



Daily Challenges Navigating SRO Buildings

Centering the Lived Experiences of Disabled and Senior SRO Residents to Inform Policy

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Executive Summary

Single-room occupancy buildings, or SROs, are often the most affordable options within the private housing markets of American cities. The lower rents found in SROs reflect SRO unit size and the amenities of the buildings. A typical SRO unit is only 150-400 square feet in size and SRO buildings offer shared amenities such as communal bathrooms and kitchen spaces. Because SROs are affordable, many vulnerable groups rely on SROs for their housing, including seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income workers, and people emerging from homelessness.

From 2021 through 2023 we studied SRO tenants' perception of building accessibility in downtown San Diego, California. For this report, we follow Susan Handy's definition of accessibility. With this definition, accessibility refers to both 1) how easy it is for [people] to get to where they need to be and 2) how easy it is [for people] to access the services they need or want. This is a purposively broad definition which allows us to explore multiple types of accessibility burdens faced by SRO residents.

We interviewed 55 residents about their experiences living in SROs and invited 10 of those tenants to take photographs of their units and buildings to illustrate their feelings about their housing. Given that many SRO residents are elderly or have disabilities, they are more likely to be both economically vulnerable and prone to accessibility challenges.

SRO residents face building accessibility challenges when entering their buildings and getting to their rooms, entering and moving about their rooms, and utilizing public spaces such as

bathrooms and kitchens. Given that SROs provide housing for the most vulnerable in our society, and that many SRO residents struggle with inaccessibility due to disability and age, understanding how SRO building design contributes to issues of accessibility is an important endeavor.

Key Findings

- **Building age, design, and maintenance create inaccessibility for tenants** - Residents face difficulties in getting to and accessing their rooms. SRO inaccessibility is exacerbated by building age and design. Our findings mirror broader research on low-income residents' exposure to poor quality construction and building maintenance.
- **SRO residents face significant mobility barriers in their buildings** - Many SRO buildings in San Diego are over 40 years old and thus were designed before the existence of ADA regulations. While not exempt to ADA regulations, these buildings have lesser requirements. As such, residents in SROs face issues with broken elevators, raised entryways, and small rooms. These are concerning impediments for elderly and disabled tenants, especially those that use wheelchairs.
- **Senior and disabled residents are most impacted by impediments to accessibility** - Design elements such as steep stairways or raised entrances, or maintenance issues with elevators, create burdens for all residents. However, for senior and disabled residents these accessibility issues can lead to significant expenditure of time and energy, elevated risk of injury, and loss of dignity. Inaccessibility of buildings and rooms causes more consequences than just physical impairment.
- **Lack of policy enforcement and maintenance impact building accessibility** - SROs have historically been exempt from several building codes that could improve accessibility, such as increasing unit size and ensuring compliance with ADA regulations. Likewise, lack of elevator maintenance in some SROs creates unnecessary lapses in accessibility. These issues are compounded by the fact that low-income residents are unlikely to possess the voice or political power to suggest changes in these areas.

Key Recommendations

- **SROs need better oversight** - Due to the financial burdens of renovating buildings that bring in below-market rent prices, many SRO owners are considering demolition or conversion. Policy has thus focused on preservation of SRO stock instead of surveillance of building quality and maintenance. The City of San Diego should improve their processes of overseeing and ensuring accessibility in housing for our most vulnerable residents while also bolstering preservation efforts.
- **SROs need better support** - While most SROs are privately-owned buildings, municipal planners and other public officials should assist in procurement of financing to renovate SRO buildings. Development projects often rely on a range of public, nonprofit, and

private funders to succeed. Financial assistance such as support in obtaining private and philanthropic funding, as well as incentive programs based on resident satisfaction could encourage improvements to these buildings.

- **SRO residents need organizing and advocacy assistance** - SRO residents lack voice and political power. Community-based organizations and housing providers can assist SRO residents by providing education on policies and rights, technical assistance and support in organizing around tenant rights, and advocacy assistance in public stakeholder meetings.

Who Lives in SROs?

Historically SRO residents were thought to be a transient population, one that moves from city to city without any long-term tenure. Contrary to popular belief, SRO residents tend to reside in their units for prolonged periods of time. Many SRO residents come from vulnerable groups that experience higher rates of economic precarity including low-wage workers, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons who have previously experienced homelessness.¹ Long-term tenure in SROs is often used as an alternative to experiencing homelessness as SRO residents live on extremely limited fixed incomes.

SRO residents tend to belong to groups that not only exhibit higher rates of economic precarity and housing insecurity but also greater accessibility issues. As mentioned

above, we rely on Susan Handy's definition of accessibility: "how easy it is for [people] to get to where they need to be, how easy it is to access the services they need or want."²

In the context of this report, we focus specifically on SRO building and room access. While much of the housing literature on low-income buildings has focused on housing affordability, the fields of public health and medicine have illuminated the need to pay attention to the effect of housing design and quality on the health and well-being of low-income people.³ Housing design and quality deficiencies can be particularly harmful to senior and disabled residents' mobility, ability to live independently, and mental and social health.⁴ Likewise, because of power imbalances between tenants and landlords, courts, and other authorities, residents are

¹ Berger, J. (2016, June 4). The many lives of a New York SRO. The New York Times; Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute. (n.d.). Vulnerable Populations. https://tephi.texas.gov/docs/tephi-who-are-vulnerable-populations.pdf?language_id=1

² Handy, S. (2020). Is accessibility an idea whose time has finally come? *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment*, 83, 102319.

³ DeLuca, S., & Rosen, E. (2022). Housing Insecurity among the Poor Today. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 48, 343-371.

⁴ Fallon, K.F., & Price, C.R. (2020). Meeting the needs of low-income housing for senior and disabled populations: an analysis of low-income housing tax credit residents in Ohio. *Housing and Society*, 47(3), 244-268.

likely to suffer through housing design and quality issues rather than voice their concerns out of fear of eviction or costly and unsatisfactory hearings.⁵

The Study: How Do Building Design and Quality Contribute to Accessibility Issues for SRO Residents?

Poor quality housing, which is most prevalent for low-income tenants, impacts elderly and disabled tenants when they are unable to easily access or leave their rooms. For example, in a study of Chicago SRO buildings, researchers found that buildings were not designed to accommodate functionally impaired elderly tenants. This caused difficulties in accessing rooms and discouraged residents from leaving their rooms.⁶ Inaccessibility was particularly harmful in this case as tenants experienced extreme internal room temperatures due to summer heat, malfunctioning heating systems, and non-functional windows. The combination of poor design and maintenance highlights how elderly and disabled people are put at further risk when SRO buildings are not renovated according to modern regulations.

Inaccessibility of rooms and buildings can also make interactions with friends and family less frequent. In fact, elderly SRO residents in New York City were found to be more isolated than the typical urban population, have fewer interactions with family and friends than typical elderly populations, and have an overall lack of intimate relationships.⁷ This in turn affected their health as they weren't able to interact socially or perform physical activity, putting them at risk for depression or other health issues. With less access to their neighbors and family, senior residents in turn become more independent and self-reliant.⁸ As people age, self-reliance becomes more difficult and dangerous.⁹

Our study examines the lived experiences of tenants residing in downtown San Diego SROs to expand knowledge on the accessibility issues faced by residents and inform policy on building maintenance and design. Our study set out to answer the following two questions: 1) What issues do SRO residents face in terms of accessibility? 2) What aspects of design limit building and room accessibility?

Since the City of San Diego has prioritized the preservation of existing SROs and construction of new SROs in its efforts to

⁵ Chisholm, E., Howden-Chapman, P., & Fougere, G. (2020). Tenants' Responses to Substandard Housing: Hidden and Invisible Power and the Failure of Rental Housing Regulation. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 37(2), 139-161.

⁶ Rollinson, P.A. (1991). The Spatial Isolation of Elderly Single-Room Occupancy Hotel Tenants. *The Professional Geographer*, 43(4), 456-464.

⁷ Cohen, C.I., & Sokolovsky, J. (1980). Social Engagement versus Isolation: The Case of the Aged in SRO Hotels. *The Gerontologist*, 20(1), 36-44.

⁸ Erickson, R., & Eckert, K. (1977). The Elderly Poor in Downtown San Diego Hotels. *The Gerontologist*, 17(5), 440-446.

⁹ Carbone, J.T., Clift, J., Wyllie, T., & Smyth, A. (2022). Housing Unit Type and Perceived Social Isolation Among Senior Housing Community Residents. *The Gerontologist*, 62(6), 889-899.

incentivize housing provision for low-income renters, the downtown area of the city, where the majority of SROs are located, is an ideal site to investigate accessibility issues and identify ways to improve resident mobility. From 2021 through 2023, we conducted interviews with 55 SRO residents. We additionally asked 10 SRO residents to take photos of their units and buildings to capture how they feel about their housing. Most of the residents we interviewed were older adults. Almost half of all residents we talked with were receiving SSI or SSDI. The majority of our participants (37) were men.

54.2%
of respondents
receive SSI or SSDI

Study Findings: Challenges of Inaccessibility in SROs

Building Inaccessibility

Many of the SRO buildings we studied in downtown San Diego are old and lack necessary renovations to be compliant with ADA Accessibility Standards.¹⁰ While older buildings are often eligible for exemptions from compliance with the full accessibility standards to ensure buildings are not

demolished, “architectural and communication barriers must be removed in public areas of existing facilities when their removal is readily achievable.”¹¹ Examples of removal of architectural barriers might include adding ramps or railings, while removal of communication barriers would require the addition of signs indicating accessible entrances and loading zones. However, effective functioning of this regulation often either requires a tenant to ask for accommodations from landlords, or submit a complaint to federal, state, or municipal authorities. Low-income tenants are very unlikely to do either of these.¹² This leaves many SRO buildings highly inaccessible due to outdated design and issues caused by lack of maintenance. Without improvements, these buildings can hinder the mobility of residents and be particularly inaccessible for elderly and disabled tenants.

Amongst survey respondents at SROs, elevators were the most discussed accessibility issue. Eleven out of 55 tenants and one building manager talked about experiencing or seeing others struggling with issues of inaccessibility caused by a lack of, or poorly maintained, elevators. For instance, one resident said in the course of a year the elevator in their building broke down three times, leaving residents without access for long periods of time. In buildings with poorly maintained elevators, able-bodied residents resort to taking the stairs.

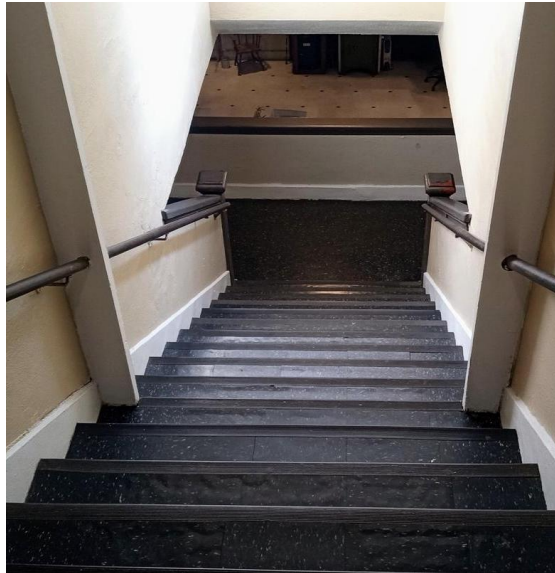
¹⁰ U.S. Access Board. (2024). ADA Accessibility Standards. <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/>

¹¹ Adaptive Environments Center. (1995). The Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable. <https://archive.ada.gov/racheck.pdf>

¹² Chisholm, E., Howden-Chapman, P., & Fougere, G. (2020). Tenants’ Responses to Substandard Housing: Hidden and Invisible Power and the Failure of Rental Housing Regulation. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 37(2), 139-161.

However, because the design of older buildings is not up to current standards, stairs are often steep and dangerous.

Image 1. Steep stairs in an SRO building



Senior and disabled residents often do not have the same ability to transition to stair use when elevators break down. Tenants claimed when elevators broke down, residents with physical disabilities were forced to leave their wheelchairs downstairs and were carried to their rooms by building staff. This creates unnecessary physical labor for staff and makes inaccessibility of multiple necessities a daily reality for residents. One resident remarked,

“ Our elevator here was down for five months. Bob's power wheelchair is stored on the second floor of this building. Bob could not leave his apartment for five months. Bob couldn't go down there to sign his check. ”

In Bob's case, inaccessibility caused by broken elevators could have led to issues accessing his income had he not been able to rely on a neighbor for help. However, the lack of a wheelchair (when they are stored on the first floor during elevator outages) creates daily problems for residents as well. One resident said some people are unable to quickly access bathrooms in those instances. Though there might be a bathroom on their floor, the closest facilities are sometimes on a different floor from tenants' rooms. These experiences of residents with physical disabilities demonstrate the necessity of better maintenance in SRO buildings.

Finally, multiple residents discussed issues related to accessing the SRO building itself. Some of these issues were caused by building design, while others were issues of manager-enacted policies. One resident highlighted a lip at the front door, and manual instead of automatic doors, as design issues which created inaccessibility to the building for senior and disabled residents. A disabled resident confirmed these challenges, claiming that the lack of ramps in their building created “absolute inaccessibility.” Others claimed that the manager did not allow front door access for residents. While the manager's reasoning for this policy is unknown, residents noted that the entrance at the back of the building produced an unnecessary burden for senior and disabled residents. Resident inaccessibility, then, is not always a product of design, but rather sometimes building policies which complicate residents' lives.

Room Inaccessibility

Poor building design and maintenance create barriers to residents' ability to enter their building and access different floors.

However, the rooms themselves demonstrate accessibility problems in SRO design. As mentioned above, residents with wheelchairs struggle to make it through smaller doors and have issues with lips at doors. Image 2 (below) was taken by an SRO resident to highlight the difficulty of getting into their room.

Image 2. Raised room entrances in downtown SRO building



Raised entrances, such as those pictured above, present obvious barriers to residents using wheelchairs. Likewise, older design elements such as these create mobility difficulties and possible injuries for elderly residents regardless of their reliance on wheelchairs.

Once inside SRO rooms, lack of space presents further accessibility issues. In the late 1980s, the city of San Diego relaxed building codes to increase development and renovation of SROs.¹³ Because of this temporary policy decision, SRO units in San Diego can be as small as 70 square feet. While this small of a living area is very uncommon, SRO units are still smaller than most studio apartments in San Diego. One resident described how the small space of his SRO room affected his mental health:

“There’s no room for like...I go to school online and there’s no room for a desk, there’s no room for a chair. There’s nowhere to cook, so your sink’s this big. It’s difficult because you’re basically doing everything on your bed. After a while, especially someone with depression and stuff like that, you’re like, “Okay, I’m getting [depressed].” because it was so small.

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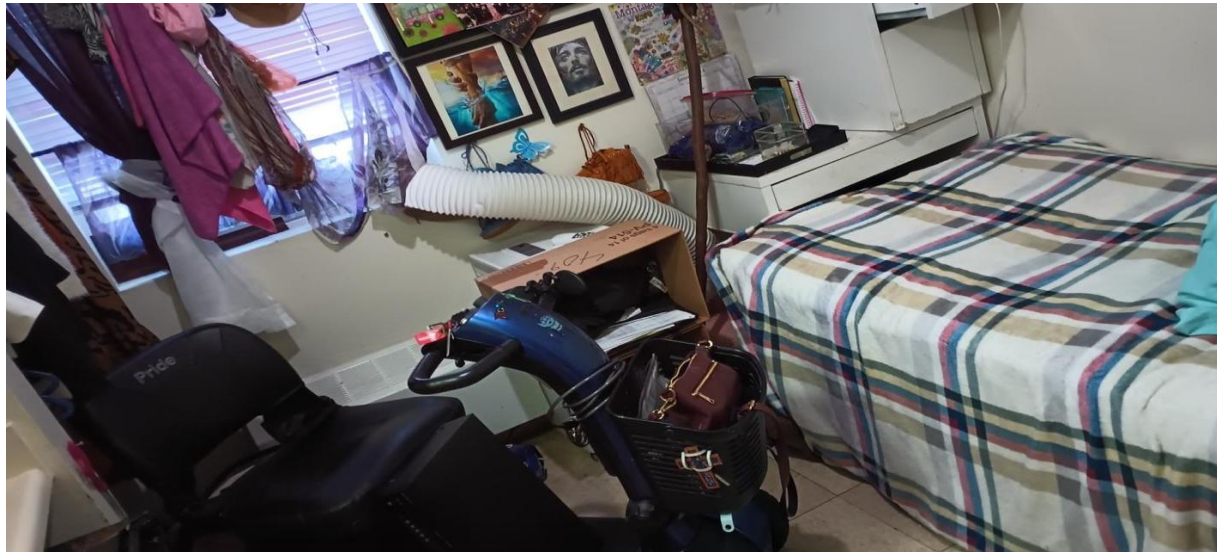
¹³ Reinhold, R. (1988). In San Diego, the Developers Profit as Homeless Get Low-Cost Housing. *The New York Times*, Sept. 6.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/06/us/in-san-diego-the-developers-profit-as-homeless-get-low-cost-housing.html>

Even more, this lack of space compounds accessibility issues faced by disabled residents. The size of SRO doors prevents residents from storing wheelchairs in their rooms. Even when they are able to enter, navigating in and out of the room can be

difficult due to the limited amount of space. Image 3 (below) was taken by a resident with a disability to illuminate the lack of space that is compounded by possession of a personal mobility device.

Image 3. Tight spaces in SRO rooms



The size of the rooms pose significant problems for those with mobility issues. Some buildings resort to keeping tenants' wheelchairs on the first floor because they do not fit in their rooms. In these situations, because many tenants do not have significant social ties to rely on, staff carry residents up and down stairs. These arrangements create daily struggles for disabled tenants as they are reliant on others to enter and leave their rooms. If staff are unavailable, tenants will stay in their rooms for long periods of time. One resident sympathized with her neighbors' difficulties:

“ It's pretty hard to improve anything here... I feel bad because for the ones who got a wheelchair and now they're stuck so they can't come down.

”

This inaccessibility not only restricts movement and leads to social isolation and subsequent poor mental health, but it prevents tenants from meeting their basic needs including accessing food and medical care.

Inaccessibility of Public Areas of Buildings

Building design and quality also affect the number of and accessibility of public areas within SRO buildings. Because most SRO buildings are designed to maximize the amount of units in the structure, public areas

are often limited to public bathrooms and kitchens. These spaces are important to residents, as many SRO units have limited or no bathroom and kitchen facilities within the unit. Image 4 (below) was taken by a SRO resident to demonstrate how little functional bathroom and kitchen space they have within their unit.

Image 4. Typical bathroom and kitchen facilities in SRO unit



Because many SRO residents must bathe in common areas of the building, accessibility is incredibly important. While some SRO buildings provide accessibility features such as bathroom grab bars, others provide none of these elements. Furthermore, the design of some SRO buildings limits accessibility to these spaces. One resident noted that it was very hard for them to shower because they use a wheelchair. Likewise, one manager noted that they had multiple complaints from disabled tenants who struggled to bathe. Images 5 and 6 (below)

were taken by residents in different buildings. Alongside each other, these photos illuminate the differences in public bathroom accommodations in SRO buildings.

Image 5. Raised shower entrance



Image 6. Grab bars in the bathroom area



Significant alterations to SRO buildings are unlikely and possibly destructive to the structure. However, small additions such as grab bars and ramps can significantly increase accessibility of public spaces, rooms, and other areas of SROs.

In sum, inaccessibility in SROs poses significant challenges for residents, especially elderly and disabled residents. These challenges impact their health, social interactions, and overall quality of life. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder approach including improved oversight, increased funding for renovations, and community support. Given the need for a multi-stakeholder approach, we have written our recommendations for two distinct audiences: governmental and quasi-governmental agencies and nonprofit and advocacy organizations. By implementing these solutions, we can create safer and more inclusive living environments for some of society's most vulnerable individuals.

Recommendations for (Quasi-) Governmental Stakeholders

- 1. Improve current funding for upgrading naturally-occurring affordable housing** - To address the inaccessibility in SRO buildings, increased funding for building renovations is essential. The city's Housing Element has called for the development and preservation of SROs; however, they do not outline any programs or proposed activities

to accomplish this goal.¹⁴ Likewise, the City of San Diego just passed a law that forces selling owners of affordable housing to notify the city and approved developers, so a bid to preserve the property can be placed; however, this does not include naturally-occurring affordable housing, such as SROs, and no funding is made available to help approved developers meet the bids of market-rate developers.¹⁵ The San Diego Housing Commission does have dedicated funding in the form of the Inclusionary Housing Fund and the Housing Trust Fund as part of the Affordable Housing Fund; however, these funds give preference for new construction.¹⁶ As such, the Housing Commission has suggested the creation of a fund specifically for preservation. We support this recommendation. Likewise, we suggest the city improve current funding opportunities to meet the needs of naturally-occurring affordable housing. The city currently has a Voluntary Accessibility Program that provides regulation incentives to spur development of more accessible units (City of San Diego, 2022). This program could be expanded to

include redevelopment and preservation projects for eligible beneficiaries and provide financial incentives for such projects. Such changes could not only help incentivize new development of SROs, but also renovation of existing buildings.

2. **Improve buy-in for funding by engaging with owners of SRO buildings.** Any policy for SRO or affordable housing preservation will require owner buy-in, and thus better outreach programs are necessary. The San Diego Housing Commission already has landlord outreach programs to get low-income San Diegans housed, such as the Landlord Partnership Program and the Landlord Engagement and Assistance Program for Homeless San Diegans. The San Diego Housing Commission should expand its outreach and education efforts to not only inform owners of funding opportunities to improve SRO buildings, but also advocate for the policies through education.
3. **Improve protections for tenants in SRO buildings** - The City of San Diego already has SRO Hotel Regulations (City of San Diego, 2000). At the moment, the financial

¹⁴ City of San Diego. (2021). City of San Diego General Plan: Housing Element, 2021-2029. https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/health_screen_view_june2021.pdf

¹⁵ Garrick, D. (2025). San Diego just moved to preserve affordable housing: Here's what it could do. *San Diego Union Tribune*, February 3. <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/02/03/san-diego-just-moved-to-preserve-affordable-housing-heres-what-that-involves/?clearUserState=true>

[3/san-diego-just-moved-to-preserve-affordable-housing-heres-what-that-involves/?clearUserState=true](https://www.sdhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Affordable-Housing-Preservation-Study.pdf)

¹⁶ San Diego Housing Commission. (2020). Preserving Affordable Housing in the City of San Diego. <https://www.sdhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Affordable-Housing-Preservation-Study.pdf>

penalties in the form of tenant relocation assistance and unit replacement are far outweighed by the financial incentives of converting or demolishing these buildings. One of the buildings in this study, the Occidental Hotel, was converted to a boutique hotel after interviews were conducted. Likewise, both San Diego Housing Commission and Homelessness Hub research independently shows that SRO stock is decreasing in San Diego.¹⁷ Instead of allowing the further conversion or demolition of these buildings, the City of San Diego and the San Diego Housing Commission should consider increasing the affordability restriction from 30 to at least 50 years, and increase the in lieu fee from 50% of replacement cost to 100%.¹⁸ SRO buildings house some of our region's most vulnerable residents and thus more should be done to provide stable housing for them.

4. **Provide financing tools, technical assistance, and administrative support for models of tenant control and power** - Multiple models of tenant control and power are available to increase empowerment of residents to take

part in housing solution-making, including tenants' unions, grassroots policy advocacy, and limited equity housing cooperatives. Each of these models has potential to not only bring improvements in housing, but also produce resident civic engagement. The City of San Diego and the San Diego Housing Commission can support these models in multiple ways and there are examples throughout the U.S. from which they can draw. The Bay Area in California has made progress in passing Community and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Acts (COPA/TOPA), which allow community-based organizations and tenant organizations the first right of refusal on land or housing.¹⁹ Likewise, San Diego and the Housing Commission could work together to create a department that supports tenant organizing of all types through technical assistance and administrative support. Minneapolis recently created a Cooperative Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) to help develop cooperatives of all types.²⁰ In particular, empowering SRO residents to take part in solving their issues would also help residents

¹⁷ Homelessness Hub. (2023). Housing on the Margins: Single-Room Occupancy Hotels in San Diego. <https://homelessnesshub.ucsd.edu/research/ongoing-research-folder/research-sro.html>

¹⁸ City of San Diego. (2000). SRO Hotel Regulations. <https://docs.sandiego.gov/municode/MuniCodeChapter14/Ch14Art03Division05.pdf>

¹⁹ Bay Area Housing Element Advocacy Working Group. (2022). Leveraging the Housing Element to Advance Tenant and Community Opportunity to Purchase Policies. <https://publicadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/topa-copa-policies.pdf>

²⁰ City of Minneapolis. (2025). Help for cooperatives. <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/business-services/business-assistance/business-technical-assistance/cooperatives-help/>

overcome the social isolation mentioned in another Homelessness Hub report.

Recommendations for Nonprofit and Community-Based Stakeholders

- 5. Advocate and provide education for SRO tenants** - Residents of SROs, like other low-income tenants, often feel powerless to assert their rights and needs. This is not necessarily indicative of poor attitudes or harsh actions by landlords or managers, but rather an outcome of power dynamics between tenants and building staff and owners. Nonprofit and community-based organization (CBO) staff could help residents voice their concerns to building managers and staff. In buildings where landlords, managers, and staff are not as responsive to residents' needs, nonprofit and CBO staff could recruit Legal Aid Society San Diego or the Housing Justice Collaborative to provide tenants' rights workshops including information on options for submitting complaints about non-compliant rooms, public spaces, and other building areas.
- 6. Strengthen relationships with SRO owners, managers, and staff** - To avoid conflict and establish lines of communication between building staff and tenants, nonprofits and CBOs should establish stronger relationships with SRO landlords,

managers, and staff. In the short term, these strengthened relationships could serve to better advocate for residents' needs. Nonprofits and CBOs could even establish a list of best practices to share with landlords and managers. For instance, one resident discussed how their building manager reserved the first floor for people with physical disabilities to avoid many of the issues mentioned in this report. In the long term, better relationships could lead to nonprofit and CBO staff acting as mediators in establishing better lines of communication between tenants and building staff. Engagement of SRO landlords, managers, and staff could spur better maintenance and safer environments, but also lead to empowerment of residents when better communication is established.

- 7. Create mechanisms for better engaging SRO residents** - One of the findings of this report is that poor building design and quality can limit accessibility and create social isolation for senior residents. While establishing better relationships with SRO management to meet residents' needs, nonprofits and CBOs can create programs to engage seniors who are more prone to being isolated in their rooms. This could be attached to existing programs or be new stand-alone programs. These programs could also be paired with shuttle transportation to nonprofit and CBO locations for other types of

programs that encourage social interaction such as education and activities workshops.

- 8. Advocate for better policy and oversight at the municipal level -** SRO buildings are unlikely to change their policies and practices unless urged to by governmental and quasi-governmental entities, such as the San Diego Housing Commission. Nonprofits and CBOs could utilize their already strong advocacy teams to push for two improvements in the SRO ecosystem. First, advocacy teams could push for new policy or funding mechanisms to ensure SRO buildings are better maintained and upgraded when possible. One manager in our interviews strongly

asserted that this is the duty of the city. While we do not support the idea that the City of San Diego is fully responsible for privately-owned buildings, we do believe the city could use its resources and influence to push for renovations. Second, nonprofits and CBOs could advocate for better oversight of SRO quality, maintenance, and accessibility. This would require either the San Diego Housing Commission or City Building and Land Use Enforcement department being more proactive. However, surveillance of this type is needed to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community are provided safety and quality of life.

Author Bio

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Josh Newton is a postdoctoral researcher at the Homelessness Hub at UC San Diego. Josh is a community-engaged researcher who studies housing instability and housing solutions in both peri-urban and urban contexts. His broader research interests include philanthropic interventions in housing, manifestations of informal housing in the U.S., and alternative solutions such as community land trusts and housing cooperatives.

