

The Real Causes of America's Housing Shortage

The Regulations Causing America's Housing Shortage

Zoning regulations have directly increased the cost of housing by:

Restricting up to 80% or more of a typical American city's land to single-family detached homes

Severely limiting the construction of **townhomes**

Mandating large minimum lot sizes, which cities embraced after WWII to ban starter homes and exclude families with young children

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Very often the apartment house is a mere parasite.

— The Supreme Court in the 1926 case *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, which upheld local zoning authority.

The Excessive Cost of the Building Code and Permitting

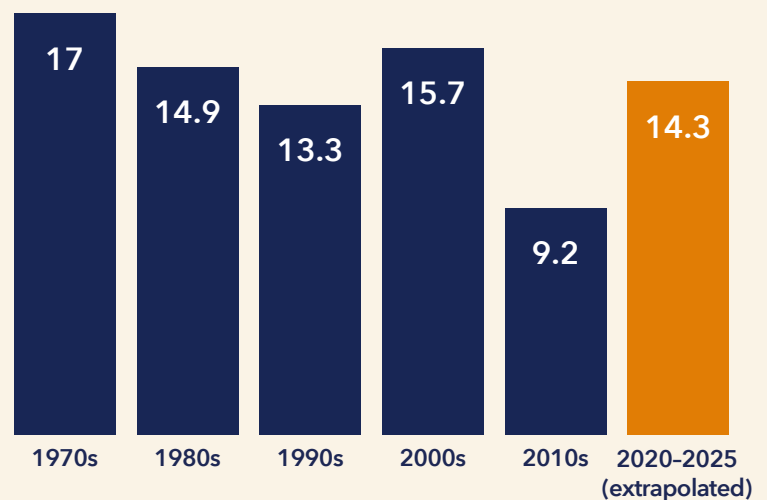
U.S. building regulations are overseen by an unaccountable, private nonprofit, the International Code Council.

Many **fire safety rules** are based on emotional appeals rather than evidence, creating **unnecessary costs** and **worsening the shortage** for low-income renters

Building permits are issued through a slow, discretionary process, which often imposes extraneous requirements on new housing.

Private U.S. Housing Units Completed by Decade (in millions)

Fewer homes were built in the United States each full decade since the 1970s, except for the 2000s. Yet from 1980 to 2025, the U.S. population grew by **more than 50 percent**.



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
Analysis: Luca Gattoni-Celli | Graphic: Gregg Girvan

What will make housing more abundant and affordable?

Removing zoning regulations so local communities can meet their own housing needs

Grounding the building code in empirical evidence and cost-benefit analysis

Implementing **rule-based permitting** rather than deferring to government and bureaucratic discretion

SUCCESS STORIES

Austin & Houston show that building more housing reduces local prices and rents.

