



Highlights from San Carlos' November 7, 2019 Community Conversation



On November 7, 2019, about 100 community members, City Council members and staff gathered at the Hiller Aviation Museum for an evening to compare experiences and share their hopes for San Carlos' future. Community members had dinner and engaged in thoughtful discussions with one another on the issue of housing, while City leaders and staff listened. The community conversation was hosted by the City of San Carlos, in partnership with Home for All, Common Knowledge and the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center.

The meeting addressed four primary goals:

- Provide a learning-oriented conversation about housing in San Carlos
- Share the City Council's Strategic Work Plan for 2019 Housing Goals
- Connect community members with each other and broaden the conversation around people's current housing situations and their hopes for the future of housing in San Carlos
- Identify priorities that can guide the City's upcoming housing programs and policies



In preparation for this event, City staff reached out to a wide range of groups in the San Carlos community (including, families at the farmers' market, local parents, library staff, and employees of the Downtown area) to learn about people's perspectives on housing in San Carlos. Feedback received during outreach shaped the design of the meeting.

Participants at the November 7th community conversation brought a diverse array of experiences with housing and varying knowledge of how the San Carlos community is working together to address housing challenges. Of the attendees who provided feedback, over half responded that they knew at least a fair amount about housing conditions in San Carlos. Other attendees were less familiar with housing conditions in the community. All participants were able to contribute to a rich discussion.

This meeting summary includes input from the following sources:

- Individual input and feedback forms that were submitted by 55 out of 80 participants
- Perspectives and comments by community members shared during the City’s multi-week outreach effort
- Table discussion notes prepared by the ten volunteer table facilitators

I. Presentation and Discussion #1 about Hopes for San Carlos’ Future

San Carlos’ Manager of Economic Development and Housing, Martin Romo, provided an [opening presentation](#) about issues facing San Carlos (and the broader Bay Area region). The presentation included basic demographic information about San Carlos residents, and the mix of housing types available in town. He also shared feedback that the City had heard from the community as it prepared for this meeting.

Martin’s presentation set the stage for the first table discussion, which posed the questions:

1. **How does the issue of housing affect you and the people you know in San Carlos?**
2. **What are your hopes for the future of our community?**
 - What do you want to preserve?
 - What might need to change?



The following are highlights of participants’ comments and quotes:

How the issue of housing affects people in San Carlos

- Community members leaving; “I see people forced out and it’s sad and unfair”
- Desire to preserve small town atmosphere and “strengthen the feeling of community”
- “My salary increases as a teacher sometimes don’t even include [the cost-of-living adjustment]”

“I’m a business owner. My employees have to live farther away and pay a disproportionate amount of their low income to commute in.”

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- Participant

Hopes for the future of the community

- Growth: “Have a diverse supply of housing while mitigating impacts of increased density”
- Public transportation: “More public transit including pedestrian and bicycle pathways”
- Desire to support “family-owned businesses that make [San Carlos] unique”
- Traffic: “With rising housing and population, what is the plan for traffic?”
- Maintain small town feel and green space
- Address all community members with “inclusion of rental community; include them in conversation and ideas”
- Diversity: “Housing at all income levels so those who work here can live here”

“San Carlos has an amazing opportunity to relieve the housing crisis, and we are ready to make tough decisions.”

- Participant

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When talking about housing issues, participants shared a range of personal experiences, including being evicted, paying high rents and struggling to stay in the community as they age. Many expressed that they value the community feel of San Carlos, while acknowledging that there are some changes needed. Community members want to maintain green space, public transportation, schools and other infrastructure as the city grows.



II. Presentation and Discussion #2 about Strategic Work Plan Housing Goals

The second presentation by San Carlos Community and Economic Development Director Al Savay highlighted short, medium, and long-term goals in the City Council’s Strategic Work Plan. Al described various strategies and housing options and identified key deadlines.

Following the second presentation, attendees discussed the following questions:

1. Based on what you’ve heard so far, which housing goals sound like a good idea?
2. What questions and concerns do you have?
3. Do you have any other ideas or suggestions?

The following are highlights of participants' comments and quotes:

Housing goals that sound promising

- Streamline planning and building [accessory dwelling units](#), while still regulating them
- Home sharing through [HIP Housing](#)
- Creating more density close to transit
- Affordability in various types of housing

Questions and concerns

- Concerns with parking and traffic
- Desire for citywide approach to developing housing
- Environmental concerns, such as sea level rise, in areas with development
- Bring others into the conversation and “encourage neighbors who don’t live here yet to have a voice”

Other ideas and suggestions

- “Preserve and develop open space and safe bike lanes”
- Create housing incentives for essential workers to remain in the community
- Balance housing with commercial development

Everyone in San Carlos is invited to attend and spread the word about the next Community conversation on Saturday, February 1, 2020. The meeting will spark conversations on new topics, while building on what was previously shared. [Please register for the meeting here.](#)

For more information about the February 1 Community conversation, please contact Sajuti Rahman at SRahman@cityofsancarlos.org. We welcome your ideas and hope you will invite others to the conversation.



“I think when it comes to affordable housing, we are all in this together. This theme needs to be emphasized again and again.

- Participant ”

SAVE THE DATE

Welcome Home, San Carlos: Second Community Conversation

Saturday, February 1 | San Carlos Adult Community Center | 601 Chestnut St., San Carlos, CA
9:30 a.m. Doors Open | 10 a.m. – Noon Community Conversation