



BURLINGAME COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ABOUT

Housing is a high priority issue for people who live and work in Burlingame.

The Burlingame City Council and Community Development Department have been working on a combination of housing programs and policies. To ensure that there is alignment with community interests, the City applied for and was awarded a “pilot city” grant and technical assistance from Home for All San Mateo County to:

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



Pilot Project Activities:

- In-Person Outreach: Winter and Spring pop-up discussions and sidewalk interviews conducted at the library, farmers market and other locations around town
- Online Survey: With help from local partners, an online survey reached a total of 301 respondents who live and/or work in Burlingame
- Community Conversation #1: This educational community dialogue brought together close to 100 people at Lion’s Club Hall on February 10
- Stakeholder meetings with local business groups, schools and community organizations
- Community Conversation #2: The topics of this second dialogue on April 28 were based on the cumulative outreach efforts that helped define what the community wanted to see and discuss

Highlights of the April 28 Community Meeting:

The second Community Conversation about housing was held at Masonic Hall on the morning of Saturday, April 28. About 70 community members gathered at round discussion tables. Over half of the attendees had participated in the prior February 10 meeting about housing and several new community members joined in. City Council members and senior staff attended as listeners, enjoying the chance to hear from a wide range of people who live and/or work in Burlingame.

As in the February 10 community conversation, there was widespread awareness of a range of negative effects from housing insecurity. Rising housing costs are affecting local business owners, homeowners as well as renters. *“Housing Security and Stability’ is extremely important as it is the foundation of a good quality of life. Housing security is linked to economic stability as a community.”*

Participants heard information about the range of City housing efforts and community-based supports, such as HIP Housing’s home-sharing program. Two presentations and two table discussions helped people develop greater understanding about which housing solutions are long-term and mid-term versus those that provide more immediate support in the near-term. The meeting format of explanations about housing options combined with dialogue with fellow community members was seen as a valuable experience.

“ *If people get together and listen, we can find good solutions.* ”
– Participant

April 28 Discussion #1: Community Values and Housing Principles

The first of two table discussions at the April 28 community conversation focused on what values should guide Burlingame’s housing strategies and programs. Participants reviewed prior community input as well as the principles that have guided City planning to date. Five key themes emerged:

- Housing Stability and Security – Increasing people’s ability to stay in the community, fostering family and community connections
- Diversity – Supporting multiple aspects of diversity:
 - Socioeconomic/occupational/generational/of all kinds
 - Diversity of housing types
 - Diversity of affordable housing opportunities, especially for those serving the community
- Vitality of Community, Businesses and Services – Housing decisions that positively impact local businesses and services and also the charm of the community
- Responsible Growth – Approaches that understand impacts on current and future infrastructure (including transportation and schools)
- Inclusion – Housing decisions should include input from all levels, all sectors

There was a recurring theme of the need for “balance” when considering housing development and affordability. *“Participants have a diverse idea of what is important around the housing issues, yet come together generally about the importance of communication and the need for affordable housing.”*



April 28 Discussion #2: Community Input on Housing Solutions

On the solutions front, there appears to be broad acknowledgement about the need for multiple approaches. This is consistent with the February 10 community conversation about housing. At the April 28 meeting, City staff was able to provide a more extended orientation to specific options to increase housing in Burlingame. The meeting also featured information about community-based services that address a range of housing needs and ways to volunteer. The following approaches to increasing housing options, especially more affordable housing, had significant community interest:



General Plan Update/Zoning

- Clear interest in mixed-use developments, combining residential and business with adequate attention to parking.
 - *“New downtown buildings should be mixed use. Developers need to provide housing units – not just office or retail space.”*
- More affordable multi-family housing, near transit; many mentioned Rollins Road, California Drive
 - *“Multi-family housing with common use green space.”*



Second Units

- Widespread desire to ease regulations
- Would like to encourage use as an affordable housing option
- Looking for ways to address current units that are not up to code
- Need to pay attention to parking considerations

A Range of Supports for Renters

- Explore minimum lease terms, just cause eviction, relocation assistance
- Continued interest by some in rent control
- Improve renter-landlord communications/relations

Coordinated and Comprehensive Planning

- Work with transportation agencies, school districts
 - *“Most at my table want thoughtful housing growth that takes into account increased housing and transit needs.”*
 - *“There should be more cross discussion with regional and county measures.”*
- Partnerships and creative solutions
 - *“Allow developers to participate in solving the problem of affordability.”*



Continued Engagement and Communications

- People found the housing information provided by the City helpful; they also wanted to understand what housing is in the pipeline and how to stay involved
- There is an opportunity to improve understanding about the City’s role versus that of other levels of government (state and county) and other local agencies (e.g., re transportation)
- Many called out the value of bringing people together to learn side by side.
 - *“Let’s have community gatherings that introduce homeowners and renters to one another.”*



Via feedback forms, participants expressed their appreciation for the extent of effort from staff, the attention of council and the commitment of their fellow community members. *“Incredible, well organized, amazed at representation of local officials and organizations.”*

Given the high repeat rate of attendees and the mix of participants, this project has shown effectiveness in meeting its stated goal of broadening participation and expanding the constituency for information and future engagement opportunities. *“Burlingame is doing a great job to have open channels of communication.”*

Next Steps:

- July 2 City Council study item to review research on residential impact fees and options for providing on-site affordable units within new developments
- July 11 Planning Commission study session on Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report
- City Council review of amendments to second unit regulations late August/September
- City to update web information and make it easier to stay on top of housing news

For more information about housing in Burlingame: Visit www.burlingame.org/planning

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.

