



# Action Guide



- Daniel, formerly homeless

After reviewing the Housing Ready Community's Toolkit, you are ready to take action to end homelessness in Santa Clara County.

Use this simple guide to get involved and make sure we fully implement the Community Plan to End Homelessness and build the new affordable and supportive housing that we need most.



## 1 INFORMATION

### Understand Our Problem

Our community faces a homelessness crisis that is made worse by a housing crisis. In the past, we have not built enough affordable homes. These two crises negatively impact the quality of life for all of us.

**Review the complete toolkit website** and factsheets to learn more about the causes and severity of these crises.

### Understand Our Plan

Building new supportive housing (using the Housing First approach) for our homeless neighbors can end homelessness in Santa Clara County. Funding is available to get started and construction is already underway.

**Review the toolkit** to learn more about the Community Plan and the progress we have made already.

### Understand Our Responsibility

Homelessness impacts quality of life for all of us, not only for people living outside. To end homelessness in our community, we all need to work together. It is not enough for only some organizations, neighborhoods or cities to participate.

**Your support and action are needed** to end homelessness in Santa Clara County!

## 2 OUTREACH

### Talk to Homeless People

Speak to people experiencing homelessness in your neighborhood. Introduce yourself, ask them if they are getting help with housing or other services. Give them information about organizations that can help them. Tell them about our plan and progress building 6,000 new homes with supportive services to end homelessness.

Saying hello and acknowledging the people living outside in your neighborhood can be incredibly powerful and **help restore dignity for them and for our entire community.** Instead of passing by, stop for a minute and get to know someone new.

### Talk to Your Neighbors

Some of us worry about what will happen in our neighborhood if new supportive housing is built. Sometimes, these fears come from a lack of information or inaccurate information we have received.

Reading and sharing the information found on the toolkit website and factsheets is one way to answer important questions and ease fears.

**Share the toolkit and talk to your neighbors** in individual conversations, at family dinners and neighborhood meetings, and at religious or other community events.

### Talk to Elected Officials

Many of the decisions about funding and construction of affordable and supportive housing are made by members of your city council, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors, California state representatives and city staff members in housing and planning departments.

Share the toolkit, send email messages and speak at city council and other public meetings to encourage your representatives to do all they can to help build the supportive housing we need and end homelessness.

**Your voice matters.**

### Who are my representatives?

The County of Santa Clara Registrar of Voters, your city's website and Facebook's Town Hall app are all good places to find out which elected officials represent you:

[sccvote.org](http://sccvote.org) [bit.ly/mydistrictscc](http://bit.ly/mydistrictscc) [facebook.com/townhall](https://facebook.com/townhall)



## 3 ACTIVATION

### Be Aware

**Subscribe** to the Housing Ready Community's Toolkit action alerts and the mailing lists of Destination: Home, Silicon Valley at Home and others working to build housing and implement the Community Plan to End Homelessness:

[scctoolkit.org](http://scctoolkit.org)  
[housingready.org](http://housingready.org)  
[siliconvalleyathome.org](http://siliconvalleyathome.org)

**Sign up today!**

### Be Present

Every month, dozens of community events about homelessness and housing take place in our community. A great way to get involved, make new friends, learn more and have an impact is to **attend these events**.

Destination: Home manages a new public Housing Ready Communities calendar that is updated weekly with relevant activities:

[calendar.housingready.org](http://calendar.housingready.org)

### Be Social

Your friends and followers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor might not know about the plan we are working on together to end homelessness.

To **spread the word** and get others involved, participate online and share information from the toolkit on social media:

**#EndHomelessness #HousingReady  
#Time4Yes #SupportiveHousing**

## 4 ORGANIZING



### Host a Dinner

**The best way to discuss homelessness and housing is around the table with the people closest to you.**

Why not invite friends and neighbors over for dinner, coffee or snacks? You can talk about the information in the Housing Ready Community's Toolkit and invite others to get involved. Think of it as a **"dinner party with handouts"**.

*Here are a few tips to help you plan:*

#### Before

1. Make a list of **6 to 10 people** to invite.
2. To reach more people, consider asking your guests to bring **someone you do not already know**.
3. Invite people with **phone calls, email messages and a Facebook event**.
4. Download and print two or three **infographics and fact sheets** from the toolkit for each guest. Make extra copies just in case.
5. Make a **list of questions** and interesting facts about supportive housing and homelessness to use in case conversation slows down.

#### During

1. Serve a **home-cooked meal**, order in or make it a potluck.
2. To make it easier, **consider co-hosting** with someone else.
3. Create **basic guidelines** so everyone is comfortable participating in the conversation. Make sure everybody gets a chance to share and ask questions.
4. Have somebody **take notes** during the conversation so that everyone can have a record of what was discussed.
5. At the end of the conversation, **discuss next steps**, including one or two specific actions you will take individually and as a group.

#### After

1. Take a **group photo** and share it on social media. Encourage your guests to post about the conversation on Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor.
2. Use **hashtags** so others can find out about it and be inspired: **#EndHomelessness #HousingReady #Time4Yes**
3. Send a **follow-up email** to encourage the group to subscribe to the toolkit website mailing list.
4. Encourage **1 or 2 people** from the group to host a dinner of their own.
5. Invite the group to join you when you **attend community meetings** and events.

**Accurate information is essential to increase understanding of those experiencing homelessness in our community. You can play a powerful role raising awareness and correcting misconceptions about homelessness and supportive housing in Santa Clara County.**

*If you want to be even more involved, consider volunteering with a local nonprofit working to end homelessness.*



# Supportive Housing Ends Homelessness



“ I can take a shower when I want to. I love that I can nuke a hot dog and fill my fridge up. I don't want to be homeless ever again.”  
- Frenchie, formerly homeless

## ONE COMMUNITY, ONE PLAN

“We want a community in which all residents have access to appropriate and affordable housing and the support they need to retain it. We can end homelessness. We know how.”

COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

### New Housing Opportunities Units and Rental Subsidies



## WE KNOW WHAT TO DO

Supportive housing using the Housing First approach has been proven as an effective solution for chronic homelessness.

Voter approval of the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond provides new funds to build new supportive housing and homes for people with very low and extremely low incomes.

These new homes will look like other new apartment buildings, but include support services to help new residents live productively in the neighborhood and keep their housing. Services are designed to stabilize, help with community integration and make it easy to get treatment.

The Housing First approach works by giving people a safe, stable place to live with the services and support they need. The model has been successful across the country for people who have not been able to maintain housing in the past. The model ends homelessness by providing long-term housing stability and improved health outcomes. It has been proven to reduce use of public services like emergency departments, hospitals and jails.

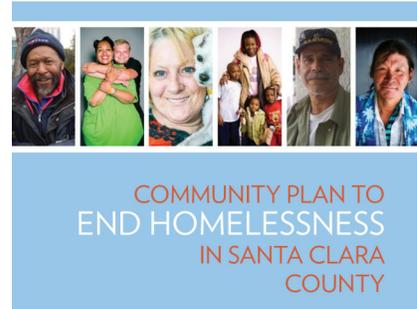




## COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

In 2014, Destination: Home, the County of Santa Clara and over 200 stakeholders created the county-wide 2015-2020 Community Plan to End Homelessness, a roadmap guiding the collective work of neighborhoods, service organizations, and local governments to prevent and end homelessness.

Since then, we have made significant progress toward our goal of creating 6,000 new supportive housing opportunities.



## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

### What services are provided?

In supportive housing developments, professional property management provides building management, maintenance, resident services and security like in other apartment buildings.

The County of Santa Clara and service organizations provide case management and on-site services, including health services, subsidized rent, meaningful daily and wellness activities.

### Who will live in new supportive housing?

Supportive housing is most successful for people who need the highest level of support services. A county-wide assessment system is used to prioritize housing and end homelessness for the people most in need.

New supportive housing developments try to prioritize people who are homeless in the neighborhood where the new homes are built, and conducts targeted outreach in the surrounding neighborhoods. This strategy increases the quality of life for new residents and also for the entire community.

### What is rapid re-housing?

Rapid re-housing helps people quickly exit homelessness by helping them find a home and stabilize in permanent housing. Rapid re-housing support includes rental assistance, case management and supportive services.

### Does the Housing First approach work?

Housing First is an approach to helping homeless people that starts with housing. In the past, homeless people were expected to get clean and sober, find a job, or commit to treatment before receiving help to find a home.

Studies have shown, however, that most people need housing before they are able to successfully work on other problems. A home provides the stability necessary to allow people to take care of themselves, pursue personal goals and seek needed treatment.

### Is building new homes an expensive way to address homelessness?

Providing housing is actually one of the most cost effective ways to address homelessness, specifically for those who need the most help. Public services cost about \$62,000 per person per year for the most vulnerable individuals when living on the streets. After moving into supportive housing, that cost is reduced to \$20,000.

### Is supportive housing like a shelter?

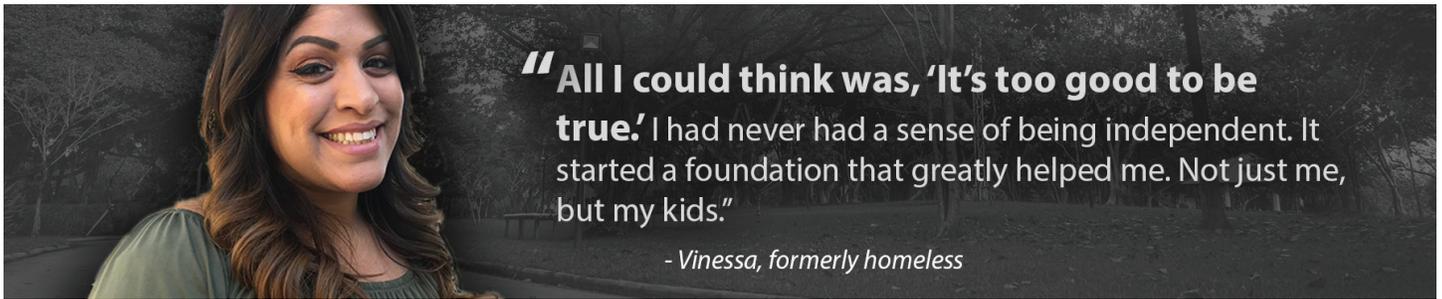
Homeless shelters provide a temporary place to sleep for homeless people, usually limited to six months or less. By contrast, supportive housing provides permanent homes and wraparound support services to ensure residents are able to stay in housing.

## TAKE ACTION

- 1** Download and print the complete toolkit
- 2** Make copies for friends and neighbors
- 3** Host a meeting or dinner to share what you learn
- 4** Share with your neighborhood association and other community organizations
- 5** Visit the toolkit website to sign-up for updates and action alerts



# Supportive Housing and Neighborhood Benefits



## OUR NEW NEIGHBORS

### Friendly

Residents in new affordable and supportive housing want to contribute to and be part of the peaceful life of the community.

### Safe & Secure

Supportive housing typically has on-site security, health professionals, case managers and highly trained 24-hour property management.

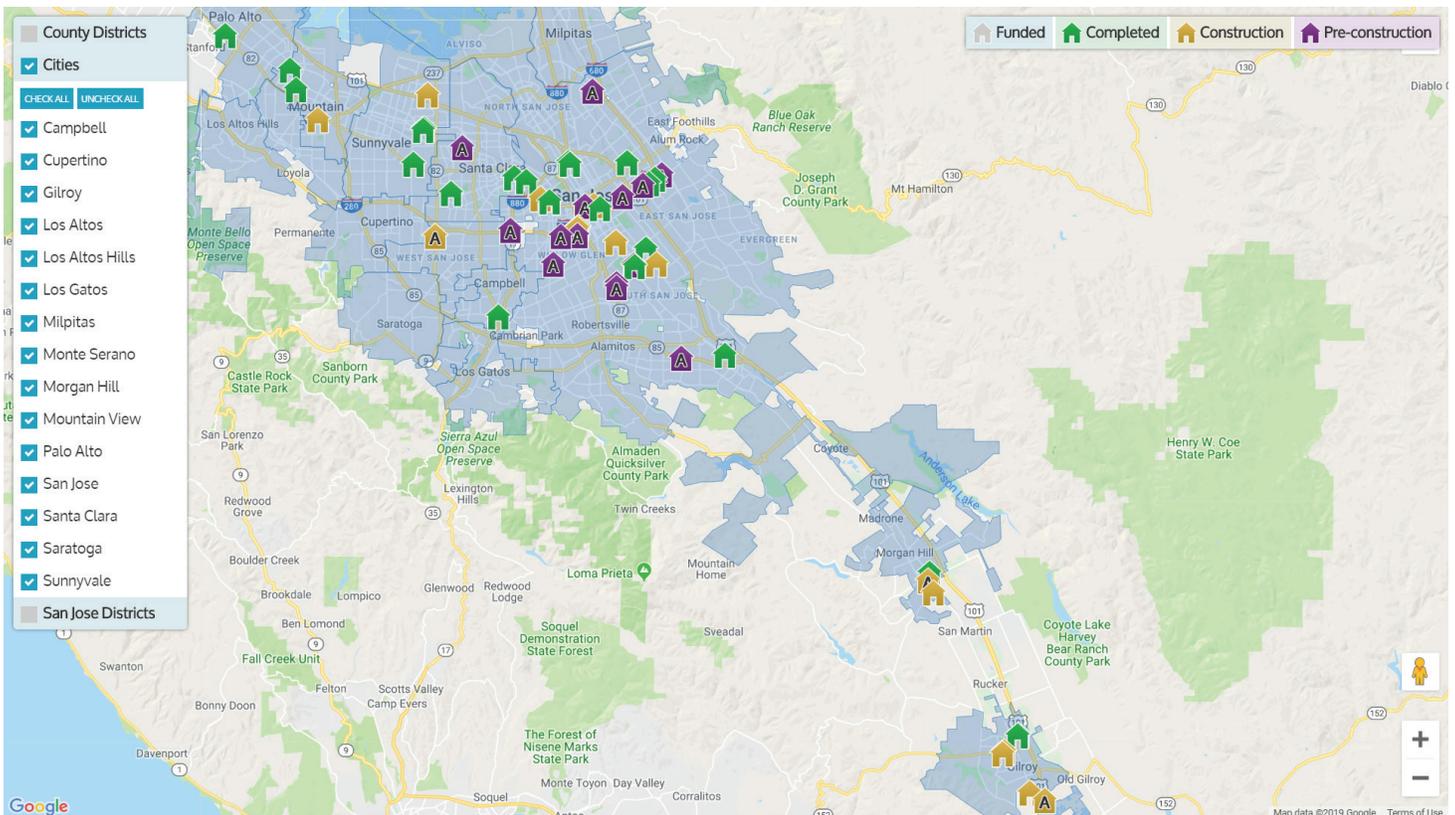
### Accessible & Engaged

Housing developers and property management companies establish ongoing relationships with neighborhood leaders and facilitate productive community interaction. On-site staff are available to respond to community concerns and prevent problems.

### High Quality

New supportive and affordable housing developments will bring top quality architecture to the block and often act as anchors for additional new community benefits to make our neighborhoods more vibrant, attractive and safe.

## WHEN & WHERE





## MYTH VS. FACT



**Homelessness and housing are important concerns in Santa Clara County, but supportive housing and the Housing First approach are relatively new concepts in our community.**

Voter approval of the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond and development of new housing for formerly homeless individuals naturally raises questions from community members.

Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. For more answers, visit the Housing Ready Community's Toolkit website.

## IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOODS

### What are Housing Ready Communities?

Housing Ready Communities are places where residents and businesses understand the benefit of supportive housing and welcome new developments into their neighborhoods.

Housing Ready Communities are ready to advocate for more housing, understand the value of a diverse community, help others understand the value of the supportive housing system, and create welcoming environments for new neighbors.

### Will new supportive housing be a magnet for homeless people?

Most developers of supportive housing in our community have been successfully building affordable housing in the region for decades. These developers, property managers and supportive service providers implement effective approaches that benefit the entire community and do not typically become magnets for homeless individuals.

In Santa Clara County, supportive housing developments do not offer drop-in services (providing food, clothing or emergency shelter, for example) for people experiencing homelessness who do not live there.

### Will new supportive housing be well managed and maintained?

Affordable housing developers and property managers hope to continue working here for years to come. They have a strong incentive to develop, own and operate buildings that are safe, attractive and well-maintained for residents and neighbors.

### Will this housing hurt property values?

There is no reason to believe that new supportive or affordable housing developments will negatively impact property values. A 10-year research study including 122 new low-income housing developments in San Jose showed that the value of homes within 2,000 feet of new housing increased at the same rate as homes further away.

### Will supportive housing increase crime?

Crime statistics are sometimes used in a misleading ways. There is, however, no conclusive evidence that supportive or affordable housing increase neighborhood crime. New supportive housing is designed to increase the quality of life for the entire community.

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## There Doesn't Go the Neighborhood: Low-Income Housing Has No Impact on Nearby Home Values

**In the nation's 20 least affordable housing markets, low-income housing built during a 10-year span shows no effect on nearby home values.**

BY CHERYL YOUNG | TRULIA | NOVEMBER 16, 2016

Some of the nation's least affordable markets are also ground zero for the fight against building affordable housing – which opponents say, among other things, depreciates nearby home values. Resistance to affordable housing development has surfaced in tight housing markets across the country such as San Francisco, New York, and Seattle.

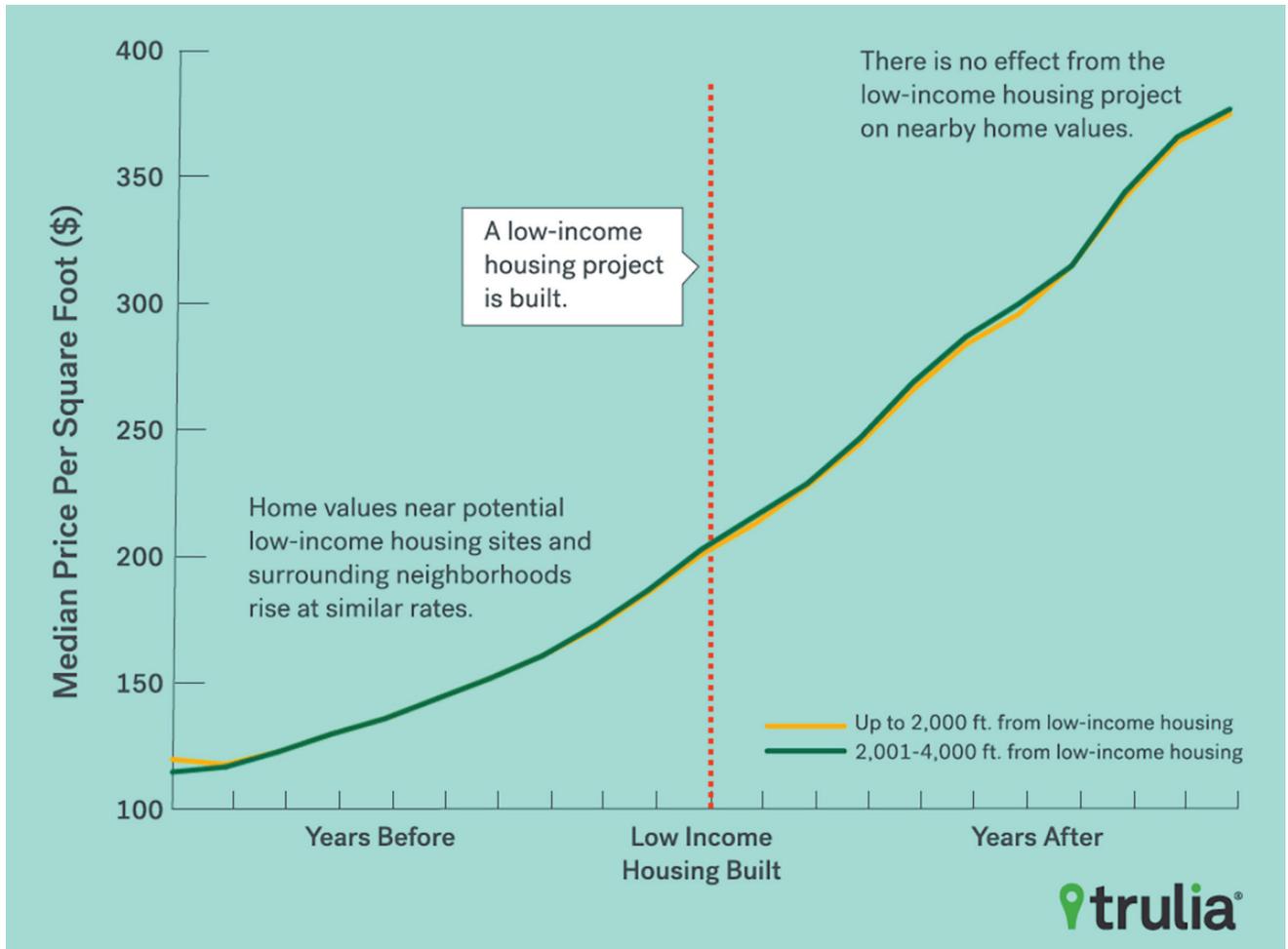
Given low inventory and high prices in these tight markets, we set out to uncover how much homeowners really have to fear. [...]

Using Trulia home value data, we examined changes in nearby home values before and after a low-income housing project is completed. Based on the location of low-income housing projects and completion dates, we determined whether or not these projects impact home values.

We found: In the nation's 20 least affordable markets, our analysis of 3,083 low-income housing projects from 1996 to 2006 found no significant effect on home values located near a low-income housing project, with a few exceptions. [...]

We focused on the time period prior to the start of the housing bubble in 2007 in order to ensure that prices reflect consistent comparisons around the time a project is completed and ready for occupancy.

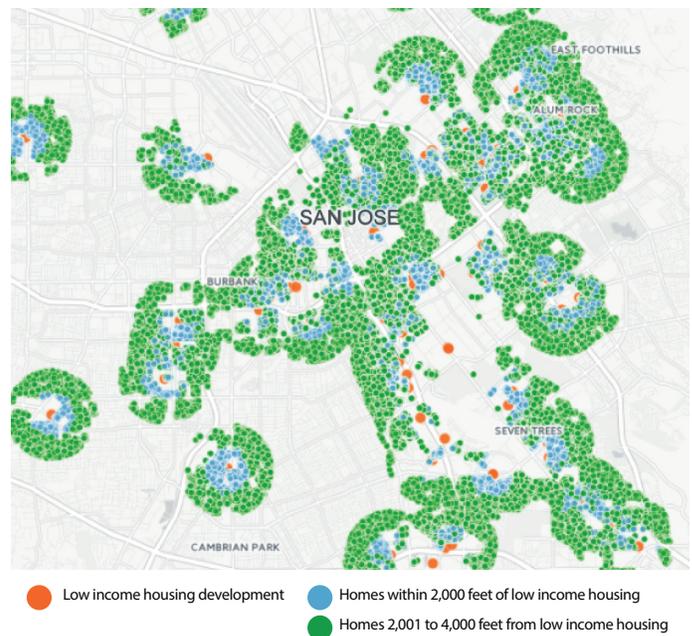
To test for spillover effects of low-income housing, we tracked home values in terms of price per square foot at two different distances from the low-income housing project from 1996 to 2006. For the neighborhood, we identified properties within an inner ring of 2,000 feet of a given low-income housing project as close enough to be impacted by the project. Properties located 2,001 to 4,000 feet from the low-income housing project were used as a comparison group. [...]



There is no statistically significant difference in price per square foot when comparing properties near a low-income housing project and those farther away when examining projects across all 20 metros. Likewise, at the metro level, the majority of markets yield no significant difference in prices between the inner and outer ring after a project is completed. However, a few housing markets revealed significant differences in price per square foot near low-income housing projects after they were placed into service. [...]

### What does it mean?

Again, these are exceptions to the finding that low-income housing projects largely have no effect on home values. The bottom line for NIMBYs who fear that property values will take a hit when a low-income housing project locates nearby is that their anxiety is largely unfounded – at least in cities where housing is either expensive or in short supply.



Source of Excerpts: "There Doesn't Go the Neighborhood: Low-Income Housing Has No Impact on Nearby Home Values" by Cheryl Young, Trulia Blog, 16 November 2016, <https://trulia.com/blog/trends/low-income-housing/>



## Frequently Asked Questions



**“I love making a difference, and housing is very key to your health. It probably effects your health as much as healthcare.”**

- Michael Santero,  
First Community Housing

### Homelessness and housing are important concerns in Santa Clara County.

Supportive housing and the Housing First approach, however, are relatively new concepts in our community. Voter approval of the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond and development of new housing for formerly homeless individuals naturally raises questions from community members. This document provides answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

## 2016 MEASURE A: AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOND

### What is Measure A?

In November 2016, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A, a \$950 million affordable housing bond. The housing bond provides the County with an unprecedented opportunity to partner with cities, residents, and the affordable and supportive housing community to address the housing needs of the community's poorest and most vulnerable residents.

Bond funds will help finance 4,800 new affordable housing opportunities for vulnerable populations including veterans, seniors, the disabled, people experiencing homelessness, low and moderate income individuals and families, foster youth, victims of abuse, and individuals suffering from mental health or substance abuse illnesses.

### What are the challenges?

Zoning and land use restrictions of our County's 15 individual cities, along with a lack of available land have resulted in the approval of less than 27% of proposed new affordable housing developments. An additional challenge is identification of sites close to jobs, public transportation, medical facilities, pharmacies, schools, and grocery stores.

While Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A and agree that building more affordable homes is necessary to address the housing crisis, many are reluctant to accept or even consider supportive housing developments in their neighborhood. To effectively address our housing crisis, we will need to embrace and support new housing throughout our community.

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### Who are my representatives?

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## HOMELESSNESS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

### Do homeless people really want homes?

Nearly everyone wants to live in a safe, affordable, and stable home. Almost no one wants to sleep in a tent or a car or under a bridge. A 2017 Homeless Census and Survey showed that 89% of those experiencing homelessness in our community want to move into housing today.

### Why do homeless people relocate here?

We do not experience a significant influx of homeless people from other places. In fact, 83% of people who are homeless in our community lived here before they lost their homes.

### Do they all have mental health problems?

Some homeless people in our community suffer from mental illness or depression, just like people who have homes do. To be specific, 33% suffer from some type of mental health condition, 28% have a physical disability, 25% have a chronic health problem and 15% suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

### Are homeless people dangerous?

Homeless people are vulnerable and constantly at risk. Statistically, those experiencing homelessness are less likely to commit a crime than other members of our community. In fact, homeless people are more likely to be the victim of a violent crime than to commit one. Their lives are so dangerous and stressful that approximately 100 people died while living on the streets last year.

### Do they all abuse alcohol and drugs?

Living on the streets makes it difficult to receive the medication and medical help homeless people need to deal with these issues. Supportive housing is successful for these individuals because services are always included.

Case workers help them stabilize their living situations, get involved and connected in the community, address substance abuse as well as mental and physical health problems.

When people have homes, it is easier to address these complex issues.

## HOUSING FIRST: A PROVEN APPROACH

### What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing looks like any other housing, but includes individualized support services to help residents remain housed and live productively in the neighborhood. Supportive housing is a proven strategy to reintegrate vulnerable homeless families and individuals into the community by addressing their basic housing need and providing ongoing support.

### Is this really the way to end homelessness?

According to evidence-based research in Santa Clara County and across the United States, the development of permanent affordable and supportive housing is the most effective long-term solution to homelessness. Following a Housing First approach, our community ended homelessness for more than 5,000 people from 2015 to early 2018. Of those placed in permanent supportive housing programs, only 4% return to homelessness within 12 months.

### How are residents selected?

Supportive housing is most successful ending homelessness for residents who are the most vulnerable and need the highest level of support services. Using a coordinated assessment system, the County prioritizes housing resources for people most in need whose homelessness is most likely to be resolved by housing.

In compliance with the Fair Housing Act and to the extent allowable by law, new supportive housing prioritizes people who are homeless in the neighborhood where the new homes will be. This strategy includes outreach in communities near proposed developments to increase the quality of life for new residents as well as for the entire community.

### What is Housing First?

Housing First is an approach to helping homeless people that starts with housing. In the past, homeless people were expected to get clean and sober, find a job, or commit to treatment before receiving help to find a home. Studies have shown, however, that most people need housing before they are able to successfully work on other problems. In most cases, a home provides the stability for people to find and keep a job more easily, stay sober and take better care of themselves and their neighbors. Housing First results in long-term housing stability and improved physical and behavioral health. This approach also reduces the use of crisis services such as emergency rooms, hospitals, and jails.

The County of Santa Clara and partner organizations adopted the Housing First approach in 2010. Commitment to this approach was reaffirmed during the 2015-2020 Community Plan to End Homelessness development process.

### Are residents allowed to have pets, drink alcohol and use illegal substances?

Just like people living in market-rate apartments, supportive housing tenants will have leases in their names and control over their living spaces. Building rules and restrictions are similar to those found in other apartment buildings. Tenants will be allowed to stay in their homes as long as they meet basic requirements of tenancy, such as paying rent, not interfering with other residents' use of their homes, and not causing property damage. Renters in supportive housing must follow building rules or risk eviction. Just like any other kind, supportive housing apartments are managed by professional property management companies.