

Many San Diegans Fear More Growth, but Housing Affordability Concerns are Near Universal

Building Single-family Homes and Building Rental Units Vie with Rent Control as Solutions

Big Support for Growth in Transit-oriented Areas; Taxes for Low-income Housing are Opposed

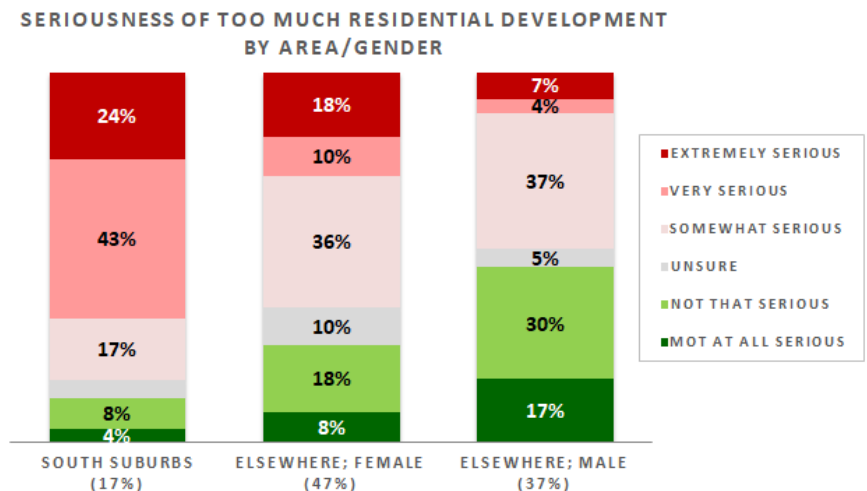
Our region is experiencing a [housing affordability crisis](#). Throughout 2022 and into 2023 the San Diego County Issues Barometer has consistently pegged affordable housing as the second most important issue behind homelessness. The [National Association of Home Builders](#) rates San Diego as the nation’s third least affordable housing market. County leaders have acknowledged the root cause is “the fact that housing development has not kept pace with population growth, resulting in housing costs that have increased at a much faster rate than income levels.” As the region becomes less affordable and Californians continue to [flee the state](#) searching for lower housing costs (among other things), how do San Diegans assess housing policies?

Residential Over-Development

Most San Diegans continue to believe residential over-development is at least a somewhat serious problem despite sky-high housing prices. It is *extremely* or *very* serious to three-in-ten, while only one-third believe too much residential development is *not that* or *not at all* serious. These are scary results for those who see more housing as the way out of the affordability crisis. It shows the old “growth wars” die hard. Many residents fear a population influx will worsen San Diego’s quality of life.



South suburbanites are on high alert. A huge two-thirds of them label residential over-development a *very* or *extremely* serious problem, reflecting the number of new residential developments in that area. Elsewhere, women see it as a *very* or *extremely* serious issue more than twice as often as men do, but their anxieties are less prevalent than in the county’s southern suburbs.



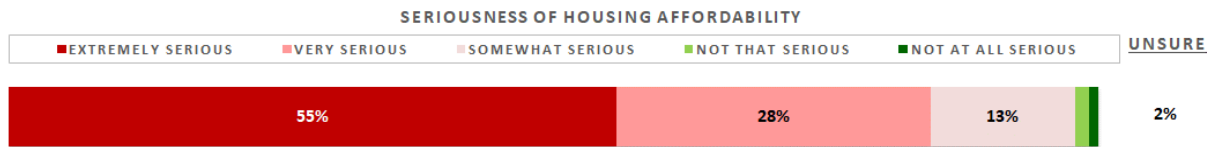
A Closer Look at San Diego’s Communities of Color

- ✓ **Latinos more often believe residential over-development is a *very* or *extremely* serious problem**
- ✓ **Views among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and African Americans align with those of all San Diegans**

		White	Latino	Black	Asian	All
Thinking about San Diego County, how serious of a problem, if at all, is too much residential development?	Not at all serious	16%	5%	11%	9%	11%
	Not that serious	24%	23%	12%	14%	22%
	Unsure	9%	3%	7%	3%	7%
	Somewhat serious	35%	25%	28%	48%	32%
	Very serious	9%	25%	11%	3%	14%
	Extremely serious	8%	19%	30%	24%	15%

Housing Affordability

With the [average San Diego County home](#) valued at \$843,000, San Diegans overwhelmingly say housing affordability is a critical issue. More than eight-in-ten feel it's at least *very serious*, with 55% saying it is *extremely serious*. Hardly anyone thinks it is no big deal. Residents generally see the San Diego housing market as in crisis, and, in fact, every demographic segment sees it that way.



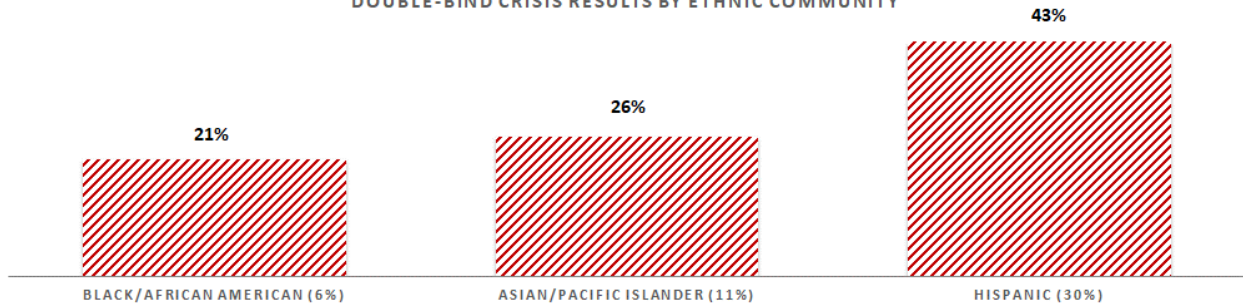
What's equally thought-provoking: 26% regard residential over-development as at least a *very serious* problem *and* perceive housing affordability to be just as serious. These residents -- often the south suburbanites, as well as residents of other dense neighborhoods -- acknowledge housing costs are problematic, but fear more development even if it offers some relief on the affordability front. Attitudinally situated between the proverbial rock-and-a-hard-place, it's difficult to imagine a solution for these folks other than some form of price controls.

A Closer Look at San Diego's Communities of Color

- ✓ Similar shares of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos consider housing affordability to be a highly serious problem
- ✓ However, Latinos are far more in the double-bind of fearing both residential development and a housing affordability crisis

		White	Latino	Black	Asian	All
Thinking about San Diego County, how serious of a problem, if at all, is housing affordability?	Not at all serious	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Not that serious	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Unsure	1%	3%	0%	0%	2%
	Somewhat serious	16%	11%	27%	6%	13%
	Very serious	27%	26%	13%	48%	28%
	Extremely serious	53%	59%	59%	45%	55%

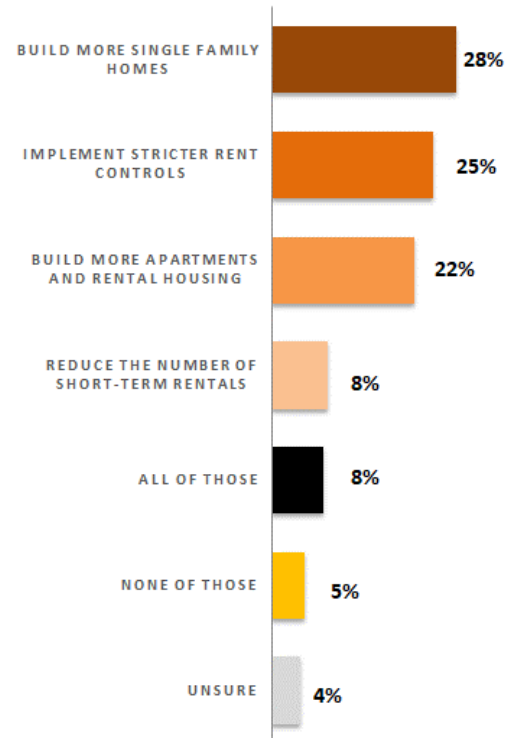
DOUBLE-BIND CRISIS RESULTS BY ETHNIC COMMUNITY



Preferred Approach for Addressing Housing Affordability

San Diegans generally divide between three approaches to addressing affordability. Including folks who want all the measures we offered, at 36%, building more single-family homes edges out the others, but is followed closely by one-in-three who think implementing stricter rent controls is the way to go. Another 30% think more apartments and rental housing should be built. When combined with those who prefer building more single-family homes, half back building more units to tackle the issue. Just one-in-six feel reducing the number of short-term rentals – long one of San Diego’s most contentious issues -- is best. Only 5% don’t think any approach we offered will work.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



A resident’s party tells us a tremendous amount about how they want housing affordability addressed. Republicans are huge fans of building San Diego out of its affordability crisis by constructing single family homes. Fifty-eight percent favor this approach. On the other hand, very few put building rental housing, stricter rent controls or reducing short-term rentals at the top of their list. Democrats spread the love around, agreeing with Republicans on single family homes 36% of the time, but equally embracing more rental housing and stricter rent control. The few folks who belong to minor parties gravitate toward building more apartments and rental housing as the way out of the crisis. Non-partisans tend to be rent control fans, as 45% would prefer this, although 30% prefer building more single-family homes. Non-registrants tend to split between rent control and building more rental housing. Given these fractious partisan attitudes, it’s no wonder politicians have trouble charting a clear course forward.

Race and ethnicity are sometimes important. Asian residents, along with Whites, show substantial support for reigning in short-term rentals, and are huge champions of building more single-family homes. Many in the Black community agree that’s the best approach, but substantial percentages of Blacks also see more rental housing and more robust rent control as the best paths forward. Hispanic residents are less united behind building single-family homes and are bigger rent control and rental housing fans. Generally, stricter rent controls are more favored by San Diego’s ethnic communities than by Whites.

Age is another factor. Support for building more single-family homes is sturdy until it peters out among the elderly, who enthusiastically embrace the construction of more rental housing. Interestingly, those 75 and older are joined in this by those in the youngest cohort. As for more rigorous rent control, backing for it is substantial among 18- to 24-year-olds, peaks among 25- to 34-year-olds, returns to moderate levels among those in their late 30s to early 40s and then recedes dramatically after that.

Some of the biggest rent control fans come from those who see housing affordability as critical to San Diego’s future. Among those who say it’s extremely serious, 44% say firmer rent controls should be atop the policymakers’ playbook. The more serious housing affordability becomes, the more stricter controls will be supported. Also, people who feel housing affordability is highly problematic far more often say they want *all* the approaches pursued and far fewer of them feel *none* are valid.

Finally, much of the support for building rental housing depends on how much of a problem one has with residential growth. Residents who have no issue with it elevate rental housing more often than any other approach. In contrast, those who see residential growth as an extremely serious problem are not fans of rental housing, greatly preferring single family home construction -- or even, at times, stricter rent controls -- to building more apartments.

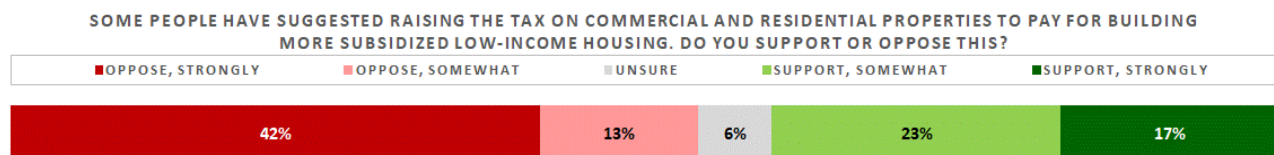
A Closer Look at San Diego’s Communities of Color

- ✓ **AAPI folks are bigger fans of building more single-family homes and less excited about the idea of building more apartments and rental housing**
- ✓ **Latinos are partial to implementing stricter rent control and building apartments, but not more single-family homes or fewer short term rentals**
- ✓ **Preferences among African Americans mirror those of the wider populace**

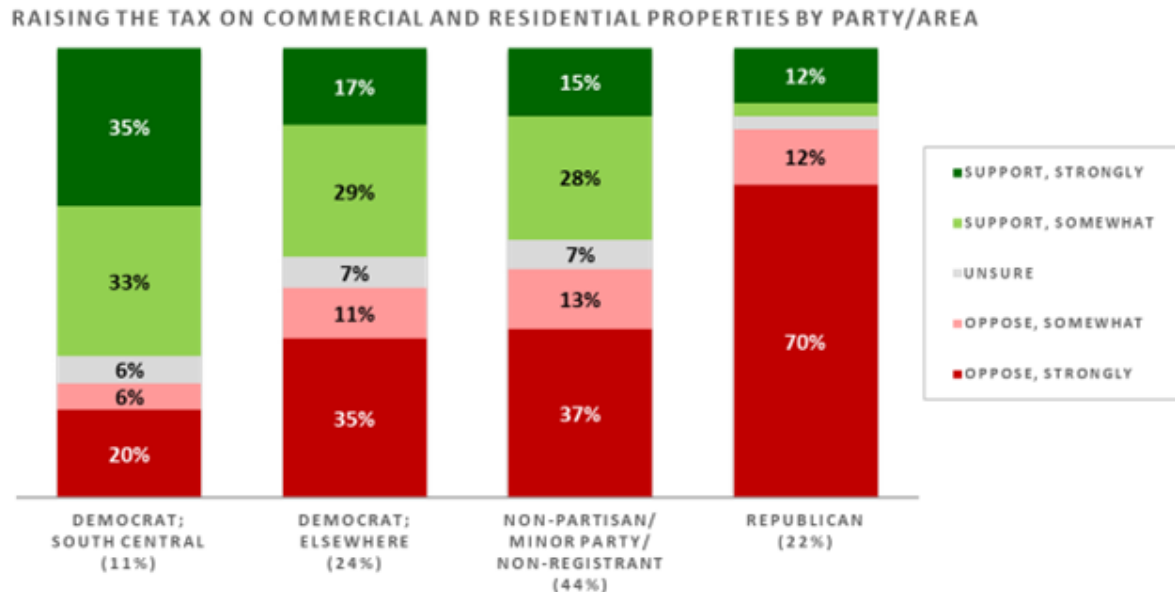
		White	Latino	Black	Asian	All
Some people have suggested the following approaches to addressing housing affordability in San Diego County. Please tell me which you think is best?	Build more single-family homes	27%	25%	33%	43%	28%
	Implement stricter rent controls	18%	37%	22%	20%	25%
	Build more apartments and rental housing	19%	32%	28%	11%	22%
	Reduce the number of short-term rentals	11%	2%	5%	15%	8%
	All of those	11%	3%	6%	6%	8%
	None of those	6%	1%	1%	2%	5%
	Unsure	8%	0%	4%	2%	4%

Funding Subsidized Low-Income Housing

California has one of the nation’s [highest income tax rates](#), so it’s unsurprising to find raising taxes on commercial and residential properties to pay for building more subsidized low-income housing is not broadly popular. Although four-in-ten like the idea, 54% oppose it and opponents are far more steadfast. If a similar proposal were on the ballot – especially in these uncertain economic times – it would lose.



Republicans overwhelmingly resist raising taxes to pay for more housing. Together, nonpartisans, minor party members, and non-registrants are mostly opposed. However, Democrats in south-central neighborhoods are keen on the idea. Democrats elsewhere, however, are more divided, suggesting it is in south-central neighborhoods where housing costs pair with partisanship to create a pro-tax pocket.



A Closer Look at San Diego’s Communities of Color

- ✓ Latinos are more strongly supportive of raising taxes to build more low-income housing
- ✓ There’s more support than opposition within the AAPI and African American communities

		White	Latino	Black	Asian	All
Some people have suggested raising the tax on commercial and residential properties to pay for building more subsidized low-income housing...	Oppose, strongly	46%	36%	31%	30%	42%
	Oppose, somewhat	15%	8%	16%	17%	13%
	Unsure	7%	7%	1%	3%	6%
	Support, somewhat	21%	24%	34%	31%	23%
	Support, strongly	11%	24%	17%	19%	17%

Residential Development Near Mass Transit

Residents largely support allowing more residential development in neighborhoods with easy access to mass transit. A whopping 72% of folks like this tax-free idea. Only 21% oppose it, while 7% are unsure what to make of it. Although most residents like the concept of placing more development near transit hubs, there would likely be pushback from residents of the neighborhoods where the development would occur, as evidenced by [recent local action](#). Thwarting the hyper-local NIMBY mentality isn’t easy.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE SUGGESTED CITIES ALLOW MORE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE RESIDENTS CAN EASILY ACCESS CONNECTIONS TO MASS TRANSIT. DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THIS?



Views on this proposal can hinge on age, and young San Diegans go gaga for it. A massive 70% of residents younger than 28 strongly believe in the plan and another 26% *somewhat* do, while none (in our survey) are opposed. Those in the 28- to 39-year-old cohort lack the young adults' white-hot intensity, but overwhelmingly favor it. Residents 40 and older are more supportive than not but take a sort of wait-and-see stance. The younger crowd is the YIMBY movement's vanguard.

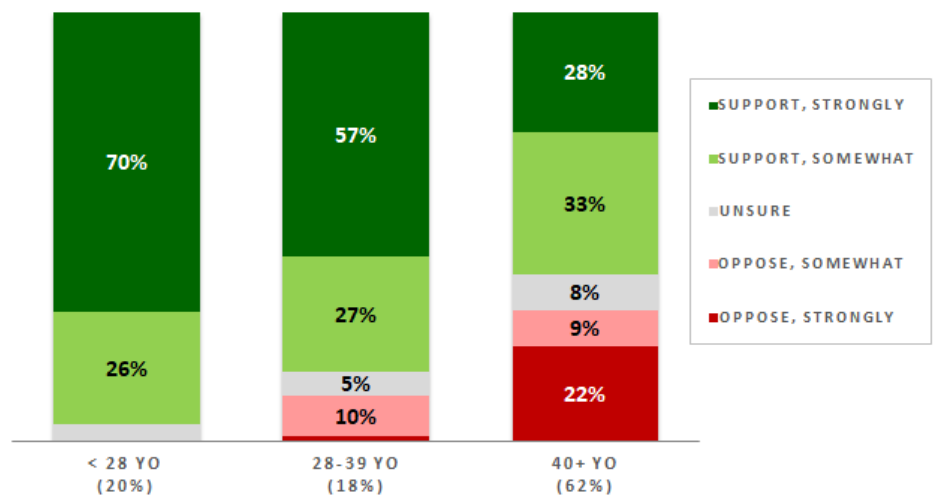
One's preferred approach to addressing housing affordability also plays a role. Those who want more apartments and rental housing built – a denser solution in-line with urbanization -- are totally on board with this concept.

Republican women constitute the lone segment decidedly against this blueprint. A slim majority are opposed and almost all their antipathy is intense; their staunch opposition is more than three times greater than their strong support. This is where pushback to infill proposals will be strongest. GOP women, however, comprise a mere 10% of the population. Their opposition to placing more development near transit would not sink such a proposal.

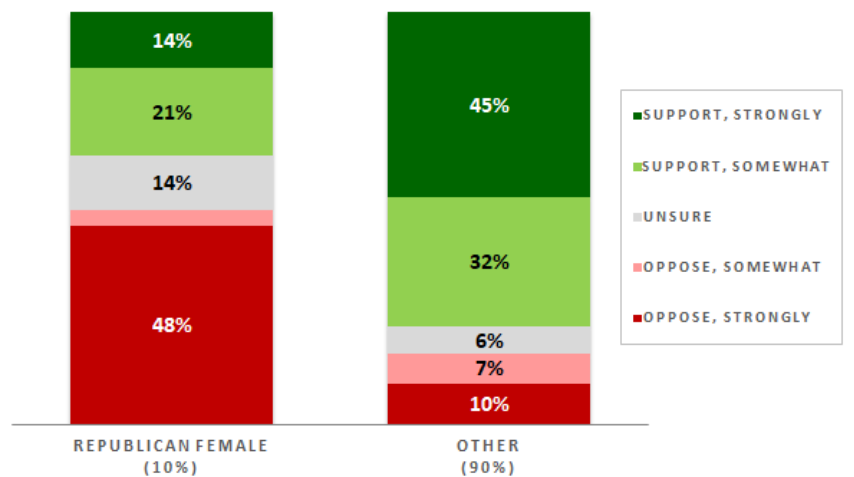
Educational partly attainment also drives opinions. There is much more backing from highly educated residents, but that eases among residents with less education.

Location also impacts views. There are almost as many opponents as there are supporters living south of SR-54 (i.e., the south suburbs). Forty-nine percent of residents living in this area like the development plan, but 44% – more than twice as many as in the county overall – are opposed, with one-quarter *strongly* against it. Again, this area has endured significant residential and commercial development in the past 20 years, and that growth probably curbs residents' appetite for more. There's

ALLOW MORE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WHERE THERE ARE MASS TRANSIT CONNECTIONS BY AGE



ALLOW MORE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WHERE THERE ARE MASS TRANSIT CONNECTIONS BY PARTY/GENDER



also less enthusiasm in communities between I-8 and SR-52. Urban planners will encounter more opposition in these areas.

Indicating just how alluring it is to move more development closer to mass transit connections, even a vast majority of the residents who *don't* think housing affordability has reached the critical stage support this. The finding that even most who see too much residential development as an extremely serious problem also support this approach drives this point home. Nearly all types of San Diegans embrace the concept of placing residential development in neighborhoods which already have transit connections.

A Closer Look at San Diego’s Communities of Color

- ✓ **Latinos and Blacks love the idea of more residential development in transit-oriented neighborhoods**
- ✓ **AAPI views are on par with those of the broader population**

		White	Latino	Black	Asian	All
Some people have suggested cities allow more residential development in neighborhoods where residents can easily access connections to mass transit...	Oppose, strongly	14%	14%	5%	22%	14%
	Oppose, somewhat	8%	3%	10%	5%	7%
	Unsure	11%	3%	6%	2%	7%
	Support, somewhat	28%	29%	21%	39%	31%
	Support, strongly	39%	51%	58%	32%	42%