



## Why don't we treat housing as infrastructure?

*By Sarah Karlinsky and Cristian Bevington, City Monitor, December 22, 2020*

“In the US, housing is treated as a financial asset, something to be invested in, bought and sold or rented...The urban policy think tank Spur estimates that the Bay Area [has produced only 300,000 domiciles over the past 20 years](#), when it needed to have produced over a million.

“In many other countries, housing is viewed as a human right. Government intervenes to ensure that a sufficient amount is available to those who need it, at prices they can afford. These countries’ governments treat housing much more as essential infrastructure - as vital to the well-being of society as clean water or electricity.

For example, “In Copenhagen, 15% of the stock is ‘social housing’ - publicly financed dwellings that serve low-, moderate- and middle-income households...A public corporation, known as the Copenhagen City and Port Development Corp, can fund infrastructure and further developments that support the public good.

“As places like the Bay Area continue to confront the challenges of housing delivery and affordability, it is encouraging to learn that many cities and countries have found ways to provide not only enough accommodations for their residents but also a range of housing options that are affordable and meet the needs of many.”

In-depth case studies several global cities, including Copenhagen’s housing provision policies, are described in a recent report jointly authored by Aecom and Spur: [From Copenhagen to Tokyo: Learning From International Delivery Systems](#)(PDF).

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