

Perkins Coie Housing Summit: 30,000 Homes by 2020.

On Tuesday April 9, Perkins Coie hosted "Housing Summit: 30,000 Homes by 2020," the Mayor's housing plan to build more housing and to make San Francisco housing affordable. The Housing Summit was held at International Hotel Senior Housing Project, an important symbol of the City's historic housing struggles and a reminder of how affordable housing can be built. The discussion featured speakers from both the public and private sectors: Cindy Wu, President of the San Francisco Planning Commission; Sarah Dennis-Phillips from the Mayor's Office of Economics & Workforce Development; Arden Hearing from Trumark Urban; and Chris Foley of Polaris Pacific. Allan Low, a partner in the Real Estate and Land Use group, moderated the discussion.

The panel debated the Mayor's Housing Plan, which includes the following elements:

- Ellis Act Reform
- Small Building Fund Program
- Revitalize and Rebuild Public Housing
- Doubling the Downpayment Loan Program
- Build More Affordable Housing Faster
- Build More Market Rate Units
- Make Construction of Housing Easier

All of the panelists agreed that more housing was needed across all income levels: market rate, workforce, below-market, and public housing, and that we needed to "turn the dial," increasing housing density for all ladders of income.

Perhaps the most important takeaway from the summit was the importance of collaboration between government agencies, private developers, local nonprofits, and community groups to address the City's housing problem. Developers have the potential to add tremendous value to small-site acquisition and other public housing projects. Nonprofits could also play an important role in public housing as liaisons between the agencies and the community and residents. Developers could engage with local community groups to understand their concerns and needs and this engagement, in turn, can help streamline the development process.

While the summit did not provide a silver bullet to solve the City's housing problems, it provided the attendees with an understanding of the problems facing the City, the policies and potential reforms that may help alleviate some of the problems, and the variety of tools available for the community at large to address the City's housing needs.

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