

HR&A + Athens-Clarke County
UNIFIED GOVERNMENT

Athens-Clarke County Housing Affordability Investment Strategy

Advisory Committee Meeting #1

December 02, 2022

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Introduction

MEETING FORMAT

This meeting will introduce you to the project, your role in the process, and gather your input on an initial set of questions.

Participating in today's conversation:

- For those online, have your smartphone or a web browser ready for answering Mentimeter questions.  **Mentimeter**
- Go to www.menti.com and enter the code displayed on the screen
- Un-mute your microphone and let us know you have a question or comment.
- Post a question or comment directly in the chat.



Participating after today's conversation:

- We are always available for follow up. Please feel reach out to the team any time to provide **written feedback** and/or **have a call to continue the conversation**, at Alejandra.Calva@accgov.com

HR&A TEAM

Our team members bring the experience needed to create an actionable housing strategy to guide community-focused development efforts.



**PHILLIP
KASH**

Partner-in-Charge



**VIDHEE
GARG**

Project Manager



**AUSTIN
AMANDOLIA**

Analyst



**SOPHIE
DANISH**

Research Analyst

Introductions: What is your name and top priority for this exercise?

Charles Smith: inclusivity and affordability

Kelly Girtz - highlight high-yield activities that will expand affordable housing stock

Determine what available options we have locally to promote affordability and availability. Evan

Alice Kinman A dramatic increase in affordable housing options for all Athenians

Heather - a realistic game plan for addressing the shortage of affordable housing in Athens.

Rick Parker A comprehensive strategy to drive affordable housing and creative new approaches throughout the community.

Andrew Identify ways to leverage scarce resources for affordable housing subsidies.

Paige Seago. Top priority is to have a shared set of goals and actionable steps for increasing affordable housing in Athens-Clarke County

M. Swain Increase Affordable Housing stock, define affordable housing strategies to better use housing tools & resources

Introductions: What is your name and top priority for this exercise?

Charles home iwnership

Heather - We need better quality affordable rental options

Preservation of affordable rental and homeownership

Zoning limitations: low income

HR&A OVERVIEW – HOUSING PRACTICE APPROACH

We understand affordability issues at three comprehensive, mutually reinforcing levels. We serve as a bridge between intention and implementation.



HOUSING STRATEGIES

Creating strategies and plans based on local needs and priorities



HOUSING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMING

Designing policies that align community goals with market conditions

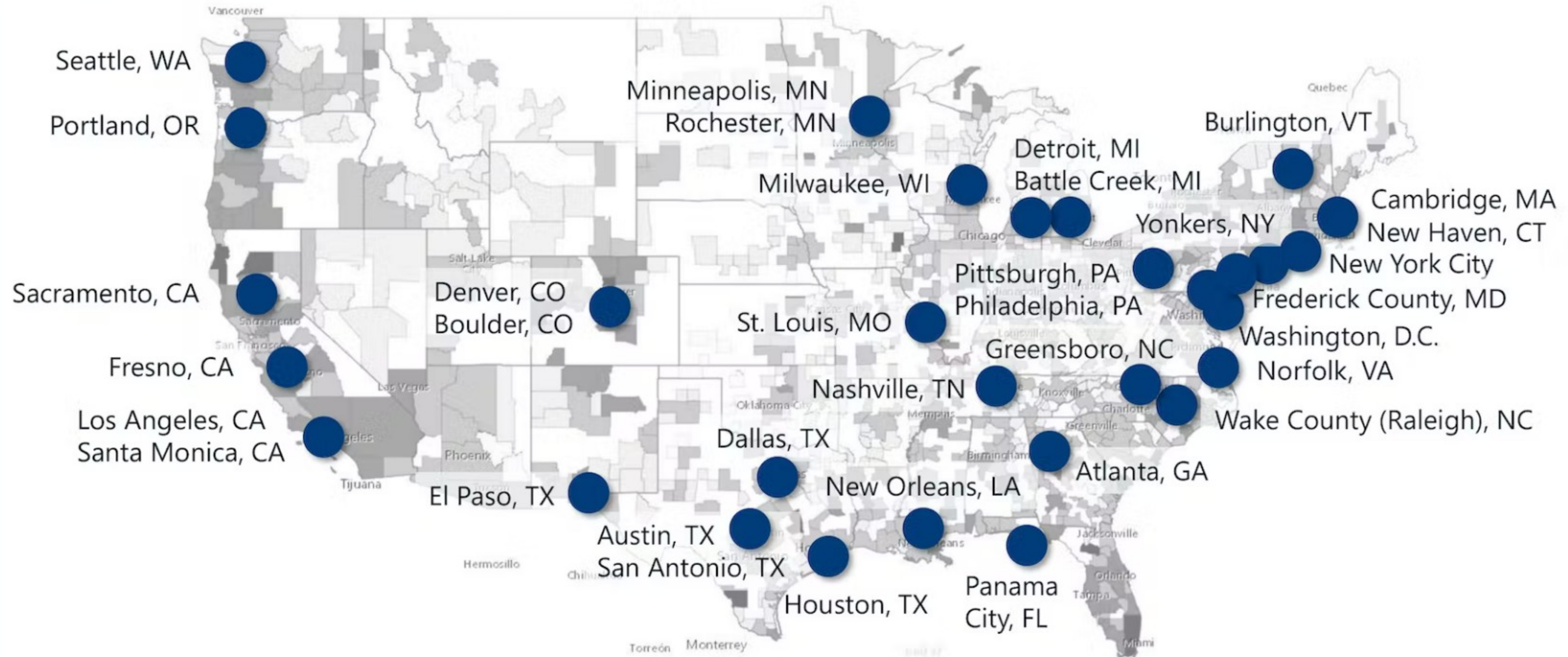


HOUSING TRANSACTIONS

Advising on the development and preservation of housing

HR&A OVERVIEW – NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

HR&A's housing practice works in a variety of markets, where affordability issues are longstanding or newly emerging.



WHY AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT STRATEGY?

Athens-Clarke County, with the support of HR&A Advisors, is taking a comprehensive and refreshed look at the community's housing needs.

The Strategy will:



Evaluate evolving housing needs

How has housing need changed in Athens-Clarke County (ACC) over the last decade? Why?
What housing options – rental and ownership – are available in ACC?



Analyze existing programs and policies

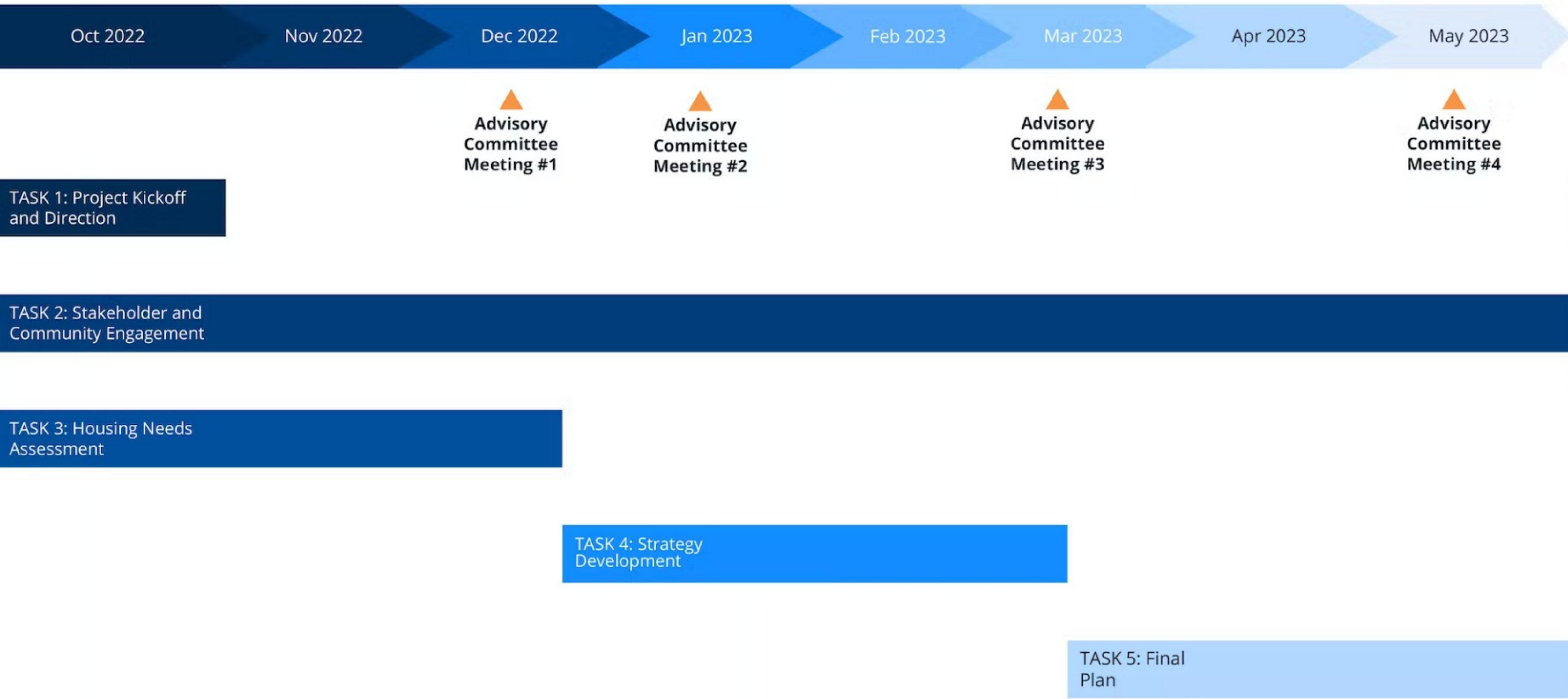
How have ACC's suite of existing programs contributed to housing affordability in ACC?



Recommend strategic investments and policies for greater impact

What new or expanded tools can help fill unmet housing need and build equity for a broad range of residents?

PROJECT TIMELINE



WHAT IS THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Advisory Committee members will serve as strategic implementation partners to the plan.

Committee Members

Group of ~25 across public, private, and non-profit sectors:

- County Staff & elected officials
- Real estate developers and brokers
- Housing authorities & non-profit housing experts
- Continuum of Care organizations
- Neighborhoods associations & community leaders
- Institutional stakeholders

Committee Role

1. Provide additional insight into affordable housing needs in Athens-Clarke County
2. Serve as engagement partners to expand outreach to community members
3. Prioritize potential housing tools
4. Shape recommendations for the strategy

Committee Timeline

4 sessions from December 2022-May 2023, covering topics that include:

- Identification of priority issues
- Feedback on Housing Needs Assessment
- Prioritization of potential tools and guidelines for recommendations
- Feedback on draft and final strategy

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Housing Affordability

WHAT IS HOUSING AFFORDABILITY?

“Affordability” can have different meanings depending on the context



Affordable Housing

A household lives in “Affordable Housing” if the building is subsidized, either through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, Public Housing, or through local, state, or federal subsidy. A household can live in “Affordable Housing” and still be cost burdened, as defined below.



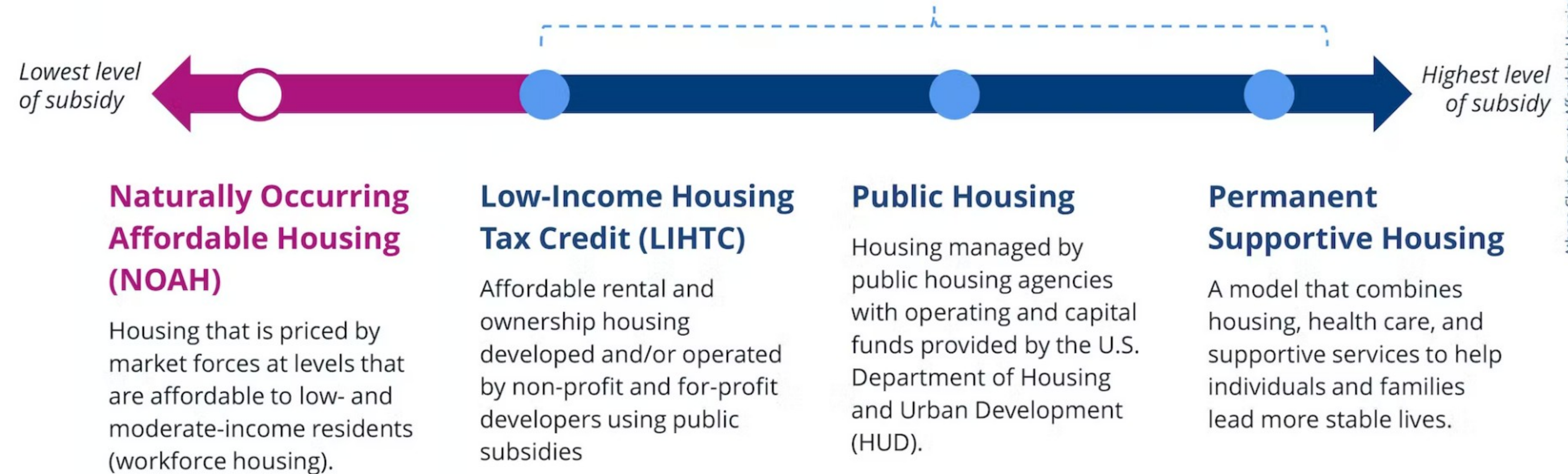
Affordable to a Household: Cost Burden

Under a standard set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing is considered “affordable” when the household spends 30% or less of its income on gross housing costs, whether for renter or ownership housing.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

There are several different types of “affordable housing”

Capital “A” Affordable Housing



WHAT IS COST BURDEN?

Housing costs can leave workers with limited income for food, childcare, and other costs.

- Housing cost burden is defined by the cost of housing *relative* to incomes.
- The more a household spends on housing costs, the less **residual income (what is left over)** available for other basic needs, such as food and childcare.
- When affordable rental housing is unavailable, low-income households face:
 - Housing instability
 - Increased vulnerability to unsafe living conditions, overcrowding, and costly and harmful evictions.

Source: EMSI, American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates



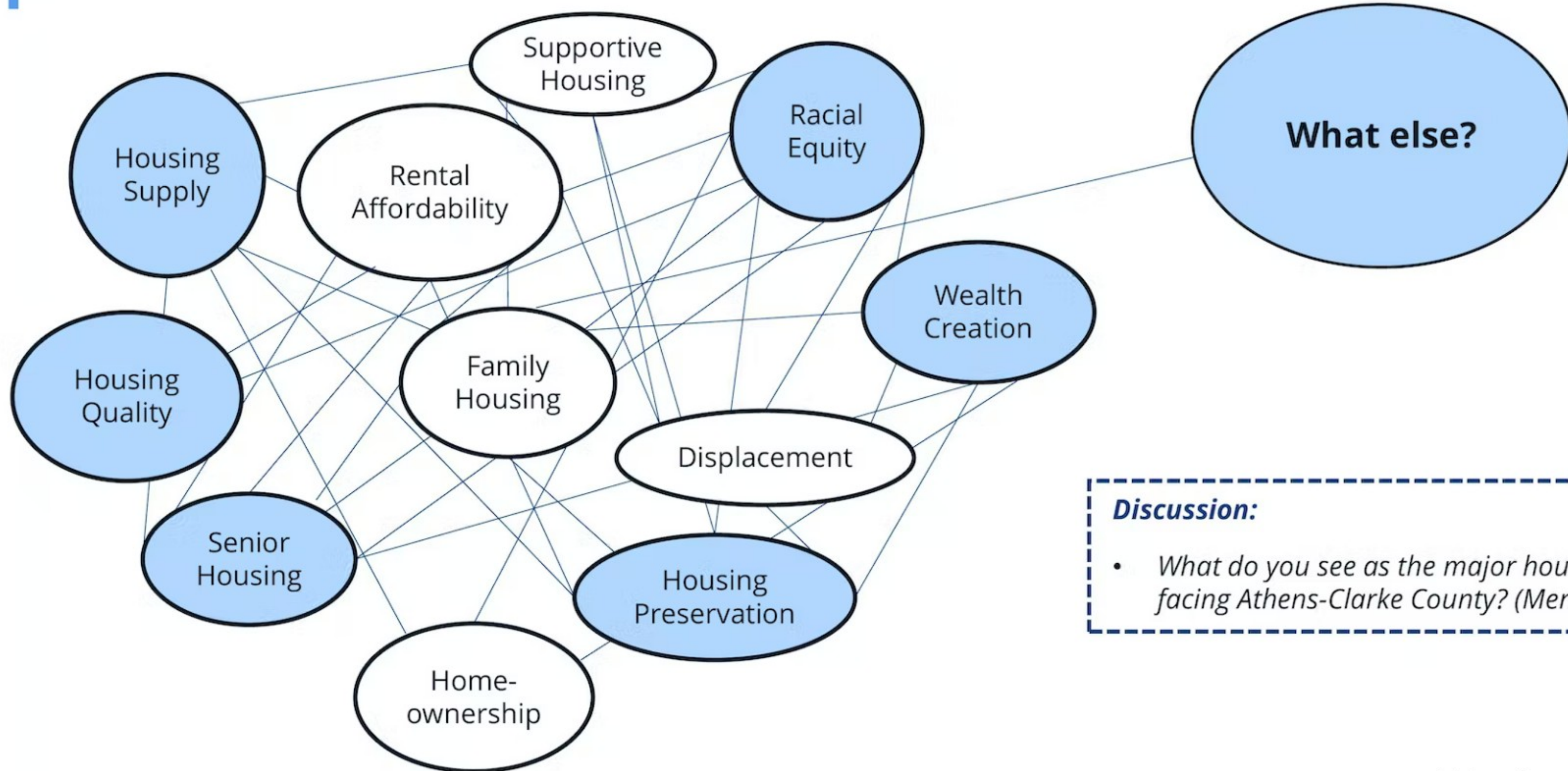
Monthly Income	\$3,240
Affordable Rent	-\$970

Residual Income	\$2,270
------------------------	----------------

Number of households making \$38,900 or less	22,600+
Portion of households cost-burdened in this income band	80%

WHY DOES HOUSING AFFORDABILITY MATTER?

“Affordable housing” also incorporates many distinct but related issues



What do you see as the major housing issues impacting Athens-Clarke County?

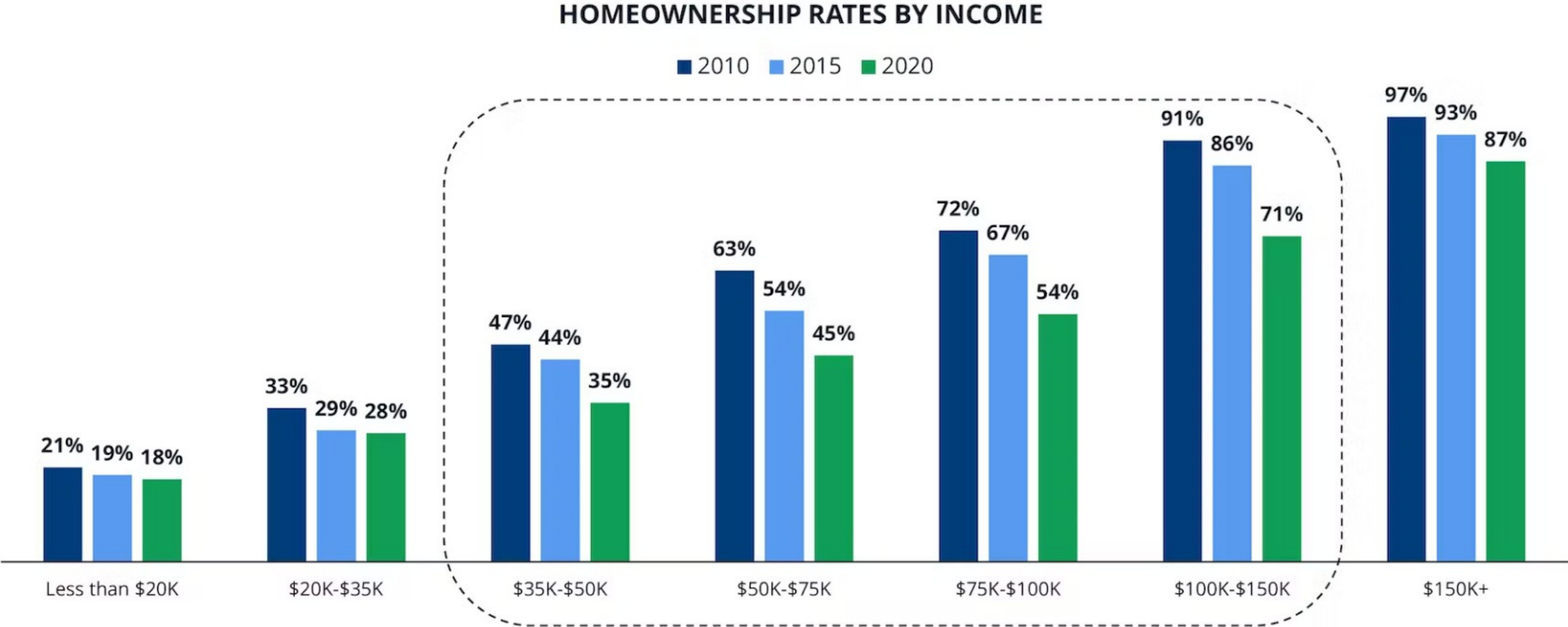
affordable stock
 diminished local control
 increased homeownership
 affordability housing quality
 displacement wages
 rental affordability
 cost burden affordable rents
 housing security safety
 housing cost availability
 quality- energy efficient
 heirs property
 home ownership

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Housing Market Scan

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT | PRELIMINARY SCAN

Athens-Clarke County is seeing a decline in homeownership rates across all income levels, but most notably in middle-income households, making \$35-\$150,000 annually.

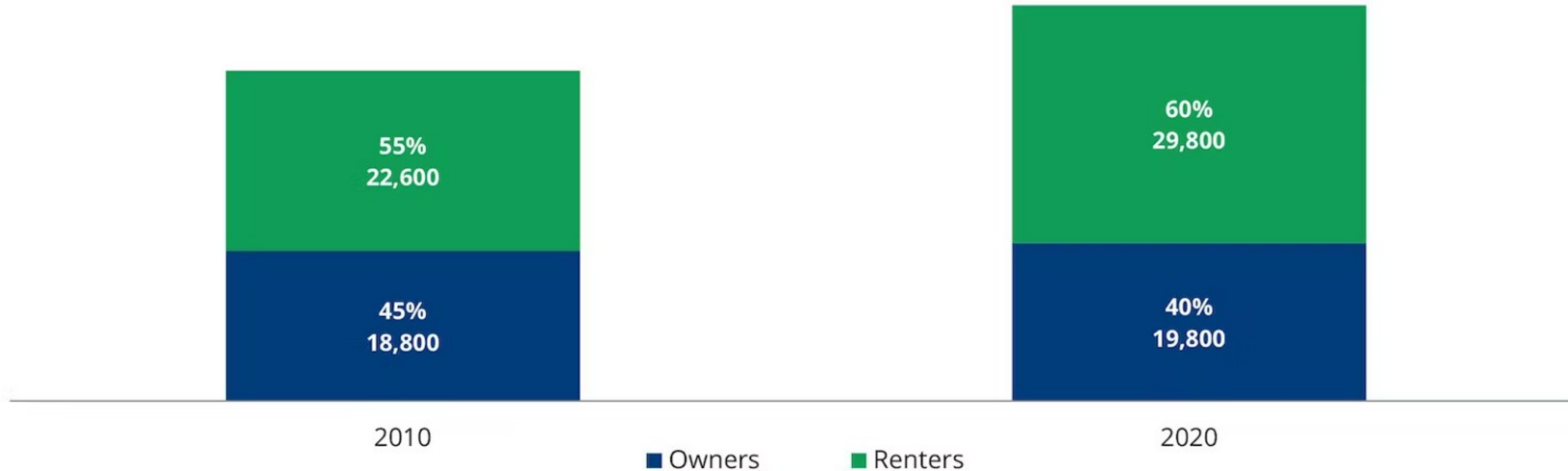


Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2010, 2015, and 2020 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT | PRELIMINARY SCAN

The distribution of renter and owner-occupied housing units in Athens-Clarke County has diverged over the past 10 years.

HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE, 2010 – 2020

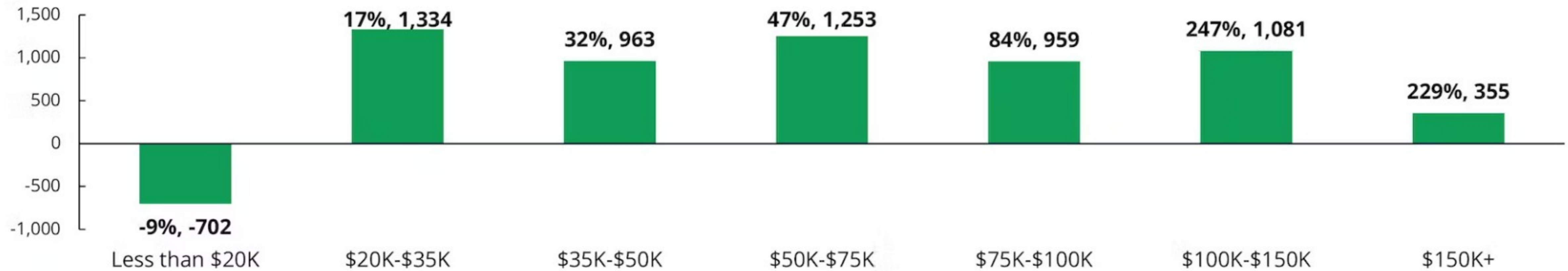


Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2010 and 2020 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT | PRELIMINARY SCAN

Over the past decade, the number of renter households have increased in all income groups except those earning less than \$20K.

CHANGE IN RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME, 2010 – 2020

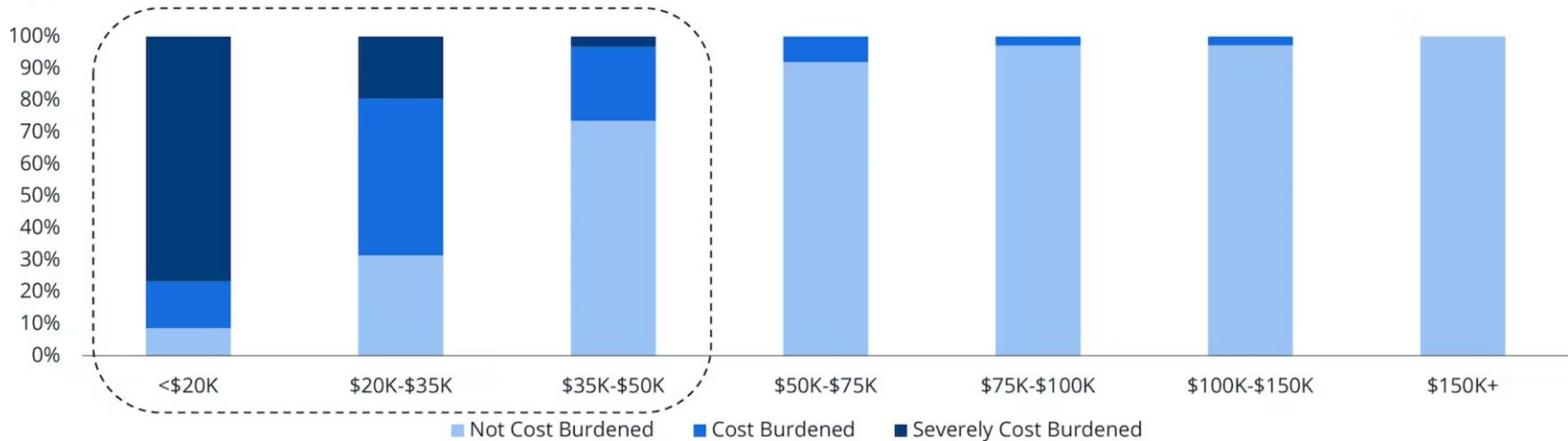


Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2010 and 2020 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT | PRELIMINARY SCAN

There are currently over 8,500 households (>40%) in Athens-Clarke County making less than \$50K that pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs.

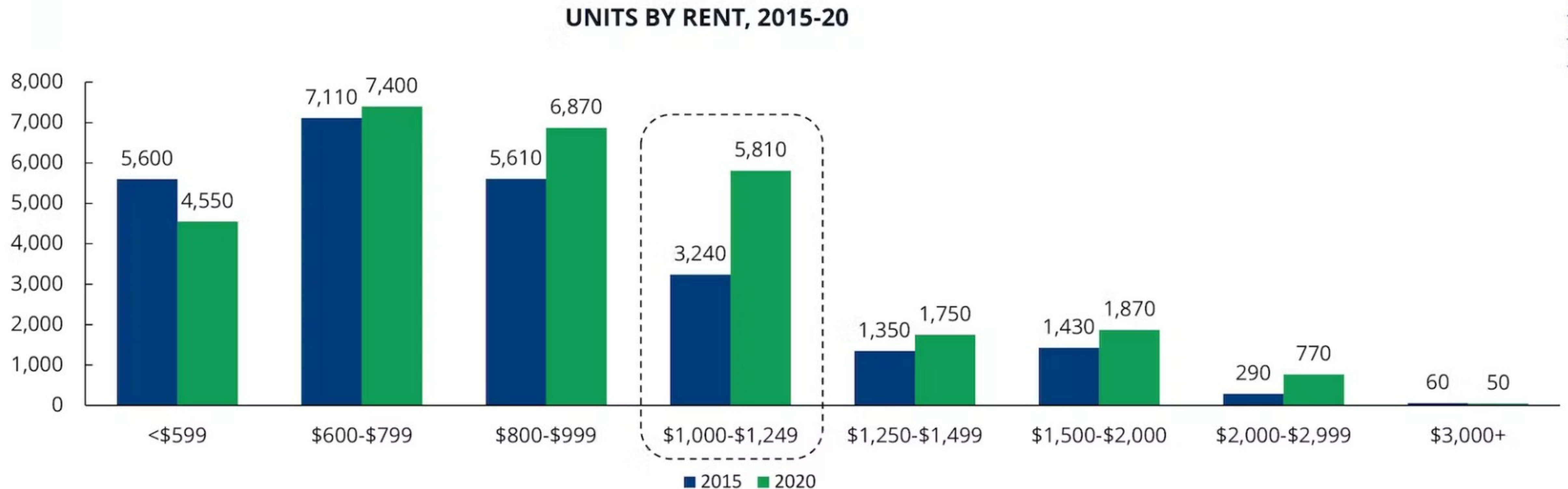
COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME, 2020



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT | PRELIMINARY SCAN

There has been a decline (or marginal increase) in units renting for less than \$800, but a dramatic increase in those renting for more than \$1,000.



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2020 5-Year Estimates

What housing market trends have you seen in Athens-Clarke County? Who is most impacted by these trends?

Low inventory; middle to high income

Dramatic rise in rental costs of traditionally lower income rental properties

More expensive rental and for-sale housing. Moderate or low income residents most impacted.

Locally owned landlords of "affordable rentals" are selling to hedge funds

Skyrocketing rents

Inventory availability is over \$2k per month for single family

Rapid increase in real estate prices and resulting rents, impacting families and low income individuals.

Out of town ownership

Increase in room rental due to how high the rents are. Low income

What housing market trends have you seen in Athens-Clarke County? Who is most impacted by these trends?

The market doesn't produce a variety of housing types. Burdens are heaviest at the lowest rungs of the ladder, which puts out-size pressure on affordable housing

Income discrimination by landlords (refusal to accept social security income, vouchers, Section 8)

Rising rents, higher home prices, Per bed rents, low income,

Assessed values are going up so much that it is driving increased costs for rentals and homeowners

Student rental by bedroom drives up rents for families

Most impacted are low income, especially people of color. Young adult townies (creatives/service industry/retail workers) also.

Reduction of "affordable" rental options, especially those with housing vouchers. Out of town investment companies buying up these properties. Single family homes being turned into short term rentals. Nimbysm pushing against potential solutions.

The number of properties that have shifted to short-term rentals

Most people are impacted in some way - but low-income people are most negatively impacted.

What housing market trends have you seen in Athens-Clarke County? Who is most impacted by these trends?

Zoning does not allow for closer buildings

Housing funding source anti discrimination laws (state level)

Repurposed blight properties for affordable rental developments

AHAT Athens Housing Advocacy Team

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Housing Tools

HOUSING TOOLS

Tools to address housing affordability fall into three broad categories



Land Use

Use **municipal regulations and zoning authority** to **indirectly** improve affordability by increasing the supply of housing, or to **directly** incentivize (or require) the production of affordable units.

e.g. by-right development, density bonuses, inclusionary zoning



Subsidy

Provide **below-market rate loans, grants, or other public resources** to close the gap between what a household can afford to pay and the costs to develop and operate housing.

e.g. rental assistance, gap financing for new construction, down payment assistance, public land sale



Tenants' Rights

Preserve existing affordable housing and housing stability by using **laws and regulations** that protect current occupants.

e.g. right to counsel, rent control, just cause eviction

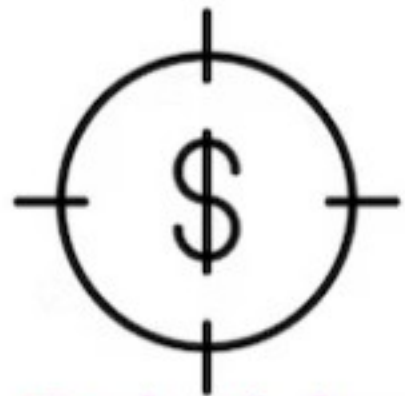
HOUSING TOOLS

Athens-Clarke County already uses some tools in all three categories



Land Use

Land banking
ADU By-right zoning (coming up)



Subsidy

Multi-family gap financing (HOME, CDBG, ARPA)
Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
Community Land Trust (ALT)
Rental Assistance (COVID-19; homeless)
Housing Choice Vouchers (via State)
Down Payment Assistance
Home Repairs and Renovation



Tenants' Rights

Housing Counseling
Community Organizing
Homelessness Prevention and Support

Discussion:

- *What existing housing tools have we not listed?*
- *What opportunities do you see to improve these tools?*
- *What housing tools do you think are most important to explore? (Mentimeter)*

What housing tools do you think are most important to explore?

Missing middle housing

We already have a voluntary inclusionary zoning ordinance. By-right ADUs seem unlikely to pass any time soon.

Greater density. Land banking.

We have to spend our energy to create big "A" affordable housing not trickle down solutions

Zoning for increased density (single family)

Use of public land.

Down payment and closing cost assistance

Smaller housing sizes

Limiting impact of short term rentals. Reactivating land bank. Increase density.

What housing tools do you think are most important to explore?

Housing funding source anti discrimination laws (state level)

Allowing smaller housing sizes

Creating a "student housing district"

We also need to look at natural resources that we don't have to support lots of density. We must start planning regionally. We have an issue with water shortages on the horizon.

Opportunities to increase minor subdivision provisions for projects supporting affordability.

Ridding of parking minimums

Incentives for developers. Reestablish land bank authority. Other housing options Promote fair housing

HOUSING ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

The Unified Government's goals will inform the tools and actions that HR&A recommends

Strategy 2: Scale Up Investments in Housing

As Stamford identifies additional revenue for the AHTF, there are a series of tools that the City can fund through partner organizations to make investments in affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities.

Existing Sources: About \$7 per capita annually



Affordable Housing Trust Fund

- Fee-in-lieu payments
- Commercial linkage fees



Potential New + Expanded Sources: At least \$35 per capita annually



Affordable Housing Trust Fund

- Fee-in-lieu payments
- Commercial linkage fees
- American Rescue Plan Act Funds
- General Fund Contributions
- Marijuana Sales Tax (local allocation)
- Local General Obligation Bonds
- Management Licensing Program
- Property Transfer Tax
- Vacancy Tax
- Proceeds from Property Sales
- Document Recording Fee
- Landlord Registration Fee



Potential New + Expanded Uses

Small Landlord Fund (new)

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Gap Funding (expanded)

NOAH Preservation Fund (new)

Demonstration Program for ADUs (new)

Down Payment Assistance & Homeownership Counseling (expanded)

Community Land Trust (expanded)

Owner-Occupied Rehab (new)

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Stakeholder engagement

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Advisory committee is one of five groups tapped to incorporate input from throughout the planning process.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Representatives from housing service providers, real estate professionals, housing advocates, low-income populations



COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

- Community liaisons who meet with community groups, facilitate discussion, and collect input



PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Workshops to solicit substantive input and inform strategies
- Include housing professionals and community members, among others



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Interviews and focus groups
- Include affordable housing professionals, advocates, developers, and housing service providers



TOWN LEADERSHIP

- Meetings with staff and elected officials from the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Advisory committee and Community Ambassadors will drive community outreach with materials from HR&A.



Discussion:

- *Who are the existing community groups and leaders that we should engage in the next 3 months? (Mentimeter)*
- *What are some forums for community ambassadors to disseminate information and collect feedback?*

Who are the community groups and leaders we should talk to in the next three months?

Existing local housing nonprofits

Athens Well Being Project

Inner East Athens Neighborhood Assoc.

AHAT Housing Advocacy Team

Hancock Community Development Corp.

UGA. Private developers. Apartment owners. AH partners (most are on this committee).

Family Connection Neighborhood Leaders

Envision Athens Groups

Planning department, HCD, Public Utilities, Code Enforcement.

Who are the community groups and leaders we should talk to in the next three months?

NEGA Homeless and Poverty Coalition

Athens immigrant Rights Coalition

Homeless Continuum of Care Committees

Asia Taylor

Athens alliance

Nucis Space/ entities that target artists/ musicians / creatives

Defacs

Athens Anti Discrimination Movement

ACC Federation of Neighborhoods

Who are the community groups and leaders we should talk to in the next three months?

Social workers in the school system

Current AH occupants.

Veterans groups

EADC

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Advisory Committee Timeline & Next Steps

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

We will hold a series of conversations with the Advisory Committee to develop the Strategy.



This is an iterative process, and there may be opportunities to begin to implement recommendations for housing policies and programs before the Strategy is finalized.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We propose to work with the following Community Ambassadors to help reach the Athens-Clarke County community.

Group of 6-8 representing geographic and area of focus diversity

- Broderick Flanagan, Neighborhood Leaders
- Lizette Guevara, Neighborhood Leaders
- Stacy Dean, Neighborhood Leaders
- Gwendolyn Littleton, Neighborhood Leaders
- Faatimah Stevens, Neighborhood Leaders
- Mykeshia Ross, ACC DA Office
- Lemuel LaRoche, UGA School of Social Work
- Montu Miller, Cedar Shoals High School
- Danielle Bonnano, Athens Recovery Center
- Jess Martinez, AHAT
- Imani Scott Blackwell, AHAT
- Katie Hill, Extra Special People
- Renee Seligman, Athens Community Council on Aging
- TBD, Dignidad Inmigrante en Athens (DIA)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We propose to interview the following stakeholders to gather qualitative data related to the development process, market pressures, and neighborhood trends, among others.

- Alejandra Villegas Lopez, ACCGov Human Relations Commission
- Daniel “Ed” Moore, ACCGov Human Relations Commission
- David Bradley, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce
- Christopher Jordan, Athens Area Council on Aging
- Hattie Whitehead, Athens Justice & Memory Project
- Brett Nave, City Block Community LLC
- Dr. LaKeisha Gantt, Clarke County School Board of Education
- Malakia Taylor, Columbia Residential
- Raymond Kuniansky, Columbia Residential
- Chad Matesi, Core Athens Mitchell LLC
- Dr. Diane Dunston, East Athens Community Development Corporation
- Carol S. Williams, GICH Alumni Member
- Tommy Valentine, Historic Athens
- Joe Polaneczky, Nabo Realty
- Trevor Scoles, Trinitas Construction
- Jermaine Durham, UGA – College of Family & Consumer Sciences
- Sharon Liggett, UGA – Archway Partnership
- Alison McCullick, UGA – Government Relations

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)	A locally-designated and controlled fund to pay for affordable housing development and programs.
Area Median Income (AMI)	Calculated and released every year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
By-Right Development	Development allowed under the Zoning Code without requiring City approval, such as a variance or rezoning.
Community Land Trust (CLT)	Separates the ownership of land from ownership of housing in order to control resale value and ensure homeownership affordability in perpetuity.
Cost Burden	Under a standard definition set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a household is considered cost burdened when it spends 30% or more of its income on gross housing costs, including rent, mortgage payments, and utilities.
Down Payment Assistance (DPA)	Down payment assistance programs support homeownership by providing a grant or forgivable loan to first-time homebuyers to reduce the upfront costs of purchasing a home.
Emergency Rental Assistance	Assistance that helps qualified renter households pay for housing costs (such as rent, security deposits, or utilities) on a limited basis to prevent evictions and shut-offs.
Fair Rent	By Charter and Ordinance, the Stamford Social Services Commission enforces the City's Fair Rent and Human Rights (anti-discrimination) laws, acting as an oversight committee in areas pertaining to the social welfare and housing issues. The Commission may be authorized to adjust tenant rents on a case-by-case basis in response to "excessive rent complaints."
Foreclosure Intervention Program	A Housing Development Fund (HDF) program to assist homebuyers overcome mortgage delinquency or anticipated increases in predatory mortgage interest rates.
Homeownership Counseling	Counseling services for prospective, first-time homebuyers help them to plan for buying a home and budget for the full costs of homeownership (including utilities, insurance, and maintenance). Counseling can also bridge disparity in access to traditional banking or financial advisory services for low-income individuals.
Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)	The federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) distributes federal funds to public housing agencies (PHAs) across the country; PHAs then administer vouchers locally to eligible renter households.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)/ Below Market Rate (BMR) Program	A policy to increase the production of affordable units in new market-rate multifamily development by requiring that a certain percentage of units have rents that low- and/or moderate-income households can afford (usually set at a percentage of AMI). Stamford's Below Market Rate program is an example of an IZ policy.
Infill Development	Development or redevelopment of a vacant or under-used property within an existing developed area.
Legal Aid	A City or other local authority can dedicate funding for the provision of legal services for tenants facing eviction.
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	A federal program that provides a dollar-for-dollar tax credit to support the development of affordable rental housing. The LIHTC program distributes federal income tax credits to developers through states' individual Housing Finance Agencies (HFA), which determine which projects receive tax credits under their federal allocation. There are two general types of credits that can be awarded: 9% credits and 4% credits.
Multifamily Gap Financing	Provision of gap financing (usually low interest loans and/or grants) helps fund development costs for new multifamily housing.
Naturally-Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)	Housing that is priced by market forces at levels that are affordable to low- and moderate-income residents.
Permanent Supportive Housing	A model that combines housing, health care, and supportive services to help individuals and families lead more stable lives.
Public Housing	Housing managed by public housing agencies with operating and capital funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
Soft Density	Primarily single-family areas that allow additional housing typologies such as duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhomes or row houses, and live-work housing – also known as “missing middle” housing.
Subsidized Housing	Affordable rental and ownership housing developed and/or operated by non-profit and for-profit developers using public subsidies.
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)	Dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development near transit hubs or stations.