



**“People are more interested than I realized in creating a more diverse community in Portola Valley. I am encouraged!”**

— Portola Valley Community Member



## WHAT'S NEXT?

The four participating cities comprised the 2017-18 Community Engagement Program. The cities have broadened participation and increased shared understanding through a multitude of outreach and learning activities, including eight city-wide meetings attended by nearly 600 residents. They are continuing their pursuit of greater inclusion through a variety of follow-up activities and revised ways of doing business.

The Community Engagement Program will expand in 2019 with **five new cities**. In addition, Home for All and Common Knowledge will continue to support successes and learning in the original pilot cities. You can follow our progress on **HomeForAllSMC.org**

## Community Engagement 2017-18 Program Snapshot



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

— Burlingame Participant

**“We would like to offer housing for young families and others who need housing here.”**

— Portola Valley Participant



**T**he Home for All Community Engagement Program helps local communities increase the number and diversity of informed participants, such as residents and local workers, addressing the shortage of available housing in San Mateo County. By utilizing inclusive and innovative strategies, communities can foster better understanding and support for local housing-related solutions. The Community Engagement Program is a collaborative learning effort that identifies best practices in engagement and communication useful in dealing with complex issues.

In 2017, Home for All partnered with Common Knowledge Plus and four cities to broaden the conversation about local housing challenges and solutions.

## GOALS

The housing challenges in San Mateo County affect everyone. Through the Community Engagement Program, each of the pilot cities worked alongside residents and workers to share community values and propose viable solutions. The four participant cities have varied demographics, land use variables, and historical context in involving the community in housing decisions. However, they share common goals, including the desire to intentionally engage new people and build a foundation of trust and shared values for future decision-making.

*“There must be a way to keep families together in our community.”*

— Portola Valley Community Member

## APPROACH

Effective Community Engagement helps decision-makers have a broader picture of the range of the community’s concerns, where there are shared values and which solutions will work. The Community Engagement Program worked with cities to identify a broad set of community partners and leaders to include a wider variety of perspectives into housing decisions. Each city conducted targeted outreach through the use of interviews, meetings, informal pop-ups and/or surveys. Building on what was learned during the outreach, cities hosted community conversations that featured diverse community members in dialogue with each other. The key elements of the Home for All approach to community engagement include:

- Engage a broader cross-section of perspectives, and identify new leaders, to participate in the design and development of priorities.
- Create opportunities and forums for **learning together**; focus on building a shared understanding ahead of any decisions.
- Maintain **ongoing two-way communication** and offer multiple ways for community members to participate.
- Create a way for people to **listen to each other and build trust** within the community.



## OUTCOMES

The community engagement process is tailored to each community’s starting points, strengths and opportunities, while it strives towards several key outcomes:

- Assist cities to build and strengthen relationships with community partners.
- Identify new intersections between City Council priorities and community values.
- Develop a community engagement blueprint that may be successfully applied to other cities’ needs.
- Create a foundation and pathways for maintaining continued dialogue within the community.



*“Focus on solutions that integrate the look and feel of our Coastside community.”*

— Half Moon Bay Community Member

*“Most at my table want thoughtful housing growth that takes into account increased housing and transit needs.”*

— Burlingame Community Member

### BURLINGAME (POP.: 30,600)

has been engaging the broader community in discussing the mix of housing options that support a thriving and diverse community and bringing new voices to the table.

### HALF MOON BAY (POP.: 12,800)

continues to develop an increased sense of interconnection by including diverse community members, including Spanish-speaking residents, to discuss housing options. The Planning Commission hosted an exploration of creative solutions for various neighborhoods and the downtown, which helped inform the City’s short-term and long-term planning efforts.

### REDWOOD CITY (POP.: 86,600)

has conducted wide-ranging community engagement during multiple housing decisions, including how to spend affordable housing funds and increase community understanding of tenant protections. Staff and partner organizations have taken steps to further connect with community leaders on housing priorities.

### PORTOLA VALLEY (POP.: 4,600)

has increased community awareness and support of its housing strategic plan by reaching out to new groups of people and existing community partners to gather input on a comprehensive housing plan and updated second unit ordinance.

