

White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness

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Executive Summary

Since the passage of AB 32 in 2006, the State of California has embarked on an ambitious program to promote more sustainable communities in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As public agencies have increased investments, from transit to parks to housing, communities have expressed concern about unintended consequences, in particular, the displacement of low-income residents. Public agencies seek greater understanding of these consequences in order to ensure that their investments benefit low-income households and communities.

Research on the impacts of public investment on displacement generally yields mixed findings (see the review in Zuk et al., 2018), with local policies and neighborhood context playing an outsized role in determining whether households can stay in place (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019).¹ This raises the question, then, of which anti-displacement strategies work, where, and why? Despite the push to implement anti-displacement policies, there is a dearth of evidence on the effectiveness of such approaches, i.e., their ability to reduce displacement either directly or indirectly.

This white paper lays the groundwork to fill this evidence gap. Drawing on a review of more than 150 articles in the academic and gray literature, as well as interviews with 14 practitioners and academics, we summarize the literature on anti-displacement strategies and their effectiveness, specify a research agenda specifically for the State of California, and lay out some sample research designs. In total, we reviewed the literature on 17 distinct policies, summarized in Table 1. For each, based on the previous studies, we determined the potential to prevent displacement (asking by how much? how directly?), the type of market necessary to make it effective, the implementation scale, and the likely timeframe in which it works.

There is relatively little rigorous research on the effectiveness of anti-displacement strategies, and even less research comparing effectiveness across policy approaches, contexts, or timeframes. Critically for the State of California, the literature suggests that not all public investments will lead to displacement; but we understand little about the types of safeguards that should accompany investments in order to avoid displacement in different contexts. We also conclude that there are serious gaps in the evaluation literature in terms of racial disparities in displacement impacts. These gaps occur because of five different challenges: the lack of a natural experiment or quasi-experimental framework; the dearth of appropriate data; insufficient sample sizes, particularly to measure variations by racial/ethnic group; insufficient or inappropriate timeframes; and insufficient variation of context.

In sum, neighborhood stabilization and tenant protection policies have the most direct and immediate effect on mitigating displacement. Given that most households with affordable housing live in unsubsidized units, housing preservation programs for naturally occurring affordable housing have the

¹ For this report, we define displacement as a situation in which households are forced involuntarily to move out for economic or physical reasons (because of eviction, rent increase, demolition of existing housing, etc.) or are prevented from moving into a neighborhood (i.e., excluded) because of high rents or other conditions they are unable to control or prevent. We define as anti-displacement policies various strategies, programs, and laws that intend to counteract the displacement pressures felt by some households.

most potential for significant impact. Housing production strategies can help indirectly in decreasing displacement by retaining or adding to the affordable housing stock. However, housing production policies typically require strong markets, and longer time spans.

State agencies may best prevent displacement by prioritizing housing preservation and tenant protection policies where possible, whether in incentive programs or planning documents. However, the state's direct power to curb displacement lies primarily in the long-term, in how it channels its investments and disposes of its assets, i.e., public land, in order to foster housing production, preservation, and stability. The state should prioritize preservation and stabilization strategies whenever it is providing funding to jurisdictions. Over the long term, the state can spur affordable housing production through its strategic disposition of public lands. State agencies will need to coordinate, perhaps via an interagency working group on anti-displacement policies in order to make these policies consistent and scale up the approach.

This review revealed several data needs beyond research that were beyond the scope of this project. The state should monitor displacement trends over time across the state, and it needs a comprehensive inventory of anti-displacement policies and programs by jurisdiction. In the absence of rigorous research on which policies are most effective, it could be valuable to survey local officials and advocates about which are most successful on the ground. Case studies describing how the approaches worked in different geographies could help agencies decide which to incorporate into their guidelines for investment. The state might also support local jurisdictions seeking research on how to design effective anti-displacement policies that will be relevant for their own particular contexts.

The COVID-19 crisis has both educated the public about the challenges of displacement and presented an opportunity to implement anti-displacement policies and programs. To date, temporary eviction moratoria and rental assistance have largely succeeded at keeping families in their homes (although we lack data to measure this systematically). This raises questions about how we can make these policies more permanent, perhaps in the form of an expanded rental assistance fund and just cause eviction policies in jurisdictions across the state.

As we move into the recovery period, new opportunities will arrive in the form of infrastructure investment, and the state should ensure that it enacts guidelines that strongly encourage jurisdictions to adopt anti-displacement policies, as in the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program. Should housing prices and land costs dip, the state and its jurisdictions should take advantage of the moment to purchase private multi-family buildings and convert them to permanent affordability. The period after the Great Recession showed that the private sector was poised to make a profit on housing; this time, California needs to be prepared to ensure that displacement does not result.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the State

- When designing guidelines for competitive funding programs, encourage jurisdictions to adopt anti-displacement policies, with priority for neighborhood stabilization and tenant protection strategies, due to their direct and immediate impact, and housing preservation programs for naturally occurring affordable housing, due to their potential for large-scale impact.
- Use available tools to spur housing production, in particular, the strategic disposition of public lands.
- Establish an interagency working group on anti-displacement policies in order to enact consistent policies across agencies.
- Conduct a comprehensive inventory of anti-displacement policies and programs by jurisdiction.
- Identify opportunities in existing and planned programs to collect data and conduct evaluations of impacts on displacement.

Recommendations for Local Governments and Communities

- Jointly develop a strategic plan for neighborhood stabilization, including a prioritization scheme for anti-displacement policies in the jurisdiction to incorporate into applications for state and federal funding.
Help build capacity in local communities by ongoing education about displacement issues and support for community organizing.

TABLE 1: LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY TABLE

Category	Policy Name	Literature Coverage Level	Potential to Prevent Displacement*	Market Type**	Implementation Scale	Timeframe to Prevent Displacement
Production	Housing Production	HIGH	HIGH+	Strong	Local, State	Long-term
Production	Inclusionary Zoning + Developer Incentives	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Strong	Local, State	Long-term
Production	Accessory Dwelling Units	LOW	MEDIUM	Neutral	Local, State	Long-term
Production	Impact + Linkage Fees	MEDIUM	LOW	Strong	Local	Long-term
Production	Housing Overlay Zones	LOW	MEDIUM	Strong	Neighborhood, Local	Long-term
Production	Land Value Recapture	LOW	LOW	Strong	Local, State	Long-term
Preservation	Unsubsidized Affordable Housing	LOW	HIGH	Neutral	Local, State	Short-term
Preservation	Federally-Funded Housing Developments	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	N/A	Local, Federal	Short-term
Preservation	Housing Rehabilitation	MEDIUM	LOW	N/A	Local, State, Federal	Short-term
Preservation	Condominium Conversion Restrictions + Tenant Opportunity to Purchase	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Strong	Local	Short-term
Preservation	Community Control of Land	LOW	HIGH	Neutral	Neighborhood, Local	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization	Rent Control	HIGH	MEDIUM	Strong	Local, State	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization	Community Benefits Agreements	MEDIUM	LOW	Strong	Neighborhood, Local, State	Long-term
Neighborhood Stabilization	Rental Assistance Programs	MEDIUM	HIGH	Neutral	Local	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization	Foreclosure Assistance	MEDIUM	HIGH	Neutral	Local, State, Federal	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization	Tenant Right to Counsel	MEDIUM	HIGH	Strong	Local	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization	"Just Cause" Evictions	MEDIUM	HIGH	Strong	Local	Short-term

* Potential: If we adopt this policy, how likely is it that displacement will be reduced directly or indirectly?

** For some policies, a strong market is necessary for feasibility, while for others, it makes them more effective.

+ Although both market-rate and subsidized housing production may successfully reduce indirect displacement, the effectiveness of a particular development depends on its context and scale.

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White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness

Introduction

Since the passage of AB 32 in 2006, the State of California has embarked on an ambitious program to promote more sustainable communities in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As public agencies have increased investments, from transit to parks to housing, communities have expressed concern about unintended consequences, in particular, the displacement of low-income residents. Public agencies seek greater understanding of these consequences in order to ensure that their investments benefit low-income households and communities.

Research on the impacts of public investment on displacement generally yields mixed findings (see the review in Zuk et al., 2018), with local policies and neighborhood context playing an outsize role in determining whether households can stay in place (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019).² This raises the question, then, of which anti-displacement strategies work, where, and why? Despite the push to implement anti-displacement policies, there is a dearth of evidence on the effectiveness of such approaches, i.e., their ability to reduce displacement either directly or indirectly.

This white paper lays the groundwork to fill this evidence gap. Drawing on a review of more than 150 articles in the academic and gray literature, as well as interviews with 14 practitioners and academics, we summarize the literature on anti-displacement strategies and their effectiveness, specify a research agenda for the State of California, and lay out some sample research designs. Overall, the goal of the paper is to help the state identify and prioritize concrete anti-displacement measures to incorporate into sustainable communities policy, and ultimately to generate deeper knowledge on policy effectiveness for mitigating displacement.

As we embarked on this project, it became clear that stakeholders have a variety of research needs that are beyond our scope. We review anti-displacement strategies in use generally and make broad recommendations for California agencies, but ultimately we cannot answer the questions of how agencies can be most effective at stabilizing communities, how they can best coordinate, and what is the appropriate scale for policy implementation. Where there is evidence of policy or program effectiveness, we provide specific examples, but we do not describe the hundreds of cases where implementation has occurred without any evaluation. Though we cannot conduct a comprehensive inventory of policies and programs that states and jurisdictions have implemented, we do provide a methodology for others to do so.

We begin with a summary of the literature review (see Appendix A for the full review), including a description of major findings and identification of gaps. The next section examines anti-displacement approaches in California, providing a methodology for inventorying policies and describing priorities for

² For this report, we define displacement as a situation in which households are forced involuntarily to move out for economic or physical reasons (because of eviction, rent increase, demolition of existing housing, etc.) or are prevented from moving into a neighborhood (i.e., excluded) because of high rents or other conditions they are unable to control or prevent. We define as anti-displacement policies various strategies, programs, and laws that intend to counteract the displacement pressures felt by some households.

a research and policy-making agenda in the state. After an overview of potential research designs to evaluate five promising strategies, the conclusion recommends next steps for research and policy-making.

Summary of Findings from Literature Review

This section begins with an overview of the various strategies that have been used to mitigate displacement. We next identify the subset of these strategies that researchers have evaluated in terms of their impact on displacement (or proxies for displacement, like rising rents). We then describe the findings from the literature on each strategy, as well as the research gaps we identified in the process. (Appendix A includes the full literature review, as well as references.)

Overview list of policies

Considerable work, including work by the authors, has begun to synthesize the literature on anti-displacement strategies (Chapple et al., 2017; Zuk et al., 2018). However, there is a further need to understand which anti-displacement strategies work, where, and why. With these questions in mind, we reviewed and summarized the academic and professional (gray) literature on anti-displacement strategies and examined how it assesses the effectiveness of various strategies in mitigating displacement.

We first looked at a long list of about 40 different anti-displacement policies identified in our previous research (Chapple 2016, Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019), divided into three major categories: policies that lead to 1) production of housing; 2) preservation of existing affordable housing; and 3) stabilization of neighborhoods (keeping residents in place). Whether producing or preserving affordable housing stock or stabilizing affordable neighborhoods, the likelihood of displacement diminishes.

We utilized five different academic research engines to undertake an initial search for literature that discusses the effectiveness of each of these strategies as they relate to avoiding displacement. From this initial list, we chose to focus on those for which we could find research regarding their effect on displacement or on what we consider as “proxies for displacement,” such as loss of affordable units or increasing rents or land values. We focused on policies directly instigated or supported by the public sector rather than purely market-driven mechanisms (e.g., ad hoc development). Some are approaches that try to prevent direct displacement (e.g., demolition controls or rental assistance), while others aim to reduce displacement more indirectly (e.g., rent stabilization or asset building). We concentrated on policies that can be primarily instigated by municipal and/or state governments; we did not look at the full array of federal programs, though we reviewed the literature on federally funded foreclosure assistance programs and rental assistance demonstration programs (RAD). Lastly, we chose not to examine policies that may indirectly facilitate housing production, such as, for example, highway construction.

In total, we reviewed the literature on 17 distinct policies, summarized in Table 1. For each, based on the previous studies, we determined the potential to prevent displacement (asking by how much? how directly?), the type of market necessary to make it effective, the implementation scale, and the likely timeframe in which it works. We present this table with the caveat that specific contextual characteristics may shape the effectiveness of particular policies (for instance, the simultaneous implementation of multiple policies).

TABLE 2: LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY TABLE

<i>Category</i>	<i>Policy Name</i>	<i>Literature Coverage Level</i>	<i>Potential to Prevent Displacement*</i>	<i>Market Type**</i>	<i>Implementation Scale</i>	<i>Timeframe to Prevent Displacement</i>
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Production	Land Value Recapture	LOW	LOW	Strong	Local, State	Long-term
Preservation	Unsubsidized Affordable Housing	LOW	HIGH	Neutral	Local, State	Short-term
Preservation	Federally-Funded Housing Developments	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	N/A	Local, Federal	Short-term
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Neighborhood Stabilization	Rent Control	HIGH	MEDIUM	Strong	Local, State	Short-term
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** Potential: If we adopt this policy, how likely is it that displacement will be reduced directly or indirectly?*

*** For some policies, a strong market is necessary for feasibility, while for others, it makes them more effective.*

+ Although both market-rate and subsidized housing production may successfully reduce indirect displacement, the effectiveness of a particular development depends on its context and scale.

Production strategies

Production of either market-rate or affordable housing may combat displacement by increasing housing supply. We reviewed the literature on six strategies, the first two directly producing new units, and the remaining four policy or planning mechanisms that may increase production through fees, mandates, and/or incentives: *Housing Production*, *Accessory Dwelling Units*, *Inclusionary Zoning*, *Impact and Linkage Fees*, *Housing Overlay Zones*, and *Land Value Recapture*. One common characteristic of production strategies is that they typically require several years, from planning to construction and development, for their effects on displacement to be measurable. Another common characteristic of the reviewed production strategies, with the exception of *Accessory Dwelling Units*, is that they require a strong market to be effective, since strong markets lead to more housing development through both the market and regulation. Additionally, production strategies generally lack a clear timeline of effectiveness, and long-term impacts may differ dramatically from those in the short-term. This is in contrast to stabilization strategies, and to a lesser extent, preservation strategies, which are typically implemented through legislation and have clear “start” and “end” dates that enable easier measurement of their outcomes.

There is a growing consensus that by increasing the supply of housing, new housing production helps moderate housing costs, make housing more affordable to more households, and relieve displacement pressures (Been, Ellen, and O’Regan, 2018). But serious caveats apply. New market-rate production may actually result in rent increases in lower-priced residential buildings nearby (Damiano and Frenier, 2020), and may not alleviate displacement over the long-term as low-income newcomers cannot move in (Pennington, 2020; Zuk and Chapple, 2016). Production of subsidized housing is generally a stronger guarantee against displacement in both the short- and long-term.

Accessory Dwelling Units represent another mechanism for the production of housing, especially in low-density, single-family zoned areas. Since land costs are free and the size of these units is modest, ADUs are a relatively low-cost way to produce new housing (Woetzel et al., 2016). While municipalities need to approve ADU ordinances, and many California municipalities have done so, this strategy relies on the individual homeowners to opt in and construct the ADUs. Recent studies show that this has started happening in California, as the ADU permits and completions have increased dramatically over the last years, even in low-income communities (Chapple et al., 2020a). However, there is no research to date that examines the direct impact of ADUs on preventing displacement. Preliminary research shows that ADUs offer affordable housing options but not for the very low-income tenants (Chapple et al. 2012). There is also concern that most municipalities do not require that ADU units are affordable; a recent study found that just 6% of California jurisdictions have adopted legislation to facilitate homeowners providing subsidized ADUs via deed restrictions (Chapple et al., 2020b). ADU construction may even lead to gentrification by adding to the value of the original property. Thus, ADUs may represent an effective strategy to add low-cost housing, but their effectiveness in preventing displacement may rely on additional regulations instigated by municipalities that keep these units affordable.

One incentive mechanism for production is through *Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)*, which allows municipalities to require private developers to build a share of affordable housing units within their new market-rate developments, or contribute a comparable amount to building affordable housing off-site. In return, developers may receive incentives such as density bonuses, expedited permits and approvals, relaxed design standards (including parking and height allowances), fee waivers, additional subsidies for

affordable units, or fee restrictions. The literature shows that IZ programs have the ability to produce affordable units, but the extent of their effectiveness depends on the presence of a strong market, as well as on the particular terms of each program. Additionally, the typically low share of affordable units required by IZ programs (usually 10-15% of the total units produced) results in low numbers of new affordable units. There are also concerns that in the absence of legislation to the contrary, affordable units developed through IZ programs will not remain affordable in perpetuity (Mast, 2019). While critics of IZ programs warn that such programs may result in higher prices of market-rate housing, preliminary research evidence does not substantiate such claims, possibly because the required percentage of affordable units is low in the US. On the other hand, we need more research to understand what share of affordable housing may be the “tipping point” in different contexts and housing markets.

Affordable Housing Linkage Fees is another production strategy that municipalities can add to their toolkit for the production of affordable housing; it allows them to collect a fee that can be used for the construction of affordable housing from market rate housing and commercial developments that meet certain size or use criteria. Since this policy represents more of a stick than a carrot for private developers, it requires a strong real estate market and developers who are particularly keen on building in the city that has instigated linkage fees. Indeed, some jurisdictions may be hesitant in imposing linkage fees, fearing they might push development to nearby communities without linkage fees, thus reducing other revenue streams such as sales tax. In general, development fees raise housing prices, and linkage fees may have the same impact, thereby increasing displacement inadvertently. Nevertheless, studies and reports from cities that have enacted such programs (such as Boston and San Francisco) find that they were able to collect significant funding towards the construction of affordable housing units (Boston Planning and Development Agency 2018; BAE Urban Economics 2016).

Housing Overlay Zones (HOZ) may apply only to specific districts within a jurisdiction and also offer carrots to developers such as density bonuses, relaxed development standards, and streamlined permits or environmental review for projects in return for the provision of a certain amount of below market housing. These minimums are significantly higher than those of IZ programs; they often vary between 25% and 100% of the proposed project. Jurisdictions can strategically choose the designation of these zones to protect the displacement of low-income communities that can result from upzoning near transportation and employment hubs (East Bay Housing Organizations 2014). HOZs may be a promising strategy to counteract possible displacement effects of public investments within a specific district, but there is almost no evaluative literature on the topic.

While a *Linkage Fee* taxes new development, *Land Value Recapture (LVR)* taxes land; it is a tax that jurisdictions may impose on landowners who witness an increase in their land values thanks to a public sector action (such as rezoning or infrastructure investments). The LVR fee can help jurisdictions collect revenue that can be then earmarked for affordable housing; it can also help counteract the displacement impacts of public investment. However, few jurisdictions have dedicated LVR revenues to housing production yet, and so there are no studies that examine the relationship between LVR collection, affordable housing development, and displacement reduction (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019).

Preservation strategies

Since housing production strategies require high costs, strong real estate markets, and long-term horizons, strategies that preserve affordable rental units in older buildings may be more effective and feasible for counteracting displacement forces in some communities (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019). We reviewed the literature on five preservation strategies: *Protection of Unsubsidized Affordable Housing*, *Federally Funded Housing*, *Housing Rehabilitation*, *Conversion Restrictions/Tenant Opportunities to Purchase*, and *Community Control of the Land*. One common characteristic of these policies is that they operate in a shorter-term than the previously discussed production strategies. Additionally, since these strategies are dealing with existing housing units, they do not need to rely on a strong real estate market.

The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies estimates that about three quarters of Americans dwelling in affordable housing live in unsubsidized affordable units (also called *Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing – NOAH*) (JCHS, 2020). Therefore, the *Protection of Unsubsidized Affordable Housing* is critical in ensuring housing affordability, and policies that help preserve NOAHs can be particularly effective in avoiding displacement. Different cities have instigated a variety of programs to protect this housing stock, based on priority criteria such as estimated rehabilitation cost, gentrification potential, proximity to transit, property size, property age, distance from hazards, etc. (LA County Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund, 2020; Abdelgany, 2016). Some municipal programs aim at acquiring and rehabilitating these units, while other give financial incentives and technical assistance to their owners to do so. (Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative, 2013). We should note, however, that *Rehabilitation Programs* aiming to upgrade private units may lead to resident displacement, unless strict policies are in place to prevent such displacement.

Condo Conversion Restrictions is such a protective policy, initiated by some cities aiming to protect existing tenants of multi-family buildings that could be displaced, if the building owner converts rental units into condos. Such restrictions enact eligibility criteria for condo conversion and restrict the total number of units that can be converted in a year. Additionally, Washington DC initiated the *Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)* in 1980, that gives tenants the first right to purchase their unit, if it is being converted into a condominium. The First Right to Purchase Program provides financial and technical assistance to income-qualifying tenants that want to use TOPA to purchase their unit. A study examining DC's TOPA program found that it has been able to help 58% of tenants in the sample to purchase their units (Gallaher, 2016). Thus, condo-conversion restrictions may help limit somewhat the numbers of displaced households; further, if accompanied with TOPA-like programs, they may effectively help some tenants purchase their units. However, such programs require significant financial resources from municipalities and are likely unable to serve households at the lowest income levels.

Federally Funded Housing Developments make housing accessible to the lowest-income households. However, the federal government is no longer building such housing and now focuses only on the rehabilitation of existing developments. The federal HOPE VI program demolished about 100,000 public housing units, replacing them with mixed-income new developments, resulting in significant displacement (Keene and Geronimus, 2011). In 2010, the federal government reinstated the requirement of replacement of its demolished units on a one-for-one basis, and introduced the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, which brings public, nonprofit, and sometimes private organizations together to rehabilitate and operate the sites (Hanlon, 2017). As of 2019, HUD had

authorized around 200,000 units (around 17% of the total public housing stock) for the program and converted just over 100,000 units (Gerken et al., 2019). Initial evaluations show that only 2.3% of residents did not return to their original unit or another subsidized housing unit. However, critics of RAD are concerned that transferring ownership of public housing to outside organizations that are susceptible to market forces could mean residents are more at risk of displacement because of foreclosure or bankruptcy (Schwartz, 2017).

Community Land Trusts (CLT) and similar policies that give tenants control of the land they reside upon offer collective ownership and effectively remove this land from the private market. The literature indicates that such policies are rather rare in the US, as they require coordinated tenant action and economic resources; where CLTs do exist, they do not help those in the lowest incomes (Thaden, 2012). While public entities are usually not involved in CLTs, local governments can actively pursue the acquisition of abandoned or tax delinquent properties and the development of *Land Banks* that would allow them to put these properties into affordable housing uses. When considering disposition strategies for excess land, local governments can work with CLTs to identify sites with greatest potential: for example, providing land in high-cost central areas or transit-oriented neighborhoods may be effective not only in facilitating accessibility but also increasing potential for home equity growth (Manweller, 2020).

Neighborhood stabilization strategies

Arguably, neighborhood stabilization strategies that offer tenants protections allowing them to stay in their changing neighborhoods are a more direct form of anti-displacement policy than housing production or preservation. Additionally, most of these protections require only a brief rollout period. We reviewed the literature on six stabilization strategies: *Rent Control*, *“Just Cause” Evictions*, *Tenant Right to Counsel*, *Rental Assistance Programs*, *Foreclosure Assistance*, and *Community Benefit Agreements*.

Rent Control policies restricting the amount of annual rent increases in certain (not new) buildings represent a common mechanism that US cities have used to stabilize rents. The literature generally finds that rent control policies are effective in preventing displacement and stabilizing neighborhoods (Pastor et al. 2018). On the other hand, while studies find that rent control policies do not discourage new housing construction (since they do not regulate new units), owners of rent controlled units may pull them off the rental market, convert them to condos, renovate them so they are no longer covered by rent control, or let their properties deteriorate. Therefore, rent control policies become more effective as anti-displacement tools if they are accompanied by other policies such as restrictions on condominium conversions (discussed above) or “Just Cause” eviction regulations (discussed below).

Just Cause Eviction Programs forbid property owners from evicting tenants except under certain specified circumstances, such as nonpayment of rent, violation of lease terms, or permanent removal of a dwelling from the rental market. The limited literature that exists and has evaluated some of these programs finds evidence that they contribute to the decline of evictions (Cuéllar, 2019).

Tenant Right to Counsel Programs offer renters access to legal representation in eviction cases. A number of jurisdictions around the country have recently established such programs; some are offered only to tenants below certain income thresholds. The limited literature that evaluates tenant right to

counsel programs in Boston, New York, and San Francisco finds that in all three cities they are indeed helping to keep threatened residents at their homes.

The literature finds that small sums of unpaid rent account for a large share of filings against tenants (Desmond, 2016). For this reason, *Rental Assistance Programs* offering low-income tenants emergency funds to pay rent during moments of economic hardship can be very effective in staving off eviction pressures and displacement. The limited literature that exists on rental assistance programs indicates that their efficiency can be compromised, however, by lack of familiarity with such programs among households that need them, as well as lengthy processes to confirm eligibility (Aghayev, Feng, and Wiens 2017)

While rental assistance programs target renters, *Foreclosure Assistance Programs* aim at assisting homeowners by offering them different means of financial and non-financial (counseling) support to avoid displacement. Such programs can be initiated at the local (municipal) and state levels. Existing literature indicates that these programs can benefit vulnerable homeowners. In particular, a large study by the Urban Land Institute found that households with troubled loans during the Great Recession that received counseling were significantly more likely to avoid default at various stages, prevent completed foreclosures, benefit from loan modification, and subsequently remain current on their mortgages relative to households not receiving counseling (Mayer et al., 2012).

Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) are legally binding contracts associated with certain large development projects. CBAs happen between local stakeholders and developers, often brokered by government entities. They usually take place in strong real estate markets, in which developers are willing to grant concessions (such as affordable housing, job opportunities, etc.) to neighborhood groups in exchange for enjoying substantial financial returns upon project completion (Cumplings 2007; Pastor et. al 2015). In theory, CBAs can help stabilize neighborhoods and ease some displacement pressures, but in practice they have rarely provided significant affordable housing. However, the literature lacks evaluative studies that examine the impact of existing CBAs on anti-displacement efforts.

In conclusion, neighborhood stabilization policies have the most direct and immediate effect on mitigating displacement. Given that most households with affordable housing live in unsubsidized units, housing preservation programs have the most potential for significant impact. Such policies can become even more effective when used simultaneously, in association with one another. On the other hand, housing production strategies can help indirectly in decreasing displacement by retaining or adding to the affordable housing stock. However, housing production policies typically require strong markets, and longer time spans.

Gaps in the literature

As we combed the literature on anti-displacement strategies, we became aware of what was missing. We examine what we perceive as gaps in the literature below.

Dearth of policy effectiveness literature: We found very few studies measuring a policy's impact on displacement directly. Most existing literature examines certain indicators that may be related to displacement (proxies for displacement), but not the actual numbers of households that were able to stay or enter a neighborhood as a result of a particular anti-displacement policy.

Selective use of displacement indicators. Additionally, the literature tends to use some more easily found proxies for displacement than others that are more difficult to identify or calculate. Many studies examine a policy's effect on rent prices or property values, but fewer studies collect data on evictions, move-outs, or loss of naturally occurring affordable housing.

Relationship between displacement and public investments. Recent studies including those of the authors have started examining the relationship between certain types of public investment (in particular transit infrastructure) and displacement risk. But not all types of public investments lead to displacement. More studies are necessary to examine the impact of diverse public investments on displacement, and importantly, the type of safeguards that should accompany public investments in order to avoid displacement in different contexts. Additionally, while empirical evidence pinpoints some unintended displacement effects of public investments, there is insufficient research about the most effective mitigation for such adverse impact by specific investment types.

Dearth of inquiry on racial impacts of policies. A number of studies clearly show that communities of color have historically borne - and continue to bear – disproportionate displacement pressure. Therefore, it is surprising that we find a dearth of studies on the effects of anti-displacement policies disaggregated by race, in other words, how particular policy interventions have (or have not) prevented displacement of communities of color, and which are effective policies to offer such protection. Without explicitly disaggregating policy effectiveness by race, the existing literature implicitly and problematically assumes that policies work equally well for all communities.

Isolated examination of policies. Most studies examine the effectiveness of a particular policy in isolation rather than in coordination with other policies, legislation, or community action that together may be effective in preventive displacement.

Dearth of literature on contextual characteristics. Few studies address how specific contextual characteristics may shape the effectiveness of particular policies; in fact, the preponderance of studies have only examined strong-market metros like San Francisco or New York. Yet, factors such as local politics, housing markets, history, or demographics of a jurisdiction may make it easier or more difficult to implement certain policies and ensure their effectiveness. Certain policies may require a strong market to be effective, and some policies may be effective only in particular parts of a metropolitan area.

Lack of analysis of barriers to implementation. There is very little written about the different barriers (economic, institutional, social, political) that may affect the implementation of anti-displacement policies. Certain policies may require a long-term horizon to become effective, and some policies may be effective only if complemented with particular provisions or other policies. Although we did not examine community organizing specifically (since it is not an anti-displacement strategy per se), case studies suggest that organizing can facilitate implementation and reduce displacement (e.g., Harris and Céspedes 2015). Community organizing can win implementation of certain types of policies, including community benefit agreements and tenant protections. However, community organizing also can stop new housing production (as well as tenant protections). It would be helpful to understand more about what policies have required significant organizing to establish and/or meaningfully enact.

Lack of a review of best practices. While particular anti-displacement policies or legislation may not fit all geographic contexts equally well, the lessons and impacts from the application of particular policies in jurisdictions of different states or even other countries could be useful to other jurisdictions. However, the literature is generally lacking a discussion about best practices.

A Research and Policy-Making Agenda for the State of California

Most of the strategies described in the literature are at least somewhat effective at mitigating displacement. Those that do not are either too indirect (e.g., impact and linkage fees), too small scale (community benefits agreements), not well developed enough (land value recapture), or too program specific (housing rehabilitation). Yet, the state can only affect a handful of these strategies directly (see Table 1, above): housing production, accessory dwelling units, inclusionary zoning and developer incentives, land value recapture, and naturally occurring affordable housing.³ Even if the state cannot implement many of the other strategies directly, it can require jurisdictions to adopt them as a condition for public investment.

Were the state or its agencies to mandate anti-displacement policies in some form, they would need to account for the variation in markets across the state. For the most part, research has identified the effectiveness of anti-displacement policies only for strong market metropolitan areas. Little is known about how they would work in weaker markets, exurban, or rural areas. The issues across California are quite diverse: for instance, coastal or mountain towns may be dealing with housing problems related to tourism or second homes, while residents living in the wildland urban interface may experience displacement due to fire. In many of these areas, displacement may be induced by disinvestment in addition to investment. Thus, more research is needed to understand the effectiveness of some anti-displacement policies in these contexts. However, based on available evidence in different geographies, we are fairly confident that the following strategies are likely effective at stabilizing communities across different market contexts: production of subsidized housing and ADUs, preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing, and foreclosure assistance.

In general, preservation and stabilization strategies are the most effective in stemming displacement in a short-term timeframe; after all, most residents of affordable housing live outside of publicly subsidized units, and thus may be at risk as housing prices increase. State agencies may best prevent displacement by prioritizing housing preservation and tenant protection policies where possible, whether in incentive programs or planning documents. For example, at present, jurisdictions can gain a Prohousing Designation for housing production but not preservation; the state should also reward proactive efforts to preserve housing affordability through programs like TOPA or small site acquisition funds. Similarly, HCD's Local and Regional Early Action Planning grants, which focus primarily on planning for housing production, are another missed opportunity to maintain affordability through preservation. Efforts by jurisdictions to affirmatively further fair housing under AB 686 and prepare Environmental Justice elements under SB 1000 will provide a way to preserve housing affordability in high-resource neighborhoods.

However, the state's direct power to curb displacement lies primarily in the long-term, in how it channels its investments and disposes of its assets, i.e., public land, in order to foster housing production, preservation, and stability. In fact, the Strategic Growth Council, in conjunction with CARB, already gives preference to projects with anti-displacement policies in both the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) and Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) programs. The draft guidelines for Round 6 of AHSC funding awards points to applicants not just for voluntarily implementing

³ In addition, it guides housing rehabilitation and foreclosure assistance under federal programs.

anti-displacement measures (such as tenant counseling), but also for being located in a jurisdiction that has production, preservation, and/or stabilization strategies (one point per strategy). TCC instructs applicants to implement anti-displacement policies, providing a long list of example policies.⁴ These lists might be expanded to include even more options, if the policies can be clearly related to public investment impacts: for example, applicants could be encouraged to establish community benefits agreements with local communities that provide for housing production or preservation.⁵ Such policies will need to have specific requirements regarding tenant relocation and return, so that there is preference for displaced community members.

Another key state leverage point is the disposition of public land. Executive Order N-06-19 prioritizes excess state-owned land for affordable housing, requiring state agencies to identify and report such lands; AB 1255 requires cities and counties as well to produce an inventory of surplus lands; and AB 1486 connects affordable housing developers to potential opportunities. This land provides one of the state's best opportunities to support housing production, perhaps even scaling up promising subsidized housing strategies like community land trusts. Once these inventories and developer connections are in place, the state should develop a strategic plan that identifies both the land best suited for different types of CLTs and the local stakeholders who might collaborate on projects.

Ultimately, individual jurisdictions will need to take action on anti-displacement policies and programs in order to qualify for state investments or assets such as public land. In most cases, there will not be any existing research that shows definitively which anti-displacement policy will be most effective in a specific context. For example, community land trusts may be more effective in terms of providing home equity in an area with high land costs, but more feasible where land costs are low. ADUs may yield more units in an area with low land costs, but may have more affordability impact in expensive neighborhoods. As our literature review shows, studies rarely evaluate effectiveness across several policies at once and typically have findings that apply only to selected contexts. Public investments are challenging to study (as described in the next section), many are quite recent, and most jurisdictions don't have anti-displacement policies in place to study yet. Thus, jurisdictions will need to move forward in the absence of significant new research. But almost any anti-displacement policy is likely to help keep some residents in place, and thus there is an imperative to act.

What jurisdictions can do is examine other jurisdictions with similar characteristics that have implemented the policies. Appendix B describes the sources where each anti-displacement policy can be found, from the municipal code to the housing element. Jurisdictions will likely have to conduct additional research also on program costs and indirect impacts, which vary widely across approaches. For example, producing a new housing unit may be a very expensive way to keep a household in place, but enacting rent stabilization policies may have indirect costs as landlords remove rental inventory.

⁴ Most of these are included in the list of policies evaluated in the literature review (Appendix A).

⁵ On the other hand, other policies, such as foreclosure assistance, are less appropriate because of the lack of a clear connection to public investment.

Research Design Summary

There is relatively little rigorous research on the effectiveness of anti-displacement strategies, and even less research comparing effectiveness across policy approaches, contexts, or timeframes. This occurs because of five different challenges: the lack of a natural experiment or quasi-experimental framework; the dearth of appropriate data; insufficient sample sizes, particularly to measure variations by racial/ethnic group; insufficient or inappropriate timeframes; and insufficient variation of context.

The first major challenge is identifying an experimental framework to study, i.e., either a “natural experiment” with random assignment to policy treatments, or a quasi-experimental approach with deliberate assignment to treatment and control groups by the researcher. Programs to preserve unsubsidized affordable housing or tenant opportunity to purchase laws, for example, are not widespread and therefore studies of individual programs may not be broadly applicable. The jurisdictions that have adopted anti-displacement policies are not random, but have self-selected into the policy for some reason. In theory, it might be possible to examine the impacts of a state program by looking at its outcomes for applicants who receive an award versus those who do not. However, high variation in the number and types of participants will be necessary to make conclusions about efficacy, and even then, intervening factors or omitted variables may ruin the experiment. For example, our study examining the impact of investment in transit stations (Chapple et al., 2017) found that displacement did not occur when there were new market-rate or subsidized housing units nearby, but this does not necessarily mean that requiring transit authorities to build new transit-oriented development with housing will mitigate displacement everywhere. The construction projects that mitigated displacement may have been built independently of the transit station; they may have accommodated in-movers to the neighborhood rather than displaced locals; and we may not have controlled for a variety of other factors that were intervening, e.g., just cause eviction policies or the availability of 3+ bedroom units.

Accessing appropriate data is another challenge. ADU policy, for example, may present a natural experiment for study due to the implementation of a variety of different measures to encourage ADU development across the state, which have been adopted with enthusiasm by some jurisdictions and resisted by others. However, the data on who is able to access an ADU and at what cost may be difficult to come by. Rental data is difficult to collect at a large scale and research often must utilize third-party, private databases (such as CoStar), which may not always be the most up to date, and tend to cover only large apartment buildings. Even with resources to conduct extensive surveys, response bias (e.g., when households are renting ADUs as short-term rentals in violation of local law) may render results non-representative.

Likewise, data on individual household mobility is hard to obtain. Yet, it is only possible to understand if displacement is really occurring through data on who is moving in and out of each housing unit (rather than using aggregate totals for the neighborhood or census tract). Household mobility data is most readily available from credit bureaus and tax agencies, which collect the data as a byproduct of their mission. Academic researchers have had some success in accessing credit bureau data via intermediaries such as the Federal Reserve Bank or the California Policy Lab (see Ding et al., 2016). However, one shortcoming of this source is that it typically lacks data on household incomes, forcing researchers to rely on credit scores as a proxy. Mobility data is also commercially available from proprietary sources like Infutor or InfoGroup (now Data Axle), who combine credit data with postal service address files and

provide estimations of income. Researchers are just starting to validate this data, but report that it underreports renters and low-income households, and seems to lose track of households for years at a time.⁶ Although other sources of individual mobility data (e.g., travel behavior) are becoming quite common, it is challenging to link these to residence in (and displacement from) a particular housing unit. Until researchers have access to more reliable data on individual household mobility, it will not be possible to conduct rigorous evaluations of policy impact.

Another, related issue is sample size, especially of underrepresented groups. For example, the various rental assistance and tenant right to counsel programs across the country are proving difficult to study because the sample sizes of individuals served is too small. As discussed in the literature review, little is known about how these policies may affect various racial and ethnic groups in different ways. Yet research needs to disaggregate outcomes of interest (e.g. displacement pressures or mobility) by these categories in order to understand how policies can overturn patterns of systemic racism in our communities.

Anti-displacement policies and programs typically experience a time lag between enactment and outcomes. For instance, San Francisco implemented a community opportunity to purchase law in 2019: results will not only be too small scale to evaluate, but also might not be available for a few years, given challenges of property disposition and occupancy. Similarly, California's state, regional, and municipal agencies have embarked on a series of investments – many funded via cap-and-trade funds – in parks, infill development, active transportation, and transit. Although researchers are currently studying these investments to determine their impacts on housing markets, they are encountering multiple challenges regarding the timeframe. First, the agencies did not collect and record data on the timeline for planning and construction, so it is not clear how to demarcate the “before” and “after” periods. Second, although there have been thousands of investments, some have occurred during times of recession, others during recovery or boom periods, and this macro context impacts outmigration rates, potentially dwarfing local factors. Such problems can usually be resolved readily by controlling for time period in multivariate regression models; however, with many different types of investments across many geographies and time periods, sample sizes may become too small to understand the impact of a particular investment in a particular place at a particular time. Third, there is the problem of the impact and comparison area: whether drawn as a radius from the project or chosen as a matched pair via propensity score matching, it may potentially be contaminated by other investments, both public and private sector – and there is no comprehensive database from which to identify these. Finally, there is the issue of whether the jurisdictions had anti-displacement policies in place when the investment was made; there is no comprehensive inventory of anti-displacement policies across the state's jurisdictions to consult, and even if there were, it would need to incorporate the timing of implementation and any amendments.

The final challenge is that of context. As described above, the literature to date on anti-displacement policy effectiveness has focused largely on the most progressive cities (like San Francisco) within strong market coastal metropolitan areas. One solution is expanding the study area to the state level, which both facilitates controlling for institutional context and encompasses geographically distinct areas, from

⁶ Authors' conversation with Urban Displacement Project research team.

urban to exurban to rural. However, this variation also introduces new problems, since it is not possible to control completely for local political, institutional, and built environment factors.

Despite these shortcomings, we present potential research designs for studying the effectiveness of anti-displacement policies in Appendix C. We selected these policies – tenant right to counsel, rental assistance, ADUs, TOPA, and unsubsidized affordable housing – based upon the information gathered from our literature review, as well as stakeholder feedback and interviews. The state has already or could potentially pass legislation to support ADUs and unsubsidized affordable housing, while the other policies would need to be enacted by local jurisdictions. Since programs to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing, tenant right to counsel, and tenant opportunity to purchase are not widely implemented but are under consideration in the state, there is a chance to embed evaluation research into their implementation. These all have relatively high potential to prevent displacement (ranked either high or medium in our list) and a relatively low amount of literature produced about them (ranked either medium or low in our list). Interviews with both practitioners and academics helped us to refine the list further, identifying policies that are unlikely to be implemented, to have significant impact specifically on displacement, or to reach the scale necessary to study.⁷ Additionally, we tried to select policies feasible for research in California, meaning they have already been enacted or are being proposed in various places across the state. For this reason, while we wanted to propose research on upzoning policies, there are not enough examples of large-scale upzoning reform within California to provide the necessary data.

Research challenges, from lack of appropriate experiments to deficient data, stand in the way of conducting impactful studies on anti-displacement policy effectiveness. As the state of California enacts legislation to stem displacement in the future, it should build evaluation mechanisms into the programs. The state should also look at opportunities for research within its current programs: for example, the CARES Act rental assistance program provides a novel opportunity to study how the funding mitigates displacement and eviction. In this section we have suggested five policies that are ripe for research from a technical point of view, but another approach would be to target the policies that would likely be most feasible and/or make the most difference, such as disposition of public land to affordable housing developers and preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing. Then, research might focus primarily on implementation, e.g., analyzing the costs and benefits of each approach in a particular context, or producing case studies that can make the case to a broad constituency. Ideally, researchers would design studies to enrich our understanding of which approach would be most cost-effective.

⁷ We conducted interviews in July through October, 2020 with nine practitioners (Dan Rinzler, California Housing Partnership Corporation; Daniel Saver, Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Joe Donlin, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy; Alexandra Gallo, Strategic Growth Council; Sophie Young, Strategic Growth Council; Josh Rosa, Department of Housing and Community Development; Jess Negrete, Department of Housing and Community Development; Kevan Rolfness, Department of Housing and Community Development; and Claudia Mildner, Department of Housing and Community Development) and four academics (Ingrid Gould Ellen, New York University; Paavo Monkkonen, UCLA; Michael Lens, UCLA; and Daniel Immergluck, Georgia State University).

Conclusion and Next Steps

In recent years, California state agencies working on both the climate and housing crises have turned their attention to how to mitigate unintended displacement impacts from climate mitigation/adaptation investments and how to effectively accelerate sustainable and equitable housing production. With the carrot of its investments and the opportunity presented by its assets, the state can help meet both goals. Preservation and stabilization strategies are the most effective in stemming displacement in a short-term timeframe, and the state should prioritize these whenever it is providing funding to jurisdictions. Over the long term, the state can spur affordable housing production through its strategic disposition of public lands. State agencies will need to coordinate, perhaps via an interagency working group on anti-displacement policies in order to make these policies consistent and scale up the approach.

This review revealed several additional data needs that were beyond the scope of this project, which focused on assessing research rather than describing existing conditions. The state should monitor displacement trends over time across the state, and it needs a comprehensive inventory of anti-displacement policies and programs by jurisdiction. This inventory should itemize the local, state, and federal government policies, programs, and funding sources that influence implementation of each. In the absence of rigorous research on which are most effective, it could be valuable to survey local officials and advocates about which policies are most successful on the ground. Case studies describing how the approaches worked in different geographies could help agencies decide which to incorporate into their guidelines for investment. The state might also support local jurisdictions seeking research on how to design effective anti-displacement policies that will be relevant for their own particular contexts.

The COVID-19 crisis has heightened displacement challenges, and presented an opportunity to implement policies and programs to address them. To date, temporary eviction moratoria and rental assistance have largely succeeded at keeping families in their homes (although we lack data to measure this systematically). This raises questions about how we can make these policies more permanent, perhaps in the form of an expanded rental assistance fund and just cause eviction policies in jurisdictions across the state.

As we move into the recovery period, new opportunities will arrive in the form of infrastructure investment, and the state should ensure that it enacts guidelines that spur jurisdictions to adopt anti-displacement policies, as in AHSC. Should housing prices and land costs dip, the state and its jurisdictions should take advantage of the moment to purchase private multi-family buildings and convert them to permanent affordability. The period after the Great Recession showed that the private sector was poised to make a profit on housing; this time, California needs to be prepared to ensure that displacement does not result.

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Appendix A. Full Literature Review

Anti-Displacement Strategies and their Effectiveness

A Review of the Literature

Jan 2021

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Introduction

Concern over the displacement impacts of smart growth and climate mitigation strategies is only growing in the State of California and across the country. Considerable work has begun to synthesize and structure the literature on the effectiveness of diverse anti-displacement strategies (Chapple et al., 2017; Zuk et al., 2019). As a start, a CARB funded study (Chapple et al., 2017) inventoried the anti-displacement strategies for Bay Area and Los Angeles County jurisdictions and surveyed housing policy staff in the Bay Area and Los Angeles County to learn about some of the implementation and policy design challenges of existing strategies.

As CARB works to promote more sustainable communities and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, there is a further need to better understand how to mitigate potential unintended displacement impacts of public investments in order to address equity concerns. While there is some empirical evidence that shows that some public investments can have the unintended consequence of displacing low-income residents, there is insufficient research and evidence about the most effective solutions to mitigate this impact. CARB seeks to understand the effectiveness of various anti-displacement strategies in order to ensure that future public investments benefit low-income households and communities in gentrifying areas.

Goals

The goals of this section of the report are:

1. To review and summarize the academic and professional (gray) literature on anti-displacement strategies and to examine how it assesses the effectiveness of various strategies in mitigating displacement;
2. To identify where there are gaps in the research and what additional research work is necessary for a clearer picture of the opportunities and challenges faced by various policies.

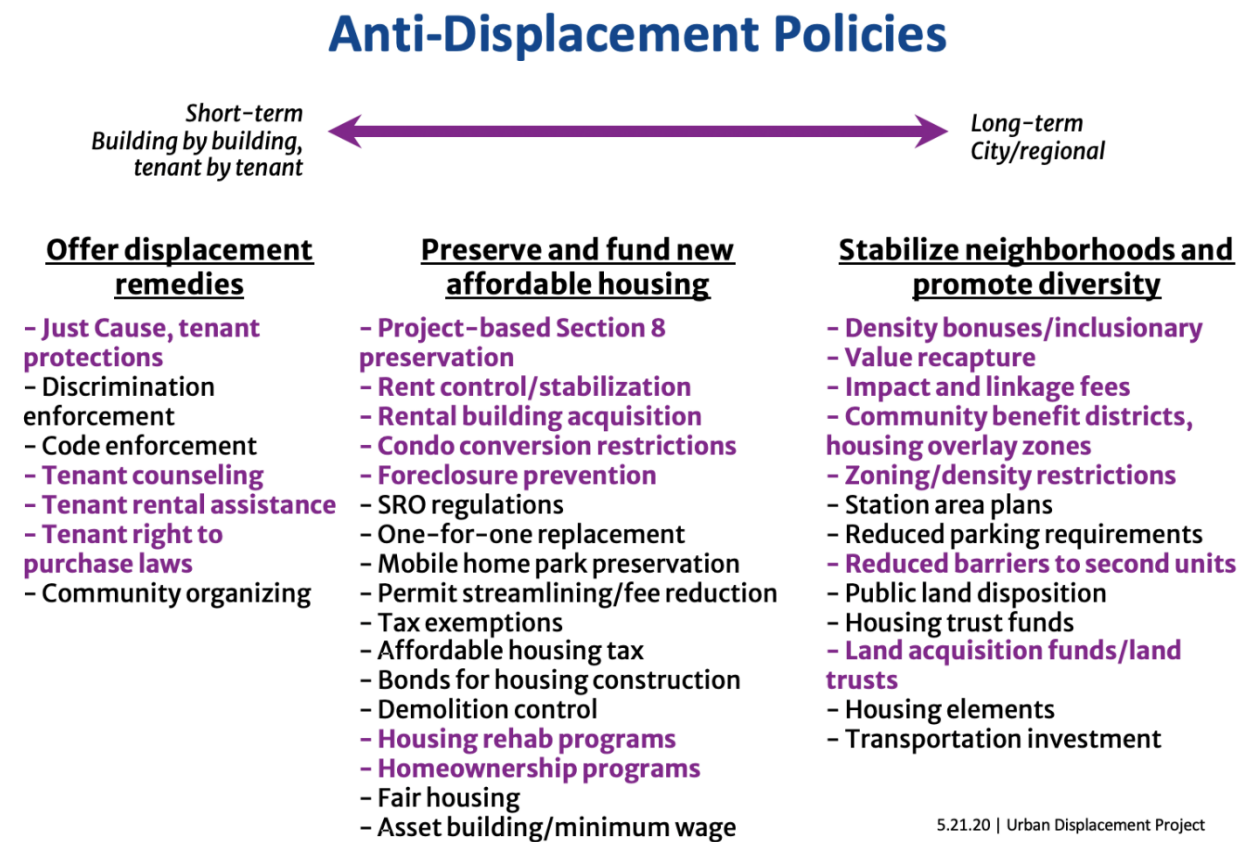
Methodology and Report Layout

For this report, we define displacement as a situation in which households are forced involuntarily to move out for economic or physical reasons (because of eviction, rent increase, demolition of existing housing, etc.) or are prevented from moving into a neighborhood (i.e., excluded) because of high rents or other conditions they are unable to control or prevent. We define as anti-displacement policies various strategies, programs, and laws that intend to counteract the displacement pressures felt by

some households. These include approaches that try to prevent direct displacement (e.g., demolition controls or rental assistance), as well as those that aim to reduce displacement more indirectly (e.g., rent stabilization or asset building).

We began this report by looking at a long list of about 40 different anti-displacement policies put together from our previous research (see Figure 1 below, adapted from Chapple 2016). We then did an initial search for both peer-reviewed and gray literature that discusses the effectiveness of each of these policies as they relate to avoiding displacement. This process involved using five academic search engines as well as resorting to Google’s standard search when we failed to identify research. From this initial list we chose to focus on the policies for which we could find any research regarding their effect on displacement. A pared-down list of about 20 policies ensued. After combining a few of these policies commonly examined together, we ended up with 17 policies, analyzed in 152 articles (70 gray literature, 62 academic journal articles, 15 media reports, 4 books, and 1 thesis).

Figure 1: Inventory of anti-displacement strategies.



Source: Chapple, 2016. This figure shows policies along a continuum from short-term, building-by-building, tenant-by-tenant policies, and long-term city and regional policies. The three policy categories are displacement remedies, preserve and fund new affordable housing, and stabilize neighborhoods and promote diversity. Purple text indicates policies we included in this study.

The sections that follow discuss each of these 17 policies following a similar analytical framework that includes:

- Policy description
- Extent and type of literature that covers the policy's effect on displacement
- Summary and evaluation of the literature
- Need for further research

We arrange these policies in three broad categories, following the categorization given in Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris (2019):

1. Policies that lead to production of affordable housing
2. Policies that help the preservation of affordable housing
3. Policies that help neighborhood stabilization by keeping residents in place

In order to give readers a sense of the relative amount of literature available on each policy's effectiveness at preventing displacement, we have created three categories which characterize the extent of coverage for a policy found in the literature as follows:

- LOW indicates that there were essentially no articles that rigorously examined the policy's effect on displacement. There may be descriptive work and/or research examining the policy's effect on other issues, but not displacement or proxies for displacement (as defined below).
- MEDIUM indicates that there was at least one paper that rigorously examined the policy's effect on displacement or proxies for displacement, in addition to a fair amount of descriptive research on other elements of the policy.
- HIGH indicates that there were multiple papers that rigorously examined the policy's effect on displacement or proxies for displacement, which allowed us to come to a clearer determination of when and how the policy is effective at preventing displacement.

While very few studies measure a policy's effect on displacement directly, much more common are the examinations of indicators that are closely related to displacement (such as a policy's effect on rent prices or property values) that we call "proxies for displacement."⁸ While these are by no means perfect metrics of displacement pressures caused or prevented by these policies, we included them in our analysis because they are prevalent in the literature and can be reasonably associated with displacement.

It is also important to note that the typical indicators used to measure displacement are inadequate at capturing the full effect of someone experiencing pressured to leave their home. As one example, we know there are well-documented public health effects to eviction as well as displacement (Marcus and Zuk, 2017). Overall this report demonstrates the need for better metrics to contextualize and add nuance to the true effects of displacement.

⁸ Other proxies for displacement that are not as frequently measured in the papers we reviewed include evictions, move-outs, move-ins, loss of low-income households, and loss of naturally occurring affordable housing.

Additionally, there are practices we did not include in this research, which may be important components of preventing displacement. For example, community organizing may be crucial to preventing displacement. Indeed, multiple studies attribute the success some neighborhoods have seen in avoiding gentrification (such as Fruitvale in Oakland and East Palo Alto) to the “years of organizing and planning” of local residents (Louie, 2016; Crispell et al., 2016). Additionally, some policies, such as fair housing, were excluded from this report due to a complete lack of research on their effectiveness at preventing displacement. This goes to show that the body of literature available on policies that are effective at preventing displacement is lacking and we must put more resources into understanding how all of these policies work together.

Through our research we found that studies consistently advised caution in extrapolating results from one housing market to another. Due to the local nature of housing policy, municipalities are quite different from one another. Politics, housing market strength, population, demographics, history, and geography are just some of the factors that play a role in how policies are designed and implemented. While we may not be able to draw a one-size-fits-all conclusion, trying to understand the relative efficacy of the various policies is still a crucial endeavor to inform California’s efforts to prevent displacement.

Last, but potentially most notably, through this research we found a surprising dearth of information about the effects of these policies disaggregated by race. While much of the existing research recognizes the harm that housing policies have historically caused African American communities, very few of them look at how contemporary policies do or do not effectively prevent displacement of communities of color. Without explicitly disaggregating policy effectiveness by race, these studies assume that they work equally well for all communities and are at risk of falling into the same pattern of past housing policy. Due to this we have added a section that looks directly for evidence of anti-displacement policies that work especially well or poorly for communities of color and provide suggestions on how to incorporate this issue into any future research.

Next, we discuss each of the 17 policies. Appendix 1 presents a summary of our findings.

Production Strategies

“A number of policy tools are available to influence the quantity of subsidized affordable housing. These include fiscal strategies to generate resources for development, land use policies to incentivize or prioritize different types of affordable housing, and public investments that can be tied to affordability requirements” (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019).

Housing Production

Policy description

The effect that producing new housing has on displacement is highly debated. The bulk of the research on this topic focuses on the effect of market-rate housing production on proxies for displacement such as nearby rents or home prices. Some research, however, has begun to examine the effects of affordable housing development directly on displacement, using data on individual mobility.

The general economic argument made and corroborated by much of the peer-reviewed research is one of simple supply and demand: the more housing available, the lower prices will get (Asquith, Mast, and Reed, 2019; Rosenthal, 2014; Been, Ellen, and O’Regan, 2018).

This is shown to happen through two main mechanisms. The first is a long-term process of “filtering,” whereby rents for new housing fall over time as units age, decline in quality, and become affordable to people at lower-income levels (Rosenthal, 2014). The second is the shorter-term migration that happens as higher-income people move from lower-rent housing to new market-rate housing, thus theoretically freeing up their previous units for someone at a lower income level. This mechanism has been studied more recently, due to the new availability of richer, address-level data, and is thought to “loosen” the market for middle- and low-income households by providing new market-rate housing (Mast, 2019).

On the other side of this debate, those skeptical of market-rate housing production believe it can be a driver of displacement at a local scale. They argue that filtering is too long-term a process to address the needs of low- and middle-income people today, and that land in high-cost cities is so constrained that market-rate production prevents affordable housing production. Additionally, considering the shorter-term migration that happens, there is a worry that producing more market-rate housing will create “induced demand” (i.e. more higher-income housing attracts more higher-income people to an area) and moving into those areas will cause spillover effects, changing neighborhood amenities and triggering further displacement in an area (Zuk and Chapple, 2016).

While there is little rigorous research that confirms a causal relationship between market-rate housing production and displacement, people in high-cost cities like San Francisco have experienced rising rents and neighborhood changes occurring simultaneously with the introduction of new market-rate housing, leading anti-displacement activists to try to prevent new market-rate development, especially in already gentrifying areas (Mark, 2018). However, the idea that new market-rate housing induces higher-income people to live in San Francisco is hard to detangle from other factors, like the economic success of the area (Egan and Khan, 2015). Moreover, more recent research on the price impacts of market-rate construction suggests that impacts may differ by housing submarket (Damiano and Frenier 2020, Pennington 2020).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: HIGH

As stated, the debate regarding the effect of market-rate housing on rents and home prices (proxies for displacement) is lively and ongoing, and there are many academic articles exploring this connection. This literature generally comes out of quantitative research and is frequently published in peer-reviewed journals. There is also a fair amount of gray literature in the form of program evaluations or reports conducted by national and regional organizations.

Less studied, but potentially quite revealing, is the effect of affordable housing production on displacement. There is some gray literature documenting the effects of affordable housing directly on displacement as well as on proxies like rental and home prices.

Summary and evaluation of literature

Overall, the peer-reviewed research into the effects of market-rate housing on rental and home prices at a regional level exhibits a relative consensus that adding new homes generally makes housing in a region more affordable to low- and moderate-income families, and is in fact a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for affordability (Been, Ellen, and O'Regan, 2018). However, research into what effect new housing construction has on nearby buildings is still emerging and highly debated.

MARKET-RATE PRODUCTION AND FILTERING

In a 2014 study, Stuart Rosenthal quantified the rates of income filtering, or how the incomes of people renting units on the private market decreased over time. Rosenthal found that across the country, rental units transition to lower-income households at an average rate of approximately 2.2% per year. This means that the income of residents in a 50-year-old home would be 60% less than the income of residents of a newly built home. Rosenthal also found, however, that filtering rates had an inverse relationship with rates of house price appreciation; so in areas with higher price growth, such as in the Pacific region of the study, filtering happens more slowly (Rosenthal, 2014). For filtering to occur at all, though, there must be production of new units at the top end of the market, such that older homes become vacated by high-income renters.

Adding to these findings, a recent study by Liyi Liu and co-authors (2020) found that filtering rates vary widely by geographic area and over time. They use Rosenthal's methods to show that while downward filtering can be rapid in certain regions, there are others, such as Los Angeles and Washington, DC, which saw upward filtering - meaning housing was going to higher-income people as it aged. They make sense of this pattern by pointing out these regions are also facing serious affordable housing shortages and suggest that policies which encourage the creation of more housing will assist in easing demand pressures and allow downward filtering to occur (Liu et al., 2020).

While faster filtering rates theoretically means apartments should become more affordable more quickly, in practice some researchers have found that this is not always the case. Zuk and Chapple (2016) report that even though filtering rates are estimated at 1.5% per year for the Bay Area, rents are only declining at about 0.3% per year, leading to the possible conclusion that people are living in units before they can fully afford them and are increasingly rent burdened. They also note that, "while filtering may eventually help lower rents decades later, these units may still not be affordable to low-income households" (Zuk and Chapple, 2016, p. 4).

Additionally, some researchers believe that in rapidly gentrifying areas, filtering won't work. Dan Immergluck of the GSU Urban Studies Institute explains this may be the case because, "land values and

rents rise as the neighborhoods become more desirable and developers bid up land values. So lower-income households must look in other neighborhoods where services and schools are likely to be much weaker. Hence the gentrification process can reconstruct economic segregation” (Badger, 2016).

In their annual reports on the state of rental housing in the US, Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies has discussed filtering as having the potential to be a key method of providing affordable housing. But while in 2015, they estimated filtering as a primary source of additions to the affordable rental stock (JCHS, 2015), in 2019 they were more skeptical, stating, “With most new construction targeting the high end of the market, there has been some potential for excess supply to filter down to lower rent levels. But with rental demand far outpacing additions to supply through 2016, this has not happened” (JCHS, 2019, p. 4). One potential problem with filtering is that by the time rents decrease enough to become affordable to renters at the lower end of the housing market, landlords may have stopped maintaining them, leaving units virtually uninhabitable (Immergluck et al, 2017).

Even researchers that have found filtering to be a viable source of long-term affordable housing supply acknowledge the need for government intervention to ensure housing is affordable to the lowest-income individuals. Rosenthal concludes by acknowledging that market-based housing subsidy programs (such as vouchers) are viable and provide potential to access this affordable stock (Rosenthal, 2014). Been, Ellen, and O’Regan’s 2018 report on housing supply and affordability recommends that “new development include housing rented or sold at a variety of price points (using subsidies as needed), so that growth is balanced among the various income levels in the community” (Been, Ellen, and O’Regan, 2018, p. 3).

Further complicating this picture is Yonah Freemark’s (2020) finding that upzoning policies allowing increased building sizes in Chicago may result in higher land values due to the added value of the land (Freemark, 2020). These findings may not be widely applicable because Freemark did not include rental homes in the analysis, Chicago’s housing market may not be representative of other locations, and the study did not measure actual construction. The question of how upzoning affects home and rental values is crucial to understanding its effect on displacement, but there are not many broad upzoning policies in the country to study at the moment, and even fewer that have resulted in new construction.

MARKET-RATE PRODUCTION AND MIGRATION

More recently, research has moved its focus from filtering to shorter-term migration patterns induced by market-rate housing production. One of the first studies to examine this was by the California Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO), which found that market-rate housing production was associated with less displacement (Uhler, 2016). In a 2019 study utilizing address-level migration histories, Evan Mast identified 686 new market-rate buildings in central cities across the country, and tracked 52,000 residents back to their previous buildings of residence. Mast repeated this for six rounds to understand how people move when new market-rate housing is introduced. Overall, this study found evidence that when new housing is built, some higher-income households occupying units that are cheaper than they could afford move into the newer, more expensive units, allowing people with lower incomes to move into their original unit. After this happens a few times, Mast estimates that this process could free up housing in low-income areas in less than five years. In its most conservative model, the study finds that 100 new market-rate units end up freeing up about 45 units in below-median areas and 13 units in bottom-quintile areas. Notably, Mast did not examine patterns of neighborhood change in the low-

income areas from which households moved, leaving open the possibility that high-income (rather than low-income) households are moving from low-income gentrifying areas to higher-income neighborhoods (Mast, 2019).

While this study does not estimate the effects of this process on rental or home prices, Mast's 2019 paper with Brian Asquith and Davin Reed does. Examining new market-rate buildings in 11 cities across the US between 2013 and 2018, they find that new buildings lower nearby rents by 5-7%, increase in-migration from low-income areas, and slow local rent increases by absorbing many high-income households. Specifically, they find that the share of people from very low-income neighborhoods moving into neighborhoods with these new units is higher, suggesting that the presence of these new units reduces costs in lower segments of the housing market. As in Mast's sole-authored 2019 paper, this article does not control for the possibility that the in-migrants are higher-income residents of gentrifying low-income neighborhoods. They also confirm previous research that new market-rate construction tends to happen in low-income neighborhoods with higher rates of education and income growth over the previous decade, suggesting that the construction is coming after neighborhood changes or gentrification has started. While this research concludes that new market-rate units can decrease rental or home prices in the surrounding neighborhood, the authors caution that the findings are specific to large market-rate apartments in strong market cities and only follow outcomes for three years after building construction; so future research is necessary to expand the findings more broadly (Asquith, Mast, and Reed, 2019).

Looking at new housing construction and displacement in San Francisco, Pennington (2020) addresses the issue of the income of in-migrants by examining individual-level mobility patterns by income level (using the proprietary Infutor database). Building new market-rate housing actually reduces rents, displacement to poorer areas, and evictions for residents within a 500-meter radius. At the same time, the new construction houses relatively wealthier newcomers and attracts more new construction nearby, which may gradually create more exclusion.

Another recent study has also shown that new development decreases rent costs in surrounding buildings. Looking at high-rise building construction in New York City, Xiaodi Li finds that for every 10% increase in housing supply there is a 1% decrease in rents within 500 feet (Li, 2019). This suggests that the supply of new development may have a stronger effect on rent costs than other effects that would raise rents (such as the attraction of new amenities to an area). Like Pennington's study of San Francisco, this study focuses only on New York City, however, and thus these findings may not be applicable to all housing markets (e.g. those without rent control, with lower density, etc.)

Anthony Damiano and Chris Frenier (2020) also recently published a study on the effects of new market-rate construction in Minneapolis on the rents of nearby apartments for five years after building completion. Adding nuance to prior findings on this topic, they found that the effects of the new construction depended on the "submarket" of the nearby buildings (i.e. proximity, price, size). For buildings on the higher end of the housing market, new market-rate construction seemed to lower rent prices (albeit these findings were not statistically significantly different from rents staying the same). Damiano and Frenier suggest this could be due to the addition of housing in the area similar to the higher-end buildings. For nearby buildings on the lower end of the housing market, though, the new construction significantly raised rents by an average of 6.7 percent, with even higher spikes for those

buildings closest to the new construction. This, the authors say, may be due to the new buildings bringing in new, higher-cost amenities, and signaling a change in the area toward a higher-income population. These findings point to the need for studies on housing production to disaggregate their findings by housing submarket in order to ensure we understand how new market-rate buildings will affect different types of nearby buildings (Damiano and Frenier, 2020).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRODUCTION AND DISPLACEMENT

While the lion's share of the research on housing production and displacement is focused on market-rate housing, Zuk and Chapple's 2016 report focuses on the effect of affordable housing production on displacement (Zuk and Chapple, 2016). Using the same methodology as the LAO report (Uhler, 2016), Zuk and Chapple found that the effect of subsidized housing production on preventing displacement was twice as strong as the effect of market-rate housing production.⁹ At a regional level, they confirmed the LAO's findings on market-rate housing, but also found that the effects on preventing displacement diminish as more market-rate housing is built in a subsequent decade. This suggests that market-rate production "may have a catalytic effect on a neighborhood, increasing its attractiveness to upper-income residents, rather than a protective effect of filtering" (Zuk and Chapple, 2016, p. 7). With subsidized housing production, however, they found it has double the protective effect, regardless of when construction happens. Therefore, while the authors agree that both market-rate and subsidized housing can reduce displacement, they note that "for every subsidized unit, we would need to produce two or more market-rate units to have the same reduction in displacement pressure" (Zuk and Chapple, 2016). However, the authors did not examine the relative public costs of building market-rate and subsidized units, which is important to understand policy efficiency. Moreover, even if new subsidized construction reduces displacement, it is not clear whether the primary beneficiaries are incumbent residents of the neighborhood or low-income newcomers.

A 2018 study by Kate Pennington in San Francisco found that neither new market-rate or subsidized construction projects had any effect on the likelihood of receiving an eviction notice for nearby neighbors. This finding remained true across all neighborhoods of the city and over time. Pennington does, however, find evidence that close proximity to this new construction "slightly reduces the risk of receiving an eviction notice over time" and suggests that this effect may be bigger for areas adding even more new units (Pennington, 2018, p. 18).

Pennington's subsequent (2020) study that examines the impact of both market-rate and subsidized construction on individual mobility finds no significant short-term impact of affordable housing on either rents or displacement nearby. However, she points out that subsidized housing construction is clearly more effective than market-rate at reducing displacement over the long term, by targeting income groups at risk, preserving their housing, and preserving income diversity over the long term.

⁹ It should be noted that neither study looks at the effectiveness of production in keeping current residents in place, instead looking at the stability of low-income households in aggregate. In other words, even when the production of subsidized housing is reducing the loss of low-income households, it may be occupied by new low-income households moving in, rather than existing low-income households.

In work attempting to understand the potential for affordable housing (both naturally occurring and subsidized) to create a “filtering up” effect, the National Low Income Housing Coalition published a report in 2016 that showed that 70% of Extremely Low-Income renters (ELI, those earning less than 30% AMI) are severely cost-burdened, living in units only affordable to those at higher income levels. Specifically, they found about 2.7 million ELI renters live in houses affordable for Very Low Income renters (30 - 50% AMI), 3.7 million live in houses affordable to low income renters (50 - 80%), and 1 million live in houses affordable to moderate income households (80 - 120% AMI). Given this, they conclude that adding housing affordable to the lowest income households may result in the loosening of housing markets affordable to higher income individuals—similar to the process described above for market-rate housing production (Emmanuel, 2016).

Need for further research

The research on the effects of market-rate housing production on displacement and proxies for displacement (nearby rental and home prices) is relatively comprehensive and ongoing. However, similar research on the relative effects of subsidized and/or naturally occurring affordable housing production on displacement is much sparser. Future research could use similar methods to those described above to look into specific filtering and migration effects of affordable housing production. As the NLIHC report brought up, filtering may happen in both directions, so looking into upward and downward filtering of affordable housing production is potentially revealing. The effects of filtering, however, should be studied at a demographic level as well in order to understand how housing that is affordable via this mechanism is contributing to economic and racial stratification of neighborhoods, an issue that raises fair housing concerns.

Additionally, there are policies that attempt to induce housing production, such as permit streamlining for new construction, objective design standards, zoning changes that allow for taller or higher density buildings, and mobile home overlay zones. These policies were not included in this literature review as they have not been studied as extensively, but to the extent they are able to lead to increased housing production, research may find similar effects. These policies could be the subject of future research to see how effective they are at producing new housing.

Notably, the majority of research on this topic does not disaggregate the impact of changes in housing by race or ethnicity, or other sociodemographic characteristics such as age or gender. For example, neighborhoods with aging households may experience higher levels of filtering as older people downsize and move to other neighborhoods. While income levels are the main focus of this research, housing patterns have historically been determined by both income and race, so future work on these topics should look into how market-rate and affordable housing production affects neighborhoods composed of different racial or ethnic groups.

Inclusionary Zoning + Developer Incentives

Policy description

Inclusionary zoning (IZ) is a mechanism that local governments use to require or incentivize private developers to build a share of new market-rate developments as affordable housing, or contribute a comparable amount to building affordable housing off-site. Proponents tout inclusionary zoning policies as effective methods to develop mixed-income communities and provide a source of affordable housing not dependent on ongoing government subsidy. As of 2007, nearly one-third of California municipalities had inclusionary programs that were generating about 4,500 affordable units per year (NPH, 2007). Traditional economic models, however, conceptualize inclusionary zoning as a tax on housing development and anticipate these policies raise the price and lower the quantity of housing available in the market. While there is both strong support and criticism of inclusionary zoning, research on its effectiveness suggests that both the benefits and costs of these policies may be overstated.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: MEDIUM

While much has been written about inclusionary zoning policies overall, most of the peer-reviewed literature focuses on its ability to produce affordable housing, not its direct connection to displacement. However, as discussed in this report, affordable housing production can be an important displacement-prevention mechanism, and therefore it is worth examining how effective IZ programs are at generating affordable units as well as how many market-rate units they may make infeasible.

Summary and evaluation of literature

As with many anti-displacement measures, the efficacy of inclusionary zoning programs depends on how the policies are designed in any jurisdiction. First, all IZ policies require market-rate developers to create affordable units as a proportion of their overall development. The percent of affordable units and the depth of income they are targeting can vary greatly across programs, but most inclusionary zoning policies in California require developers set aside 10 - 15 percent of their units as affordable (Mukhija et al., 2010).

In a study of the affordable units created in California between 1999 and 2007, the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) estimated about one-quarter of units served people at the very low income threshold, half at the low income threshold, and about one-fifth at moderate incomes; in other words, people on either low-moderate income extreme were not served well by these units (Mukhija et al., 2010; NPH, 2007).

In San Francisco, production of inclusionary zoning units amounted to roughly 2-3% of total housing production over the last 25 years (Schuetz et al., 2009). While the number of units created by IZ policies in California each year is low when compared with the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, cities that have mandatory IZ programs with high enough in-lieu fees produce relatively similar numbers of units (Mukhija et al., 2010). However, it is worth noting that LIHTC likely provides deeper subsidies (units that are more affordable to lower-income households) than IZ policies, with cost going to federal taxpayers rather than local housing consumers.

Additionally, all programs offer some combination of cost-offset strategies to help developers build the units. These can include, but are not limited to density bonuses, expedited permits and approvals, relaxed design standards (including parking and height allowances), fee waivers, additional subsidies for

affordable units, and fee restrictions (Mukhija et al., 2010; NPH, 2007). The presence and strength of these incentives have a significant effect on the efficacy of the policies, especially when it comes to density bonuses. In a study of the effect of San Francisco's inclusionary zoning program, Schuetz et al. (2009) found that one of the strongest predictors of the amount of affordable housing produced by these programs was the presence of a density bonus.

Research has found inclusionary zoning programs to be ineffective when they were voluntary, instead of mandatory (Hamilton, 2019; Mukhija et al., 2010). Also, the effect of in-lieu fees that developers can pay instead of actually building units, depends highly on the level of the fees. While these fees can be combined with other subsidies to create units that serve even deeper levels of affordability, municipalities often do not track the outcomes from those funds, making their impact difficult to assess (Mukhija et al., 2010; NPH, 2007).

Overall, the top producing inclusionary programs have a certain set of requirements and incentives policies in common. While these vary significantly by jurisdiction, according to the NPH report the IZ programs that produce the most units had some combination of these factors:

- Mandated (as opposed to voluntary) inclusionary zoning program
- Minimum size of project that triggers inclusionary program between 5 and 30 units
- Affordable unit percentages from 12.5 to 35 percent
- In-lieu fees allowed
- Very-low to low-income households served
- Minimum affordability timeline of 30 years

While inclusionary zoning programs may be effective at producing some affordable units, their ability to reduce displacement is again dependent on local policy. This is borne out in a 2014 geo-spatial analysis of over 11,000 affordable units created by inclusionary zoning policies in Montgomery County, MD and Suffolk County, NY, which found that 97.7% of inclusionary units in Suffolk County (where housing was mostly under local control) were built in only 10% of census tracts (Kontokosta, 2014). By contrast, in Montgomery County (where there is more significant regional oversight of housing), only 56.1% of units were built in 10% of census tracts; moreover, there was no significant variation in the characteristics of tracts with and without inclusionary units, suggesting local control has a significant effect on the number of inclusionary units produced (ibid).

In San Francisco, the City Controller's Office published an analysis of a proposed increase to the IZ requirements in 2016, finding that the biggest increases would increase the number of affordable units available, but potentially reduce the overall housing produced in the city due to increased construction costs (Egan, 2016). Additionally Evan Mast's study of new market-rate housing production in New York City compares the creation of new units from migration (as described above) to that of IZ programs. It finds the migration process is potentially more efficient at generating new units, although Mast notes that unlike with IZ laws, there is nothing mandating that these units remain affordable in perpetuity (Mast, 2019).

Despite the benefits of inclusionary zoning being potentially overstated, research suggests that the costs of enacting these policies are relatively insignificant. A study of 65 municipalities in California that adopted inclusionary programs between 1988 and 2005 found that these programs potentially increase

housing prices between 2 and 3%; however the effects were mixed when controlling for the original cost of the home—suggesting that the programs were associated with a decrease in price for homes below the median value and an increase in price for those above the median value (Bento et al., 2009). Additionally, in the Baltimore-Washington area, Hamilton (2019) used data on inclusionary zoning, house prices, and building permits, finding that for each additional year of a mandatory inclusionary program, per-square-foot home prices increased by 1.1%, while new housing construction did not decrease (Hamilton, 2019).

No study has found any significant (negative or positive) causal effect of inclusionary programs on the total housing supply (Mukhija et al., 2010; Schuetz et al., 2009), however it is logical that past a certain threshold, inclusionary requirements would make building too expensive and reduce the overall units produced (Egan, 2016). What that threshold is must be elucidated through further study. Additionally, Bento et al. (2009) found that having an IZ program increased a California city's multifamily housing share by about 7 percent, suggesting that these programs incentivize denser housing development.

Looking at the construction of affordable units, Chapple et al. (2017) found that inclusionary zoning was the most prevalent affordable housing production strategy in the 109 Bay Area counties and municipalities. This same study showed that moderate and above-moderate income communities with IZ between 2007 and 2013 were particularly effective, producing almost three times as many affordable units than those without IZ - about 76 units per 10,000 residents in the above-moderate income communities.

Schuetz and coauthors summarize the overall effect of inclusionary zoning as follows: “The ideological debate over IZ has greatly exaggerated both the benefits and the dangers of IZ: any negative effects on housing prices and production have been relatively slight, but only modest amounts of affordable housing have been produced through IZ programmes” (Schuetz et al., 2009). Inclusionary programs may have the benefit of facilitating mixed-income communities and improving the political conditions for housing approvals, however these effects would need to be the subject of further research.

[Need for further research](#)

The above studies identify a need for more empirical research on the effect of inclusionary zoning programs on housing costs; case studies on how the design and implementation of these programs affects production; and how to create affordable housing through IZ programs without exacerbating affordability problems for those who do not get the units (Mukhija et al., 2010; Hamilton, 2019). Additionally, there is a need to study the effectiveness of the various developer incentives offered with IZ programs to understand how they change how much affordable housing is produced.

Again, however, additional research can more directly elucidate IZ's effect on displacement by understanding how these policies affect affordable and market-rate housing production. Comparing how many affordable units IZ programs create annually with how many market-rate units they deter, and linking this to household mobility rates, could be a useful starting point to understanding how these programs play into broader displacement trends. It is crucial to understand if there is a threshold beyond which inclusionary zoning requirements have significant negative effects on a city's overall housing supply. It is also important to understand how well these programs are able to create mixed-income communities and disrupt existing neighborhood stratification by race and economic status.

Impact + Linkage Fees

Policy Description

Impact or linkage fees are a type of exaction imposed on qualifying development activities. These fees are levied on development projects during the local approval process, justified by the additional effect that new development has on governmental services, such as infrastructure and housing. Jurisdictions earmark revenue from these payments for specific purposes; development fees typically fund infrastructure and services, while linkage fees may be linked to affordable housing. Specifically, jurisdictions may implement linkage fees to protect vulnerable communities from displacement pressures by explicitly supporting housing affordability in hot real estate market environments (Goetz 1988; Merrill and Lincoln 1993; Levy, Comey, and Padilla 2007).

Affordable housing linkage fees operate through a fee structure on qualifying development activities, which are identified through a nexus study that legally justifies this type of exaction. Linkage fees generally apply to commercial and market-rate housing development projects that meet certain criteria (e.g. square footage, type of use). For instance, in 2017, the City of Los Angeles passed an ordinance authorizing an affordable housing linkage fee on qualifying commercial and market-rate residential projects with less than a certain percentage of affordable units. This legislation also led to the creation of an Affordable Housing Impact Fund, a repository for resulting revenue earmarked to support affordable housing preservation, production, and anti-displacement initiatives (Johnson 2018).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: MEDIUM

While there is a sizable amount of literature on impact/linkage fees, the discourse largely centers on their legality, economic impact, and comparisons with related policies (e.g. inclusionary zoning).¹⁰ There is only a moderate amount of literature that explicitly connects impact/linkage fee programs to displacement, though some limited empirical research assessing this relationship exists.

Much of the literature on linkage/impact fees, with or without discussion of displacement, focuses on their legal implications and how they relate to regulatory takings and exactions. These publications provide an historical overview of the strategy and its basis in jurisprudence, but largely do not consider its role in relation to urban displacement (Merrill and Lincoln 1993). Another body of literature focuses on the economic impact of development fees, which typically raise the cost of housing (and thus potentially displacing residents); however, this literature generally does not examine fees that are linked to affordable housing development (Dresch and Sheffrin, 1997; Evans-Crowley et al., 2009; Ihlanfeldt and Shaughnessy, 2004).

Concerning displacement of communities, Levy, Comey, and Padilla (2007) discuss the case of Sacramento, which instituted a series of anti-gentrification strategies in the 1980s and 1990s, including a local Housing Trust Fund and an affordable housing impact fee in 1989. This program imposed per-square-foot fees on commercial development to ensure that housing production for the City's low-

¹⁰ It is worth noting that throughout some of the linkage/impact fee literature, the term “displacement” denotes impacts on development activity, rather than on incumbent residents. In other words, relevant planning and economic literature most commonly interrogates the potential “displacement” or loss of private investment resulting from these types of policies, not the impact they may have on displacing vulnerable residents.

income workforce kept pace with its economic development. Although the authors point out that nearly \$15 million had been collected since 1989, the study does not evaluate how this program mitigated displacement pressures. Similarly, Dreier and Ehrlich (1991) sketch an overview of how linkage fees emerged in Boston, situating the policy within a broader framework of progressive reforms in that city during the reemergence of downtown development. However, akin to other publications, Dreier and Ehrlich (1991) do not attempt to quantify the outcomes beyond the significant revenue generated through the policy; their discussion of displacement centers mostly on past waves of upheaval resulting from urban renewal and the early stages of downtown redevelopment in Boston.

Several other publications explicitly identify linkage fees as a strategy to mitigate gentrification and displacement, but most of these writings mention this approach only in passing. Those publications with an explicit focus on displacement discuss linkage fees as a mechanism to produce or preserve affordable housing, but do not specifically try to quantify or enumerate the benefits (e.g. Keating 1986). Nevertheless, some cities - such as Boston - with linkage fee programs have issued findings that focus on resultant housing production, accumulation of in-lieu fees for further production, and the overall contribution of linkage fees to the housing stock that directly and indirectly mitigates displacement pressures (Boston Planning and Development Agency 2018). For instance, in a 2018 press release, Boston's Planning and Development Agency found that since 2014, over \$30 million in linkage fee revenue leveraged over \$500 million in public funds to support development of 1,268 new affordable housing units and the preservation of an additional 548 existing affordable units (Boston Planning and Development Agency 2018).

Additionally, pursuant to Los Angeles's Affordable Housing Linkage Fee program, BAE Urban Economics reviewed outcomes from other cities' existing linkage/impact fee programs. According to its study, BAE found that San Francisco's Jobs-Housing Linkage Fee yielded over \$56 million since its inception in fiscal year 1988-89 (BAE Urban Economics 2016, 97). During fiscal year 2014-15, the linkage fee added an additional \$27 million to the local Affordable Housing Fund, which supported the development of over 600 units of affordable and supportive housing during that year (BAE Urban Economics 2016, 97).

[Need for further research](#)

Although several publications discuss impact/linkage fees as a tool for mitigating displacement, few have attempted to quantify their efficacy. Several jurisdictions have established linkage fees relatively recently, however, and potentially offer avenues to assess their outcomes. For instance, Los Angeles's Affordable Housing Linkage Fee was implemented in mid-2018, and was designed explicitly to ensure public oversight. Accordingly, researchers can monitor how revenue in the City's Affordable Housing Impact Fund is earmarked for anti-displacement programs, such as the preservation of affordable housing or neighborhood stabilization programs.

Further, impact/linkage fees are somewhat common in cities with strong real estate markets. Therefore, future research might attempt to measure outcomes across different jurisdictions that have established such programs. Of course, similar to the evaluation of other policies, isolating the independent effect of linkage fees would prove difficult, especially as cities that institute these programs are likely to do so in conjunction with other efforts. Nevertheless, by designing robust metrics, comparisons across jurisdictions that place more or less emphasis on anti-displacement strategies could shed light on policy efficacy, and how these programs prioritize residential stability.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Policy Description

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are secondary units or apartments typically added to low-density residential properties (e.g., single-family homes). Also known as granny flats, in-law units, or accessory apartments, these ADUs have the double benefit of acting as an additional source of income for homeowners as well as introducing more housing to less-dense neighborhoods where zoning can prohibit most development. ADUs may be either “attached” units (i.e. those created through converting extra bedrooms or basements into separate living spaces) or “detached” units (i.e. those created through new or converted structures in a backyard such as a detached garage). Since land costs are free and construction costs are lower for these structures, ADUs can be a relatively low-cost way to produce new housing (Woetzel et al., 2016). Homeowners are interested in constructing ADUs because of the flexibility—and potential rental income stream—they provide, but local zoning requirements can create barriers to ADU construction (Chapple et al. 2017).

Local and state governments in California have battled for decades over who gets to control ADU development (Ramsey-Musolf, 2018). To encourage localities to permit more ADU development, in 2002, the CA state legislature allowed cities to count ADUs toward their low-income and market-rate housing production requirements (Ramsey-Musolf, 2018). To spur demand for these ADU permits, the state stepped in again in 2016 (and again in 2018 and 2019), easing zoning and permitting regulations across the state (Chapple et al., 2017).

These reforms—along with similar ones around the country—have seen some level of success as measured by increased ADU permits and applications, however, studies have yet to determine the extent to which ADUs prevent displacement or are able to serve the lowest-income households (Chapple et al., 2017; Wegmann and Chapple, 2014; Ramsey-Musolf, 2018; Medina, 2018).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: [LOW](#)

We found almost no literature that covers the effects of ADU development on displacement. However, since ADUs are used as a mechanism for housing production, it is reasonable to assume that the displacement-preventing effects of new housing production (both affordable and market-rate) discussed in this paper, could apply to the production of ADUs.

There is comparatively more literature examining existing ADUs and effective strategies for encouraging their development. This literature, however, does not come to a consensus as to whether ADUs are consistently affordable or closer to market-rate housing. Either way, ADUs likely prevent displacement, but they will be more effective the more affordable they are.

Summary and evaluation of literature

In general, the goal behind encouraging the production of ADUs is to develop more housing in low-density neighborhoods that can serve a variety of renters. Additionally, as a 2014 study of the potential for ADU growth in California’s East Bay region points out, ADUs are a way for neighborhoods to meet fair housing goals by adding density to higher-income areas that are typically dominated by single-family homes (Wegmann and Chapple, 2014).

Much of the peer-reviewed and gray literature available on ADUs focuses on their potential to increase the overall housing stock as well as strategies to encourage their development. Recent research shows

that California has the potential to add up to 1.5 million new units across the state through the development of ADUs alone (Monkkonen et al., 2020). This potential is especially high in places like Los Angeles and San Francisco where single-family zoning accounts for the vast majority of residential land use and there is significant unmet housing demand (Bennett, Cuff, and Wendel, 2019; Woetzel et al., 2016).

Researchers have found that a number of different measures are successful at encouraging additional ADU development, including relaxing zoning restrictions (such as minimum lot size and parking requirements), reducing development fees (such as permit or utility connection fees), and assisting landlords through technical assistance or educational campaigns (Chapple et al., 2017; Brown, Mukhija, and Shoup, 2017). Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver saw increases in ADU permits after similar zoning changes were made (Chapple et al., 2017).

Since California relaxed some of the zoning restrictions on ADUs statewide, the state's four largest metro areas have seen permitting increase dramatically, from about 650 in 2016 to 8,800 in 2019 (Chapple et al, 2020a). In general, however diverse and moderately advantaged communities have the least restrictive approaches to ADU development, while disadvantaged communities of color continue to have the most restrictive approaches (Pfeiffer, 2019).

While these changes have seemed to work to encourage ADU production, there is less consensus in the literature as to which groups really benefit from these new units. Wegmann and Chapple (2014) found that ADUs in the East Bay were relatively more affordable than multifamily infill developments and served a higher proportion of low income renters. Specifically, the average ADU in Berkeley, CA in 2011 was affordable to a household earning 62% AMI, with 30% affordable to very low-income households and 49% affordable to low income households (Chapple et al., 2012). However, the same research showed no ADUs were affordable to extremely low-income households, leading researchers to conclude that, "bolstering the stock of units in the very low-income and low-income affordability categories with minimal expenditures of public funds, could therefore help to free up such scarce (and dwindling) monies for the subsidization of the lowest-income affordable developments" (Chapple et al., 2012, p. 12). In Portland, OR, researchers found that about 20% of ADUs rented for at less than market rates in 2014 (Brown and Palmeri, 2014).

Yet, the recent surge of production in California has taken place across both high-income and low-income neighborhoods: although the majority of production across the state takes place in neighborhoods with high home values, Los Angeles and Orange County gain most ADUs in low-resource areas (Chapple et al., 2020b). Given these findings, there is evidence that ADUs can contribute to the naturally-occurring affordable housing stock. However, some caution that very few localities actually require ADUs to remain affordable. A 2018 survey of 57 CA cities found that while nearly half of the cities were counting planned ADUs toward their low-income housing production goals, none of them had mechanisms requiring those units to be affordable for any period of time (Ramsey-Musolf, 2018). The survey of California jurisdictions conducted by Chapple et al. (2020b) found that just 6% had created tools to impose deed restrictions on rents in exchange for public subsidies.

Some localities in California, however, are starting to use ADUs to serve low-income renters, demonstrating their potential to meaningfully contribute to the affordable housing available in the state. The county of Santa Cruz has launched a pilot program offering loans of up to \$40,000 for ADU

development that will be forgiven if homeowners agree to maintain the units as affordable to low-income households for at least 20 years (County of Santa Cruz Planning Department, 2019). Los Angeles is piloting the use of ADUs as housing for individuals emerging from homelessness, offering to help pay building costs (up to \$30,000) and identifying tenants who were formerly homeless and who have access to a rental assistance program such as Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (Medina, 2018). While these programs are still new, they show how ADUs could be created to help address California's affordable housing needs.

As stated above, there has been no research into the direct effect of ADU development on displacement, but if we simply consider ADUs as additional housing units, many providing space for low-income family members, their effect is likely preventative. Until we know more about what income levels ADUs serve in the long-term, it is difficult to estimate exactly how much they help prevent displacement. However, since areas that are zoned for single-family housing are not likely to add density in any other way, ADUs are a promising mechanism for infill development and adding to the overall housing stock in California.

Need for future research

In order to more fully understand how ADUs prevent displacement, we need more clarity on the demographics (e.g. income level, race/ethnicity, family structure, etc.) of people living in these units and to understand where residents are moving from. Additionally, since cities have varying ADU regulations across the state, we could examine and compare how the regulations of different cities are correlated with displacement pressures in the area.

Housing Overlay Zones

Policy Description

Housing overlay zones are land use mechanisms that supplement base zoning regulations within particular geographic areas. Although they are often used to maintain distinctive features of the built environment (e.g. historic preservation, natural resource protection), housing overlay zones have also been implemented to promote affordable housing development that is appropriately tailored to local conditions (East Bay Housing Organizations 2014). In addition to offering versatility for community planning, overlay zones are a means to stimulate affordable housing development within areas where minimal such housing exists in exchange for higher density projects (Cambridge Community Development Department n.d.).

Housing overlay zones essentially operate as geographically specific density bonuses by offering incentives, relaxed development standards, and streamlining permits for projects providing a certain amount of below market housing. These minimums can vary between 25% and 100% of the proposed project (Public Advocates and East Bay Housing Organizations 2010). Further, overlay zones offer a key advantage to affordable housing developers; because of the substantial capital necessary for pursuing housing projects, affordable developers often cannot compete with the resources of market-rate developers. Therefore, by imposing below market requirements to increase density in certain areas, affordable housing developers gain a critical upper hand relative to well-resourced, market-rate counterparts (Cambridge Community Development Department n.d.). In AB 73, California recently adopted a form of housing overlay zone, the Housing Sustainability District, a designation that mandates affordability on housing sites near public transportation and allows for district-wide environmental review.

Extent and Type of Literature that Covers Policy's Effect on Displacement: LOW

Although housing overlay zones have existed in California jurisdictions since at least the early 2000s, there is virtually no research on their role in mitigating displacement. The limited literature on housing overlay zones has been published by housing advocates that describe their benefits in fostering affordability in high-cost regions.

For instance, in a white paper on Public Benefit Zoning (PBZ), East Bay Housing Organizations describes housing overlay zones as an alternative to PBZ (another form of land value recapture resulting from upzoning) (East Bay Housing Organizations 2014). EBHO discusses overlay zones as one among several local land use planning tools that can minimize displacement that might result should high-density zoning result in construction, particularly in lower income communities proximate to transportation and employment hubs that are particularly sensitive to the increases in land value that come with upzoning (East Bay Housing Organizations 2014). However, this analysis primarily focuses on the economics of incentive and value capture programs rather than their efficacy in reducing displacement.

Similarly, Public Advocates and East Bay Housing Organizations describe the opt-in incentives that housing overlay zones offer without sacrificing local planning efforts. For instance, in contrast to California's state density bonus law - in which qualifying developments receive an increase in units and incentives established by the legislature - housing overlay zones are designed through local planning processes that define the affordability terms and incentives (East Bay Housing Organizations 2014, 7). Moreover, these organizations emphasize how attractive incentives that reduce development costs in

exchange for affordability requirements mutually benefit developers and municipalities (Public Advocates and East Bay Housing Organizations 2010). However, this discussion does not explicitly describe how overlay zones minimize displacement.

Need for further research

Similar to other policies, research on the anti-displacement efficacy of housing overlay zones is virtually nonexistent, at least in the U.S. context. Future studies could examine how municipalities, and specific overlay zones within them, have promoted residential stability through such policies. In particular, such a policy may have a significant impact within jurisdictions where redevelopment has been targeted around certain amenities (e.g. transportation hubs). In areas where overlay zones have been implemented, researchers could investigate how neighborhood composition has changed relative to the development activity triggered under these ordinances.

Land Value Recapture

Policy description

Land value recapture (LVR) describes a set of policies that aim to identify increases in land value resulting from public sector actions (such as rezoning or large infrastructure investments), and return that value to the public sector to use for further public projects. For example, when a government agency changes zoning rules to allow for more density or plans for new transportation infrastructure, the value of the land associated with or nearby those changes often increases. This, then, creates a windfall profit for land owners, despite having no part in generating the increased property value: “Housing scarcity delivers unearned wealth to people who own housing, and it imposes unwarranted burdens on people who don’t.” (Manville et al., 2017). LVR attempts to impose fees or taxes on this “unearned” increase in value to return that revenue to the public sector so it can finance additional public projects, such as affordable housing or more transportation infrastructure (Calavita and Wolfe, 2014). While LVR policies may not directly prevent displacement, they can contribute to funding that municipal governments can use for public subsidies or infrastructure to provide housing.

Policy tools that can be used for value capture include land value taxes, tax increment financing, special assessments, transportation utility fees, development impact fees, negotiated exactions, joint developments, and air rights (Center for Transportation Studies, 2009). Some value capture mechanisms are only triggered by development activity; thus land owners may experience important land value increases without having to pay taxation, if these increases are not related to new developments. One prominent example in California is the Community Benefits District in San Francisco, which provides additional density to new development in exchange for an array of benefits, including funding for affordable housing (Calavita and Wolfe, 2014; Chapple, 2014).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: LOW

While LVR policies have been in place across the country for decades, there is little to no research on their effectiveness in preventing displacement. The vast majority of the literature that exists about LVR is primarily descriptive, outlining how policies function and how they may be implemented. Additionally, the research on LVR comes primarily from the transportation planning field, which describes it as a promising way to finance current and future transportation infrastructure.

In practice, LVR is used to invest in both transportation and housing infrastructure and has been presented as an option for funding affordable housing. In Los Angeles, LVR was seen as a potential alternative to linkage fees, which essentially tax developers for building new housing and potentially depress housing production overall. Taxing land instead of development raises revenue that can be put toward building affordable housing, without discouraging the production of market rate housing, however there may be significant legal challenges to enacting such policies (Manville et al., 2017).

While LVR has been used across the country for decades, in one form or another, there has been no study on whether these policies keep people from being displaced.

Need for further research

To move forward with an understanding of whether LVR policies are effective at preventing displacement, research should focus on areas that have implemented these policies, attempt to track how much revenue they have generated, and uncover if any additional affordable housing has resulted

from that revenue. The end goal should be to understand if LVR can be leveraged as an effective tool to increase affordable housing and prevent displacement, and also who gains access to this housing.

Additionally, it would be useful to understand the effects of these policies on landowners and developers. Given that the idea behind LVR is to tax “unearned” increases in wealth, it would be important to explore whether such policies change the willingness of landowners to invest in areas with LVR policies, whether it penalizes existing homeowners, and how that changes the housing development landscape of an area.

Preservation Strategies

“Many built-out neighborhoods experiencing displacement pressures may have little room for new development. Furthermore, the cost of new development in strong housing markets, where the cost of land is very high, may make the production of new subsidized housing prohibitively expensive. Therefore, strategies for preserving affordable rental units in older buildings may be more cost-effective and feasible for counteracting displacement forces in such communities. By ensuring that this housing stock is permanently affordable, policies essentially remove it from upper-income markets, pushing these households into costlier newer construction” (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019).

Unsubsidized Affordable Housing

Policy description

Unsubsidized affordable housing (sometimes called naturally occurring affordable housing, or NOAH) is defined as rental units offered by the private market that are affordable outside of any subsidy or regulatory scheme. These units may be affordable for a number of reasons (including the strength of the housing market, the quality of the unit, the age of the building, or the quantity of housing in an area), but they are not protected by any program, so changes in the market put them at risk of becoming unaffordable. Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies estimates that only around 25% of income-eligible households receive federal subsidy (such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits or Section 8 vouchers), which means that a significant majority of Americans living in affordable housing are doing so in unsubsidized units (JCHS, 2020). Due to the cost and length of time it can take to develop new affordable housing, many areas are exploring the possibility of preserving this unsubsidized housing stock to ensure long-term affordability.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: LOW

While descriptions of unsubsidized affordable housing programs are widely available, there is very little research on the effectiveness of programs using this strategy to prevent displacement.

Summary and evaluation of literature

Housing affordability is commonly defined as rent or mortgage payment comprising less than 30% of a person’s income. However, each program attempting to preserve the unsubsidized affordable housing stock has a different idea of what population it may actually work for. In a white paper on the potential opportunities to preserve these units in the Twin Cities, the Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative looks for units that are affordable to very low-income households—those at 50% of Area Median Income (Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative, 2013). Alternatively, some programs argue that the cost of acquiring and rehabilitating buildings may make it necessary to produce affordable housing in “middle market” areas (those having neither the highest, nor the lowest housing costs and quality), and target incomes between 60 - 120% AMI (Reinvestment Fund, 2019). Some programs may drop the lowest income brackets altogether, knowing that even if a market rate unit is “affordable” it will likely not be for someone below 30% AMI (Bhatia and Keller, 2018).

Even if programs agree on one definition of unsubsidized affordable housing, there are a variety of criteria they use to decide which units to prioritize. Considerations of estimated cost, gentrification potential, proximity to transit, property size, property age, distance from hazards, land use suitable for

multi-family development, are some potential factors in shaping an affordable housing preservation program (LA County Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund, 2020; Abdelgany, 2016).

Many programs that aim to preserve unsubsidized affordable housing do so via acquisition and rehabilitation, while others employ “lighter touch” interventions such as financial incentives for landlords to make affordability commitments, technical assistance for doing so, efforts to reduce their operating costs, etc. (Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative, 2013). Another form interventions increasingly take is simply providing data: for example, the Own-It! (Owners Warning Notification and Information for Tenants) tool in Los Angeles (www.ownit.la) identifies at-risk properties with the aim of helping tenants and communities organize.

Need for further research

Ultimately, many of these programs are relatively recent and not much research exists about their effectiveness in preventing displacement. Potential questions for further research include: What population is most effectively served by unsubsidized affordable housing preservation? What are the characteristics of this stock that are preventing them from becoming market-rate? What strategies are most appropriate (acquisition vs. light touch vs. information tool)? How effective is this strategy at keeping tenants in units (e.g. length of stay, amount of money invested per unit, etc.)? It would also be important to know where the unsubsidized affordable housing stock is throughout California and the quality of those buildings, as housing rehabilitation programs may be key to their preservation.

While the intricacies of local governments and politics can make it difficult to come to a “one-size fits-all” answer to any of these questions, this research is necessary in California to know whether localities should be investing time and resources into preserving the existing stock of unsubsidized affordable housing.

Subsidized Housing Preservation

Policy Description

Preservation of “at-risk” subsidized housing generally refers to efforts at federal, state, and local levels to maintain the affordability of housing units constructed through government subsidy. These subsidized units are leased or sold to income-eligible households for a stipulated length of time, after which they can be redeveloped or otherwise converted to market-rate and lost from the deed-restricted affordable housing stock. Such units are considered to be “at-risk” of loss from the affordable housing stock based on the number of years of remaining restricted affordability, the type of entity managing a project (e.g. for-profit vs. non-profit owners), among other factors limiting the potential for conversion to market-rate (California Housing Partnership Corporation, 2020). In effect, preservation efforts seek to prevent displacement and foster residential stability of households inhabiting these restricted units through a variety of financial and non-financial incentives.

Housing preservation initiatives are typically developed and administered by municipal housing departments or other local organizations that monitor deed-restricted affordable housing stock. However, state and federal agencies support local preservation efforts by providing strategies and resources essential to extending affordability. For instance, at the federal level, the National Housing Preservation Database manages an exhaustive inventory of units “at-risk” of conversion to market-rate, and the California Housing Partnership Corporation offers localities throughout the state a variety of strategies to protect its deed-restricted stock (California Housing Partnership Corporation, 2020; National Housing Preservation Database, 2020).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: MEDIUM

Housing subsidy programs are highly diffuse - administered at federal, state, and local levels - and it is therefore difficult to thoroughly monitor resulting displacement from formerly affordable properties. Nevertheless, there are a handful of studies that attempt to measure the extent to which properties subsidized through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and other large-scale funding sources remain affordable beyond their required minimum terms. While these studies do not offer a direct measure of displacement, the loss of the affordable housing stock to market-rate conversion or redevelopment acts as an indirect proxy for displacement.

Summary and evaluation of literature

At the federal level, HUD commissioned a report that examines the outcomes of projects funded through LIHTC beyond the initial 15-year compliance period to which all such properties are subject under statute (though this period has since been extended to 30 years, and states such as California mandate 55 year affordability terms). In this report, Abt Associates found that LIHTC properties overwhelmingly remained affordable beyond the compliance period, with tax-credit beneficiaries selling their shares of properties to the mission-driven affordable housing developers who have overseen development, operations, and management of the subject property (Khadduri et al., 2012). However, there are exceptions to this finding that do pose a risk to residential stability, such as continued financial feasibility (and therefore habitability of the property) and, particularly relevant in California, the market-rate conversion or redevelopment of properties in strong real estate markets (Khadduri et al., 2012).

Jurisdictions throughout the country have also spearheaded programs focused on preserving at-risk affordable housing that would prevent displacement of low-income households. For instance, the

Housing and Community Investment Department of Los Angeles released a transmittal on a variety of strategies executed to preserve, rehabilitate, and acquire at-risk housing (Campos and Lott, 2018). These strategies include flexible funding programs that offer communities and mission-driven organizations the opportunity to preserve existing housing stock that may be losing affordability restrictions or require rehabilitation to maintain habitability. Additionally, municipal governments such as the City of Los Angeles have explored covenant extensions and “buy-downs” in which properties facing expiration essentially receive additional rental income from the city to extend affordability and stave off displacement (Campos and Lott, 2018).

Other cities have implemented programs that attempt to leverage sales involving properties with subsidized units to maintain their affordability. For instance, according to the City of LA’s transmittal, Seattle adopted a Notice of Intent to Sell Ordinance. Under this program, the City effectively publicizes information on occupied properties containing affordable units with the objective of protecting tenants and preserving affordability (Campos and Lott, 2018; City of Seattle, n.d.). However, despite the several strategies explored, the City’s report does not present research on the outcomes of preservation programs such as these in preventing displacement.

[Need for further research](#)

There is little research on the direct effects that subsidized housing preservation programs may have on displacement after contracts expire and buildings are converted to market rate; we know little about where tenants go, and how cost-effective it would be to maintain these contracts over time. Since prior studies were concerned with the external validity of their findings, researchers in California should attempt to use California-specific data to understand these trends. Additionally, it would be useful to disaggregate the effects for various racial and socioeconomic groups and attempt to measure differences in strong versus weak housing markets.

Housing Rehabilitation

Policy description

Housing rehabilitation is broadly defined as any effort to upgrade seriously deteriorated housing units (Hays, 1982). While private property owners and local nonprofit organizations engage in housing rehabilitation on a small scale all the time to keep units livable, larger-scale efforts funded by the public sector are much more limited. Currently, more than 1 million low-income people live in public housing, yet the program still struggles with an aging housing stock and significant capital needs (Gerken et al., 2019). Given the federal disinvestment in public housing starting in the 1980s, many public housing communities went without significant repairs for decades. Therefore, housing rehabilitation is necessary to improve the living conditions in both public and private housing as a means to avoid displacement.

Early federal responses to housing deterioration emphasized completely clearing dilapidated housing, often using the cleared land for non-housing uses that seemed beneficial for the community. In the 1970s, the Housing and Community Development Acts encouraged local communities to make housing rehabilitation part of their community development efforts, as an alternative policy strategy (Hays, 1982). In 1992, following a federal report that 86,000 public housing units were “severely distressed” with families living in extreme poverty, the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program (HOPE VI) was created. As one of the biggest infusions of public sector resources into public housing in decades, HOPE VI attempted to rehabilitate the most distressed public housing (Zielenbach, 2003). Most recently, the federal Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) and Choice Neighborhoods programs were developed to improve upon past attempts at rehabilitating public housing, with a focus on ensuring that residents can remain in place or return post-rehabilitation.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: MEDIUM

Housing rehabilitation programs have taken many forms over the past few decades, and while they are not always focused on reducing displacement, the rehabilitation process inherently leads to some level of displacement (short- or long-term). Therefore, there is a fair amount of both academic and gray literature discussing these programs, which often touch on whether they led to displacement or suggest that future research should look into their displacing effects. In June 2019, HUD released the first major evaluation of the RAD program, but there is no major publication that focuses solely on understanding the displacement effects of current, public housing rehabilitation programs.

Summary and evaluation of literature

REHABILITATION THROUGH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Early housing rehabilitation programs were funded on a per-project basis or via block grants for community development, meaning their implementation was much more localized. In a study of housing rehabilitation programs from 1980, R. Allen Hays estimated that nearly eight million units were in need of “assisted rehabilitation,” while only around 100,000 were being rehabilitated each year. Hays attributed this gap to the complexity of the rehabilitation process and the overall lack of resources committed to them. Subsidies to landlords were often not deep enough to pay for full rehabilitation costs, which potentially resulted in increasing rents for tenants (Hays, 1982).

In another study of these programs in Cleveland, researchers found that the grants that did go out, did not seem to change tenants’ situations much at all. “Expected signs of population displacement, property tax inflation, housing appreciation and real estate turnover were not always distinguishable

from normal patterns” (Margulis and Sheets, 1985). Instead of pointing to a lack of resources, however, Margulis and Sheets blamed real estate market disinvestment, housing blight, and neighborhood decline on “deeper economic malaise” and claimed jobs could do more to improve neighborhoods than community development (Margulis and Sheets, 1985).

DEMOLITION AND REHABILITATION THROUGH HOPE VI

HOPE VI brought an influx of resources into public housing rehabilitation and was initially intended to fund the public housing projects or Public Housing Authorities most in need. As the program went on, however, population priorities and unit-replacement requirements changed. HOPE VI projects increasingly funded mixed-income communities and no longer required one-to-one unit replacement. This resulted in a net loss in housing units designated for very-low income individuals and families and the significant displacement of those families (Zielenbach, 2003).

Overall, HOPE VI funded the demolition of nearly 100,000 public housing units in favor of mixed-income developments resulting in significant displacement (Keene and Geronimus, 2011). While residents were, on average, moved to neighborhoods with lower poverty rates than those they left behind, the majority were moved to other public housing sites (Kingsley et al., 2003). It is estimated that only 11.4% returned to their original homes (NHLP, 2002), despite the fact that most residents leaving HOPE VI sites wanted to return when projects were completed, as a study had found (Popkin et al., 2004). Overall, displaced residents experienced few improvements to their living conditions and economic realities, while also losing their geographically-rooted social ties (Keene and Geronimus, 2011). In a book studying the effects of the HOPE VI program, Edward Goetz examined what happened to residents whose communities were demolished, unfortunately finding that, “in some areas, residents are as a whole arguably worse off than before” (Goetz, 2013, p 150).

REHABILITATION THROUGH RAD + CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Choice Neighborhoods program succeeded HOPE VI in 2010 and reinstated the requirement to replace demolished units on a one-for-one basis. However, in 2010 the Choice Neighborhoods could only fund about 900 units annually, and it was estimated that the capital-needs backlog for housing rehabilitation was \$25.6 billion. The Rental Assistance Demonstration program was introduced as a way to bring outside funding to fill this gap. Through RAD, public housing is essentially transferred to public, nonprofit, and sometimes private organizations to rehabilitate and operate the sites (Hanlon, 2017). As of 2019, HUD had authorized around 200,000 units (around 17% of the total public housing stock) for the program and converted just over 100,000 (Gerken et al., 2019).

To address the issues of displacement that occurred under HOPE VI, RAD regulations often prohibit permanent involuntary displacement and require that tenants who must temporarily relocate are guaranteed the right to return without any rescreening (Hanlon, 2017). In the first major evaluation of the program, research commissioned by HUD found more than 4 in 5 residents were satisfied with their housing after RAD conversion (Gerken et al., 2019). Similarly, in interviews with residents of RAD sites in California’s Central Valley, researchers found notable, and mostly positive, results associated with RAD conversions, especially regarding improved amenities, safety, and resident resources (Hernández et al., 2019).

Regarding displacement, the initial evaluation seems to show that the majority of residents in public housing converted through RAD are able to stay in their units. About one-third of residents had to move

during the RAD process, and only 2.3% did not return to their original unit or another subsidized housing unit. Despite the program's small size, it has been quite controversial. There remain significant concerns that transferring ownership of public housing to outside organizations that are susceptible to market forces could mean residents are more at risk of being displaced because of foreclosure, bankruptcy, etc. (Schwartz, 2017).

Need for further research

Given RAD is the major public housing rehabilitation program in the country today, there is a real need for research to focus on the voluntary versus involuntary displacement that can happen throughout the conversion process. Research could monitor the experience of residents after the rehabilitation to understand if the safeguards built into the program are sufficient to prevent displacement in the event of mortgage foreclosures (Schwartz, 2017).

Additionally, since residents have the option to seek housing on the private market with federal vouchers, it is necessary to understand how communities change during RAD conversions and where they go. These changes have an impact on social networks that can improve health outcomes. Therefore bringing a health equity perspective into research around housing rehabilitation can reveal insights into the community-level health outcomes from a RAD conversion (Keene and Geronimus, 2011).

Another potential focus of future research is rehabilitation programs. Little is known about whether and how these types of investments incorporate investments in weatherization, energy efficiency, and/or electrification, and then how these may contribute directly or indirectly to displacement.

Condo Conversion Restrictions + Tenant Opportunity to Purchase

Policy description

Condominium (or condo) conversion typically refers to the process of taking multi-unit rental housing that is owned by one entity, breaking it up by individual units, and selling those to separate owners as condos. As referenced in the discussion of rent control policies, owners of rental property may choose to convert their units to condos as a reaction to laws perceived to reduce their potential profit from renting.

In response to condo conversions, some cities have placed restrictions on how many units may go through this process each year. In San Francisco, for example, there was a backlog of two thousand requests to convert, so in 2013 the City Council placed a ten-year moratorium on condo conversions in exchange for permitting those already in the backlog (Barmann, 2013).

In Washington DC, the city responded to condo conversions with a law giving tenants the first right to purchase their building when it is put up for sale. The Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) passed in 1980 as a strategy to prevent displacement in DC's inner core (Gallaher, 2016). When the owner of a multi-unit building puts it up for sale, TOPA gives the existing tenants the right to purchase the property at the market price and then convert the units to a condo or cooperative so tenants can individually buy their own units. This often involves tenants working with a third-party developer (either for- or non-profit) that makes necessary repairs and helps manage the property after the purchase. This strategy utilizes the condo conversion process to assist existing tenants and is seen as one of the most tenant-friendly laws in the country (Gallaher, 2016).

The First Right Purchase Program in DC provides financial and technical assistance to income-qualifying tenants that are attempting to use TOPA to purchase their buildings. Over the past decade the program has helped preserve nearly 1,400 units of affordable housing (Reed, 2013). In one neighborhood alone, TOPA was used to block the eviction of 26 families on one street in DC, leading researchers to conclude that it provides the "legal opportunity structure necessary for community organizations to fight redlining and gentrification" (Lloyd, 2016, 1091).

On a larger scale, the UK passed a similar, nation-wide "Right to Buy" policy in the 1970s, which research suggests was largely responsible for raising homeownership in the UK from 55% to over 70% in about 25 years (Disney and Luo, 2017). At present, several cities in California (Berkeley, Oakland, and Los Angeles) are considering passing similar legislation (Brey, 2020).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: MEDIUM

Beyond a 2019 study examining the effect of condominium production on the demographics of cities in the US (and indirectly on displacement), there is little empirical evidence on the effect of either allowing or restricting condo development on displacement. While descriptive research exists on first-right-to-purchase condos policies, there is not much literature directly examining how they affect displacement. The exception is Carolyn Gallaher's 2016 book on Washington DC's response to condo conversions and the efficacy of TOPA as a means of preventing displacement. According to Gallaher, "Scholars complain...that condo conversion reduces the rental housing stock on which the poor and working class depend" (Gallaher, 2016, 2).

Summary and evaluation of literature

Gallaher analyzed tenant associations' attempts to purchase their buildings through TOPA to understand if the law effectively prevents displacement. Using a representative sample of seven buildings (containing 1,179 units) that went through the TOPA process between 2003 and 2013, the study looked at both the percent of tenants who made it through the whole process, as well as whether the units remained affordable (Gallaher, 2016). Gallaher found that 58% of tenants in this sample made it all the way through the TOPA process, which qualitative interviews described as long and complex. While this number may seem low, Gallaher points out that when buildings were sold before, “landlords and developers interested in conversion routinely forced out [all of] their in-situ tenants” (Gallaher, 2016).

When it comes to the affordability of the units, however, Gallaher had a more nuanced take. While all 58% of tenants who made it through the whole TOPA process were able to afford their units in the end, the units that were vacated by existing tenants were most often converted to market-rate rents, becoming affordable only to people with higher-than-average incomes. Gallaher considers this “exclusionary displacement” because although units are voluntarily vacated, rent increases or tenure changes make it so that someone who could have afforded the unit before conversion no longer can. Bringing these vacated units up to market rate is often the result of pressure from developers to increase the returns on a project (Gallaher, 2016).

This analysis suggests that while TOPA can be an effective way to use the condo conversion process to keep tenants in their homes, the complexity of the process and pressure from developers may affect how many people are able to access this resource. Additionally, tenants who can afford to buy their homes at the time of sale are typically not in the lowest-income groups, which means TOPA laws may not protect the renters most at risk. One criticism of TOPA’s effectiveness at preserving affordable housing is that it puts too much responsibility into the hands of tenants. Aaron O’Toole and Benita Jones argue that while TOPA provides a “significant opportunity” for ensuring that housing remains affordable, the law’s structure forces tenants to work in their own best interest instead of allowing the government to mandate that units remain affordable for all (O’Toole and Jones, 2009). This may lead to potential disparities in who is and is not served by these laws.

While condominium conversions can directly displace existing tenants, a new working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research challenges the idea that the presence of condominiums in general causes displacement by encouraging wealthier residents to move into urban centers. In what they call the first empirical analysis of the effect condominiums have on urban space, Boustan et al. (2019) analyzed the relationship between the density of condos in central cities across the US and the demographic makeup of those cities. Examining a range of local policies that either allow or restrict condo production and conversion in these cities, they found that while restrictive policies did in fact reduce the number of condos in an area (as intended), there was no relationship between the number of condo units and the residents’ demographics in that area (Boustan et al., 2019). As they explain, this finding provides more evidence to the idea that, “the primary factors behind gentrification reflect changes in the demand for urban living rather than housing supply” (Boustan et al., 2019).

Need for further research

The introduction of the new Boustan et al. (2019) paper challenges the idea that building new condominiums can drive displacement through induced demand; however it does not address the

question of whether restrictions on condo conversions are preventing direct displacement by stopping the eviction of existing tenants when buildings are sold. While these condo conversions can restrict the housing market and displace lower-income tenants, the use of laws like TOPA turns that process on its head, instead using it to protect at least some of the existing tenants.

Gallaher's research suggests this process can be effective, but recommends that future research is needed to understand the affordability and displacement effects of similar laws in different cities. If similar ordinances proposed around the state are passed, this would present an opportunity to conduct similar research on how effective these laws are at preventing displacement in a more local context. Similarly, research could examine San Francisco's ten-year moratorium on condo conversions to see how resident mobility has changed since its passing.

Community Control of Land

Policy description

The motivation behind policies that give communities control over the land on which they live is straightforward: housing as an investment vehicle leads to speculation, increasing rent costs, and displacement of those who cannot pay. These policies attempt to provide an alternative by transforming tenants into collective owners with control of the land they live on. Instead of being bound by the profit motivations of individual or corporate landlords, these tenants trade profit maximization for the guarantee that they will be able to afford their homes indefinitely. While there are many specific policies that fall under this umbrella, they include similar components that differentiate community control from other forms of cooperative ownership like condominiums: land owned collectively by residents or a non-profit organization, long-term leases of the structures on the land to residents, and resale requirements to ensure rents remain affordable in perpetuity (Green, 2018).

In a 2018 report for the Democracy Collaborative, Jarrid Green describes the following policies under the umbrella of community control, some of which we discuss elsewhere in this report:

- *Community Land Trusts*: Multi-stakeholder organizations that own land for the permanent benefit of the community, selling and renting homes with various resale restrictions in order to maintain long-term affordability.
- *Resident Owned Communities*: Member-run cooperative organizations that own the land in manufactured housing communities, protecting against displacement, poor conditions, and exploitative management practices.
- *Limited Equity Cooperatives*: Member-run cooperative organizations that limit the equity homeowners can accumulate, thus preserving long-term affordability.
- *Land Banks*: Publicly owned or nonprofit entities that allow local governments to acquire abandoned or tax delinquent properties and prepare them for productive uses.

Community land trusts (CLTs) are one of the more direct policies that allow communities to retain control over the land they live in. The first CLT was an agricultural land trust in Georgia, started in 1968 to prevent black farmers from being forced off their land (Louie, 2016). While CLTs can be complicated to set up and maintain, there are over 225 of them in the US today (Grounded Solutions Network, 2020). According to the California Community Land Trust Network, there are over 15 CLTs statewide, most of which are in Northern California. (CCLTN, 2020).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: LOW

We found no literature on the effectiveness of these policies in reducing displacement. While there are papers and reports (mostly gray literature) describing individual communities that have enacted policies like CLTs and examining their effects, there has been little, if any, research on their larger relationship to displacement.

Summary and evaluation of literature

The most prominent and well-studied example of a CLT is the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston, which had notable stabilizing effects on the residents of the neighborhood. DSNI is a CLT that covers 225 permanently affordable housing units, commercial and nonprofit space, as well as community amenities like a playground, urban farm, and more. Because of the CLT's presence in the

neighborhood, its residents were less hard hit by the Great Recession of 2007-2009 (Louie, 2016). DSNI, which owned the land and leased out the housing to the residents, had ensured that no subprime mortgages were sold in the neighborhood; therefore, foreclosures during that time were minimal. Compared to a similar sized area nearby that had 85 foreclosures in 2008 and 2009, DSNI only had 1 (Louie, 2016).

The neighborhood was also included in a study of big-city neighborhoods that were seeing higher capital investment in residential real estate as well as increasing numbers of low- and moderate-income people (Oakland's Fruitvale neighborhood was also included in this list). Citing years of community organizing and investment in policies like CLTs, the report states, "In these just-right neighborhoods, value recapture mechanisms (e.g., community land trusts and mutual housing associations) might allow us to harness a wave of reinvestment to benefit urban residents instead of displacing them" (Wyly et al., 2000, p. 2).

CLTs more broadly, however, have been found to serve more moderate-income than lower-income households, which may limit their ability to prevent displacement of the communities most at risk of displacement by market pressures. In a 2011 survey of CLTs by Grounded Solutions Network, an organization that promotes affordable housing via policies like those discussed here, researchers found that 55% of CLTs served households at 80% AMI, another 30% served households at 120% AMI, and none served those below 50% AMI (Thaden, 2012).

These findings are confirmed internationally in studies of limited equity cooperatives in both Denmark and Uruguay. Recent research into these communities found that they do in fact provide owners with more direct control over their homes, but who is an owner is often determined by social and cultural capital (e.g., social networks, educational resources, values and attitudes, etc.) This can leave out groups in need. As the researchers explain: "those who have fallen through the cracks...have largely been vulnerable and marginalized social groups that are not endowed with the minimum economic, social and cultural capital required for membership in a cooperative housing project" (Vidal, 2019, p. 174).

This limited research points to the potential for policies that give communities control of land to reduce displacement through their protective affordability requirements and long-term commitment. While these policies have not yet been broadly replicated and do not currently cover people at all income levels, they have the potential to work in concert with other anti-displacement strategies to preserve affordable housing and reduce displacement (Jackson, 2011).

Need for future research

Due to their potential role in reducing displacement, more research should be conducted on community land trusts. Particularly important would be to better understand the extent to which these policies do or do not serve the most vulnerable communities (including those with high proportions of people of color and/or the lowest incomes), and how they could be expanded or geared toward serving those most at risk of being displaced. Other questions that require further investigation include: Are there local or state policies that facilitate or inhibit the establishment of CLTs? How might governments link public land disposition policies to CLT formation?

Additionally, given that community land trusts (and similar policies) can effectively remove housing from the market, it would be important to analyze the second-order effects of their implementation to

understand what happens to rents and displacement pressures for those living near such protected housing.

Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies

“As rents in... neighborhoods rise, advocates often point to the need for tenant protections, rent regulation, and other strategies to ensure that existing residents are able to stay in the changing neighborhood” (Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2019).

Rent Control

Policy description

Rent regulations (including rent control) have been utilized as a mechanism to stabilize housing costs for decades. After both world wars, facing a lack of housing for those returning home, cities across the country implemented different forms of rent regulation with the goal of fighting skyrocketing housing costs (Pastor et al., 2018). While specific rent regulation policies vary across time and geographic context, rent control today refers to a set of policies restricting the amount landlords can raise rent in a given year. Such policies are frequently accompanied by provisions that exempt new construction from rent control and bring rents to market rate once tenants move out.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: HIGH

Given their long history, rent control policies have been under much academic scrutiny, and there exists a large body of peer-reviewed writing available about their effectiveness in reducing displacement. However, the majority of these studies do not measure displacement directly, instead using proxy measures such as housing costs or rent prices to estimate the effect on existing tenants.

In a literature review of the most recent research on the effects of rent regulation, Manuel Pastor and co-authors describe rent regulations as an “anti-displacement tool” that successfully keeps tenants in their homes longer, writing, “in San Francisco, rent stabilization has allowed long-term, lower-income residents to stay in their homes rather than being pushed out to farflung suburbs” (Pastor et al., 2018, 21).

The conclusion that rent regulations are effective at stabilizing neighborhoods and preventing displacement is commonplace in the research overall. In the aforementioned study of rent control in San Francisco, Rebecca Diamond and co-authors examined the introduction of the 1994 ordinance that suddenly applied the existing policy to a new set of units. Using this unanticipated change in the law, they were able to examine the migration patterns of tenants in small multi-family apartment buildings built before 1980 (protected by rent control) as compared with those built in 1980 or after (not protected by rent control). Their findings suggest that rent control limited the displacement of tenants and allowed them longer tenure in their units, having an especially strong effect among minority and elderly communities (Diamond et al., 2018). Overall, the authors estimated that tenants in rent-controlled units were 10 to 20 percent more likely to remain at their original address and are more likely to remain in San Francisco, in general. However, they also found that the policy led to removal of units from the rental market, through condo conversions. They concluded that the policy protected current tenants while potentially harming lower-income residents who did not currently occupy a rent-controlled unit.

Another study of rent decontrol in Cambridge, MA, looked at the unexpected removal of rent control in Massachusetts in 1995 (Autor et al., 2016). Researchers found that property values increased by 16 percent, on average, for units that were no longer subject to rent regulations. This increase in property

values does not directly predict displacement, but ostensibly led to the displacement of some tenants who had been protected by rent control.

Using the same policy change as Autor et al. (2016), Sims (2006) examined the effect of the 1995 end of rent control in Massachusetts on the quantity and quality of rental units in Boston. Overall, this study found that units subject to rent control were 6 to 7 percentage points more likely to become rental units after rent control was removed, suggesting that landlords had been keeping thousands of units off the market (as ownership units) due to these regulations. This study also found that removing rent control shortened renter stays in a property by about 1.84 years (Sims, 2006).

While rent control is effective at keeping people who live in regulated units in place, these studies find mixed results on the effects of the policy on the rental market overall. Since rent control policies generally contain exemptions for newer units, they have not been found to affect the rate of new building construction (Pastor et al., 2018). On the other hand, these studies also find that owners of units subjected to rent control are likely incentivized to pull them off the rental market and convert them to for-sale units, renovate them to the point at which they are no longer covered by rent control, or let their properties deteriorate in minor ways (Diamond et al., 2018; Sims, 2006; Asquith, 2019). In a paper examining landlord behavior under rent control in San Francisco, Asquith (2019) finds that when faced with large demand increases in the housing market, “an increasing number of landlords choose to withdraw some or all of their units from the market, even at the cost of leaving them vacant” (so that rents can eventually be raised to market rate) (Asquith, 2019, p 42).

Additionally, there is uncertainty around the effect of the presence of rent control policies on non-regulated units. While it seems that the rent and property values of surrounding, non-regulated units may also remain lower with rent control (Sims, 2006; Autor et al., 2014), the effect is limited and there is uncertainty as to whether this applies in all contexts (Pastor et al., 2018). While Diamond et al. (2018) attribute a 15 percent decline in the supply of rental units and 5 percent increase in rent prices to San Francisco’s rent control policies, they do not discuss what would have happened to rental units in such a strong housing market without those policies. Given the above findings from Autor et al. (2016), it is possible that the removal of rent control would lead to an even further increase in property values and rent prices, potentially driving even more displacement in the area (Pastor et al., 2018).

While the nuances of the second-order effects of rent regulations are being debated, the literature seems to agree that rent regulations are an effective anti-displacement tool for those living in regulated units. “Such housing stability reduces evictions (forced mobility) and can provide important societal benefits” (Pastor et al., 2018, 21). However, Pastor et al. are careful to warn that these policies are not a “silver bullet” and must be part of a slate of anti-displacement policies (such as preventing landlords from removing units from the rental market, or “Just Cause” eviction regulations) to be effective in the long-term. Research in Silicon Valley showed that the nuances of rent control (what cap exists, how many buildings are included, etc.) can make a significant difference. In San Jose, for example, where there has been some version of rent control in place since 1979, the cap on annual rent increases was set at 8 percent. While other cities with rent regulations in the area saw lower tenant outmigration than nearby cities without regulations, San Jose witnessed no difference, potentially demonstrating that the 8 percent cap was too high to have an effect (Jeon and Cash, 2019). Vacancy decontrol is another nuance

that can dramatically diminish the effectiveness of rent control, since it ensures that rent-stabilized units repeatedly return to market-rate upon turnover (Kelekian and Barton, 2010).

Need for further research

Despite the relative abundance of research on rent control policies, researchers recommend that a deeper understanding is needed. Suggestions for further research include: analyzing exactly who benefits and who doesn't from these policies (Sims, 2006), how differences in rent regulation policies and local context change their outcomes (Jeon and Cash, 2019; Rajasekaran et al., 2019), the effect of these regulations on small "mom-and-pop" landlords (Pastor et al., 2018), the effects on housing costs (Rajasekaran et al., 2019), and the impact of rent control on the health and wellness of tenants (Pastor et al., 2018).

Additionally, more research is necessary to truly understand rent control's effectiveness at preventing displacement as none of the above studies look directly at displacement pressures comparing areas with and without rent control. It would be useful to understand the effect rent control has on the mobility of residents who live in controlled units (e.g. whether or not they are consuming "too much" or "too little" housing due to a desire not to leave a regulated unit, or living in a location they would want to move away from), to determine the extent to which it creates exclusionary displacement. In a similar vein, we should examine who is moving into controlled units, where, and how, in order to understand longer-term patterns of neighborhood integration and segregation (Rajasekaran et al., 2019).

“Just Cause” Evictions

Policy Description

“Just Cause” eviction protections forbid property owners from evicting tenants except under certain specified circumstances, such as nonpayment of rent, violation of lease terms, or permanent removal of a dwelling from the rental market. In jurisdictions without such restrictions, tenants may be served with notices to vacate without cause—termed “no fault” evictions— that legally compel tenants to surrender their dwelling to the property owner within a certain period of time. “Just Cause” protections therefore generally shield tenants from arbitrary or “no-fault” evictions that may occur for reasons including economic incentives in a warming rental market, retaliation against tenants, or other instances in which tenants are not at-fault (Cuéllar 2019).

The coverage of “Just Cause” ordinances varies by jurisdiction: they may apply their protections universally or only to a subset of the housing stock (e.g., structures built prior to 1980). Relatedly, “Just Cause” protections may either exist as standalone policies to prevent residential instability or in conjunction with rent-stabilization ordinances to bypass limitations on rent increases for incumbent tenants. Moreover, “Just Cause” ordinances may also operate in concert with condominium conversion laws or regulations on removing units from the rental market. For example, in Los Angeles, “Just Cause” protections include rent-stabilized housing stock being removed from the rental market, and property owners are required to provide relocation assistance to affected tenants as part of this ordinance (All-in Cities n.d.).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy’s effect on displacement: MEDIUM

“Just Cause” eviction ordinances, similar to “Right to Counsel” protections, lend themselves to a relatively direct metric of displacement prevention and residential stability. “Just Cause” eviction protections are often featured in discussions of displacement, though limited research exists on how these programs mitigate displacement.

Among the limited research on the efficacy of “Just Cause” is a natural experiment that examined the incidence of eviction in California cities with and without these protections. The analysis selected four cities with recently passed “Just Cause” protections, compared evictions and eviction filings before and after their implementation, and compared these results to those of cities with similar characteristics but not similar protections (Cuéllar 2019). This study found that cities with “Just Cause” protections saw the incidence of evictions and eviction filings decline after their passage and compared to their counterparts without such protections in place (Cuéllar 2019). Although this finding only considers formal processes of eviction—rather than informal channels not reflected in legal filings—the data demonstrate how “Just Cause” protections may mitigate formal displacement pressures.

Another study from 2016 examined how proposed “Just Cause” legislation in Boston would stem the tide of gentrification-fueled displacement and their associated harms. This study was framed as a health impact analysis to assess how “Just Cause” protections could influence the health of residents experiencing residential instability (City Life/Vida Urbana 2016). In other words, this study sought to assess how “Just Cause” protections could improve community health outcomes by promoting residential stability and its associated lifelines (e.g. social support networks) (City Life/Vida Urbana 2016). The report demonstrates how the eviction is associated with short- and long-term health issues; for instance, persons experiencing eviction reported decline in mental health and well-being as a result

of stress and trauma, and evicted households are often forced to relocate to substandard, hazardous dwellings that harm physical health (City Life/Vida Urbana 2016). In effect, “Just Cause” evictions protections, according to this study, would mitigate stressors and harms associated with residential instability.

Need for further research

Future research should emulate and build upon the analysis presented by Cuéllar (2019), who investigates the change in eviction rates and filings across cities that have implemented “Just Cause” protections.

However, to build on such an analysis and address its limitations, future research should examine trends in residential stability and tenure across jurisdictions that have or lack “Just Cause” protections. Indeed, by itself, “Just Cause” leaves open the possibility for other sources of displacement, such as rent increases and tenant harassment. By considering policies to support residential stability that complement “Just Cause” evictions, researchers can better estimate the impact of “Just Cause” policies. Moreover, recent legislation in California—Assembly Bill 1482—offers an additional lens through which “Just Cause” protections can support residential stability; this law includes “Just Cause” protections for certain renters and units, while also limiting annual rent increases. Future research can explore how this legislation has mitigated displacement pressures throughout California.

Tenant Right to Counsel

Policy Description

Tenant right to counsel confers renter households access to legal representation in eviction, or unlawful detainer trials. Such a policy extends the constitutional right to an attorney, required in criminal procedures, to tenants in eviction trials, which are civil procedures. Scholars and advocates have noted the imbalance of representation for decades and the devastating consequences for renter households (Scherer 1988). In the face of an ever diminishing supply of affordable housing, a tenant right to counsel has the potential to mitigate displacement pressures.

Until recently, tenants named in eviction filings could rely only on under-resourced programs that provide legal counsel or volunteer attorneys (Scherer 1988). Over the past few years, however, jurisdictions throughout the country have introduced programs offering tenants access to attorneys as they navigate eviction cases. Notably, cities differ in whether they operate within a means-tested framework, whereby only low-income tenants qualify for assistance, or through a guaranteed right for renters of all income levels, as with criminal proceedings. For example, New York City offers legal representation to renters with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line, whereas San Francisco's program extends to all renters, regardless of income. Overall, right to counsel policies represent a significant shift in the context of urban displacement by dramatically expanding access to legal representation for the most vulnerable renter populations.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: MEDIUM

Because right to counsel implementation is relatively recent, there is a somewhat limited amount of literature that explicitly measures how such policies mitigate displacement. For instance, New York, San Francisco, and Newark have all enacted right to counsel laws, but only a handful of evaluations have been conducted (Mironova 2019; Fracassa 2020). Of course, in contrast to most other policies considered in this report, right to counsel provides a direct metric to evaluate incidence of displacement—whether unlawful detainer actions were filed, and the outcome of those filings. Accordingly, existing studies offer preliminary insight into how this type of policy can reduce displacement pressures.

Much of the literature on right to counsel—empirical or otherwise— has originated in law schools and public interest legal clinics engaged in pilot programs for tenant representation in housing court. For example, Stanford University's Justice & Diversity Center established a one-year pilot program offering pro-bono legal services to tenants with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (John and Terry Levin Center 2014). The results of this pilot program—the initial step toward San Francisco's implementation of a codified right to counsel—revealed that out of 692 tenants provided with legal representation, 187 were able to remain in their dwellings (John and Terry Levin Center 2014, 17). However, this analysis was largely exploratory and therefore offers notable but limited findings in how tenants with representation fared relative to those without representation, beyond citing the imbalance between landlords and tenants described above. Around the same time, the Boston Bar Association rolled out randomized controlled trials in a handful of cities in Massachusetts, in which a treatment group received legal representation. The results revealed that tenants receiving legal representation were twice as likely to remain in their homes than those without representation (Boston Bar Association 2012). This pilot's experimental research design provides a slightly more robust measure of how right to counsel minimizes displacement.

More recently, San Francisco has issued findings related to the city's right to counsel law that was approved by voters in 2018. The San Francisco Chronicle reported in February 2020 that over the course of six months in 2019, the Right to Counsel program helped approximately 730 residents remain in their homes (Fracassa 2020). During this span, over 1,600 households sought legal representation through the program, with more than 1,000 receiving full representation and more than 500 households receiving supplemental legal support. In a related press release, Supervisor Dean Preston highlighted that the City's eviction filings had declined by 10%, and that two out of three tenants receiving full-scope representation retained possession of their dwelling unit (Fracassa, 2020). Additionally, these findings revealed that four out of five African Americans receiving legal representation in an unlawful detainer action remained in their home, preventing further displacement of African American San Franciscans (Fracassa, 2020). While preliminary and not independently examined, these early findings point to the profound impact of right to counsel as a potential anti-displacement tool.

Finally, another recent high-profile implementation of right to counsel was in New York City, which enacted its policy in late 2017. As part of its law, the City has rolled out the program to approximately 20 zip codes, with remaining implementation to all 200 zip codes by 2022. To evaluate its efficacy in mitigating eviction, the Community Service Society of New York compared eviction filing records in 2017, before the law was implemented, to its first year of operation in 2018. More specifically, this analysis compared filings in those first wave zip codes with demographically comparable zip codes where the law will be implemented in the coming years. Based on data from the City's Office of Civil Justice, over 22,000 residents benefitted from representation, of whom 84% were allowed to remain in their home (Mironova 2019). The analysis further found that evictions in pilot zip codes declined by 11% between 2017 and 2018 (from 4,563 to 4,051), compared to just 2% for non-piloted zip codes (from 13,219 to 12,932) (Mironova 2019). Although this report only compares data between 2017 and 2018, the results highlight the immediate impact that such a policy has on reducing displacement pressures.

[Need for further research](#)

Right to counsel programs stand among only a handful of policies that allow for clear measurement of displacement. With a cluster of right to counsel programs emerging, scholars and advocates will continue to receive fresh data to examine the efficacy of these programs and how tenant legal representation may stem the tide of displacement.

To further strengthen the analysis, future research should examine the broader economic and demographic trends within which right to counsel interventions are unfolding. In other words, most of the existing studies on right to counsel analyze the policy independent of the local dynamics that have contributed to the loss of incumbent residents. Therefore, research could be improved by examining the underlying circumstances that may be fueling displacement, which would offer a more exhaustive understanding of residential instability beyond formal eviction proceedings. Further research might also try to identify the basis for the eviction (e.g., non-payment of rent, failure to comply with the lease terms, notice to vacate, or another basis). This would help identify whether right to counsel is most effective in a specific type of eviction or is effective across the board for all tenants facing eviction.

Rental Assistance Programs

Policy Description

Rental assistance programs—distinct from tenant-based or project-based rental assistance—are initiatives offering low-income tenants emergency funds to pay rent and stave off eviction pressures during moments of economic hardship. Whereas tenant-based or project-based rental assistance (e.g. Section 8) is the primary means of rental assistance at the federal level, state and local governments have implemented additional short-term rental assistance programs to supplement renter household income to avoid mass evictions and displacement.

Rental assistance programs take a variety of forms, and may exist permanently or on an ad hoc basis during moments of heightened risk of residential instability. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, states and localities have spearheaded emergency programs that provide assistance to renter households with lost income as a result of mass economic closures (Greene and Batko 2020). Through general revenue, housing trust funds, and philanthropic contributions, state and local governments are overseeing rental assistance programs for qualifying households that can demonstrate their economic hardship (Greene and Batko 2020). These policies are not limited to economic downturns, and have been used to support renters who have experienced sudden rent increases. For instance, in late 2019, prior to the implementation of a state law that capped annual rent increases, tenants in Los Angeles saw their rents spike as landlords attempted to bypass the impending restrictions on future rent adjustments. As a result, the LA City Council established an emergency renters fund to prevent mass displacement as tenants absorbed substantial increases to their housing costs (Chandler 2019).

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: MEDIUM

Although limited research exists on the efficacy of rental assistance programs, some research on eviction prevention does address rental assistance funds as a stopgap displacement remedy. For instance, a recent student capstone project conducted a comparison of cities having some combination of eviction prevention programs that include emergency assistance, administered by either local governments or charitable organizations. It examined the localities of Jacksonville, Florida, Hennepin County, Minnesota, Seattle-Tacoma-Everett, Washington, and San Antonio, Texas, which have programs offering emergency grants to households at risk of eviction (Aghayev, Feng, and Wiens 2017). This report shared survey findings suggesting that familiarity with these programs was highly limited, with ⅓ of respondents in eviction court reporting that they did not apply or were unaware of rental assistance programs (Aghayev, Feng, and Wiens 2017). Additionally, the researchers found that the process of confirming program eligibility greatly undermines its efficacy, as this processing period lasts longer than the eviction process itself (Aghayev, Feng, and Wiens 2017).

Other work has explored how policies could be instrumental in reducing residential instability by preventing eviction. For instance, most recently, Matthew Desmond's extensive research on eviction has revealed how relatively small sums of unpaid rent account for a large share of filings against tenants. In fact, Desmond's findings suggest that in the eviction courts of over 20 states, a significant share of renters are being evicted for less than \$600, or otherwise less than a single month's rent (Badger 2019). Similarly, in a study conducted in King County, Washington, researchers found that over half of the tenants experiencing eviction owed less than half a month's rent (Raghuveer 2018).

Researchers and advocates have long pointed out the need for rental assistance programs, pointing to examples of where such initiatives have existed. Hartman and Robinson (2003) point to San Francisco and New York City as two cities in which community organizations have pursued such efforts to prevent eviction and displacement. However, this research does not provide figures on the outcomes of these programs on mitigating displacement (Hartman and Robinson 2003).

[Need for further research](#)

The prevalence and variety of rental assistance programs offer a diversity of approaches to measure their efficacy in mitigating displacement. The present moment of economic insecurity wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged cities to design policies that can protect vulnerable renters from displacement. Consequently, researchers can evaluate how cities differed in their efforts to stem the tide of eviction and displacement as a result of financial need.

Moreover, the multiple sources of relief—from state and local governments to non-profit organizations—provide a natural point of comparison. Future research might examine how federal stimulus programs and expansion of Emergency Solutions Grants were leveraged by localities, as well as how non-governmental entities administered these programs for households experiencing economic hardship.

Finally, research must consider how tenant outreach and education shape the success of these programs in effectively reducing displacement pressures. In other words, future studies should investigate the extent to which cities and other entities are reaching tenants, and how their efforts could be improved.

Foreclosure Assistance

Policy Description

Foreclosure assistance programs offer financial and non-financial means of support to homeowners facing financial distress and risk of displacement. In response to the tidal wave of foreclosures during the Great Recession, jurisdictions established assistance programs that provided financial aid and/or loan counseling that would protect homeowners and prevent further residential instability at the nadir of economic downturn.

For instance, during the Great Recession, the federal government established multiple programs that provided foreclosure assistance in a variety of forms (Mayer et al. 2012). Localities typically received federal grants that were used to prop up families in or on the cusp of financial default by providing free assistance on renegotiating mortgage terms or, in extreme cases, supporting households that ultimately ceded their home (National Housing Conference n.d.). Additionally, community development institutions spearheaded initiatives to assist homeowners at risk of foreclosure. Overall, the Great Recession offers a recent case study of how foreclosure assistance programs function and its efficacy in preventing displacement.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement

The magnitude of the foreclosure crisis during the Great Recession yielded a significant amount of literature on the subject of assistance programs. Because foreclosure, like eviction, is directly related to displacement, the outcomes reported in these foreclosure assistance programs essentially serve as a proxy for displacement mitigation.

The Urban Institute conducted a comprehensive, three-year evaluation of the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling (NFMC) program, one of several initiatives that emerged during the foreclosure crisis of the Great Recession (Mayer et al. 2012). As part of its program evaluation, Urban Institute researchers matched a sample of 180,000 records from the NFMC program to a loan performance data-sharing partner (Mayer et al. 2012, 3-4). By several metrics, households with troubled loans that received counseling were significantly more likely to avoid default at various stages, prevent completed foreclosures, benefit from loan modification, and subsequently remain current on their mortgages relative to households not receiving counseling (Mayer et al. 2012, 4-7). Although this study does not explicitly discuss displacement, the outcomes assessed - such as loan modification, avoiding delinquency, and remaining current - suggest that foreclosure counseling programs may promote residential stability (Mayer et al. 2012).

Another analysis by the Urban Institute conveyed the benefits of mortgage counseling programs as piloted by a program in Washington D.C. In a data-sharing arrangement with the Urban Institute, a local non-profit housing counseling organization engaged in outreach with over 400 households facing the threat of foreclosure between 2011 and 2012 (Urban Institute, 2013). Nearly half of the participating households were able to become current on their mortgages through their assistance, with only five counseled households reporting foreclosure (Urban Institute, 2013). While a small sample, this study further conveys the benefits of foreclosure assistance programs in preventing displacement.

Additionally, in a joint report between the Boston and Cleveland Federal Reserve Banks and Federal Reserve Board, one case study examined a pilot program that provided foreclosure assistance to low-income households facing imminent displacement. This study described how, between the Fall of 2009 and April 2010, Boston Community Capital - a non-profit financial institution - piloted a program that acquired more than 60 housing units at discounted rates and resold them to existing occupants across several low-income neighborhoods in the Boston area (Cherry and Hanratty 2010; Carr and Mulcahy 2010). The program explicitly served households who had not been evicted in neighborhoods targeted by subprime mortgage lenders (Cherry and Hanratty 2010, 115-117). While not a comprehensive study, this case study sheds light on innovative approaches to foreclosure assistance that explicitly prevented displacement of homeowners (Cherry and Hanratty 2010; Carr and Mulcahy 2010).

Individual states have also established foreclosure prevention initiatives. For instance, the State of Washington passed the Foreclosure Fairness Act, which requires lenders to offer homeowners financial counseling options, including mediation, prior to beginning foreclosure proceedings (Chen 2016). Washington's Foreclosure Fairness Act, according to Chen, has hundreds of homeowners to modify their loans and avoid displacement through this state law through the state law (Chen 2016, 232).

[Need for further research](#)

Foreclosure assistance is an anti-displacement policy that lends itself to direct measurement similar to "Just Cause" eviction protections and tenant's right to counsel. The existing research on the subject demonstrates how these programs, from foreclosure assistance to counseling to financial literacy, have benefitted vulnerable homeowners, insulating them from residential instability precipitated by the Great Recession and widespread subprime, predatory lending practices.

To further explore this policy, researchers should examine how federal, state, and local policies established in the aftermath of the economic downturn have continued to function as home prices stabilized. Additionally, this research should consider local programs – like that established by Boston Community Capital – that leverage the resources of local financial institutions embedded in communities where foreclosures are concentrated. Finally, given the specifically ethno-racial dimension of subprime lending that precipitated the Great Recession, researchers should investigate how foreclosure assistance programs have performed in communities of color that bore the brunt of these lending practices.

Community Benefits Agreements

Policy Description

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are legally-binding contracts between developers and local stakeholders that set the terms and provisions of a proposed development project; more specifically, these agreements stipulate the tangible resources that a developer must provide to community members in exchange for tacit support of the proposed project (Salkin and Lavin 2007/2008; Pastor et. al 2015). These types of agreements have become channels through which community organizations have compelled public and private entities to meet local needs and ensure that large-scale projects serve as assets, rather than liabilities, to the surrounding population. Given the economic uncertainty introduced by new development, CBAs often include affordable housing requirements, local hire provisions, and other conditions that intend to mitigate displacement pressures in neighborhoods at risk of gentrification.

Against a backdrop of heightened public and private investment in central cities, CBAs emerged as a mechanism for neighborhoods—particularly in low-income communities of color—to tailor development projects and impacts to also benefit incumbent residents. In a sense, CBAs are a form of development value recapture, except that community organizations, rather than governments, usually initiate these agreements to recapture value that new developments will generate out of land use entitlements. CBAs take a variety of forms, but most often exist in strong real estate markets, in which developers are willing to grant concessions to neighborhood groups in exchange for enjoying substantial financial returns upon project completion, and usually depend on a government actor to serve as a mediator (Cummings 2007; Pastor et. al 2015). Overall, CBAs offer historically disenfranchised communities formal opportunities to negotiate development terms that minimize the negative externalities of new investment activity.

Extent and type of literature that covers policy's effect on displacement: MEDIUM

Although a substantial amount of literature on CBAs exists in planning and policy circles, much of the research discusses the political and legal dimensions that influence their adoption, rather than investigating whether CBAs have accomplished their established objectives. In other words, studies on CBAs focus more descriptively on the terms of the agreements and less on how such terms achieve the desired outcomes beyond project completion. In this way, the existing literature does not explicitly measure how CBAs have reduced displacement pressures.

Much of the research on Community Benefits Agreements took place in Los Angeles, where they originated, as this city witnessed a wave of redevelopment in the late 1990s into the 2000s. The nation's first CBA focused on community stabilization at the southern edge of Downtown Los Angeles, which was being redeveloped into an entertainment hub hosting professional sports, live entertainment, and conventions at the Staples Center and L.A. Live venues. As this multi-phase project proceeded, a coalition of community groups organized to compel the developer to fulfill demands for affordable housing, economic opportunity, and other programs that would serve residents in neighboring low-income communities of color (Salkin and Lavin 2007/2008; Bornstein 2010). After initially evading local efforts demanding community benefits, the developer ultimately negotiated with stakeholder groups when local opposition stood in the way of the land use approvals necessary to complete the project. Ultimately, the coalition secured a variety of concessions from the developer—including funding for

affordable housing, job training, and living wage requirements—that would serve neighboring residents (Salkin and Lavin 2007/2008; Pastor et al. 2015).

Because of its groundbreaking significance, the Staples Center/L.A. Live CBA is a major focal point of the literature on CBAs and displacement. However, this initial CBA also set the stage for future agreements between power brokers and community advocates in nearby communities to combat residential instability. In the decade following the Downtown project, UNIDAD—United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement—continued to use its organizing capacity to reach two separate agreements from two major projects in South Central LA: the University of Southern California’s Master Plan implementation and a high-end housing project in Historic South-Central. In both cases, the coalition situated gentrification and displacement concerns front-and-center, and secured a variety of concessions out of these projects, including affordable housing, living-wage employment and vocational training, and healthcare access (Pastor et al. 2015).

However, the majority of the literature on CBAs does not explicitly focus on displacement mitigation. Rather, the social scientific and legal research on the topic address the political shifts that yielded these agreements and how these agreements fit within the landscape of public policy (Salkin and Lavin 2007/2008; Wolf-Powers 2010; Saito 2012). Discussions of displacement tend to be limited to how the issue is among those raised by the coalitions that spearhead CBAs, rather than the primary focus of the literature.

[Need for further research](#)

While displacement and gentrification are topics found throughout Community Benefits Agreements, existing research tends to examine how these issues are instrumental in the formation of agreements and not their outcomes. However, because several CBAs exist in jurisdictions throughout the country, there are research opportunities to examine how different communities have fared with these anti-displacement mechanisms. Although countless other forces are at play that influence displacement pressures, future research could investigate the impact of CBAs in these contexts that have enacted such agreements. Future research can also examine if certain CBA requirements, such as the provision of park or transit improvements may actually lead to increased displacement pressures.

Gaps in the Literature

Racial Disparities in Anti-Displacement Policy

In our review of the literature on anti-displacement policies and their effectiveness, we found a surprising dearth of information disaggregating the effects of these policies by race or ethnicity. While much of the existing research recognizes the harm that housing policies have historically caused African American communities, very little looks at how contemporary policies do or do not effectively prevent the displacement of communities of color. It is not sufficient to state the effects of housing policy without also looking into how those effects may change based on people's racial identities. Without explicitly looking at policy effectiveness by race or ethnicity, these studies risk implying that the effects are equal for all communities and perpetuating the same patterns of past housing policy. For this reason we have included this section to look for evidence of anti-displacement policies that work especially well or poorly for communities of color and call for any future research to include this view when studying policy effectiveness.

In our review, there is very little rigorous research on policies that actively work to preserve communities of color. We did find some of discussion of how incumbent non-white households have benefitted from anti-displacement policies in research on the Tenant Right to Counsel program in San Francisco as well as rent stabilization laws (Fracassa, 2020; Pastor et al., 2018). However, these examples were an exception and illustrated the lack of discussion around these topics in the literature overall.

It is well-documented that throughout the 20th century, racially restrictive covenants, redlining, blockbusting, and urban renewal displaced and excluded non-white communities across the nation's urban landscape. In the process, through cycles of disinvestment and reinvestment, these policies and practices paved the way for waves of displacement in communities of color. Despite this history, scholars have conducted limited research on the subject and how anti-displacement policies may protect vulnerable communities from displacement.

Nevertheless, community organizations, advocates, local governments, and academics alike have contextualized displacement and residential instability within the racialized histories of urban development. For instance, in 2015, the Bay Area-based organization Causa Justa/Just Cause (CJ/JC) produced an exhaustive analysis of gentrification and displacement throughout San Francisco and Oakland. In its report *Development Without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area*, CJ/JC presents robust quantitative and qualitative data that illustrates how cycles of disinvestment and immense public and private reinvestment have uprooted low-income communities of color (Causa Justa/Just Cause, 2015).

This publication – produced in collaboration with the Alameda County Department of Public Health – specifically focuses on how development in the Bay Area has overwhelmingly unsettled incumbent non-white communities residing in the previously disinvested urban core. In particular, the report highlights the dramatic demographic and socioeconomic changes in gentrified neighborhoods of North Oakland and San Francisco's Mission District between 1990, 2000, and 2011 (Cause Justa/Just Cause, 2015). During this 21-year period, the report found that North Oakland – an historically African American community – lost more than 2,000 African American households, and the percentage of African American homeowner households plummeted from 50% to 25% of all North Oakland homeowners

(Causa Justa/Just Cause, 2015, 7). Similarly, in the Mission, an historically Latinx community, the neighborhood saw a decline of approximately 1,400 Latinx households and an increase of nearly 3,000 white households, contributing to a twofold increase in white homeownership (Causa Justa/Just Cause 2015, 7). Once displaced, these groups tend to re-segregate in low-resource neighborhoods far from the urban core (Urban Displacement Project and California Housing Partnership, 2019).

In response to the forces of displacement, CJ/JC asserts the need to protect incumbent residents of gentrifying communities. To this end, the report presents policy recommendations that are explicitly designed to mitigate displacement pressures endured by low-income households in neighborhoods witnessing public and private investment activity. For example, one set of recommendations focuses on protections for economically vulnerable tenants such as fair relocation assistance for displaced households, preservation of existing housing stock, and tenants' rights outreach programs (Causa Justa/Just Cause, 2015, 9-10). Moreover, according to the report, neighborhood stakeholders would craft these initiatives through participatory efforts to ensure that community needs are sufficiently addressed in any anti-displacement program. In the process, policies would actively incorporate an equity lens tailored to the communities facing residential instability (Causa Justa/Just Cause, 2015, 10).

In addition to collaboration with community organizations, local governments have also commissioned research on the relationship between gentrification, displacement, and racial disparities. Lisa Bates of Portland State, for instance, conducted a comprehensive study on the relationship between residential instability and racial disparities on behalf of the City of Portland. Bates's analysis is situated within a racial equity framework that underscores the disproportionate vulnerability to displacement of communities of color and the necessity for an equity-informed approach to policymaking (Bates, 2013, p. 17-18). To illustrate, Bates identifies the historic linkage between racial segregation and urban disinvestment, and the gentrifying pressures unfolding in these same communities today. Against the backdrop of structural inequality, Bates emphasizes the need for equity-minded policymaking that prioritizes resources to support low-income communities of color that face barriers to residential stability through housing discrimination, lower wages, and less access to credit (Bates, 2013, 17-18).

As conveyed in these studies, communities of color have borne – and continue to bear – a disparate impact of displacement pressures across the urban landscape. The interwoven policies, institutions, and practices that directly or indirectly uproot non-white communities have indelibly shaped patterns of urban development and access to housing and residential stability. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated and further exposed the acute displacement pressures in communities of color. For example, national and local studies on eviction filings during the pandemic have underscored how communities of color are enduring heightened risks of displacement as the economy remains shuttered (Blasi, 2020; Merle, 2020; Mironova, 2020). According to survey data collected by the Census Bureau in May and June of 2020, over 40% of both Black and Latinx renters reported slight or no confidence in their ability to pay rent for the subsequent month, as compared to 21% of white renters (Merle, 2020). Overall, given the minimal literature on the longstanding racial disparities in residential instability, along with the ongoing crisis that has underlined these inequities, this project calls for all future research to explicitly address how anti-displacement policies may support communities of color at greatest risk of economic displacement.

Limited Research on Displacement

While substantial research exists on the topics explored in this literature review, we also find significant gaps. In the previous section, we discussed a striking absence of discussion of how to best protect minority populations from displacement. Additionally, there is generally limited research on the extent to which different policies effectively prevent displacement and foster residential stability. Lacking also is a discussion of how specific contextual characteristics may shape the effectiveness of particular policies. For example, certain policies may require a strong market to be effective; some policies may require a long term to become effective; some policies may be effective only in particular parts of a metropolitan area; lastly some policies may be effective only if complemented with particular provisions or other policies.

In the limited research that does exist on displacement, those policies that are implemented in the short-term seem to yield the most promising results for stabilizing low-income neighborhoods and mitigating displacement pressures. In contrast, much of the research on policies that necessitate longer time horizons largely does not evaluate impacts on displacement. What's more, as discussed below, these longer-term policies tend to be more diffuse and difficult to isolate (e.g. housing production) than short term interventions that directly focus on maintaining household stability (e.g. "Just Cause" protections). The following sections discuss the barriers and opportunities to robustly analyze displacement mitigation policies as well as the most promising paths forward.

The time horizons of these policies vary widely across production, preservation, and stabilization strategies. For instance, housing production policies would require several years for effects on displacement to be measurable, whereas stabilization policies like "Just Cause" eviction protections or rental assistance programs would necessitate only a brief rollout period. Similarly, production strategies generally lack a clear timeline of effectiveness while stabilization strategies – and to a lesser extent preservation strategies – are typically implemented through legislation and therefore have legible "start" and "end" dates that enable easier measurement of outcomes. Unsurprisingly, then, there is notably more research on how stabilization strategies directly affect displacement compared to production and preservation strategies.

To illustrate, tenant right to counsel programs, a short-term stabilization strategy, featured substantially more research on displacement than inclusionary zoning, a long-term production strategy. In the first place, right to counsel programs are explicitly focused on reducing household displacement by offering legal representation or services to incumbent households facing eviction. In contrast, inclusionary zoning policies yield additional units for low-income households as a result of the development process, and therefore may be useful by contributing to the existing housing stock over time, rather than helping a household to remain in place. Both the longer time horizon and the unit of measurement render inclusionary zoning (and other production strategies) less conducive to analysis on the nexus between the policy and displacement mitigation.

However, the more complex relationship between policies such as inclusionary zoning and residential stability does not suggest that these policies, in the long term, fail to effectively prevent displacement. In fact, existing research on production strategies suggests that new housing, and especially new affordable housing, mitigates displacement pressures on a regional scale. Rather, these strategies are more difficult to measure because they rely on more indirect outcomes, such as rental costs and rent

burdens, and necessitate longitudinal study that depends on several external factors that cannot be controlled (e.g. market conditions, financial practices).

Suggestions for Additional Research

In light of the barriers and opportunities to robustly analyze displacement, this report proposes research that examines direct, short-term strategies focused on maintaining residential stability. These policies include:

1. Tenants Right to Counsel: confers renter households access to legal representation in eviction, or unlawful detainer trials;
2. “Just Cause” Eviction Protections: forbid property owners from evicting tenants except under certain specified circumstances, such as nonpayment of rent, violation of lease terms, or permanent removal of a dwelling from the rental market;
3. Tenant Opportunity to Purchase: gives the existing tenants the right to purchase the property at the market price and then convert the units to a condo or cooperative so tenants can individually buy their own units;
4. Unsubsidized Affordable Housing: rental units offered by the private market that are affordable outside of any subsidy or regulatory scheme; and
5. Accessory Dwelling Units: secondary units or apartments typically added to low-density residential properties (e.g., single-family homes).

Notably, two of these policies are “stabilization” strategies, two are “preservation” strategies, and one policy is a “production” strategy. They were selected based on a combination of their relevance to current California housing policy, their comparatively direct measures of displacement, and shorter time horizons. Through a combination of methods, these diverse strategies can be evaluated for their efficacy across a variety of jurisdictions.

Appendix B. Literature Review Summary Table

Category	Policy Name	Literature Coverage Level	Potential to Prevent Displacement*	Notes on Potential to Prevent Displacement	Market Type**	Notes on Market Type	Implementation Scale	Time Scale to Prevent Displacement
Production Strategies	Housing Production	HIGH	HIGH	Affordable production more effective than market-rate, but both can be preventative.	Strong Market	Housing production is most conducive as an anti-displacement strategy in strong market areas, where demand is high and supply is limited. By increasing the supply of housing - particularly affordable housing - in strong markets, housing costs can be moderated and relieve displacement pressures.	Local, State	Long-term
Production Strategies	Inclusionary Zoning + Developer Incentives	MEDIUM	MED	Can produce affordable housing units, but depends heavily on program design.	Strong Market**	Inclusionary zoning's efficacy wholly depends on the value that can be generated in a local real estate market. Essentially, project returns must be strong enough to justify the tradeoff for developers to build below market rate units.	Local, State	Long-term
Production Strategies	Accessory Dwelling Units	LOW	MED	Can increase stock significantly, but depends on individual homeowners to opt in.	Market Neutral	Accessory dwelling units add to the local housing stock without requiring substantial returns as with larger, multifamily developments. As such, ADU production is far less sensitive to local market conditions than other production strategies.	Local, State	Long-term
Production Strategies	Impact + Linkage Fees	MEDIUM	LOW	Minimal nexus between linkage fees and preventing displacement, but has the potential to generate funds that can preserve and produce affordable housing.	Strong Market**	Impact or linkage fees generate revenue in submarkets where commercial and/or residential activity is profitable and desirable. In other words, projects must be financially feasible enough to render fee payments a worthwhile tradeoff to investors and developers.	Local	Long-term

Category	Policy Name	Literature Coverage Level	Potential to Prevent Displacement*	Notes on Potential to Prevent Displacement	Market Type**	Notes on Market Type	Implementation Scale	Time Scale to Prevent Displacement
Production Strategies	Housing Overlay Zones	LOW	MED	Minimal evidence because not implemented in many areas, but strong mechanism to foster affordable housing production.	Strong Market**	Housing overlay zones function by relaxing development standards in exchange for on-site affordable housing in desirable submarkets. Their efficacy lies in offering development incentives that allow increased density in areas that can fetch substantial returns to warrant voluntary set-aside of affordable housing units.	Neighborhood, Local	Long-term
Production Strategies	Land Value Recapture	LOW	LOW	Minimal nexus between value recapture and preventing displacement, but has the potential to generate funds that can preserve and produce affordable housing.	Strong Market**	Land value recapture - like inclusionary zoning - hinges on favorable market conditions that incentivize profitable development. Consequently, localities can secure concessions from developers, in the form of on-site affordable housing, land dedications for future affordable housing, and other displacement mitigation initiatives.	Local	Long-term
Preservation Strategies	Unsubsidized Affordable Housing	LOW	HIGH	Can preserve a variety of housing to keep people in place, challenges with funding.	Market Neutral	Preserving "naturally occurring" affordable housing occurs in varying market contexts, and does not depend on a strong market to succeed. However, as with most strategies, preserving existing housing may be especially urgent in strong markets.	Local, State	Short-term
Preservation Strategies	Federally-Funded Housing Developments	MEDIUM	MED	Can increase housing accessible to lowest income individuals, but may not keep them in their communities.	N/A	Project-based subsidized housing remains a key lifeline for low-income households. However, because new projects are no longer built, the role of the market is somewhat ambiguous, with efforts focused on preserving this affordable housing stock regardless of market strength.	Local, Federal	Short-term

Category	Policy Name	Literature Coverage Level	Potential to Prevent Displacement*	Notes on Potential to Prevent Displacement	Market Type**	Notes on Market Type	Implementation Scale	Time Scale to Prevent Displacement
Preservation Strategies	Housing Rehabilitation	MEDIUM	LOW	May not prevent displacement without other policies in place, difficult to scale without directly displacing residents.	N/A	Housing rehabilitation - particularly through the federally-sponsored Rental Assistance Demonstration and HOPE VI programs - does not depend on local market conditions. These programs tend to be implemented through government initiatives.	Local, State, Federal	Short-term
Preservation Strategies	Condominium Conversion Restrictions + Tenant Opportunity to Purchase	MEDIUM	MED	Very protective for those who have access, but may not serve lowest incomes.	Strong Market	Condominium conversions and tenant opportunities to purchase are most effective in markets strong enough to garner interest in homeownership or redevelopment that may result in displacement of incumbent tenants.	Local	Short-term
Preservation Strategies	Community Control of Land	LOW	HIGH	Evidence of prevention where it exists, but limited scale so far and potentially doesn't reach lowest incomes.	Market Neutral	Community acquisition of land does not require strong market conditions to succeed and may be effective in all market contexts.	Neighborhood, Local	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies	Rent Control	HIGH	MED	Effective at keeping people housed who have it, but may have second-order effects on rental market overall and lead to exclusionary displacement.	Strong Market	Rent control - unlike value capture policies - can and do exist in markets of varying strength, and are not strictly a prerequisite for their efficacy. However, rent control is a valuable tool to mitigate displacement in hot real estate markets. In other words, whereas value capture mechanisms necessitate strong markets for success, rent control laws can be useful in a variety of market types but are most effective in strong markets where economically vulnerable households face displacement pressures.	Local, State	Short-term

Category	Policy Name	Literature Coverage Level	Potential to Prevent Displacement*	Notes on Potential to Prevent Displacement	Market Type**	Notes on Market Type	Implementation Scale	Time Scale to Prevent Displacement
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies	Community Benefits Agreements	MEDIUM	LOW	Grants local stakeholders a seat at the table to demand explicit displacement mitigations, but main focus is on hiring practices not housing levels.	Strong Market**	Community benefits agreements - similar to other value capture mechanisms - are possible in areas where financial returns on large-scale developments significantly exceed the concessions by local stakeholders. In this way, strong markets are a prerequisite to their efficacy.	Neighborhood, Local	Long-term
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies	Rental Assistance Programs	MEDIUM	HIGH	Can be very protective for low-income tenants, but challenges exist around the knowledge of existing programs and the ability to access them.	Market Neutral	Rental assistance programs function in markets of various types irrespective of whether households face "housing poverty" or "income poverty."	Local	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies	Foreclosure Assistance	MEDIUM	HIGH	Establishes a variety of resources, financial or otherwise, that provide critical aid to homeowners facing fiduciary struggles.	Market Neutral	Foreclosure assistance programs function in various housing markets and, as the wave of foreclosures during Great Recession indicated, no housing markets were spared from displacement of financially struggling homeowners.	Local, State, Federal	Short-term
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies	Tenant Right to Counsel	MEDIUM	HIGH	Legal counsel consistently keeps households in place and reduces incidence of eviction filings	Strong Market	Tenant right to counsel against eviction proceedings protects vulnerable households in all market contexts. Although programs have been introduced in strong markets (e.g. San Francisco, New York), legal representation as an anti-displacement strategy does not require strong market conditions to be effective.	Local	Short-term

Category	Policy Name	Literature Coverage Level	Potential to Prevent Displacement*	Notes on Potential to Prevent Displacement	Market Type**	Notes on Market Type	Implementation Scale	Time Scale to Prevent Displacement
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies	"Just Cause" Evictions	MEDIUM	HIGH	Introduces obstacle to tenant turnover, preventing or at least postponing displacement on an individual level.	Strong Market	"Just Cause" eviction protections, similar to other tenant protections, are universal assets for vulnerable renter households. While they are especially useful in hot markets where property owners can demand higher rents, "Just Cause" protects households from residential instability in all contexts.	Local	Short-term

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Appendix C. Policy Inventory Methodology

Policy	Where it can be found	Examples
Just Cause Eviction	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Rent Stabilization, Just Cause, Evictions
Rent Stabilization or Rent Control	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Rent Stabilization, Just Cause, Evictions
Rent Review Board	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Rent Stabilization, Just Cause, Evictions
Mobile Home Rent Control	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Mobile Home Rent Stabilization, Rent Control
SRO Preservation	Municipal Code, Planning and Zoning Code	Chapter titles: SRO Hotels, Redevelopment Plan Procedures, Residential Hotel Unit Conversion
Condo Conversion Restrictions	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Condominium Conversions, Withdraw Rental Units from the Rental Market, Standards for Conversion Projects
Foreclosure Assistance	City website, Program website	N/A
Affordable-Housing Linkage Fees	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Affordable Housing Linkage Fees
Commercial Linkage Fees	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Affordable Housing for Nonresidential Developments, Below Market Rate Housing Program
Housing Trust Fund	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Housing Fund, Housing Impact Trust Fund
Inclusionary Zoning	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Inclusionary Housing, Affordable Housing Programs,
Density Bonus	Municipal Code, Housing Element	Chapter titles: Density Bonus, Zoning and Planning Regulations

Policy	Where it can be found	Examples
Community Land Trusts	Program website; Northern California Land Trust website, California Community Land Trust Network website	N/A
First Source Hiring Program	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: First Source Hiring
ADUs	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Accessory Dwelling Units, Accessory Structure, Special Development Standards
Housing Overlay Zones	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Overlay District, Overlay Zone, Affordable Housing Overlay, Historic Preservation
Land Value Recapture*	Municipal Code, Tax Code, CA Government Code	Chapter titles: Enhanced Infrastructure Financing
Unsubsidized Affordable Housing Preservation	City website, Program website	N/A
Subsidized Housing Preservation	CHPC Preservation Database	N/A
Housing Rehabilitation Programs	City websites, Federal programs	N/A
Tenant Opportunity to Purchase	Municipal Code	Chapter titles: Community Opportunity to Purchase
Rental Assistance Programs	City websites, Program websites	N/A
Tenant Right to Counsel	Municipal code	Chapter titles: Right to Counsel

*This includes multiple policies that can be implemented at state or local level

Appendix D. Anti-Displacement Policy Research Design

Tenant Right to Counsel

Of the anti-displacement policies considered, tenant right to counsel is particularly well-suited for study. In the first place, outcomes of eviction filings offer a direct measure of residential displacement, specifically, vacating a dwelling. Outcomes may also include further detail on the causes of displacement (e.g. nonpayment of rent) that underlie broader trends of residential instability in an area, as well as the demographic groups that are facing eviction and benefiting from legal representation. Additionally, right to counsel programs provide researchers with clearly delineated time periods to compare outcomes prior to and after a policy's implementation. Along the same lines and unlike other anti-displacement policies, program evaluation before and after implementation can occur within time horizons of a few years (in contrast to policies requiring much longer time horizons such as upzoning). Moreover, right to counsel programs apply only to qualifying tenants within a handful of jurisdictions and therefore avoid the risk of geographical "spillover" effects. These spatial boundaries therefore minimize unobserved external factors that could complicate robust research and data analysis.

Tenant right to counsel programs have been implemented in jurisdictions across the country in various forms, and most notably, a right to counsel program is currently operating in San Francisco and has been under discussion in Los Angeles (Mironova, 2019; Fracassa 2020; Nittle, 2019). Additionally, prior to the implementation of municipal programs in California, several large cities have received funds through the statewide Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act, which offers legal assistance for lower-income tenants facing eviction where resources are available (NPC Research, 2018). While not a codified right to counsel, this program expanded access to legal services for indigent tenants. Further, the program has yielded results that provide a baseline for further more robust analysis of outcomes in jurisdictions where a tenant's right to counsel is implemented (NPC Research, 2018). Finally, San Francisco's right to counsel program - approved through a 2018 ballot measure - has shown promising results for tenants in that City, with hundreds of households benefiting from full-scope and limited representation, as well as an overall decline in legal actions filed against tenants (Fracassa 2020).

In light of existing and emergent legislation, as well as the direct measure of displacement that eviction filings offer, future research could examine how these programs foster residential stability and how different jurisdictions' initiatives minimize displacement pressures. In effect, these programs can serve as natural experiments within and between jurisdictions, depending on how they are designed. For instance, in New York City, where tenant's right to counsel is being rolled out gradually by zip code, analysts have investigated how renters have fared in those first wave of zip codes relative to those that were not included in the initial roll out (Mironova, 2019). Additionally, New York City offers legal representation only to tenants below certain income levels, whereas San Francisco's program offers services to all tenants, irrespective of income (Mironova, 2019; Fracassa, 2020). With other jurisdictions, such as Los Angeles, considering a tenant's right to counsel, researchers can perform robust analyses of these programs to offer lessons learned on how to mitigate economic displacement pressures endured by tenants (Nittle, 2019).

Rental Assistance Programs (H/M)

Rental assistance programs serve as a lifeline for tenants facing displacement facing economic hardship. These programs offer emergency assistance grants for low-income households at risk of displacement through eviction for falling into arrears with their landlord. Similar to tenant right to counsel program, rental assistance programs offer a somewhat direct measure of displacement, as tenants may be served with eviction notices or may choose to voluntarily vacate their dwelling while enduring economic hardship or landlord harassment. Further, rental assistance programs are typically administered through an application process, whereby income-qualifying households petition for emergency assistance to stave off evictions. In this way, the administration process of rental assistance programs allow for data collection on the populations who seek resources, their circumstances, and their outcomes.

Rental assistance funds can be designed as permanent sources of emergency assistance, or as temporary measures during economic downturns to help keep households afloat until broader conditions improve. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, jurisdictions throughout the country – including the City of Los Angeles – instituted emergency renters assistance programs, in which federal funds were allocated to subsidize housing costs for low-income households affected by the crisis (Dillon, 2020). As this example demonstrates, these programs tend to be introduced at the municipal level, which allows for local governments to adapt to structure these interventions according to needs. Therefore, the implementation and outcomes are geographically confined to households residing within a jurisdiction, and depending on the design of the program, may be administered within a limited period of time. Accordingly, rental assistance programs can be easily analyzed for their impact on displacement with minimal spillover effects both between and within jurisdictions. For example, we could compare the use of CARES Act money across jurisdictions, determining what portion went to rental assistance and looking at what happened to evictions or displacement more broadly.

Along the same lines of right to counsel, rental assistance programs function as a natural experiment in which jurisdictions design and implement initiatives with different requirements and scope. Because permanent programs are not widespread, the varying approaches to emergency renters assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity to examine the extent to which these initiatives have prevented displacement, who the beneficiaries of these programs are, and the outcomes of these programs over the long term. Further, in addition to temporary measures, researchers can explore how permanently funded programs operate and the outcomes of such initiatives during periods of relative macroeconomic stability. For example, existing research on this topic suggests that such programs do not achieve their potential to prevent eviction because of information gaps between local governments and their intended beneficiaries (Aghayev, Feng, and Wiens, 2017). Therefore, future research can explore how jurisdictions can better oversee these policies and how displacement may be more effectively mitigated through tenant outreach and counseling as part of the administration process. For instance, households can participate in trial studies with “treatment” and “control” groups that offer divergent forms of counseling to analyze how these programs can most effectively allocate resources to prevent displacement.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Despite California's state accessory dwelling unit (ADU) reform, there is relatively very little research on their ability to reduce displacement. Given the local nature of zoning reform, the rules permitting ADU development vary widely across local jurisdiction. While current research has shown that relaxing zoning requirements on ADUs leads to more ADU production, and many cities are counting ADUs as part of their RHNA production targets, it remains unclear how these policies stabilize communities.

Given the significant variation in how many ADUs each jurisdiction is permitting/producing, there is an opportunity for research to look into their impact on displacement. Using the diversity in these policies and their overall productivity, research could seek to determine how more ADU availability relates to displacement pressures in certain neighborhoods or cities, and which policies are most effective at reducing outmigration.

In order to do this, we would first need to understand the demographics of the population moving into these units to determine how those residents are changing the demographics of the neighborhoods. Descriptive research on ADU implementation in California, Oregon, and Minnesota is underway and could be a helpful baseline for causal research. While comparing across jurisdictions may be difficult due to the nuances of each policy, we could compare displacement pressures before and after ADU policies were enacted in order to account for the unobserved factors in each area. Additionally, we could also compare displacement pressures in regions with effective ADU policies with that in neighboring jurisdictions with less effective ADU ones.

Current research suggests that ADUs are not serving lower-income groups or communities of color. However further evaluation could focus on the Santa Cruz ADU loan program, which provides a forgivable loan for homeowners to build an ADU if they agree to keep the unit affordable (County of Santa Cruz Planning Department, 2019). Understanding the impact that this program has on housing affordability and displacement in the area would be useful in understanding whether such ADU policies can prevent displacement via affordable housing production.

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase

Tenant opportunities to purchase laws require landlords of multi-unit buildings to inform tenants if they plan to sell the building and then to offer them the first right of refusal on the purchase. The Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) in Washington, DC, for example, gives tenants (often in partnership with nonprofit organizations) the first right to purchase their building when it goes up for sale. Despite many descriptive accounts of this program, there is no research as to whether it had any impact on displacement in the area. Studying this program could provide insight into how best to implement these policies, but may not be as useful in understanding how effective this policy will be in California. In 2019, San Francisco passed the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) that closely follows DC's. Given that it is a relatively new program, there is very little data on how many buildings have been purchased using COPA. The Mission Economic Development Association in San Francisco published their reflections on the program one year after implementation and while they reported purchasing at least three buildings with this mechanism, there are still significant challenges utilizing it ([Mission Economic Development Association's reflections on the COPA program](#)).

With proposals to pass policies like TOPA in Berkeley, Oakland, and East Palo Alto, there is an opportunity to build research into the implementation of the program to understand their impact on

displacement from the beginning. Using DC and San Francisco as case studies could help future programs tailor their implementation to serve communities most at risk of displacement. These cities could also create quasi-experimental studies by opening applications to access the program and randomly selecting which buildings get selected for assistance. In so doing, analysts could compare the outcomes of the two groups to determine the type of assistance for these programs to successfully prevent displacement.

As more jurisdictions implement these programs, researchers could examine the differences between those that have implemented TOPA and their neighbors who have not (matching them based on common characteristics in order to account for other factors that may determine displacement pressures). This way, we could begin to isolate the effect that TOPA had on displacement in these communities.

Given the time it takes to buy and sell property, the impact of TOPA laws may not fully become clear for years after their implementation. However, similar to right to counsel programs, the outcome of interest is very clear as the TOPA process explicitly focuses on preventing residential instability and therefore understanding who had the opportunity to remain in place and who elected to relocate. Indeed, given the potential for exclusionary displacement (Gallaher, 2016), it would also be important to keep track of how building rents change throughout this process and whether they remain affordable as compared with nearby buildings.

Unsubsidized Affordable Housing

Unsubsidized (or naturally occurring) affordable housing is a term used to define rental housing units that are affordable without being rent-restricted or receiving any form of subsidy to offset rent costs. Since they are not restricted in this way, they are vulnerable to market forces pushing up rents and making them unaffordable, which has prompted governments to try to guarantee their affordability before this happens. While affordable is defined as costing less than 30% of a person's income, the population in need of affordable housing ranges from those in extreme poverty to those making as much as 120% AMI – or more. While this makes research comparing these programs challenging, cities and states are considering implementing unsubsidized affordable housing preservation programs that are ripe for study.

One of the most well-documented programs that explicitly seeks to preserve unsubsidized affordable housing is the Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative, but there are other programs around the country that are smaller or don't use this terminology that also do this work. In San Francisco, the Small Sites Program aims to acquire and preserve small multifamily rental buildings, taking them off the market and ensuring they remain permanently affordable (MOHCD, n.d.). From 2014 - 2018 this program acquired 25 buildings, serving 327 people with an average income at 65% AMI. While this data gives credence to the idea that these programs could protect lower-income renters, further research is necessary to understand how they impact displacement overall. The Bay Area Preservation Pilot through Enterprise Community Partners, the New York Acquisition Fund, the Chicago Preservation Compact, and the Housing Authority of King County, do similar work to preserve affordable housing that could be included in order to broaden this research as well.

To understand the potential impact of these policies, research could look statewide to identify where unsubsidized affordable housing exists in California. Using rental data for properties across the state

(through databases such as CoStar), or the combination of American Community Survey and Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data, we could set criteria for what target populations these programs should serve and identify the unsubsidized rental units that are affordable to them. Using the market cost of those buildings, we could identify how much funding would be required to preserve a significant number of these buildings.

Additionally, we could propose a research design for any program implemented on a statewide or local scale. Having identified where this housing exists, we could match areas with similar displacement pressures and provide preservation for some of them, but not others - effectively creating a control group against which we could compare the displacement pressures after program implementation.

If studied, it would be critical to understand what residents these programs are best able to serve. Given that much of this housing may be affordable due to low-quality amenities or age, some buildings may be more expensive to preserve (and rehabilitate) than others. This could create disparities in the racial and socioeconomic demographics of residents served by these programs, a factor which should be considered during program design and implementation. Although large programs like this have not been implemented yet, unsubsidized affordable housing is a highly discussed policy intervention that could likely gain traction at a larger scale and should be ready to include evaluation research when it does.

Upzoning

Much debate is occurring over policies to relax zoning requirements to allow more housing units built on the same area of land (upzoning). Over the past few years, state Senator Scott Weiner has proposed an evolving series of bills that would attempt to allow this kind of housing development throughout the state. While these bills have stirred consistent debate, the result of upzoning could be more housing units on the market, increasing supply and with potentially mixed effects on displacement (as noted in the literature review); however, some research has suggested that upzoning alone will be insufficient to increase supply significantly. While we wanted to propose research that could study the effects of upzoning on displacement, there is currently no program existing (or being considered) large enough to evaluate its effects. Moreover, at least in the short-term, the five policies described in our research agenda above are more likely to have direct effects in mitigating displacement. Still, upzoning is an important, but understudied tool, for potentially increasing housing affordability and reducing displacement pressures across the state.