

Myths and Facts of Affordable Housing

Myth

Fact

Residents of affordable housing won't "fit in" with our community.

93% of Walnut Creek's workforce doesn't live in Walnut Creek, but they're still part of our thriving community: teachers, artists, retailers, construction workers, medical technicians, food service workers, etc. They deserve more opportunities to live in the city they love!



"Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; Inflow/Outflow Job Counts." Census Bureau, 2017.

Affordable housing looks "cheap," and high density housing will undermine our community's character.

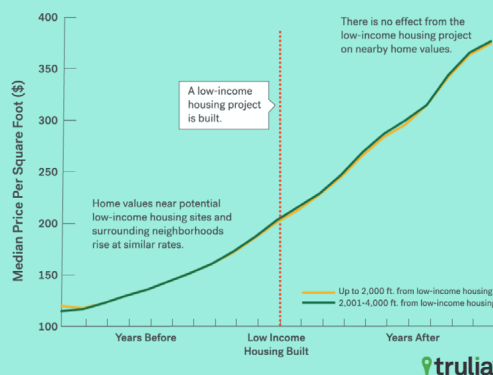
Modern affordable homes look visually similar to market-rate housing, and Walnut Creek's design review process ensures that new buildings blend in with their surroundings. Infill projects like Habitat for Humanity's Las Juntas Way provide transitional density between neighborhoods.

And while some may think single-family homes make up the majority of our community, **64%** of Walnut Creek's housing units are multi-family!



- www.walnut-creek.org > Departments > Community and Economic Development > Planning & Zoning > Design Review
- City of Walnut Creek Demographics and Data, 2018. <https://www.walnut-creek.org/home/showdocument?id=4>
- "Rendering of the Las Juntas Way community." Greenbelt Alliance, 2018. www.greenbelt.org/blog/greenbelt-alliance-endorsed-las-juntas-way-community/

Affordable housing reduces property values.



A recent study of the 20 least affordable metro areas found that **affordable housing had no impact on property values!** A decade prior to and after the construction of low-income housing, property values nearby and further away rose at the same rate.

"There Doesn't Go the Neighborhood." Trulia, Nov 2016. <https://www.trulia.com/research/low-income-housing/>

More affordable housing will just lead to more traffic congestion.

Higher density, transit-oriented housing results in fewer car trips in general, and far fewer trips by lower-income households in particular.

Much of Walnut Creek's traffic congestion is due to the fact that out of a 58,000-person workforce, 54,000 come from outside the city! **Affordable housing near job centers will reduce traffic** — and pollution!



- "Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit Is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy." Transform, 2014. www.transformca.org/sites/default/files/printable_executive_summary.pdf
- "Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; Inflow/Outflow Job Counts." Census Bureau, 2017.

Myth

Fact

More affordable housing means more crime.



A National Bureau of Economic Research study examined the impact of Low Income Housing Tax Credit-financed properties on local crime rates in San Francisco, San Diego, and Chicago. In low income areas of each city, there was a reduction in violent and property crime. **Higher income areas saw no increase in violent crime, as well as a slight decrease in property crime.**

Diamond, Rebecca, and Timothy McQuade. "Who Wants Affordable Housing in Their Backyard? An Equilibrium Analysis of Low Income Property Development." *NBER Working Paper Series; Working Paper 22204*, 2016. www.nber.org/papers/w22204

Residents of affordable housing place a burden on public infrastructure.

Due to smaller footprints, higher-density housing requires less infrastructure than spread out single-family homes. Infill projects can tap into existing infrastructure while preserving open space. And a new state law requires solar panels at all new homes, which will cut energy use in half from 2016 standards.



By opening up housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income members of our community who travel from all over the Bay Area to participate in our economy, we can help them spend more of their time and money here in Walnut Creek, which means more revenues for the city, and a thriving community for all!

- "The Case for Multifamily Housing." *Urban Land Institute*, 2003. <https://web.archive.org/20120611192008/http://centerforneighborhoods.org/pdfs/Case%20for%20Multifamily%20Housing.pdf>
- "California Gives Final OK to Require Solar Panels on New Houses. *NPR*, 2018. www.npr.org/2018/12/06/674075032/california-gives-final-ok-to-requiring-solar-panels-on-new-houses

Residents of affordable housing overburden our schools.



Households living in multifamily dwellings tend to have fewer children than those in single-family units: There are about 29 children per 100 new apartments and 64 children per 100 new single-family homes.

Because apartments can be assessed as commercial real estate, **they often generate more taxes per square-foot than single-family homes**, and may end up contributing a larger share of income to schools.

- Obrinsky, Mark and Debra Stein. "Overcoming Opposition to Multifamily Rental Housing." *Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University*, 2006. www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/rr07-14_obrinsky_stein.pdf
- "Single-Family Vs. Multi-Family Real Estate Taxes." *The Nest*. <https://budgeting.thenest.com/singlefamily-vs-multifamily-real-estate-taxes-32847.html>

Affordable housing is not fair; only the very poor benefit.

"Very low income" for a family of four in Walnut Creek is **\$65K/year**.
"Affordable rent" for a low-income family renting 3 bedrooms: **\$2,600**.

Housing affordability means stability for people who are already part of our community; more opportunities for lifelong success; less traffic and pollution; a resilient economy; and a thriving Walnut Creek!

Affordable housing is just, and it benefits everyone!

"Affordability Criteria." *City of Walnut Creek*, 2020. www.walnut-creek.org/home/showdocument?id=24219