communities on faith-owned land was met with an equally positive response, with almost 90% of survey respondents in favor. Faith leaders expressed a readiness to foster a sense of belonging and community among cottage residents, aligning this initiative with their mission to assist those in need. Many listening session participants were excited about the relationships and support that FBOs would bring to the table to increase the chances of success for future residents of the cottage communities. It was emphasized, however, that the successful operation of these communities would require professional management for supportive services and property management, rather than relying solely on volunteers from the faith institutions. Moreover, some participants did express concerns about the potential involvement of religious leaders or members in property management and tenant selection. There was a consensus on the need for assurances that FBOs would not exert religious influence over residents.

Our faith community is well-positioned to explain to people that this is right.

– Antioch Church Member

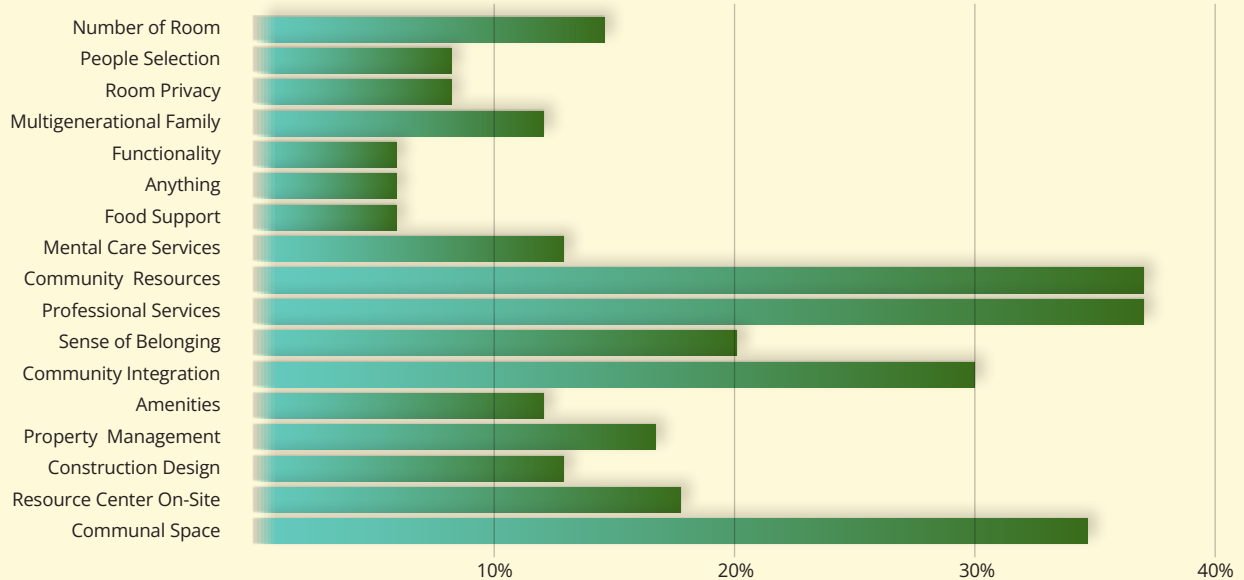
Would you live in a cottage community on faith-owned land?



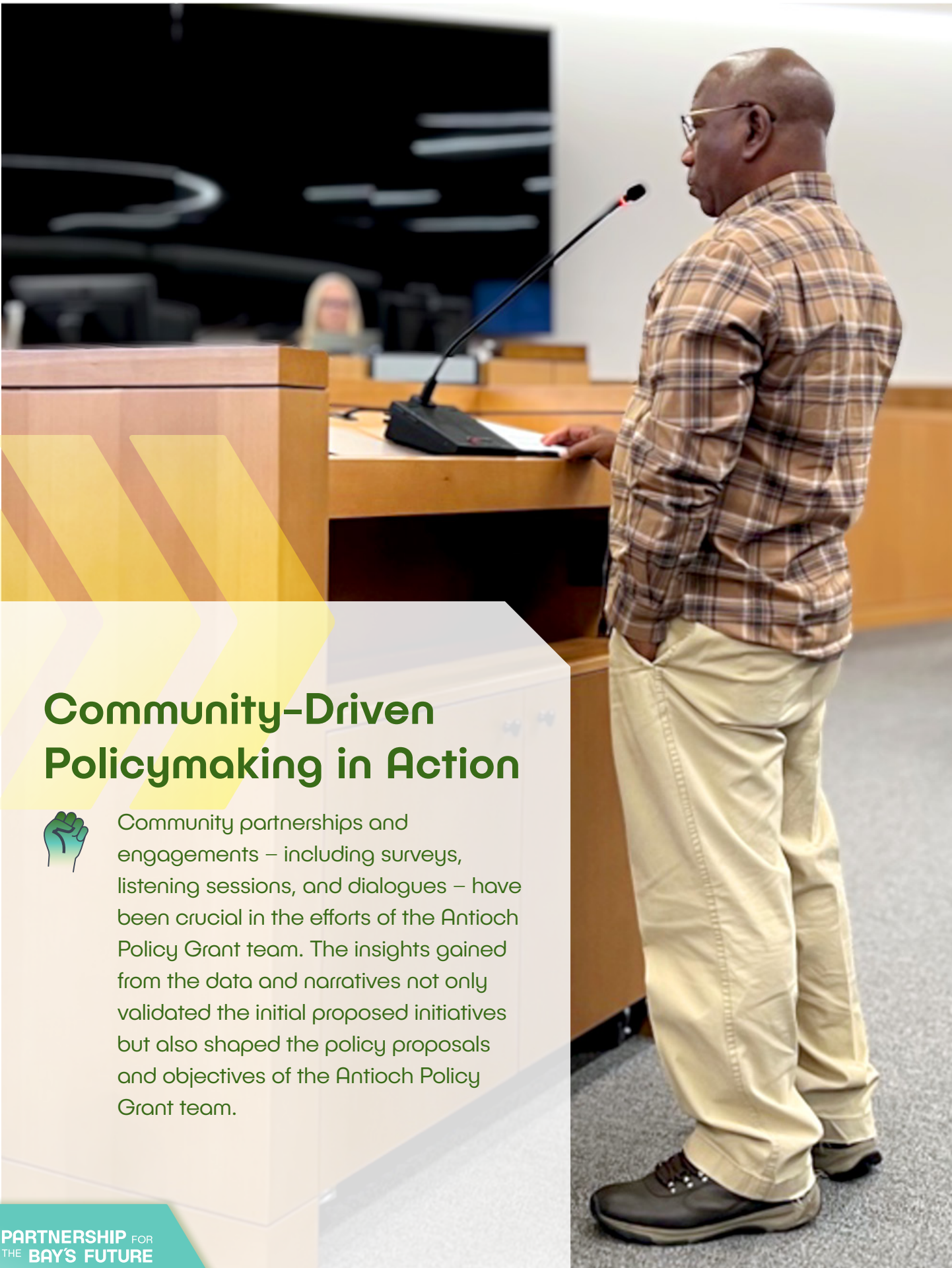
The discussions also highlighted the potential of cottage communities to strengthen communal bonds, not just within the cottage communities, but also extending to the FBOs and the broader Antioch community. As shown in the figure below, community-building elements and professional supportive services were most frequently mentioned when participants were asked what would make a cottage community successful. Participants enthusiastically suggested various features for the cottage communities to build inclusion and belonging, such as pet parks, playgrounds, accessibility features, and sufficient parking facilities.

The most frequently mentioned component necessary for a cottage community to be successful was professional supportive services, with mental health services, job training or placement, and physical health services identified by survey respondents as the most critical services to live safely and thrive in a cottage community on faith-owned land. Supportive services are pivotal in maintaining stable housing for residents, particularly those who have faced or are facing housing instability. The absence of such support significantly increases the likelihood of individuals returning to homelessness, as they often lack the resources to develop a supportive network independently. According to a Turner Center report, the most common reason residents leave permanent supportive housing is the lack of sufficient professional case management and the absence of services that are culturally attuned.¹⁶

If you were to envision cottage communities in Antioch, what would they need to include to positively accommodate you and help you and the people you know thrive?



¹⁶ Reid, Carolina, 2023. Turner Center for Housing Innovation. "Permanent Supportive Housing as a Solution to Homelessness: The Critical Role Of Long-Term Operating Subsidies." turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PSH-Paper-June-2023-Final.pdf



Community-Driven Policymaking in Action



Community partnerships and engagements – including surveys, listening sessions, and dialogues – have been crucial in the efforts of the Antioch Policy Grant team. The insights gained from the data and narratives not only validated the initial proposed initiatives but also shaped the policy proposals and objectives of the Antioch Policy Grant team.

Leveraging Faith-Owned Land for Affordable Housing



In response to the resounding support for cottage communities on faith-owned land, the Antioch Policy Grant team developed a zoning tool – the Innovative Housing Overlay Zone – to support the creation of such developments. The faith land zoning policies were adopted by the Antioch City Council in December 2023, unlocking 90 acres of faith-owned land for the development of affordable housing. As of February 2024, 3 of the 26 faith institutions impacted by the zoning overlay initiated affordable housing development projects that could yield between 115 to 160 new affordable homes.

In addition to catalyzing development on faith-owned land in Antioch, the zoning reforms directly incorporated much of the community feedback from the listening sessions. Examples of this include the following requirements and standards:

- Ninety-five (95)% of homes built in the zoning overlay must be below-market-rate, affordable housing for low- or moderate-income households (with 5% of homes allowed to be set aside for staff of the faith institution). No more than 20% of homes may be for moderate-income households.
 - Deeply affordable homes are prioritized by providing projects greater flexibility in meeting site design standards when they include homes for extremely- or very low-income residents. In particular, when 15% or more of the homes in a cottage community are deeply affordable, cottage orientation and open space standards are relaxed so that fewer cottages must abut common open space.
 - High-quality, shared open spaces are required to build a sense of community, but must be balanced with prioritizing the number of homes built. The shared open spaces must create touchpoints with neighbors, most of which were crowd-sourced from listening session attendees (e.g., dog parks, playgrounds, barbecue areas).
 - Applicants are required to sign a Fair Housing Statement to certify that homes may not be tied to religious practice.
- The homes within these communities are classified as ADUs, which aligns impact fees and processing times with the actual scale and impact of these developments, promoting fairness and efficiency.
 - The policy permits the construction of homes that are under 400 square feet, thereby offering a wider variety of housing options and increasing the likelihood of creating more affordable units.

Leading by example, Hope Solutions is pursuing a cottage community development for extremely low-income individuals and families on a faith-owned property in the overlay zone. This project aims to demonstrate the concept's viability by providing permanent housing with supportive services. Reflecting the input from community engagement efforts, the development plan by Hope Solutions includes several key features: homes are equipped with in-unit washer/dryers; residents are permitted to have pets; comprehensive onsite supportive services are provided; a range of housing options including two- and three-bedroom units are available to meet family needs; and the project incorporates communal spaces of a higher standard than city minimums, fostering a strong sense of community among residents.



REP leader Deborah Carney speaks in favor of zoning reforms at the Antioch Planning Commission meeting, November 2023.

Advancing ADU Development



To address barriers identified in the listening campaign, the Antioch Policy Grant team is advancing a pre-approved ADU building plan initiative. This initiative aims to make ADU projects more accessible and appealing to homeowners, particularly those in lower-income brackets, through the following efforts:

- A selection of pre-approved plans with easy-to-read guides will simplify and accelerate the permitting process, offering an efficient pathway for homeowners.
- By utilizing pre-approved plans, homeowners can bypass plan check fees, translating into significant savings and making ADU projects more financially accessible.
- An interactive online gallery of pre-approved plans will not only inspire homeowners but also serve as an educational tool, increasing knowledge about ADUs and motivating action.
- Targeted outreach efforts will ensure that information and resources reach low-income homeowners and seniors. Partnerships with trusted organizations, culturally appropriate messaging, and affirmative marketing strategies will be used to address equity concerns.

Anticipated to launch in March 2024, this program is designed to lower the barriers to ADU development, making it a more viable and attractive option for increasing the stock of affordable housing in Antioch. By providing practical support and resources, the team aims to empower homeowners to contribute to the affordable housing solution.

Building Collaborative Networks



Through the listening campaign, the Antioch Policy Grant team realized the power of ongoing collaboration and engagement between faith leaders, community organizations, city staff, and elected officials. In response, two networks are being established that are designed to sustain collaborative policymaking, ensuring diverse perspectives enrich Antioch's approach to housing and community development.

The **Antioch Faith Leader Advisory** leverages the unique position of faith leaders to offer moral and ethical guidance on city challenges. In partnership with the Antioch Public Safety and Community Resources Department, the first Faith Leader Advisory meeting, held in January 2024, served as a foundation for defining the advisory's mission, logistics, and governance, with plans for continued meetings to solidify its role and impact. After resounding interest from 20 faith leaders, the group anticipates meeting again in Spring 2024. A summary of the first workshop may be found [here](#).

The **Antioch Community Voices Advisory** focuses on broader community engagement, with an emphasis on elevating and amplifying the voices of marginalized and underrepresented groups. Comprised of nonprofit staff and Antioch residents, this group will provide city staff with diverse input and perspectives, enhancing inclusivity and participation in city initiatives. The first meeting, scheduled for early April 2024, in partnership with the East Contra Costa Community Alliance (ECCCA), marks the beginning of a concerted effort to ensure that the voices of all community members are heard and considered in shaping the future of Antioch.



Conclusion

The Antioch Policy Grant team's achievements and ongoing work exemplifies a community-centered approach for tackling the housing affordability crisis through innovative and scalable solutions. The team has laid a strong foundation for transformative and equitable change, and will now focus on advancing these impactful initiatives with a renewed commitment to collaboration.

The challenges ahead, including limited financial resources and capacity of key partners, are significant, but not insurmountable. By fostering strategic partnerships, pooling resources, and identifying grant opportunities, the Antioch Policy Grant team aims to ensure the successful implementation of these housing and community-building solutions. This endeavor not only addresses the immediate needs in Antioch but also sets a precedent for innovative housing models that can be replicated in other communities facing similar challenges. The team's dedication to creating sustainable, affordable housing options reflects a deep understanding of the complexities involved and a steadfast commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

