



Our Community: Housing and Our Future

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Increasing housing costs are creating a challenge for many in our community. People are struggling to pay rent or make mortgage payments. Families are finding it harder to live near each other. Many worry that they will have to move away from the city that they love.

Achieving housing security for all in the community is a priority for the City of Redwood City. That is why over the past five months, the City of Redwood City has brought together a diverse group of community members to understand how housing is affecting our community and together generate new ideas for the future.

Since March, the City and various community partners have connected with over 1,000 people who live and/or work in the community. This summary shares what the City has heard about the way housing affects renters, homeowners, seniors and families, low-income residents, young people, developers and landlords. While each community member has their own specific experience, it's clear that nearly everyone in Redwood City is impacted.

As the entire state grapples with how to address California's housing challenges, the Redwood City community is helping to lead



Community members share their experiences with housing during the May 22 community conversation at Veterans Memorial Senior Center.

the way. In partnership with Home for All San Mateo County, the City embarked on a series of outreach and engagement activities, including community conversations, pop-up events and an online survey. The City's efforts have focused on listening and developing a shared understanding as a backdrop for shaping specific policies.

To reach as many community members as possible, the City also collaborated with Redwood City 2020, the Redwood City Library Foundation, Casa Círculo Cultural and an array of community-based groups including several local Latino leaders. These collaborators provided significant support,

helping to promote and co-host housing conversations.

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Community Conversation Series

Since April, the City has held three community conversations about housing, reaching roughly 220 community members:

- The first conversation, held on **April 7**, brought together 40 Spanish-speaking community members at Casa Círculo Cultural. City staff and three City Council members attended as listeners. Interpretation and headsets

were provided for English speakers.

- The second conversation, held on **April 11**, brought together over 100 attendees to the Downtown Library for an evening of dialogue in Spanish and English. The conversation featured a mix of community members, homeowners, tenants, building owners, developers and nonprofit leaders talking side by side. About half of the attendees were new to the issue of housing. Five City Council members, four members of the Housing and Human Concerns Committee and three Planning Commissioners attended.
- The City's third conversation, held on **May 22** at the Veterans Memorial Senior Center, was co-hosted by Redwood City's Housing and Human Concerns Committee (HHCC). Nearly 80 community members came together to take a closer look at specific housing options that the City is exploring. The discussion also featured information about housing services and supports provided by local community agencies. Members of the City Council, HHCC and Planning Commission participated as listeners.

Pop-Up Engagements in the Community

To extend the reach of this discussion, the City also engaged residents through a series of seven pop-up conversations at locations throughout the city, including the Redwood City Farmers Market, Redwood City Library, churches and youth clubs.



Community members listen to a presentation during the May 22 community conversation at Veterans Memorial Senior Center.



A mother and daughter share a snack during a pop-up engagement at Redwood City's Downtown Library.

Housing Survey

In June, the City conducted a bilingual housing survey in Spanish and English, reaching 540 residents through online and paper copies of the questions. The survey aimed to explore how community members are impacted by housing and to hear their suggestions for how the City should spend its affordable housing funds.

Survey respondents shared many of the same concerns as those who participated in community

conversations and pop-ups. They also voiced support for several of the same guiding principles for how to spend the City's affordable housing funds.

“Community and communication are the key to solutions.

– Participant ”



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Major Themes

Community members who participated in conversations, pop-up events and the city's housing survey shared many of the same priorities and concerns. Themes that emerged through community input included:

1. **Increase housing security;** need for more short-term support while pursuing mid- and long-term solutions
2. **More housing options** for families, seniors, singles, homeless and those serving the community (such as teachers, police, fire fighters, nurses)
3. **Enhance social and economic diversity;** increase community connections and cooperative approaches
4. **Engage large employers and preserve small businesses;** increase possibility of wage increases for low-income earners



During the April 11 community conversation participants share how they and those they know are affected by housing issues.

5. **Coordinate planning efforts,** including making strategic transportation decisions

Solutions with Community Interest

Community members expressed significant interest in:

- Renter protections, safety of housing, renter/landlord relations and other immediate assistance
- Increased diversity of housing supply, creative land use options, and secondary units

- Purchasing and preserving housing that is currently affordable
- Using City funds to maximize housing opportunities, including building new housing
- Working with large employers with campuses

“ The people in Redwood City want to hold on to what makes the city great, its diversity!

– Community member ”

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES & CITY ACTIONS

Affordable Housing and New Developments

On May 21, the City Council voted to require that new housing developments include 20 percent affordable units or that development contribute to affordable housing funds.

Allocation of Affordable Housing Funds

On **June 25**, the City Council met to consider the best ways to use money in the City's Affordable Housing Fund. Based on community feedback, the City Council approved that funds be directed toward:

- Acquisition of existing multifamily housing for conversion to affordable
- Buying land for development of new affordable housing, especially near transit
- Funding construction of new affordable housing
- Providing funds to nonprofits to purchase, refinance or rehabilitate affordable housing

NEW PROTECTIONS FOR RENTERS

On March 26, the City Council voted to implement two key requirements to support renters in the community:



MINIMUM LEASE TERMS

Landlords must provide at least a 12 month lease.

Rents can only be increased after the 12 month lease ends.



RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

If a landlord evicts a renter, under certain situations, they must provide renter with money equal to 3 months rent.

Increase Reach of Housing Information

During the City's engagement efforts, community members also provided constructive feedback on the type of housing information and resources that they would like to see. As a result, the City has developed:

- [Housing Resource Guide](#) available in English and Spanish
- Informative [blog posts about housing](#)
- [Project page and electronic newsletter](#)

What's Next?

Feedback and other themes heard through the community engagement efforts will be folded into the HHCC work plan, which will detail priorities and focus areas of the committee for the next two years.

The City Council is scheduled to consider and review the work plan at their **July 23** meeting. The City appreciates the work completed so far by our partners. The work plan will continue the conversation and work to address housing issues in the community.



Stay Connected

To learn more about housing in Redwood City and how you can stay involved, visit www.redwoodcity.org

**“ I appreciate
how much
Redwood City
is trying to do!**

– Participant ”



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