

City of San Mateo Housing Element Intercept Survey Results

October 16, 2021 – December 21, 2021



The results of an “Housing Element Update Intercept Survey” conducted by City of San Mateo staff and they City’s consultants and community partners during the Fall of 2021 are presented here. 156 surveys were completed in person by community members. Intercept locations were selected in consultation with community outreach partners at Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, following City Council direction to proactively reach out to communities not traditionally well represented in online surveys. These included:

- Harvest Festival at King Park, Saturday, October 16: 93 Responses
- Central Park Storytime in the park, Wednesday, October 27: 4 Responses
- Mi Rancho Market in North Central, Friday, October 29: 26 Responses
- Chavez Market in Shoreview, Thursday, November 18: 25 Responses
- Macedonia Food Distribution, Various Tuesdays October to December: 8 Responses

Please note that multiple choice subject-related questions (questions 5 and 7) are present first, followed by open ended questions (questions 6 and 8), and demographic responses (questions 1-4) are included at the end of this document. 39 email addresses were collected in response to Question 8 and were added to the City’s project mailing list. The individual email addresses have been removed from these published survey results.

Question 5: Given that there is limited land available, what do you think are best strategies to manage production of new housing? (Please select up to three)

Summary: To manage the production of housing overall, there was notable interest in in redeveloping existing properties that have potential for more housing (45%), creating accessory units on existing single-family properties (22%), and encouraging mixed-use projects that have both commercial and residential uses (21%). The twelve individual responses are included below. They ranged from “redevelop around 280” to “create jobs outside of Bay Area.”

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Redeveloping existing properties that have potential for more housing.	70	45%
Create accessory units on existing single-family properties.	35	22%
Convert existing single-family houses into duplexes.	25	16%
Increase the allowable density in areas that are close to transit	27	17%
Encourage mixed-use projects that have both commercial and residential uses	33	21%
Allow taller developments if they include open space	25	16%
Other	13	8%

Individual Responses for other:

- ADU Building Plan
- More Golf Courses
- create housing for people who don't have a place to live (crear vivienda para personas que no tienen donde vivir)
- access to parking lower rents
- redevelop around 280
- create jobs outside of Bay Area)
- fair price (precio justo)
- stop building
- infrastructure development
- rent control
- more construction, more people, San Mateo could be a new SF (mas construccion mas gente San Mateo podra ser un nuevo SF)
- more housing means more traffic, more garbage, less parking (mas vivienda es mas trafico mas basura menos estacionamiento)

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Question 7: What do you think are the best ways to address housing affordability? (Please select up to three)

Summary: To address housing affordability, there was substantial interest in financial assistance programs for people who cannot afford housing, such as subsidized rent and down payment loans (47%), and public funding to construct new housing (26%). The eleven individual responses are included below. Some comments included: “Include up-scale neighborhoods in zoning changes” and “Always include preferences for people w/ developmental disabilities + others.”

Financial assistance programs for people who cannot afford housing, such as subsidized rent and down payment loans	73	47%
Public funding to construct new housing	41	26%
Incentives for developers to build more affordable housing	28	18%
Encourage conversion of single-family units to duplexes in single-family neighborhoods	17	11%
Financial assistance to homeowners to add accessory dwelling units	28	18%
Streamline residential approval process	14	9%
Locate affordable housing near transit and jobs	29	19%
Develop programs that help people experiencing homelessness find permanent housing	33	21%
Other	15	10%

Individual Responses for other:

- More Golf Courses
- Remove Height Limit
- Always include preferences for people w/ developmental disabilities + others
- Include up-scale neighborhoods in zoning changes
- no more big companies
- reduce interest rates for housing
- address prop owner gouging. Its shear greed. Its inherently wrong
- find another solution for companies to grow in central valley

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- they really need them (que en realidad las necesiten)
- federal level should help
- increase wages and control rents (aumentar los sueldos y controlar la renta)

Question 6: how does the current housing situation in San Mateo affect you or people you know?

Summary: 104 community members shared how the current housing situation in San Mateo is affecting them or people they know. A number of recurring themes could be extracted from these responses, including: high cost of housing in general, the cost of housing's impact on types of individuals (child care workers, adult children, older adults), inability to purchase a home due to cost, self or others moving away due to price, traffic, and difficulty commuting. Select responses include: "I have to move b/c its getting too expensive, I will move away from County to an in-law unit with relatives in Marin" and "I'm homeless, I sleep on street behind the gas station. I can't afford rent, I can hardly get food."

- Middle class families are being priced out. Our working class commutes too far
- People are losing homes because of rates going up
- Traffic is out of control on Hillsdale. Infrastructure needs to keep up with any housing increases
- Less parking, getting crowded
- Price is too high
- Impact to commute/loss of productivity
- I have family in need
- price
- the price so high
- Rent is expensive for ppl who aren't low income, but not high income
- Hard to buy their first home
- Housing is too expensive
- we are homeowners worried about traffic
- expensive
- I have friends who find it difficult to commute to school from where they live
- we live in the densest neighborhood. We don't mind the density but there are too many cars
- traffic + parking in dense areas are painful
- too expensive
- too expensive to live
- my sisters left
- feels like I will never be able to afford to own a house
- discourages people from moving here

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- not enough housing available leads to high prices
- rent increase, tough to buy a home
- childcare providers had to move away - sad for our family
- I live in a BMR
- it affects my ability to buy a home
- more affordable rent
- high rent - constant increases for friends who rent
- more el Camino traffic
- limited housing options and affordability
- rent
- young adults can't afford to live here. Limited housing for people w/ developmental and other disabilities. Housing need for extremely low income + homeless
- our friends keep moving away because of the cost of living here
- lack of local housing increases commute traffic. Homelessness is a real problem
- things are too expensive
- hard to buy or upgrade homes as it is too expensive
- multiple adults in households near me have more cars than fit in their own space
- traffic so much traffic
- crowded street parking
- we just bought a home. Many neighbors would not be able to afford living where they do if they had to buy now. I fear a progressive gentrification of the area over the years
- A friend of mine living in North Central slept on the couch for years due to lack of housing/high rents prompting overcrowding. I personal can't afford living here.
- many of our neighbors will not be able to keep their houses at their age. People who do not work for apple, google, etc cannot buy or pay taxes on property (our family works for big tech)
- people have to move away
- no space makes it hard for parking at times
- it inflates my home value artificially
- there is no affordable housing (no hay vivienda accesible)
- housing has become very expensive in San Mateo pushing families to more out of the area even out of state - working in making more affordable
- we can not afford to rent or think about buying. Way too expensive
- Getting evicted after 16 years of living here in South City
- Cost is too high (costo mul alto)

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- Housing price is too high, I had to move to Alameda (el precio de vivienda es demasiado alto tuve que moviendo a Alameda)
- housing is too expensive (vivienda muy cara)
- high cost of housing (alto de vivienda)
- high cost of housing (alto costo de vivienda)
- we had to leave San Mateo because of the high cost of housing (tuvimos que irnos de San Mateo por el alto costo de vivienda)
- paying rent (pagando renta)
- high cost of housing (alto costo de vivienda)
- having two jobs to make ends meet, sometimes you struggle to pay rent (tener dos trabajos para poder sobrevivir a veces se batalla para pagar renta)
- it's hard when one's rent is too expensive (es difícil si uno renta es muy caro)
- high cost alone (alto costo solamente)
- financially (economicamente)
- high cost of housing (alto costo de vivienda)
- paying rent (pagando renta)
- housing is too expensive (vivienda muy cara)
- had to leave San Mateo because it is too expensive (tuvo que irse de San Mateo pq muy caro)
- it's hard to get a place to live (es difícil para conseguir un lugar donde vivir)
- it's very expensive and difficult to afford an apartment (es muy caro y difícil para poder tene un apart)
- the apartment is affordable (es accesible el apartamento)
- very expensive housing, if there were affordable housing (muy cara la vivienda hubiera viviendas economicas)
- I know my children don't want to come back to live because they can't afford it
- parking - no Humbolt - no parking on the street please don't remove it (estacionamiento - no hay Humbolt - quiten esta estacionamiento en la calle por favor no lo quiten)
- expensive rent - had to move to another place, used to live here but not now (cara la renta - se tuvo que mudar a otro lugar antes vivia aqui pero ahora no)
- prices are going way too high wants to buy a house someday
- parking
- I'm homeless but I'm a Veteran & I have a Homeless Vet Voucher getting it on Nov 10th. \$2,350/mo & my portion < 200/mo
- its getting overcrowded
- personally I need housing, especially for seniors (personalmente necesito vivienda, especialmente para mayores de edad)

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- its expensive
- no one can afford it here our child can't live here w/o 2 jobs. Its too expensive takes too long to make a down payment
- leave to move (mover a mudo)
- expensive - high rent (caro - alta la renta)
- too many people, no new roads. Stop packing more people into san mateo
- yards dirty, not kept clean, smoking, people smoking and leaving trash everywhere, no clean up services (yards dirty, no mantienen limpios, fumar, people smoking and leaving trash everywhere, no services for cleaning up)
- difficulty in affordability
- very expensive houses, everything very expensive, and it's getting more and more expensive (muy caras las casas todo muy caro y cada vez mas caro)
- too crowded
- high property prices/living expenses
- everything expensive, 1 room \$1,200 - \$1,500 per month. They do not accept more than 1-2 people in the apartment. I have had to move several times. Immigrants have responsibilities in other countries – it's very hard to make ends meet. (todo caro, 1 cuarto 1200-1500 por mes. No aceptetan tener mas de 1-2 personas en el departamento. Me he tenido que mudar varias vecez. Personas inmigrantes tienen responsabilidades en orthos paises - es muy difcil "making ends meet".)
- I'm homeless, I sleep on street behind the gas station. I can't afford rent, I can hardly get food.
- too expensive - no matter what
- house value has gone up. Homeowner. has not had any negative affects related to housing
- make houses cheaper, paying is difficult, if I don't work one day, then I can't pay the rent. (hacer mas baratas las casas pagar es difcil si no trabajo un dia, entonces no puedo pagar la renta)
- the rent is too much (la renta es mucho)
- I am retired and I am going to have to move to Rosedale because I cannot afford to pay rent after 60 years of living in San Mateo. I would prefer to stay here if I could. Building more and more condos does not actually solve the ousing problem for people that live here. building more condos only helps the City collect more property taxes and makes San Mateo crowded
- I have to move b/c its getting too expensive, I will move away from County to an in-law unit with relatives in Marin. My rent went from 2600 to 2956 despite covid. The cost of housing is taking all of my savings.
- it doesn't affect me because I earn good money and my rent is comfortable (no afeta porque gono bien y elquile bien)
- very high rents (rentas muy altas)

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- friends and family have moved out of San Mateo because they can't afford to pay rent (amigos y familiares se han movido fuera de San Mateo por ne poder pagar la renta)
- hard to pay rent because it is so high (dificil pagar renta por es alta)
- families are leaving to live further away and coming back to work here, very big economic impact (families se estan saliendo a vivir mas lejos y regresan a trabajar aqui impacto economico muy grande)
- can't afford it, not enough "low income" housing if so no pets allowed
- the high cost has affected my whole family, in addition to the job loss due to COVID, it is terrible not being able to live in this city. (el alto costa ha afectado a toda mi familia, ademas de la perdida de trabajo por COVID, es terrible no poder vivir en esta ciudad)
- I moved out of my neighborhood due to high cost of housing, it impacted my family's emotional and financial well being. (me movi de vecindario por alto costo de vivienda, impacto el bienestar emocional y economico de mi familia)

Question 7: Are there any other thoughts about housing you would like to share?

Summary: 44 community members shared additional comments. Several recurring themes could be extracted from these responses, including: the high cost of housing in general, an interest in additional development to house more people, rental housing assistance, and traffic concerns. Select responses include: “We love that we have many kinds of neighbors, socio-economically. We hope that can continue,” “we should all have housing (que todos teugamos vivienda),” and “allow higher buildings (permitiendo edificios mas altos).”

- improve traffic flow through dense areas
- more golf courses
- taller buildings mean more housing without compromising single family neighborhoods
- build more
- more affordable BMRS
- build awareness about housing how to navigate services. Its confusing. Integrate behavioral developmental services w/ housing services
- more affordable housing
- housing needs to be more affordable for first time buyers + middle class families
- do not assume residents will use transit only to justify reducing requirements for parking spaces on site
- so expensive so many people in dwellings. Makes parking difficult
- affordable housing should be a priority for anything new
- we need to up-zone all neighborhoods and create a citywide affordable housing overlay
- we love that we have many kinds of neighbors, socio-economically. We hope that can continue

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- bigger = better
- more affordable housing opportunities (renters)
- thank you for helping the people who need this
- building more means more parking problems (edificando mas es mal problema de estaonamiento)
- we should all have housing (que todos teugamos vivienda)
- low income families don't have housing and others don't, and there are families that don't need it, they have affordable housing (familias de bajos recursos no tenea vivienda y otros no y hay familias que no lo necesitan tienen vivienda asequible)
- the population is growing, there should be more housing for everyone. (la poblacion esta creciendo, debe de haber vivienda mas para todos)
- more affordable rent (renta mas accesible)
- rental housing assistance is needed (se necesita ayuda para alquilar vivienda)
- too many requirements to access housing programs, not a good experience. (demasiados requisitos para access programas de vivienda no bueno experiencia)
- it needs to early childcare so kids don't grow up poor. I don't want property values to go down
- parking - biggest issue. No parking in neighborhoods
- Nothing (nada)
- some kind of legislation should be passed to limit landowners greed. These are people who inherited property - they are lucky
- no use of protective lands
- lots of construction but very expensive. Living only on retirement money and I have no affordable housing. (much construccion pero muy cara. Vivir solo con el dinero del retiro y no tengo vivienda accesible)
- my 20 year old w/a degree can't buy a house here. Traffic is crazy its too expensive
- lower the rental prices (bajar los precios de elquiler)
- offer a chance to [find?] a house and buy it. (que den una oportunidad para ogoura una casa y comprale)
- stop the building. Theres no more room.
- increase salaries, don't increase the costs (aumentar el salario, no aumentar los costos)
- more affordable housing I have two daughters who can't buy houses
- wish we can make it more affordable. Lower rent please
- make it easier for people like me to get housing
- stop building in our neighborhood where we cannot afford to pay rent - need rent control
- allow higher buildings (permitiendo edificios mas altos)

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- 2 stories are bad b/c leggs are hurt. I only need a place that is safe, close, and affordable. More density lowers price & increases safety
- increase wages and not allow landlords to charge more than the minimum wage. (aumentando los sueldos y que los propietarios no puedan cobrar mas que el salario munimo)
- maybe a way where younger generaltion can afford houses/apartments
- please help us stay in this city. (por favor, ayudamos a permanecer en esta ciudad)

Demographic data:

