

HUD's National Call to Action

HUD's [National Call to Action \(NCA\)](#) is a campaign developed by the [America's Affordable Communities Initiative \(AACI\)](#) to enlist states, local communities, and affordable housing advocacy groups across the nation to commit to producing affordable housing through public participation in a national network for regulatory reform. AACI is a HUD initiative committed to helping communities across America identify and overcome regulatory barriers that impede the availability of affordable housing, and is strongly supported by the Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse. In fact, we've developed and are hosting a new section here on our site specifically dedicated to the National Call to Action.

The following are goals of HUD's National Call to Action:

- To encourage participants to make a pledge to actively engage in regulatory reform;
- To assist states and communities in their efforts to initiate regulatory reform and increase the supply of affordable housing by encouraging the creation of state and local affordable housing task forces;
- To educate housing advocacy groups on the issues of regulatory barriers to affordable housing; and
- To promote awareness of the Department's America's Affordable Communities Initiative and Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse (RBC).

The NCA web pages provide resources to assist communities in building a [Regulatory Reform Task Force](#) to analyze its current regulatory landscape and make recommendations to help improve housing affordability. [Affordable Housing Toolkits](#) are also highlighted to provide community leaders with a set of best practices and case studies.

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In order to participate, organizations must complete and mail the [Call to Action letter](#) to the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, stating a commitment to forming a task force (or that one is already in the working stages). Although optional, organizations are also encouraged to formally pass or adopt a [Resolution](#) that formalizes this commitment at the state, local, or organizational level. Those interested in taking part can mail the signed, original letter, along with the Resolution (if applicable) to:

Jurisdictions Aim to Increase Workforce Housing

A growing number of low- to moderate-income households are forced to move outside of metropolitan areas, creating an increasing problem with the proximity of housing to work. Suburbs are becoming exurbs as new and more affordable housing becomes available on the outer edge of urban areas, forcing commuters to travel long distances. Such problems can be seen throughout the nation, in jurisdictions

that have booming economies and a shortage of workforce housing. This article will highlight two such jurisdictions that are taking the initiative to make changes.

Naples, Florida

Many people find Naples to be an enjoyable place to live. However, according to an article in [USA Today](#), the high demand for housing, relocation of retirees, lengthy permitting processes, impact fees of \$30,000 per unit, and community opposition to development have all contributed to the high price of housing, making it more difficult for workers to live in the area.

The limited supply of affordable housing leaves essential employers struggling to attract and retain employees who are willing to work in Naples. According to the news article, within the past year, more than two dozen people turned down employment opportunities at the local hospital because they could not afford to live in the area. During peak season, when the population of Naples grows by 50 percent, the hospital rents 200 apartments to provide nurses with housing during their tenure. The affordable housing shortage is beginning to have a diminishing effect on residents' quality of life. Commuters are pushing roads past capacity, and restaurant and retail services are deteriorating because employers cannot find people who are willing to work in the area.

Rated as one of the [top-ten local stories](#) in 2006, the lack of workforce housing received much needed attention by community leaders throughout the year. Politicians and employers worked together to create solutions to affordable housing. Their efforts resulted in legislation to encourage public-private affordable housing partnerships, and a proposed 300-unit development initiated by school districts, enforcement agencies, and hospitals, where half of the units would be set aside for service personnel. Additionally, the city approved incentives in the form of density bonuses to builders who incorporate affordable housing into their developments. County planners are also considering amending zoning regulations to further encourage workforce housing, which would provide additional affordable housing units.

East King County, Washington

According to the [Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce](#), East King County has experienced an economic boom over the past decade. From 1993 until the year 2000, more than 26,000 housing units were built. Despite the new construction, housing prices have continued to increase as a result of a steady population growth stemming from the area's economic success. The article discusses how low- and moderate-income families often pay more than 30 percent of their household income for housing. This puts other needs, such as insurance and healthcare, at risk. Alternatively, families commute long distances, causing traffic congestion and pollution, or they may move out of East King County altogether.

To meet the affordable housing need, many cities within East King County have started encouraging housing development in downtown or commercial areas. Some cities provide density bonuses for builders whose developments target moderate-income families, and most cities allow accessory dwelling units that expand the supply of affordable housing. Local governments also formed a formal

partnership — A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) — to work cooperatively on housing issues. This partnership pools local resources to create a housing trust fund that has already given lower-income families \$18 million in loans and grants.

Conclusion

Housing affordability has become an increasing problem throughout the country. Jurisdictions, such as Naples and East King County, are taking steps to help alleviate workforce housing shortages. Their efforts may inspire other local and state governments facing similar concerns

Mixed-Use Libraries Serve Two Community Needs

City and county governments facing the challenge of providing both affordable housing and essential public goods are, in essence, catalysts for the development of innovative solutions. A number of communities are meeting both objectives simultaneously with a mixed-use branch library that includes on-site affordable housing. Usually a stand-alone resource, these libraries offer the opportunity to increase the utility of available land, provide affordable housing, and serve as a community hub and centerpiece. Such projects can even be incorporated into a city's transit-oriented development plan, and offer the possibility of bringing in city revenue. A number of potential obstacles can limit this type of development, such as commercial-only zoning districts, height limitations, and parking requirements.

In this article, we'll examine how ground-breaking decisions by local planners, board members, affordable advocates, and architects, along with modifications to the local ordinances, have led to the development of mixed-use libraries that integrate affordable housing units.

Portland, Oregon Creates Mixed-Use Library

Portland, Oregon (county seat for Multnomah County) has a strong history of innovative land-use planning decisions. The city and county officially opened the [Hollywood Library and Bookmark Apartments](#) project in 2002, the culmination of over six years of planning, design, negotiation, and construction. Hollywood Library, located on the first floor, occupies 13,000 square feet, and since opening, has become a popular branch location. Bookmark Apartments, occupying floors 2 through 4, offer an average of 900 square feet per apartment. Of the 47 apartment units, 19 are set aside for low-income households.

Although preliminary planning and design studies for the library began earlier, the project came to fruition when the Multnomah Commissioners adopted [Resolution 99-78](#) in May of 1999. The resolution called for county-owned surplus or vacant land to be made available for mixed-use development that includes affordable housing.

Following in the footsteps of the Resolution, the [Hollywood and Sandy Plan](#) (Resolution 35875) was adopted in April 2000 in a collaborative effort between the Bureau of Planning, the Office of Transportation, the Mayor's office, and various

community members. The plan laid much of the groundwork for the project, including calling for the completion of the new mixed-use library within a five-year period (Action Ph 1). The plan also emphasized the citywide need to promote mixed uses and ensure that new development is pedestrian-friendly.

Multnomah County's [Comprehensive Framework Plan](#) from the Land Use Planning Division also helped guide and direct the development. This document clearly defines mixed-use to include "several different types of uses in a single structure, such as residences, stores, eating establishments, theaters, and office [space]" (Policy 20). The Plan also outlines the county's responsibility to provide affordable housing and to seek out innovative methods of realizing these goals.

The development team encountered and scaled many hurdles along the way. Ownership of the facility was one obstacle that led to an interesting [resolution](#) that allowed the County to retain ownership of the library facility, while the developer was granted ownership of the apartments and the small, ground-level restaurant.

Rehabilitation of an Historic Commercial Building into a Library and Affordable Housing in Irvington, New York

Where Portland took a new development approach, Irvington, New York was able to redevelop an historic commercial building into a mixed-use library incorporating affordable housing. The [Burnham Building](#), originally constructed in 1881, housed a manufacturing company until 1986. In 1993, the Village of Irvington acquired it and began seeking proposals to redevelop the property. A unique combination of library supporters, affordable housing developers, and nonprofit property managers stepped up to redevelop the building, with the first floor accommodating the library and the upper floors as affordable rental housing.

Although the project was strongly supported by village officials, Irvington's existing zoning regulations did not allow for construction of such a project. The Burnham Building is located in the Industrial District (Section 224-39), which precludes mixed-use development. The Zoning Board reviewed the project proposal and recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt a zoning code amendment. In December of 1996, the Board of Trustees reviewed and [approved](#) an amendment to the zoning code allowing multifamily dwellings and mixed-use structures in the Industrial District, pursuant to a special permit. With these new regulations in place in 1997, the Board of Trustees granted a [special permit](#) to redevelop the building, under very little community opposition.

The project was completed in January 2000, resulting in a 10,000 square foot library, 20,000 square feet of living space, and nearly 3,000 square feet of common space. The 22 affordable rental units made great strides toward reaching the affordable goals of the village, while preserving and improving an important historical structure. The developers were even able to incorporate many modern green features, such as recycled insulation, low-VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) paints, a natural sunlight reading room that improves energy efficiency, and solar panels.

Other Cities/Counties Look Toward Creating Mixed-Use Affordable Libraries

Mixed-use library projects are still relatively rare. However, a number of cities have active proposals on the table or have completed projects.

City/County	Project Description	Proposed	Built
Minneapolis, MN	The city is seeking to redevelop an existing library, which is to include commercial and/or residential space. Twenty percent of residential units (rental or ownership) must be affordable.	✓	
New York, NY	A nonprofit developer is proposing to rebuild four branch libraries, incorporating low- and moderate-income housing.	✓	
Saint Paul, MN	A new community outreach library includes a 31,000 square foot library and 98 apartment units. 80 percent of apartment units are affordable to households earning 60 percent or less of the area median income.		✓
San Francisco, CA	A new development houses a 7,500 square foot branch library, a health center, retail space, and affordable senior housing. All 140 apartment units are available to seniors earning less than 50 percent of the area median income.		✓
Seattle, WA	A new 5,600 square foot branch library was built to incorporate 19 apartments, affordable to those earning less than 50 percent of the area median income.		✓

Conclusion

By combining a public library with affordable housing in one mixed-use structure, cities and counties have successfully tackled two needs at once. The communities highlighted in this article were able to work through and resolve any regulatory barriers during the design and development process, thus establishing a valuable addition to the neighborhood.



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