

Ways for Suburbs to Build More Housing – The New York Times – April 07, 2023, pg. A 23 (national edition)

To the Editor:

Re “[NIMBYs Threaten a Plan to Build More Suburban Housing](#),” by Mara Gay (Opinion, March 23):

There is a deep conceptual flaw in Mara Gay’s argument. She, like so many others across the country, are undertaking an assault on local zoning in the name of more (and hopefully more affordable) housing.

But we live in a market economy. Localities do not, on the whole, provide housing. They set some of the local conditions, through zoning, for housing that will be built. It is developers, often local developers, who decide what to build, where to build and when to build. Their decisions are based on how much profit they can make. On the whole, larger, less affordable housing yields higher profits.

The lack of housing, particularly affordable housing, is more about the decisions of these private actors than it is about local zoning (though local zoning is not all together “innocent”).

If we need more housing, and more affordable housing (yes, we do!), maybe it is time to look at how housing is delivered, and develop some alternatives to the current and longstanding private-sector model.

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/06/opinion/letters/new-york-suburbs-housing.html>