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San Francisco Affordable Housing Demonstrates Best Practices

NHLP Study Lauds City's Innovative Approaches to Community Development and Housing



SAN FRANCISCO: A new housing report released Wednesday, November 28, 2012 by the [National Housing Law Project \(NHLP\)](http://www.nhlp.org) in collaboration with the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, ***From Urban Renewal and Displacement to Economic Inclusion***, details how from 1968 to 2012 San Francisco transformed its housing landscape into a “dynamic affordable housing system.”

Author Marcia Rosen, Executive Director of NHLP, and co-author, Wendy Sullivan, follow the evolution of San Francisco’s affordable housing and community development policies, which began in the late 1960s and continues today. According to the study, prior to 1968, San Francisco largely sacrificed its neighborhoods and sense of community, as well as any chance for low-income people to live affordably in the city, under a poorly-drawn blueprint for urban renewal. The authors share a compelling housing history that begins with the uprising of community activists who, while working to save their neighborhoods from demolition and high-rise commercial development, energized a city to re-think its redevelopment strategies and priorities. Fueled by relentless grassroots advocacy and an enlightened city government, designated housing revenue streams, development set-asides for inclusive and affordable housing, and new guiding principles for holistic community development emerged.

The San Francisco Foundation (SFF) provided key funding for NHLP’s research and creation of the report. SFF Director of Community Development and Investment, Vanitha Venugopal, notes, “While the report was meant to capture the evolution of local housing policy, it also serves as an ode to those who didn’t give up – both outside and inside government, and is a strong reminder of the power and need for organizing and advocacy. The creative solutions that were crafted in response to challenges that affordable housing faced over the last 40 years, at their root were, and are always, value based – to protect the right of the low income residents to live in the City.”

She continues. “Strong market cities across the country will benefit from this report as it covers every conceivable affordable housing issue and provides information on a corresponding policy solution. I hope you are as inspired by this report as I am, especially in these extraordinarily challenging times for affordable housing.”

As study authors Rosen and Sullivan point out, “San Francisco must continue to evolve its policy and find creative and substantial sources of funding to develop and maintain affordable housing in what is typically the most expensive housing market in the nation.” Given the transformative journey detailed in this new report, there is reason to expect San Francisco will do just that.

Download the full report [here](#).