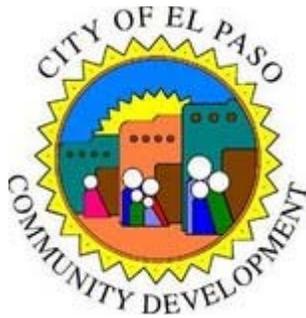


Demand for Accessible Type A Apartment Units in the City of El Paso, Texas



Project Overview and Comments Response

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Overall Purpose and Objective

Purpose of the Study

To evaluate the market conditions for accessible Type A apartment units by estimating their potential demand and supply.

Why?

To provide essential information that may be useful to policymakers, housing providers, and housing advocates in determining the appropriate Type A accessibility requirements for new commercial multi-family developments (five or more units).

Accordingly, this analysis estimated the potential demand and supply of accessible Type A apartment units based on current market conditions and survey responses.

On the other hand, **this analysis did NOT examine ANY specific issues regarding fair housing or the lack of it.** These issues were beyond the scope of this project.

IPED Response to Comments Received

Response to Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. Comments

Comment 1: Based on U.S. Census estimates of persons with ambulatory difficulties, previous findings and survey respondents' willingness to live in an accessible Type A apartment, it was estimated that the **potential need** could be around 7,712 units. However this figure is not the same as **potential demand** given that it does not account for the level of rents nor the reported apartment size needs.

Based on apartment size needs reported on survey responses it was assumed that the average level of rent was at least \$800. Therefore, the shortage of 71 units came from subtracting the potential demand of 463 units (at this level of rents) from the estimated 392 units in the open market. It is important to note that, as in any market, supply and demand are driven by price and quantity; therefore, it was essential to account for the average level of rent (price) to estimate the potential demand.

Affordability of Type A units and occupancy issues were beyond the scope of this analysis.

Comment 2: As stated in the "Final Analysis and Concluding Remarks" section, affordability clearly seems to be an issue. Accordingly, all interested parties (policymakers, suppliers, demanders, advocates, etc.) should engage in discussing different avenues (e.g. incentives, partnership programs, etc.) that may help to reduce the potential need.

Comment 3: The inclusion of units owned by the local public housing authority was only for informational purposes; hence, these units were not included to estimate the potential demand.

Comment 4: It was stated that the “shortage may in fact be non-existent.” This statement was based on the following two factors:

- 1) The number of Type A units was not inventoried nor audited; therefore, the estimates relied on secondary data sources in which errors may be embedded.
- 2) Information received by the El Paso Apartment Association (EPAA) indicating that there is a vacancy rate of around five percent for accessible Type A units.

It is accurate that the private sector participation on the survey was minimal and practically non-existent and that the EPAA did not provide supporting evidence regarding the five percent vacancy rate. However, participation on surveys was strictly voluntary and there was no reason to disbelieve any information provided by the private sector (EPAA) or by survey respondents. To that effect, there is no reason to disregard the information provided by the EPAA considering that none of the groups provided supporting evidence of their statements and/or responses.

Response to Marc Salazar Comments

As discussed in the report, the Privacy Rule Standards of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) prevented the development of a list of potential respondents in advance; therefore, a purposive sample technique was implemented. Accordingly, a list of a total of 35 agencies and organizations that provide services to the target population was compiled in collaboration with the City Fair Housing Task Force Committee, housing advocates and community stakeholders. From the compiled list, a total of 14 organizations and four events agreed to assist in the distribution of the survey strictly voluntarily. Even though this may be seen as “low participation,” the opposite could be argued given that 5,300 surveys were distributed during an adequate timeframe considering the type of survey and given that no additional responses were being received. Also, it is important to note that all surveys included a telephone number and email address of a point of contact in case potential respondents had any questions. During the nearly three-month period, only two calls were received.

As stated in the report, the final sample of responses (626) provided a response rate of nearly 12 percent (11.8%). This is higher than the usual 10 percent response rate that has been observed in this region for many years. Again, it is important to note that survey participation was strictly voluntary.

In addition, the sample of 626 responses provided a margin of error of ± 3.89 percent at the 95 percent confidence level assuming that the total population of persons with an ambulatory difficulty in the City of

El Paso is 45,206. This relatively low margin of error is an indication that the sample obtained is likely to be not skewed and likely representative of the target population. In fact, some responses were in line with previous findings reported at the state and national levels.

As previously mentioned, apartment/property managers' participation on the survey to estimate the potential supply was minimal and practically non-existent but they had no obligation to answer given that survey participation was strictly voluntary. On the other hand, this issue did not impede our ability to estimate the potential supply. In fact, it is important to note that all estimates and conclusions are well supported by the data obtained and the survey responses received.

The last statement on the "Final Analysis and Concluding Remarks" section was simply presented as an option that may help to alleviate the need for accessible housing. By no means was the intention to hold responsible nor put the burden of meeting the potential accessible housing need on federally funded public housing or any other entity by its own. On the contrary, all interested parties (policymakers, suppliers, demanders, advocates, etc.) should engage in discussing different avenues (e.g. incentives, partnership programs, etc.) that may help to reduce the potential need. Accordingly, the final paragraph on this section was modified to clarify this misunderstanding.