



Qüestions d'Habitatge

21

APRIL 2018

**Barcelona Right to
Housing Plan 2016-2025**

- Al 2016 es van aprovar definitivament reparcel·lacions que permetran edificar 34 nous habitatges de protecció oficial.
- C1.2 Implementació de nous models d'habitatge de protecció oficial**
- Execució temporal: 2016 - 2020
Responsable: Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge de Barcelona (PMHB)
- S'han iniciat diversos projectes per explorar vies alternatives d'incrementar de forma quantitativa i qualitativa el parc d'habitatge públic. Entre ells:

Impuls del cohabitatge en cessió d'ús

- S'ha constituït la Taula d'Habitatge cooperatiu, presidida pel regidor d'Habitatge i el Comissió-nat d'Economia Social i Solidària, i formada per representants del món de les finances ètiques i de cooperatives d'habitatges.
- Amb l'habitatge cooperatiu en cessió d'ús es busca:
 - Garantir l'accés a un habitatge digne i assequible.
 - Mantenir la titularitat pública del sòl.
 - Impedir l'especulació amb l'habitatge.
 - Afavorir l'estabilitat en el temps dels usuaris.
 - Fomentar la gestió comunitària dels immobles.



- S'ha convocat el Primer Concurs de Cohabitatge en cessió d'ús, oferint 7 solars públics en dret de superfície als projectes millor puntuats. Els solars se situen en diferents districtes de la ciutat: Cuaderns de l'Estació, Sarrà - Sant Gervasi, Horta - Guinardó, Nou Barris (2) i Sant Martí.
- Impuls al model de cooperatives d'habitatge en cessió d'ús

Noves tecnologies

- Aplicar criteris de gènere, a l'adequació a la diversitat de necessitats, a l'innovació, a l'accessibilitat i a la sostenibilitat.

...realitzat en març de 2016

...habitatges en cessió d'ús

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The goal behind the new Right to Housing Plan is to transform housing policies by putting people at their centre.



A plan for championing the right to housing



Josep Maria Montaner

Barcelona City Councillor for Housing and Renovation

This issue of *Issues* no. 21, presents a summary edition of the 2016-2025 Plan for the Right to Housing in Barcelona, which was approved by the Full City Council Meeting of 27 January 2017. This is an ambitious plan that multiplies investments in housing; it is strategic, for a ten-year period, the minimum for introducing changes that will result in an important public housing stock; and it is executive, for developing all the tools that Barcelona City Council has at its disposal for housing.

Barcelona is a successful city that, like other desirable cities on the international arena, has fallen prey to the serious problem of gentrification. This, together with the lack of a public housing stock, where such housing has not been built or maintained, makes this plan a more than necessary tool for reclaiming housing as a right for all city residents.

This publication features the plan's most notable points, divided up into four areas: preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion; ensuring the proper use of housing, incorporating empty dwellings; increasing the stock of affordable housing and maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock. It is on the basis of these areas that the various initiatives that serve to promote a new housing framework in Barcelona are being designed.

There are many legal and budgetary difficulties we have to tackle if we are to ensure housing is a right and an asset used

for people's daily lives, rather than a commodity. Many of these legal difficulties fall outside our municipal jurisdiction. Despite these limitations, we have launched new tools and measures.

And we're going even further. Because the City Council is well aware that housing falls mainly under the jurisdiction of the Catalan regional government and the Spanish State. That is why this plan, besides multiplying and boosting municipal tools, provides for calls on the competent authorities to govern the regulatory framework that affects housing and its economic activity and exercise their powers or delegate them to the City Council which, proportionately speaking, is the authority that has currently been putting the most resources and services at the disposal of the city's residents. Never before in Barcelona have such efforts been made to transform its indecisive and unambitious policies.

Today's government team has put together a plan to radically change how housing is conceived and championed as a right. A right recognised in several local-, regional-, State- and international-level tools that involves a commitment from the various authorities to work to ensure that people can have access to decent housing. The Housing Right Plan is therefore a key tool for implementing policies that serve to guarantee the social function of housing and moving forward in building a public service on a par with the best European practices.

This is a plan drafted for the first time from within the territory, with participation from local residents and invitations to

associations, and a particular treatment for each of Barcelona's districts and neighbourhoods, as well as specific collectives.

This is a plan that presents strategic measures for tackling specific problems: increases in rent, tourist flats, an increasingly ageing population, the difficulties young people face trying to leave home and gain access to housing etc.

What is more, in addition to the damaging effects caused by the property bubble and mortgage crisis, along with the central government's decision to bail out banks and abandon hundreds of thousands of families to totally unjust housing-eviction proceedings, Barcelona is now seeing a rise in rental prices due to a series of market and legislative developments.

This situation cannot be tackled without a bottom up change and in every direction: by strengthening and increasing rent subsidies; by developing support measures for people at risk of eviction, such as the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER); by creating new tools for ensuring empty dwellings are incorporated into the affordable Rental Housing Pool; fighting against anti-social uses of housing, such as empty dwellings in the hands of banks; by multiplying the production of public rental properties which, what is more, follow innovation, flexibility, gender-equality, accessibility and energy-saving criteria; by boosting new forms of housing tenure, such as co-housing under granted right of use; and, finally, by strengthening policies for maintaining the residential housing pool, through proactive measures for allocating financial aid for renovations wherever they are most needed, and through interventions at various levels, from reforms and energy improvements inside properties to urban-regeneration operations, not to mention agreements with owner communities.

This is not simply a document of intent but a plan that is being implemented under 59 initiatives, which can be continued and assessed and which is accompanied by an unprecedented budgetary impetus. The City Council has planned to invest 1,671.8 million euros over the coming ten years, 58% more than in the previous plan. Housing then is becoming a key policy at the City Council, which is coordinating the actions and measures of other areas and combining several tools for the key purpose of redistribution and urban restructuring.

Some of the plan's notable points are as follows:

- Strengthening rent-payment subsidies as a key tool for preventing housing losses. Close to 10,000 households will benefit from this every year during this term of office.
- Extending the public housing pool by acquiring 1,000 flats and making 8,000 brand-new dwellings available — from the Municipal Housing and Renovation Institute, the municipal operator — and a further 8,000 made in collaboration with other operators, according to the 80% for rent and 20% for building lease ratio.
- Making over 1,000 small-property-owner dwellings available to tenants for affordable rent by guaranteeing rent cover and financial aid for renovations for as much as 20,000 euros through the Rental Housing Pool.
- Impetus from a brand-new renovation policy that prioritises energy saving, by concentrating its efforts where there is residential vulnerability. For the first time, an annual call for grant and subsidy applications for interior home renovations has been incorporated, as have agreements with communities. All in all, more than 50,000 households will benefit from it.

To achieve all of this, in addition to the participatory processes, the plan has been negotiated with associations that champion the right to housing and has been explained to the residential construction sector's main players; this is a plan discussed and debated with each of the political party groups, in order to improve and complete it, with the aim of achieving the highest possible consensus. Such a radical change in housing policies cannot come about in a single term of office or from a few political party groups; it has to be a commitment from the entire city.

None of that could be achieved without a housing plan with a view to the future, agreed with organisations and residents, which multiplies the annual budget that the City Council allocates to housing. That is why we understand that its summarised publication, both for the knowledge of Barcelona's citizens and also to serve as a point of reference in other housing policies and plans, is a useful and necessary initiative. ☺

Work is being carried out to extend the Public Housing Pool to tackle the increase in rental prices.



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The new housing path in Barcelona: towards a quality public service



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Javier Burón
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Housing and Renovation
Institute

The Right to Housing Plan for 2016-2025 seeks to reverse the historical deficit Barcelona has suffered with regard to housing, placing it within the framework of the best European practices, which for over a hundred years have been offering a public housing service.

This plan is based on an analysis of the housing reality in the city. Barcelona has a pool of 684,000 main dwellings*, 31% of which are rental. It is the municipality with the highest percentage in the Spanish State, which makes the city more sensitive to changes in the rental market.

At the same time, the economic power of families for paying rent is much higher than in the rest of the Spanish State. Areas

*Data from the 2011 census

with lower rent are also the ones where price increases and family efforts to make ends meet are proportionately the biggest.

The rental housing market in Barcelona has been suffering from problems of excessively rising rental prices and a supply controlled by too few hands. Regular-residence use of housing is coming under pressure from a foreign-property investment focus, Barcelona's attraction as a city for permanent or temporary residence, illegal tourist flats, poor use by large-property owners, etc.

All this is leading to an emergency housing situation. In 2016, 84% of evictions were over rent-payment difficulties. In addition, the public rental housing pool, capable of providing



Barcelona aims to reverse the historical deficit and put itself on a par with cities that have over 100 years' experience in public housing services.

accommodation for people who cannot access market housing, is only 1.6%. The figure is around 20% in other European cities. Berlin, for example, has a social housing pool of over 30% and Paris of 17.2%. Today's social housing pool in Barcelona is a long way from these cities which have been adopting good public housing practices for years.

This new term of office has ensured public ownership of land in all its housing promotions. We will not sell or lose more public housing than is built. Building, however, is a long process. That is why there is a need to exploit other avenues to increase the public housing pool and allocate it to the rental market.

Only by using all the tools we have at our disposal, along with some new ones, will we be able to overcome this serious threat. That is, if everyone is responsible for them and if the other authorities meet their obligations too. It's time Barcelona followed this path.

To this end the new Right to Housing Plan provides for every mechanism at hand, such as pre-emption rights, to acquire dwellings for allocation to rental social housing or multiply the production capacity, from an average construction of 200 flats a year to 800, during the plan's ten-year period.

It also considers completely new challenges and mechanisms, such as the creation of the UCER, a unit specialising in mediation and assistance during evictions and the impetus of a metropolitan housing operator, who will enable a multiplied production of new flats for affordable rent, in the style of a *housing association*, tasked with promoting affordable rental housing in many European cities. This operator will be managed as a mixed company that will enable investment capacities for promoting protected housing to be added to those for production.

Another tool we are working on is attracting privately owned flats to the Barcelona Rental Housing Pool. Owners are being offered maximum guarantees and incentives; they are being ensured their flats will pay them rent while being maintained.

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This new term of office has ensured public ownership of land in all its housing promotions. We will not sell or lose more public housing than is built.
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Financial aid is also being added for renovations and subsidies, in addition to technical and legal advice.

The cooperative assigned-for-use housing model is also being established, along with *urban masoveria* [a leasehold in exchange for maintenance and repair work instead of money] projects and social-entity impetuses in managing and generating rental housing.

Making empty flats available for renting is another of the areas being worked on, through agreements with banks and locating empty dwellings, by contacting owners and offering them incentives to include their dwellings in the Public Rental Housing Pool.

As for management, all the above would not have been possible without a powerful internal re-organisation. Firstly, the Manager's Office for Housing is becoming answerable to Social Rights, to strengthen social right and service aspects. Secondly, the various managing bodies are integrated into the new Municipal Institute of Housing and Renovation, which will be the body tasked with managing municipal housing policies.

The plan provides for the establishment, within a period of ten years, of a public housing service in Barcelona, so that the city can finally make progress in housing policies that guarantee the rights of its local residents. ☺





Right to
Housing Plan
2016-2025



CHAPTER

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- Home icon
- Piggy bank icon
- Information icon
- Dollar sign icon
- Bar chart icon



01

Right to Housing Plan 2016-2025. The challenge of turning housing into a public service

The new Right to Housing Plan for 2016-2025 promoted by Barcelona City Council represents a paradigm shift in that it regards living in a decent home to be everyone’s right. To ensure that housing is not a commodity but rather a right that all city residents have access to under equal conditions, the plan tackles — from four strategic areas — the current and future needs that the city has in this area: preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion; ensuring the proper use of housing; increasing the stock of affordable housing, and maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock.



Gemma Martí
Journalist and sociologist

Housing is a fundamental right recognised in legislation and the authorities at a local, regional, State and international level. More specifically, Article 26 of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 2006 stipulates that: “Individuals who lack sufficient resources have the right to a decent home, to which end the public authorities must establish a system of measures by law to guarantee this right, within the terms and conditions determined by legislation”.

The new Barcelona Right to Housing Plan (PDHB) launched by the City Council — which is set out for a period of ten years, from 2016 to 2025 — is focused on people and ensures the social function of housing. For this reason, the plan lays the foundation for building a public housing service similar to the ones that already exist for health care and education. In this way Barcelona aims to put itself on a par with the best practices in housing seen in other European cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris.

To do this, the plan — which was drafted by the Councillor’s Office for Housing, the Manager’s Office for Housing, the Municipal Institute for Urban Planning, Barcelona Gestió Urbanística, SA, and the Municipal Housing Trust — promotes the right to have a decent home and advises people to protect it, while tackling problems that have to be solved imminently, such as the

Housing-emergency prevention is one of the main goals of the new Plan to avoid the repetition of the situations we have seen where people lose their homes.





UCER
(Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion)
 Creating a unit specialising in providing assistance to people affected by housing-loss processes.

Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion

The Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER) is made up of socio-residential supervisors, lawyers and experts in building and administrative support; it works preventively in coordination with the other municipal services involved (Housing Offices, Social Service centres and Social Emergencies Centre [CUESB]) to support families affected by eviction processes in the event that they lose their home, and to strengthen the application of legislation to counter the housing emergency and energy poverty (housing discipline).

Working in the unit are 20 people with a range of professional profiles who are tasked with negotiating with housing owners, coordinating the municipal services involved and managing the necessary measures for reducing the effects that losing a home can cause when it finally happens.



The new municipal plan puts the emphasis on maximising efforts to prevent people in a vulnerable situation from losing their usual dwelling



This unit also manages the fines that are issued against banks and large-scale property owners with empty flats*.

1.2. Assisting people in the process of losing their home

Although it is the Catalan regional government that has most of the jurisdiction, the new municipal plan puts special emphasis on maximising efforts to prevent the loss of housing of people in a vulnerable situation and, where that is not feasible, to halt evictions and ensure decent new accommodation.

To make this possible, a coordinated social and housing intervention is required that brings together the services and support offered by the various agencies, such as the Housing Offices, the territory’s Social Services, the Municipal Institute of Social Services and the Barcelona Social Emergencies Centre (CUESB). They all need to be coordinated to find out about the evictions occurring in the city, in order to monitor them and mediate, while supporting the people affected and looking for a solution to the problems they are suffering. Specialist committees have therefore been created in each district to bring about an intensive and coordinated initiative.

The mediation service is key where people have difficulties paying their rent or mortgage. This is why the Housing Office has boosted its team of professionals, so it can deal with situations where people are unable to meet payments before debts arise, and provide flexible one-off or on-going financial aid to respond to a diverse range of situations. The municipal Protection, Intervention and Mediation services have also joined forces for people who have defaulted or are

* For further information, see Section 2.3 Housing Discipline.

for providing access) for individuals or households on low incomes or with little guarantee of stable work, even though their situation is very similar to those of other households receiving rent-payment subsidies. The new subsidies for accessing a rented flat would minimise owners' reluctance to let out their properties to such people. Another option is to create a mechanism that enables owners to receive guaranteed rent, as well as a commitment to follow up any disputes or problems that may arise, and other measures that provide an incentive for renting out properties, such as subsidies for improvement work and property tax (IBI).

The formulas stated in the plan where work will be carried out are: launching a guarantee fund or something similar; creating guarantees from the City Council itself; introducing private market insurance policies that would provide guarantees for property owners' income, and linking a line of rent subsidies for housing included in the affordable housing pool (or a figure that is introduced) that allows the Authority to act as a



guarantor through a line of subsidies in the event of any arrears. This mechanism could also trigger a monthly subsidy in the event of non-payment being more than a one-off.

FORECAST RENT-PAYMENT GRANTS FOR 2016-2020 AND 2021-2025

	2011-2015	2016-2020	2021-2025	TOTAL
Approved rent-payment grants	61.397	67.500	65.000	132.501
Investment in rent-payment grants	108.750.000 €	162.000.000 €	156.000.000 €	318.000.001 €

The new Plan champions the notion that the right to housing depends on housing being used for residential purposes and no other.





It is crucial that Barcelona ensures its local residents are not forced to move out of the neighbourhoods they were born or grew up in or have chosen to live in.

Besides detecting and penalising cases of property mobbing, a notable line of action involves amending the regulations so as to prevent the replacement of residential use. We should point out that urban planning regulations are a key tool that the City Council can use to organise and regulate the processes of replacing residential use with other uses.

One example is the Special Urban-Development Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT), the first city regulation for all forms of tourist accommodation, which was approved in January 2017. PEUT bans new tourist accommodation from replacing housing but allows accommodation to

undergo improvement and renovation work. It is also accompanied by supplementary measures, such as a considerable strengthening of the team dedicated to detecting illegal activity in tourist accommodation, whose number will be increased to 110 in 2018.

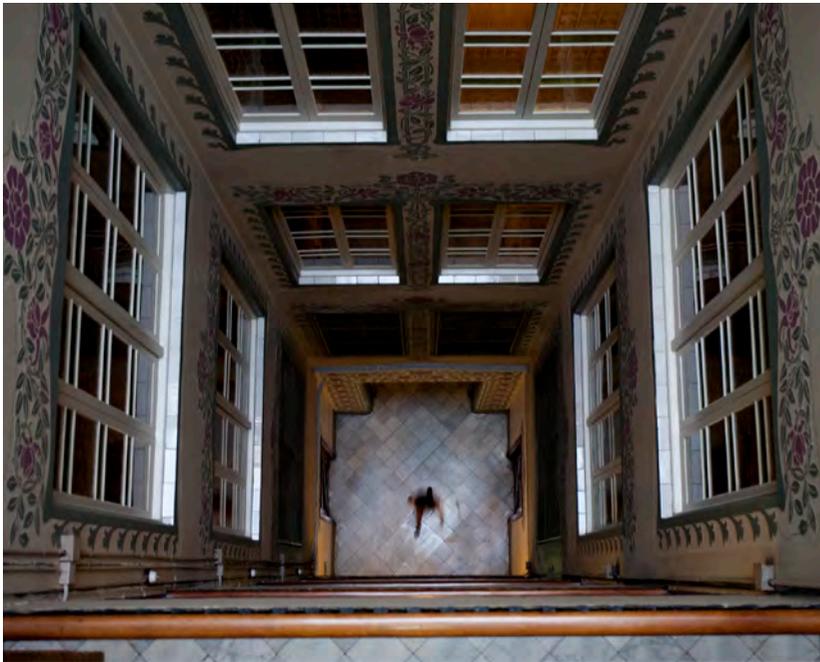
Awarding social housing

The new plan highlights the impetus for awarding housing to the various collectives applying for it. More specifically, to meet everyone's needs, percentages are being established for awarding housing to the various types of applicants. There is assistance for special cases (financially vulnerable members of the population — households with incomes below 2.5 times the value of the Public Income Indicator with Multiple Effects (IPREM) —, women victims of domestic violence, young people, people with disabilities and elderly people), and general award criteria are being established to ensure some of the social housing available is allocated to these collectives. The plan is to earmark 30% of flats for people under 35 and for women in housing which is neither emergency accommodation nor for special cases.

Where members of the population are not in a special-case vulnerable situation but do have difficulties accessing the free market, flats are being promoted which enable a guaranteed social mix in areas where the promotion of official protected housing is high.

It needs to be stressed here that the number of people registered with the Social Housing Applicants Register (HPO) stands at 53,889, which corresponds to a total of 28,238 households(*), of which 89.3% have incomes less than 2.5 times the IPREM income index.

* The number of applicants went up to 35,000 in 2017.



The City Council has launched all the mechanisms permitted under the current legislation to put an end to the anomalous use of property.

So, the City Council has launched every mechanism permitted under current legislation to put an end to anomalous uses of property and non compliance with its social function, keeping properties empty without justification. To improve the efficiency of these initiatives, files have been systematised and computerised and various procedures introduced, through the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion, bearing in mind that the initiative to be implemented, once the empty housing has been identified, varies depending on whether the housing has been empty for over or under two years (according to the definition for empty housing established in Articles 3(d) of Act 18/2007 on the Right to Housing).

First, a letter is sent to the banks concerned, explaining the programmes they can access to make their empty properties available on the rental market, under Article 42 of the Right to Housing Act. If the banks still fail to comply, fines and penalties will be issued against those properties that have been empty for over two years.

Property mobbing

Barcelona has a protocol for dealing with cases of mobbing. This programme offers advice on the rights and duties of the people concerned and responds to the situation through mediation. Housing Offices opened 237 cases of possible situations of property mobbing between 2009 and 2015, although only thirteen of these resulted in sufficient evidence of a crime for submission to prosecutors. In any case, the City Council provides users with legal advice, support when faced with a situation of inequality, proposals for resolving possible disputes through negotiated and mediated channels and, where necessary, formal complaints for identified situations of mobbing or the administrative proceedings that arise from these.

Working groups have also been created for specific cases, coordinated by the district and the legal services for housing. Advisory activities and talks relating to such cases are also being promoted. Examples include the advisory talks to local residents from Carrer de Lancaster, in Ciutat Vella and the workshop on mobbing that was given in Eixample.

At the same time, Housing Offices have been increasing staff numbers and insourcing lawyers so they can attend to the public, not only in relation to issues such as mobbing but also any other housing-related problems.

Facing the major need to expand the social and affordable housing stock in Barcelona, the Plan exploits all the channels for the acquisition and handing-over of dwellings.





CHAPTER





02

The Plan's drafting process A starting point

Commissioned by Barcelona City Council's Area for Housing, the Lacol and Celobert cooperatives began coordinating and drafting the Barcelona Right to Housing Plan in November 2015.

This plan was developed at a particularly unique time, marked on the one hand by a long housing-crisis period that started in 2007 when the property-market bubble burst, leaving Barcelona with thousands of housing evictions and people in vulnerable situations, going through difficulties meeting their most essential basic needs, including access and maintenance of a decent and suitable home.

On the other hand, it took place in a city which, even though it had been making progress in its implementation of housing policies since 2004, had a long way to go to reach the level of such benchmark European cities as Amsterdam, Vienna, Paris and Berlin, especially in the availability of a significant public housing stock allocated to social policies.

We therefore find ourselves in a context that raises an urgent need for attending to, reversing and preventing housing emergencies in the city, though also working with a longer-term view that allows policies and mechanisms to be designed for advancing towards a city with more and better tools for guaranteeing the right to housing and to



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Architect at the
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the city. A decision was then made to draft a ten-year plan that would enable the incorporation of goals with this double time frame and provide the city with a powerful public housing service.

We highlight two starting-point decisions below that determine the plan's drafting process and frame its development.

1. In the first place, the aim is for it to be a plan developed with considerable collaboration from city residents. Defining the participatory mechanisms will therefore be one of the aspects that the work process's initial discussions and debates will focus on.
2. In the second place, in contrast to the previous plans, it opts to bring housing-policy planning to the district level. A level closer to neighbourhoods and citizens, where diagnoses can be established and initiatives considered that are more adapted to the specific needs of the various territories.

For all that, the Plan includes four sections:

- I. Analysis and diagnosis**
- II. Right to Housing Plan-** Challenges, strategic lines, action lines, initiatives and economic and financial study.
- III. The situation in the districts.** Analysis and diagnosis on the district level, including the





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Each of these four big areas includes various lines of action which are carried out in 59 measures.





A

Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

A1. Preventing residential exclusion

A1.1

A1.1 Social grants for accommodation provided by social services

Time scale: 2016 - 2017

STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion

- Drets Socials [Social Rights] allocates part of its budget every year to grants for housing payments: grants for accommodation and maintenance allocated to households monitored by social services; grants for tenants of dwellings included in the social housing fund and grants for paying off the social fund's housing arrears.
- For the purposes of offering comprehensive assistance to residents in a situation of residential exclusion or at risk of social exclusion, we will need to strengthen coordination between the Housing Offices and the territory's social services.
- Coordination mechanisms will enable transfers of information between the two services, so as to spare the individuals attended to from having to carry the same information twice, determine that everyone in receipt of grants from the Social Rental Housing Fund has access to social support and establish housing boards in the districts to allow exchanges of information.

A1.2

Boosting the role of the Housing Offices

Time scale: 2016 - 2018

STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion

- Housing Offices are the public's point of contact with the city's housing policy.
- We need to raise their profiles, given that only 27.2% of the people surveyed for evaluating the services offered by Drets Socials actually knew of their existence. By age bracket, the collective that knew least about the Offices were elderly people. As regards resources, immigrants were the group that knew the least about the Offices.
- We will need to launch a city-scale information campaign while taking into account the particular features and needs of each district.
- A few measures:
 - Extending the Offices' help and information opening hours, which are currently every morning and one afternoon, so that everyone in the population has access to them.
 - Improving IT coordination between the Housing Offices and other municipal services such as Youth Information Points), the social services and the districts.
 - Encouraging the e-processing of grants and subsidies.
 - Boosting the Offices' team by strengthening their coordination and improvement roles and technical- and legal-advice roles, among other things.
 - Offering training to the offices' staff in areas they aim to promote, such as alternative housing-access models and the right to housing.

A1.5 Measures for receiving refugees

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion and homelessness

- As a result of the international humanitarian crisis that the world is experiencing, according to data from the UNHCR in 2014, close to 14 million people abandoned their homes because of armed conflict or natural disasters, among other things.
- Over half of the world's refugees come from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.
- The "Barcelona, a refuge city" campaign has been in operation since 2015, to prepare the city for receiving refugees by giving and guaranteeing them services to meet their needs.
- A few measures:
 - Defining the strategy and reception model
 - Attending to refugees who are already in the city
 - Coordinating volunteer, awareness-raising and educational work.
 - Promoting coordination and support between European cities and municipalities

A2. Helping people in the process of losing their home**A2.1 Mediation service for people who have defaulted or are having difficulties in paying their rent or mortgage**

Time scale: ongoing management

STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

STRATEGIC LINE

A.2. Helping people in the process of losing their home

- Defaulted housing payments can be over rent or mortgage payments, so it is here that the Housing Offices offer mediation services.
- Mediation over defaulted rent payments depends as much on strengthening staff numbers as it does on grants for rent payments and arrears, which will have to be sufficiently flexible to be able to deal with the diversity of situations.
- There are two alternatives when it comes to mediation over defaulted mortgage payments:
 - To take on one-off arrears by activating, through the Housing Offices, the corresponding grant, provided the beneficiaries are able to continue paying the mortgage.
 - Where a bank has to be negotiated with over improved mortgage terms and conditions to enable households to keep their homes, it will be presented with a proposal through the Ofideute service in coordination with the Catalan Housing Agency (AHC).
- Promoting the unification of services linked to defaulted rent or mortgage payments, through the eviction programmes and public housing stock, so as to offer a comprehensive service.

A3.3 Intervening against squatting

Time scale: 2016-2017 implementation. Ongoing management.

STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Barcelona City Council has worked extremely hard to update data for detecting the number of cases of squatting in the city.
- The main consequence of this situation is the difficulty these households have accessing help from the City Council and protection during evictions.
- Initiatives embarked on by the City Council to resolve this:
 - Coordinating several of the City Council's entities to obtain and organise data on cases of squatting.
 - Amending the Regulations of the Social Emergencies Committee, allowing responses to squatters who have to be evicted from their homes.
 - Different types of intervention according to the various forms of squatting that occur.
 - Detecting cases of squatting that cause social conflict.
 - Promoting negotiations with owners to regularise the situation

A3.4 Action in cases of substandard housing

Time scale: Ongoing management.

STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Act 18/2007 defines substandard housing as properties which, despite having no habitability certificate (for failing to meet the conditions required for obtaining one), are allocated to housing.
- Barcelona City Council takes action here through the Housing Offices in coordination with the district.
- The action process consists of five stages:
 1. Background detection and research
 2. Analysing and verifying the substandard housing situation
 3. Coordinating initiatives between Housing Office and District
 4. Mediating and penalising, where substandard housing is confirmed, in coordination with the district's Department of Permits and Inspection, which could put an end to the property's use as housing. At the same time, a decent residential solution is sought, according to the situation.



B

Ensuring the proper use of housing

B1. Putting empty dwellings on the rental housing market

B1.1 Compiling lists of empty dwellings

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing

STRATEGIC LINE

B.1. Putting empty dwellings on the rental housing market

- Act 18/2007 defines empty housing as a dwelling that remains vacant without interruption for more than two years and for no justified reason.
- We need to coordinate the compilation of an empty-housing list so we can embark on a decisive initiative for imposing sanctions on empty dwellings and find out which areas experience the most problems. This list will be compiled from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.
- It will also enable proactive initiatives for offering mechanisms to promote the use and improvement of these dwellings.
- It will consist of an initial statistical-analysis part, based on data from the electoral roll, property-tax register and water-consumption and rubbish, and a second part, based on a direct analysis through field work.

B1.2 Penalising empty dwellings

Time scale: Ongoing management

STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing

STRATEGIC LINE

B.1. Putting empty dwellings on the rental housing market

- Control and penalisation measures will apply to dwellings left empty without justification, as a breach of their social function.
- UCER (Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion) will be the one that systematises the proceedings. It has implemented a series of procedures to that end:
 - Procedure for declaring anomalous use of housing and imposing penalty payments (Article 41, Right to Housing Act).
 - Penalisation procedure for anomalous uses due to uninterrupted non-use (Article 42, Right to Housing Act).

B2. Maintaining residential use and residents

B2.1 **Detecting and penalising property mobbing**

Time scale: Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing

STRATEGIC LINE

B.2. Maintaining residential use and residents

- Act 18/2007 on the Right to Housing defines property mobbing as “any action or omission with abuse of right that is aimed at disturbing the harassed person’s peaceful use of their dwelling”.
- Such cases can be difficult to report given that they usually affect households in a vulnerable situation.
- Spain’s current Penal Code requires the people affected to produce evidence (putting the burden of proof on them) that they are suffering from a situation of property mobbing.
- Three areas of action are suggested:
 1. Facilitating the detection of cases of property mobbing
 2. Implementing the Right to Housing Act’s protective mechanisms.
 3. Monitoring cases to prevent any harm.

B2.2 **Amending planning regulations to prevent residential uses from being replaced by other uses**

Time scale: 2016-2020

STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing

STRATEGIC LINE

B.2. Maintaining residential use and residents

- There is strong pressure in Barcelona over the appearance of new uses and the City Council is working to prevent residential uses from being replaced with others, whether or not the latter is linked to tourism.
- An evaluation will be made of the suitability to launch new tools for ordering, regulating and protecting housing.

B3.5 Providing the Committee for Accessing Inclusive Public Housing with dwellings
 Time scale: 2016-2025

STRATEGIC AREA
 B. Ensuring the proper use of housing
STRATEGIC LINE
 B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Inclusive housing means publicly or privately owned dwellings that are managed mostly by entities included in the Barcelona Inclusive Housing Network (XaHIB).
- The City Council has established a “Barcelona social-entity access protocol for applying for protected housing allocated for social inclusion”, by determining the elements of the application and access criteria, among other things.
- It is also promoting the signing of a collaboration agreement between the promoter and the entity for temporarily handing over the use of the dwelling, where a contractual framework will be established, laying out, among other things, the reasons and conditions for terminating the contract.
- A monitoring agreement will also be established by the Area for Social Rights.
- The subsequent possibility of accessing protected housing is one of the options that helps these people make the leap to regularised housing. Of course, resources for emergencies are being overstretched and transitions from inclusive housing to protected housing are becoming increasingly difficult. This means that the entities need a larger number of inclusive dwellings.
- So we will have to evaluate the real need for inclusive housing while having to increase the number of dwellings allocated to special quotas, so that the households that have completed their re-integration process can gain access to new dwellings.

B3.6 Co-responsibility from the public housing stock’s tenants
 Time scale: Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA
 B. Ensuring the proper use of housing
STRATEGIC LINE
 B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Barcelona's social rental housing stock includes not just protected price-regulated rental dwellings but also dwellings included in the social fund, where residents pay according to their respective incomes and never more than 30% of their income.
- The Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service (SPIMH) was set up to deal with the possible resident disputes that may arise in such dwellings). The goal will be to expand this service to attend to collectives that reside in other dwellings that come from the public housing stock or which are managed by the public authority.
- A social contract has also been created to protect and facilitate agreements that provide incentives to co-responsibility from tenants.

B3.7 **Expanding the initiatives of the Public Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service**
Time scale: 2016-2018. Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA
B. Ensuring the proper use of housing

STRATEGIC LINE
B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Created in 2014, the Public Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service (SPIMH) is aimed, above all, at dwellings included in the Social Rental Housing Fund, although it can cover all publicly managed dwellings.
- This service enables us to find out about the situation of the public housing stock and maintain contact with its users, especially those living in social rental housing, and in a more vulnerable situation.
- Its work over this period is regarded as positive and we will have to weigh up the possibility of extending it to the entire public housing stock, including rental housing and home-sharing models, such as rent subsidies, public housing rent and the Rental Housing Pool.
- Finally, there are plans to unify the Public Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service (SPIMHP) with the Housing and Squatting Intervention and Mediation Service (SIPHO) in coordination with legal advice from the mediation service for cases of defaulted payments and difficulties in making rent and mortgage payments.

B3.8 **Implementing a tool for managing the demand for affordable housing**
Time scale: 2016-2018

STRATEGIC AREA
B. Ensuring the proper use of housing

STRATEGIC LINE
B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Barcelona City Council has several applications at its disposal for managing the various services that are offered in the field of housing. That is why a study will be conducted on implementing a new application that allows the various services to be managed.
- This application will have to include:
 - The functions of the Barcelona Register of Officially Protected Housing Applicants.
 - The management of the officially protected housing.
 - The Housing Pool or system for attracting private housing that replaces it.
 - Rent subsidies.
 - Social emergencies.
 - Renovation.
 - General management in Housing Offices
- This application will enable more detailed information on applicants and therefore a more efficient operation, it will provide a portal for accessing online procedures as well as a more accurate evaluation of the service.



C

Increasing the stock of affordable housing

C1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

C1.1 Generating new land sites for housing that is officially protected and with special services

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- Implementing a strategic land-site policy for promoting urban-development planning, to make land available for building housing that is officially protected and with special services
- The building potential is not distributed uniformly and there is greater potential in districts that already have a much higher number of affordable homes today (Sants-Montjuïc, Sant Andreu, Sant Martí).
- To promote social mixing and ensure the right to the city, a study will be made on:
 - defining the new areas for building affordable housing in.
 - expanding the qualifying threshold for officially protected housing in plans that are implemented in the city's central districts.
- The new urban-planing housing developments will have to meet a minimum target of 50% of officially protected housing, preferably for rent.
- It will not be possible to withdraw a dwelling's officially protected housing status.

C1.2 Implementing new housing models with official protection and special services

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- The new public-initiative residential projects will have to meet several criteria:
 - To meet current social requirements
 - Gender perspective, non-androcentric dwellings that can include areas for community life and children's games etc.
 - Sustainability and sustainable mobility and use of natural and recycled materials, as established in point 3, Article 86 of the Municipal Charter.
 - Accessibility.
 - Others with cultural adaptation of dwellings, adaptation to the household unit, compatibility of residential and productive uses.
 - To meet the management needs of the housing stock:
 - Flexibility for adapting dwellings to the various users and situations of household units.
- So, several lines of work are being considered:
 - Developing pilot projects to analyse new arrangements of people living together and from a gender perspective.
 - Developing pilot projects to evaluate the level of finishes necessary and the possibility making plans for dwellings that can be improved.
 - Extending energy-efficiency and bio-construction criteria.
 - Promoting innovation throughout the project's drafting and implementation process, as well as in the renovation systems, and introducing equality, accessibility and energy-efficiency policies, among other things.

C1.3 Promoting new housing with official protection and special services

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- The Plan provides for the building of new housing with official protection and special services on publicly or privately owned land. It will combine public building from the Barcelona Municipal Institute for Housing and Renovation (IMHAB) with private building from non-profit or limited-profit promoters.
 - Public land will be made available to social promoters, such as cooperatives, so that they develop new officially protected housing, thereby increasing the production provided for by the IMHAB.
- Most of the promotions will be rental (80% in the IMHAB's and 69% overall). So:
 - There will be guaranteed maintenance of dwellings as affordable housing stock.
 - It will move over to housing-use value instead of value as a possession, thereby realising the general-interest service (Art. 4 of the Right to Housing Act).
- Priority will be given to the building of officially protected housing for special quotas and housing with special services allocated to young and elderly people.
- As for housing that is awarded, a percentage will be reserved for the area's population, to ensure social networks and community ties are maintained and to enable residents of new housing promotions to integrate into their new place of residence, protecting against gentrification and moving towards the goals of the Act on the Right to Social-Cohesion, Territorial-Balance and Socially Mixed Housing.

C1.4 Purchasing housing and buildings for allocation to public rental housing

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- The City Council plans to use various means for acquiring dwellings from the private market, including:
 - Purchasing dwellings by exercising its pre-emption rights. By applying Executive Decree 1/2015, of 24 March, on extraordinary and emergency measures aimed at banks, for putting dwellings on the rental housing market that come from mortgage foreclosure processes; and by applying Act 18/2007, of 28 December, on the Right to Housing and the Catalan Urban Planning Act, aimed at all kinds of property owners.
 - Purchasing dwellings from banks through agreements.
 - Purchasing empty dwellings from the private market. Detection work will be carried out and a specific protocol applied under the regulations.

C2.2 Support for accessing rental housing

Time scale: Implementation: 2016 – 2018.
Ongoing.

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.2. Extending and improving rent subsidies

- Certain profiles have many more difficulties than others in accessing the rental housing market. We need to provide guarantees that owners will receive rental income to thereby encourage the signing of rental-property contracts, without the need for the City Council itself to act as the tenant. Work will therefore be carried out on:
 - Opening a guarantee fund or something similar.
 - Creating guarantees from the City Council itself.
 - Introducing private-market insurance policies that enable guaranteed income for property owners.
 - Linking a line of rental subsidies for dwellings included in the Affordable Rental Housing Pool (or whatever body is introduced).

C3. Putting private housing on the the affordable rental housing market

C3.1 Registering empty land sites and promoting affordable housing on vacant sites

Time scale: Implementation: 2016 – 2018.
Ongoing.

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- Several initiatives will be launched to enable the building of affordable housing on the city's empty land sites:
 - An analysis of the city's empty land sites and their location and potential for generating affordable housing.
 - Fostering the generation of new affordable rental housing on these empty land sites, through grants and subsidies for promotions or agreements for managing future housing.
 - Where the identification and promotion initiatives fail to yield results, the Municipal Register of Undeveloped Plots will be activated, enabling the City Council to enforce work to be carried out on the property or, if necessary, subsidiary enforcement on the part of the City Council.

C4.2 Promoting urban masoverias

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- Under the *urban masoveria* contract, the owner of a dwelling hands over its use, for a specific period, in exchange for which its user takes charge of any renovation and improvement works they have agreed to. Three basic lines of action are planned for establishing this model:
 - Training and publicity: basic technical training for staff at the Housing Offices and publicity to attract dwelling users and owners
 - Application to public properties: this will help to raise the profile of and give confidence to owners. It will be performed under rental contracts and with comparable rent terms and conditions set as a maximum in officially protected housing.
 - Application to private properties: the type of properties the initiative is aimed at will have to be defined.

C4.3 Setting up an Affordable Housing Association to produce and manage housing

Time scale: 2016 - 2017

Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- This provides for the creation of a mixed public and private capital company for promoting and managing affordable housing.
- This is a similar model to the one used in other European countries (Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom etc.,) for promoting a stock of affordable housing.
- This model will help to increase public rental housing through collaboration with private limited-profit players.
- The land will remain publicly owned.
- This is a model that aims to incentivise non-speculative social investments in the housing.
- At the same time, it will also promote values such as sustainability, energy saving, innovation, community participation and good management.

C4.4 Social entity promotions of affordable rental housing
Time scale: 2020 - 2025

STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- We need to create mechanisms for social entities, especially foundations and cooperatives, to continue generating the housing the city needs.
 - Given the current context, it will be necessary for the housing that is created to be rental and for the entities to have the capacity not just to promote it but to manage it as well.
- So, mechanisms will be established such as building-lease assignments or agreements.



D

Maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock

D1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

D1.1 Systematising information on the state of the housing stock
Time scale: 2016 – 2020. Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock

STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- To improve the planning and implementation of housing policies, we need to have a good knowledge of the residential housing stock, along various lines:
 - Systematising the information of the municipal technical services, technical housing inspections, energy-efficiency and accessibility certificates etc.
 - Systematising the Housing Offices' information.
 - Drawing up a map showing the state of the housing stock that includes the features detected.
 - Transferring information from the social services to the Housing Offices.
 - Housing inspections. Establishing a collaboration so that when social services need to visit a home, they will be accompanied by an expert who can assess the state of the dwelling.
 - Creating the Metropolitan Housing Observatory which enables existing information on housing to be summarised, new information gathered and evaluation work performed.

D1.2 Map of housing conditions
Time scale: Start of pilot project: 2017

STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock

STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- The initiative will start in Ciutat Vella given that, according to the Population and Housing Census of 2011, 30% of dwellings were found to be in a poor or defective state, a percentage well above that of the city's other districts.
- It will be carried out in four stages:
 - Pilot housing-analysis carried out by the territory's players.
 - Publicity campaign.
 - Map of housing conditions
 - Systematising information on the state of the housing stock.

D2.6 Neighbourhood Plan

Time scale: 2016 – 2025

STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock

STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- This Plan is intended to enable us to tackle inequality in some areas of the city (Eix Besòs, Eix Muntanya, Marines and Ciutat Vella) and it establishes four main goals: recovering and boosting economic activity in neighbourhoods; tackling urban-planning deficits, low-quality dwellings and facility shortages and boosting their accessibility and centrality; establishing initiatives for attending to and improving the population's living conditions; empowering local residents so they can organise themselves and establish goals and initiatives for improving collective life in the neighbourhood.
- The following initiatives are being considered within the housing framework:
 - Mediation and support programmes for positive community life and the running of local-resident communities.
 - Support programmes for people who have been re-housed.
 - . Technical-boosting programmes for Housing Offices.
 - Purchasing/obtaining empty dwellings.
 - Intervening in "vulnerable buildings", with a particular focus on habitability and enhancing communal spaces; harnessing renewable energies and adapting dwellings.
 - Agreements with job placement companies and BCN Activa, to boost local employment.

D2.7 Intervening in areas with urban-planning changes to land uses and classifications

Time scale: 2016 – 2018

Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock

STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- Urban development has major repercussions on residents; such changes need to be assessed to enable mechanisms to be developed that will allow the affected areas to be improved and minimise future effects on housing. The plan is to:
 - analyse the current effects on dwellings to set out the requirements for intervention;
 - establish an intervention protocol for urban-planning changes to land use and classification which enables the processes to be carried out under known and acceptable terms;
 - provide for the necessary reserves, whether for new work or for awarding existing dwellings, to meet re-housing needs.

D2.8 Improving housing accessibility
 Time scale: 2016 – 2025

STRATEGIC AREA
 D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock
 STRATEGIC LINE
 D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- If we are to improve housing-accessibility conditions we will need to implement initiatives along several lines:
 - Grants for improving accessibility and installing lifts: this includes improving accessibility for buildings and dwelling interiors, as well as installing lifts.
 - Amendments to planning for lift installations.
 - Mediation to facilitate agreements in communities: Disagreements often prevent improvements from being carried out. The Housing Offices will have two basic tools at their disposal for establishing these agreements:
 - Cohesion grants.
 - Customised grants and subsidies.
 - Changing over from private housing to a publicly owned dwelling: to facilitate the re-housing of people with mobility problems.
 - Privately owned housing exchanges: we will need to assess the possibilities for this

D3. Improving the intervention capacity of the renovation policy

D3.1 Implementing new mechanisms for providing renovation funding
 Time scale: 2016 – 2018.
 Ongoing

STRATEGIC AREA
 D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock
 STRATEGIC LINE
 D.3. Improving the capacity for intervention

- In many cases, if a renovation is to be carried out, the necessary funding will have to be available to enable it to be done and protect local residents from having to make a payment in advance. So, then, we will need:
 - To set up a guarantee fund for housing operations.
 - Funding and involvement from the energy suppliers in implementing housing-related energy measures.
 - Agreements with professional guilds and associations to reduce the initial economic outlay involved in renovations, so that the subsidies are paid directly to the companies, without the community of owners having to make any payments in advance.
 - Agreements with the banks so that they offer low-interest-rate funding to communities of owners carrying out renovation initiatives.



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