



Association for the Improvement
of American Infrastructure

Together, we move P3s forward.

Attainable Housing

The term “affordable housing” can often be confused with “attainable housing” or “workforce housing.” While they might seem synonymous, they have distinct meanings and implications.

Simply Stated - Attainable or Workforce Housing refers to housing options priced to accommodate the needs of households with incomes above and beyond 60% Area Median Income (AMI) which typically qualify for subsidized or government provided housing (affordable housing).

Why is Attainable Housing Important?

Gap Filling - There’s a growing gap between government subsidized affordable housing, which typically relies on Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) or vouchers, and market-rate housing. Attainable housing aims to cater to the “missing middle” - a broad range of middle-income individuals (typically earning from 80% - 120% of Area Median Income, or AMI) serving as a bridge to those who may not qualify for assistance through government sponsored programs, but still face challenges in finding housing options at or below 30% of their gross income.

Economic Growth - The provision of housing options for a diverse range of income levels and employers ensures that employees and their dependants are provided the opportunity to live in the vicinity of their workplaces, thereby reducing commute times, populating target neighborhoods, contributing to the community and supporting local businesses.

Quality of Life - An adequate stock of attainable housing allows for broader access to desired communities, which for many can mean better schools, increased safety, access to parks, and improved community wellbeing.

Options to address inadequate “missing middle” housing in your communities.

- 1. Evaluate Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) and Property Contributions** - These actions promote collaborative ventures between public sector officials and private developers. This collaborative relationship allows for expedited delivery of additional housing, catering to the needs of specific population groups based on income or other factors that are financially feasible and beneficial for both parties.
- 2. Provide Incentives for Developers** - Development/land contributions, grants, loan programs, property tax abatements, bundling attainable housing with other civic projects, direct monetary contributions to “buy down” project costs, and/or forms of soft financial backing can entice developers to prioritize attainable housing in their projects.
- 3. Consider Regulatory Reforms** - Streamlined permitting and entitlement processes, density bonuses, reduced impact and related fees and other zoning enhancements may help deliver attainable housing more easily and quickly.

The distinction between affordable and attainable housing is becoming more critical as we address the needs of the “missing middle.” By thoughtfully addressing the challenges faced by all income levels, we can foster more inclusive communities and sustainable economies.