Let's Talk Housing
STRATEGIES FOR THRIVING IN PLACE

The Three Ps of Anti-Displacement

Santa Clara County doesn't have enough homes for all the people who live here. There's no single solution, but we can work to protect residents, preserve affordable housing, and produce more housing of all kinds. Working on all "Three Ps" helps keep our communities resilient and thriving, preventing displacement and keeping our neighbors housed.

Protection Policies & Programs

Keeping people in their homes & in our communities

These policies and programs protect people from displacement, including support and defense against unjust evictions, harassment, steep rent increases and substandard housing conditions, as well as help for people who have had to leave their homes.

JUST CAUSE EVICTION

These protections define specific reasons that a landlord can use to evict a tenant. Examples include a breach of the lease (including non-payment), the landlord removing the property from the rental market, or the landlord or family member wanting to move in.

TENANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Studies show that tenants with legal assistance or representation are half as likely to lose their home. Tenant legal assistance includes providing tenants with the legal representation and resources needed to fight unlawful evictions, rent increases, or unsafe living conditions.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE

These programs provide financial assistance to help people stay in their homes. These can range from providing short-term or one-time emergency rental payments to long-term assistance like Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

Some renters facing a no-fault eviction or who are displaced because of building demolition, rehabilitation or health and safety issues must be given relocation assistance like money for rent or to cover moving expenses or help finding a new home.

LANDLORD & TENANT MEDIATION

These protections help resolve landlord-tenant disputes by requiring mediation under certain conditions, such as before a notice of eviction or if a rent increase is more than a certain amount.

TENANT ANTI-HARASSMENT & RETALIATION

These rules give tenants legal protection from unreasonable, abusive, or coercive landlord behavior, including intimidation, threats, or other forms of harassment that try to force tenants to leave without a legal eviction process.

FORECLOSURE ASSISTANCE

These programs provide a dedicated funding source for short-term assistance (money or other support) to homeowners at risk of foreclosure, to help keep people from losing their homes.

FAIR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT

These efforts ensure that housing practices are equitable and help prevent discrimination and unfair practices that could lead to displacement. Typical examples include fair housing testing, monitoring, and enforcement.

PROACTIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT

When code violations are identified early, landlords are required to make necessary repairs, protecting tenants from being forced to move due to unsafe or unhealthy conditions. Some places may offer assistance for improvements in exchange for protecting existing tenants.

TENANT COMMISSION OR RENT BOARD

These groups regulate the relationship between landlords and tenants by mediating and arbitrating disputes, enforcing relevant protections, and investigating wrongful eviction. They often enforce limits on rent increases.

RIGHT TO RETURN/PURCHASE

These policies say that people displaced by a no-fault eviction may have the right to return if the unit becomes available again. In other cases, when a residential building is renovated, demolished or redeveloped, property owners may be required to offer tenants a right to return at their former rent or a right to purchase.

TENANT PREFERENCE

In areas with high displacement rates, preference policies prioritize local and previously displaced low-income applicants for affordable housing.

LANDLORD & TENANT EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Education and outreach materials that cover more of the issues around displacement, are culturally appropriate and are available in many languages can help tenants and landlords understand their rights and responsibilities. This helps everyone navigate complex and changing rules.

Preservation Policies & Programs

Keeping existing housing affordable

Preserving affordability is usually easier and more cost-effective than building new affordable housing. These strategies help preserve existing subsidized and unsubsidized affordable housing, decreasing the likelihood that tenants will be displaced because of demolition, redevelopment, or rising rents.

RENT STABILIZATION

Rent stabilization (also known as rent control) prohibits landlords from raising the rent more than a defined amount per year for certain rental units. Local communities can expand rent stabilization if they choose.

RENTAL REGISTRY

Tracking information about rental properties and their owners and tenants allows communities to collect better data on changing rents and other household trends and supports enforcement of housing laws. This information also makes it easier to track property conditions, address tenant complaints, and enforce fair practices.

PUBLIC/COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Public and non-profit entities such as housing cooperatives, community land trusts (CLTs), and land banks can offer housing at permanently affordable levels. This encourages long-term stability and affordability by keeping properties out of the traditional real estate market.

FUNDING TO SUPPORT PRESERVATION

This type of funding can allow community land trusts (CLTs), nonprofit housing groups, and other community-based organizations (CBOs) to acquire and manage properties, including properties at risk of redevelopment or rapid rent increases.

FUNDING TO PRESERVE UNSUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This funding helps keep housing for lower- or moderate-income residents affordable. This funding is necessary to protect tenants in changing housing markets from gentrification and rising rents and property values.

TENANT / COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE (TOPA/COPA)

When an owner decides to sell a building, these policies allow tenants or mission-driven nonprofits to make a purchase offer before other people (the “right of first refusal”). This can provide a path to ownership for tenants and help stabilize communities.

CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION RESTRICTIONS

When rental units are converted to condominiums, they may no longer be affordable for existing tenants. Conversion restrictions require that units converted to condominiums be replaced one-to-one with similar rental units, unless purchased by current tenants or converted to permanently affordable housing for existing tenants.

SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY (SRO) PRESERVATION

SROs typically offer some of the most affordable rental options in high-demand cities. These programs limit the demolition of occupied SRO rental units or conversion to condominiums and other uses that would displace existing residents.

MOBILE HOME PRESERVATION & RENT STABILIZATION

Residents of mobile home parks typically own their home but lease the land underneath, which limits their opportunities to find housing if they are forced to move. Some communities restrict mobile home parks from being converted to other uses and some communities also limit rent increases on mobile home park land.

FEE REGULATION

Regulating fees that can be charged to tenants, homeowners, and housing developers, can protect against excessive or unfair charges.

Production Policies & Programs

Making it easier to build housing at all income levels

Building more housing can combat the biggest causes of displacement: lack of housing and high costs. Production strategies focus on construction of new affordable homes and converting non-housing structures (such as vacant shopping malls) to homes. These strategies also provide more housing choices for all people within our communities.

INCLUSIONARY ZONING

These policies require that a percentage of units in new housing developments include housing for low- and moderate-income residents. In some cases, developers may be allowed to contribute to a fund for affordable housing instead of building units on-site.

PUBLIC LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

By dedicating public land to affordable housing, governments can reduce land costs. This makes it less expensive to build housing, helping to create more homes that are affordable, including to very low-income people.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY ZONE

This zoning tool encourages the construction of more affordable housing in high-demand areas by allowing developers to build more units or have their projects reviewed more quickly if they include affordable units.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING

This type of dedicated funding helps pay for deed-restricted affordable housing or to buy and protect existing unsubsidized affordable housing.

MINISTERIAL APPROVAL

This strategy provides a streamlined approval path for affordable housing projects, reducing uncertainty during the permitting process and reducing the time and cost to build affordable housing.

DEVELOPMENT CERTAINTY & STREAMLINING

Affordable housing projects with more certainty and shorter timelines for approval cost less and can be ready to break ground more quickly. Cost savings can mean even lower rents or additional affordable units.

Education & Engagement

Helping people understand displacement what to do about it

Education and public engagement are important ways to help stop displacement. All voices must be heard to create a shared sense of purpose and to build support throughout the community.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION

Community conversations and education are helpful first steps to prevent displacement. Renters must know what is allowed so they can advocate for their rights and landlords must know the rules and understand their responsibilities.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An advisory committee gives people a voice in local displacement discussions. It can also advise decision makers and local staff on how to develop anti-displacement policies and programs that work better for people at risk of displacement.

Resources

To learn more and start a community conversation visit the Santa Clara Let's Talk Housing website.