

Barcelona's social and affordable housing policy

Office of the Housing Manager

Ajuntament de Barcelona

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A high-angle, black and white aerial photograph of a sprawling urban landscape. The city is characterized by a dense, regular grid of buildings and streets. In the center of the image, a prominent, tall, and ornate Gothic-style church with multiple spires stands out from the surrounding urban fabric. The city extends to the horizon, where a range of hills or mountains is visible under a clear sky. The overall impression is one of intense urban density and organized urban planning.

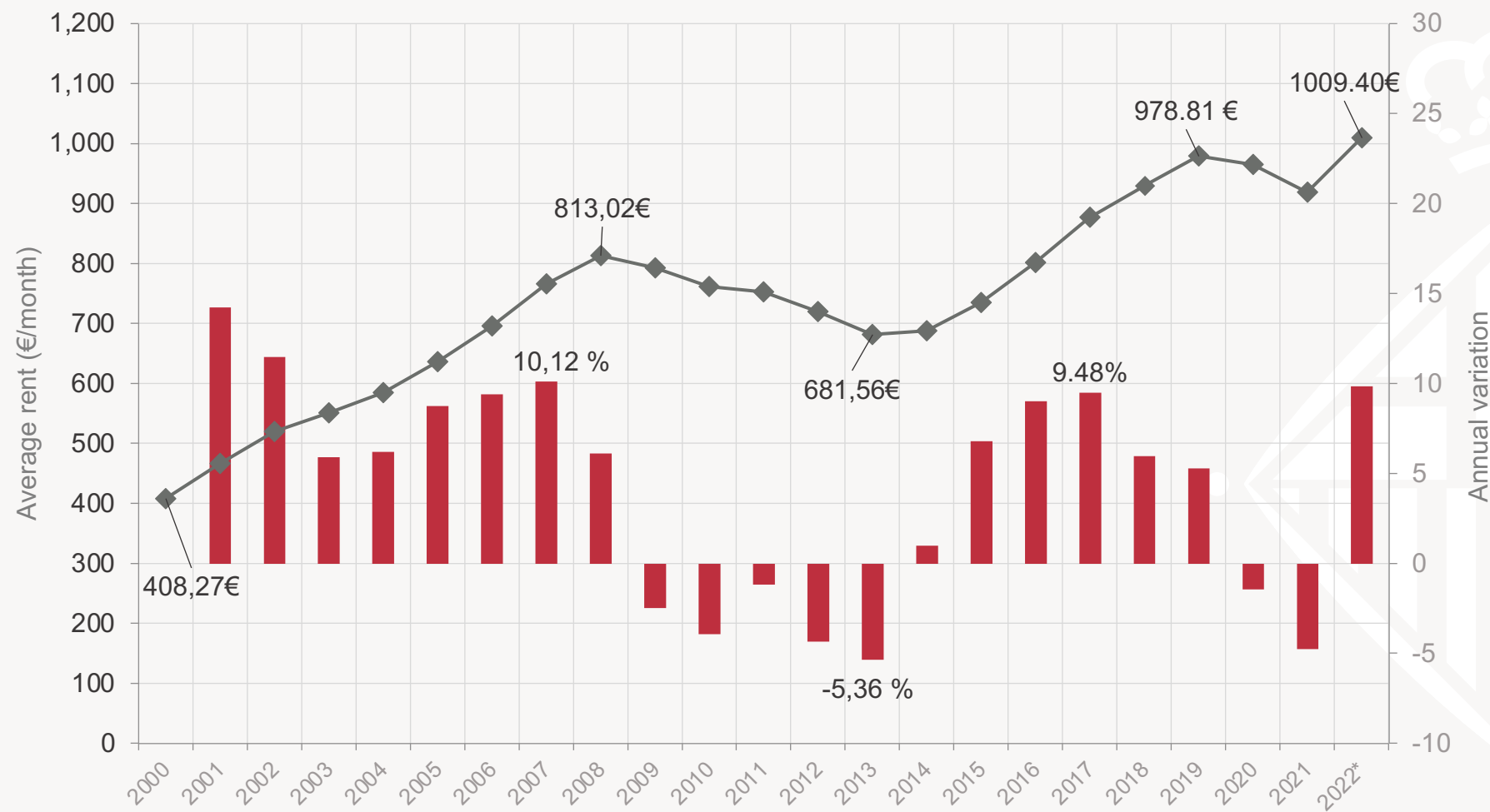
1

Inclusionary housing approach

Housing crisis

- Barcelona has experienced two bubbles, the **real estate bubble** and the **rental bubble**.
- Rents have risen 3 times faster than **household incomes** in the last 20 years in Catalonia.

Evolution of rents in Barcelona



Source: Incasòl

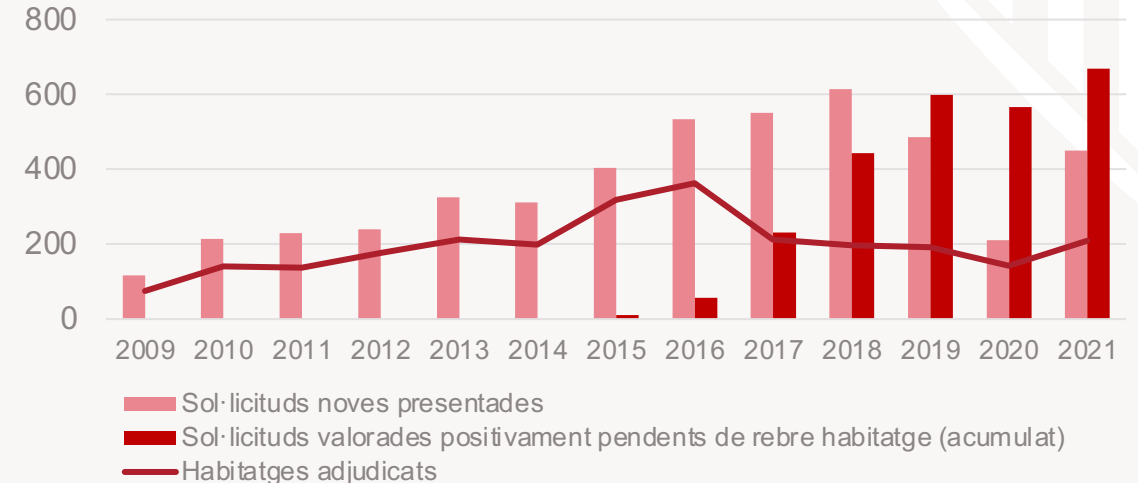
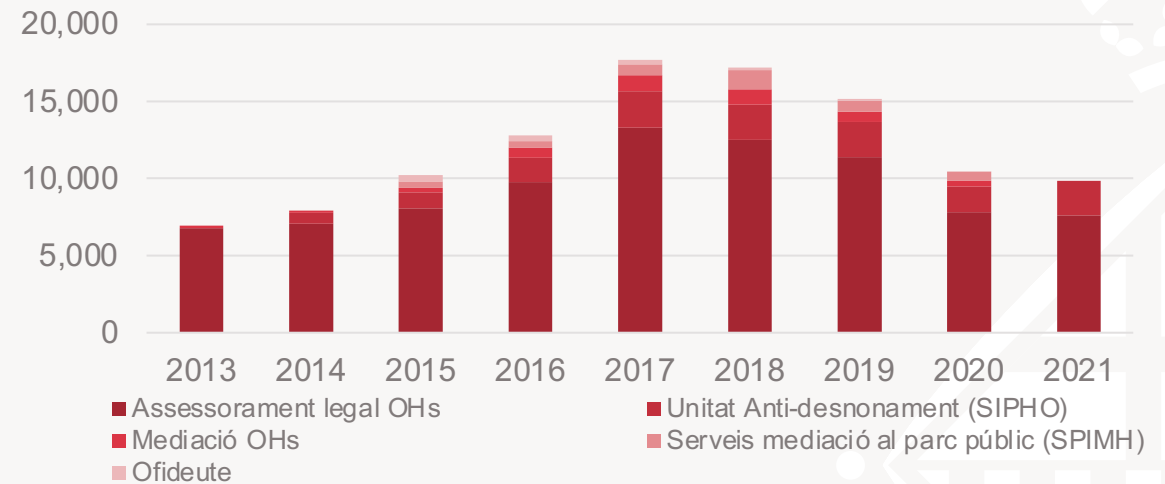
Prevent and address housing emergencies and residential exclusion

➤ Mediation services:

- Legal counseling and Mediation by the Housing Offices
- Anti-eviction unit (SIPHO)
- Mediation services in public housing (SPIMH)
- Ofideute

➤ Social Emergencies Board

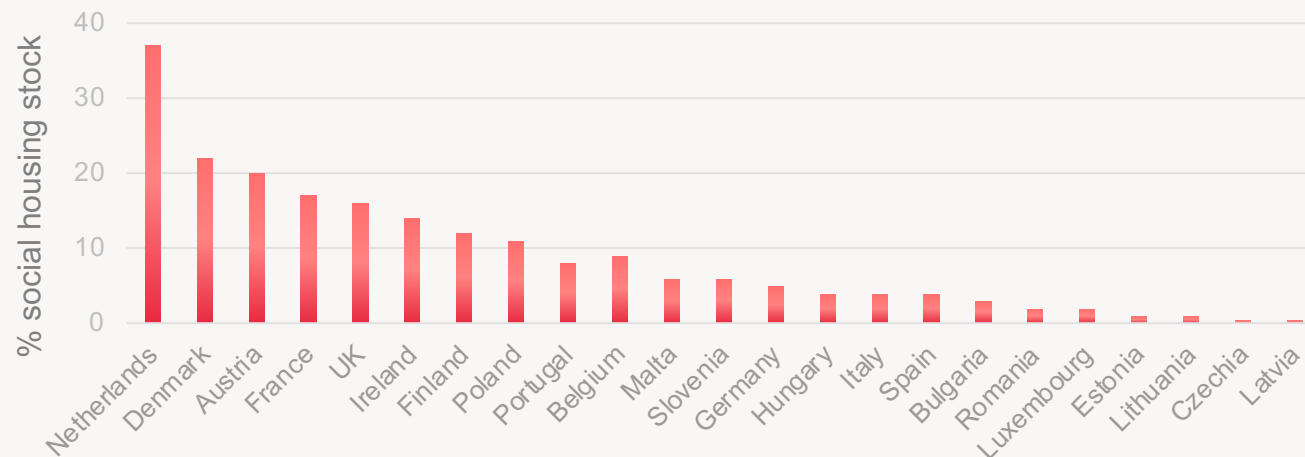
- The City of Barcelona has provided **78% of the housing units** and the Generalitat the 22%. The distribution should be 40%-60% accordingly.
- The Generalitat has accumulated a **deficit of 1,185 units** between 2016-2021.



Mission-oriented approach

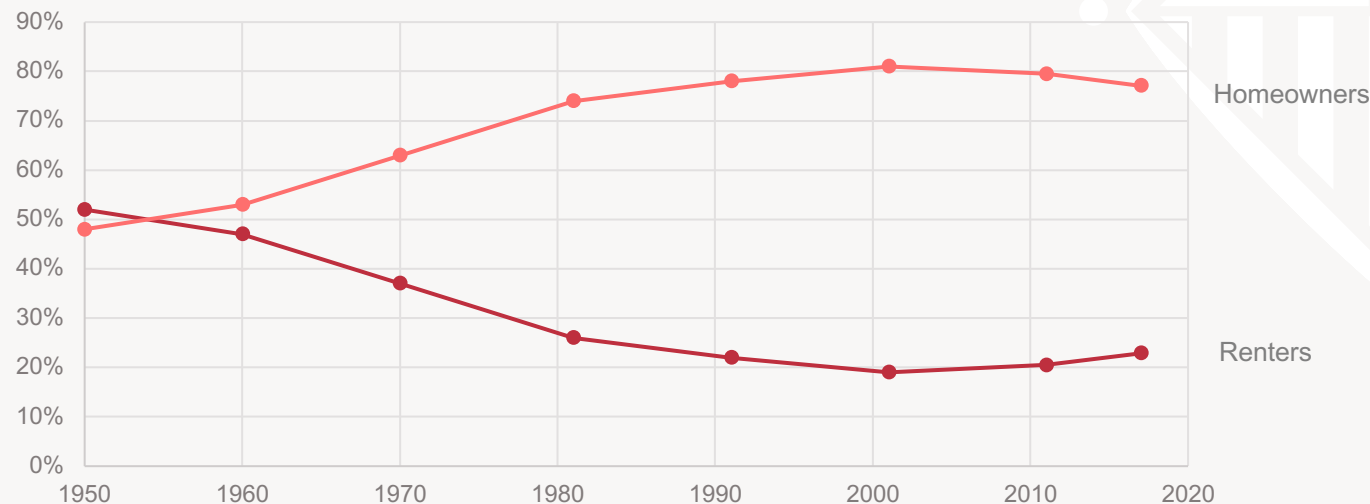
- Spain needs 2.6 million affordable housing units (HPO) in rental (or other alternative tenures) in order to converge with the rest of Europe (15% of the housing stock). **In Barcelona there is a 90,000 units deficit.**
- Rental public housing in Barcelona represents around **1.5% of the overall housing stock.**
- Non-market housing (public, coop, non-profit and limited profit) + rent subsidies are used by **17% of the tenants** of the city (12% in 2015).
- Policies that support homeownership have made it difficult for most of society to access housing. **We need to diversify housing tenures.**

Percentage of social housing in OECD countries



Source: OCDE Affordable Housing Database

Population distribution across housing tenures in Spain (1950-2017)



Source: INE

An emerging model

- › **100% private management** has proven to be a failure.
- › **100% public management** is not a virtuous model either.
- › Housing is too important to be left exclusively in the hands of the market or the State.
- › Effectiveness and efficiency will result from a combination of public, private and community solutions.

OUR IDEAL

A 3/3 providers system

- ▶ **Private**
- ▶ **Public**
- ▶ **Communitarian** + **Commercial**
non-profit limited-profit

2 operational approaches

- ▶ **New development**
How to do it with a high percentage of public, social and affordable housing?
- ▶ **Urban regeneration**
How to intensify the availability of affordable housing in high-quality urban settings?



2

Increase the stock of social
and affordable housing

2.1 Land and development policy



2.1.1 Duration of the affordability

› **Goal:** all affordable housing units (HPO) remain permanently affordable.

- Between 1940 and 2011, 12,836,692 units were built in Spain. Half of them (6,424,018) were HPO. **Almost all of them have lost their affordability and have joined the private market.**
- País Vasco, Illes Balears, Navarra and Catalunya are the first four regions to regulate **affordable housing in perpetuity.**
- Catalunya: Decret-Ilei 17/2019, de 23 de desembre, de mesures urgents per millorar l'accés a l'habitatge.



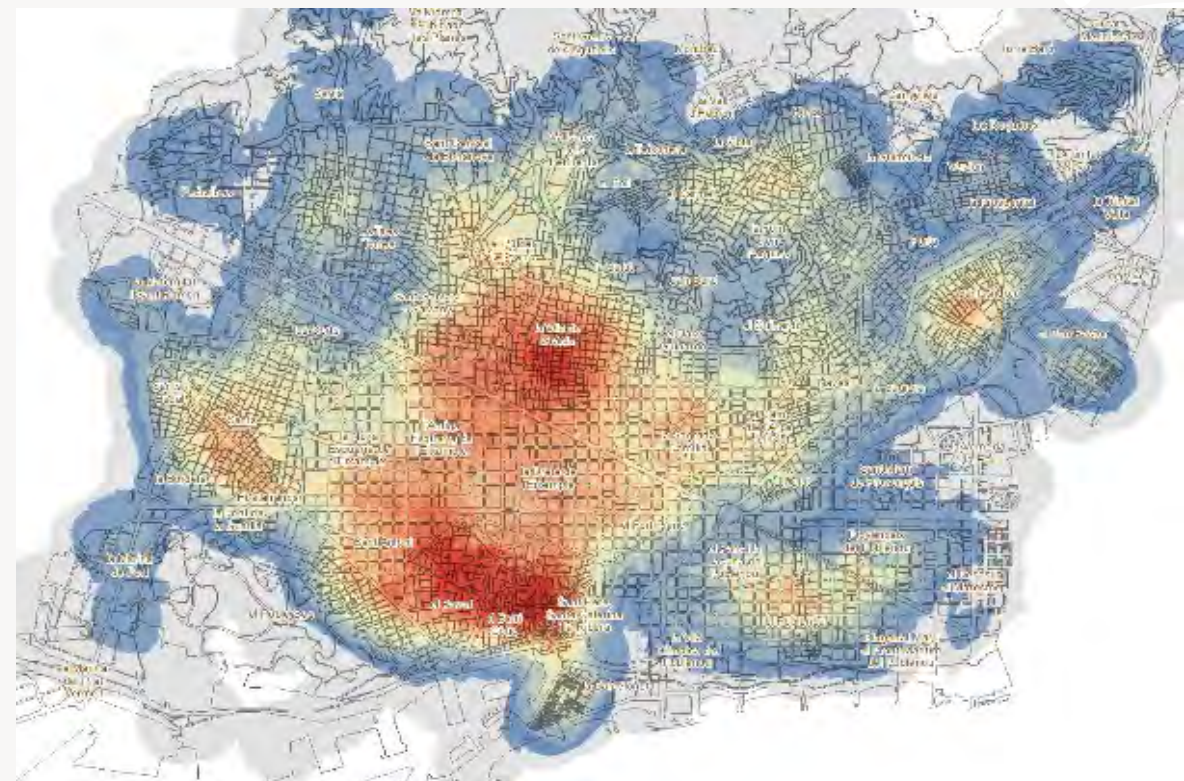
2.1.2 Affordable housing zoning requirements

- **Goal:** increase land reserves for HPO to promote social mixing and avoid segregation.
- Additionally, promote that at least half of the affordable units are in rental.
- Barcelona and the Metropolitan Area (AMB):
 - **HPO requirements in green fields: 40% (20% in rental).** The minimum statewide is 30%, with no minimum in rental.
 - **HPO requirements in brown fields: 40% (20% in rental).** The minimum statewide is 10%, with no minimum in rental.
 - **HPO requirements in existing buildings or plots: 30%** (no rental requirement). There is no minimum statewide. Pioneering instrument at the State level .



2.1.3 MPGM 30% in consolidated urban land

- 30% affordable housing requirement in most **major building renovations and new constructions in exiting plots.**
- It applies to all multifamily projects citywide bigger than 600sqm of buildable surface, with some exceptions.
- **Game changer**, in a context in which the city cannot grow outwards and needs to focus on urban regeneration processes.
- **Preliminary results** (2018-2021):
 - The number of building licenses is similar to that of previous years.
 - There has been a significant increase in the % of HPO units built.



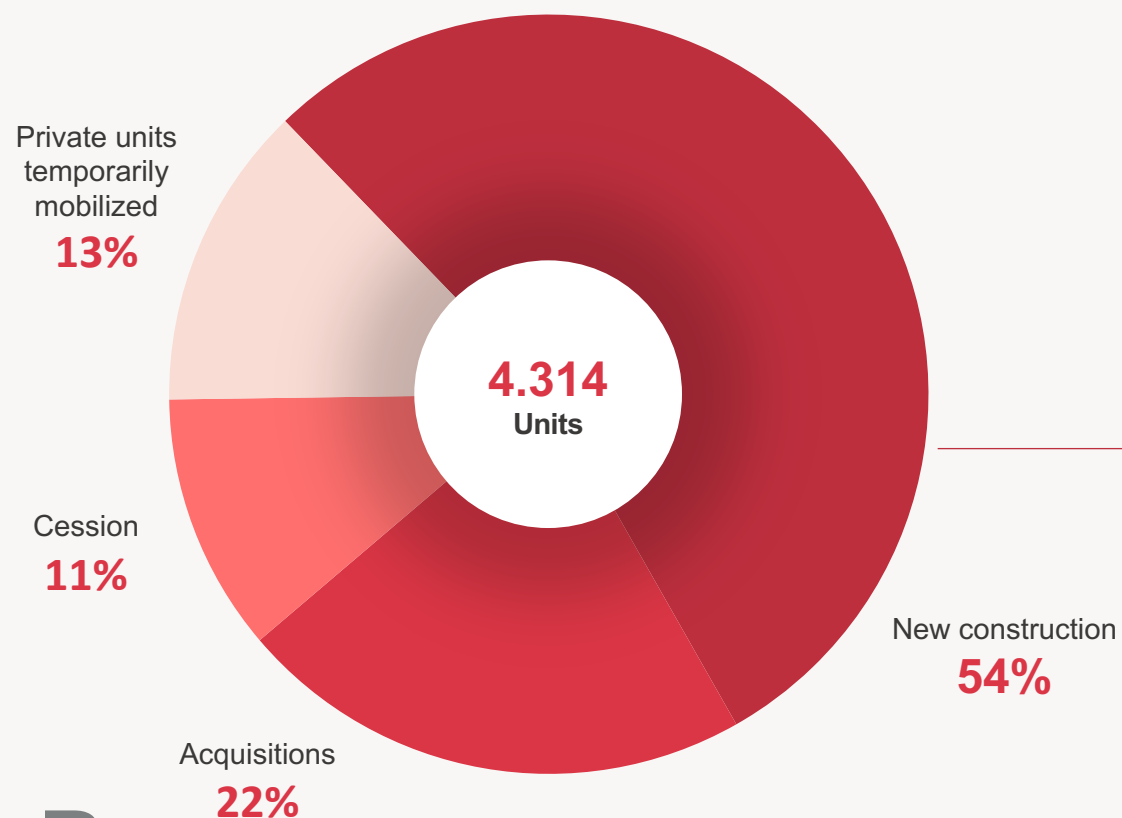
The central neighborhoods are the ones with the highest potential for generating new affordable units through this policy

2.2 Development of public and public-private/communitarian social and affordable rental housing



Right to Housing Plan 2016-2025

› Instruments for the increase of the affordable housing stock



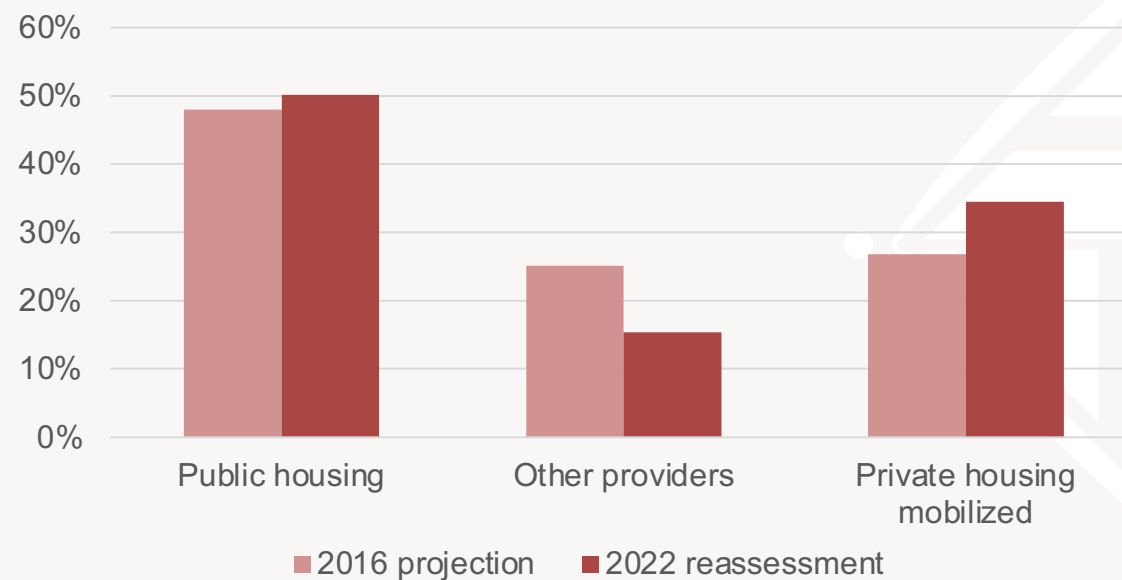
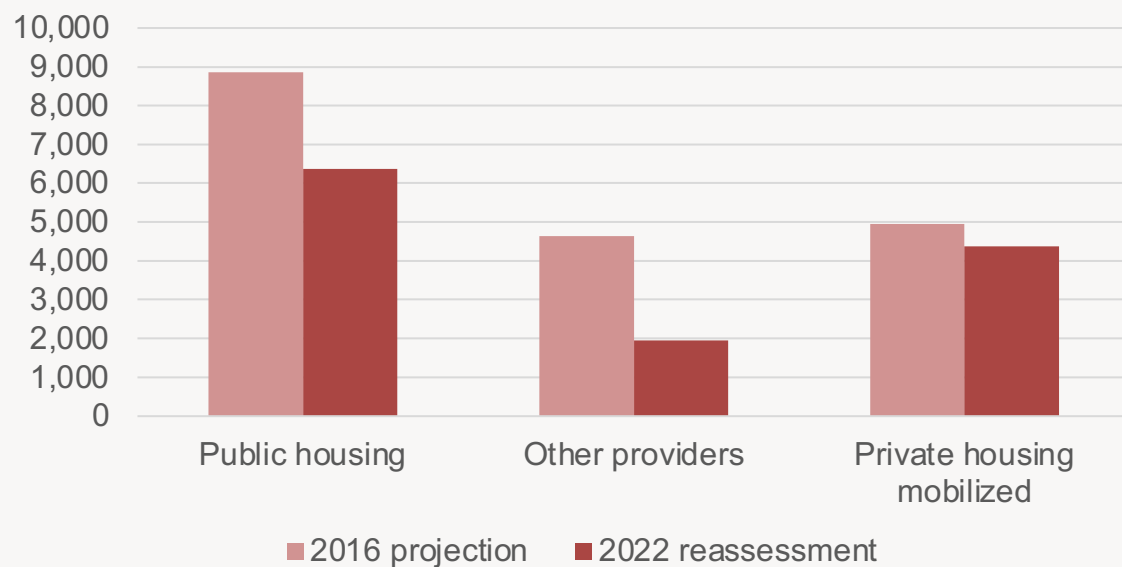
Between **2016** and **2021** the city's affordable housing has increased by **4,314 units**, which have provided housing to **10,800 people**.

Half of them result from new construction while the other half come from acquisitions and private units temporarily mobilized as affordable housing.

76% of the new affordable housing has been developed by the City Council.

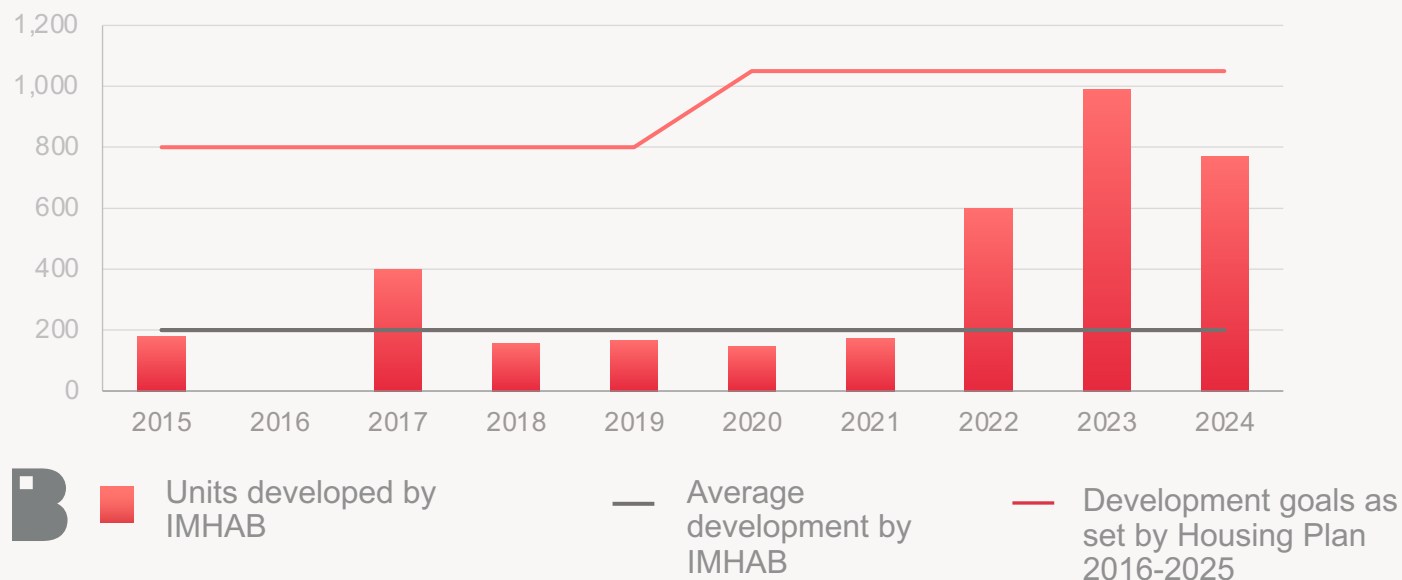
Right to Housing Plan 2016-2025

- The **rate of production** of social and affordable housing has been lower than the initial projection in 2016.



2.2.1 Public development

- IMHAB has increased exponentially its housing **development and management capacities**, 80% of the new units being in rental.
- At the end of 2021 there were **106 projects** underway on municipal land, which will generate **6,200 units** between 2016-2025.
- By the end of **2023, there will be 6.600 units finished or under construction.**



Bon Pastor



C/ Tànger

2.2.1 Public development



- Innovation through **industrialized construction** (more than 500 units, 10% already finished) is allowing to:
 - **Minimize the environmental impact** of the buildings through their life cycle.
 - **Reduce time**, from 5 to 2 years on average.
 - **Reduce costs**.
 - **Improve the quality**, control and efficiency of the construction works.
- Development has also accelerated thanks to the use of **joint project + construction procurement**.



APROP Ciutat Vella



Casernes de Sant Andreu

2.2.2 Public-private-community partnerships

Framework Agreement with Social Providers (ESAL)

- › Cohousing development through 3 phases:
 - **Bilateral agreements** for 2 pilot projects (2014 and 2015): 33 units.
 - **Competitive tenders** (2016 and 2019): 217 units.
 - **Partnership between City Council-Cooperatives-Foundations** (2021): 1.000 units in 10 years.
- Long-term lease on municipal land (99 years).
- 60% rental, 40% cooperative.
- Municipal returnable subsidy (7-16%).
- Framework Agreement with ICF and ICO to provide **140M€ in financing**.
- End goal: **Community Land Trust**.
- **130 households are already living in these cooperative projects.**

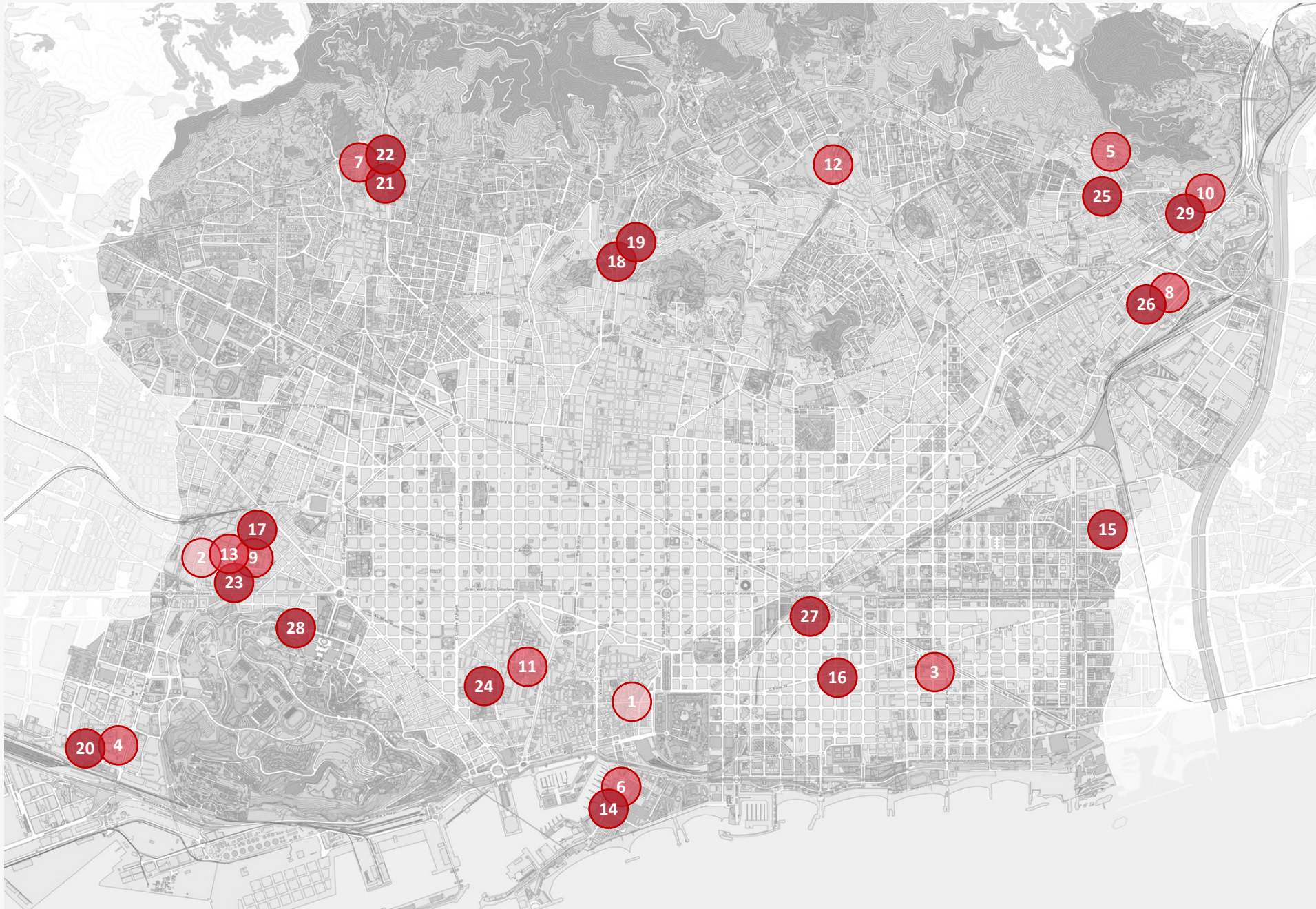


	Address	#Units
1	C. Princesa, 49	5
2	C. Constitució, 83-89	28
3	C. Espronceda, 133	20
4	C. Ulldecona, 26-28	32
5	C. Pla dels Cirerers, 2-4	29
6	Pg. Joan de Borbó, 11	8
7	C. General Vives, 4-6	17
8	C. Teresa Boronat i Fabra, 10	35
9	C. Constitució, 43	31
10	C. Aiguablava, 74-76	27
11	Pl. de la Gardunya, 5	39
12	Av. Estatut de Catalunya, 15-17	105
13	C. Constitució, 49	48
14	Pg. Joan de Borbó, 44-45	18
15	C. Binèfar, 18	46
16	C. Pere IV, 115	23
17	C. Rossend Arús, 36 i 38	7
18	Av. de Vallcarca, 110X	37
19	C. de Gustavo Bécquer, 11X	24
20	C. Ulldecona 11.X	84
21	Via Augusta, 375 i 383	26
22	Via Augusta, 389-393	14
23	C. Mossen Amadeu Oller, 17-21	40
24	C. Sant Martí, 12-16	43
25	Mont-Ral -Letamendi	38
26	Pg. de Torras i Bages, 126-128	80
27	C. Bolívia, 23-27	74
28	C. Gessamí, 13	8
29	C. Palamós, 55-63	59

Total 1,045

Instrument	#Units
PILOTS	33
CONCURSOS	391
CONV. ESAL	621

Total 1,045



CONSTRUCTION
WILL START ON
OCTOBER 2022

ALLOCATION OF
FIRST UNITS ON
OCTOBER 2024

Primera fase

Un parc d'habitatge
públic equitatiu
per a tot el territori
metropolità

9 promocions
640 habitatges
1.600 persones

Les vuit primeres promocions previstes sumen 640 habitatges i es construïran als municipis de Barcelona, Montgat, Sant Adrià de Besòs i Sant Boi de Llobregat.

Aquest nou operador metropolità d'habitatge assequible de lloguer neix amb l'objectiu de garantir l'accés a l'habitatge en tot el territori de l'àrea metropolitana de Barcelona.

Per poder accedir a un habitatge, els futurs inquilins hauran de complir les condicions establertes en els diferents plans d'habitatge vigents en cada moment, en relació amb els habitatges amb règim de protecció oficial o equivalent.



Habitatges amb protecció oficial Saló Central de Sant Boi de Llobregat (IMPSOL - AMB).

110 **Saló Central H1**
Sant Boi de Llobregat
Fase de projecte

72 **Les Bateriaes 18A**
Montgat – Turó del Sastre
Fase de projecte

58 **Les Bateriaes 18B**
Montgat – Turó del Sastre
Fase de projecte



56 **La Catalana R16**
Sant Adrià de Besòs
Fase de projecte

112 **Casernes R5**
PAU 2 Barcelona
Sant Andreu – Fase inicial

106 **La Sagrera FR02 UP5**
PAU 1 Barcelona
La Sagrera – Fase inicial

65 **La Marina del Prat Vermell P23**
S10 Barcelona – Sants
Montjuïc – Fase inicial

60 **La Marina del Prat Vermell P15**
S10 Barcelona – Sants
Montjuïc – Fase inicial



Habitatges de protecció oficial al carrer Comte Borrell 159 de Barcelona (IMHAB – Ajuntament de Barcelona).

Les noves edificacions es conceben sota criteris de qualitat arquitectònica, integració en l'entorn, qualitat constructiva, sostenibilitat, innovació tipològica i viabilitat econòmica.

L'experiència continuada del gestor des la fase de projecte, com a promotor, executor, constructor i també gestor del parc públic d'habitatges, en garanteix la bona execució amb materials de qualitat i un manteniment eficient i sostenible.

Un parc residencial sostenible
i de qualitat homogènia
en tots els municipis
metropolitans.



- Habitatge Metròpolis Barcelona (HMB) aims to promote and manage affordable rental housing in the city of Barcelona (50%) and its metropolitan area (50%).
- The main objective of HMB is to rebalance the disproportionate economic effort faced by families living in rented housing in the metropolis of Barcelona.
- The HMB project proposes the construction of 4,500 affordable rental homes, within 6 years, to halt the upward trend in metropolitan housing prices, creating a public rental park with guaranteed public ownership.
- The project will be carried out in four phases over the next 5 years, with the first deliveries in 2025 and the last in 2028.
- In the first phase (2022-2025) it contemplates the development of +640 homes in: La Mariana del Prat Vermell in Barcelona, La Sagrera, Casernes in Sant Andreu, Sant Boi de Llobregat, Turó del Sastre in Montgat, La Catalana in Sant Adrià de Besòs.
- The total investment of the project amounts to 649 million euros.
- Sustainable and healthy housing, built on the basis of environmental design and energy efficiency criteria, guaranteeing energy certification A in all homes.



- The AMB and Barcelona City Council have promoted the first joint venture in affordable rental housing with full party in Spain, a public-private participation formula that will enable the expansion of the public subsidized housing stock, while maintaining public ownership".
- The joint venture is formed by AMB (25%), Barcelona City Council (25%) and Nicrent Residencial (50%), a limited company formed by the companies Cevasa and Neinor, which won the HMB tender in July 2021.
- A pioneering and benchmark public-private model. A relationship of equality, co-responsibility and long-term trust that shares investment efforts, risks, costs and benefits.



2.3 Acquisitions

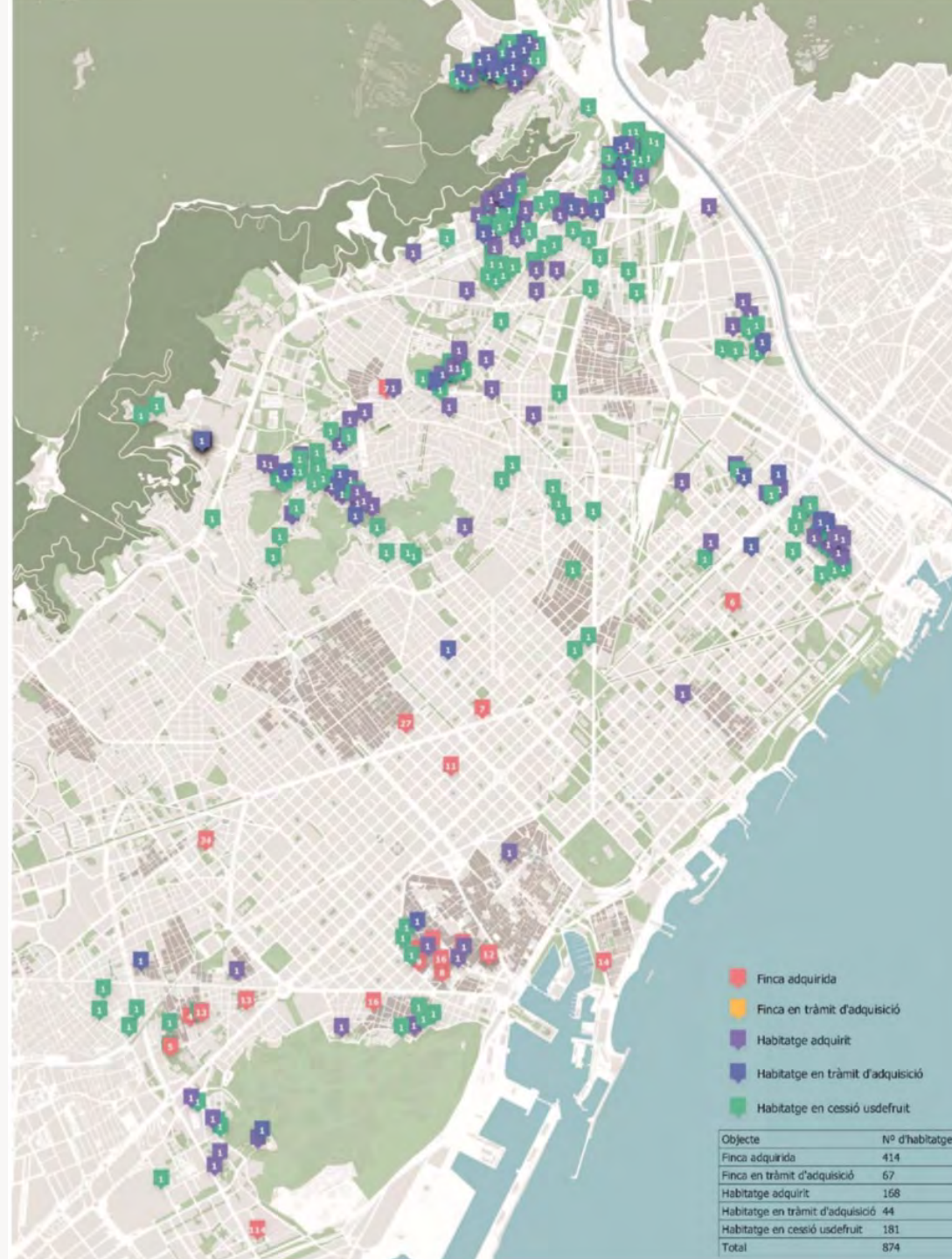
2.3 Acquisitions

- **Goal:** Increase the social housing stock in a non-segregated manner.
- **Instruments:**
 - Affordable housing pre emption right and right of first refusal
 - Pre emption right and right of first refusal (DL 1/2015)
 - City wide pre emption right and right of first refusal (MPGM): whole buildings and plots.
 - Inclusionary zoning pre emption right and right of first refusal (MPGM 30%)

	Units within a single building		Individual units in separate buildings		Total	
	Housing units	Investment	Housing units	Investment	Housing units	Investment
2016	88	9.301.204€	56	2.747.996€	144	12.049.200€
2017	167	24.813.017€	24	1.071.377€	191	25.884.394€
2018	36	6.230.468€	4	291.360€	40	6.521.828€
2019	127	8.018.677€	71	4.465.281€	198	12.483.958€
2020	40	7.086.500€	39	2.790.308€	79	9.876.808€
2021	358	54.022.505€	19	1.376.112€	377	55.398.618€
2022	257	38.154.991€	22	2.950.241€	279	41.096.232€
Total	1.076	147.941.706€	248	16.455.796€	1.324	164.397.502€



By February 2023 the City had acquired 1.568 units for 173M€

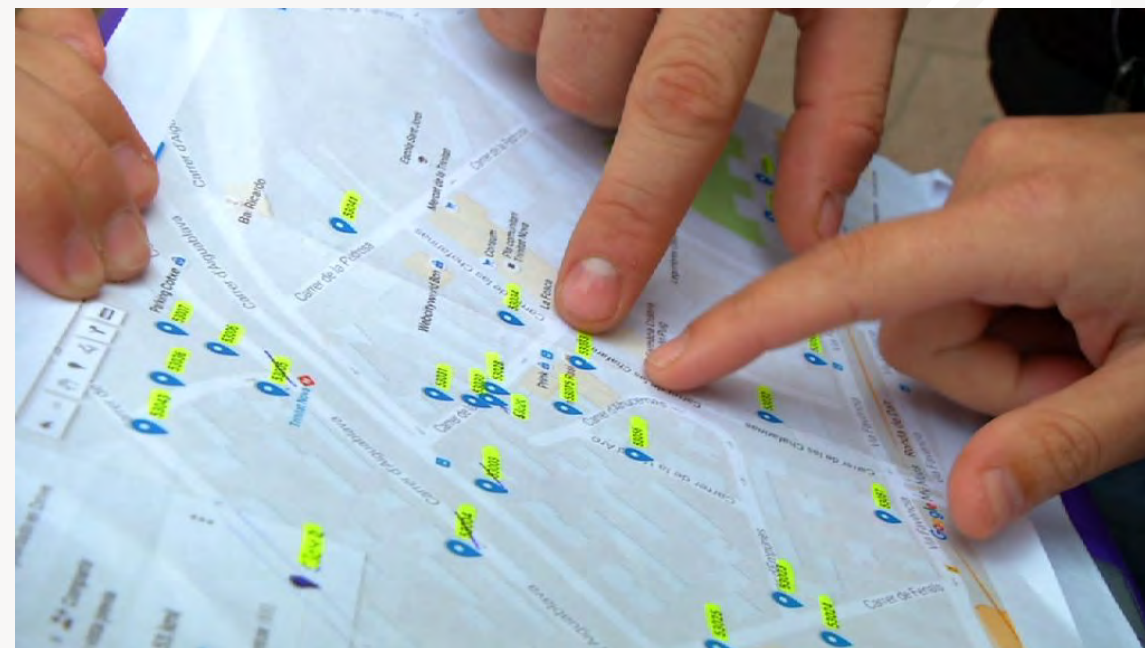


2.4 Temporary mobilization of private housing



Vacant housing census

- › INE's Housing Census from 2011 **overestimated vacant housing** (10%).
- › An extraordinary municipal census using water consumption data and the municipal registry + fieldwork allowed to identify **10,052 vacant units** (1,22%).
- › **881 unlicensed touristic apartments** were also identified.
- › **1,166 units presented deficiencies** that required refurbishment.



2.4.1 Rental housing pool (Borsa)

- Public intermediation program.
- More than 1,000 units administered in 2021.



INCENTIVES FOR APPLICANTS

Longer rental contracts

- ✓ Affordable rental
- ✓ No additional expenses. The landlord takes on:
 - Community expenses
 - Local property taxes
 - Turning on utilities
- ✓ No transaction costs (deposit, 1st month, administrative costs) according to social services evaluation

Home insurance

Legal and technical advice

INCENTIVES FOR LANDLORDS

Competitive rental price

Rental income guarantee

- + legal defense
- + Follow-up/mediation
- Rent intermediation (optional)
- Temporary or permanent voucher if risk of non-payment

Home insurance

Occupancy permit and energy efficiency permit

Renovation subsidies for up to 20,000€

- ✓ Discount on local property taxes
- ✓ Incentive for empty apartments: 1,500€
- ✓ Incentive for keeping existing tenants (w/o outstanding payments) in place: 1,500€
- ✓ Incentive for keeping existing tenants (w/ outstanding payments) in place: up to 6,000€

Legal and technical advice + follow-up + mediation



2.4.2 Cession program

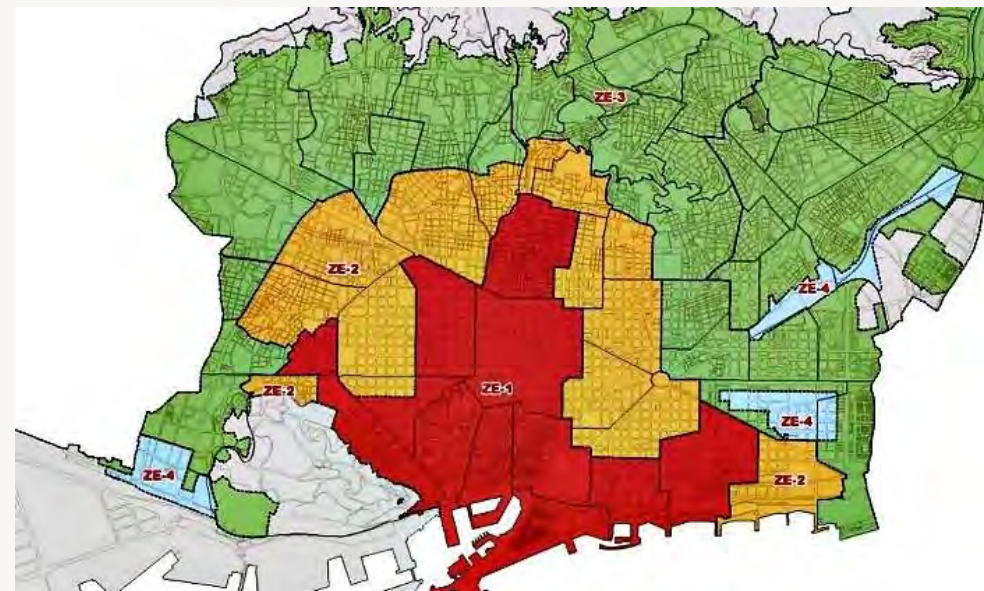
- › Program managed by **Hàbitat 3 Foundation**.
 - Goal: **social rent**
 - Payment of the rent is guaranteed to the owner.
 - Refurbishment subsidies.
 - Renters pay according to their income thanks to additional municipal subsidy to cover the gap.

FUNDACIÓ
HÀBITAT 

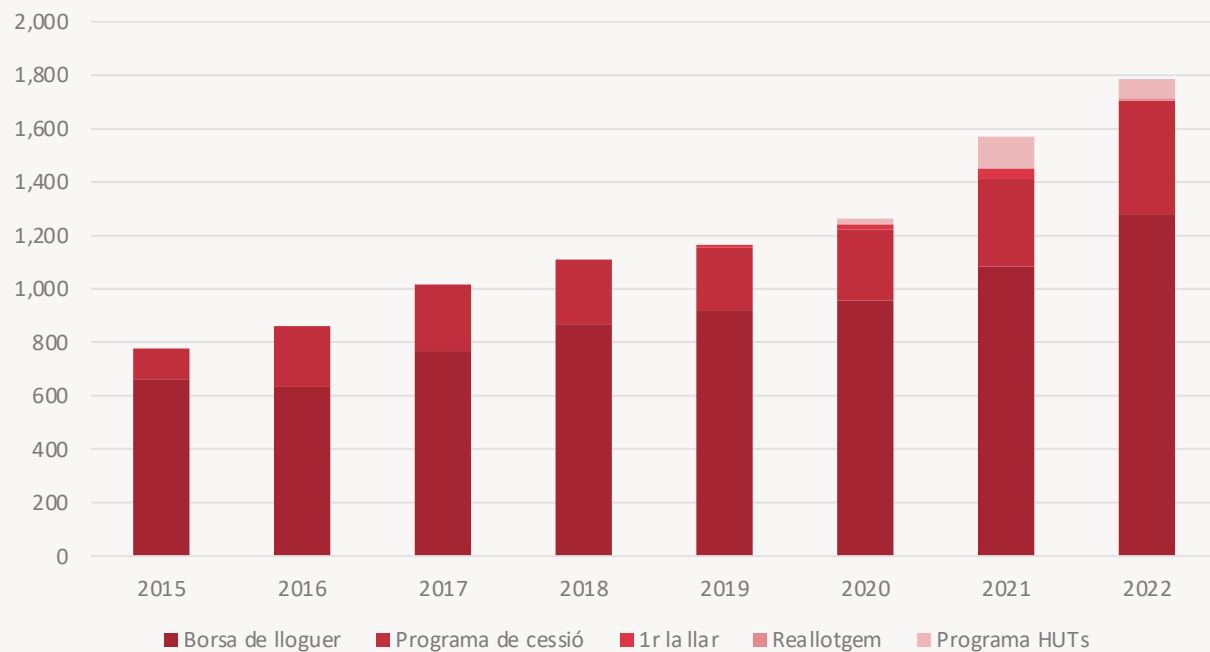
Habitatge per a la inclusió social

2.4.3 Touristic apartments mobilization program

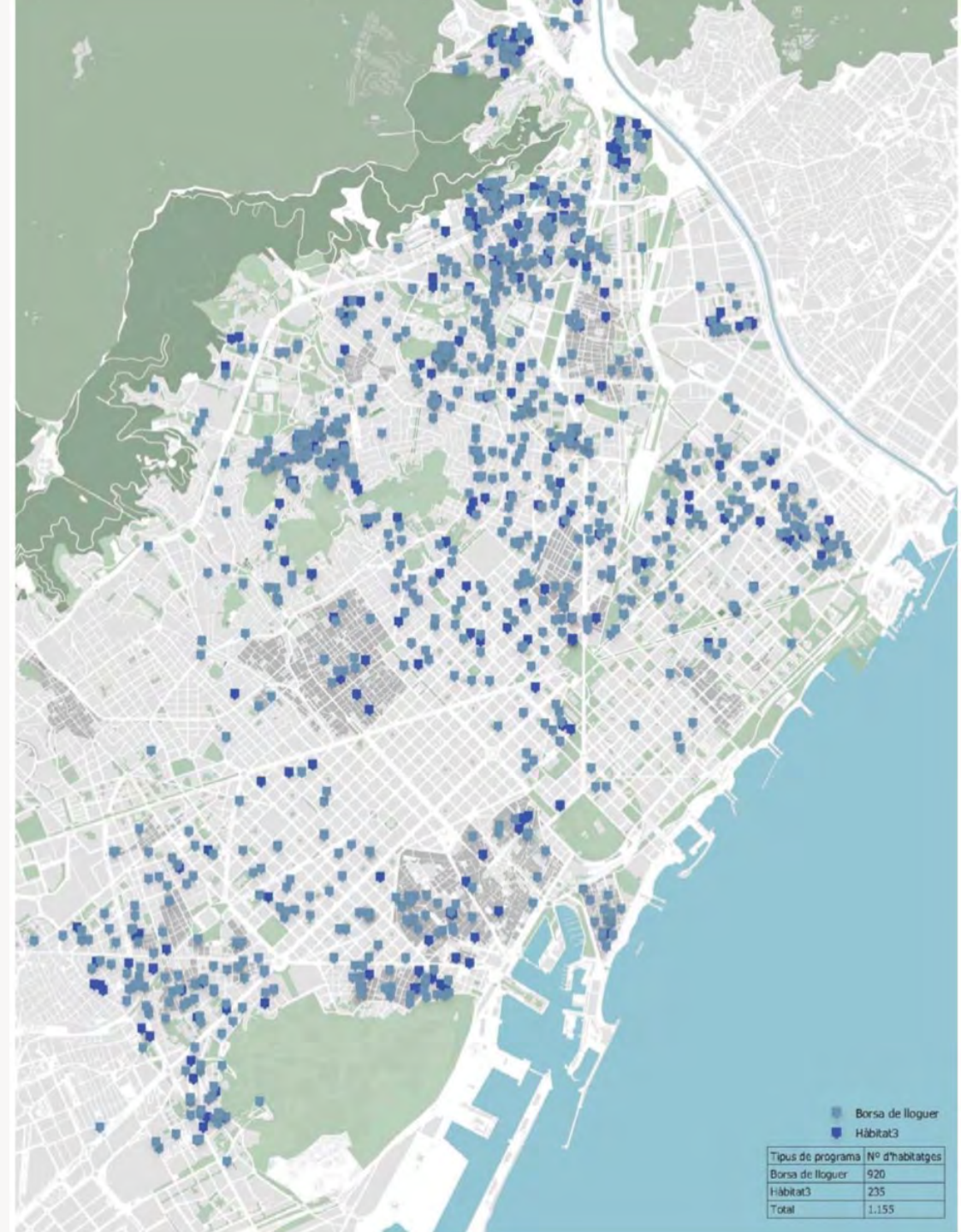
- The **Touristic Apartments Especial Urban Plan** (PEUAT) establishes 3 areas for the regulation of touristic apartments:
 - Decrease (licenses are not renewed).
 - Stabilization (a cap is set on the number of existing licenses)
 - Potential growth
- Goal: **Mobilize vacant touristic apartments** as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Rents between 700€ and 1,200€ per month depending on the time the unit is made available to the City.
 - Temporary rental contracts between 12 months and 3 years.
 - Social support by Hàbitat 3 Foundation.
- **150 units** were mobilized by 2021.



Temporary mobilization of private housing (total)



130% increase between 2015 and 2022



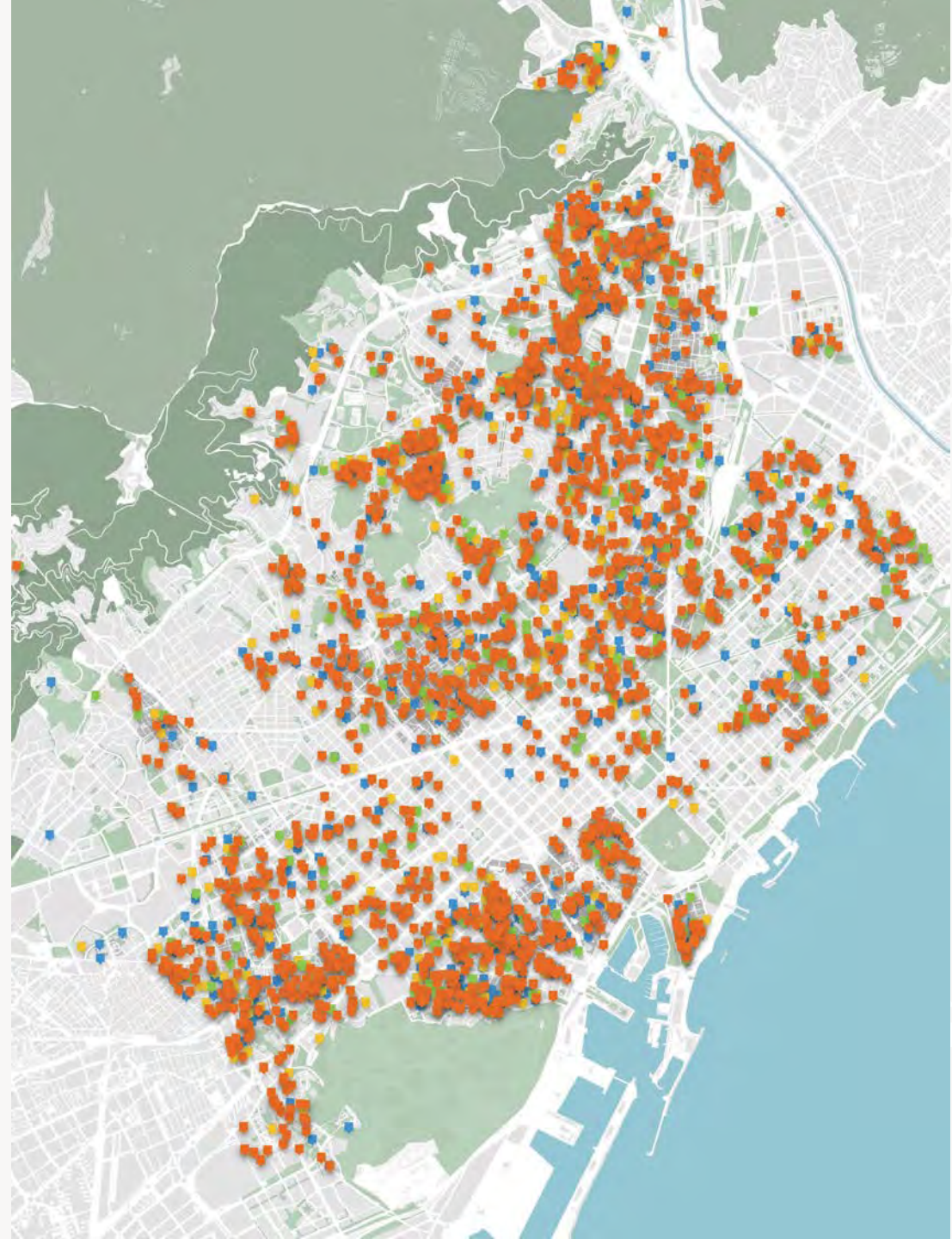
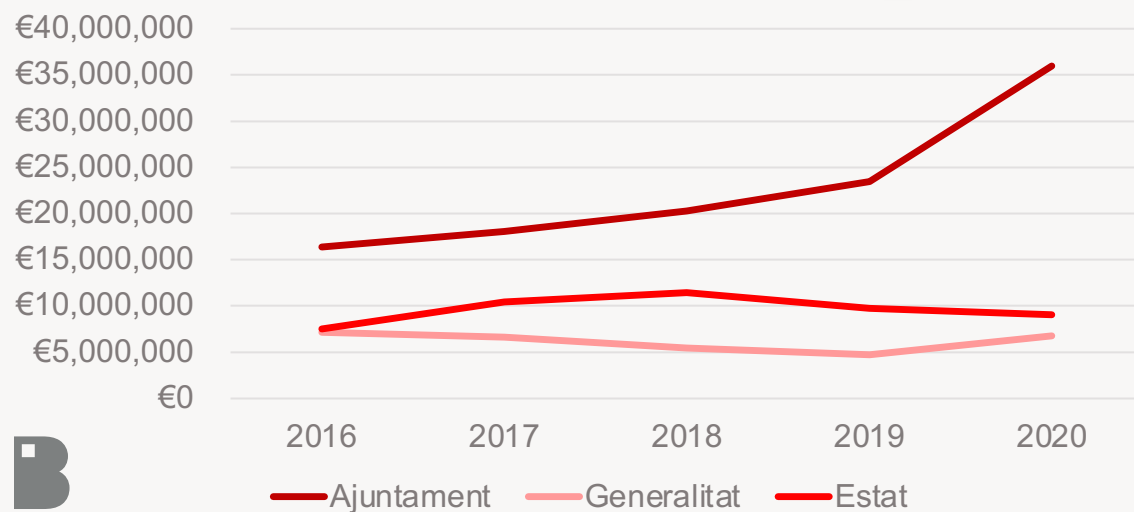
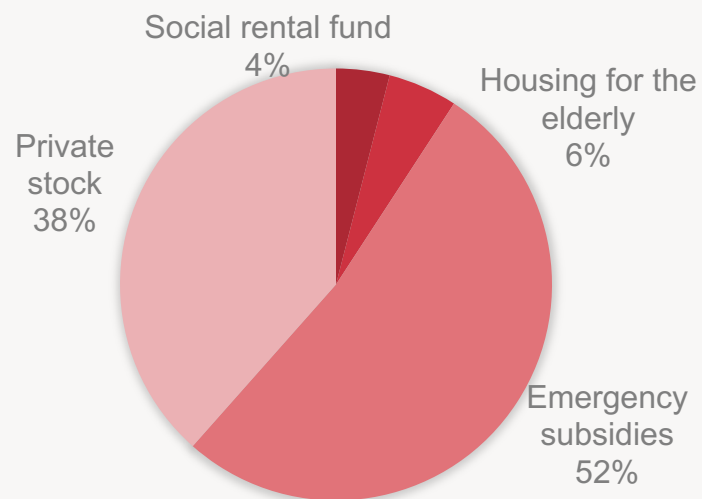


2.5 Rental subsidies



2.5 Rental subsidies

- From 18,208 subsidies in 2016 to **29,814 in 2021**.
- 120M€ during the period between 2016-2020.



Summary of strategies to increase the affordable housing stock



Development

- 8,000 units
- 80% rentals – 20% leaseholds
- 67% public development – 37% PPPs
- 1,200M€
- 19,000 residents



Acquisition

- 1,568 units
- 100% rentals
- 173M€



Temporary mobilization of private units

- 1,787 units
- 100% rentals
- 25M€

- The public housing stock has grown from 7,500 units in 2015 to **11,600 in February 2022** (+40% increase expected by 2025).
- 29,814 households receive rental subsidies (June 2022) vs. 18,208 in 2016.
- **17,3% of the renters receive public assistance** in Barcelona (12% in 2015)

1.5B€ PUBLIC PROGRAMME
(90% funded by Barcelona City
Council and its partners)

35,000+ jobs created



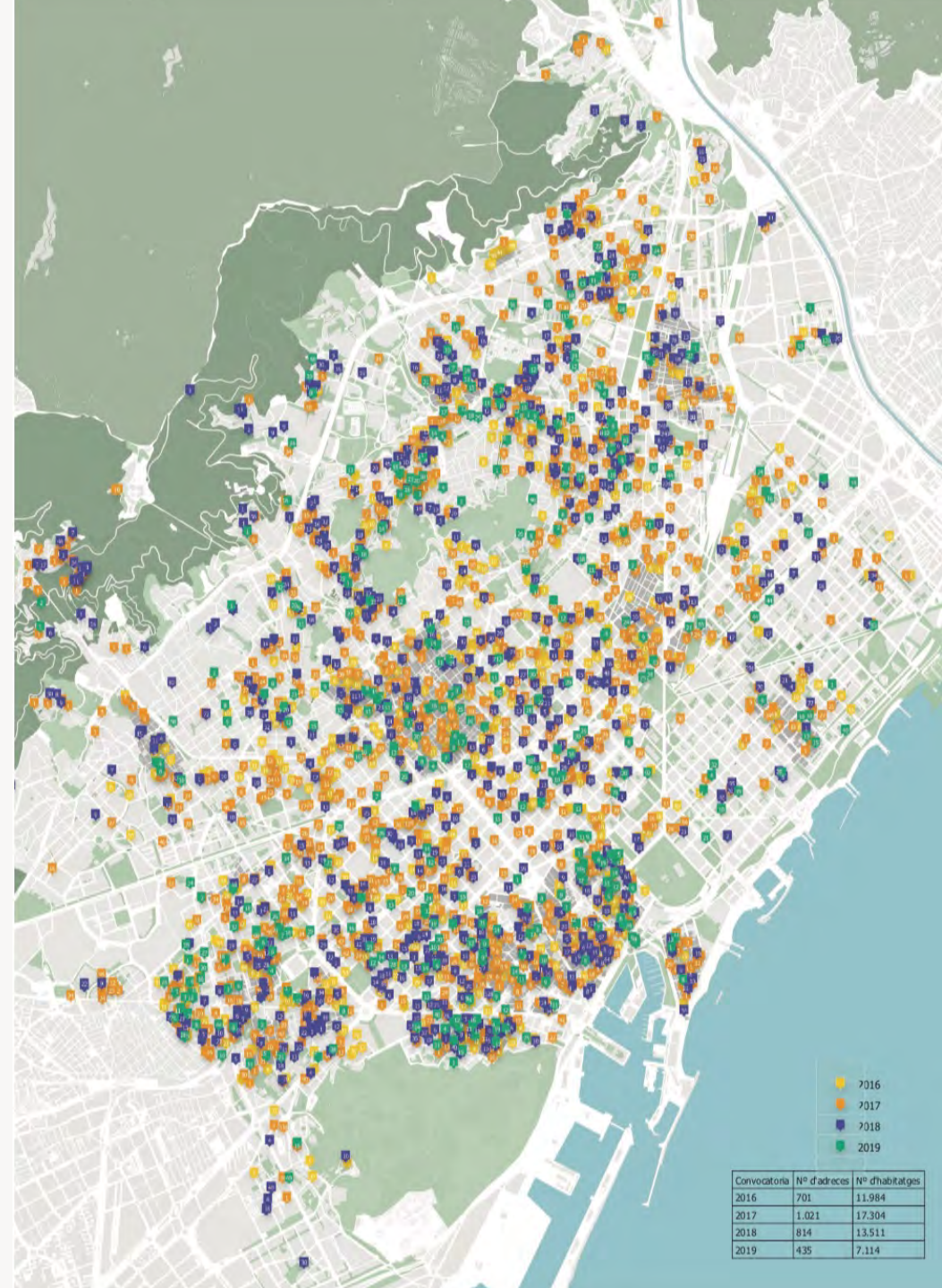
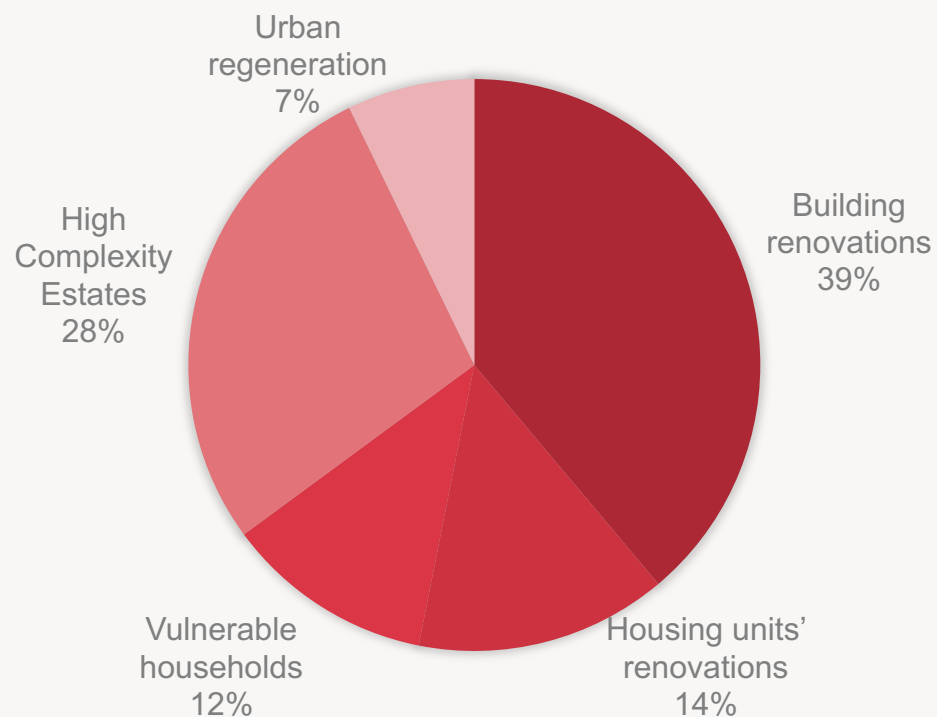
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Renovation policies



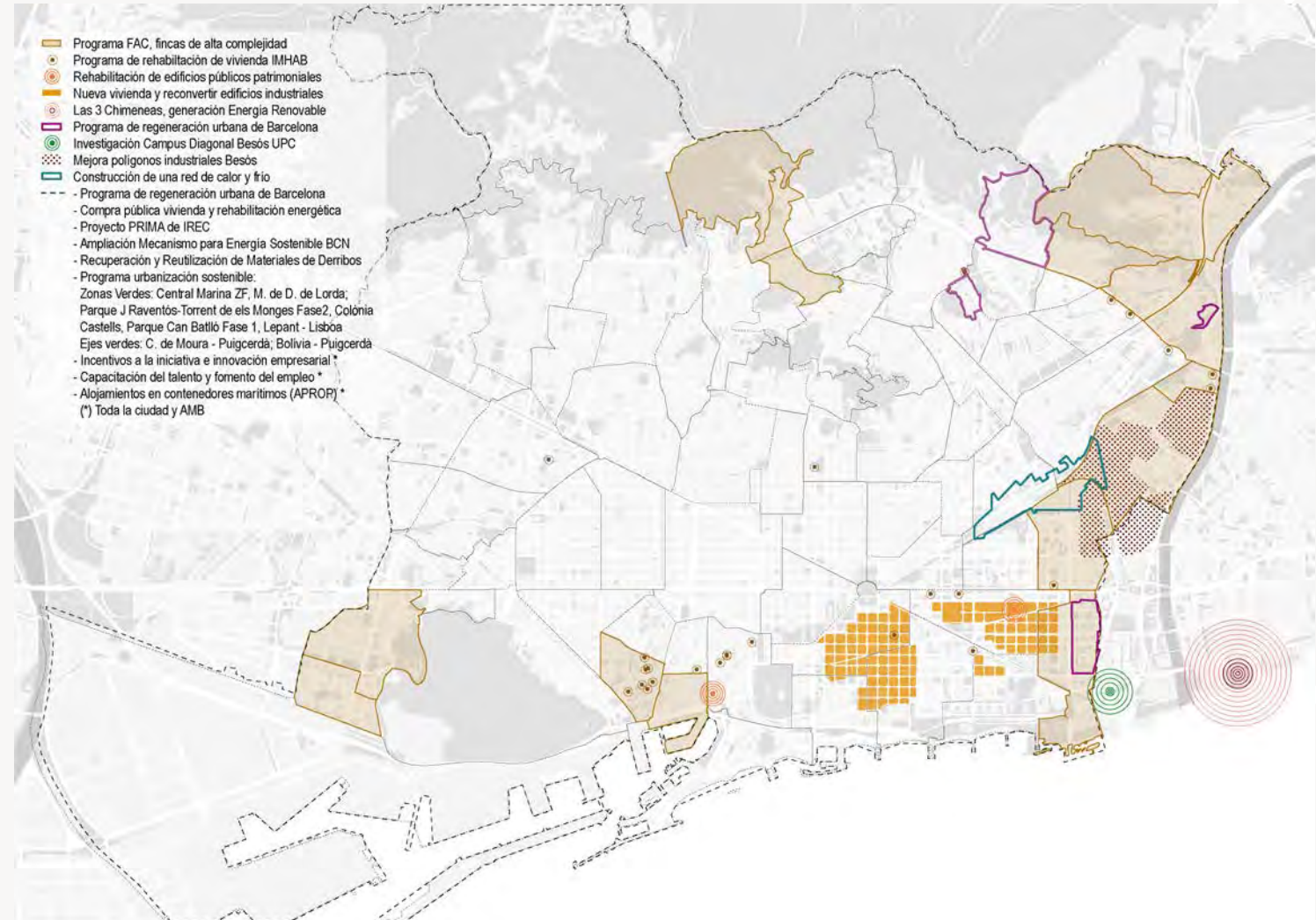
3.1 Renovation subsidies

- › 146M€ in the period 2016-2021.
- › Impact of more than 383M€ on the City's GDP.
- › Some 63,000 households benefited.
- › 130M€ EU Next Generation 2022-2024



3.2 Urban regeneration programs

- High Complexity Estates.
- Urban Regeneration and Renovation Areas (ARRUs)
- **Renewable Barcelona 2030 Plan**
(Next Generation EU).





4

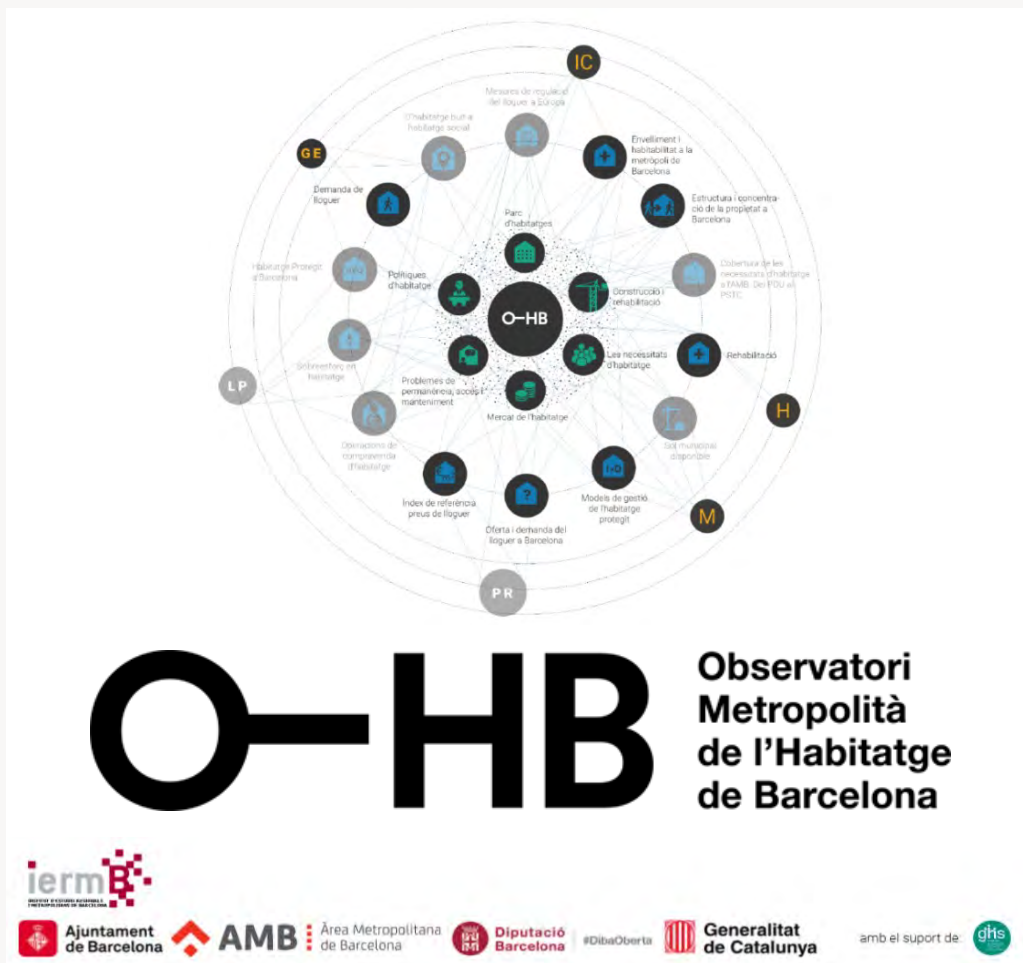
Regulating the real estate market



4.1 Data Mastering = Market Shaping

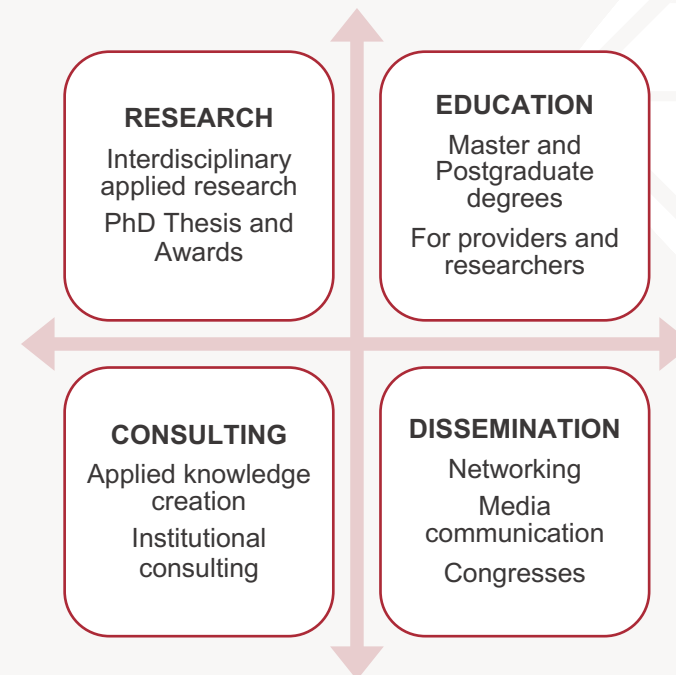


4.1.1 Metropolitan Housing Observatory (O-HB)



4.1.2 Barcelona Housing Studies Chair

- › 4-year framework agreement extendable to 4 more years.
- › 4 co-directors, one from each university.
- › Annual budget of 150,000€, 25% from each university.
- › 10% Overhead for each university.





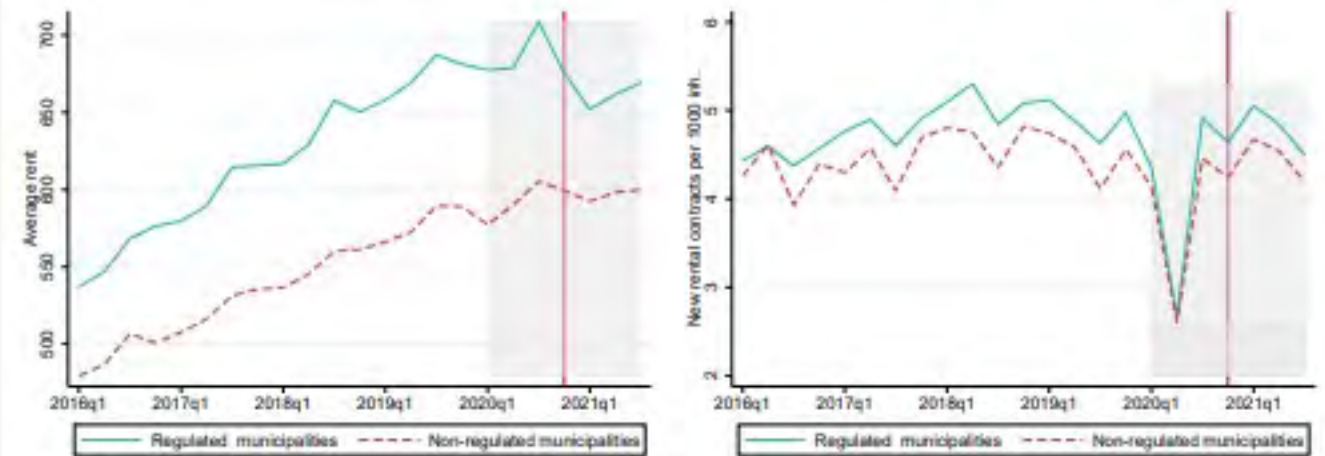
4.2 Rent regulation

- Reduction in rental **prices** and increase in the number of **contracts** signed.
- 2 parallel phenomena as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Halt in the sector during lockdown.
 - Reduction in the demand for touristic apartments.

*“Our **results indicate that the [Catalan rent] regulation reduced average rents paid by about 6%. However, this price drop did not lead to a reduction in the supply of housing units in the rental market.***

*[In conclusion, the data] suggest **that rent control policies can be effective in reducing rental prices and do not necessarily shrink the rental market.***”

Figure 2: Evolution of rental markets in regulated and non-regulated municipalities.



(a) Average rent

(b) Contracts per 1000 inhabitants



4.2 Rent regulation

- › In the 40 Catalan municipalities where the law applied, there was a **7% reduction in rental prices**.
- › In the 32 municipalities with a tense market where the law did not apply, rental prices increased by 4.1%.
- › In all municipalities the **number of new contracts went up**: +6.9% were the law applied, and +7.2% where it didn't.

Impacte de la Llei 11/2020 en el mercat de lloguer a la demarcació de Barcelona: Avenç de resultats

06/2022

4.3 Enforcement

- Law enforcement (in collaboration with building and urban planning inspections-sanctions) as a new pillar of **housing policy understood as a public service**.

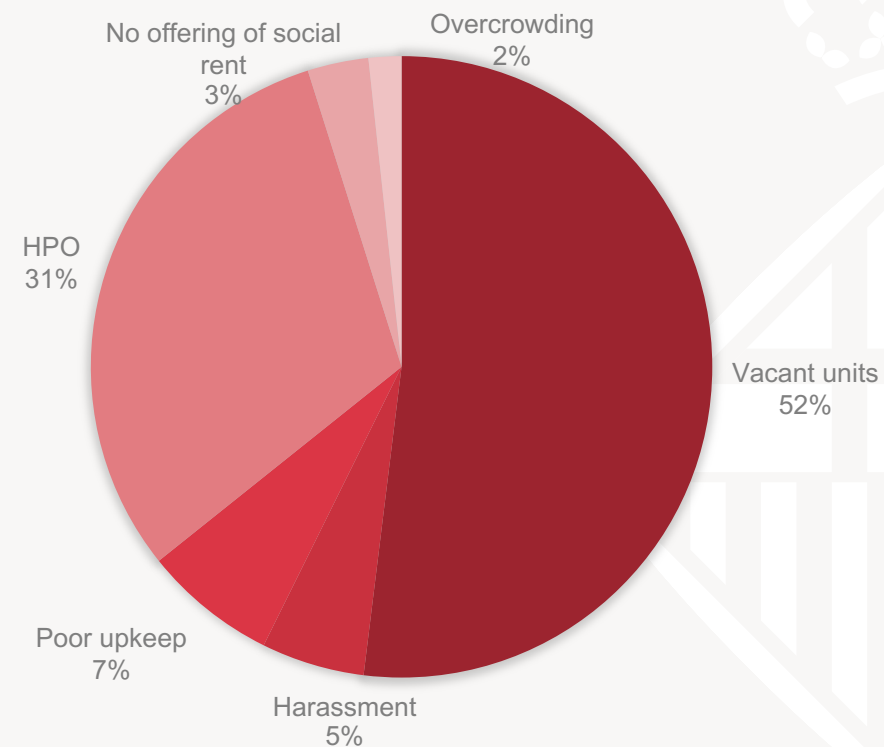
TOTAL INSPECTIONS 2016-2021

Type of action	inspections	proceedings	units
Mobilizing vacant housing			
related to sanction proceedings	1,571	661	950
vacant housing census	103,864		10,052
Real estate harassment		35	44
Affordable housing appropriate use	4,925	253	253
Improve building upkeep			
Related to the Department of enforcement		41	57
Related to the Districts' own tasks			
Offer a social rent		21	26
Identify unlicensed touristic apartments	9,964	8,824	8,824
Total (does not include vacant housing census)	16,460	9,835	10,154
<i>Total including vacant housing census</i>	<i>120,324</i>		<i>20,206</i>

4.3 Enforcement

› Sanctions 2016-2021

Imposed sanctions	87 sanctions
Value of imposed sanctions	2.87 M€
Units surveyed	121,457 units
Preliminary reports to guarantee the right of relocation for residents	630 reports (451 favorable and 121 unfavorable)
Regularization of rent in affordable units (HPO)	27 regularizations





5

Conclusions



5 Conclusions

- › **Barcelona as an emerging, mission-oriented model (Mazzucato)**, based on symbiotic collaborations between public, private and community stakeholders.
 - › **Intervene** from the public sector. Without a strong public intervention, nowhere and never in history, has it been possible to generate permanently affordable housing estates.
 - › **Reach agreements** with private, communitarian and commercial stakeholders. Public commitment is necessary but not enough. There needs to be a whole set of alliances between different types of affordable housing providers.
- › **The meantime**
 - › The meantime will be long. And we cannot say to several generations that our solutions will bypass them.
 - › The increase in housing supply (adequately diversified) will need to be done in parallel to the continued provision of **rental subsidies**.
 - › But we cannot bear private suppliers' profit margins with public money. Therefore, the debate on **rent control** is inevitable.



Challenges

1. The growth of the social housing stock without **State/Federal funding & legal and regulatory umbrellas & friendly taxation schemes** is extremely difficult.
2. The complexity of multilevel governance. **Barcelona has not legislative power** for regulating the housing market. We are obligated to **lobby** continuously for a favorable and coherent regulatory framework.
3. The more housing and related assistance you can provide, the bigger the **expectation from the public**.
4. The battle for land and development. Limited future development opportunities (land exhaustion & zoning) make it difficult to **balance the historical distribution of social and affordable housing across the city**.



Lessons learned

1. Having a **mixture of housing models** (different affordability levels, different housing tenures, different providers) results in a social mix that may provide opportunity for all.
2. Social housing provides low-income households with **stability**, which has positive externalities in terms of employability, community building and inclusiveness.
3. **Public-private and public-community collaborations** are essential to grow and manage a social housing system, particularly when there is little Regional & Federal funding available.
4. We need more **core capital** for affordable build to rent, but also for **purchasing, renovating & rental PPPs**.
5. Evidence-based policies require investments in **data collection, management and research**.

Awards and future events



Award	Project	Category	Year
Urbact Best Practice	UCER	Prevention of evictions and homelessness	2017
World Habitat Award	Hàbitat 3 cession programme, La Borda	Best innovative initiative, Bronze	2019
European Responsible Housing Award	"Place-based anti-speculation housing policies", La Borda	Fair financing and housing affordability, Special prize for innovation	2019
AVS	Can Fabra	Best building in new construction	2020
Mapei + Green Building Council Spain	Can Fabra		2020
Advanced Architecture Awards	Can Fabra		2020
FAD	APROP (finalist)		2020
FAD	Can Fabra		2021
AIT-Award	Can Fabra	First prize in collective housing	2021
New European Bauhaus	APROP	Modular, adaptable and mobile living solutions	2021
EU Mies Award	La Borda	Emerging Architecture	2022
Advanced Architecture Awards	Cirerers	Sostenibilidad, descarbonización, mayor autogeneración de energía de un edificio	2022

Award	Project	Category	Year
European Responsible Housing Award	Conveni ESAL (CLT) (finalist)	Building strategic alliances	2022
	Llar Casa Bloc, Hàbitat 3 (finalist)	Leaders in innovation, agents of a fair energy transition	
	Can Fabra (finalist)		
AVS	La Balma	Best new construction project	2022
	Bon Pastor (runner-up)	Best new construction project	
	Industrialized construction projects (runner-up)	Best environmental management	
	Conveni ESAL (CLT) (runner-up)	Best initiative in social housing management	
	APROP (runner-up)	Best R&D in housing	
	Llar Casa Bloc, Hàbitat 3 (runner-up)	Best initiative in housing rehabilitation	



Barcelona, August 30 – September 2, 2022



Barcelona, 6-9 June 2023

Thank you for you attention!

Office of the Housing Manager

Ajuntament de Barcelona