



# City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire

## Section A: Questionnaire Introduction

The City of Palo Alto is updating its Housing Element and wants to hear from you!

The City is in the process of updating the Housing Element, one of the required chapters of the City's long-range plan (called the Comprehensive Plan). The Housing Element establishes policies and programs to address Palo Alto's existing and projected housing needs during the period of 2015 to 2023. These identified needs include accommodating a "fair share" of regional housing production for people of all income levels.

This questionnaire is just one way of hearing from the community over the next several months. Questionnaire results and input gathered at community workshops will be provided to decision-makers for their consideration. If you are a Palo Alto resident, please take a few moments to share your views by completing this questionnaire. This questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

**\* 1. Do you currently live in Palo Alto?**

**If Yes, questionnaire will continue to Section B1**

**If No, questionnaire will automatically skip to Section B2**

Yes

No

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# City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire

## Section B1: Tell us about yourself - Residents

2. What is your home ZIP code?

3. How long have you lived in Palo Alto?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

4. Select the type of housing in which you reside:

- A detached single-family house
- A duplex/triplex/fourplex
- A condominium or townhome
- An apartment
- A second unit/guesthouse
- A mobilehome
- Other

4a. If you answered "Other" please specify:

5. Do you rent/lease or own the home you live in?

- Rent/Lease
- Own

6. Currently, you:

- Live and work in Palo Alto
- Live in Palo Alto but work elsewhere
- Work from home
- Do not work
- Are in school

**6a. If you answered "Are in school" please specify which school:**

**7. Please check all that apply to you:**

- I am a Senior (65 years or over)
- I am disabled
- I live in a large household (five or more persons living in your home)
- I am a female head of household
- I am homeless
- None of the above

**8. Select the reason(s) you chose to live in Palo Alto. Please rank the top FOUR reasons that you live here, with "1" being the most important reason.**

**Instructions: Use the drop-down menus to assign ranking positions, or drag and drop the answers choices in order of preference. Note that as soon as you assign a ranking position, the options will immediately adjust to the ranking order selected. If an answer does not apply, check the "N/A" box at right to take it out of the running. We will be looking at your top FOUR choices only.**

<input type="text"/>	Quality of local school system	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	Quality of homes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	Quality/ambiance of neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	Safety of neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	Proximity to open space/recreational areas	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	Proximity to job(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	Proximity to family	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

<input type="checkbox"/> Exclusivity	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness of streets and surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> City services and programs	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Proximity to shopping and services	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Proximity to medical care	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

**8a. If you answered "Other" please specify:**

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## City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire

### Section C: Housing Conditions and Issues

A community's housing stock is defined as the collection of all types of housing located within the jurisdiction. The characteristics of the housing stock—including condition and affordability—are important in determining the housing needs for Palo Alto.

#### 10. How would you rate the physical condition of your home?

Excellent condition

Shows signs of minor deferred maintenance (peeling paint, chipping stucco, etc.)

Needs one or more modest rehabilitation improvement (new roof, new wood siding, etc.)

Needs one or more major upgrade (new foundation, new plumbing, new electrical, etc.)

#### 11. The most significant housing problems in Palo Alto are (check all that apply):

Rents or prices of homes in Palo Alto are too high.

There is not enough housing available for sale.

There is not enough housing available for rent/lease.

Housing types in Palo Alto do not meet the needs of residents.

Housing conditions and property maintenance need attention.

Neighborhood physical condition (such as streetlights, sidewalks, etc.)

Other

#### 11a. If you answered "Other" please specify:

#### 12. Please identify what would most improve your current housing situation (check all that apply):

More indoor space

More outdoor space

Lower cost of rent/house payment

Better neighborhood

Home/yard improvements or repairs

Better weatherization

Lower utility costs

Lower Homeowner Association dues

Better access to transit

Other

**12a. If you answered "Other" please specify:**

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## City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire

### Section D: Housing Affordability Crisis

In 2012, the National Low Income Housing Coalition ranked Santa Clara County as the ninth most expensive county in the United States. The same study ranked San Mateo County and San Francisco as the first and second most expensive counties. Housing costs tend to be higher in highly sought-after areas near major employers. In the Bay Area, the technology boom has increased the demand for new housing at all income levels, resulting in both lower-earning residents and well-paid area professionals competing for housing in an overcrowded and expensive market.

High housing costs can price lower-income families out of the market, cause extreme cost burdens, or force households into overcrowded or substandard conditions. High housing costs can also reduce competitiveness in attracting workers and employers to Palo Alto and the Bay Area region. Employers and workers may instead choose to locate or work in areas with a wider range of housing types and prices.

Affordable housing does not refer only to subsidized, low-income housing. It also means housing that is affordable to all income groups based on a federal standard: households spending more than 30% of their gross annual income on housing experience a “housing cost burden.” When a household spends more than 30% of its income on housing costs, it has less disposable income for other necessities such as health care, childcare, transportation, and even food. In the event of unexpected circumstances such as loss of employment or health problems, homeowners with a housing cost burden usually have the option of selling the homes and become renters. Renters, on the other hand, are more vulnerable and subject to constant changes in the housing market.

The City is interested in learning more about housing affordability for Palo Alto residents. The housing industry standard for determining “affordability” is 30% of household income. Take a moment to consider the amount of your monthly housing costs (including rent or mortgage payment, utilities, homeowner fees, taxes and insurance). Consider this amount as a percentage of your monthly income.

**13. Approximately what percent of your household gross monthly income is spent on housing?**

Less than 30%

30-50%

More than 50%

**14. Increasing a variety of housing types and costs can provide options for working families. Which alternative housing types should the City of Palo Alto support (check all that apply)?**

Shared housing (Sharing a home by renting out a room, assistance with household tasks, or both)

Co-housing (A housing community of private homes supplemented by shared facilities, resources and meals)

Micro-Apartments (Compact, one-room living units, generally with 150-300 square feet of space)

Homes with convertible space to adjust the size or function of existing areas

Loosened development standards for second units (a second unit is an additional housing unit created on a lot that already has a house; sometimes referred to as granny flat or accessory dwelling unit), such as reducing parking standards and lot size requirements and/or provide amnesty/legitimize existing illegal or nonconforming second units where appropriate

Other

**14a. If you answered "Other" please specify:**

**15. What strategies should the City of Palo Alto use to address the affordable housing crisis (check all that apply)?**

Increasing the housing supply can drive down housing costs to a certain extent. The City should encourage the development of mixed use and infill development at higher densities in specific parts of the City.

Cost-restricted housing can protect working families from cost fluctuations related to the supply and demand of housing in the region. The City should support the development of cost-restricted housing affordable to working families through the City's Affordable Housing Fund and through development and regulatory incentives to nonprofit developers.

Increasing a variety of housing types and costs can provide options for working families. The City should encourage the development of a wide spectrum of housing types and prices.

The City of Palo Alto's Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing Purchase Program requires developers of five or more residential units to contribute at least 15% of those units at below market rates. The City should continue the Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing Purchase Program to create and retain a stock of affordable for-sale housing in Palo Alto for people of low and moderate incomes.

Non-housing services are important to special needs populations and lower-income households struggling with housing costs. Increase funding for the Human Services Resource



Allocation Process (HSRAP) to support organizations that deliver direct services to Palo Alto residents so that they have a safety net of services.

Other

**15a. If you answered "Other" please specify:**

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## **City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire**

### **Section E: Special Needs Groups**

Certain groups have more difficulty finding decent, affordable housing due to their special circumstances. Special circumstances may be related to one's income-earning potential, family characteristics, the presence of physical or mental disabilities, or age-related health issues. As a result, certain groups typically earn lower incomes and have higher rates of overpayment for housing, or they may live in overcrowded residences. Housing Element law specifically requires an analysis of the special housing needs of the elderly, the disabled, female-headed households, large families, farmworkers, and homeless persons and families.

16. Please select the **THREE** groups with the greatest need for housing and related services in the community, with “1” being the greatest need.

Instructions: Use the drop-down menus to assign ranking positions, or drag and drop the answers choices in order of preference. Note that as soon as you assign a ranking position, the options will immediately adjust to the ranking order selected. If an answer does not apply, check the “N/A” box at right to take it out of the running. We will be looking at your top **THREE** choices only.

<input type="checkbox"/> Seniors	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Large households (five or more members)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Female-headed households	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Homeless persons and families	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Farmworkers	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

16a. If you answered "Other" please specify:

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## City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire

### Section F: Jobs/Housing Mismatch

A recent series in the Silicon Valley Business Journal (“The Real Reason for Silicon Valley’s Sky-High Rents and Gridlocked Traffic”, February 28, 2014) cites a 3.13-to-1 jobs-to-housing ratio in Palo Alto, calling Palo Alto “the least balanced city in the region by a significant margin.” This means that for every three jobs in the City, there is only one housing unit. So, most workers in Palo Alto drive from other locations to meet the needs of business and industry. This imbalance affects housing costs and puts more traffic on local streets. Property owners can charge a premium for housing in highly sought-after areas near major employers, driving up prices in an already expensive regional market. Workers who cannot afford to live in the City commute from longer distances, often contributing to highway gridlock. When this imbalance is multiplied many-fold by adjacent cities, regional consequences include high local housing costs, residential sprawl into outlying areas, congestion of the transportation system, and increased air pollutant emissions.

Ideally, a community should have housing to provide opportunities for a wider spectrum of income levels, from lower-income through the upper-income levels. Cities with a diverse housing stock provide opportunities for employees of local businesses to find adequate housing within a short commute of their place of employment. Also, new householders (recent college graduates in their first jobs) can find housing in the communities where they grew up. When affordable housing choices are lacking, people who provide services that sustain all communities—including teachers, firefighters, and nurses—are not able to live here. Their skills may be lost to the community.

#### **17. What are the best strategies to address the impacts associated with Palo Alto and the region’s jobs-to-housing imbalance (check all that apply)?**

Higher density housing in strategic locations can increase housing options and translate into increased transit usage (i.e. fewer cars on the streets). The City should facilitate mixed use and infill development at higher densities to increase housing options and optimize transit use.

Increased affordable housing resources can alleviate the jobs-to-housing mismatch for local workers. The City should support the development of mixed-income or affordable housing in close proximity to major employment centers and transit corridors.

Traffic congestion can be reduced by increasing the cost and reducing the desirability of driving alone. The City should consider parking pricing strategies and additional transportation fees to make transit use more economically desirable.

Businesses can implement trip reduction programs in which employees are given a

variety of incentives to reduce driving during peak times. The City should support or require employers to provide incentives to reduce car trips, which could include allowing for flexible schedules, staggered work hours, telecommuting, transit subsidies, preferential parking for carpools, provision of bicycle parking and showers (for cyclists and pedestrians), and others.

Other

**17a. If you answered "Other" please specify:**

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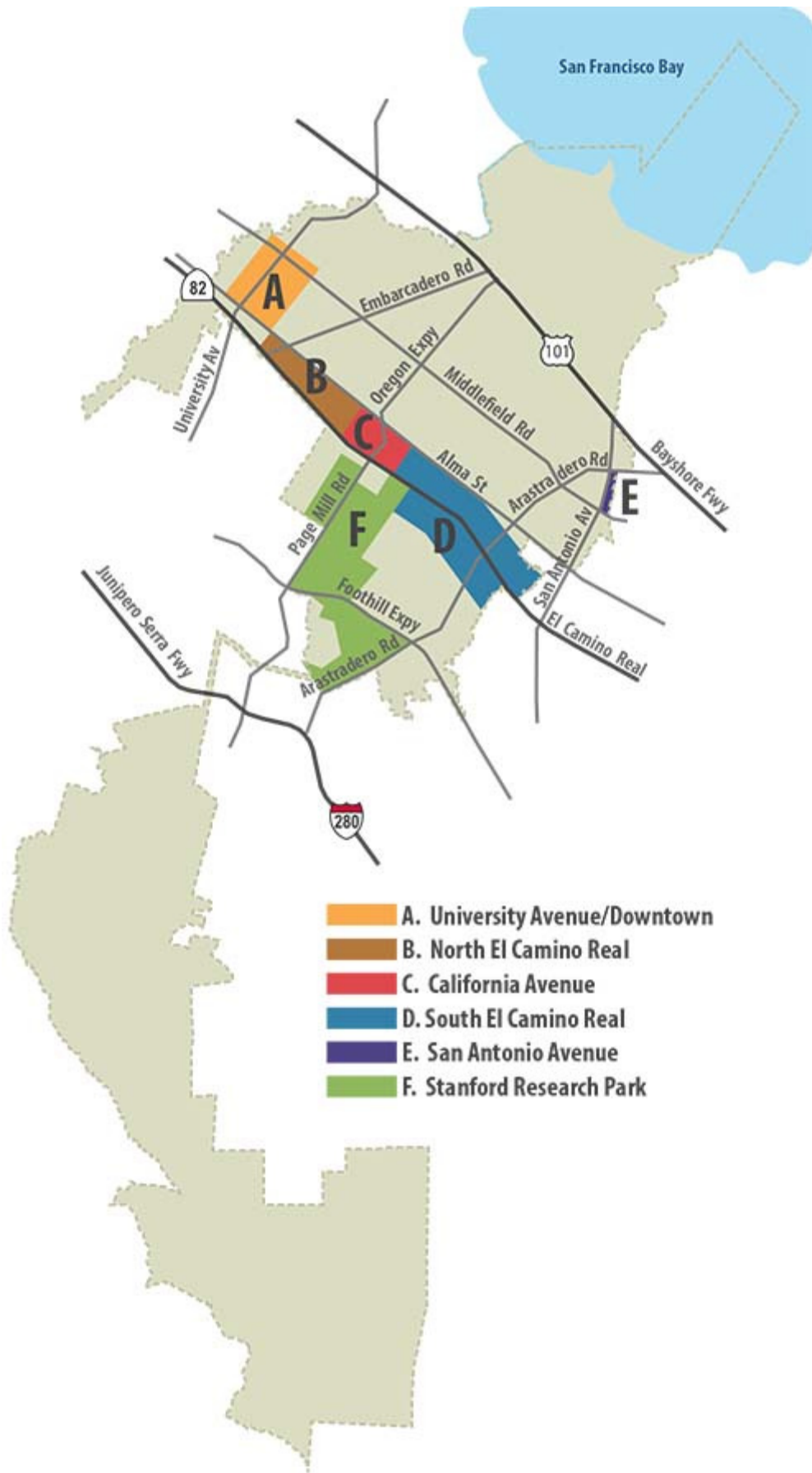


## **City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire**

### **Section G: Projected Housing Need**

The housing need (also known as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, or RHNA) for the Bay Area region for 2015-2023 has been determined by the State to be 187,990 housing units. ABAG has determined that Palo Alto's portion of this regional need is 1,988 housing units. The City has identified that the majority of the 1,988 units can be accommodated on sites previously identified in the last Housing Element as well as projects currently proposed and approved. However, the City must identify locations where the remaining 369 units can be accommodated.

#### **Potential locations for new multi-family housing**



18. With the issues presented previously in mind, and knowing that 70% of the City is

dedicated to public open space, single-family neighborhoods, and public rights-of-way, what are your preferred locations for new multi-family housing? Please refer to map and rank your preferred locations for new multi-family housing, with “1” being the most preferred location.

**Instructions:** Use the drop-down menus to assign ranking positions, or drag and drop the answers choices in order of preference. Note that as soon as you assign a ranking position, the options will immediately adjust to the ranking order selected. If an answer does not apply, check the “N/A” box at right to take it out of the running.

<input type="text" value="1"/>	A-University Avenue/Downtown	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text" value="2"/>	B-North El Camino Real	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text" value="3"/>	C-California Avenue	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text" value="4"/>	D-South El Camino Real	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text" value="5"/>	E-San Antonio Avenue	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text" value="6"/>	F-Stanford Research Park	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text" value="7"/>	G- Other	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

**18a. If you answered "Other" please specify:**

**19. What types of housing programs and activities do you feel the City should focus on over the next eight years? Please rank the following programs/activities in order of funding importance, with 1 being the most important.**

**Instructions:** Use the drop-down menus to assign ranking positions, or drag and drop the answers choices in order of preference. Note that as soon as you assign a ranking position, the options will immediately adjust to the ranking order selected. If an answer does not apply, check the “N/A” box at right to take it out of the running.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing rehabilitation assistance for homeowners
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rental housing rehabilitation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide opportunities for new construction of housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Code enforcement



- Provide affordable housing opportunities
- Encourage housing to address the needs of all socioeconomic groups in the community
- Accessible units for persons with disabilities
- Housing for seniors
- Housing for the homeless

**20. What types of housing are most needed to address Palo Alto’s housing needs? Please rank the following types of housing by order of highest need for new housing (with “1” being the highest need).**

**Instructions: Use the drop-down menus to assign ranking positions, or drag and drop the answers choices in order of preference. Note that as soon as you assign a ranking position, the options will immediately adjust to the ranking order selected. If an answer does not apply, check the “N/A” box at right to take it out of the running.**

- Single-family houses
- Condos/Townhouses
- Apartments
- Secondary Dwelling Units or “Granny Flats”
- Senior Housing
- Housing for Persons with Disabilities
- Affordable Housing
- Other

**20a. If you answered "Other," please specify.**

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## City of Palo Alto Housing Questionnaire

### Section H: General Comments

21. Are there any additional comments you would like to share? Please specify.

22. The City of Palo Alto will be conducting a variety of outreach activities during the Housing Element update. Would you like to participate in future conversations to provide additional input into housing needs and opportunities in Palo Alto?

No

Yes: Please contact Tim Wong at 650-329-2561 or [Tim.Wong@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Tim.Wong@cityofpaloalto.org) or provide your contact information in the following questions.

22a. If you like to participate in future conversations to provide additional input into housing needs and opportunities in Palo Alto, please provide your name and email or phone number.

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

23. If you would like to be included on future email updates about the Housing Element, please leave your name and email address

If you have any questions or comments please contact Tim Wong, Housing Coordinator at (650) 329-2561 or [Tim.Wong@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Tim.Wong@cityofpaloalto.org)

Name:

Email Address:

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Done