

Housing reform: same chorus, same verse — still off-key for working households

Nashville is missing the mark for regular households earning below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) and offering nothing for those under 30%

FOCUS matters for any serious work effort and should begin where the need is greatest. Since 2010, Nashville has focused aggressively on housing production, setting national records for both zoning reforms enabling that production and the number of units built. But output (production) alone is not the same as progress — especially when the results leave the majority behind and the most vulnerable even further behind. A thriving city requires more than volume — it requires vision, values, and fairness.

Today, consultants and think tanks are calling to turn up the volume: do more of the same, but only faster. But scaling a bad song only amplifies the fall. You can't turn a flop into a classic by turning up the volume.

Here's what Nashville was promised and what residents got:

PROMISED: More homes = more affordability

REALITY: Prices rose, not fell. Land costs surged. Builders chased the high-end, not working families.

PROMISED: Smaller, denser homes would help working families

REALITY: “Skinny” homes on small lots pushed out middle-income and low-income buyers and delivered investor-owned rentals instead.

PROMISED: Increased housing supply would bring equity, fairness, and access.

REALITY: The new supply overwhelmingly serves wealthier buyers and corporate ownership — while pushing middle- and low-income households further away from options, especially communities of color.

In Nashville: Data from the National Low-Income Housing Coalition shows that Nashville's housing production still primarily serves households earning above 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). After 15 years of zoning reform, what's being built by builders and investors still doesn't match what people earn. Continuing this pattern—especially through the 2025 zoning and policy proposals—***will only widen the gap between market output and actual need***, worsening conditions for middle- and lower-income families.

PROMISED: Reform would reduce displacement

REALITY: Demolitions accelerated. Longtime residents were priced out. We got more turnover — not more stability

These are only a few of our concerns. Please join us as we work to ensure Nashvillians have both a voice and a seat at the table — as they should.



Save Our Nashville Neighborhoods, Inc. (SONN or SONNinc) was founded by a coalition of neighborhood associations in District 23 and has grown into an independent, citywide movement. SONN advocates for neighborhood preservation, civic engagement, and place-led planning—grounded in the voices of residents across Davidson County. It operates as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization.

SONN supports housing strategies rooted in real community needs—not profit-first models. We oppose deregulated, supply-side housing policies that are actively harming the very people Nashville's latest trends claim to support: essential workers, vulnerable families, and long-time residents.



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Or mail your check to: **SONN, Inc.**,
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