

April 17, 2024

Word Count: 199

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QuickPoint! - Providing Homes Oregon Families Can Afford Is a Solvable Problem

By Kathryn Hickok

This month, Cascade Policy Institute is releasing a new report explaining why government-mandated “affordable housing” doesn’t actually make housing more affordable.

In [*The Affordable Housing Scam*](#), author Randal O’Toole writes that while “U.S. taxpayers spend tens of billions of dollars a year subsidizing housing for low-income households,” those units cost “about 20 percent more per square foot than unsubsidized homes.” Developers, not low-income households, capture most of the benefits of taxpayer-funded subsidies. O’Toole recommends that “[i]nstead of wasting money on high-cost housing, project-based affordable housing funds should be abandoned in favor of tenant-based voucher subsidies.”

Most families want to live in single-family homes, not apartments or small attached units. Yet, state and local government planners impose growth policies on their constituents that restrict supply of what their communities really want. The supply of land available for new homes is artificially constrained by urban growth boundaries, which drive up the costs both of existing housing and new construction within UGBs.

Oregon can bring down housing costs at all price points by increasing the supply of land available for new homes. In a state that is 98% open space, building neighborhoods that people want to live in should not be a problem.

Kathryn Hickok is Executive Vice President at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization, and Director of Cascade’s Children’s Scholarship Fund-Oregon program.

