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Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All Initiative Proposes Zoning Reform Priorities to Increase Housing Production and Improve Housing Choice

The Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All initiative—a statewide, pro-housing collaborative—has announced a set of zoning reform policy priorities to address New Jersey’s growing housing supply and affordability crisis.

Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All stands on the belief that everyone in New Jersey deserves an affordable place to live in a safe, vibrant, inclusive community. For far too long, New Jersey’s restrictive local zoning laws have stood in the way of housing production, limiting affordable housing choices, driving up costs for both renters and buyers, and reinforcing patterns of racial and economic segregation. New Jersey has a shortage of approximately 205,000 affordable rental homes, and the median home sale price is \$575,000—one of the highest in the country. Zoning reform is a key lever for change that can unlock affordable housing choices in our communities.

The committee assembled to work on advancing these priorities consists of a diverse cross-sector of advocates and industry professionals, including affordable housing advocates; representatives from planning, smart growth, transportation, and disability support service organizations; builders, and architects.

Together, the committee is urging the Legislature to take action on state-level policy changes that would:

- Allow for the construction of **accessory dwelling units**—smaller homes often referred to as “in-law suites” or “backyard cottages”—which offer housing solutions for aging family members, an adult child with a disability, young adults just starting out, or older adults seeking to downsize;
- Jumpstart the **redevelopment of vacant or underutilized office parks and shopping centers** into housing, which would increase the availability of homes near jobs and revitalize blighted commercial properties;
- Reduce or **eliminate the number of parking spaces required** at residential developments near public transportation, which ultimately allows for the production of more homes, preserves trees and green space, and reduces pollution; and
- Invest in an **enhanced Transit Village Program** to incentivize transit-oriented development that includes affordable housing, which would help towns create vibrant transit neighborhoods across New Jersey.

"Too many New Jerseyans are struggling to find an affordable, stable place to call home in communities that meet their needs," said **Peter Kasabach, Executive Director of New Jersey Future**. "Smart growth is about building welcoming, vibrant neighborhoods where everyone—regardless of income or background—can live and thrive. To get there, we must fix the outdated zoning and permitting rules that hold us back. Through the Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All's zoning reform agenda, we've outlined real, practical solutions. Now it's time for the Legislature to act and help every town build a more inclusive and hopeful future."

"New Jersey needs more homes, in more places, for more people, and the Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All initiative is exactly the kind of thoughtful, broad-based effort we need to get there. Regional Plan Association is proud to support the GHNA zoning reform campaign and our collective commitment to advancing affordability, equity, and housing choice," said **Zoe Baldwin, Vice President of State Programs at the Regional Plan Association**.

"To build on the success of the Mount Laurel framework and tackle the housing crisis, it's crucial for New Jersey policymakers to reform our outdated zoning laws," said **Al-Tariq Witcher, Managing Director of External Affairs at Fair Share Housing Center**. "This campaign's policy priorities are vital opportunities to advance smart growth, increase access to affordable housing, and support more inclusive economic development across New Jersey."

"Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All speaks to the heart of what the housing movement fights for every day—safe, stable, and affordable homes in neighborhoods where people can truly thrive across New Jersey. The diversity of talent amongst the steering committee reflects the strength of this work that I'm honored to be part of. This work tackles critical issues ranging from inclusionary zoning, affordable housing, and the need for equitable investment in communities, making the work not just about policy, but the power of communities shaping their own future," said **Shavani Hurry, Founder of The Shemperor Group**.

"Where you live impacts how you get around. A lack of transit-accessible housing that is affordable to working families is contributing to a cycle of suburban sprawl where people have no other option than to drive, with dire impacts on cost of living, traffic safety, accessibility, and our climate," said **Corey Hannigan, Active Transportation Program Manager at Tri-State Transportation Campaign**. "New Jersey is blessed with so many historically walkable and transit-accessible towns, but our counterproductive zoning laws make it extremely difficult to build more housing there, artificially restricting supply and increasing costs. This initiative would do a lot to fix that, and make it easier for New Jerseyans to live where they want, and get around how they like."

"Starter homes are on the brink of extinction in New Jersey. If we want them back, we need to build more homes of every shape and size. The solution lies in state-level reforms that let us create great homes and vibrant neighborhoods for everyone. This campaign is about action. And with the right people in the room, we can make it happen," said **Marina Rubina, Architect and host of *Who Killed the Starter Home?* podcast**.

"Princeton GROWS strongly supports the Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All zoning reform campaign, especially because it builds upon some of our priorities to achieve statewide change. We support the priorities of this campaign, namely to promote mixed-use and affordable housing on already-developed, underutilized commercial lots and 'gentle-density' accessory dwelling unit construction on residential lots that can and should accommodate more housing. These reforms represent progress toward equitable and sustainable housing for all across the state at a time when we desperately need it," said **Matt Mleczek, President of Princeton Grows**.

"NJBA looks forward to working with this broad coalition to break down New Jersey's decades-old barriers to growth and remedy our massive housing supply shortage. The time is ripe to increase the dialogue around ways to restructure how we provide housing and homeownership opportunities to improve the state's housing ecosystem and maximize the economic and societal benefits it can provide, said **Jeff Kolakowski, CEO of the New Jersey Builders Association**.

The Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All initiative engaged in a year-long stakeholder engagement process to build consensus on the foundational principles that would guide the development of the group's initial set of advocacy priorities. This zoning reform work represents the next phase of the initiative's work—turning consensus into legislative advocacy. While the committee is focused on advancing zoning reforms to increase housing production and improve housing choice, the broader Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All collaborative continues complementary work to address resident displacement, streamline development review and permitting processes, support local land use planning, and ultimately develop a network of local pro-housing campaigns. By combining top-down policy reforms with community-led action, New Jersey can move closer to achieving **great homes and neighborhoods for all**.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ghna_nj. Follow Great Homes and Neighborhoods for All on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Bluesky](#).

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