



BURLINGAME COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ABOUT HOUSING

Winter 2018
UPDATE



The City of Burlingame is partnering with Home for All to:

- Broaden the conversation about housing
- Develop shared understanding about what types of housing will help Burlingame thrive in the future

Home for All is a community collaborative addressing the housing challenge in San Mateo County by promoting the preservation and production of all types of housing through sharing information, promoting innovation and convening the community.

Vice Mayor Donna Colson and Councilmember Ann Keighran have been active members of the Home for All collaborative. Under their leadership, the City of Burlingame applied for and was awarded a grant to pilot new approaches to community engagement on the topic of housing. The grant provides technical assistance from Home for All and consultant Common Knowledge Plus, as well as funds to help conduct engagement that is more inclusive, informed and sustained than traditional civic participation activities.

Pilot Project Activities to date:

- In-Person Outreach: Mid-December through mid-February, pop-up discussions were conducted at multiple locations around town, such as the library, train station, farmer's market, and outside local stores.
- Online Survey: With help from local partners, an online survey reached a total of 301 respondents who live and work in Burlingame
- Community Conversation: An educational community dialogue brought together close to 100 people on the morning of Saturday, February 10.

Highlights of February 10 Community Meeting

Participants sat at 11 discussion tables, each with a mix of income levels and mix of impacts from housing challenges. Following a welcome from Vice-Mayor Donna Colson and William Lowell from Home for All, the format was a mix of short presentations by Planning Manager Kevin Gardiner followed by table discussions supported by trained facilitators. All five council members attended as listeners. In his closing remarks, Mayor Michael Brownrigg shared his appreciation of the community participation. An open house followed the main meeting, providing information about proposed housing projects and

nonprofit services related to housing. Participant input was captured by discussion notes from each of the 11 tables, 52 feedback forms and 38 participant worksheets.

Themes from Table Dialogue:

There is a strong connection and loyalty to the community of Burlingame; people want to be able to stay and have their families stay.

- Rising housing costs have created insecurity and instability, especially for renters.
 - This creates stresses on families, communities
 - When people can't afford to live in Burlingame, everyone is affected – including homeowners, employers and renters
- Many jobs in Burlingame do not pay enough for someone to be able to afford housing here. As a result, many workers must commute (adding to the whole region's traffic congestion).
- Residents are also paying attention to impacts from growth on schools and parking. They wonder: *"What is Burlingame's upside capacity?"*
- There is widespread shared interest in retaining "teachers, cops, hospital workers, retail workers" and other major community contributors as residents.
- People want a walkable, well-connected community with socio-economic diversity.



These are representative comments of what participants cited as key takeaways from the dialogue:

- *"Many citizens share the same concerns about the affordability challenges of living in this area."*
- *"That this challenge is not just happening in my marriage and family – every one of my neighbors is affected by this, even if they own their home."*
- *"Many residents are thinking about the topic and realizing we can't keep the status quo."*
- *"Burlingame is doing much more than I realized about housing."*
- *"That the city is listening to people and working on solutions."*

“ Thank you for bringing us all together to share our concerns and hopes for the future of Burlingame. ”
– Participant

Indicated Actions:

Participants indicated an enhanced awareness that no one solution was sufficient to address the challenges. As one community member shared: *"There are multiple options on the table, no one idea is*



the right choice, it will take time but will get sorted out one step at a time.” There was broad interest in a whole array of responses and solutions, such as:

- Multi-family, especially along Caltrain corridor and Rollins Road
- Mixed use, especially along El Camino Real and Broadway
- Live/work
- Employer support to housing
- Various kinds of tenant support, such as more predictable rent, and relocation assistance
- Easing up ADU regulations
- Ways to preserve existing stock
- Home sharing
- Build smaller units, tiny homes



“ **The conversation for solutions needs to continue. There is a decent amount of community consensus on the issue.** ”

Some participants also expressed interest in a housing commission and/or advisory group to keep communication with the community flowing.

Community feedback about the format of the February 10 meeting was quite positive. Participants asked for more chances to come together and for more information. The discussion between participants was called out as the most valuable element of the meeting. The information shared by the Planning Department was also appreciated as well as how council members attended as listeners. The location, breakfast and activities for children were also cited as positives in making this an accessible way to learn more about Burlingame and housing.

About two thirds of attendees indicated that they had limited prior experience with housing conversations in the past. Most said the level of information provided at this introductory meeting was *“just about right.”*

Next Steps

- A follow up meeting in late April or May will invite the community to help shape priorities for the City of Burlingame’s Housing Program
- Ongoing updates to the City’s web pages about housing overall and affordable housing based on the information requested by community members

Highlights from Online Survey

Conducted from January 24 through February 7, 2018, the purpose of the online survey was to understand what issues are top of mind and what information about housing people are interested in. Among the 301 responses, these were the leading areas of concern:

- High cost of purchasing a home
- Rising rent
- People I care about can no longer afford to live in the community

These additional concerns were representative of comments:

- Negative impacts of growth, crowded schools, “strain on infrastructure,” such as local parking and water supply
- Many are stressed or sad about being on the brink of being priced out.
- Many calls for housing that support occupations like teachers, safety officers, city employees, and retail clerks as well as adult children.
- Several noted traffic congestion. Some asked that planning for housing and transportation happen concurrently.
- Interest in housing for people with low and middle incomes, as well as housing for seniors on fixed incomes.
- There is a strong desire to maintain a diverse community with strong social connections.



Comparing Input from February 10 Meeting and Survey Results

The February 10 meeting participants articulated the same concerns raised in the online survey and most also demonstrated three key differences versus the survey respondents:

- Increased understanding of the extent of shared impacts (“I’m not alone”)
- Increased understanding about different dimensions of the situation (“it’s complicated”) and that multiple solutions will be needed
- Despite understanding that the problem is bigger and more widespread, most attendees expressed feeling more encouraged than discouraged and some even “inspired.” (This compares to more negative comments from survey respondents, including feelings such as “despair”). It appears that the February 10 community dialogue generated these sources of encouragement:
 - That many others in the community also care
 - That there are many solutions underway and under consideration
 - That the council was listening and attentive to the concerns of all kinds of community members

