

# San Diego becoming leader in solving housing crisis

By Justin Ewers, PublicCEO

It didn't get much attention outside San Diego, but it may well have been the biggest step a political coalition has taken this year to shift the focus of a major city onto a crisis impacting millions of Californians—and moving rapidly up the income scale.

“More than 70 percent of San Diegans cannot currently afford a median-priced home,” San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer said in his January state of the city address—noting that renters in the region now spend a higher portion of their income on housing (an average of 35 percent) than people in either hyper-expensive San Francisco or New York City. San Diego's affordability crisis, he noted, has moved into the middle class—and shows no signs of stopping: “People who love San Diego and want to live in San Diego should not be priced out of San Diego. I'm going to say something that mayors have traditionally been afraid to say: We need to build more housing!”

Faulconer's call to arms may not sound that dissimilar from the rhetoric emerging from other parts of the state, as rising prices make living in California increasingly unaffordable. But the San Diego mayor's framing of the problem—and the solutions the city is developing with a unique coalition of business associations, labor groups, environmentalists, and builders—are fundamentally different.

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