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Park Ridge Council told city has too few affordable housing units, under new law

By Jeff Banowetz
Pioneer Press • May 03, 2022 at 4:10 pm



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Affordable housing was on the agenda at Monday night's Park Ridge City Council meeting, as the board received a presentation from Community Preservation and Development Director Drew Awsumb concerning recent changes in state law.

"The standard is that 10% of your units are affordable," Awsumb said. "Park Ridge is at 8%. So what do we need to do to get to that number?"

There were no answers to that question in the discussion before City Council,

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“It’s very true in mature communities with a number of seniors aging in their homes,” Smith said. “They’ve paid off the mortgage, but still bear costs of a home. If those folks have another option in the community, it may open up a starter home to another buyer.”

Harris mentioned seniors aging in place, and the need for more senior housing, as a factor in his native Highland Park.

“We also want to identify shortages at both ends of the market,” he said.

Awsumb said the nature of the survey will be “more of a classic community planning questionnaire and public participation effort...it is not my understanding that it is a scientifically valid survey or margin of error type polling, etc.

“We do not anticipate the project kicking off until late summer and then a duration throughout the remainder of 2022. So the questionnaire and public engagement in general will not commence for a few months.”

Last meeting for Ald. Marty Joyce

The housing presentation also was the last full City Council meeting for Seventh Ward Ald. Marty Joyce after five years of service.

Honored with a proclamation, Joyce, a Park Ridge native, has been the Council’s liaison to the Suburban O’Hare Commission. He also served on the

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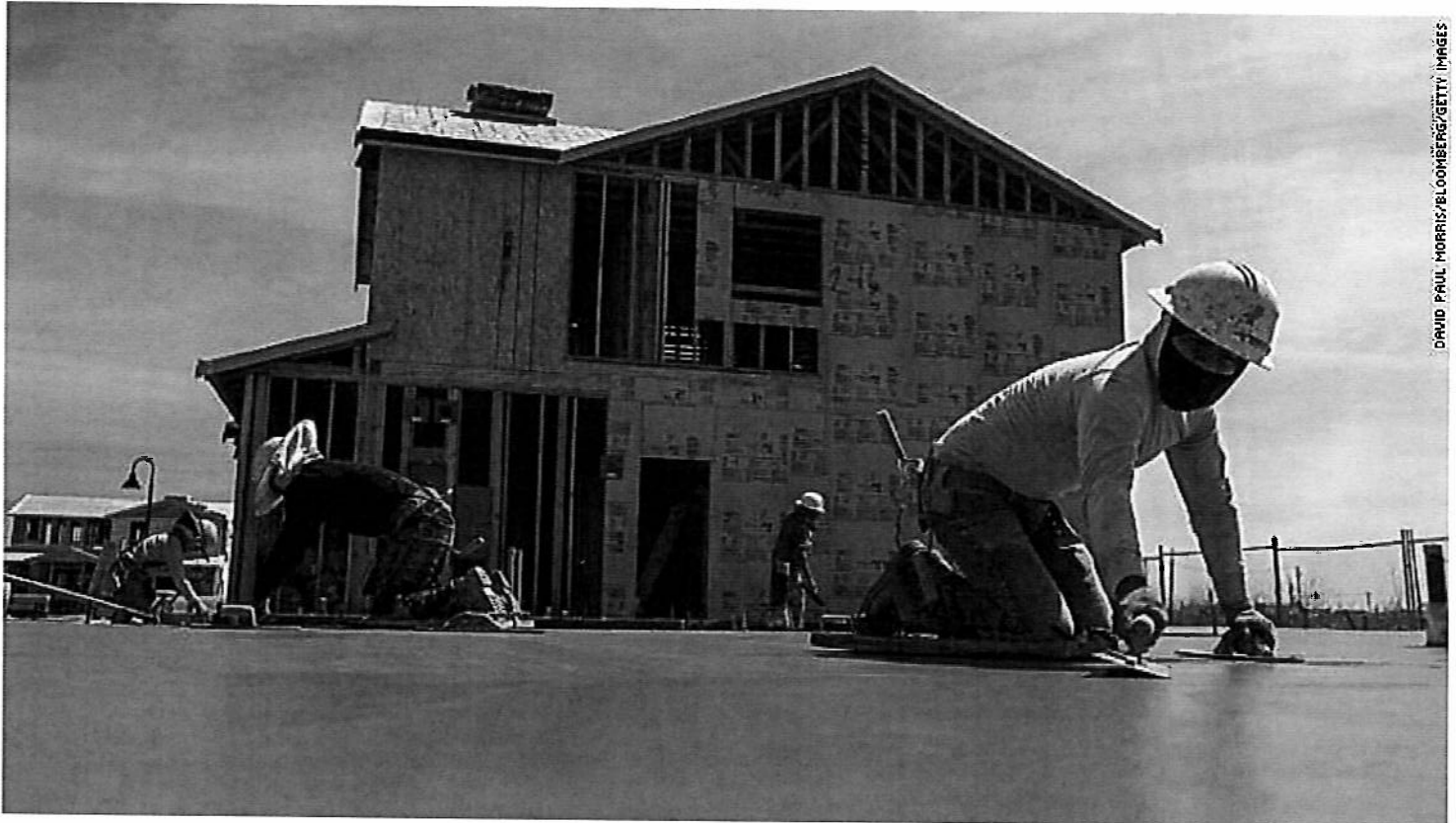
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Biden administration unveils action plan to boost affordable housing

By Betsy Klein, CNN

Updated 2158 GMT (0558 HKT) May 16, 2022



DAVID PAUL MORRIS/BLUOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

Contractors work on concrete slabs in the Cielo at Sand Creek by Century Communities housing development in Antioch, California, US, on Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Washington (CNN) — The Biden administration announced an action plan Monday aimed at boosting the supply of affordable housing amid rising home prices and overall high inflation.

Taken together, administration officials said, the actions announced will help close the affordable housing gap and "ease the burden of housing costs," noting that housing prices are a key driver of inflation.

The move is the latest step by the administration to show it is working to get a handle on high prices nationwide. US home prices continued to surge higher in February, according to the most recent data from the S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller US National Home Price Index. Prices rose 19.8% year-over-year in February, an even higher rate than the 19.2% growth seen in January. Meanwhile, rents are up nearly 20% from two years ago.

President Joe Biden said last week tackling inflation is a top domestic priority for his administration. He attacked Republicans for a plan put out by the head of the Senate GOP's campaign arm rather than laying out any new proposals to combat the worst inflation the country has seen in 40 years.

Among the new policies announced Monday are steps to leverage existing federal funding to encourage state and local reforms to zoning and land use policies, a senior administration official told reporters, via funding from the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Department of Transportation. A second official noted that the administration

There are also steps to finance or produce more manufactured housing, accessory dwelling units -- also known as garage apartments, basement apartments or backyard homes -- 2-4 unit properties and smaller multifamily buildings, according to a White House fact sheet.

The administration will also direct supply of affordable housing for owner-occupants, which the second administration official said is aimed at addressing "the growing trend of large institutional investor purchases of single family homes."

And the administration will "work with the private sector to address supply chain challenges and improve building techniques to finish construction in 2022 on the most new homes in any year since 2006," the fact sheet said.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge will join Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and other Biden officials to address supply chain disruptions for building materials with industry leaders, the fact sheet said.

The actions will "help close the housing supply shortage in five years," the first senior official said, and will be paired with a series of proposed legislative measures to help ease costs. The legislative moves, which will require congressional approval, include tax credits for low- and middle-income home buyers and a proposed \$25 billion for grants for affordable housing production.

Fudge will join Sen. Sherrod Brown and Rep. Joyce Beatty, both Ohio Democrats, for an event in Columbus, highlighting the new plan on Monday.

"The Plan's policies to boost supply are an important element of bringing homeownership within reach for Americans who, today, cannot find an affordable home because there are too few homes for sale in their communities. And it will help reduce price pressures in the economy, as housing costs make up about one-third of the market basket for inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index," the White House said in a fact sheet.

Affordable housing advocates approve

Housing advocates applauded the administration's plan.

But while housing experts said the actions were welcome and necessary, they cautioned this would not be a quick fix. In addition, they said, while some actions can be taken on their own many of the recommendations require congressional approval, which may prove difficult.

"I commend President Biden for taking significant and decisive action, but the administration cannot solve the crisis on its own," said Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. "Congress must also act with similar urgency and quickly enact Build Back Better's transformative and badly needed housing investments. Only through a combination of administrative action and robust federal funding can the country truly resolve its affordable housing crisis."

Record low interest rates coupled with more than a decade of under building created a supply and demand mismatch that has pushed home prices higher. Now the Federal Reserve is working to stem inflation by raising interest rates, which may reduce demand but will also make the cost of buying a home even more expensive.

For nearly eight million households with extremely low incomes, housing consumes at least half of their limited monthly budget, according to the NLIHC. Affordable homes that may have been out of reach for these households even before the pandemic are even more scarce now.

The NLIHC commended the administration's proposed use of federal transportation funds to relax local zoning laws, which tend to inhibit or prohibit the construction of apartments and can be rooted in racial exclusion. The organization also noted that by supporting manufactured housing, accessory dwelling units, and small-scale developments, the administration can increase affordable housing options in all kinds of communities nationwide.

Eliminating the regulatory barriers to new construction, especially in underserved markets, and expanding financing options for multifamily and rehabilitation projects can go a long way toward making housing more affordable in the US, noted Bob Broeksmit, president of the Mortgage Bankers Association.

"A commitment to more private and public sector partnerships will help address the housing supply and affordability challenges that continue to burden families," said Broeksmit.

Dennis Shea, the executive director of the Terwilliger Center for Housing Policy, agreed.

"This is the right focus," Shea said. "We've under built the housing supply by millions of homes over the past 20 years. Efforts to increase the supply of homes should reduce housing costs for people looking to rent or buy a home."

Additional reporting by CNN Business' Anna Bahney.

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NEWS

Why some Illinois landlords are unhappy with proposed mandatory participation in Section 8



Ken DeCoster

Rockford Register Star

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ROCKFORD — An organization representing landlords across Illinois has concerns that more choices for residents in public housing could translate into less autonomy for landlords.

Illinois House Bill 2775 amends the state's Homelessness Prevention Act by creating additional legal defenses for renters and protections against discrimination based on source of income, as well as preventing undue administrative burdens when applying for housing assistance.

Protected sources of income under the bill includes emergency housing assistance, social security, disability support and federal Section 8 housing vouchers.

Housing: Winnebago County Board members at odds over affordable housing incentive

According to the Illinois Rental Property Owners Association, the legislation would mandate that landlords participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, commonly referred to as the Section 8 program.

Section 8 is a federal rental assistance program for low income individuals whereby monthly rent is determined by income. Participation in the program is currently voluntary for landlords.

“The legislation will have the effect of mandating that a property owner enter into a non-negotiable contract with a unit of government, regardless if the property owner is willing to do so,” said Paul Arena, director of legislative affairs at the Illinois Rental Property Owners Association. “It is unreasonable to accuse a property owner who declines to accept such non-

negotiable terms as having violated a person's human rights. If a government program is not gaining sufficient participation, the solution is to correct objectionable elements of the program. There are remedies other than forced participation.”

The bill also effectively eliminates the use of an income threshold to qualify tenants, Arena said.

Rockford landlord Mary Snyder has been active in the Section 8 program for years.

“The biggest problem we have with entitlement programs like food stamps and Section 8 is there's no time limits and there's no incentive for them (participants) to get off of it,” Snyder said. “I've had tenants turn down promotions because then they'd no longer qualify for the program.”

News: Rockford peace activist Stanley Campbell calls on churches to make a difference

Snyder said forcing landlords to accept Housing Choice Vouchers from low-income tenants is unfair to landlords.

“It comes down to tenant accountability,” she said. “There's some long term tenants and there are people who come and go quickly. You've got to get more landlords to participate but forcing them to do it is not the way.”

The bill passed the House last fall and is currently pending in the Illinois Senate.

Debate over the bill coincides with two local public housing agencies preparing to implement a program designed to increase the number and quality of affordable housing options for their tenants.

Previously: Gov. Pritzker expands tenant protections with latest executive order

The Rockford Housing Authority and Northern Illinois Regional Affordable Community Housing, representing the Winnebago and Boone County Housing Authorities, have been designated “Moving to Work” agencies by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“With this new business model, we are able to provide incentives for our landlords to encourage them to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program, thereby giving our residents greater access to areas of higher opportunities,” RHA Executive Director Laura Snyder said in a news release.

In addition to boosting the number of affordable housing options, the Moving To Work program strives to increase the number of public housing residents toward self-sufficiency while reducing the agency's administrative costs.

"We are excited to see the future of RHA and the Rockford community through the Move to Work program," Snyder said. "We cannot wait to start implementing the local goals that we have set in order to help the residents and the community."

The vision for the expansion of the Moving to Work program is to improve the delivery of federally assisted housing and promote self-sufficiency for low-income families across the nation, according to NI ReACH Executive Director Alan Zais.

"The succinct way of saying it is the program gives you more flexibility," Zais said. "You report your progress so HUD and Congress can see what might make sense to adopt for housing authorities nationwide."

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