

# Advocacy Weekly Wrap

APRIL 15, 2021

## ISSUE SPOTLIGHT: NIMBYism and Public Opposition to Affordable Housing



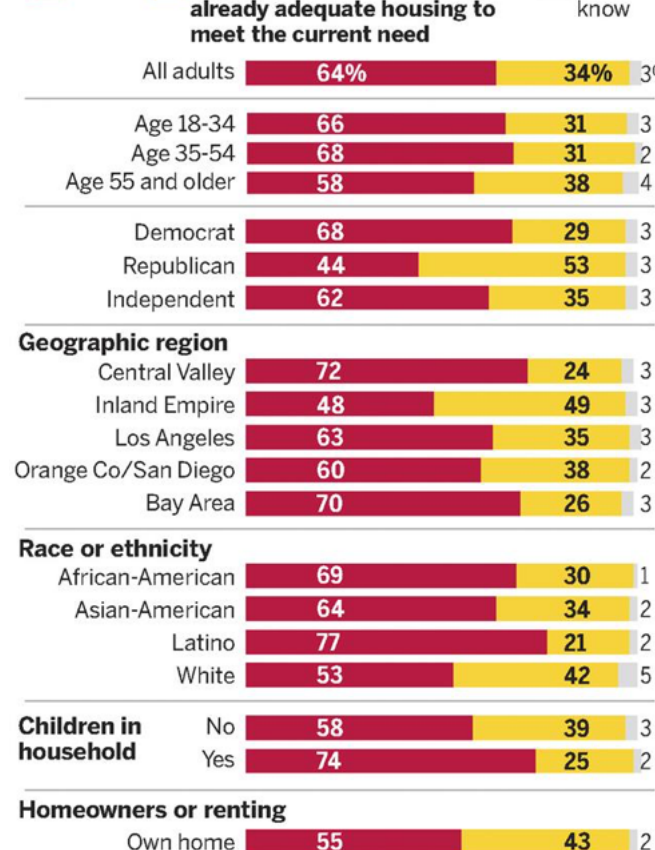
Source: RL CRABB

- NIMBYism.** **NIMBY** stands for “Not In My Backyard” and describes the phenomenon in which residents of a neighborhood express opposition to new developments or change in occupancy of an existing development in their local area. People who hold this sentiment are usually homeowners concerned about their own property or changes in the community. Common reasons for this opposition include:
  - Increase in traffic
  - Decrease in their own property value
  - Increase in crime, theft, and violence (usually rooted in racial prejudices against potential new residents)
  - Detriment to neighborhood aesthetic (e.g. blocking natural lighting)
- New housing developments can be very beneficial for populations of lower socioeconomic standing.** In areas where rent is high and housing is scarce, adding new developments to the area can mean **lower rent rates** due to increased supply. Many affordable housing developments are also targeted towards lower-income tenants to alleviate homelessness problems for the area. However, these lower-income populations are disproportionately made up of Black individuals which is why many NIMBYs oppose new housing due to prejudiced stereotypes of PoC.
- Local government structure and public processes often promote NIMBY opposition.** Many neighborhoods hold **neighborhood council meetings** that allow for local residents to argue against changes to their neighborhood. These gatherings were made initially to connect local communities to city government. However, they have proved to have a detrimental effect since most individuals who are on neighborhood council boards are the more privileged, affluent members of the community so the opinions expressed are often unrepresentative of the actual residing population.
- Government policy also plays a role in NIMBYism.**
  - Nuisance laws** were originally put in place to prevent people from harming their surrounding neighbors and land (e.g. chemical spills, excessive noise pollution, etc). However, these policies are now being used by NIMBYs to oppose housing developments because they “block natural sunlight” or “detract from the neighborhood aesthetic.”
  - Some neighborhood groups also use LA’s historic preservation policies to halt new construction policies. The **Historic-Cultural Monument program** recognizes historically significant buildings and protects them from demolition. However, the issue is that *anyone* can nominate a building for protection. Even more troubling is the fact that the City Council can even designate a building as historic against the recommendations of LA’s Department of City Planning.
- Solutions for NIMBY opposition.** Some strategies that can be implemented to alleviate the effects of NIMBYism are:
  - Having a longer delay between council meetings and denial/approval of a project so community voices are less influential.
  - Government officials being more mindful of who they appoint to zoning boards.
  - Setting a limit on the sites that can be nominated for historic status.
  - Giving more power to city planners and preservationists rather than City Council.

### CALIFORNIANS AND THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

Two-thirds of adults would support more housing in their communities, but opinions vary by race, income and political party, a new poll finds.

“Do you favor or oppose building more housing in your city or community to meet the current need in your part of California?”



Note: Some numbers may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.  
 Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Californians & Their Government survey. The results are based on a phone survey of 1,734 California adult residents — cellphones and land lines — from September 10–19. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error is +/- 3.1 percent for all adults and 3.8 percent for the likely voters.  
 BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

**Demographic breakdown of Californians who favor or oppose new housing development in their community.** (Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Californians & Their Government, 2017)

## LEARN MORE:

- Journal Article:** “Managing Local Opposition to Affordable Housing: A New Approach to NIMBY” This article proposes a new approach to local housing development opposition that combines proactive planning by the developer, community organizing, and public relations strategies. (Journal of Affordable Housing and Community Development)
- Study:** “Opposition to Development or Opposition to Developers?” This presents a study done to evaluate Angelenos’ attitudes towards new housing. (Monkkonen & Manville, UCLA)
- Podcast:** “Nimbyism” This podcast discusses the ethics behind NIMBYism: Is protecting your local area selfish or the right thing to do? This podcast is a less directly relevant to the specific issue of homelessness but more about the general phenomenon of NIMBYism. (Source: BBC Radio)
- Commentary:** “Tiny Homes” This is commentary about the downsides of the Tiny Homes that were recently built in LA. Specifically about why they are insufficient and even insulting to unhoused Angelenos. They are also being used as a tactic by NIMBYs to reduce visible homelessness. (Street Watch LA, Hal Selfmade)

## IN THE NEWS:

- Unhoused residents of Echo Park forcefully displaced by city government:**
  - Many nearby housed residents of Echo Park had been petitioning throughout 2021 to remove Echo Park’s occupants due to complaints about safety, deterioration of park amenities, and general annoyance of the tents that were scattered throughout the park.
  - Around mid-March, residents of the Echo Park encampment were **forced out of the park** and were offered housing through Project Roomkey. This was a safe and community-centered environment for over 100 individuals experiencing homelessness.
  - Many unhoused residents of Echo Park were displeased with this and felt that they had been **unfairly forced to participate in this program** with such strict regulations.
  - Some of the downsides of Project Roomkey that participants cited include:
    - Curfews
    - Lack of privacy
    - Lack of food (compared to the community kitchen they had in Echo Park)
    - Instability (many participants of Project Roomkey feared that they would be kicked out of the program eventually)
    - Lack of community (that they had in Echo Park)

## ACTION ITEMS:

- Future hour opportunity:**
  - Are you interested in researching/collaborating with HP Advocacy directors on this newsletter during Spring quarter? This could include helping with research for our topic highlights or brainstorming ideas for future newsletter issues. If so, fill out [this form](#) and we’ll reach out to you!
- Listen to a podcast about NIMBYism (1 hour):**
  - Listen to BBC Radio’s podcast on the ethics of NIMBYism and write a short reflection (~1 paragraph) about your own opinion on NIMBYism or about something you learned. You can turn in this reflection under the task description question of the services hours form!
- Join the Advocacy Slack channel!** There, we hope to post information and action items (for hours) on a more regular basis than this newsletter.

**Thank you so much for reading! If you found this informative, please share! If you would like to subscribe, [click here](#).**

Special thanks to Victor for helping out with the newsletter this week!

[View this email in your browser](#)

You are receiving this email because of your relationship with Hunger Project at UCLA. Please [reconfirm](#) your interest in receiving emails from us. If you do not wish to receive any more emails, you can [unsubscribe here](#).

This message was sent to rgirl1000@gmail.com by hungerprojectadvocacy@gmail.com@gmail.com

308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, CA, 90024

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage Subscription](#) | [Forward Email](#) | [Report Abuse](#)



**This is a Test Email only.**

This message was sent for the sole purpose of testing a draft message.