



SAPPHIRE NEIGHBORHOODS

What is a sapphire neighborhood? “Sapphire” neighborhoods are areas which have an older housing stock, with affordable rents and home prices.

What are the HousingNOLA plan’s recommendations for preventing displacement, improving fair housing, increasing sustainable design, improving neighborhood quality of life, and increasing accessibility for special needs populations in sapphire neighborhoods?

Preventing Displacement:

1. Create first-time homeownership opportunities.
2. Make better use of publicly owned property (HANO, OPSB, and tax adjudicated) and require that some properties be offered to market for affordable housing only, coordinate release with other funding rounds (LIHTC, HOME, Private)
3. Freeze tax increases for low income homeowners and property rented to low income families
4. Create a loan fund for rehabs (homeownership and rentals w/income restrictions)
5. Prioritize resources (NHIF, CDBG, NOLA Housing Trust Fund) to ensure the creation of community assets and amenities(ex: transit, fresh food grocers, parks and green space, community centers, etc) is paired with funding and policies to retain affordability so that long-term residents can stay to enjoy the new amenities.
6. Remove barriers for affordable housing, such as parking restrictions, zoning changes, permits, inconsistent tax assessments, inconsistent reviews by boards and commissions. (HDLC, BZA, NCDAC)
7. Implement basic health and safety standards for occupied housing

Fair Housing:

1. Create a Housing Mobility Program for vouchers
2. HANO implements revisions to Criminal Background policy consistently at all properties (policy currently show all arrests, and it should show only convictions, and factor in time lapsed since and type of crime)
3. Increase access for voucher holders, pass legislation prohibiting denial based on source of rental payments.
4. HANO implements a neighborhood-based payment standard for vouchers
5. Prioritize investment in new affordable housing
6. Update the City’s report to the federal government on its progress and barriers to achieving fair housing goals (Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice)
7. Educate citizens about discrimination against the seven classes:
 - a. Race
 - b. Color
 - c. Religion
 - d. National Origin
 - e. Sex
 - f. Families with children
 - g. People with disabilities
7. Provide education for landlords, realtors and homebuyer counseling agencies on tenants’ rights
8. Increase awareness of tenants’ rights to receive information about denials, encourage automatic disclosure (current policy will disclose only if requested and within a month)



9. Improve Tenants' Rights by standardizing leases, implementing a Rental Registry, preventing landlord retaliation, and making housing documents available in multiple languages.
10. City ordinance to mandate that whenever a housing provider requests a criminal background check, tenants are entitled to a copy of the background check report, an explanation of any denial, and a copy of the provider's criminal background policy.

Sustainable Design:

1. Advocate for stabilizing insurance rates
2. Implement improved building standards to reduce insurance costs
3. Create a feasible plan for living with water
4. Work with public entities who manage vouchers (LHC and HANO) to provide incentives to developers for increased energy efficiency improvements.
5. Require energy audits
6. Reduce costs of implementing green building techniques with builders coordinating to share those costs
7. Remove barriers to individuals effecting change to create energy efficiency in their own homes
 - a. Develop a one stop center/ website with all information on energy efficiency.
 - b. Create a list of all existing energy programs
8. Stabilize and increase various tax credit programs
 - a. Retain Historic Tax Credits
 - b. Re-implement solar credits
9. Incentivize developers to build green, historic
10. Collect Utility Data to provide additional data to craft policy recommendations that foster energy efficiency.
 - a. Advocate for increased energy efficiency and sustainable utility rates.

Improving Quality of Life:

1. Focus on transit-oriented development overlay in area with high investments like Canal Street @ Bio District, Lafitte Greenway, St. Claude Corridor-
2. Promote alternative land use:
 - a. Encourage land banking
 - b. Reduce blight
 - c. Reduce vacancies
3. Improve health outcomes by zip codes and neighborhood

Access for Special Needs Populations – See Citywide Special Needs Recommendations