Infrastructure: Equitable Housing Readiness

Build it Green is working to enable housing development in high-need Californian communities by targeting critical infrastructure

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This initiative aims to accelerate housing development on vacant land for communities who have the greatest need.

> "It's important to identify what prevents development in neighborhoods that have been chronically neglected," says Jeremy Madsen, BIG's executive director. "Infrastructure development, investment, repair and preparedness could enable housing readiness in the places that need it most."

This initiative is looking for solutions to implement infrastructure policies, practices, and resources that make housing possible by asking:

- What is delaying housing construction?
- What infrastructure challenges stall developments in housing developments?
- What examples of local infrastructure enabled development?

Hot-spot mapping

This project will assess the areas that have the greatest need for infrastructure. For example, communities that are overcrowded, or with **the greatest deferred maintenance backlog**.

Deferred maintenance is when city's delay the regular upkeep required for an equipment, or other infrastructure, to operate well.	**Backlog** is the list of deferred maintenance a community must address.

> For example, if a car owner continues to delay an oil change once the light is on or after excessive mileage, the car's performance weakens. For infrastructure, deferred maintenance looks like aging water pipes bursting because they haven't

been replaced, or bridges collapsing because they haven't been reinforced.

This assessment will identify federal, state, and local funding opportunities to inform philanthropy and policy makers how to do things differently, and better understand the needs of a community.

This part of the project is inspired by the [Northwest Side Community Development Corporation](#) in Wisconsin.

Rapid prototyping precedent setting projects

Build It Green wants to validate the need for funding by researching specific places and case studies where there is evidence that infrastructure is a problem to housing development.

Through this research, Build It Green would identify neighborhoods to pilot precedent setting projects that include innovative and regenerative solutions to current infrastructure problems in those areas – by using guidance and lessons learned from ongoing infrastructure projects.

Infrastructure professionals culture shift

Build It Green hopes this project will inspire infrastructure professionals to see their work as essential to housing development and community engagement.

In the long term, this project aims to run deep dive community engagements and a precedent for future housing infrastructure initiatives in California.

State Clean and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) provisions

Eventually, Build It Green hopes California explores interagency funding, and provides incentives, loan forgives, and additional financial support for water projects that enable affordable housing.

Background

Housing development requires infrastructure like sewer systems, safe and clean access to water, affordable and efficient electrical systems, internet, and proximity to transit systems – but these are either non-existent or in need of repair.

In many communities, the funding model for this critical infrastructure is also ineffective.

Funds may get directed to the neighborhoods that most need it, but the process often puts the burden of this work on new development. That makes low and middle income projects more difficult, if not impossible.

Jurisdictions create codes and requirements that conflict with one another and make more affordable, sustainable infill projects impossible to build.

It also delays how quickly new development can happen in prime infill areas, further exacerbating the housing crisis and negatively impacting how we effectively address climate change resilience in our communities and address the inequities of long term neglect in these areas.

Partners

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2. Ray Boyle - BIG
3. Sam Ruben - Mighty Buildings
4. Sally Greenspan - Enterprise Community
5. Josh Meyer - Civicwell
6. Rebecca Long - Metropolitan Transportation Commission
7. Abhijeet Pande - TRC Companies, Inc.
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Resources
As Build It Green develops resources, we will share them here.