

From Initiative to Municipal Review: Affordable Housing Commitments Across a Changing Approval Pathway

Decision-Based Academic Teaching Case

Kimberly D. Wright 

Marymount University, Arlington, VA, USA, kwright2@marymount.edu

Abstract: This decision-based academic teaching case examines how an earlier affordable-housing proposal should be treated when a large development moves from a countywide initiative to a municipal review pathway. In 2024, the East Solano Homes, Jobs, and Clean Energy Initiative proposed a \$400 million Solano Homes for All program, development-linked funding, community participation in program design, and later incorporation into a Development Agreement. The initiative was withdrawn before the election and did not create continuing municipal obligations. By June 10, 2025, Suisun City was considering a reimbursement agreement that would finance City review, preserve the City's independent judgment, and anticipate later Development Agreement negotiations. The reviewed pre-decision record did not contain an equivalent project-specific affordable-housing package. Using historical institutionalism and path dependence as the instructional lens, students assess whether the earlier framework should operate as a negotiating benchmark, be replaced by a Suisun-specific design, or be divided into early minimums and later performance-based commitments. A fictional municipal adviser, Elena Torres, must recommend negotiating principles while distinguishing verified evidence, unresolved questions, institutional capacity, and the risks of anchoring, erosion, and administrative complexity.

Keywords: Affordable Housing Development, Development Agreements, Historical Institutionalism, Local Government, Path Dependence, Public-Private Development

Author Note and Positionality Disclosure

The author previously served in a compensated community-engagement role with California Forever. That relationship ended before development of this teaching case. California Forever did not direct, fund, review, or receive advance access to the manuscript. The case relies on publicly available documents rather than personal recollection or nonpublic information. The five exhibits were created by the author from the cited source record and do not reproduce third-party tables or graphics.

Teaching Case Construction Disclosure

Elena Torres, Senior Housing and Development Strategy Adviser, is a fictional composite created for instructional purposes. Her role, internal assignment, and noon memorandum deadline are teaching constructions. No private deliberations, quotations, or views are attributed to actual Suisun City officials. The student evidence record closes immediately before the Suisun City Council meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on June 10, 2025. Later applications, environmental-review documents, project revisions, public-opinion surveys, consultant studies, decisions, and outcomes are excluded from the student record.

PART I: STUDENT-FACING CASE

Evidence cutoff: June 10, 2025, immediately before the 6:30 p.m. Suisun City Council meeting

The Morning of the Decision

At 8:15 a.m. on June 10, 2025, Elena Torres opened the draft reimbursement agreement on her second monitor and the withdrawn 2024 initiative on her first. By noon, the City Manager expected a short memorandum: If the City Council authorized the review agreement that evening,

what affordable-housing negotiating principles should staff establish at the beginning of the municipal process? Elena was not being asked whether the proposed development should be approved. No completed project application, certified environmental review, final fiscal analysis, or negotiated Development Agreement was before her. Her assignment was narrower and more immediate: advise what the City should preserve, redesign, or leave contingent while the evidence was still incomplete.

The timing created two opposing risks. If the City imported a former countywide proposal too quickly, it could anchor negotiations to a dollar amount and program design that had not been validated for Suisun City. If the City waited until every financial and planning question was answered, the earlier specificity could disappear before an equally measurable replacement existed. A third possibility - fixing some obligations early and deferring others through performance gates - appeared flexible, but it could exceed the City's monitoring capacity or produce disputes about triggers and remedies.

Elena's recommendation would not bind the Council or predetermine later land-use decisions. It would shape the staff position used to organize evidence, request analysis, and prepare eventual negotiations. The practical question was therefore not whether the prior initiative remained legally controlling. It did not. The question was whether parts of that earlier framework should still influence the municipal pathway, and if so, through what new and defensible mechanisms.

The Earlier Countywide Pathway

On February 14, 2024, the proponent filed the East Solano Homes, Jobs, and Clean Energy Initiative. The proposed initiative would have amended Solano County planning and zoning rules for a new community on unincorporated land. Among its stated community benefits was Solano Homes for All, a proposed \$400 million commitment. The initiative said the funds would support downpayment assistance for Solano County families purchasing homes in the proposed community and affordable homes for low-income, very-low-income, extremely-low-income, and special-needs households. It listed gap financing, land donations, and community land trusts as possible mechanisms (California Forever, 2024, PDF p. 3).

The proposal included more than a headline amount. It called for allocation, eligibility, and governance to be developed through a countywide community-engagement process and included as an applicant exhibit to a future Development Agreement. It stated that program funding would scale with certificates of occupancy during buildout, be reported annually, remain enforceable through the Development Agreement, and bind successors and assigns (California Forever, 2024, PDF pp. 3, 6-11). Those provisions created a relatively specific proposed architecture, but they did not resolve the final allocation among housing interventions, the number of assisted households or units, the subsidy required per household, or a single affordability period applicable to every program component.

On July 22, 2024, the initiative proponent formally withdrew the measure before it was submitted to voters (Sramek, 2024, PDF p. 1). The proposed provisions therefore did not become voter-approved requirements. The withdrawal ended that approval pathway and removed the initiative's proposed legal structure. It did not, by itself, answer whether the earlier proposal should retain political, negotiating, or accountability significance in a later process.

A Municipal Review Pathway Emerges

In March 2025, Suisun City contacted the developer about possible annexation and entitlement of developer-owned land. The draft reimbursement agreement prepared for the June 10 meeting described a City-led process involving environmental review, possible annexation, and potential project entitlements. The agreement identified Suisun City as the lead agency for environmental

review and preserved the City's independent judgment and sole discretion over later approvals (City of Suisun City & California Forever LP, 2025, PDF pp. 1, 3-4, 9-10).

The agreement would shift project-review costs away from the City's General Fund by requiring an initial \$400,000 deposit, quarterly budget and schedule updates, monthly documentation of consultant invoices and staff time, and additional advances when the account was insufficient for the next 90 days of projected work. The City could stop work if an additional advance was not timely provided (City of Suisun City & California Forever LP, 2025, PDF pp. 7-8). These terms were not an affordable-housing program. They did, however, show how a public-private obligation could identify a responsible party, a measurable trigger, documentation, a funding mechanism, and a consequence for nonperformance.

The draft also anticipated a later Development Agreement and described certain early fiscal public benefits if specified approvals occurred. At the same time, it stated that approval of the reimbursement agreement would not commit the City to annexation, entitlements, a Development Agreement, or the development itself (City of Suisun City & California Forever LP, 2025, PDF pp. 4-6, 9-10). As of the cutoff, no equivalent project-specific \$400 million affordable-housing commitment, beneficiary structure, affordability duration, housing-funding schedule, or complete housing-enforcement package appeared in the reviewed municipal record. That evidentiary absence did not prove abandonment. It meant the status of the former housing provisions remained unresolved.

Local Housing Conditions

Suisun City's certified 2023-2031 Housing Element documented a need for housing across income levels. The City's sixth-cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation totaled 620 units: 160 very-low-income units, 95 low-income units, 98 moderate-income units, and 267 above-moderate-income units (City of Suisun City, 2023, PDF p. 59, printed p. 52). RHNA is a planning allocation, not a finding that the City must directly build each unit or that a particular development must satisfy the allocation. It nevertheless shows that the City's housing responsibilities include lower-income as well as market-rate capacity.

The Housing Element's regional needs assessment also showed substantial cost pressure. Using 2014-2018 CHAS data, it reported 9,320 occupied households in Suisun City, including 3,135 households that paid more than 30% of income for housing. The table identified 1,275 lower-income households paying more than 50% of income for housing and 2,165 lower-income households paying more than 30% (City of Suisun City, 2023, PDF pp. 264-265, printed Appendix 2 pp. 2-27-2-28). These figures describe the period and definitions used in the Housing Element; they are not estimates of conditions on June 10, 2025.

Local stakeholder consultations summarized in the Housing Element identified shortages of affordable and accessible housing, displacement pressure, homelessness, and limited administrative capacity for voucher services. The City also recorded public comments calling for more affordable rental housing and supportive housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, seniors, and persons with disabilities (City of Suisun City, 2023, PDF pp. 14-15, printed pp. 7-8). These sources support the relevance of multiple beneficiary groups, but they do not establish a comprehensive June 2025 consensus about how a project-specific commitment should be allocated.

Municipal Capacity and Economic Uncertainty

The City's fiscal position limited how much administrative complexity Elena could assume. In a May 13, 2025 budget memorandum, the City Manager projected a FY 2025-2026 General Fund shortfall of \$1.3 million if the reimbursement agreement was executed and \$1.8 million without it. The memorandum also stated that most departments operated at 75% or less of benchmark staffing (Prebula, 2025, PDF pp. 47-49). These projections did not establish that the proposed

development would ultimately benefit or burden the City. They did show that any housing package requiring underwriting, eligibility review, long-term monitoring, compliance enforcement, or dispute resolution would need a credible administrator and funding source.

Different housing tools would also address different barriers. Downpayment assistance could help an income-qualified household that can sustain a mortgage but lacks initial capital. Income-restricted rental housing could serve households whose incomes cannot support market rent. A community land trust or shared-equity structure could preserve long-term affordability but would require durable stewardship. Gap financing could support project feasibility but would depend on the financing plan, affordability restrictions, and the capacity of a developer or nonprofit partner. A dollar amount alone would not allocate these responsibilities.

The record available to Elena did not provide a completed project pro forma, land-value analysis, unit-level subsidy estimate, financing plan, legal analysis of residency or employment preferences, or final estimate of City monitoring costs. It also did not establish how much public or philanthropic leverage would accompany a private housing commitment. A defensible recommendation therefore had to distinguish what the evidence supported from what remained conditional.

The Choice Before Elena

Elena developed three alternatives. Each could be defended if it was tied to the evidence, stated its assumptions, and addressed implementation. None was designed as the preferred answer.

Alternative 1 Continuity First

Under a continuity-first approach, the City would treat major parts of the proposed 2024 housing framework as new municipal negotiating benchmarks. The approach would not describe the withdrawn initiative as legally binding. Instead, it would use the prior amount, beneficiary categories, program mechanisms, reporting concepts, and Development Agreement protections as an anti-backsliding baseline.

The main benefit is early specificity. Affordable housing would enter the municipal process with an observable benchmark before later public-benefit negotiations became crowded by other fiscal, infrastructure, or service demands. The principal risk is anchoring. The \$400 million amount and countywide design arose from a different geography, governmental pathway, and political proposal. The June 2025 record did not show that the same amount, beneficiary mix, or delivery system was economically optimal for Suisun City. The approach would therefore require new legal and financial instruments rather than an assertion that the old initiative survived.

Alternative 2 Suisun Specific

Under a Suisun-specific approach, the City would not presume that the \$400 million framework should govern. It would develop a new package after analyzing local housing need, project economics, City capacity, potential delivery partners, financing sources, and the appropriate relationship between ownership and rental interventions.

The main benefit is local fit. A new framework could align obligations with verified municipal conditions and assign responsibilities to organizations capable of administering them. The principal risk is erosion through redesign. If the City discards a quantified historical benchmark before establishing an equally measurable replacement, later negotiations could produce broad affordability language without a defined funding level, beneficiary structure, duration, schedule, reporting system, or remedy. This option would need deadlines and interim evidence requirements to prevent 'more study' from becoming indefinite deferral.

Alternative 3 Phased Commitments With Performance Gates

Under a phased approach, the City would secure specified minimum obligations early and allow other elements to change as financial, environmental, and implementation evidence developed. A floor, formula, or beneficiary principle could be fixed at the outset, while allocations, delivery partners, financing sources, or later contributions could be tied to measurable milestones.

The main benefit is adaptability without leaving every housing term unresolved. The main risk is administrative complexity. Performance gates can invite disputes over whether conditions have occurred, who verifies them, whether changed economics justify modification, how deferred obligations are valued, and what remedy follows missed performance. If triggers are vague or the City lacks monitoring capacity, phasing could increase transaction costs, encourage metric gaming, or function as delay. This alternative would need clear evidence standards, verification responsibility, deadlines, and remedies.

Student Tables

The exhibits summarize only evidence available by the June 10, 2025 cutoff. They distinguish documentary facts from the teaching construction and identify unresolved issues rather than filling gaps with later information.

Table 1. *Institutional Chronology Through the Evidence Cutoff*

Date	Event	Documented evidence	Status at cutoff
February 14, 2024	East Solano initiative filed	Proponent-drafted countywide initiative proposed planning changes and specified community benefits, including Solano Homes for All.	Proposed framework; not voter approved
July 22, 2024	Initiative withdrawn	The proponent formally withdrew the measure before it was submitted to voters.	Countywide initiative pathway ended
March 19, 2025	City inquiry	The reimbursement agreement recites that Suisun City asked about possible annexation and entitlement of developer-owned land.	Exploratory municipal pathway
April 1, 2025	Developer response	The reimbursement agreement recites that the developer confirmed interest.	Exploration continued; no project approval
May 13, 2025	Budget strategy memorandum	City Manager presented projected General Fund shortfalls and staffing constraints.	Capacity evidence available before negotiations
June 10, 2025, 6:30 p.m.	Council meeting scheduled	Agenda Item 3 identified the updated California Forever reimbursement agreement for Council consideration.	Student record closes immediately before the meeting

Note. Sources: California Forever (2024, filing date on title page); Sramek (2024, PDF p. 1); City of Suisun City and California Forever LP (2025, PDF pp. 1, 3); Prebula (2025, PDF pp. 47-49); City of Suisun City (2025, agenda cover and Agenda Item 3). Elena, her role, and the noon deadline are teaching constructions.

Table 2. *The Proposed 2024 Framework and the June 2025 Municipal Record*

Dimension	Proposed 2024 initiative	June 2025 pre-decision record
Legal status	Proposed county initiative; voter guarantees would have been implemented through later actions and a Development Agreement.	Withdrawn before election; no continuing municipal legal obligation identified.
Housing funding	\$400 million proposed for Solano Homes for All.	No equivalent project-specific affordable-housing total identified in the reviewed pre-decision municipal record.

Dimension	Proposed 2024 initiative	June 2025 pre-decision record
Beneficiaries	Downpayment assistance for Solano County families purchasing in the proposed community; support for low-, very-low-, extremely-low-income, and special-needs households.	No complete project-specific beneficiary allocation identified.
Possible tools	Downpayment grants or loans, gap financing, land donations, community land trusts, and similar methods.	No complete project-specific housing delivery package identified.
Funding schedule	Proposed contributions linked to buildout and certificates of occupancy.	Reimbursement agreement contained cost-reimbursement and early-public-benefit milestones, but not a housing-specific contribution schedule.
Reporting and enforcement	Proposed annual reporting, Development Agreement enforcement, and obligations binding successors and assigns.	City discretion and reimbursement mechanics were specified; housing-specific reporting, duration, and remedies remained unresolved.

Note. Sources: California Forever (2024, PDF pp. 3, 6-11); Sramek (2024, PDF p. 1); City of Suisun City and California Forever LP (2025, PDF pp. 3-10). 'No equivalent identified' means none was located in the reviewed pre-decision record; it does not establish permanent abandonment.

Table 3. Selected Suisun City Housing Conditions

Measure	Documented result	Interpretive boundary	Exact locator
Sixth-cycle RHNA	620 units total	160 very low; 95 low; 98 moderate; 267 above moderate	Housing Element PDF p. 59; printed p. 52
Occupied households	9,320	2015-2019 source period used in the regional needs assessment	Housing Element PDF pp. 264-265; printed Appendix 2 pp. 2-27-2-28
Households paying more than 30%	3,135 households; 33.6% of all households	Includes renters and owners across income categories	Housing Element PDF pp. 264-265; printed Appendix 2 pp. 2-27-2-28
Lower-income households paying more than 30%	2,165 households; 23.2% of all households	Income at 0%-80% of HAMFI	Housing Element PDF pp. 264-265; printed Appendix 2 pp. 2-27-2-28
Lower-income households paying more than 50%	1,275 households; 13.7% of all households	Severe overpayment measure used in the Housing Element	Housing Element PDF pp. 264-265; printed Appendix 2 pp. 2-27-2-28
Stakeholder concerns	Shortage of affordable and accessible options; displacement and homelessness concerns; voucher-administration capacity	Stakeholder consultation summary, not a statistically representative June 2025 opinion survey	Housing Element PDF pp. 14-15; printed pp. 7-8

Note. Source: City of Suisun City (2023). RHNA is a planning allocation, not a project-specific production requirement. Cost-burden figures reflect the source periods and definitions in the Housing Element and should not be represented as June 2025 point estimates.

Table 4. *Municipal Capacity and Review Mechanics*

Capacity or mechanism	Documented evidence	What it establishes	Exact locator
Projected General Fund shortfall	\$1.3 million with reimbursement agreement; \$1.8 million without	City Manager's FY 2025-2026 budget projection	Budget memo PDF pp. 47, 49
Staffing	Most departments at 75% or less of benchmark staffing	Capacity constraint; not a department-by-department workload study	Budget memo PDF pp. 47, 49
Review-cost responsibility	Developer reimburses specified City staff, consultant, legal, environmental, planning, and outreach costs	Funds project review; does not fund a housing program	Agreement PDF pp. 3, 6-8
Initial deposit	\$400,000, with additional advances for projected 90-day needs	City may stop work if an additional advance is not timely provided	Agreement PDF pp. 7-8
Documentation	Quarterly budget/schedule updates; monthly consultant invoices and staff-time documentation	Accountability model for review expenses, not housing performance	Agreement PDF p. 8
Governmental discretion	City retains independent judgment and discretion to approve, deny, or condition later actions	Reimbursement does not equal project approval	Agreement PDF pp. 3-4, 9-10

Note. Sources: Prebula (2025); City of Suisun City and California Forever LP (2025). Budget projections and agreement mechanics establish the City's pre-decision fiscal and administrative context; they do not establish the project's eventual fiscal outcome.

Table 5. *Implementation and Contractual Mechanisms for Student Evaluation*

Design question	What students must specify	Pre-cutoff evidence	Still unresolved
Defined financial obligation	Specified amount, floor, formula, or range	2024 initiative proposed \$400 million; June agreement uses defined deposits and milestone payments	Economically supported housing obligation
Beneficiary rules	Income, tenure, special-needs, and geographic eligibility	2024 initiative named categories but deferred final allocation and eligibility design	Final mix and any legally permissible preferences
Delivery responsibility	Entity responsible for underwriting, development, stewardship, or compliance	Possible tools were named, but no final housing administrator was identified	Capacity, authority, cost, and partner commitments
Milestones and triggers	Dates, approvals, certificates of occupancy, financial close, or unit delivery	2024 initiative linked contributions to buildout; June agreement uses deposits and approval milestones	Housing-specific trigger sequence and verification
Reporting	Public schedule, performance data, independent verification, and record access	2024 initiative proposed annual reporting; June agreement requires recurring cost documentation	Housing metrics, frequency, and responsible verifier
Duration and stewardship	Affordability period, resale controls, rental covenants, and successor obligations	2024 initiative proposed Development Agreement and successor obligations	Program-specific duration and long-term steward
Default and remedies	Notice, cure period, suspension, payment, security, reallocation, or other remedy	June agreement permits work stoppage for unpaid advances and contains dispute procedures	Housing-specific default, remedy, and enforcement authority

Note. Sources: California Forever (2024, PDF pp. 3, 6-11); City of Suisun City and California Forever LP (2025, PDF pp. 4-10). The table identifies decision dimensions, not findings of legal sufficiency, financial feasibility, or preference.

Elena's Unresolved Decision

At 11:42 a.m., Elena reviewed the record. The earlier initiative offered specificity but no continuing legal force. The municipal agreement funded review and preserved City discretion but did not resolve affordable housing. Local evidence showed need and cost burden; the budget record showed capacity limits. Every option required tradeoffs.

With eighteen minutes remaining, Elena had to recommend continuity, a Suisun-specific redesign, phased performance gates, or a carefully justified hybrid. She also had to specify what would become measurable now, what could remain contingent, what evidence was required before finalization, who would administer the obligations, and how the City would prevent delay.

Decision question: What negotiating principles should Elena recommend now, and what should remain contingent on later financial, legal, development, and implementation evidence?

Student Preparation Questions

1. What does the June 10 evidence record establish, and what remains unknown?
2. Which 2024 provisions, if any, should serve as negotiating benchmarks rather than continuing obligations?
3. Which alternative best manages anchoring, commitment erosion, administrative complexity, and delay?
4. What should be fixed now, and what may legitimately remain conditional?
5. What evidence, responsible parties, milestones, reporting, and remedies are required?
6. What is the strongest counterargument to the preferred alternative?

Decision Memorandum. Prepare a 1,500-2,000-word memorandum recommending one alternative or a justified hybrid. Use only the case record; distinguish facts, assumptions, and proposals. Address beneficiaries, financing, implementation, duration, milestones, reporting, modification, default, remedies, counterargument, missing evidence, and decision rules.

References

- California Forever. (2024, February 14). *East Solano Homes, Jobs, and Clean Energy Initiative* [Proposed county initiative]. <https://content.solanocounty.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/East%20Solano%20Plan%20-%20A%20-%20Initiative%20East%20Solano%20Plan.pdf>
- City of Suisun City. (2023, March). 2023-2031 *Housing Element*. <https://hcdpowerbi.blob.core.windows.net/housing-elements/SuisunCity-6th-Adopted-032323.pdf>
- City of Suisun City. (2025, June 9). *Additional information for the June 10, 2025 Suisun City Council meeting: Agenda Item 3, California Forever reimbursement agreement*. <https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/suisuncityca/26a4dd17-4588-11f0-b7f5-005056a89546-f2d5af20-22d2-4467-894e-6aecd5a4307-1749514795.pdf>
- City of Suisun City, & California Forever LP. (2025, June). *Reimbursement agreement* [Pre-decision agreement text]. https://www.suisun.com/files/sharedassets/suisuncity/v/1/departments/city-manager/cf/reimbursement-agreement_2.pdf
- Prebula, B. (2025, May 13). *Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget strategy framework: Balancing sustainability, community impact, and strategic planning* [Memorandum to the mayor and city council]. City of Suisun City. <https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/suisuncityca/f56b22cd-1be1-11f0-955d-005056a89546-5360f717-96cd-4307-943a-c7dc7bb46276-1746666427.pdf>
- Sramek, J. (2024, July 22). *Withdrawal of proposed initiative to be submitted to voters* [Letter to the Solano County Assistant Registrar of Voters]. <https://content.solanocounty.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/CA%20Forever%20Initiative%20Withdrawal%20Letter-07222024.pdf>

PART II: TEACHING NOTE

For instructor use only | Do not distribute before the case discussion

Companion to the student-facing decision case

Evidence cutoff for the student record: June 10, 2025

From Initiative to Municipal Review: Affordable Housing Commitments Across a Changing Approval Pathway

Purpose and Use

This Teaching Note supports the decision-based academic case in which Elena Torres, a fictional municipal adviser, must recommend affordable-housing negotiating principles as a proposed development moves from a withdrawn countywide initiative into a municipal review pathway. The instructor's task is to preserve the decision's uncertainty. Students should receive facts, exhibits, alternatives, and the unresolved recommendation; instructors receive the theory, model analysis, teaching sequence, anticipated responses, assessment guidance, and debrief contained here.

The case is not designed to produce agreement about California Forever or a single preferred housing package. It is designed to test whether students can distinguish legal force from institutional influence, analyze a decision with incomplete evidence, compare materially different implementation strategies, and convert broad public commitments into measurable and administratively credible negotiating principles.

Case Synopsis

In February 2024, the East Solano Homes, Jobs, and Clean Energy Initiative proposed a \$400 million Solano Homes for All framework. The proposal identified beneficiary groups, possible housing tools, development-linked funding, reporting, and eventual Development Agreement protections. The proponent withdrew the initiative in July 2024, so those provisions did not become voter-approved obligations. By June 10, 2025, Suisun City was considering a reimbursement agreement for a City-led review process involving possible annexation, environmental review, and future entitlements.

The agreement funded review and preserved City discretion, but the reviewed pre-decision record contained no equivalent completed project-specific affordable-housing package. Elena must choose among three strategies: use the earlier framework as a continuity benchmark, build a Suisun-specific framework after additional analysis, or secure early minimums while deferring selected elements through measurable performance gates. A carefully justified hybrid is permitted. Students must decide what should be measurable now, what may remain contingent, what evidence is still required, who would administer the resulting obligations, and how accountability would be enforced.

Pedagogical Contribution

The case joins historical institutionalism with affordable-housing implementation. It asks students to examine what happens to a prior commitment when the legal pathway that contained it disappears but its substantive content remains visible to later actors. The teaching contribution is the disciplined separation of three questions: whether an earlier proposal remains legally binding, whether it still influences expectations or bargaining, and whether its provisions should be reconstructed as new municipal obligations.

The case also teaches evidence-bounded decision design. Students do not have enough information to calculate one correct housing amount or complete program. They must identify which gaps prevent final specification and which uncertainties can be managed through

floors, formulas, ranges, milestones, verification rules, or later decision gates. This moves the discussion from advocacy to institutional design.

Audience Course Placement and Prerequisites

Table 1. *Audience, Course Placement, and Prerequisites*

Element	Recommended use
Primary audience	Graduate or advanced undergraduate students in public administration, business, real estate development, urban planning, housing policy, public policy, or nonprofit/community development.
Course settings	Housing policy; land-use and development; public-private partnerships; business and public ethics; strategy; implementation; local government; case analysis.
Prerequisites	Basic familiarity with local-government decision processes, development agreements, affordable-housing terminology, and the distinction between policy goals and enforceable obligations.
Student preparation	Read the case and five exhibits. Answer the six preparation questions. Select a preliminary alternative before class.
Instructor preparation	Read the full case and this note; decide whether students will receive the AHIAF worksheet; prepare the board map; preserve the June 10 cutoff during discussion.
Delivery formats	50-minute compressed, 80-minute standard, or 90-minute extended session; optional written memorandum.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the case, students should be able to:

1. Differentiate the legal status of a withdrawn proposal from its possible political, negotiating, and institutional influence in a later governmental process.
2. Evaluate verified evidence, unresolved facts, assumptions, and implementation uncertainty without inventing unsupported numerical precision.
3. Compare continuity-first, Suisun-specific, phased-performance, and carefully justified hybrid strategies using benefits, risks, evidence requirements, and administrative consequences.
4. Design defensible negotiating principles that identify beneficiaries, obligations, responsible entities, milestones, reporting, modification conditions, default, and remedies.

Evidence Record and Boundaries

The student record closes immediately before the 6:30 p.m. Suisun City Council meeting on June 10, 2025. The case permits students to use the 2024 initiative, the July 2024 withdrawal, Suisun City's Housing Element, the May 2025 budget memorandum, the June 2025 reimbursement agreement, and the June 10 agenda materials identified in the student manuscript. Later applications, environmental-review documents, surveys, consultant studies, decisions, and outcomes must not be used to improve a student's ex ante recommendation.

Elena Torres, her internal advisory role, and her noon deadline are disclosed teaching constructions. No private deliberation or quotation is attributed to an actual official. The author positionality disclosure in the student manuscript should remain visible. Instructors should reinforce the distinction among verified public evidence, applicant proposals, governmental findings, teaching constructions, and student recommendations.

Table 2. *Evidence Categories and Discussion Treatment*

Evidence category	How to treat it in discussion
Verified documentary fact	Use as established within the cutoff, subject to the exact source and locator shown in the case.
Applicant proposal	Treat as a proposed commitment or representation, not as an approved obligation or governmental finding.
City record	Treat as evidence of the City's documented process, housing conditions, projections, or agreement terms; do not extend beyond the document.
Teaching construction	Use only to frame the decision. Do not present Elena or the noon deadline as historical fact.
Inference	Require students to state the inferential step and identify evidence that would strengthen or weaken it.
Unknown	Do not fill with later information. Ask whether the uncertainty prevents a decision or can be managed through the recommendation's structure.

Theoretical Foundation

Historical Institutionalism

Historical institutionalism directs attention to timing, sequence, institutional arrangements, and the ways earlier choices shape later possibilities. Institutions do not merely constrain actors through formal law; they also structure expectations, distribute authority, establish procedures, and make some options easier to defend than others (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Thelen, 1999). In this case, the relevant sequence is the creation of a detailed initiative-based housing framework, its withdrawal, and the later emergence of a municipal review process.

Path Dependence

Path dependence does not mean that the past automatically controls the present. A defensible path-dependent explanation identifies a mechanism through which an earlier event changes the relative cost, legitimacy, availability, or attractiveness of later choices. Increasing returns, coordination effects, learning, sunk investments, and expectation formation are among the mechanisms discussed in the literature (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2000). Students should therefore be asked what continuing mechanism, if any, connects the 2024 framework to the 2025 municipal decision.

The earlier \$400 million proposal is not a continuing municipal legal obligation in the case record. It may still operate as a political expectation, public accountability benchmark, negotiating anchor, informational template, or source of reputational cost. Those possibilities are hypotheses to test, not conclusions to supply. Students may conclude that the transition represents a near reset if they can explain why no meaningful mechanism carries forward.

Institutional Change

The transition can also be analyzed through concepts of gradual institutional change. Displacement replaces an earlier arrangement; layering adds new elements alongside existing structures; drift occurs when formal arrangements remain while surrounding conditions change; conversion redirects an institution toward a different purpose; and exhaustion describes gradual breakdown (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Streeck & Thelen, 2005). The case does not require one classification. The point is to make students specify what changed, what remained, and who has authority to reconstruct obligations in the new pathway.

Table 3. *Institutional Change Concepts for Case Analysis*

Concept	Case question	Caution
Displacement	Did withdrawal end the operative framework and replace it with a distinct municipal process?	Legal discontinuity does not by itself prove that all political or negotiating influence disappeared.
Layering	Could selected 2024 commitments be added to the municipal process as newly negotiated terms?	New municipal terms would require new authority and agreement; they are not inherited automatically.
Drift	Did earlier specificity lose force as the governing context changed?	Drift normally concerns rules that remain formally in place; use cautiously because the initiative was withdrawn.
Conversion	Could earlier ideas be redirected into different municipal tools or beneficiaries?	Reusing an idea is not the same as preserving the original institutional arrangement.
Reset	Is the 2025 pathway sufficiently distinct that local evidence should control from the beginning?	A reset claim should still address public expectations created by the earlier proposal.

Theory Guardrails

- Do not state that the case proves path dependence. Ask students to identify the mechanism and evidence.
- Do not equate historical visibility with legal enforceability.
- Do not assume that continuity is normatively superior to redesign.
- Do not use institutional-change labels as substitutes for analyzing beneficiaries, money, authority, capacity, monitoring, and remedies.
- Allow a student to reject a path-dependent interpretation if the rejection is evidence-based and mechanism-specific.

Affordable Housing Implementation Alignment Framework

The Affordable Housing Implementation Alignment Framework (AHIAF) is an author-developed instructional diagnostic. It is not an empirically validated theory, legal test, governmental standard, financial underwriting model, or scoring system. Historical institutionalism and path dependence provide the scholarly foundation; AHIAF helps students organize implementation questions after they have established the evidence boundary and institutional sequence.

AHIAF asks students to classify each alternative as Aligned, Partially Aligned, Misaligned, or Indeterminate across five dimensions. No combined score should be calculated. A severe enforceability or feasibility weakness may matter more than several moderate strengths, and the evidence may be insufficient for a rating.

Table 4. *Affordable Housing Implementation Alignment Framework Dimensions*

AHIAF dimension	Instructor focus
Housing need and equity	Who benefits, which housing problem is addressed, and what distributional effects or exclusions require attention?
Financial viability and leverage	What is committed, what is merely possible, and what evidence supports the amount, timing, financing, or leverage assumption?
Development and implementation capacity	Which entity performs underwriting, development, stewardship, compliance, or reporting, and does it have the capacity?
Governmental and regulatory enforceability	What authority, instrument, trigger, verification rule, default, cure, and remedy would make performance measurable?
Community legitimacy and accountability	How are priorities, reporting, transparency, and public verification addressed without inventing consensus?

Student Preparation Questions

1. What is established by the June 10 evidence record, and what remains unknown?
2. Which parts of the proposed 2024 framework, if any, should function as negotiating benchmarks rather than continuing obligations?
3. Which alternative best manages the risks of anchoring, commitment erosion, administrative complexity, and delay?
4. What should be fixed at the outset, and what may legitimately remain conditional?
5. What evidence, responsible entities, milestones, reporting requirements, and remedies would the recommendation require?
6. What is the strongest argument against the preferred alternative?

Standard 80 Minute Teaching Plan

Table 5. *Standard 80-Minute Teaching Plan*

Time	Activity	Purpose	Objectives
0-10 min.	Initial vote and strongest reason	Capture the pre-analysis position	3
10-25 min.	Known versus unknown	Establish the evidence boundary	1, 2
25-40 min.	Historical institutionalism and path dependence	Test whether prior commitments retain influence after pathway change	1, 2
40-60 min.	Compare the three alternatives	Defend benefits, risks, evidence gaps, and implementation consequences	2, 3
60-70 min.	Build negotiating principles	Separate what should be fixed now from what may be deferred	3, 4
70-80 min.	Final vote and debrief	Reassess the decision and identify what changed	1-4

Opening and Initial Decision 0 to 10 Minutes

Begin with the decision. Do not lecture on path dependence first.

You are advising Elena Torres on June 10, 2025. Before we discuss the analysis, choose Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3, or a carefully justified hybrid. What should Elena recommend, and what is your strongest reason?

Record the initial distribution visibly. Ask what evidence most influenced the choice, what risk the student is prioritizing, what assumption is being made, and what evidence could change the position. Do not signal a preferred answer.

Known Versus Unknown 10 to 25 Minutes

What can Elena establish from the record, and what would she be inventing if she claimed certainty?

Table 6. *Known Versus Unknown at the Evidence Cutoff*

Known by the cutoff	Unknown at the cutoff
The earlier initiative proposed a \$400 million housing framework.	Final project economics and a validated total housing obligation.
The initiative was withdrawn and did not create continuing municipal obligations.	Final beneficiary mix and legally permissible preferences.
The municipal pathway is institutionally and legally different.	Final allocation among ownership, rental, land, financing, or other tools.
The reviewed municipal record did not contain an equivalent complete housing package.	Delivery partners and confirmed organizational capacity.

Known by the cutoff	Unknown at the cutoff
City fiscal and staffing capacity is relevant.	Affordability periods, modification rules, and complete enforcement architecture.
Later Development Agreement negotiations were anticipated.	Whether outside financing or leverage will be secured.

If students say there is not enough information to decide, ask which missing fact prevents a recommendation and which uncertainty can be managed through a floor, formula, range, benchmark, milestone, or decision rule.

Theory Application 25 to 40 Minutes

After the evidence boundary is clear, give a concise theory explanation: historical institutionalism examines how prior arrangements and sequences shape later choices; path dependence requires a mechanism, not merely chronological order.

When the 2024 initiative was withdrawn, what disappeared: its legal force, its institutional influence, or both?

- Is the \$400 million proposal a legal obligation?
- Could it still function as a political expectation or negotiating benchmark?
- What evidence would demonstrate continuing institutional influence?
- At what point does using the earlier framework become inappropriate anchoring?
- Does the transition look more like displacement, layering, conversion, drift, or a reset? Why?

Alternative Comparison 40 to 60 Minutes

Use three columns and require the same five questions for every alternative: strongest benefit, most serious risk, supporting evidence, additional evidence needed, and administrative responsibilities created. Equal structure prevents the phased option from becoming an automatic compromise.

Table 7. Alternative Comparison Pressure Questions

Alternative	Pressure question
1 Continuity First	When does accountability become anchoring? Why should a withdrawn countywide framework constrain a later municipal process?
2 Suisun Specific	How do you distinguish evidence-based redesign from commitment erosion? What prevents further study from becoming indefinite delay?
3 Phased Performance Gates	When does flexibility become postponement? Who verifies the gates, and what happens when the parties disagree?

Negotiating Principles 60 to 70 Minutes

What must be measurable now, and what can legitimately remain uncertain?

Table 8. Negotiating Principles and Evidence Requirements

Fix now	Defer conditionally	Evidence required before finalization
Beneficiary principles; minimum accountability requirements; obligation structure; reporting expectations; requirement for measurable enforcement.	Final total amount; detailed allocation; delivery partners; final phasing; financing mix; program-specific duration where evidence is incomplete.	Project economics; local housing analysis; legal feasibility; implementation capacity; financing availability; administrative burden; partner commitments.

Require students to identify the instrument, responsible party, trigger, verifier, deadline, cure process, and remedy for any proposed obligation. A recommendation that names only a goal is incomplete.

Final Vote and Debrief 70 to 80 Minutes

Repeat the initial vote. Ask who changed positions and whether the change resulted from a fact, theoretical mechanism, implementation concern, or counterargument. Ask each student to identify the strongest argument against the final position.

The central insight is not that an earlier commitment automatically survives or disappears when an institutional pathway changes. The pathway change alters the legal, political, administrative, and contractual mechanisms through which the commitment may continue, weaken, or be redesigned.

Discussion Management

Table 9. *Discussion Management Responses*

Problem	Instructor response
Students treat \$400 million as binding	Ask which source establishes a continuing municipal legal obligation. Write: legal force is not the same as institutional significance.
Students dismiss the earlier framework	Ask whether loss of legal force necessarily eliminates relevance to bargaining, expectations, or public accountability.
Students debate whether the development is good or bad	Redirect: Assume municipal review proceeds. What should Elena recommend about affordable-housing negotiating principles?
Students invent precise economics	Ask which exhibit supports the number. If none does, require a range, floor, formula, benchmark, or decision rule.
Students equate complexity with strength	Ask who administers the term, how performance is verified, and what occurs after noncompliance.
Students say more study solves everything	Require a deadline, decision owner, required evidence, and consequence if the evidence is not produced.

If the Class Becomes Unbalanced

- If most students favor Alternative 3, assume limited monitoring capacity and expensive performance disputes. Require students to defend Alternative 1 or 2.
- If most favor Alternative 1, require evidence that the former amount remains economically appropriate and ask students to identify the anchoring risk.
- If most favor Alternative 2, ask what prevents redesign from reducing specificity or enforceability before a replacement exists.
- If discussion is silent, require each student to choose the worst risk: locking in too early, waiting too long, or creating a structure the City cannot monitor.

Compressed and Extended Formats

50 Minute Version

Table 10. *Compressed 50-Minute Teaching Plan*

Time	Activity
0-5 min.	Initial vote
5-15 min.	Known versus unknown
15-23 min.	Historical institutionalism and path dependence

Time	Activity
23-38 min.	Three-alternative comparison
38-45 min.	Negotiating principles
45-50 min.	Final vote and debrief

Omit full AHIAF completion, detailed institutional-change typology, extensive financial-mechanism discussion, and extended small-group work. Assign AHIAF before or after class if used.

90 Minute Version

Use the additional ten minutes for small-group advocacy and self-critique. Group 1 develops the strongest Alternative 1 case; Group 2 develops Alternative 2; Group 3 develops Alternative 3. Allow five minutes to prepare and two minutes per group to present. Each group must then identify the most damaging counterargument against its own position.

Board Map

Table 11. *Board Map*

Known	Unknown	Options	Fix now	Defer with conditions
2024 proposal; withdrawal; City record; capacity evidence	Economics; final amount; partners; duration; complete enforcement	Continuity; Suisun-specific; phased; justified hybrid	Principles; floor or rule; reporting; accountability; evidence duties	Allocation; partners; financing; later amount; detailed phasing

Keep the board visible through the final vote. When students add a claim, place it in the correct column rather than allowing an inference to migrate into the known-evidence column.

Instructor Analysis

Evidence and Institutional Sequence

A strong analysis begins by recognizing both discontinuity and legacy. Withdrawal ended the initiative pathway and its proposed legal protections. The municipal process required new governmental action and retained City discretion. At the same time, the earlier framework supplied a visible, quantified, and comparatively detailed reference point. The decisive analytical question is whether that reference point should constrain later negotiation, inform it without controlling it, or be replaced after local analysis.

The record supports neither the statement that California Forever permanently abandoned every earlier housing concept nor the statement that Suisun City inherited the \$400 million proposal. The defensible formulation is narrower: no equivalent complete project-specific housing package was identified in the reviewed pre-decision municipal record by the cutoff. Students should preserve that evidentiary boundary.

Alternative 1 Continuity First

The strongest continuity argument is accountability, not inherited legal force. The earlier proposal gives the City an observable baseline and reduces the chance that specificity disappears while negotiations move forward. A high-quality recommendation may reconstruct selected provisions as new municipal negotiating minimums, subject to legal and economic validation.

Its main weakness is anchoring. The \$400 million amount and countywide design arose in another jurisdictional and political context. A student who chooses continuity should

explain which elements are preserved, why each remains relevant to Suisun, and what evidence could justify modification. Simply repeating the earlier proposal is insufficient.

Alternative 2 Suisun Specific

The strongest redesign argument is local fit. The Housing Element, project economics, municipal capacity, available financing, and implementation partners may support a different mix of rental, ownership, land, assistance, or other tools. A high-quality response establishes an evidence plan, deadline, accountability floor, and replacement standard rather than leaving affordable housing entirely open.

Its main weakness is erosion through process. If the earlier benchmark is discarded before an equally measurable substitute exists, additional study may produce indefinite delay or broad language without beneficiaries, amount, duration, or enforcement. A student who selects redesign must specify how the City prevents that result.

Alternative 3 Phased Performance Gates

The strongest phased argument is adaptive durability. It can secure minimum obligations while allowing later allocations or contributions to respond to verified economics and implementation evidence. A high-quality response identifies the minimum floor and fully designs each gate: trigger, obligation, deadline, verifier, default, cure, and remedy.

Its main weakness is administrative complexity. Gates can create disputes, transaction costs, metric gaming, renegotiation, and repeated deferral. The student must demonstrate that the City or a designated administrator can monitor the structure and that the remedy is both lawful and operationally credible.

Carefully Justified Hybrid

A hybrid is not automatically superior. It earns support only if the student explains which elements come from each strategy, why the combination solves a specific problem, and how contradictory features are reconciled. An answer that selects the attractive parts of every option without addressing cost, authority, capacity, or enforcement is not a defensible hybrid.

No Preferred Answer

Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3, or a carefully justified hybrid can receive the highest evaluation. The selected option carries no independent points. Quality depends on evidence discipline, theoretical coherence, comparison of credible alternatives, implementation feasibility, accountability, uncertainty management, and engagement with the strongest counterargument.

Anticipated Student Responses

Table 12. *Anticipated Student Responses*

Response pattern	What is promising	What to probe
Preserve the full \$400 million benchmark	Recognizes visibility and accountability value.	Economic basis, local fit, allocation, legal instrument, and modification standard.
Start from Suisun's RHNA and Housing Element	Uses local evidence and differentiates housing needs.	RHNA is not a project-specific obligation; require project economics and an anti-delay safeguard.
Use a minimum floor plus later gates	Manages uncertainty while preserving an early commitment.	Who verifies each gate, what deadline applies, and what remedy follows nonperformance?
Delay all substance until environmental review	Avoids premature precision.	What prevents commitment erosion, and what evidence or process obligations should be fixed now?

Response pattern	What is promising	What to probe
Use community engagement to set allocations	Recognizes legitimacy and accountability.	Community input does not replace underwriting, legal authority, representative evidence, or implementation capacity.
Rely on public subsidy to leverage funds	Recognizes layered housing finance.	No award can be presumed. Distinguish committed funds from competitive or contingent financing.

Optional Decision Memorandum

Assign a 1,500-2,000-word memorandum recommending Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3, or a carefully justified hybrid. Students must use only the case record and distinguish documented facts from assumptions and proposed terms. The memorandum should address beneficiaries, financial structure, eligible interventions, responsible implementation organizations, affordability definitions and duration, milestones, monitoring, public reporting, modification or reallocation conditions, default, remedies, and the strongest counterargument. When the record cannot support numerical precision, students should identify the missing evidence and propose a decision rule rather than inventing a figure.

Assessment Rubric

Table 13. *Assessment Rubric*

Criterion	Weight	Exemplary	Competent	Developing
Use of evidence	25	Accurate use; separates fact, inference, and unknown; avoids unsupported precision.	Relevant evidence with minor gaps or limited uncertainty treatment.	General assertions, material misstatements, or invented facts or precision.
Historical institutionalism and path dependence	20	Distinguishes legal status from institutional influence and specifies a mechanism.	Generally accurate theory use but limited mechanism or incomplete distinction.	Superficial, incorrect, or absent theory application.
Alternative comparison and uncertainty	20	Fair comparison; explicit assumptions, risks, missing evidence, and conditional reasoning.	Compares options but treats risks or uncertainty unevenly.	Treats one option as obvious or ignores credible alternatives and missing evidence.
Implementation feasibility and accountability	15	Addresses obligations, beneficiaries, responsibility, monitoring, enforcement, and capacity.	Addresses most implementation issues but leaves important gaps.	Aspirational recommendation without workable implementation or accountability.
Recommendation and counterargument	15	Coherent recommendation; separates fixed and deferred matters; answers strongest objection.	Generally supported but vague on timing, conditions, or counterargument.	Weakly supported, inconsistent, or avoids serious counterargument.
Professional communication	5	Organized, concise, readable decision memorandum.	Generally clear with limited organizational or stylistic weaknesses.	Difficult to follow or not presented as a professional memorandum.

Alternative-neutral grading rule. The rubric evaluates the quality of reasoning, not agreement with an instructor preference. A student supporting any approved alternative may earn full credit if the recommendation is evidence-based, theoretically coherent, administratively feasible, and responsive to uncertainty and counterargument.

Missing-evidence rule. Students should not be penalized for declining unsupported numerical precision. Identifying missing evidence, explaining why it matters, and proposing a suitable decision rule may demonstrate stronger analysis than supplying an unjustified figure.

Model Response Architecture

A high-performing memorandum should contain six moves. It need not reach the same substantive conclusion as another high-performing response.

1. State the recommendation and identify whether it is continuity-first, Suisun-specific, phased, or hybrid.
2. Define the evidence boundary and separate verified facts from assumptions and unknowns.
3. Explain whether the earlier framework retains institutional influence and identify the mechanism, while acknowledging the absence of continuing legal force.
4. Compare all credible alternatives using benefits, risks, evidence requirements, and administrative consequences.
5. Specify what is fixed now and what is deferred, including responsible parties, milestones, verification, reporting, modification standards, default, cure, and remedies.
6. Address the strongest counterargument and identify the fact most likely to change the recommendation.

Instructor Only Epilogue

After the June 10 cutoff, later public records expanded the available project record, including formal application materials and environmental-review documents. These materials must remain withheld until students complete the decision exercise. They should not be used to judge whether an ex ante recommendation was correct with hindsight. If an instructor uses a post-case update, the discussion should focus on which earlier uncertainties were later clarified, which remained unresolved, and whether the student's proposed evidence or decision rules would have handled the new information.

The epilogue is optional. The core case is complete without it. Any post-case discussion should use current official records and should be separately dated because the project and governmental process may continue to change.

Alignment Check

Table 14. *Alignment Check*

Learning objective	Case evidence	Class activity	Assessment criterion
1 Legal status and institutional influence	Chronology; framework comparison	Known/unknown; theory application	Historical institutionalism and path dependence
2 Evidence and uncertainty	All five exhibits	Evidence boundary; pressure questions	Use of evidence; alternative comparison
3 Compare strategies	Alternatives; capacity and mechanism exhibits	Three-column comparison; final vote	Alternative comparison; recommendation
4 Design negotiating principles	Implementation-mechanism exhibit	Fix now/defer; decision memorandum	Implementation feasibility; communication

Instructor Source Locator Sheet

Table 15. Instructor Source Locator Sheet

Topic	Student case location	Primary locator
2024 housing framework	Narrative; Tables 1, 2, and 5	California Forever (2024), PDF pp. 3 and 6-11
Initiative withdrawal	Narrative; Tables 1 and 2	Sramek (2024), PDF p. 1
Housing conditions	Table 3	City of Suisun City (2023), PDF pp. 14-15, 59, and 264-265; printed pp. 7-8, 52, and Appendix 2 pp. 2-27-2-28
Fiscal and staffing context	Narrative; Table 4	Prebula (2025), PDF pp. 47 and 49
Review mechanics and City discretion	Narrative; Tables 1, 2, 4, and 5	City of Suisun City and California Forever LP (2025), PDF pp. 1 and 3-10
June 10 meeting	Table 1	City of Suisun City (2025), agenda cover and Agenda Item 3

References

- California Forever. (2024, February 14). East Solano Homes, Jobs, and Clean Energy Initiative [Proposed county initiative]. <https://content.solanocounty.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/East%20Solano%20Plan%20-%20A%20-%20Initiative%20East%20Solano%20Plan.pdf>
- City of Suisun City. (2023, March). 2023-2031 Housing Element. <https://hcdpowerbi.blob.core.windows.net/housing-elements/SuisunCity-6th-Adopted-032323.pdf>
- City of Suisun City. (2025, June 9). Additional information for the June 10, 2025 Suisun City Council meeting: Agenda Item 3, California Forever reimbursement agreement. <https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/suisuncityca/26a4dd17-4588-11f0-b7f5-005056a89546-f2d5af20-22d2-4467-894e-6aecd5a4307-1749514795.pdf>
- City of Suisun City, & California Forever LP. (2025, June). Reimbursement agreement [Pre-decision agreement text]. https://www.suisun.com/files/sharedassets/suisuncity/v/1/departments/city-manager/cf/reimbursement-agreement_2.pdf
- Hall, P. A., & Taylor, R. C. R. (1996). Political science and the three new institutionalisms. *Political Studies*, 44(5), 936-957. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00343.x>
- Mahoney, J. (2000). Path dependence in historical sociology. *Theory and Society*, 29(4), 507-548. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007113830879>
- Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511806414>
- Pierson, P. (2000). Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of politics. *American Political Science Review*, 94(2), 251-267. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586011>
- Prebula, B. (2025, May 13). Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget strategy framework: Balancing sustainability, community impact, and strategic planning [Memorandum to the mayor and city council]. City of Suisun City. <https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/suisuncityca/f56b22cd-1be1-11f0-955d-005056a89546-5360f717-96cd-4307-943a-c7dc7bb46276-1746666427.pdf>
- Sramek, J. (2024, July 22). Withdrawal of proposed initiative to be submitted to voters [Letter to the Solano County Assistant Registrar of Voters]. <https://content.solanocounty.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/CA%20Forever%20Initiative%20Withdrawal%20Letter-07222024.pdf>
- Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2005). *Beyond continuity: Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199280452.001.0001>
- Thelen, K. (1999). Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2, 369-404. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369>

Appendix AHIAF Student Worksheet

Students may use this blank worksheet after establishing the known-versus-unknown evidence boundary. Ratings are Aligned, Partially Aligned, Misaligned, or Indeterminate. No numerical total should be calculated.

Table 16. *AHIAF Student Worksheet*

Dimension	Continuity First	Suisun Specific	Phased Gates	Evidence and reason
Housing need and equity				
Financial viability and leverage				
Development and implementation capacity				
Governmental and regulatory enforceability				
Community legitimacy and accountability				