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State and local policy support needed to rebuild Sonoma County sustainably and revitalize downtowns

Locals should support infill pilot projects and permit streamlining, while businesses should assist employees to live in downtown areas

SANTA ROSA — Sonoma County and Santa Rosa will need significant state and local policy reforms and financial assistance to rebuild its housing stock in a sustainable, infill-focused way, following the devastating October 2017 wildfires, according to a new report from the nonprofit [Council of Infill Builders](#).

[Accelerating Infill in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County](#) finds that to rebuild 30,000 homes over the next five years in existing urbanized neighborhoods to meet demand, stakeholders will need to overcome challenges related to market uncertainty due to unknown demand for infill, a lack of demonstrated viability and financing for infill, a lack of policy and process commitment to support infill development, and high costs and fees on infill.

The report recommends seven priority policy solutions to address the rebuilding challenge:

1. **Pilot projects** with public partnership with possible concessions regarding fees, land purchase, and streamlined entitlements.
2. **Rent guarantees** for employees from employers to boost demand for infill.
3. A **Joint Powers Agency (JPA)/Renewal Enterprise District (RED)** to guide and fund infill development.
4. **Zoning, parking requirement, and development fee reforms** to encourage rather than stymie infill development.
5. Improved availability of **public sector infill financing** and enhanced access to sales and use taxes.
6. **CEQA streamlining** for qualifying infill, such as proposed legislation like AB 2267.
7. A **market study and project development navigator** to help streamline infill investment and deployment.

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About the Council of Infill Builders

The [Council of Infill Builders](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation of real estate professionals committed to improving California through infill development. Infill development revitalizes neighborhoods and communities, provides transportation choices, creates viable close-knit mixed-use areas, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and improves the overall economy. The Builders seek to educate the public about these benefits through research and outreach.