



City of Menlo Park Anti-displacement Plan

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Chapter 1

Background

Introduction

Displacement occurs when individuals or families need to relocate from their homes or neighborhoods due to economic pressures, redevelopment, rising housing costs, or other external factors beyond their control. While some degree of neighborhood change is inevitable, displacement disproportionately impacts low-income households and communities of color, often uprooting long-standing residents and weakening social and cultural networks.

Anti-displacement strategies are a set of focused policies and programs designed to reduce displacement impacts by preserving affordability, protecting tenants, and promoting housing stability.

During preparation of the Menlo Park Housing Element¹ and Environmental Justice Element², the Belle Haven neighborhood was identified as the area most at risk for displacement, shaped by a legacy of historical disinvestment, redevelopment

pressures, and ongoing affordability challenges. In response, the two Elements include policies and programs to address displacement and create greater community stability in Menlo Park. In alignment with its commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive community, the City of Menlo Park (City) is pursuing holistic approaches to reduce displacement and enhance livability within the city.

The Anti-displacement Plan outlines and evaluates a series of potential programs and policies designed to advance anti-displacement efforts in the City's General Plan Housing Element and Environmental Justice Element. It identifies key drivers of displacement, elevates community-defined priorities, and incorporates expert guidance to propose the most effective tools for ensuring that residents can remain and thrive in their neighborhoods.

Defining Displacement

Displacement occurs when people need to relocate from their homes or neighborhoods due to a variety of factors that are often out of their control.

These factors could include eviction, rising housing costs, deteriorating building conditions, neighborhood redevelopment or gentrification.

A combination of these factors can result in different forms of displacement, including direct, indirect, and cultural displacement.

Table 1 summarizes the different forms of displacement while Table 2 provides important terms relevant to displacement.



Image Source: Realm Apartments, City of Menlo Park BMR Rental Listing

Table 1. Forms of Displacement

TERM	DEFINITION
Direct Displacement	Direct displacement is when a person or family is forced to move because they are informally evicted through tactics designed to drive them out, or because their building is torn down. When this happens, the residents must move out of their home, sometimes to a different neighborhood or community. Direct displacement is the most visible and immediate form of displacement. It can be extremely disruptive to people's lives.
Indirect Displacement	Indirect displacement is when a person or family can no longer afford to stay in their home because of rising rents. As rents increase, they feel pressure to move away to a place they can afford. Indirect displacement is harder to see and happens more slowly over time, but it still takes people away from social networks, jobs, schools, and places of worship.
Cultural Displacement	Cultural displacement is when new development and new residents change the character of the area. It can create a feeling of loss for those who have been in the area for a longer time, even if they can afford to stay. Cultural displacement happens over time as older businesses close or move away, community institutions lose their membership, and public spaces are reoriented to new users and activities.

Source: Cities Association of Santa Clara County³

Table 2. Other Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Gentrification	A process of neighborhood change that includes economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood — by means of real estate investment and new higher-income residents moving in – as well as demographic change – not only in terms of income level, but also in terms of changes in the education level or racial make-up of residents.
Redlining	From the 1930s through the late 60s, standards set by the federal government and carried out by banks explicitly redlined certain neighborhoods that were often home predominantly to people of color, and labeled them as “risky” and “unfit for investment.” This practice meant that people of color were denied access to loans that would enable them to buy or repair homes in their neighborhood.
White Flight	Housing and transportation policies of the mid-20th century fueled the growth of mostly white suburbs, and the exodus of white residents and capital from urban centers, in a phenomenon often referred to as “white flight.” The mortgage component of the GI Bill is an example of a program that fueled white flight. The program guaranteed low-cost mortgage loans for returning WWII soldiers. However, discrimination limited the extent to which Black veterans were able to purchase homes in the growing suburbs thus limiting them to urban centers. In fact, the FHA largely required that suburban developers agree to not sell houses to Black people in order for the developers to access these guaranteed loans.

Table 2. Other Definitions (continued)

TERM	DEFINITION
Urban Renewal	Left behind in central city neighborhoods, low-income households and communities of color bore the brunt of highway system expansion and urban renewal programs, which resulted in the mass clearance of homes, businesses, and neighborhood institutions. This set the stage for widespread public and private disinvestment in the decades that followed.
Exclusionary Zoning	Exclusionary zoning refers to local land use policies that restrict or prohibit certain types of housing, particularly affordable or multi-family housing, often through requirements such as large minimum lot sizes, building height limits, or bans on multi-unit dwellings. These practices have historically been used to exclude low-income people and people of color from certain neighborhoods. ⁴
Foreclosure Crisis	In more recent history years, the foreclosure crisis contributed to making places vulnerable to gentrification. In low-income communities of color, disproportionate levels of subprime lending (providing loans with higher interest and fees to those with lower credit scores or income to offset an increased risk of default) resulted in mass foreclosures, leaving those neighborhoods vulnerable to investors seeking to purchase and flip homes. Of foreclosures completed nationwide between 2007-2009, there were 790 foreclosures for African Americans, 769 foreclosures for Latinos, and 452 for Non-Hispanic Whites per 10,000 loans. ⁵ Before the foreclosure crisis, foreclosures were relatively rare, with a rate of just 1% at the end of 2005 compared to 4.6% by the end of 2009. Among subprime loans, foreclosure rates increased dramatically, rising from 3.3% in 2005 to 15.6% in 2009. ⁶
Cost Burdened	Cost burdened means monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceed 30% of monthly income for a household. Severely cost burdened means monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceed 50% of monthly income for a household.

Source: Urban Displacement Project, HUD⁷

History and Background of Displacement in Menlo Park

When discussing displacement, it is important to consider the historical context that may contribute to a community's vulnerability. Displacement is often shaped by patterns of disinvestment and exclusionary policies that have limited access to stable housing and wealth-building opportunities for certain communities. Without this context, the root causes can be overlooked in the development of anti-displacement strategies.

The summary below offers a snapshot of the historical context shaping current displacement risks, including specific events that have impacted the Belle Haven neighborhood.

A more detailed account with cited sources is included in Appendix A.

Significant Displacement Dates in Menlo Park

1769: Spanish settlers arrived in the Bay Area. Missions and land grants forcibly displaced the Ramaytush Ohlone people.

1927: The City of Menlo Park is officially incorporated. Single-family zoning becomes dominant, laying the groundwork for exclusionary land use policies.

1934: The FHA begins redlining, denying mortgages in communities of color and fueling disinvestment. Belle Haven, developed for working-class families, is formally redlined in 1955, limiting access to credit and homeownership.

1940s: Racially restrictive covenants blocked Black and other minority families from buying homes in Menlo Park and across the Bay Area.

- **1949:** Belle Haven neighborhood annexed into Menlo Park.⁸

1950s:

- **1952:** Menlo Park's Master Plan proposes increased minimum lot sizes, using zoning to block multifamily and affordable housing; Belle Haven, with its smaller lots, remains one of the few areas where lower-income and non-white residents can live.
- As suburban housing booms, federally backed loans are denied to integrated developments, reinforcing segregation outside Belle Haven.

Real estate agents began using blockbusting techniques and playing on white homeowner biases to spur "white flight." White homeowners were encouraged to sell their homes at lower prices, which were then resold to Black homebuyers at higher prices in places like Belle Haven. This is known as "block-busting."

1960: School district boundaries place Belle Haven and East Palo Alto in the Ravenswood High School attendance area, reinforcing segregation from majority-white Menlo-Atherton High.

1976: Ravenswood High School closes, which served Belle Haven and East Palo Alto, amid white flight and chronic disinvestment.

1990s: The tech boom fuels massive job growth in Silicon Valley and long-time Belle Haven residents face mounting displacement pressure due to the region's growing jobs-housing imbalance.

2000's: Predatory lending occurs in segregated communities like Belle Haven. This leads to foreclosures peaking during the recession with 99 homeowners losing their homes to foreclosure in Belle Haven in 2009 alone, disproportionately and deeply impacting the community's housing stability.⁹

2013: Tech expansion and development pressure further reshapes Belle Haven.

2020s - Menlo Park Now – Inequities Persist Amid Wealth and Growth

The California Opportunity Map indicates that Belle Haven is the City's only Low Resource neighborhood, while most other areas are classified as High or Highest Resource.¹⁰

The City has more jobs than residents, but few workers, particularly low-wage earners, can afford to live in Menlo Park due to soaring home prices and high rents.

According to 2021 ACS 5 Year data used in the Housing Element, home values in Menlo Park were 72% above the typical home value in San Mateo County,¹¹ Belle Haven remains one of the few areas where lower-income families can still reside, comparable to County prices, underscoring the city's persistent housing affordability crisis.

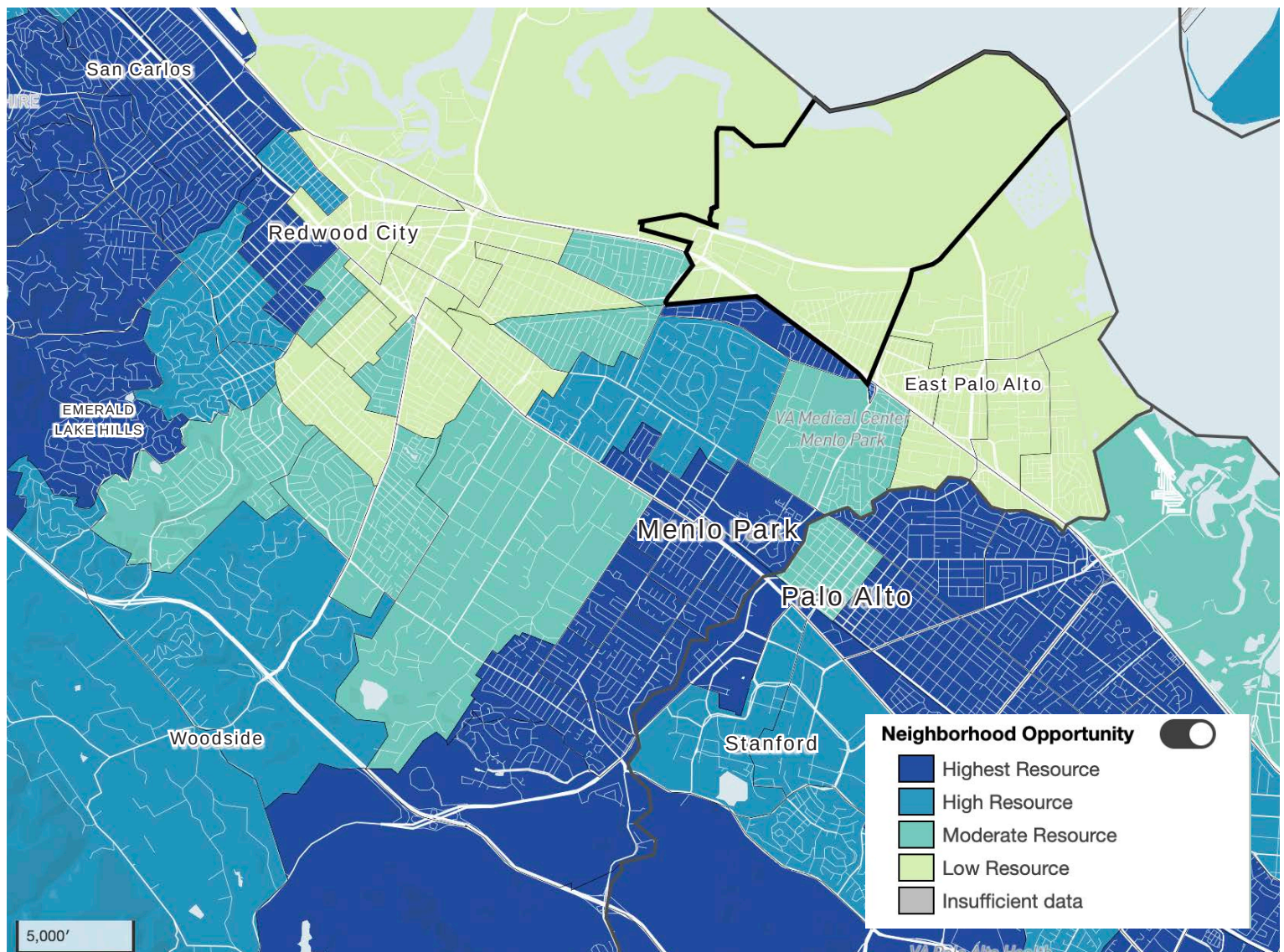


Image Source: 2026 Opportunity and Neighborhood Change Maps, Office of the State Treasurer, State of California

Chapter 2

Belle Haven

Why Belle Haven?

When developing an anti-displacement plan, it is essential to first identify the communities most at risk. Both current and historical data consistently show that the Belle Haven neighborhood faces deep and persistent disparities such as household income and educational attainment.

Belle Haven is a racially and economically diverse neighborhood, geographically separated from the rest of Menlo Park by Highway 101. Originally developed during World War II to house working-class families, it was shaped by exclusionary zoning and land use decisions that concentrated lower-income housing in one part of the city. While much of Menlo Park consists of larger single-family homes, Belle Haven's lots were typically smaller and single-family homes were more modest, making it one of the few areas where lower-income and non-white residents could live.

Today, these homes have appreciated significantly in value, placing them out of reach for many lower-income households.

In the summer of 2025, interviews were conducted with housing practitioners and community advocates who indicated that many of the single-

family homes are now shared by multiple lower-income households who are likely renters. This observation is also supported by quantitative data discussed later in the document.

Compared to the other areas of Menlo Park, Belle Haven experiences significant disparities in income, race/diversity, educational attainment, and housing conditions. These disparities contribute to greater housing instability and make Belle Haven residents more vulnerable to displacement.

This report draws on 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year data. Where possible, the data is specific to Belle Haven (using Block Groups). In some instances, however, data is only available for Census Tract 6117, which includes both Belle Haven and Bayfront. Therefore, please note that any figure labeled 'Belle Haven' pertains to data specific to Belle Haven. Any figures labeled "Belle Haven/Bayfront" apply to both areas.

This data underscores persistent inequities that highlight Belle Haven as a clear priority for focused, data-informed anti-displacement strategies.



Image Source: Anti-displacement Plan Community Meeting

Income

When compared to the City as a whole, the Area Median Income (AMI) in the Belle Haven/Bayfront neighborhood is significantly lower.

The Median Household Income for Belle Haven/Bayfront in 2023 was estimated to be \$149,669, which is about three-quarters of the AMI for Menlo Park, at \$206,588.

Historically, incomes in Belle Haven have been less than the rest of the city.

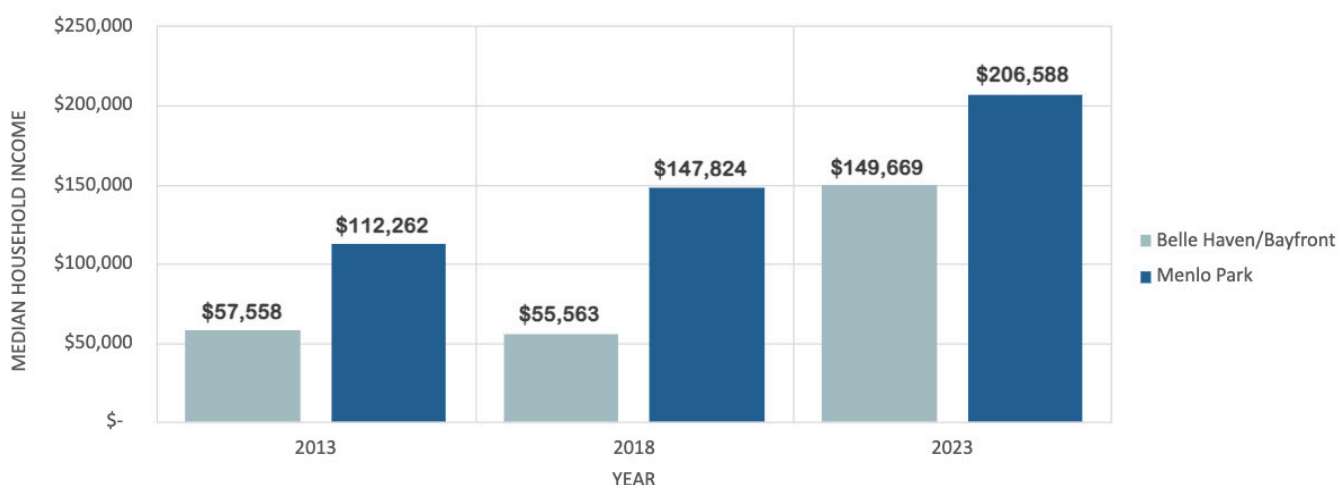
Figure 1 highlights the difference in median income over the past decade. **Figures 1 and 2** also illustrate rising household incomes and a concurrent decline of households making less

than \$100,000 a year, over time in both Belle Haven/Bayfront and Menlo Park. **Figure 1** shows that the median household income significantly increased from 2018 to 2023, going from \$55,563 to \$149,669 in Belle Haven/Bayfront.

Correspondingly, it shows a dramatic decrease in households making less than \$100,000 in **Figure 2**.

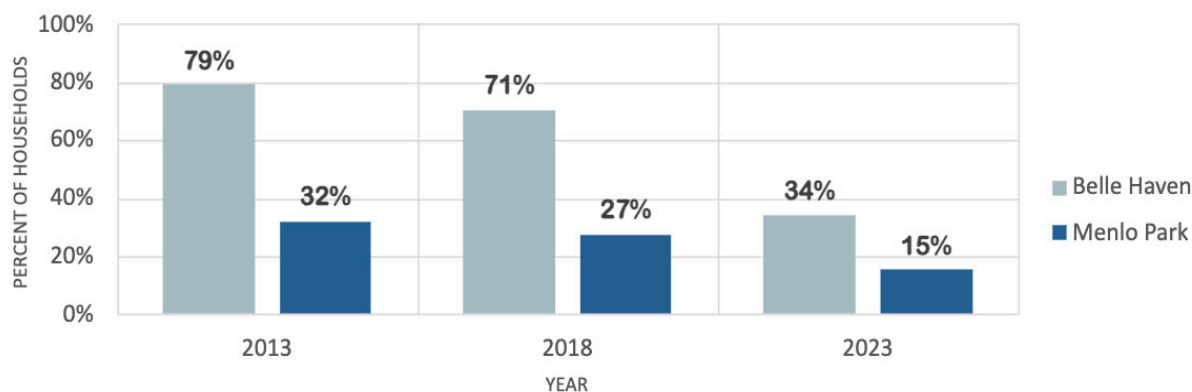
This pattern suggests that some displacement of lower-earning households may have already occurred, reflected in the changing income composition of residents as higher income households are moving into the area.

Figure 1. Median Household Income for Belle Haven/Bayfront and Menlo Park, 2013, 2018, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table S1903, Census Tract 6117.

Figure 2. Percent of Households Making \$100,000 or less a year in Belle Haven vs Menlo Park 2013, 2018, and 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table S1901.

Rising Housing Costs

The rising cost of housing is also a key factor contributing to displacement. Between 2022 and 2023, the median gross rent in Belle Haven/Bayfront rose from \$2,653 to \$3,252, an increase of 22.6% in just one year.¹²

This substantial increase in housing costs reflects broader regional trends but has particularly profound implications for Belle Haven, where income disparities make its residents more vulnerable to displacement.

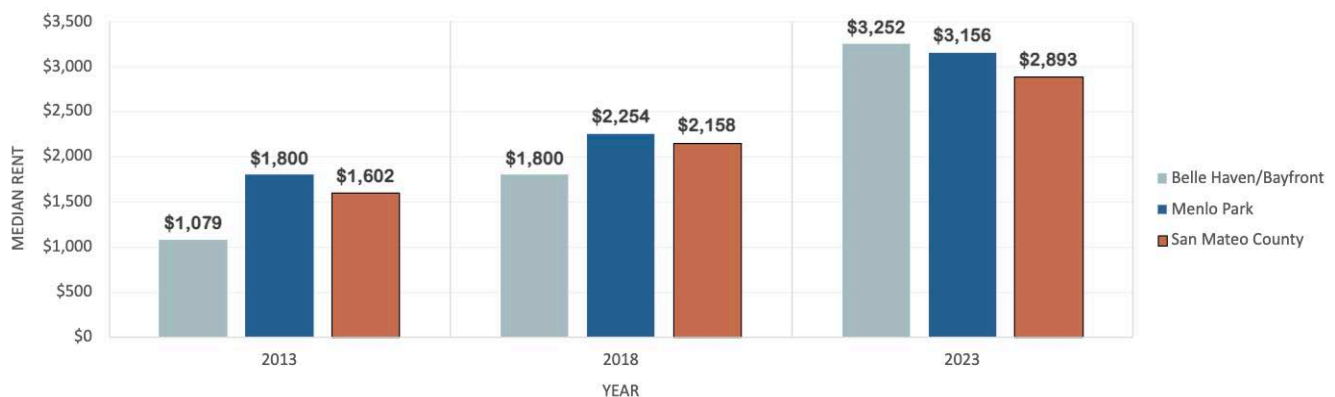
For more about the income disparities, please see the “Household Composition and Overcrowding” discussion later in the plan.

Both rent prices and home values have increased significantly in Belle Haven/Bayfront and Menlo Park, as a whole, over a 10 year period.

As seen in [Figure 3](#), from 2013 to 2023, rents in Belle Haven/Bayfront have tripled (+201%), rising faster than Menlo Park overall. For reference, San Mateo County rents were also included in [Figure 3 and 4](#) for reference.

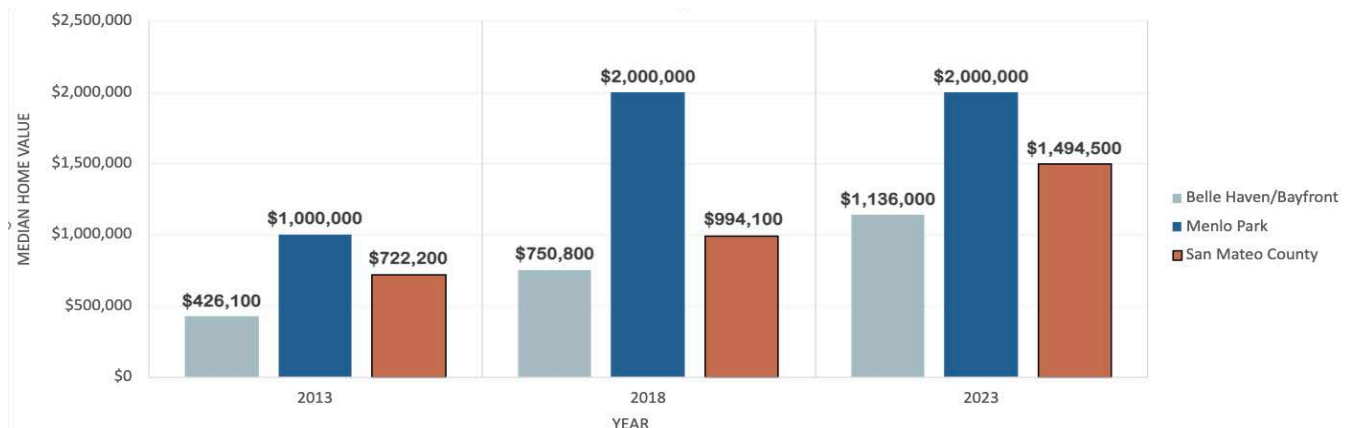
The rent prices even surpassed citywide averages in 2023 (\$3,252 vs. \$3,156), putting renters under intense displacement pressure.

Figure 3. Median Rent in Belle Haven/Bayfront vs Menlo Park and County 2013, 2018, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table DP04, Census Tract 6117.

Figure 4. Median Home Value in Belle Haven/Bayfront vs Menlo Park and County 2013, 2018, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table DP04, Census Tract 6117.

*Home values above \$2 million are grouped into a single category in ACS data, so the median home value may be higher than shown here.

Not surprisingly, from 2018 to 2023, the percentage of renters that pay \$3,000 or more in rent increased dramatically in Belle Haven/Bayfront, from 8% to 43%, shown in [Figure 5](#).

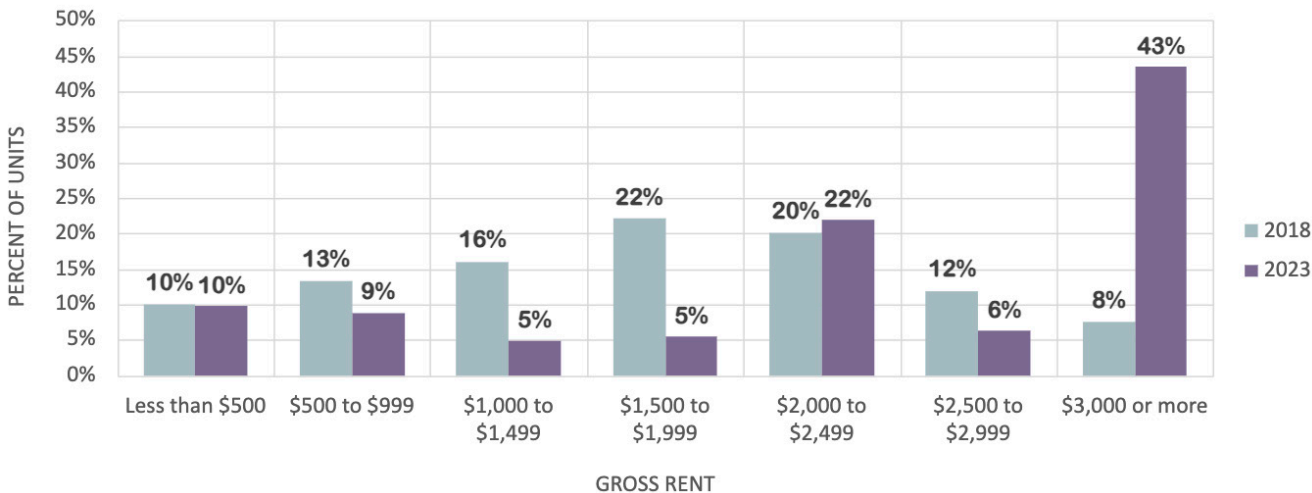
Even before the recent rent increases, 68% of all renters in 2018 were already paying more than 30% of their income on rent, as outlined in [Figure 6](#).

In 2023, after a dramatic increase in rents, the percentage of cost burdened renters decreased to 53% of Belle Haven/Bayfront renters, **suggesting that lower income populations were displaced, and replaced by higher income households.**

While at first glance, per the ACS, Menlo Park’s home values remained consistently above \$2 million from 2018 to 2023, Belle Haven/Bayfront’s rose from \$750,800 to \$1.1 million, narrowing the gap in housing prices between the Belle the rest of the City.

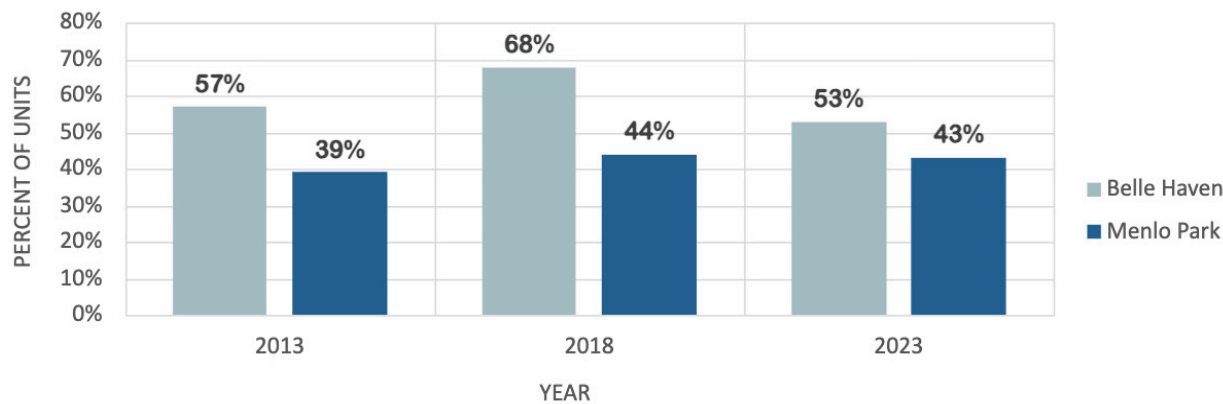
Because home values above \$2 million are grouped into a single category in ACS data, the median home value may be higher. Per SiliconValleyMLS.com, the median value of a home in 2018 was about \$2.6 million. In 2023, the median home value had increased to about \$3.5 million.¹³ **Thus the trend of decreasing the supply of affordable ownership housing and increasing the displacement risk for low-income households continued.**

Figure 5. Gross Rents in Belle Haven/Bayfront 2018 and 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25063.

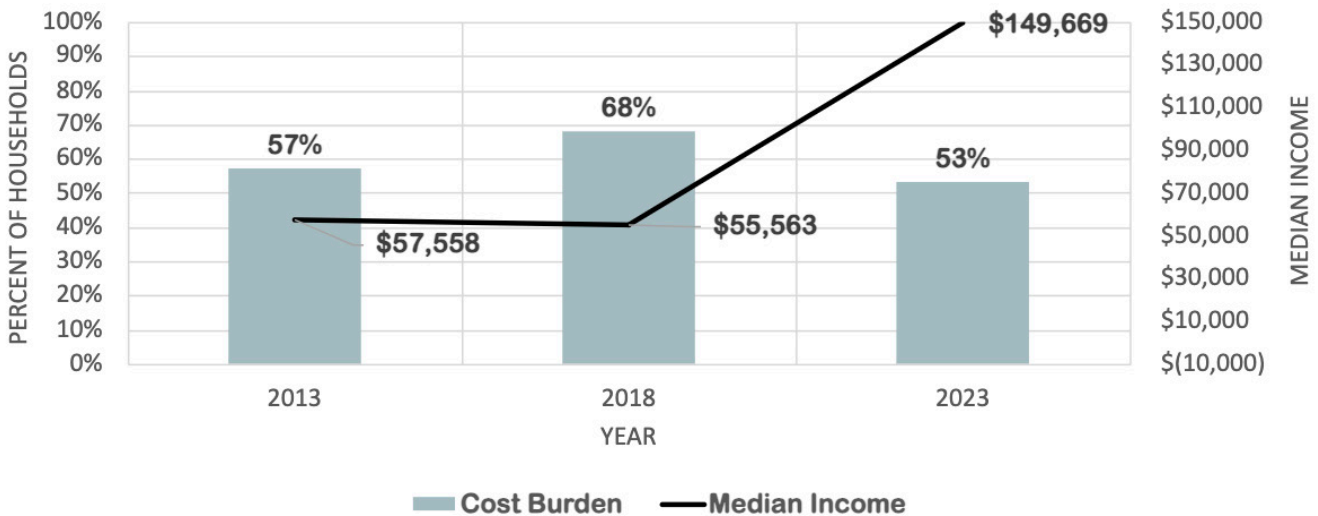
Figure 6. Rent Cost Burden in Belle Haven/Bayfront vs Menlo Park 2013, 2018, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25070.

Figure 7 shows the trend of lower earning households being replaced by higher income households as seen in the rise of median income with the corresponding decrease in rent burden. This suggests that many of the cost burdened households are no longer in the community.

Figure 7. Belle Haven/Bayfront Rent Cost Burden vs Belle Haven Median Income 2013, 2018, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Tables B25070 and S1903 (Census Tract 6117).



Image Source: Menlo Park Housing Fair

Housing Conditions

One key factor driving displacement risk is the limited availability of affordable housing. As seen in [Figure 8](#), 54% of Belle Haven’s housing stock was built before 1960, and development slowed significantly afterward. It was not until Meta Platforms Inc.’s (formerly Facebook) move to Menlo Park in 2013 and rapid expansion from 2015 to 2020 that the area saw a sudden and dramatic surge in housing construction, much of it at market-rate prices significantly above existing rents (see Rising Housing Costs section).

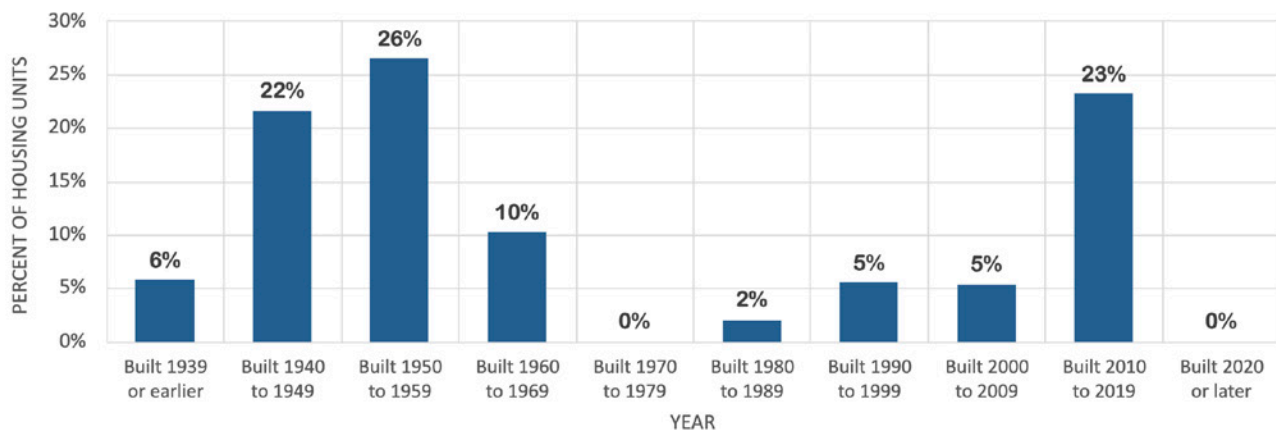
This influx of higher-cost units, alongside rising demand tied to job growth, intensified

displacement pressure on long-term Belle Haven residents.

The limited stock of naturally affordable housing in Belle Haven is predominantly made up of single-family homes. In fact, 57% of the neighborhood’s housing consists of single-family homes ([Figure 9](#)).

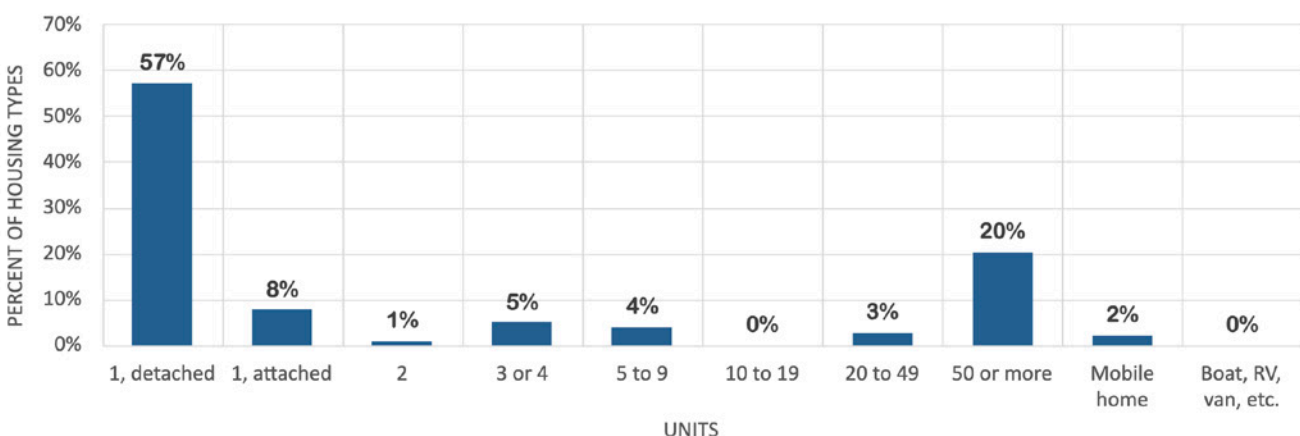
This is particularly notable given that over half of Belle Haven households are renters, and about half of all renter households earn less than \$100,000, which is less than what federal and state agencies consider to be low income (see [Figure 10](#)).

Figure 8. Housing Units by Construction Year in Belle Haven/Bayfront, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25034. Please note that 2023 ACS estimates are prepared using 2018 data therefore some recent projects in the Bayfront area may not have been included in the estimates.

Figure 9. Housing Types in Belle Haven, 2023



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25024

Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act

The predominance of single-family homes in the neighborhood plays a key role in the displacement dynamic, as 36% of Belle Haven's renter households live in single-family homes.¹⁴

The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act of 1995 (Costa-Hawkins) limits local rent control and exempts single-family homes, condominiums, and buildings constructed after 1995. In 2019, the state passed the Tenant Protection Act (AB1482), which created rent stabilization, just-cause eviction protections, and relocation assistance. To avoid conflict with Costa-Hawkins, single-family homes were excluded, so tenants of single-family homes do not receive the same protections as tenants in apartments.



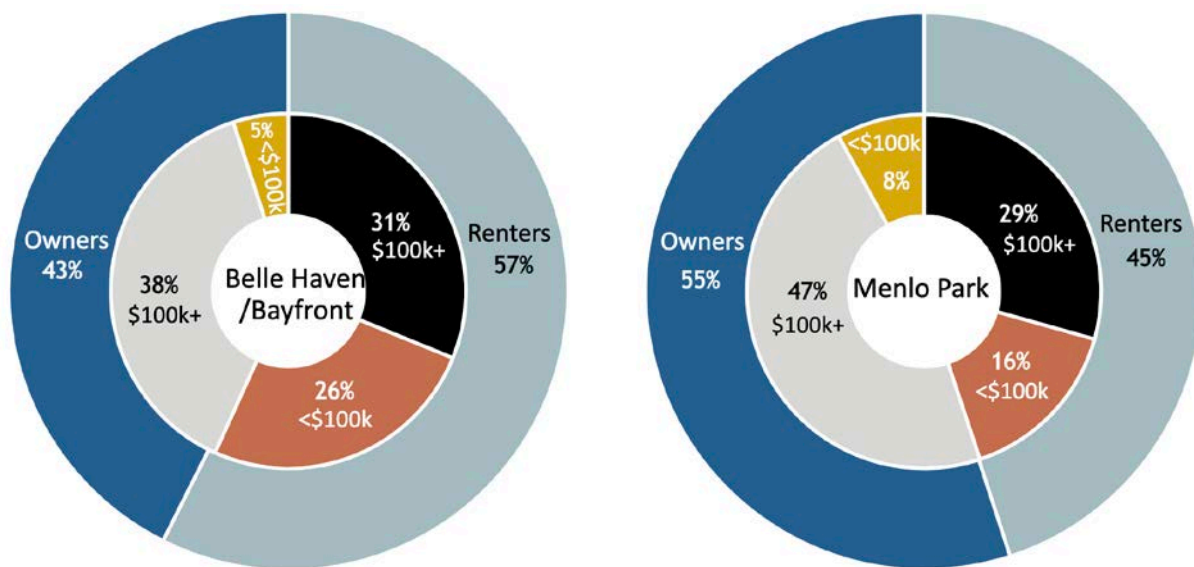
Image Source: Housing Element Flyers

Household Composition and Overcrowding

The percentage of renters in Belle Haven/Bayfront is 12 percentage points higher than the rest of the City. In Belle Haven, approximately 57% of the households rent their home and 43% own their homes. For the rest of City, the percentages are almost the same but opposite in that 55% own their homes and 45% are renters (*Figure 10*).

As single family homes make up a majority of the Belle Haven housing stock, it is an important part of the rental housing stock. However, as single home values increase, (given that over 74% of these houses are valued at more than one million dollars¹⁵), the cost to rent this homes have increased as well.

Figure 10. Renters vs. Owners in Belle Haven/Bayfront and Menlo Park, and Tenure by Household Income in Belle Haven/Bayfront and Menlo Park



	BELLE HAVEN/BAYFRONT	MENLO PARK
	43% Owners	55% Owners
	57% Renters	45% Renters
	38% of Owners making \$100k+	47% of Owners making \$100k+
	5% of Owners making <\$100k	8% of Owners making <\$100k
	31% of Renters making \$100k+	29% of Renters making \$100k+
	26% of Renters making <\$100k	16% of Renters making <\$100k

Source: 2023 ACS 5 Year data, Table B25118, Census Tract 6117. For reference, in 2023, HCD defined low income in San Mateo County as 80% AMI (\$104,400 for one person and \$149,100 for a four-person household) and very low income as 50% AMI (\$65,250 for one person and \$97,900 for a four-person household).

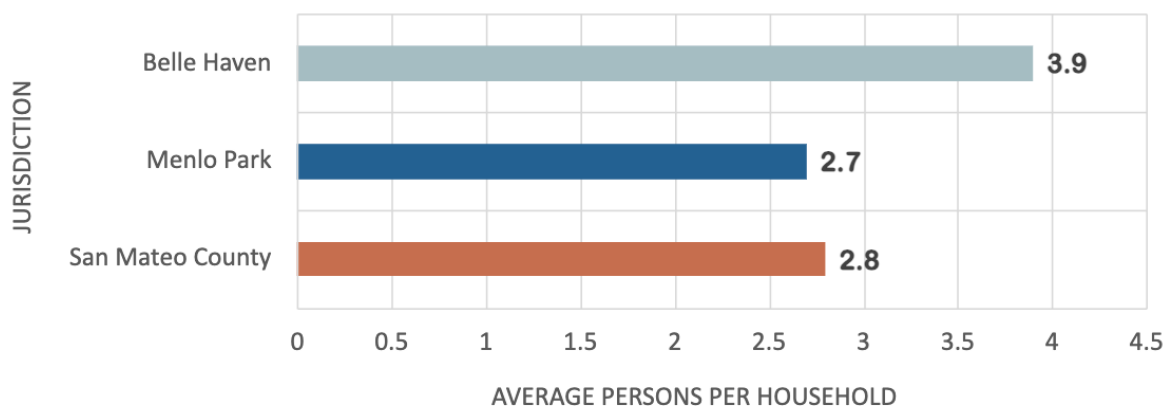
As the data shows, incomes have not kept pace with rent increases, it is possible that many of these homes are occupied by multiple lower-income renter households. As seen in [Figure 11](#), Census data shows that Belle Haven has an average household size of 3.9 persons, compared to 2.7 in Menlo Park and 2.8 in San Mateo County.

As shown in [Figure 12](#), overcrowding in Belle Haven, defined as more than 1.5 persons per room, increased from 2.3 percent in 2013 to

11.4 percent in 2023, significantly higher than overcrowding for the rest of Menlo Park, which is 2.8 percent. While renter households in Belle Haven are more likely to be overcrowded (12.7 percent of households), 10.4 percent of owner households are also overcrowded.¹⁶

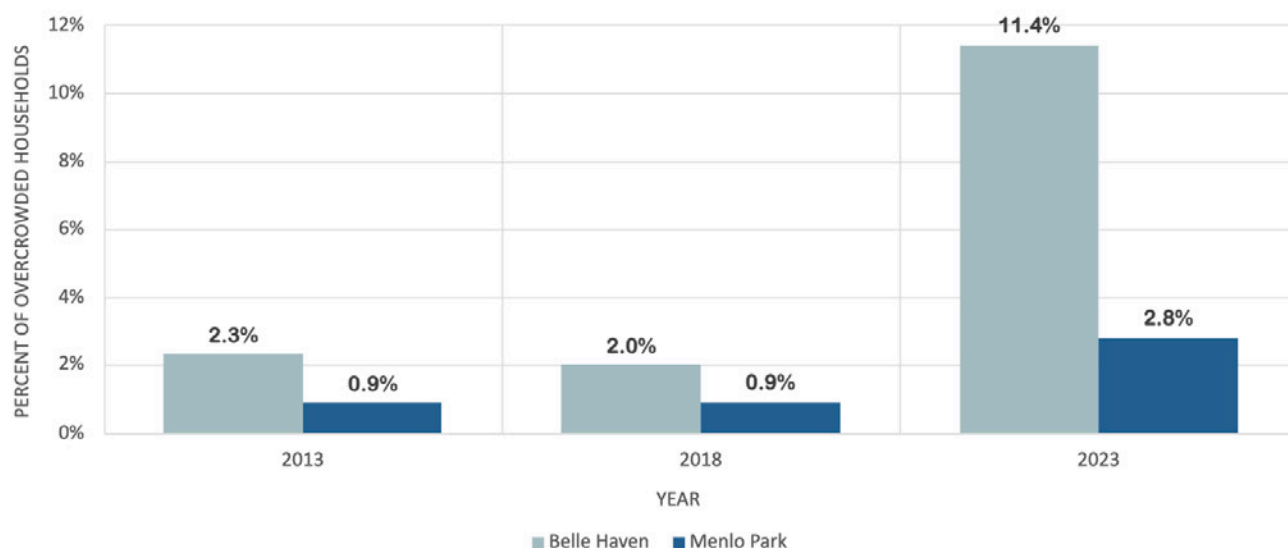
This level of overcrowding is indicative of the economic stress that both renters and homeowners face, as households increasingly contain multiple generations, and/or multiple families within one household.

Figure 11. Average Household Size Belle Haven vs. Menlo Park vs. San Mateo County



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25014

Figure 12. Overcrowding in Belle Haven vs Menlo Park 2013, 2018, and 2023



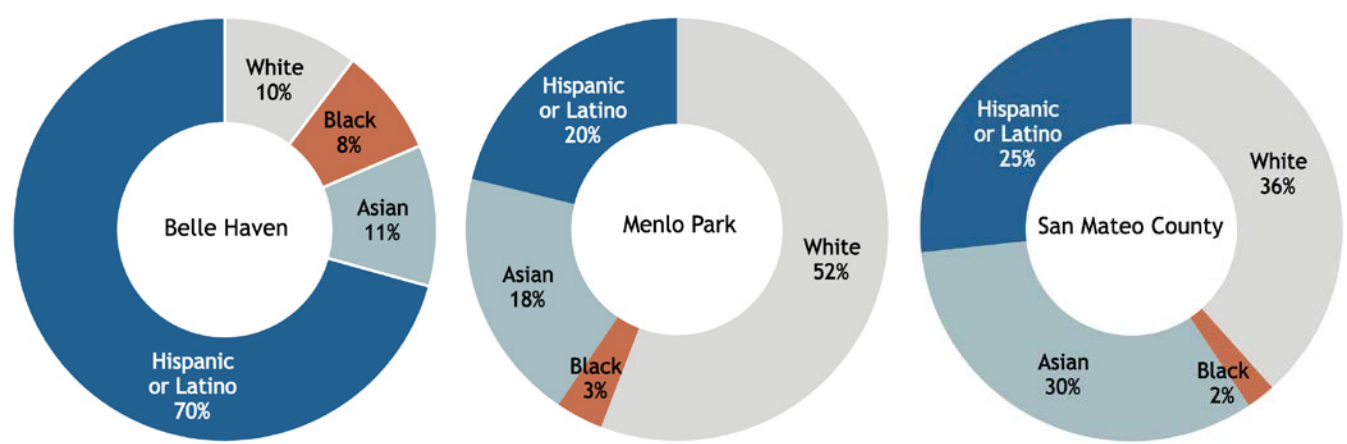
Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25014. Overcrowding is defined as 1.51 occupants per room or more.

Race/Diversity

Belle Haven is one of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in San Mateo County and faces significant housing challenges due to high costs and gentrification pressures. Preserving this community means protecting a vital part of Menlo Park’s identity.

As seen in the pie charts in *Figure 13*, 70% of Belle Haven residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 20-25% for the entire City and San Mateo County as a whole, and **approximately 90% of the population in Belle Haven are people of color.**

Figure 13. Demographics in San Mateo County vs Menlo Park vs Belle Haven



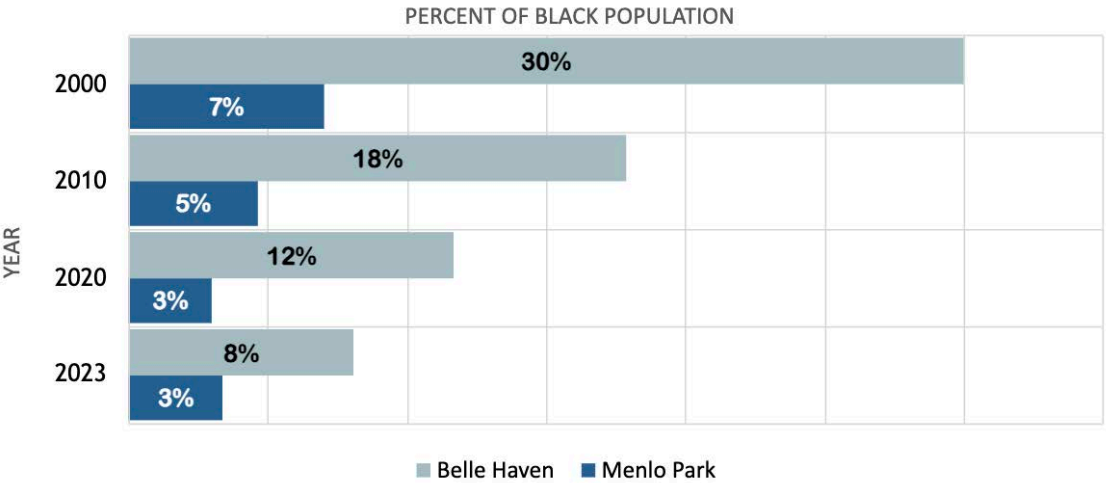
	BELLE HAVEN	MENLO PARK	SAN MATEO COUNTY
	70% Hispanic or Latino	20% Hispanic or Latino	25% Hispanic or Latino
	10% White	52% White	36% White
	8% Black	3% Black	2% Black
	11% Asian	18% Asian	30% Asian

Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B03002.

Historically, Belle Haven was predominantly populated by Black households. **In 1970, Black households made up 94% of the Belle Haven population.**¹⁷

More recently, as seen in *Figure 14*, **the Black population in Belle Haven has decreased from 30% in 2000, to just 8% in 2023, suggesting displacement of Black residents.**

Figure 14. Black Population in Belle Haven vs Menlo Park, 2000 to 2023



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B03002.



Image Source: Belle Haven Community Campus

Education

Belle Haven is served by the Ravenswood City School District and the Sequoia Union High School District, and a small portion of the Bayfront Area is served by Redwood City School District for grades K-8. The Ravenswood City School District has experienced declining enrollment and lower educational outcomes.

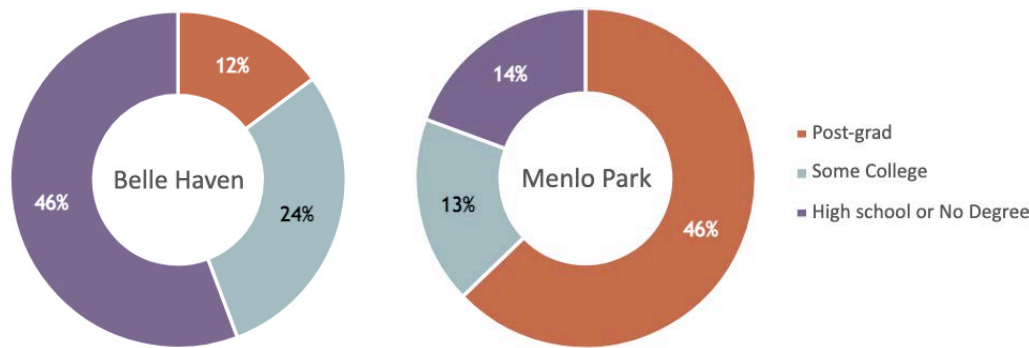
As shown in [Figure 15](#), educational attainment in Belle Haven is lower than compared to all other areas of Menlo Park and San Mateo County, with 12% of Belle Haven residents having completed a post graduate degree, compared to 46% in all of Menlo Park, and where 46% of Belle Haven

residents have a High School Degree or no Degree, compared to 14% in Menlo Park.

These disparities remain significant challenge and therefore, residents may have less opportunities in a competitive job market and may face heightened risks of marginalization and displacement compared to the rest of Menlo Park.

As seen in [Table 3](#), disparities persist across school districts today. Ravenswood School District remains more racially diverse, with lower household incomes, home values, homeownership rates, and educational attainment than neighboring districts.

Figure 15. Educational Attainment in Belle Haven vs Menlo Park



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B15002.

Table 3. Disparities in Menlo Park by School District

Elementary School District	Ravenswood	Menlo Park	Las Lomitas
White	13%	63%	66%
Black	11%	2%	0%
Asian	7%	18%	18%
Hispanic	62%	10%	10%
Median Income	\$110,403	\$236,731	\$250,001
Persons below poverty line	10.2%	3.5%	2.2%
Median Value of owner occupied units	\$1,134,700	More than \$2,000,001	More than \$2,000,001
Owners vs Renters	49% Owner 51% Renter	60% Owner 40% Renter	80% Owner 20% Renter
Bachelor Degree or higher	26.5%	85.9%	81.2%

Source: Disparities among School Districts in Menlo Park, US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Tables B02001, B03003, B19001, B17001, B25075, B25003, B15002.

Measuring Displacement

Measuring displacement is inherently challenging because of data limitations and the lack of longitudinal, neighborhood-level information.

It is very difficult to directly measure when and how many residents have moved out of the Belle Haven neighborhood or the City, or determine their reasons for leaving. **But patterns of displacement can be inferred using proxy indicators, based on changes in mobility, income, and educational attainment.**

The available data highlights the changes in the Belle Haven neighborhood, with higher income populations moving in the last 5 to 10 years, making it harder for low-income populations to afford it.

Figure 16 shows what percentage of the households moved into Belle Haven and the City during certain time periods.

Almost 40% of the Belle Haven households who lived there in 2023 said they moved into the neighborhood from 2010 to 2017.

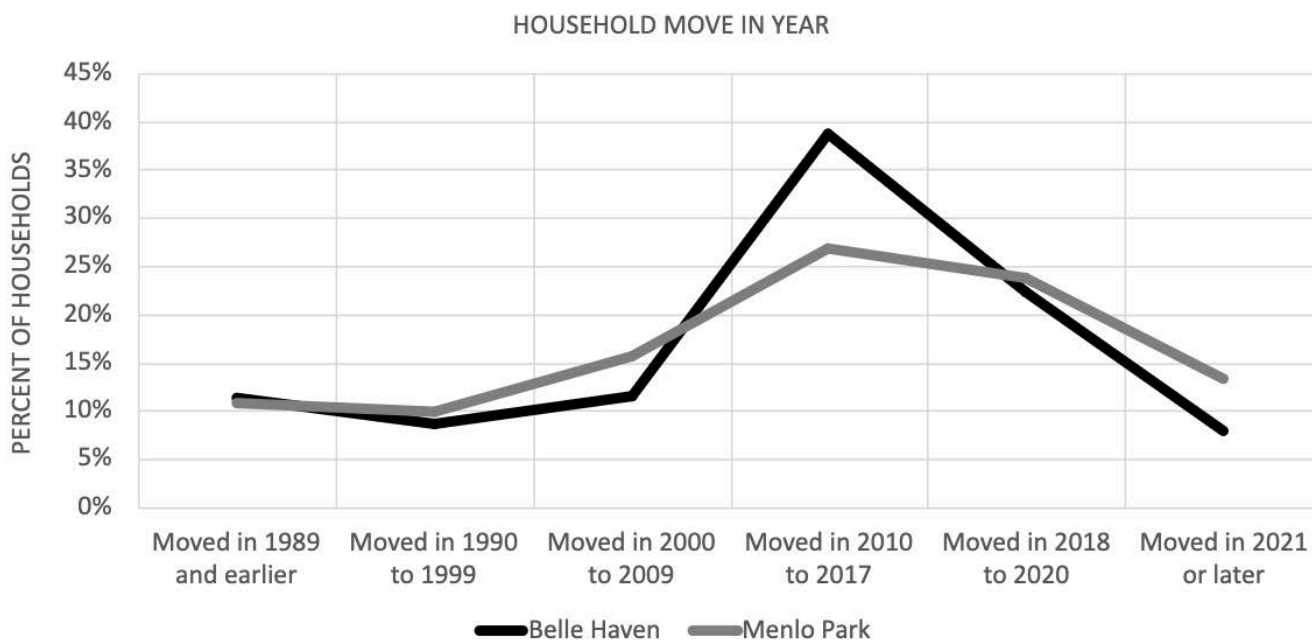
And as previously mentioned, Meta relocated from Palo Alto to an area directly adjacent to the Belle Haven community, from 2011 to 2013.

It can be inferred that this influx in population was attributed to Meta employees whose incomes have increased since. Coupled with the high number of foreclosures in Belle Haven during the Great Recession, this may explain the much higher percentage of households moving into Belle Haven during that period. This suggests that a significant amount of displacement occurred over that time.

In *Figure 17*, looking at mobility data for the census tract containing Belle Haven/Bayfront, those who are moving into the neighborhood also have higher incomes than current residents.

In 2013 and 2018, those who moved into the neighborhood that had incomes above \$200,000 was a fairly small percentage, although it did more than double from 3% to 7%. But in 2023, the percent of households earning over \$200,000 in Belle Haven from 2018 to 2023 increased from 7% to 34%, a 385% increase.

Figure 16. Year Population Moved into Belle Haven vs Menlo Park



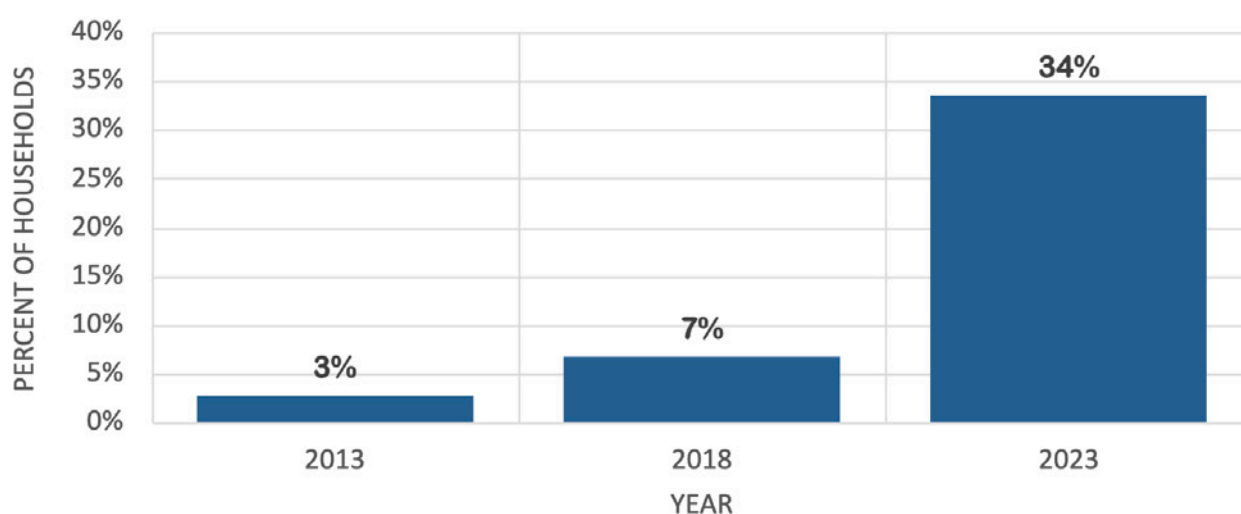
Source: US. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B25038.

While the value of \$200,000 may change over time due to inflation, the increase in the percentage of households earning over \$200,000 from 7% to 34% of households cannot be solely attributed to inflationary gains but also other factors such as displacement of the existing lower-earning residents with higher earning households, and possibly the increasing salaries of Meta employees who moved into the area after the office relocation.

Because Census income data groups all households earning above \$200,000 into a single category, the actual income disparities may be higher.

Given the high cost of housing in Belle Haven, the City and region, and the change in demographics in who lives there, the risk of displacement of low-income households has been high for some time and it is likely that some of it has already occurred.

Figure 17. Percent of Belle Haven Households with Incomes Greater than \$200,000



Source: US. Census Bureau, 2013, 2018, and 2023 ACS, 5-year estimates, Table B19001.

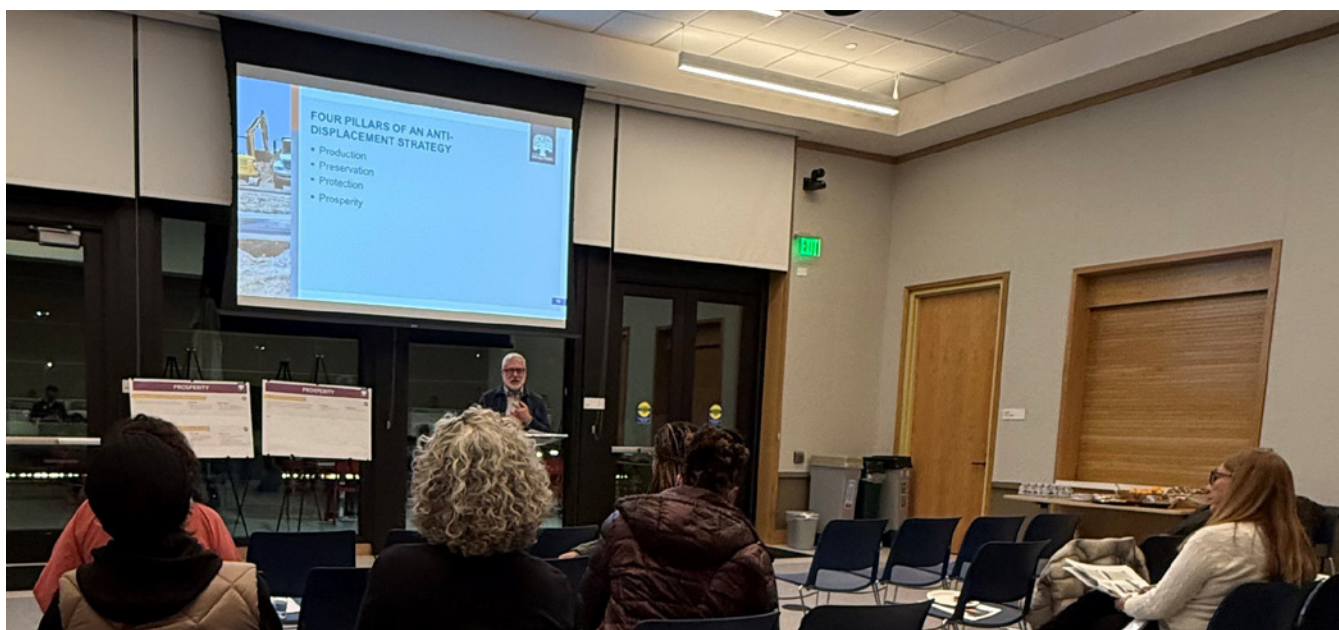


Image Source: Anti-displacement Plan Community Meeting

Data Limitations and Considerations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of available data when analyzing displacement risk in Belle Haven. Much of the neighborhood falls within Census Tract 6117, a large and diverse tract that includes areas beyond Belle Haven's geographic boundaries. As a result, aggregate data may dilute or obscure conditions specific to the neighborhood.

Additionally, common metrics such as household income may not fully capture local economic realities. In Belle Haven, it is not uncommon for multiple families or unrelated individuals to share a single-family home, especially in response to rising housing costs. Because the U.S. Census defines "household income" at the housing unit level and does not take into account household size, this dynamic can inflate reported income figures, making the community appear more economically stable than it is in practice.

Finally, data disaggregating renter vs. owner households within this specific context is limited. While available estimates indicate a relatively high percentage of renters, the lack of fine-grained, tract-level data makes it difficult to quantify the overlap between renter status and income level, a key variable in understanding displacement risk.

These limitations underscore the need to complement quantitative data with on-the-ground insights from community-based organizations and residents. Therefore, as part of the Anti-displacement Plan's methodology, the City also conducted interviews with both housing practitioners and community members with ties to the Belle Haven neighborhood. Doing so helps ensure that strategies are grounded in lived experience and responsive to the real pressures facing Belle Haven households. These interviews and their findings can be found in Appendix B.



Image Source: Belle Haven Library, City of Menlo Park Website

Chapter 3

Plan Framework

Framework

The framework of the City's Anti-displacement Plan was developed from a multitude of sources. The desire to address displacement has been voiced by the community for many years with the City implementing certain anti-displacement strategies in the past such as mandating tenant relocation assistance in certain circumstances and requiring landlords to offer 12-month leases.

A comprehensive approach or plan to address displacement was expressed and subsequently validated by its inclusion as a program in both the City's Housing Element and Environmental Justice Element adopted in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

The recommendations of the Anti-displacement Plan were developed through community outreach and research to determine the most practical path forward to combat displacement.

Preparation of the Housing Element and Environmental Justice Element

Between 2021-24, the City engaged in the preparation of its General Plan Housing Element and its first ever Environmental Justice (EJ) Element. The Housing Element is the City's "housing plan" to accommodate future housing growth through 2031.

The EJ Element is a document that seeks to reduce or remove local disparities and inequities that exist by addressing and improving the social determinants of health (housing and community cohesion are key factors) in neighborhoods and for populations that face the greatest barriers to good health with a focus on the Belle Haven neighborhood.

Through extensive community outreach, displacement emerged as a primary concern, with strong community support for developing a comprehensive anti-displacement strategy to address this growing threat.

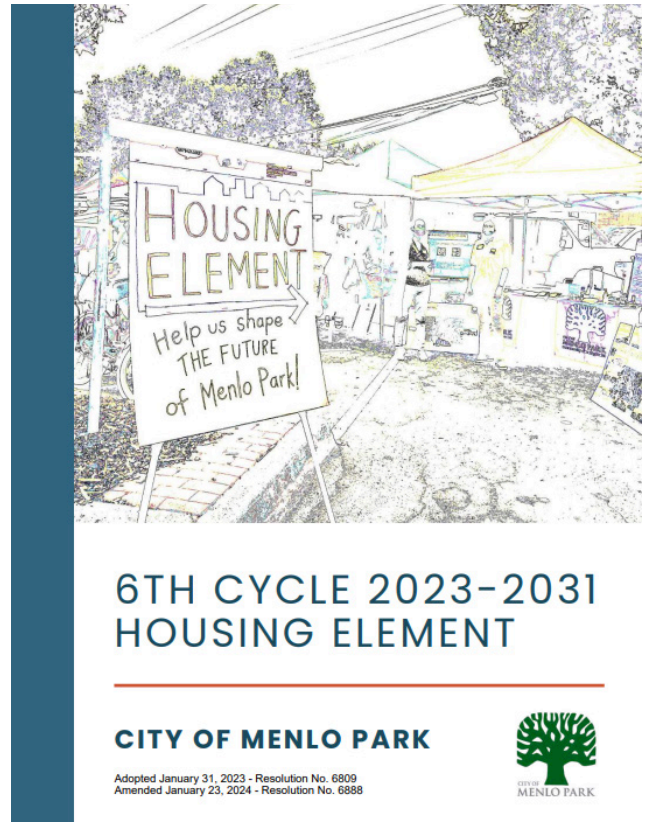


Image Source: Housing Element Cover

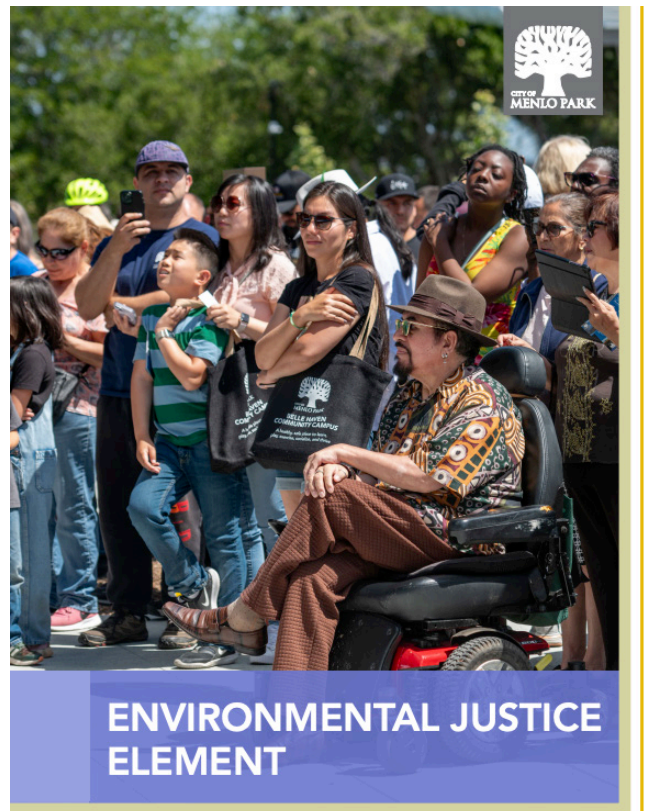


Image Source: Environmental Justice Element Cover

Housing Element Anti-displacement Program

As part of the City's preparation of its 2023-31 Housing Element, community engagement and feedback were an important component. The City used various methods to solicit community feedback including creating a Housing Element website to provide updates on the project's process, a community survey, pop-up events at local farmers markets/stores and held online and in-person community meetings.

At these meetings, it became clear that the displacement of its residents, especially in the Belle Haven neighborhood, was a top community concern.

The City funded work with a community-based organization to expand and bolster outreach with underserved communities, which are traditionally harder to reach populations.

The City partnered with Climate Resilient Communities (CRC), a community-based organization dedicated to serving underserved

communities through empowering community voices to implement climate solutions centered around the direct needs of the community and build unity and resilience.

CRC was selected as a partner because they are a recognized community-based organization in Menlo Park with a history of experience in community outreach efforts, specifically within Belle Haven and the Bayfront, Menlo Park's underserved communities.

Through a diverse and multifaceted outreach strategy, the City was able to better understand the impacts of environmental justice issues that underserved communities in Menlo Park face and together with the community, plan for positive change.

Based on the feedback, Housing Element Program H2.E to prepare an Anti-displacement Strategy was included in the City's 2023-31 Housing Element.



Image Source: Housing Element Tabling

Table 4. Housing Element Program H2.E

Anti-Displacement Strategy

Conduct outreach and meet with residents and organizations primarily in the Belle Haven neighborhood to develop an anti-displacement strategy that the City Council can adopt after review from the Housing Commission and Planning Commission.

This strategy should reflect community engagement, potentially including research and tools such as community meetings, surveys and field visits in collaboration with local community organizations. It will include policies that could:

- a. Increase housing quality while preventing evictions
- b. Consider neighborhood tenant preference for affordable housing
- c. Identify new sources of funding for anti-displacement efforts
- d. Develop localized anti-displacement programs that could accompany large-scale developments
- e. Provide deposit assistance, particularly for veterans
- f. Provide robust tenant education to connect tenants to housing supportive programs and ensure that tenants are aware of their rights and access to legal counsel by posting resources on the City's housing website and other media on an ongoing basis
- g. Inform tenants of opportunities for rental assistance, such as revolving loan funds or external funding sources. Consider continuation of funding beyond 2024 for the Menlo Park Housing Assistance Program to provide emergency financial assistance to lower income tenants and homeowners facing displacement risk for reasons not addressed by the tenant relocation assistance ordinance; identify potential funding sources and explore potential scale of rental assistance.
- h. Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions beyond current law to include tenants of any tenure
- i. Increase the time of rent relocation assistance required to be paid by landlords
- j. Increase the required amount of relocation assistance provided by landlords to low and moderate income tenants whose tenancy is terminated for no-fault just cause
- k. Create an eviction monitoring and data collection program.

Environmental Justice (EJ) Element Anti-displacement Program

Through an inclusive, intentional, and equitable planning process with over 15 outreach and engagement events (e.g., community meetings, pop-ups, focus groups, surveys), the Menlo Park community reiterated the need to address displacement of their friends and neighbors.

The EJ Element process engaged approximately 1,800 residents total, which represents more than 25 percent of the Belle Haven population.

Ten workshops (5 conducted in Spanish), a community advisory committee of 20 Belle

Haven residents, a survey representing more than 1,200 Belle Haven respondents, and dozens of stakeholder conversations constituted one of the most robust community engagement efforts in the Menlo Park’s history.

The EJ Element went further than the Housing Element in addressing displacement. While a program similar to the Housing Element Anti-displacement program was included in the EJ Element, other EJ programs, such as access to legal counsel, were also added to the EJ Element.

Table 5. EJ Program EJ5.G

Anti-Displacement Strategy
Ensure that City’s Anti-Displacement Strategy (Housing Element Program H2.E) supports households and neighborhoods in underserved communities, including identifying, acknowledging, and addressing racial disparities in the housing market. This will include consideration, at a minimum, the following: • Rental inventory of all dwelling units • Updated or expanded rent control laws • Rent increase mitigations, such as longer noticing requirements • Community and tenant opportunity to purchase • Revised BMR guidelines allowing for deeper affordability (e.g., subsidies) • Expand relocation assistance for tenants • Just Cause Eviction protections regardless of tenant duration • Strengthened anti-tenant harassment ordinances • An examination of opportunities to limit additional fees passed to tenants like laundry, parking, and utility costs.

Table 6. EJ Program EJ5.H

Anti-Displacement Strategy
As part of an anti-displacement program and to ensure stable housing, support increasing access to legal counsel for tenants facing eviction by conducting community outreach, education, and engagement to ensure renters are aware of this resource. Include progress reports on usage annually.

Production, Preservation, Protection, and Prosperity: An Anti-displacement Framework

The framework in this plan is inspired by the work of a taskforce, the Committee to House the Bay Area (CASA), assembled in 2017 by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to address the housing crisis in the Bay Area. The taskforce developed a set of policy recommendations known as the CASA Compact,¹⁸ which attributed the housing crisis to the Bay Area’s challenges in:

- Producing** housing at all levels of affordability,
- Preserving** existing affordable housing,
- Protecting** vulnerable households from housing instability and displacement.

The need for housing **Production, Preservation, and Protection** of vulnerable households, has become known as the “three Ps” in anti-displacement efforts. This framework was created to help cities in the Bay Area grow equitably while mitigating the displacement of low-income residents.

This plan includes a fourth P, for **Prosperity**, to ensure that there are pathways to also support the financial empowerment of impacted communities.¹⁹ Each of these four pillars are designed to strengthen the Belle Haven neighborhood and all of Menlo Park against the forces of displacement and ensure a vibrant, inclusive future.

Table 7. Menlo Park’s Four Pillars

Production	Preservation	Protection	Prosperity
Efforts that boost the production of affordable housing and provide opportunities for families to stay in Menlo Park.	Policies and programs that maintain the affordability of existing housing stock, preventing displacement.	Programs pertaining to tenants’ rights, legal assistance, rental assistance, and other programs that protect residents from displacement.	Measures that enhance employment prospects, provide job training and create pathways for upward mobility, so that residents can afford to live in Menlo Park.

Current State and Local Anti-Displacement Efforts

Both the City and State have recognized the issue of displacement and its significant impact on renters, especially lower income households, that may be severely cost burdened. As a result, in 2019 the State enacted the Tenant Protection Act (AB 1482) which provided a number of protections statewide.

In addition, the City has also implemented a variety of anti-displacement strategies framed around tenant protections, affordable housing production and preservation in the past. Some City actions included a 12-month lease requirement, approving a tenant relocation assistance ordinance, providing financial assistance to affordable housing developments and establishing a rental assistance program.

More recently, Menlo Park has been involved in the production and preservation of both affordable

and market-rate housing. For example, the City has provided \$2 million to MidPen Housing to construct 62 low and very low income units for formerly or at-risk of homelessness veterans. Also, the City has provided \$1.2 million to Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco for a single-family home preservation program, focused on the Belle Haven neighborhood.

Prosperity is a relatively new “P” pillar which creates paths to financial empowerment and upward mobility. While not traditionally included in the housing pillars, the City has also acknowledged the importance of “prosperity”.

Some examples include adopting a city minimum wage higher than state requirements, discussing a living wage and encouraging financial literacy courses for residents.



Image Source: Gateway Rising, City of Menlo Park

Statewide Anti-displacement Efforts

The State has instituted a number of tenant protections within the past few years from rent stabilization to requiring replacement of all demolished residential units. The most significant is the passage of AB 1482, the Tenant Protection Act.

Tenant Protection Act

The Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (AB 1482) became effective on January 1, 2020 and expires on January 1, 2030. The statewide tenant protection policy caps rent increases, requires a landlord to have a “just cause” in order to terminate a tenancy (just cause eviction), and provides relocation assistance to tenants who are evicted for “no-fault, just cause” reasons.

In addition, SB 567 which was passed in 2024 strengthens existing protections for renters by limiting rent increases and requiring stricter requirements for just cause evictions. However, some type of structures, including single family homes, are exempt from the AB 1482 requirements, which are described below.

Rent Increase Limitations

For tenants who have occupied a property for more than 12 months, AB 1482 limits yearly rent increases to 5% plus the percent change in the local Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 10%, whichever is lower.

Just Cause Evictions

AB 1482 includes just cause eviction protections which prevent unfair evictions for tenants that have lived in a unit for at least 12 months. It establishes specific reasons for which landlords can evict tenants.

These “just causes” include a failure to pay rent, continued violation of the lease or doing significant damage to the property.

Under AB 1482, landlords can evict for “no-fault” reasons but then must provide relocation assistance to the tenant. No-fault evictions can include owner move-in, demolition, substantial remodel, or withdrawal of the unit from the rental market.

Current relocation assistance is equivalent to one-month current rent and can be exchanged for waiving the last month’s rent. As comparison, the City requires a minimum of 3 months of relocation assistance, if eligible.

Unit Type Exceptions

AB 1482 applies to all rental units except the following:

A. Any units that were constructed within the last 15 years. To clarify, as buildings age and cross the 15-year threshold, they would be covered by AB 1482 requirements.

B. Affordable housing units restricted by a deed, regulatory restrictions, or other recorded document limiting the affordability to low or moderate-income households.

C. Certain types of group housing, such as college dormitories.

D. Two-unit properties if the second unit is occupied by an owner of the property for the entire period of the tenancy.

E. Single-family homes and condominiums are exempt unless owned by a real estate trust, a corporation, or an LLC with at least one corporate member.

Housing Crisis Act

The Housing Crisis Act forbids the City from approving a housing development project that would demolish one or more existing residential units unless the project complies with the Act's housing replacement and tenant relocation requirements.

In "affected cities", if a property includes any residential dwelling units, a proposed housing development project must create at least as many units as would be demolished.

This requirement applies to rental and ownership units regardless of whether the existing units were occupied or unoccupied and without regard to income. It also applies when a project proposes the demolition of non-conforming residential units.

In addition to the general replacement requirement, the Housing Crisis Act includes special rules that are applicable only to "protected units."

Protected units are defined as:

1. dwelling units subject to affordability restrictions for lower income households within the past five years;
2. dwelling units that were subject to the Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act at any time within the past five years;
3. dwelling units that were actually occupied by lower income households within the past five years, regardless of the rent charged for the unit; and/or
4. residential units withdrawn from the rental market pursuant to the Ellis Act within the past ten years.

A protected unit that was subject to affordability restrictions or occupied by a lower income household must be replaced with a new unit that is subject to affordability restrictions that require the unit to be rented or sold at affordable levels for lower income households.²⁰

Senate Bill No. 330

CHAPTER 654

An act to amend Section 65589.5 of, to amend, repeal, and add Sections 65940, 65943, and 65950 of, to add and repeal Sections 65905.5, 65913.10, and 65941.1 of, and to add and repeal Chapter 12 (commencing with Section 66300) of Division 1 of Title 7 of, the Government Code, relating to housing.

[Approved by Governor October 09, 2019. Filed with Secretary of State
October 09, 2019.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 330, Skinner. Housing Crisis Act of 2019.

(1) The Housing Accountability Act, which is part of the Planning and Zoning Law, prohibits a local agency from disapproving, or conditioning approval in a manner that renders infeasible, a housing development project for very low, low-, or moderate-income households or an emergency shelter unless the local agency makes specified written findings based on a preponderance of the evidence in the record. The act specifies that one way to satisfy that requirement is to make findings that the housing development project or emergency shelter is inconsistent

Image Source: Housing Crisis Act, California Legislative Information Site

Menlo Park Anti-displacement Efforts

The City of Menlo Park has also established programs to address displacement in the community. It has implemented or partially implemented several of the strategies identified in the Housing and EJ Elements.

The implemented strategies include:

Multilingual Outreach about Tenant Protections

The City has begun implementing this strategy by emphasizing greater multilingual communication at its City Council meetings with live interpretation, conducting community meetings solely in Spanish and having printed materials in English and Spanish.

The City will continue to building on these efforts such as conducting outreach specifically about tenant protections.

Affordable Housing Production

Affordable housing production has been a City focus for many years. The City has been funding affordable housing development in the City since the 1980's using local and federal funding.

The City collects a commercial in-lieu fee for affordable housing. Those fees are used for the City's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process, typically issued every two years. Affordable housing developers apply for the funding to construct 100% affordable housing developments in the City. Recent examples include Sequoia Belle Haven, a 90-unit senior affordable development, Gateway Rising, a 140-unit development, and Oak Gardens, located at 795 Willow, a 62-unit development for homeless and formerly homeless veterans.

In 1988, the City adopted its Below Market Rate (BMR) Guidelines as part of establishing its affordable housing program, which required residential developers to set aside a percentage of their residential units as deed-restricted affordable units.

In addition, if it is not feasible to provide affordable units on site due to site conditions or other factors, developers can also meet this requirement through payment of an in-lieu fee or providing the units offsite. **This requirement has produced over 250 affordable ownership and rental units since its inception.**



Image Source: Sequoia Belle Haven, City of Menlo Park

12-Month Lease Ordinance

The City adopted a 12-month lease requirement in 2016. The Menlo Park ordinance requires that the landlord must offer to the tenant a written lease with a minimum term of one year. It must be made in writing.

The purpose is that a contractual relationship with a landlord may offer some needed assurances of stability and minimize displacement of tenants in a rental housing market affording tenants few and increasingly expensive options.

Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance

In 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1053 adding a tenant relocation assistance requirement to the municipal code (Chapter 8.56 Tenant Relocation Assistance).

The code is applicable to residential developments of five or more units. It requires payment to a low income displaced household the equivalent of three months' rent in certain situations such as removal of all the rental housing units from the market. Relocation assistance could increase to the equivalent of four months' rent if the household meets additional characteristics.

Rental Assistance Program

In 2019, the City initiated a Rental Assistance Program. Partnering with Samaritan House, the City provided funding for financial assistance to renters experiencing difficulty paying their rent. In 2021, the program was expanded to homeowners. The program provided up to \$5,000 for one month of assistance per applicant.

The City contributed \$220,000 in 2022 for the program. The funds were expended by February 2025. However, the program continues with other funding sources. In those three years, the program was able to assist 76 households with the City funding for an average assistance amount of approximately \$2900 per household.

As part of this strategy, and based on community feedback, the City is evaluating the development of a new rental assistance program through the 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Housing Policy grant (MTC TOC Grant) the City received. Additional information about the MTC TOC Grant is provided later in this plan.

Modifications to BMR Requirements

Since the initial adoption of BMR housing requirements in 1988, the guidelines have been updated multiple times with the City Council approved the most recent revisions in October 2025. Under the BMR Program, depending on the project size, residential developers are required to set aside a certain percentage of units as affordable.

For example, rental projects less than 20 units must set aside 10% of the units for households earning less than 80% AMI. Project larger than 20 units must provide 15% of the units as affordable to 80% AMI households.

In addition, commercial developments are required to pay an affordable housing fee for non-residential developments of more than 10,000 sq. ft. of new net commercial development. **That fee is then used to fund affordable housing developments or other initiatives related to affordable housing.**

These requirements are also known as inclusionary requirements or zoning. The City is currently embarking on a multi-city nexus study to review the City's inclusionary zoning percentage and commercial linkage fee to determine if the requirements need to be revised based on current market conditions. The study findings should be ready by Fall 2026.

Repair/Renovation Program

In 2022, the City provided \$1.2M to Habitat for Humanity to establish a home preservation program for low-income homeowners in the Belle Haven neighborhood. In addition, in 2024, the City granted \$180k to Rebuilding Together Peninsula to provide accessibility improvements to low-income homeowners in Belle Haven.

Both programs are currently operating in the neighborhood. In 2025, the City Council approved an extension to the initial Habitat funding agreement term for an additional 12 months and expanded participation eligibility to all of Menlo Park with a dedication of 70% of funds allocated to the Belle Haven neighborhood.

Also, through the City's Sustainability Program, the City has partnered with Peninsula Clean Energy to establish an electrification program to help Belle Haven residents with updating their homes with electric panel upgrades and converting outdated gas appliances to more energy-efficient options. Habitat for Humanity has done extensive outreach for the home preservation program.

Its outreach has resulted in 50 program inquiries, 9 submitted applications and 3 approved applications moved forward.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Transit-Oriented Communities and Implementation Grant Program Grant (MTC TOC Grant)

The City was awarded \$250,000 from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Transit-Oriented Communities Planning and Implementation Grant Program (MTC TOC Grant) in February 2025 to evaluate, develop and adopt a rental assistance program and legal assistance program. Understanding that housing is closely linked to transportation, MTC is providing the funding to encourage jurisdictions to adopt housing policies to help address the three "P"s.

In addition, the City is participating with other San Mateo County jurisdictions in a multi-city grand nexus study. A nexus study assesses the impact of new development on the need for new affordable housing. Based on the findings of the study, it may possibly adjust the City's current inclusionary requirement and the feasibility of "deepening" the affordability levels from their current levels. The preliminary findings of the study should be ready by Fall 2026.



Free Home Upgrade Services in Menlo Park

- ✓ Free electric appliances
- ✓ Zero-cost installation
- ✓ Healthier indoor air
- ✓ Lower long-term energy costs
- ✓ More comfortable, modern living

It's all happening now, and your home could be next!



Image Source: Free Home Upgrade Services in Menlo Park, Peninsula Clean Energy Webpage

Prioritizing Strategies

In all, the Anti-displacement Plan includes 23 strategies to consider. All the strategies each have their own merit in addressing displacement. But because of the large number of strategies, a goal of the Anti-displacement Plan is to identify and prioritize the key strategies for implementation over the next three years following adoption of the plan.

Practice and research have clearly shown that there is not one strategy or remedy that will prevent displacement. Ideally, to effectively address displacement, a coherent set of strategies from each of the “P” pillars should be implemented. Because of the many facets of displacement, each strategy is effective but only to a degree.

The strategies were all introduced by the community during the Housing and Environmental Justice community meetings and some additional outreach. If all listed strategies were implemented, the City could potentially make a significant impact on advancing anti-displacement. However, the time, effort and staffing and financial resources needed to implement each strategy would not be practical.

Therefore, the preparation of the Anti-displacement Plan was a deliberate process to intentionally select and balance strategies based on their effectiveness, complexity of implementation, estimates of required program funding, the number of residents that could benefit from the program, and how quickly it could provide benefit to the community. The aim is to create a manageable and planned approach to addressing displacement in the City.

Understanding that there that 23 anti-displacement strategies that have been suggested, the Anti-displacement Plan prioritizes key strategies to create a manageable plan to implement.

This Anti-displacement Plan was crafted with the following assumptions:

- Significant displacement has already occurred.
- Time is of the essence to protect the remaining legacy community in the Belle Haven neighborhood.
- Multiple strategies must be implemented to make an impact on displacement.

Based on the assumptions and criteria used during evaluation, strategies prioritized in the Anti-displacement Plan are those that have been deemed the highest priority by the community and recommended by experts and shown to be effective strategies by research. Cost and impact or effectiveness of the strategy were also taken into consideration.

The strategies recommended for this Plan is the beginning of a holistic approach to addressing displacement in the City. The City will continue to explore, refine and pursue additional strategies in the future following the initial implementation of the top strategies over the next three years. City staff will provide an annual update to the Housing Commission and City Council to ensure the Anti-displacement Plan is being effectively implemented and adjusted as needed over time.

Methodology in Preparing the Anti-displacement Plan

The development of the Anti-displacement Plan used the Housing Element and EJ Element programs as a foundation for identifying anti-displacement strategies and used a three-pronged approach to prioritize them. The approach included the following:

1. Belle Haven neighborhood outreach;
2. Expert and stakeholder interviews; and
3. Review of research on displacement.

Belle Haven Neighborhood Outreach

The Housing Element and EJ Element identified the Belle Haven neighborhood as a focus area of the Anti-displacement Plan. The City conducted Belle Haven neighborhood outreach to help prioritize which strategies were most important to the neighborhood.

Community Meetings

On November 7 and November 14, 2024, the City conducted open forum community meetings at the Belle Haven Community Campus in monolingual English and Spanish, respectively.

At these meetings, staff presented background information on anti-displacement and an overview of the 23 different anti-displacement strategies.

Community members were invited to share their thoughts and identify their top anti-displacement tools that would most likely benefit themselves or the community. Community members were also encouraged to add strategies and their thoughts about the identified programs/policies.

Survey

On April 25, 2025, the City released a city-wide anti-displacement survey, available in both English and Spanish, to solicit feedback from the community on the proposed strategies. This survey was categorized into three sections depending on housing tenure: renters, homeowners and those unstably housed, and included a variety of questions on the topics of current household/housing needs, personal experiences with displacement, and demographics. The survey also asked respondents to prioritize the suggested policies and programs to inform the City's Anti-displacement Plan.

Overall, community responses favored the implementation of tenant protections over preservation or production of affordable housing. Specifically, local neighborhood protections received a high number of votes. For a review of the results from the community meetings and the city-wide survey, please see Appendix B.



Image Source: Environmental Justice Meeting

Interviews

The second prong in the plan methodology included conducting interviews with practitioners and stakeholders to understand tools and community priorities, and best practices and considerations.

As part of the community engagement strategy for Menlo Park's anti-displacement work, interviews were conducted with 12 stakeholders—five with deep experience in Belle Haven, four displacement researchers and practitioners, two legal assistance providers, and one business representative. Each was asked to share their experience with displacement and identify effective strategies and key implementation challenges. Interviewees were also given the list of strategies—drawn from the City's Housing Element and EJ Element to help guide the conversation.

There was strong agreement amongst those interviewed that rental and legal assistance for tenants as well as expanding just cause eviction protections were high impact strategies. For further details about those interviewed and their feedback, please see Appendix B.

Research

Research was conducted through several different sources on anti-displacement best practices. Sources of information included anti-displacement plans from different jurisdictions, publications on displacement on a national and local level, and research on specific strategies, such as the rental registry strategy and tenant anti-harassment.

While there is a great deal of information about possible anti-displacement interventions, there is little research on the effectiveness of individual strategies. While many sources were reviewed, three studies provided the most information and data.

The research strongly supported rental assistance and legal assistance programs, mirroring the feedback received during the interviews.

The most comprehensive and thorough source of research that is most cited in anti-displacement work is the “White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness”, prepared by Karen Chapple and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris for the California Air Resource Board in 2021.²¹ In addition, much information was obtained from the Urban Displacement Project.²²

For more research data, please see Appendix C.

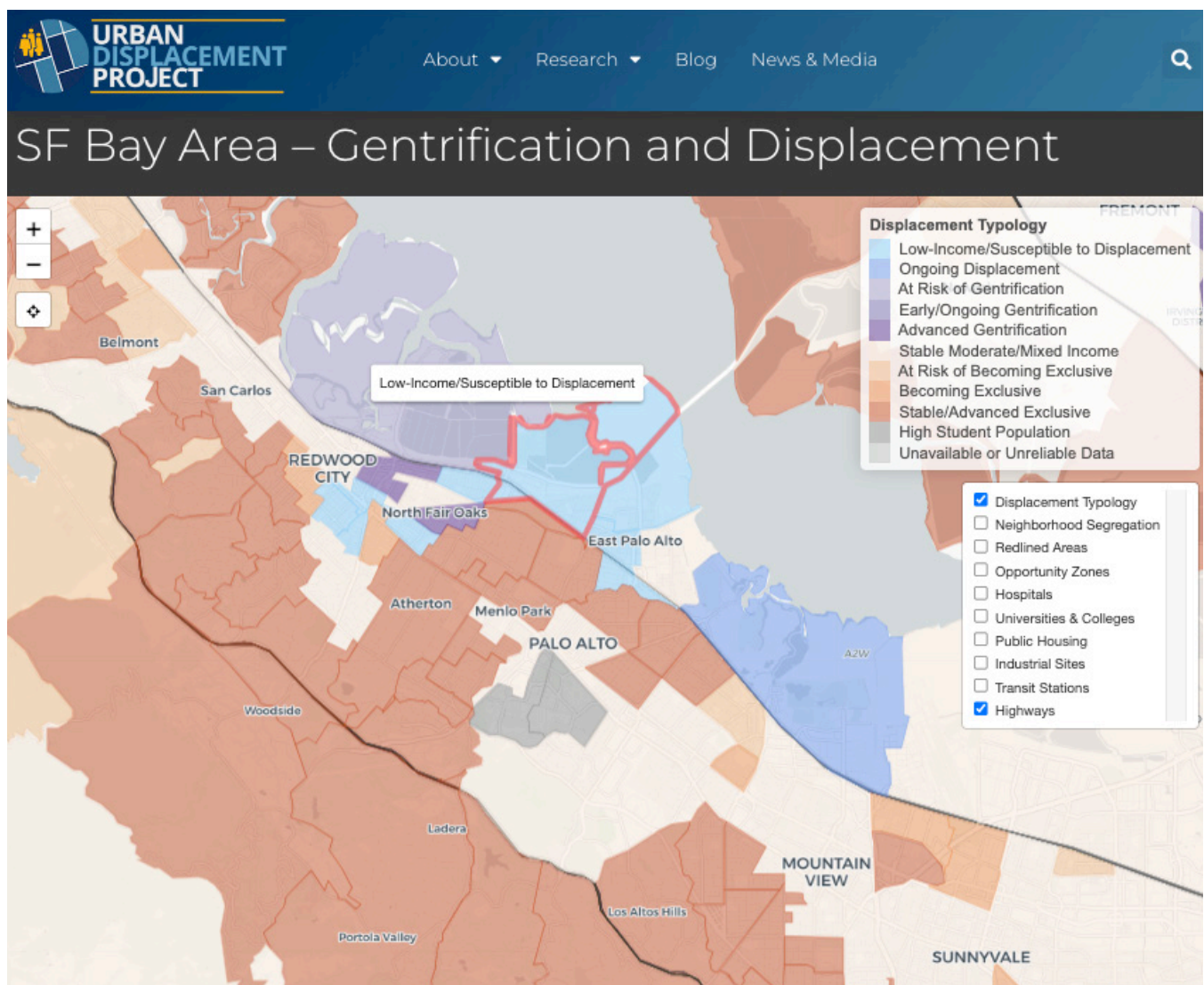


Image Source: Urban Displacement Project SF Bay Area Gentrification and Displacement Map

Review of Anti-displacement Strategies

The City's Housing and EJ Elements identified a total of 20 anti-displacement strategies. Given the overlap of a few strategies, 18 different strategies emerged. These ideas were suggested by the community, a majority from the Belle Haven neighborhood, through community meetings, surveys and other engagement efforts.

In addition, during the outreach and engagement for the preparation of the Anti-displacement Plan, community members suggested additional strategies. In total, 23 different strategies were reviewed as part of the development of the anti-displacement plan.

Below summarizes the suggested 23 anti-displacement strategies, which are categorized under one of the CASA "P" pillars of Production, Protection, and Prevention. As mentioned, a fourth "P" for "Prosperity" was added with suggested Prosperity strategies.

Separated out by pillar, an overview of each strategy has been included in the tables below. The summary includes the advantages and disadvantages for each strategy as well as pertinent information collected from the outreach, interviews and research.

The strategies outlined in the Plan were proposed by community members and stakeholders. The complete list of strategies do not represent the recommendations of the or analysis by the City with respect to effectiveness, implementation likelihood and/or legality. Please note that if any strategy is implemented, it must be evaluated against and follow local, state and federal requirements.

For quick reference, those strategies with white font over a dark blue background are strategies already implemented by the City.

Strategies with black font over a light blue background are strategies that have not been implemented by the City.

[HE] denotes the strategy was included in Housing Element Program H2.E.

[EJ] denotes the strategy was included in EJ Element Program EJ5.G.

[HE/EJ] denotes the strategy was included in both the Housing Element Program H2.E. and EJ Element Program EJ5.G.

Production

1. Strategy: Increase Affordable Housing Production

[HE]

Overview: Affordable housing refers to rental or ownership units that cost no more than 30% of a household's gross income. Many City households are paying more than 30% of their income for housing, especially lower income households. This strategy promotes the development of affordable housing which provides long term affordability.

Advantages: Deed-restricted affordable housing guarantees long-term affordability of the units and can keep current lower income residents in place.

Disadvantages: This strategy requires extensive funding. It also takes several years for affordable housing to be constructed. In addition, the production of housing and affordable housing units through the City inclusionary zoning requirements, is dependent on market conditions.

Research: From the White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness, it found that housing production, especially affordable housing, can relieve displacement pressures.²³

In addition, according to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), "During the last ten years, housing production averaged fewer than 80,000 new homes each year... far below the projected need for 180,000 homes annually."²⁴

Interviews: While interviewees support the development of affordable housing, this strategy was not noted as a top strategy.

Community input: This strategy received overwhelming support from participants in the city-wide survey.

Analysis: The lack of sufficient affordable housing is an often stated reason for displacement. Therefore, affordable housing production is a widely supported strategy to address displacement. The City has seen a considerable increase in the production of housing, including affordable housing, in the City in the past 10 years and is continuing to see interest in residential development at all scales. The City continues to add affordable housing units through its inclusionary zoning requirements and its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process where the City provides funds for proposed affordable housing projects. Developing affordable housing can be a long and expensive process, usually needing a few years to complete a project. However, deed-restricted units guarantee long term affordability for income eligible tenants.

Timeline: Typically, the development of an affordable housing project could take an estimated 3-4 years to complete.

Cost: It can cost between \$500,000 to over \$1,000,000 to construct an affordable housing unit. Therefore, multifamily affordable housing projects can cost multi-millions of dollars.

Impact: While it may take a few years to develop affordable housing, it provides long term affordability, typically 55 years or more. Production of affordable units is limited because of cost and complexity, and obtaining a unit is often done by lottery or from a long waitlist. Therefore, the number of persons benefitting from this strategy is relatively small.

2. Strategy: Explore Changes to BMR Requirements

[HE]

Advantages: The City's Below Market Rate (BMR) (aka "inclusionary") requirements mandate affordable units be provided in market rate residential developments and commercial developments pay a certain fee. Examining the BMR requirements may allow for the provision of more affordable units in a development and/or provide units with a "deeper" affordability where it would be affordable to those households with lower incomes. Other potential changes could include focusing on larger units or emphasizing units for seniors. Or it could also involve commercial developments providing additional funding for affordable housing projects through the payment of fees.

Disadvantages: Since this program is dependent on market rate residential development, changing the current requirements may disincentivize or inhibit development due to potential financial cost. Any proposed changes would require study.

Research: From the White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness, it found that IZ (inclusionary zoning) programs have the ability to produce affordable units, but the extent of their effectiveness depends on the presence of a strong market, as well as on the terms of each program. Additionally, the typically low percentage of affordable units required by inclusionary zoning programs (usually 10-15% of the total units produced) results in low numbers of new affordable units.²⁵

According to the Urban Institute, "Estimating the exact number of affordable units created nationwide through IZ [inclusionary zoning] is difficult because of a lack of consistent data. Recent studies have claimed total counts of 150,000 to 173,000.²⁶ These estimates can be difficult to interpret because of missing data and variation between programs, but they generally indicate IZ programs are successfully creating affordable housing."²⁷

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy received some support from participants but was not identified as a top priority.

Analysis: The City is reviewing its current Below Market Rate (BMR) requirements as part of Housing Element program H4.A, "Amend the Below Market Rate Inclusionary Housing Regulations". The City is part of a multi-jurisdictional Nexus study that will evaluate the City's inclusionary zoning and commercial linkage fee requirements. The study, funded by the MTC TOC grant, would be the empirical analysis needed to make potential changes to the BMR requirements. Those changes could include increasing (or decreasing): 1) the percentage of affordable units required for inclusionary zoning, 2) the City's in-lieu fees, and 3) target income levels for the affordable units. The City has made numerous changes to the requirements over the years. Recently, the City Council adopted administrative changes to the program in 2025 and pending the results of the nexus study, would consider more substantive changes to the BMR Guidelines.

Timeline: The preliminary results of the nexus study should be completed by the end of 2026 with recommendations in early 2027. Changes to existing BMR requirements could take up to an estimated 9 months to implement after completion of the study.

Cost: The cost to prepare the nexus study is supported by the MTC TOC grant.

Impact: Inclusionary requirements provides ongoing production of affordable housing with each market-rate development and it establishes long term affordability. However, the production of these units through inclusionary zoning is dependent on the market. The City has produced over 250 affordable units with the advent of the program in 1988. Therefore, the community impact would only benefit a few community members.

Below market rate (BMR) rental housing interest form

CITY OF
MENLO PARK

First Name Required

Last Name Required

Do you currently live and/or work in Menlo Park? Required

☐ Live in Menlo Park

☐ Work in Menlo Park

☐ Live and work in Menlo Park

☐ Do not live or work in Menlo Park

How many members are in your household? Required

What is your approximate gross annual household income? Required

What type of unit are you interested in (check all that apply)? Required

☐ Studio

☐ 1 Bedroom

☐ 2 Bedrooms

☐ 3 Bedrooms

Phone number Required

Email address Required

Image Source: Below Market Rate (BMR) rental housing interest form, City of Menlo Park Website

Protection

3. Strategy: Expand the Just Cause Eviction Ordinance

[HE/EJ]

Overview: A landlord must have a “just cause” or a valid, legal reason such as nonpayment of rent or a lease violation to evict a tenant from a rental unit. The California Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (AB 1482) provides a variety of “Just Cause” protections to tenants who may be evicted through no fault of their own. Current state protections expire in 2030 and single-family homes are excluded from the protections.

Advantages: This strategy can promote housing security and neighborhood stability. An ordinance to expand the protections could reach a larger number of residents. Expanding the type of structure to include single family homes would impact a greater amount of households. It would also provide greater clarity and define reasons why a tenancy can be terminated. It can also empower tenants without fear of retaliation or eviction.

Disadvantages: An expanded ordinance may face landlord opposition due to required additional assistance to tenants.

Research: The following comments are taken from the White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy, “Among the limited research on the efficacy of “Just Cause” is a natural experiment that examined the incidence of eviction in California cities with and without these protections... The study found that cities with “Just Cause” protections saw the incidence of evictions and eviction filings decline after their passage and compared to their counterparts without such protections in place.”²⁸

Additional research was done about just cause eviction protections on the East Coast. Dr. Molly Richards of Boston University’s Center for Innovation and in Social Science, in her research, found that just cause eviction protections do decrease evictions and eviction filings.²⁹

Interviews: This strategy was supported by majority of interviewees.

Community input: This strategy received some votes from the community meetings and city-wide survey but it was not a top vote getter.

Analysis: Just cause protections are important for housing stability, especially when paired with rental assistance and legal services. Research has shown that evidence of evictions and eviction filings decline after introduction of just cause eviction protections in comparison to cities that do not have these protections in place. By pairing both just cause evictions with a legal assistance program, those seeking to challenge their unlawful evictions can do so by utilizing the legal services offered and potentially decrease evictions. In addition, expanding Just Cause could expand these protections past the State expiration date, apply protections to additional building types like single family homes and require eviction notices given to tenants to be submitted to the City.

Timeline: Preparation and adoption of this strategy could take an estimated 8-12 months to implement.

Cost: Staff and City Attorney time to develop the ordinance including community outreach.

Impact: This strategy would offer a substantial community-wide impact. It could also provide additional City-wide protections to tenants living in units currently excluded by the state protections.

4. Strategy: Extend 12 Month-Lease Ordinance to Single Family Homes

[HE/EJ]

Overview: Menlo Park's ordinance (Chapter 8.54 Residential Leases for Rental Units) requires that tenants in buildings with 4 or more units be offered a 12-month lease. This strategy aims to extend this protection to single family homes and other building types not covered in the existing ordinance.

Advantages: A long-term lease offers greater tenant and neighborhood stability. This strategy can build on an existing ordinance and offer protections to a larger number of residents, including households renting single family homes, duplexes and triplexes.

Disadvantages: May face landlord opposition if the expanded regulations are seen as costly, overly restrictive or complicated. It does restrict landlord flexibility in the management of the property.

Research: In a review of property management websites, the typically listed benefits of a 12 month lease include a more stable rental income, lower turnover costs, and longer term stability.³⁰

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy did not receive much support from participants at the community meetings or city-wide survey.

Analysis: Extending the offer for a 12-month lease requirement to single family homes and to other building types would help provide greater stability to those tenants in single family homes. The Belle Haven neighborhood would benefit where there are a large number of single family homes. However, there may be other strategies that may offer greater household and neighborhood stability.

Timeline: Amending and adoption of an ordinance could take an estimated 6-8 months. Additional time would be needed for outreach and education.

Cost: Staff and City Attorney time to develop the ordinance.

Impact: This strategy could have a large community benefit as more than half of the homes in the City are single family homes. Other proposed protections would offer greater benefits to prevent displacement such as expanding just cause protections.

5. Strategy: Strengthen Tenant Anti-harassment Ordinance

[EJ]

Overview: Landlords may use various tactics (i.e. lengthy delays needed repairs, lack of functioning utilities, intimidation, etc.) to force tenants to vacate a unit. The City currently does not have a tenant anti-harassment ordinance. Creating a City anti-harassment policy could reduce the risk of retaliation against tenants who report issues to landlords and help keep them in their homes.

Advantages: This strategy has support from housing advocates and renters, could protect tenants from unreasonable or coercive behavior from landlords and could reduce the risk of landlord retaliation.

Disadvantages: This strategy may face landlord opposition and would require monitoring and enforcement to be effective.

Research: According to ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments) "Local anti-harassment ordinances can reduce displacement pressures and informal evictions by clarifying what constitutes harassment and retaliation and empowering tenants to stop it."³¹

Research from the University of Southern California (USC) shows that housing policies that explicitly protect tenants from unjust evictions and landlord harassment are necessary to alleviate this crisis by preventing additional residents of Los Angeles from falling into housing insecurity and homelessness.³²

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from participants at community meetings.

Analysis: Landlords may use different harassment actions to informally evict tenants. By providing this protection to curb the landlord behavior, it would empower the tenant to exercise their rights without fear of landlord intimidation or harassment.

Timeline: Development and adoption of this strategy could take an estimated 6-8 months.

Cost: Staff and City Attorney time to develop the ordinance. It would also require additional staff time for tenant and landlord education of the ordinance.

Impact: This strategy would offer protection to all tenants. An ordinance would discourage harassing behavior by landlords and/or provide consequences for landlords who subject their tenants to such behavior.

6. Strategy: Enhance Neighborhood Tenant Preference for Affordable Housing

[HE]

Overview: Housing preference criteria can be used to prioritize applicants for affordable housing. The City's BMR Guidelines currently establishes preferences for people who currently live in, previously lived in, but is unhoused or was displaced, or work in Menlo Park. The preference can also be determined by the developer if they want to provide for a specific group. Other examples of preferences can include persons with disabilities or veterans. These preferences are used to help households that have the greatest need to secure housing in high demand areas.

Advantages: Local or neighborhood preferences would lessen or mitigate the displacement impacts of the immediate area.

Disadvantages: This strategy may create potential fair housing implications. A city-wide preference instead of a neighborhood preference is less likely to raise fair housing concerns. Administratively, it could impact the speed of tenant placement by requiring an additional review criteria of the applicant in that specific neighborhood.

Research: A report prepared by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development concluded that neighborhood preferences are effective.³³

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from both survey participants and participants at community meetings.

Analysis: Creating a neighborhood preference can give residents a greater opportunity to remain in the neighborhood, especially for lower-income neighborhoods undergoing gentrification. The City currently has a city-wide preference that applies for those who live and/or work in Menlo Park. A neighborhood preference would take some time to study and evaluate. Developing neighborhood specific preferences may have challenges such as fair housing risks and administrative complexities. And there is criticism that while it may address anti-displacement on a very local level, if the neighborhood is segregated, it may prevent greater diversity in the neighborhood.³⁴

Timeline: This strategy would require a revision to the BMR Guidelines and may take a year to develop and implement.

Cost: May need additional time and expense to study the potential implications to fair housing.

Impact: This strategy's impact may be limited to only assisting a smaller number of persons, the local neighborhood, where the preference is established instead of a larger, general population.

7. Strategy: Develop Localized Anti-displacement Programs to Large-scale Developments

[HE]

Overview: Through collaboration between developers and the City, large developments can address direct displacement of small business and residents from the development site. As mentioned, State law (SB 330) already provides for some protections such as relocation assistance and right of first refusal if their existing residence is demolished. Localized programs could include other benefits.

Advantages: Similar to neighborhood preferences, localized programs can address direct and indirect displacement and protect existing local tenants.

Disadvantages: This strategy would require project by project implementation. A disparate impact study may need to be prepared to ensure compliance with fair housing law.

Research: None

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from both survey participants and participants at community meetings.

Analysis: Developing localized anti-displacement programs in response to large developments would support local residents remaining in the area. However, it may require study to ensure that it does not violate any fair housing law, more specifically it does not create a disparate impact to any particular protected group under fair housing law. In addition, it may add to the complexity in developing larger projects.

Timeline: Estimated time for implementation dependent on proposed development.

Cost: May need additional time and expense to study the potential implications to be consistent with fair housing could lead to delays in developing the project.

Impact: This strategy may have a limited overall community impact since the focus would be on residents directly affected by a proposed development. However, impacted residents may be able to remain in the community for longer term stability.

8. Strategy: Identify New Sources of Funding for Anti-Displacement Efforts

[HE]

Overview: By identifying new sources of funding, it can help ease the financial burden in the maintenance and/or implementation of new anti-displacement programs or strategies.

Advantages: Additional funding would assist in implementing current and future City anti-displacement efforts.

Disadvantages: Typically, new funding sources are in the form of grants, which are limited in scope in time. While useful in establishing or implementing new programs, they are not suitable for sustaining ongoing programs.

Research: Funding is always a key factor in the implementation or establishment of an ordinance or program. Therefore, City staff is always attentive to any information regarding federal, state and local funding opportunities.

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy did not receive support from participants from community meetings or the city-wide survey.

Analysis: City staff is always looking for funding opportunities. By identifying new sources of funding for anti-displacement efforts, it may be able to supplement existing programs or help in supporting any recommended strategies.

Timeline: Research to identify additional funding sources is ongoing.

Cost: Staff time to explore and pursue potential funding sources.

Impact: If additional funding sources are found, it would help continue to sustain existing programs and potentially help implement other anti-displacement strategies for the City.

9. Strategy: Modify Tenant Relocation Assistance Provided by Landlord to Low and Moderate Income Tenants

[HE]

Overview: The City has an ordinance (Chapter 8.56 Tenant Relocation Assistance) that requires relocation assistance in certain no fault eviction circumstances of developments of 5 or more units. Relocation assistance is intended to help households with the cost of moving and securing replacement housing. Under the ordinance, if the tenant needs to move out per the action of the landlord and the action is covered under the ordinance, the landlord would be required to provide the equivalent of three month's rent to assist in the relocation of the tenant. However, the ordinance applies to developments with five or more units. The program could include expanding eligibility to moderate income households and applicability for smaller developments, increasing the time and/or amount of relocation assistance required.

Advantages: Additional payments can reduce housing instability and could assist with moving costs and security deposits for replacement housing. Tenant relocation assistance is paid by landlords and not from City funding.

Disadvantages: This strategy may encounter landlord opposition because of greater imposed financial burden. The expanded ordinance would assist in lessening the impacts of displacement but does not prevent tenants from being displaced.

Research: Research on tenant relocation assistance is relatively sparse.

Tenant relocation does ease the financial burden for the displaced tenant in securing the next residence. However, per a Stanford University paper, "Nowhere to Go: Community Based Research on Tenant Displacement and Relocation in the San Francisco Bay Area", relocation assistance does little to mitigate forced displacement and suggest alternatives to prevent forced displacement.³⁵

In addition, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), combining relocation assistance with other protections such as "just cause evictions" or providing legal assistance may help the relocation assistance to be more effective.³⁶

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from survey participants and community advocacy groups.

Analysis: Currently, the City's tenant relocation assistance ordinance requires three (3) months of rent to qualifying households and in certain circumstances, an added month for a total of four months. There are other State tenant relocation assistance requirements in place that exceed the local ordinance. For example, on the State level, if the unit is to be demolished, State requirements mandate the tenant could be eligible for up to 42 months of relocation assistance. In addition, State 1482 also provides for tenant relocation assistance, albeit it only provides for one month of relocation. But a Anti-displacement Plan proposal is to expand 1482 protections and extend the relocation assistance to four months, would achieve the same aim as this proposed strategy.

The City ordinance could be expanded to include specific assistance for items such as moving fees and/or money for temporary housing while searching for a permanent residence. Additional relocation assistance payments may aid in providing further stability to those displaced through no fault evictions and help people find new accommodations quicker.

Timeline: To update the current ordinance would take of 6-9 months to complete.

Cost: May need additional time to conduct outreach to the public and housing provider/business community about proposal.

Impact: While this strategy may only affect renters currently facing a no fault eviction, the benefit would be substantial in providing greater stability by providing greater financial resources for a security deposit and rent for any future residence. In turn, this strategy would significantly impact all landlords who may have to pay higher assistance payments to renters who qualify for relocation assistance.

What are you looking for?

Search

Home / Government / Departments / Community Development / Housing / **Tenant relocation assistance ordinance**

Tenant relocation assistance ordinance

In 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1053 adding a [tenant relocation assistance](#) requirement to the municipal code.

In addition, the City Council approved the establishment of a community housing fund to support lower income tenants to prevent homelessness. Menlo Park tenants experiencing financial hardships and potential displacement are encouraged to contact Samaritan House.



Image Source: Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance, City of Menlo Park Website

10. Strategy: Foreclosure Prevention/Mortgage and Rental Assistance

[HE]

Overview: Mortgage and rental assistance typically involves an emergency, one-time mortgage or rental payment to help avoid foreclosure or eviction. The City established a Housing Assistance Program with Samaritan House that provides assistance to homeowners and renters. Although the City funds have been expended, this program still serves City residents. Please note that this analysis only focuses on emergency assistance and not long term assistance such as the federal Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program.

Advantages: Rental assistance payments can help prevent immediate eviction and displacement. The City has an existing program with Samaritan House to distribute funding and was awarded MTC TOC grant funding this year to assist with implementing the program.

Disadvantages: While rental assistance may help prevent an eviction, this provides only temporary relief and is a short-term solution. The same tenant could be in a similar situation at another time if the root cause is not addressed. The program may potentially assist a small number of households depending on funding, eligibility requirements and program criteria.

Research: From the White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness, it determined that rental assistance programs can be very protective for low-income tenants when it comes to potential to prevent displacement.³⁷

In 2022, research from the Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies found that emergency rental assistance provides short-term benefits beyond housing stability but also better mental health³⁸. They also pointed to the continued need for rental assistance.

Additional support can be found in the study "Evictions in San Mateo County 2019/2023":

- Most evictions are based upon alleged nonpayment of rent
- The study found that in 2023, over 85% of unlawful detainers were based on alleged rent delinquency.

Interviews: This strategy was highly supported by majority of interviewees.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from survey participants.

Analysis: The City previously partnered with Samaritan House to create a Housing Assistance Program that provided short-term mortgage and rental assistance. The City funds have been expended as of February 2025 but the program continues to provide assistance to cover one or two months of housing payments for households needing emergency relief. A rental assistance program is not a long-term subsidy program such as the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program. However, research has shown that 85% of evictions are rent related. Therefore, a rental assistant program, coupled with a legal assistance program, would be effective in addressing evictions. In addition, rental assistance could also be effective in preventing informal evictions (eviction outside the court system such as a move out due to higher rents), albeit temporarily, which are not as easily quantified or trackable.

Timeline: Community outreach, program revisions/design and Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop and implement a rental assistance program will occur through Fall 2026.

Cost: This MTC TOC strategy will require funding to provide program assistance. The City has received a \$250,000 grant to develop the program. To be compliant with TOC policy, the City is required to pledge \$300,000 over four years for rental assistance.

Impact: A large percentage of lower income households are rent burdened. Rental assistance could be beneficial in helping a large number of renters within the program's income requirement to avoid immediate displacement. However, while the assistance may provide relief in the very short term, it does not guarantee long term stability. The same situation could occur a month later.



11. Strategy: Rental Registry/Inventory

[EJ]

Overview: A rental registry is a database that requires property owners to register their rental units and provide up to date information on the units including rental prices, tenancy and other information.

Advantages: Examples of rental registry implementation can be found in surrounding cities like East Palo Alto and Half Moon Bay. The registry collects and monitors data and allows trends to be analyzed to better understand the rental market.

Disadvantages: A rental registry may face landlord opposition if the program is funded by registration fees paid by the landlords. Depending on the registry, landlords may have limited compliance due to privacy concerns. The program may also be time consuming to implement as it may take time to design the program, implement registry, achieve compliance with landlords including collection of fees, and then time to review the data. A rent registry, by itself, does not provide tenant protection, only information. It needs to be paired with a “protection” strategy to be more effective.

Research: According to HdL Companies, “According to a 2023 report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the U.S. has a shortage of 7.3 million affordable rental homes for low-income renters. Yet many local governments don’t even know how many rental units exist in their jurisdiction. The National League of Cities and Local Housing Solutions both identify rental registration as a best practice for cities looking to improve affordability, enforce housing standards, and plan more effectively.”³⁹

Interviews: Highly supported by majority of interviewees.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from participants at the community meetings.

Analysis: Rental registries can be used to track tenancies and rents and provide other useful information about the rental market. As AB 1482 now limits rent increases, the rent registry could be used as a way to monitor compliance with the law. To make the registry more effective it should be paired with an implementing action such as rent stabilization. Without an implementing action, the rent registry has only limited usefulness in that it provides information. The rent registry may also include single family homes. Per the [Figure 9](#), more than half (57%) of the City’s housing stock comprises of single family homes.

Timeline: In speaking with other jurisdictions, implementation can take 1-2 years depending on the complexity of the registry. Time is needed to design the registry, establishing fees for the maintenance of the registry, conduct outreach notifying landlords about the registry and then collecting the data. It may take longer in order to generate data to show trends.

Cost: In researching other jurisdictions that have implemented rent registries, the cost was \$100,000-\$300,000. Staff and financial resources would be needed to establish and implement the rental registry. Costs may go up with the inclusion of single family homes. Annual operating costs would need to be budgeted to maintain the registry with fees collected from the landlords.

Impact: This strategy could affect all rental units and provide the City with updated housing data but would not directly prevent displacement. A larger impact could be made if combined with other anti-displacement strategies like rent control or an eviction monitoring system.

CITY OF PALO ALTO LOGIN ENGLISH

Palo Alto Rental Registry Program

Welcome to the City of Palo Alto's Rental Registry Program online portal.

The Rental Registry Program annual open registration period for Program Year 3 (FY 2026-2027) will begin in Fall 2026 and run through early Winter 2027. The online portal remains open and available for ongoing event based reporting and for non-registered properties to register/pay citations.

The Rental Registry Program annual open registration for Program Year 2 (FY 2025-2026) is closed and ran October 1, 2025 through January 15, 2026. The City then sent Notice of Intent to Cite letters for rental properties that had not yet completed annual registration for Program Year 2 and extended a one-month grace period through February 16, 2026. The City sent Administrative Citations for non-registration of rental properties and units on April 7, 2026 per Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 9.65.

Contact City staff at rentalregistry@paloalto.gov if you have questions.

Who Can Use the Portal:

- Rental property owners and property managers use this portal to create accounts, register properties, and report events throughout the year.
- Renters and other members of the public can search for basic information, including the registration status of a rental unit.

What Rental Properties Need to Register:

- Rental Properties with Three or More Units: Initial registration or annual registration renewal is required each year during the annual open registration period. Most rental properties initially registered in Program Year 1 (FY 2024-2025); these properties must complete their annual registration renewal. Additional rental properties with three or more units were added for Program Year 2 (FY 2025-2026); these properties must complete their initial registration.

What Properties Do Not Need to Register:

- Rental Properties with Two or Fewer Units: These rental properties are currently not required to register during Program Year 1 (FY 2024-2025) or Program Year 2 (FY 2025-2026);
- Non-Residential Properties; and
- Hospitals, extended medical care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, health facilities,

Renters and Additional Community Members

Search Search...

To see a rental unit registration status without the need to create a Rental Registry Program online portal account, type the property address or Assessor's Parcel Number (without hyphens) in the search box.

Assessor's Parcel Numbers can be found using the City's Online Parcel Report tool: <https://opengis.cityofpaloalto.org/parcelreports>

Property Owners/Managers

Create an Account / Log In

Image Source: Rental Registry Program online portal, City of Palo Alto Website

12. Strategy: Create an Eviction Monitoring and Data Collection Program

[HE]

Overview: Currently, the only formal eviction data is maintained by the judicial system and because they are legal documents with confidential information, tracking or monitoring eviction numbers or rate of evictions may be difficult to obtain. An eviction monitoring program would require landlords to participate and provide information regarding tenant evictions outside the judicial system.

Advantages: An eviction monitoring and data collection program can be a metric for measuring displacement in tracking move outs/vacancies. It can also be combined with a proposed rental registry program in tracking unlawful detainer (eviction) cases.

Disadvantages: This strategy would require increased staff time to collect and monitor data. In addition, the data may be difficult to gather or in depending on landlords cooperation. Similar to the rental registry, this would only provide information. It does not prevent displacement.

Research: There is some data about the number of evictions that have been filed through the judicial system. However, there is no large-scale research or information on eviction monitoring and data collection. The study "Evictions in San Mateo County 2019/2023" provided information and data on evictions and some findings on certain actions that reduced eviction actions. For example, rulings against defendant-tenants are dramatically lower when the tenant appears in court than those tenants who defaulted. Potentially these findings could be addressed through a legal assistance program, another proposed strategy.

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: The strategy received support from participants but was not identified as a top priority.

Analysis: Eviction monitoring can create a way for the City to follow eviction trends. An eviction monitoring system and data collection program could require the landlord to also file with the City after an eviction notice has been filed with the courts. It would then be entered and tracked in the system. Based on the data, the City could have additional information about evictions. This would be different from a rent registry where landlords would be required to submit their data on a consistent basis or more of a "proactive" system. This program would be more "reactive" in submitting the data after the notice has been filed. However, there may be the opportunity to incorporate this system into a rent registry.

Timeline: Estimated time of up to 1 year to create the program; ongoing tracking of the data.

Cost: It will take some investment to establish and implement the program. Annual operating costs are estimated to be lower as data is entered when an eviction notice is filed.

Impact: This strategy would provide the City data on residents being evicted but would not directly prevent their displacement.

13. Strategy: Updated or Expanded Rent Control

[EJ]

Overview: The City does not have a local rent stabilization ordinance, but rather adheres to the statewide California Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (AB 1482), which limits rent increases to 5% plus inflation, or a maximum of 10% per year, whichever is lower. This act also includes just cause eviction protections for tenants who have lived in their rental residential unit for at least 12 months.

Advantages: A rent control program could impact a large number of renters in applicable housing developments and reduce displacement of current residents by stabilizing rents from year to year.

Disadvantages: This strategy may face significant landlord opposition and could require substantial investment as staff and a rent registry are typically required for effective implementation. Per State law, an ordinance would not apply to single family residential rental units.

Research: Rent control, as a tool to support housing stability, has been in place for many years. The following comments are taken from the “White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness”:

- Rent control generally is effective in preventing displacement. However, this may incentivize landlords to remove units from the rental market to avoid rent control. Therefore, rent control policies become more effective as anti-displacement tools if they are accompanied by other policies such as restrictions on condominium conversions or “Just Cause” eviction regulations.⁴⁰
- The conclusion that rent regulations are effective at stabilizing neighborhoods and preventing displacement is commonplace in the research overall.⁴¹

However, in a study by the Turner Center about the impacts of AB 1482, it prepared, “Rising Rents, Not Enough Data How a Lack of Transparency Threatens to Undermine California’s Rent Cap”. The Turner Center research showed that prior to adopting AB1482, rents were increasing about 3% annually in Los Angeles and San Francisco. After the passage of AB1482, annual rents were growing roughly 3-5 times faster.⁴² It continued that it could be due to the lack of enforcement mechanisms and due to the broad scope of AB 1482, educating and informing both landlords and tenant on how this law applies remains challenging. In addition, because of the number of exemptions in the law, it may not be as effective.

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from participants of the survey.

Analysis: The Costa Hawkins Act prohibits inclusion of single-family residential properties in rent control programs or units built after February 1, 1995. Since 57% of Belle Haven residents live in single family home rentals, any rent control or stabilization measure would not benefit many Belle Haven residents, thus reducing the effectiveness of implementing this strategy. Passing a local rent control ordinance could be difficult as rent control measures in other jurisdictions have been controversial.

Timeline: Implementation can take up to 2 years. Rent control or stabilization is generally a controversial issue. Therefore more community outreach and discussion would need to be done.

Cost: To create a local rent control ordinance or program, initial costs to implement the ordinance can be substantial as considerable staff and attorney time would be needed. In addition, some jurisdictions have a rental board to enforce the rent control ordinance. This would need dedicated staff.

Impact: This strategy would affect renters living in multi-family dwelling units but would not benefit Belle Haven renters who live in single-family homes. If combined with other anti-displacement strategies like a rent registry, it could have a larger impact for the greater community.



Image Source: Menlo Park Housing Fair

14. Strategy: Provide Legal Assistance to Tenants

[HE/EJ]

Overview: Research has been shown that landlords generally have much greater access to legal services and representation and typically tenants do not. A legal assistance program can provide critical legal education and services to tenants to assist them with their legal rights and about the legal process as well as potentially legal representation.

Advantages: A legal assistance program can include measures to effectively prevent and fight eviction, discrimination and other illegal practices.

Disadvantages: A legal assistance program may face landlord opposition, depending on the structure of the program. Providing legal services may be too late to prevent evictions further in progress.

Research: The following comments are taken from the “White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness”: The paper highlighted the results of results from San Francisco’s right to counsel law, passed in 2018. The results showed that the City’s eviction filings had declined by 10%, and that two out of three tenants receiving full-scope representation retained possession of their dwelling unit. Additionally, these findings revealed that four out of five African Americans receiving legal representation in an unlawful detainer action remained in their home, preventing further displacement of African American San Franciscans.⁴³ The paper also wrote about a New York City study, who also approved their right to counsel in 2017. Their study results showed that evictions declined 11%.

Additional findings in the “Evictions in San Mateo County 2019/2023”, published in February 2025 shows that even a small amount of legal assistance increases the tenant’s chance of contesting an eviction. The study found that those cases in which the defendant appeared in court was much more successful in contesting the eviction. The study found that if the defendant did not appear, 49.4% of the time, a writ of possession (a notice to vacate) was issued. It dropped to 21.6% of the time when the tenant appeared and filed a response to the eviction. The study points out that with even limited attorney involvement; it dramatically decreases the chance of a writ being issued.⁴⁴

Interviews: This strategy was highly supported by majority of interviewees.

Community input: The strategy was noted as a top priority from participants of the survey.

Analysis: Establishing a legal assistance program is an important aspect of tenant protections. Legal assistance could potentially reduce evictions, provide vital information about a tenant’s rights and promote fairness in legal proceedings, considering that landlords overwhelmingly have access to legal resources compared to tenants. The City can explore contracting with established legal organizations to create a program that could provide legal advice, information or any combination of services, or providing financial assistance for representation.

Timeline: Per the MTC grant, the legal assistance programs is scheduled to be established in Fall 2026.

Cost: This MTC TOC strategy will require funding to provide program assistance. The City has received a \$250,000 grant to be TOC compliant, has pledged \$300,000 over the next four years for legal assistance.

Impact: Providing access to legal assistance could have a significant impact in preventing eviction and assisting all City of Menlo Park renters facing eviction. The program could service tenants, regardless of income level, with legal information and education to help prevent any potential or issued eviction. Coupled with other City services such as rental assistance, it may assist in challenging an eviction scenario.



Image Source: *Evictions in San Mateo Report Cover, Stanford Law School Website*

15. Strategy: Increase Multi-Lingual information and Outreach about Tenant Protections

[HE]

Overview: Thirty-eight percent of Menlo Park residents speak a language other than English at home, including 15% of residents who speak Spanish.⁴⁵ This percentage is even higher in Belle Haven where over 58% of the residents speak Spanish.⁴⁶ This strategy would create or partner with service providers to conduct proactive outreach and education to inform the community of available housing resources, especially tenant protections. Hold culturally competent, in-language outreach workshops.

Advantages: This strategy can reach large number of residents and increase awareness in available resources and programs.

Disadvantages: This strategy may require increased staff time and cost.

Research: There are many documented benefits to multilingualism. Some benefits include:

- Improved Engagement and Connection
- Reduced Misunderstanding
- Enhanced Cultural Sensitivity
- Broader Reach
- Inclusivity and participation⁴⁷

Interviews: This strategy was highly supported by Belle Haven interviewees.

Community input: This strategy received support from participants but was not identified as a top priority.

Analysis: Understanding that providing materials and meetings in multiple languages increases accessibility to more groups in community outreach, the City currently works to translate informational handouts and provide translation services in different languages at community events and has provided live Spanish interpretation at some City Council meetings. The City Housing website can also be translated into various languages including Spanish. Increased outreach in multi-lingual information can assist in reaching vulnerable populations. These vulnerable populations would probably benefit the most from tenant protection programs in their own language.

Timeline: The timeline depends on the event or project. Existing material can be translated fairly quickly. But larger documents or events may take additional time.

Cost: The City is already in the process of implementing information into Spanish. Other languages could be an additional cost. Tenant protection outreach could be an extension of that effort.

Impact: This strategy would have a beneficial impact on all those who communicate in a primary language other than English. It would provide equal access to materials and resources available to English speaking residents.

16. Strategy: Rental Deposit Assistance (particularly for veterans)

[HE]

Overview: The Veteran's Administration (VA) has established programs to help veterans with deposit assistance such as the Supportive Services for Veteran Families. It pays for security deposits, moving costs and rent arrears. Also, the HUD-VASH program combines the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program with a VA case manager. There are other non-profit organizations that help veterans with housing. The VA, with their established programs, may be better suited to assist veterans.

Advantages: This strategy could explore federal Veteran's Administration (VA) and other veteran organizations that already provide assistance. It can also increase awareness in available resources and programs.

Disadvantages: This strategy may only apply to a limited number of people and does not guarantee long term housing.

Research: There is much research on assistance for veterans. The National Low Income Housing Coalition has found that temporary financial assistance is effective in reducing homelessness amongst veterans.⁴⁸

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy received support from participants but was not identified as a top priority.

Analysis: The Veteran's Administration has established programs to help veterans with deposit assistance such as the Supportive Services for Veteran Families. It pays for security deposits, moving costs and rent arrears. Also, the HUD-VASH program combines the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program with VA case manager. There are other non-profit organizations that help veterans with housing. This strategy could also be folded into a City rental assistance program but the established programs would probably be better able to assist the veterans.

Timeline: If created under the City's newly proposed rental assistance program, it would be by Fall 2026.

Cost: This strategy may require additional funding to provide deposit or rental assistance for veterans.

Impact: The impact of this strategy would be limited to a particular group, veteran renters looking to newly occupy a unit. While this group would certainly benefit, it would have less of an impact community wide.

17. Strategy: Examine Opportunities to Limit Additional Fees Passed to Tenants

[EJ]

Overview: Investigate the possibility of regulating the fees and costs that landlords can pass on to tenants. This could include laundry, parking and utility costs.

Advantages: This strategy could result in potential cost savings for tenants.

Disadvantages: The scope of what can be regulated for this work may be limited and may receive landlord opposition.

Research: No significant supporting evidence for this strategy was found.

Interviews: This strategy did not receive notable support from interviewees.

Community input: This strategy received support from participants but was not identified as a top priority.

Analysis: Since AB 1482 limits rent increases, there are more reported instances of landlords passing on other fees instead of raising rent to cover those fees. Having the tenant responsible for utility costs and fees could add more financial strain to an already cost-burdened renter. By examining how the City can limit or prevent these costs, tenants may be able to better save for emergency situations and potentially keep themselves from being displaced.

Timeline: 10-12 months

Cost: Would require staff time to research this issue to understand the prevalence of the issue. Additional time would be needed to implement an ordinance. Overall, it would take 10-12 months to research and implement.

Impact: Some additional research would need to be done to understand what fees or costs are now being passed on to tenants to measure the overall impact. But this may impact many tenants.

Electrification

The City could examine opportunities to limit additional fees and cost pass-throughs associated with required habitability, electrification, and decarbonization upgrades, including protections against passing through costs for publicly subsidized improvements.

Preservation

18. Strategy: Home Repair/Renovation Program

[HE]

Overview: The City does have two renovation programs for single family homeowners, a program administered by Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco, which focuses on larger rehabilitation projects. The other program is for smaller scale items such as minor rehabilitation projects as well as accessibility improvements, run by Rebuilding Together Peninsula. These households may not have the financial resources to complete basic repairs to their home as labor and material costs continue to increase, and a home renovation program would help them make repairs to be able to live longer in their homes.

For affordable housing developers maintaining their existing units, many of their units were built decades ago. These projects may need more substantial repair in replacing building systems or updating individual units. This strategy would provide funding for affordable housing property managers or developers to address major repairs, accessibility and other physical housing issues.

Advantages: This strategy improves existing housing conditions for residents to stay in place in safe and quality housing.

Disadvantages: There may be limited City funding, lengthy applications and not all residents may meet program qualification requirements.

Research: According to the Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies, "Municipal home repair programs are vitally important for addressing housing inadequacy among homeowners with limited resources. Lower-income households are disproportionately likely to live in inadequate or substandard housing, and as reported in our latest Improving America's Housing report, a large share of homeowners make little to no investment in home repairs and improvements in any given year. Indeed, a much smaller share of lower-income owners make home repairs and upgrades compared with higher-income owners. However, while they spend significantly less on average, this spending represents a considerable share of their incomes."⁴⁹

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy did not receive support from participants from community meetings or the city-wide survey.

Analysis: To address rehabilitation and repair of existing affordable multifamily housing developments, this program can be implemented by prioritizing these projects in the City's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and work with non-profit organizations. For low income single family homeowners, the City already has a preservation program for single family homes. The City has made financial commitments with Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco and Rebuilding Together in performing home repairs assistance program, targeted for low income homeowners, focusing on Belle Haven. This funding could also be for Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH). It would help preserve the units and their affordability through deed restrictions.

Timeline: This program is implemented for individual homeowners. For affordable housing property managers, this can be quickly implemented by providing preference in funding for preservation projects as part of the City's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

Cost: The Housing Element has already committed funding towards the home repairs assistance program.

Impact: This strategy would be focused on multifamily affordable housing developments. Therefore may benefit a larger number of residents.



Image Source: Belle Haven Home Repair Program, City of Menlo Park Facebook

19. Strategy: Community and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA/TOPA)

[EJ]

Overview: This strategy would give tenants or qualified nonprofit organizations the first right to purchase a multi-family building when it is for sale.

Advantages: By giving tenants the first right of refusal to purchase the property, it provides them to opportunity to gain ownership as well as preventing displacement.

Disadvantages: This strategy may attract opposition. The TOPA/CAOPA process has been said that it can be time consuming, requires a large amount of funding assistance, usually from the jurisdiction, and its success is reliant on purchase funds and building tenant/non-profit capacity. Securing a consistent source of funding for this strategy may be difficult as well.

Research: According to Policylink.org, "By creating pathways to resident or nonprofit ownership, TOPA/COPA not only help prevent evictions and speculative displacement but also serve as critical mechanisms for building long-term community wealth."⁵⁰

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy did not receive support from participants from community meetings or the city-wide survey.

Analysis: This strategy is confirmed in the current Housing Element. However, due to the difficulties in establishing a program and the large amount of funding needed, the City does not currently have any COPA/TOPA policies in place and does not have plans for initiation.

Timeline: Drafting and passage of a COPA/TOPA program could take up to 1 year.

Cost: The program itself has some cost, but a successful program depends on secured funding for tenant/non-profit capacity and purchase funds.

Impact: This strategy would be largely beneficial for those at risk for displacement due to the sale of their unit. However, the opportunities to purchase a unit may only impact a few households therefore the community wide impact would be limited.

20. Strategy: Purchase and Preservation of Existing Housing

[HE]

Overview: Similar to TOPA/COPA, this process would provide funding, typically by the jurisdiction, to be used by non-profit organizations to purchase market rate units and make them long-term income restricted units.

Advantages: This strategy could encourage the conversion of existing market rate units into affordable housing and promotes long-term affordability.

Disadvantages: This strategy requires significant funding and qualified organizations to purchase and maintain housing

Research: According to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), "Maintaining the affordability of [these developments] ensures both that current tenants (including seniors and families with lower incomes) can afford to stay in their homes and that future tenants can find an affordable places to live."⁵¹

According to the Urban Institute Initiative, "As we showed in our Who Can Afford to Rent report last year, California's households with lower incomes are unable to keep up with rising rental costs; none of the state's 1.18 million households with extremely low incomes were able to afford average asking rents in 2022.

Naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAHs) are becoming increasingly scarce, in part due to recent increases in NOAH acquisitions by large, for-profit entities, but largely due to a continued supply shortage of affordable housing throughout the state."⁵²

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy was noted as a top priority from survey participants.

Analysis: The preservation portion of this strategy could be easily implemented through prioritization of preservation of existing housing in the City's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process for affordable multifamily developments. The NOFA, done by the City every two years, could prioritize funding for proposed projects that preserve NOAH type units. For the purchase of existing housing, that is a little more complex. Many of the same issues mentioned in the previous TOPA/COPA strategy would apply here.

Timeline: It would take 1-2 months to revise the NOFA for the preservation of existing housing. Preparing a program for the purchase of housing would take up to a year, similar timeline as the TOPA/COPA strategy.

Cost: The cost to add this strategy to the NOFA is minimal. The cost for the purchase of existing housing could be very expensive, possibly in the millions of dollars.

Impact: This strategy would promote long term affordability in the City. Because of the potential cost, only a few households could benefit from a purchase scenario.

Prosperity

21. Strategy: Down Payment Assistance for First Time/ First Generation Homebuyers

[HE/EJ]

Overview: When purchasing a home, typically, a down payment of 20% of the home's sale price is required. This can be a substantial barrier for low-income or first-time homebuyers.

Advantages: This strategy allows an opportunity for residents who grew up in the community to remain long term and can help build intergenerational wealth.

Disadvantages: This strategy may only benefit a smaller group of people, require a large amount of funding because of the high cost of housing and could result in a higher cost of assistance per household than affordable rental units.

Research: According to Housing Trust, "Many households in the region struggle to secure a substantial down payment, making homeownership with affordable mortgage payments an unattainable goal. This financial barrier not only impacts individuals and families but also affects the diversity and skill of our local workforce, as well as the well-being of our community."⁵³

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy received support from participants but was not identified as a top priority.

Analysis: The City has a BMR ownership program for first time homebuyers where the homes are priced at an affordable level therefore making the down payment more attainable. However, the City does not have a down payment assistance program. This strategy could provide a step for those looking to purchase a starter home and invest in their community. Downpayment assistance could be very expensive because the gap between the sales price of a market rate home and what a lower income household can afford is substantial. Because of the expense and the limited availability of funding, only a very few households could benefit from this program.

Timeline: Estimated time to implement strategy could be up to 1 year or longer. The main challenge is securing the funding.

Cost: Because of the high cost of housing, downpayment assistance per household could be in the hundred of thousands of dollars, to be able to purchase a market rate home.

Impact: This strategy would be beneficial to a limited number of households due to the amount of money needed to provide adequate assistance for a home in this high priced area.

22. Strategy: Financial Planning Education and Tutoring

[HE/EJ]

Overview: A community program including financial planning and education can help low and moderate-income residents save for emergencies, manage their credit, pay for a down payment on a home and encourage financial independence. There are financial planning courses already offered with various organizations throughout the County including classes in San Mateo County Libraries.

Advantages: This strategy can increase awareness in available resources and programs, resulting in better financial literacy.

Disadvantages: None

Research: According to the National Financial Educators Council, "The strongest benefits are seen when participants complete a program that induces real, positive behavioral change in financial matters. The research-backed benefits of financial education include having less debt, being able to manage household finances more skillfully, making well-informed investment decisions that will produce higher personal net worth..."⁵⁴

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy received some support from participants from community meetings and the city-wide survey.

Analysis: Impacts of this strategy could include reductions in social services dependency and encourage personal financial growth. Using the knowledge they learn through a financial planning class, residents could use the skills learned to help themselves improve their financial standing and possibly be in a better situation to stay in place. There are already existing financial planning resources that the community can access.

Timeline: As stated, there are already financial resources available. It may take some months for outreach to emphasize the resources.

Cost: Additional funding may be required to fund additional classes or seminars focusing on financial literacy.

Impact: Providing access to financial planning education could potentially impact a large group of people looking to make better financial decisions.

23. Strategy: Building Pathways to the Tech Economy/Workforce Development

[HE/EJ]

Overview: This strategy would focus on partnering with other organizations that could provide career development opportunities to residents. Organizations could include local community colleges, labor organizations, the local Work Investment Board (WIB) and other established job training programs. Other than job training, the strategy could include career counseling and development.

Advantages: Workforce development enhances employee skills, increases economic opportunities, improves job readiness and helps revitalize communities.

Disadvantages: None. Workforce development has been in place for many years.

Research: According to Economic Development Collaborative, Workforce development programs may include job training, but they also encompass educational opportunities, career counselling and supportive services to help individuals navigate career paths and achieve long-term career goals.⁵⁵

Workforce development is a proven pathway in financial empowerment and social mobility.⁵⁶

Interviews: No notable support for this strategy was expressed during interviews.

Community input: This strategy received some support from participants from community meetings and the city-wide survey.

Analysis: This strategy could assist with developing pathways to financial independence for those in the Belle Haven neighborhood through internships and job training programs. Since it is not a City core competency and knowing that there are already many established workforce development organizations, the City would need to explore partnerships with employers and organizations instead of establishing a program. The City currently has designated the organization JobTrain as a FY2025-26 funding recipient, but this strategy is not part of its programmatic duties.

Timeline: Estimated time to implement strategy could be approximately 9 months.

Cost: The costs would include staff time in coordinating the different workforce development organizations.

Impact: This strategy would impact residents looking to establish career paths for themselves but is not easily quantifiable.

Chapter 4

Recommendations

Recommended Strategies

Research suggests that Bay Area cities that have implemented ten or more anti-displacement policies have been the most effective at addressing resident displacement.

Cities such as East Palo Alto and Oakland (with 13 policies each), and Berkeley and San Francisco (with 12 policies each), are recognized as among the most effective in addressing displacement. Notably, these cities do not have formal anti-displacement strategy documents, but they have implemented a comprehensive set of policies that achieve strong outcomes as the policies work in concert with another.

As stated earlier in this report, Menlo Park currently has five anti-displacement strategies in place with only two of which are protection strategies. To align with these best practices, it is recommended that Menlo Park adopt at least five additional anti-displacement policies and consider two more, bringing the total to between ten and twelve comprehensive strategies.

Most of these new policies should focus on protection measures, which directly support tenants, preserve existing affordable housing, and stabilize vulnerable residents. Similar to the other cities, the recommended strategies are also chosen to work with each other.

If a strategy is not recommended for implementation, it does not preclude the City from implementing it in the future. The strategies outlined in the Plan were proposed by community members and stakeholders.

The complete list of strategies do not represent the recommendations of the or analysis by the City with respect to effectiveness, implementation likelihood and/or legality. If any strategy is implemented, it must be evaluated against and follow local, state and federal requirements.

Each of the proposed strategies has shown to be effective in addressing displacement. The recommended strategies are for a path to move forward in the immediate future and include a prioritization of tenant protections.

As with any strategy implemented, robust outreach and education must be done to ensure that the most under-represented and unreachable groups have the information and understand their rights as tenants.

Please note that the recommendations are presented as a suggested priority of implementation.



Image Source: Menlo Park Housing Fair

1. Rental Assistance Program (Strategy No. 10)

Why?

As referenced in the strategy analysis, a high majority of evictions are due to nonpayment of rent. It can be assumed that eviction data is a reflection of the greater displacement environment, it clearly shows the significance that rent affordability play in displacement.

Rental assistance can help tenants before they reach the stage of being formally or informally evicted, and some funds can be used to resolve an eviction or temporarily avoid an informal eviction.

Menlo Park has a rental assistance program and will review whether to explore improvements to it or to establish a completely new program through the awarded MTC TOC grant. If adopted, the City will need to commit additional funding for the program from other sources.

Sources to Assist in Implementation

- Oakland and Contra Costa County - Rental Assistance Program
- Alameda County - Rental Assistance Program
- [*East Palo Alto Direct Rental and Financial Assistance RFP*](#)
- Other Resources:
 - [*MTC TOC Rental Assistance Program Implementation Guide*](#)
 - [*Santa Clara County Emergency Rental Assistance Case Study*](#)

Timeline and Budget

Review of the existing program commenced in late 2025.

Community outreach and program revisions/design will occur through summer 2026.

The City can distribute the funds or contract with a provider (recommended) to administer the program. The administrator would likely be selected through a Request for Proposals process, and is targeted to be issued in Fall 2026.

Menlo Park's existing Housing Assistance Program provided up to \$5,000 for one month of rental assistance per applicant. For reference, the City contributed \$220,000 in 2022. The funds were expended in February 2025 however the program continues serving Menlo Park. In those three years, they were able to assist 76 households with the funding for approximately \$2900 per household. Future annual costs could be between \$75,000 to \$120,000 per year.

Menlo Park received \$250,000 from the MTC TOC grant program to further research and establish a rental assistance program in the City.

To be TOC compliant, the City would be required to set aside \$300,000 to fund the rental assistance program over a four-year period. Funding does not have to be evenly distributed across the four years.

2. Legal Assistance Program (Strategy No. 14)

Why?

Evictions have exceeded pre-pandemic levels in all nine Bay Area counties. Menlo Park is no exception. Research has shown that legal assistance programs are effective in preventing eviction as shown as pointed out in the strategy analysis.

Additional research has shown that even some access to professional legal counseling at time of unlawful detainer (the notice to begin eviction proceedings) had a higher success rate in fighting the eviction than those who did not receive any counseling.

All those interviewed support a legal assistance program although there were differences as to what point in the eviction process to provide the assistance (counseling vs. full representation).

This strategy has received strong community support, with encouragement for an even shorter implementation timeline than proposed in the Fall 2026 MTC TOC grant timeline.

Sources to Assist in Implementation

- [East Palo Alto Legal Services RFP](#)
- [San Mateo County Legal Aid and Tenant Landlord Mediation Services RFP](#)
- Other Resources
 - [MTC TOC Legal Assistance Implementation Guide](#)
 - City of Mountain View – Senior Adults Legal Assistance (SALA) and Immigration Services of Mountain View (ISMV)
 - City of Oakland- Neighborhood Law Corps (NLC)

Timeline and Budget

Initial research of a legal assistance program has begun.

Community outreach and program design is expected through Summer 2026 with implementation by Fall 2026. Outreach would mainly occur to the general public once the program is established.

The City will contract with local legal assistance providers through a Request for Proposals process. Based on proposals from other cities, the anticipated costs for legal services, including tenant education, is to be from \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year to serve around 40 households.

Menlo Park also received a grant of \$250,000 from MTC Grant to further research and establish best practices in the implementation this program.

To meet MTC TOC Policy, the City would be required to set aside requires an additional \$300,000 of secured funding for legal assistance over a four-year period. Funding does not have to be evenly distributed across the four years.

3. Just Cause Eviction (Strategy No. 3)

Why?

The Tenant Protection Act (AB 1482) offers statewide tenant protections for just cause evictions until 2030 but it excludes single family homes. In addition, research has shown that evidence of evictions and eviction filings decline after introduction of this legislation in comparison to cities that do not have these protections in place. The plan recommends revisions to the AB 1482 requirements as follows:

a) Expand applicability to apply just cause eviction requirements to single family homes.

- Currently single-family homes are not protected under AB1482. As AB1482 includes both just cause eviction and rent stabilization provisions, single-family homes are not included to avoid conflict with the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act state law. Costa Hawkins limits the scope of local rent control ordinances by prohibiting rent control on single-family homes. By removing the rent stabilization requirements when adopting a local version of AB 1482, Menlo Park could provide just cause eviction protections to single family homes. As part of the interviews, legal professionals noted this is especially helpful in places like Belle Haven, where many rentals are single-family.

b) Extend the 2030 expiration timeline.

- Adopting a local ordinance could extend the 2030 sunset built into state law, providing longer-term stability. The City of East Palo Alto and City of Los Angeles have already implemented just cause eviction requirements to include single-family units.

c) Require eviction notices to be submitted to the City.

- A local just cause eviction ordinance could require submittal of eviction notices to the City. Currently, only the courts maintain data on all evictions. Eviction cases are sealed; therefore, eviction data is very difficult to obtain. By requiring submittal of eviction notices to the City, it could track eviction trends.

d) Establish tenant protection on first day of tenancy.

- AB 1482 protections begin after one year of tenancy. The proposed revision would offer protections at upon initial move in date.

e) Expand relocation assistance.

- Currently AB 1482 requires one month of relocation assistance equal to one month's rent. The proposal is to expand the requirement to 4 months of relocation assistance. This also exceeds the City's relocation assistance requirement of 3 months. Expanding tenant relocation assistance can better ensure that tenants needing to relocate are able to pay their initial rent, security deposit, any additional moving expenses and can decrease the possibility of further displacement.

Electrification

A local ordinance could clarify that typical electrification and energy efficiency upgrades do not constitute "substantial remodels" under California Civil Code 1946.2 and therefore do not justify just-cause evictions.

Sources to Assist in Implementation

- [*East Palo Alto Guide to Just Cause Eviction*](#)
 - includes single family dwellings.
- [*Palo Alto Just Cause Eviction*](#)
 - under Rental Housing Stabilization Chapter

Other Resources: [*MTC TOC Just Cause Eviction Implementation Guide*](#)

Timeline and Budget

It is anticipated that no additional cost to the City beyond staff time is needed to pass a Just Cause Eviction ordinance, which could take approximately 8-12 months to complete.

Outreach and education efforts for the just cause eviction ordinance could be incorporated into the proposed legal assistance program.

As the legal assistance program is providing assistance or education to households, it can include information about the preparation and implementation of the just cause ordinance.

4. Tenant Anti-harassment Ordinance (Strategy No. 5)

Why?

Currently, the City does not have a tenant anti-harassment ordinance. There are existing state protections such as California Civil Code §1940.2 which make it illegal for landlords to use methods of coercion like threats or intimidation to force tenants to leave their homes. However, the state law does not include specific language of what defines harassing behavior.

A local ordinance can be crafted to meet local needs, and greater define and list specific actions of what can be considered harassment.

The ordinance would be required to provide:

- Definitions of harassing behaviors, including behaviors prohibited by state law as well as:
- Any behavior to prevent tenant organizing
- Refusal to accept or acknowledge receipt of a rent payment
- Requesting information or documentation on immigration or citizenship status, unless required by federal law
- Withholding or threatening to withhold repairs or maintenance
- State in their policy that the city or county attorney as well as the impacted tenant may bring a civil action or request an injunction in response to harassment.
- Establish penalties for violations, including fines, attorneys' fees and punitive damages. Define a violation of the ordinance as an affirmative defense for a tenant in an eviction proceeding.
- Establishing noticing requirements for landlords to comply with

Sources to Assist in Implementation

- East Palo Alto, Emeryville, Antioch and Richmond are Bay Area jurisdictions that have anti-harassment ordinances.
- Other cities include Los Angeles, Santa Monica and West Hollywood have all adopted tenant anti-harassment ordinances that also include single family homes.

Other Resources

- [MTC TOC Tenant Anti-Harassment Protections Implementation Guide](#)

Budget and Timeline

Outside of outreach effort materials like printing and postage, it is anticipated that there will be no additional cost to the City beyond staff time to pass a local Tenant Anti-Harassment ordinance. It could take approximately 8-12 months to complete.

Tenant and landlord education efforts would need to be done after potential approval of the ordinance.

Electrification

To address electrification related displacement concerns, the City could incorporate provisions into a tenant anti-harassment ordinance that prohibit the use or threat of mandated clean energy and public health upgrades, including gas to electric appliance conversions, as a basis for eviction or unreasonable cost pass-throughs.

5. Home Preservation Program (Strategy No. 20)

Why?

A home preservation program refers to the physical preservation or rehabilitation of existing residential structures. As mentioned, the City has two existing single family rehabilitation programs for low income households. This strategy is recommended because of the ease of implementation and will specifically be targeted to multifamily projects.

Through the City's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process, which is done on even numbered years, the NOFA can give preference of funding to multifamily preservation projects.

This can apply to existing deed-restricted affordable housing, in which the affordability term would be extended, or for naturally occurring affordable housing, in which deed restrictions would be required.

Sources to Assist in Implementation

- [City of Redwood City Affordable Housing Preservation Program Guidelines](#)
- City of Burlingame Notice of Funding Availability of Affordable Housing Funds, includes "Rehabilitation of existing affordable housing" and the "Preservation of existing multi-family affordable housing nearing the end of affordability terms."
- [East Palo Alto Affordable Housing Preservation Program](#)

Other Resources

- [MTC TOC Funding to Support Preservation Capacity Implementation Guide](#)

Budget and Timeline

The City NOFA funding is dependent on the amount of fees collected during each two year period. Past NOFA amounts have ranged from \$3-4 million.

Because of the uncertainties and unknowns in rehabilitation projects, it typically takes 1-3 years, once awarded, to complete the rehabilitation work itself.

The processing of the NOFA funding awards typically takes 6-8 months, which involves staff review, a Housing Commission recommendation, and the City Council committing the funds.

Eventually the subsequent approval of the loan agreement to the awarded applicant will need to be done but that is based on the timing of the project funding.

Electrification

By providing funding for housing preservation and system upgrades, the program could help property owners comply with California habitability requirements under Civil Code 1941.1 related to heating and hot water systems while minimizing displacement risks associated with required building improvements.

6. Rental Registry (Strategy No. 11)

Why?

A rental registry is a database of rental properties in a local jurisdiction used to provide greater transparency in the rental market. A registry generally contains data on property ownership and contact information, number of units, rent rates and other related information.

A rental registry is a very useful tool in tracking compliance with programs like rental stabilization requirements or relocation assistance, and monitoring data like vacancy rates.

However, the tool itself, does not directly prevent or address displacement. The length of time needed to establish a rent registry as well as the time needed to gain compliance with the landlords for them to input their data.

Sources to Assist in Implementation

- [Palo Alto Rental Registry Program](#)
- [East Palo Alto Rental Registry RFP](#)
- [Half Moon Bay Residential Rental Registration Program](#)
- [San Jose's Rent Registry](#)

Other Resources

- [MTC TOC Rent Stabilization Implementation Guide](#)

Budget and Timeline

Based on cost estimates from East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay, and Palo Alto, a rental registry in Menlo Park—which has approximately 5,815 rental properties—could cost \$100,000 to \$300,000 per year, depending on the technology service provider and the need for additional City staff.

As the rent registry is developed, it will consider inclusion of single family homes as part of the registry. Because the City is mostly single family homes, the scope of the registry, and therefore the budget may also increase.

Typically, the costs are offset by an annual fee for registered properties. Implementation can take 1-2 years, including public meetings and a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select the provider, which itself typically adds 3–6 months.

7. Workforce Development (Strategy No. 23)

Why?

During the interviews, discussion on financial empowerment to the community was frequently mentioned. Whether it was the enactment of a living wage, local hire mandates or establishing a workforce development program, this would be a strategy in addressing displacement and a Prosperity pillar.

Examples

- [East Palo Alto Measure HH Pilot Workforce Development Program](#)
- [East Palo Alto First Source Hiring Ordinance, and East Palo Alto Career Center](#)
- [Nova Workforce Services](#) – a regional Workforce Development Board funded by public funds that serves San Mateo County
- Work2future – a Silicon Valley Workforce Development Board serving primarily San José, as well as Gilroy, Campbell, Morgan Hill, Saratoga, Los Gatos, Los Altos Hills, Monte Sereno, and the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County.
 - JobTrain and Team4tech
- [Homes and Jobs Connect – All Home](#)

Cost and Timeline

The cost and timeline for a workforce development program or policy could vary widely. There are many workforce development organizations focused on different aspects of the workforce.

Understanding that workforce development is not a City core competency, the City would coordinate and gather the organizations for the community and be a catalyst between the community and the organizations. Coordinating all the organizations and community could take about 9 months.

The cost would be City staff time in coordinating with the workforce organizations and the community.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Conclusion

The City Housing Element and Environmental Justice Element clearly articulated the need for an Anti-displacement Plan. With the Plan setting forth a set of recommended strategies, the implementation of the strategies now becomes the focus.

The estimated implementation timeline of the recommended strategies will take place over the span of the next 3 years from adoption. Work on two of the strategies, the Rental Assistance Program and the Legal Assistance Program, have already begun. They are targeted to be completed by Fall 2026.

The recommended strategies will be implemented based on their priority level as identified in this Plan and the availability of resources (including staff and funding). Each strategy will be implemented independently with their own timelines.

Each of the recommended strategies is complex with its own opportunities and challenges.

When designing each program, factors such as sources of funding, level of public outreach and engagement, and extent of the benefit public will be considered to help develop programs that are sustainable, effective and serve the community.

Beyond the initial recommendations, the Anti-displacement Plan can be used to help guide future work or be re-evaluated as community needs and resources change, all to help produce and preserve affordable housing, protect tenants, and foster a prosperous community.

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Appendix A: Displacement History in Menlo Park

Displacement History in Menlo Park

A more in depth analysis of displacement history in Menlo Park and its impact on Belle Haven.

1700s

Like many cities in the Bay Area, prior to Spanish colonization, the Ramaytush people of the Ohlone and Costanoan tribe stewarded this land for thousands of years, and while many still do, the vast majority of their population and land was lost through centuries of “devastating policies and practices of a succession of explorers, missionaries, settlers, and various levels of government over the centuries since European expansion.”⁵⁷

Spanish settlers arrived in the Bay Area around 1769 and through the establishment of missions and land grants, the Ramaytush people were forced off their lands.

1800's

As a result of the Mexican-American War, California became part of the United States in 1848. Many land grants came under dispute, and American settlers poured into the region as a result of the California Gold Rush of 1849.⁵⁸ As a result of the rapid populations increases, new communities were founded around the Bay Area. Menlo Park received its official name in 1854, “when two Irishmen, Dennis J. Oliver and D. C. McGlynn, purchased 1,700 acres (some sources say it was 640 acres) bordering County Road, now El Camino Real, and built two houses with a common entrance.”⁵⁹ In 1863, it got its first train that traveled along its San Francisco and San Jose Railway, and in 1868 it was bought by Southern Pacific. The railroad was of economic significance because it provided “wealthy San Francisco barons faster transportation to their country homes – a round-trip ticket from Menlo Park to San Francisco cost \$2.50 and a one-way ride took 80 minutes, compared to the stagecoach, which took four hours from Redwood City to San Francisco.”

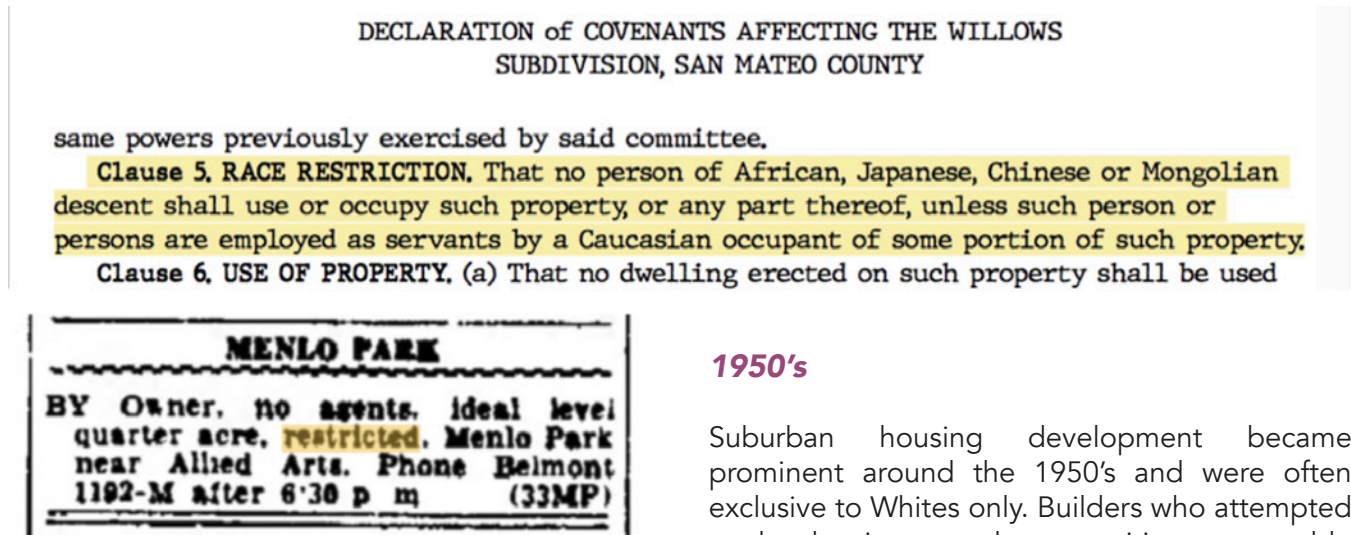
1920s

Although the Supreme Court ruled that housing segregation was unconstitutional in 1917 (*Buchanan v. Warley*), communities felt they could skirt this ruling with the use of single-family zoning laws which were later upheld by the Supreme Court in 1926 (*Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*). The City of Menlo Park was incorporated shortly thereafter, in 1927. Since that time, a range of policies, programs, and practices have shaped the social, racial, and economic disparities that continue to place low-income households at heightened risk of displacement today. Now, the City of Menlo Park remains largely zoned for single-family housing, reflecting the legacy of these policies.

1934

In 1934, the National Housing Act created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and “redlining” becomes a common practice. The FHA, which provided various insurance loan programs for mortgages, created “redlining” maps that color coded neighborhoods by risk level and resulted in the denial of mortgages to families seeking homes in “non-racially harmonious” communities. This led to disinvestment in historically non-white communities, effectively preventing them from being able to purchase homes in communities like Menlo Park. Belle Haven was developed during the 1930s and 1940s as modest, affordable housing, often intended for working-class families and defense industry workers. Because the neighborhood was not annexed into the City of Menlo Park until 1949, it did not appear on redlining maps until 1955, when it was formally identified as a redlined area, contributing to long-term disinvestment and limited access to credit and homeownership opportunities in the community.⁶⁰

Figure 1. Racially restricted covenants



Source: Menlo Together, published 2021

1940's

Because covenants are considered legal agreements between private parties, covenants were tools that more explicitly restricted land and housing to Whites only. Such covenants were used extensively in the San Francisco Bay Area, including in Menlo Park. When Black Americans migrated from the South to fill jobs during World War II, these covenants made it difficult for Black families to locate in many areas, forcing these families to live in segregated neighborhoods in Oakland, San Francisco, and Richmond. The Supreme Court ruled these covenants unconstitutional in 1948. The terms "restricted" and "no restrictions" were used to allude to race restrictions.

In 1944 the G.I. Bill, a federal benefit program, was created to provide educational assistance, medical care, unemployment benefits, and low interest home mortgages to eligible soldiers returning from WWII. Despite the program's benefits, Black veterans were still excluded from purchasing homes in predominantly White neighborhoods like Menlo Park. Because Belle Haven was already a redlined working-class neighborhood, racial covenants were not applied there. It became one of the few places where Black families could find housing, although the area continued to face disinvestment and limited resources.

1950's

Suburban housing development became prominent around the 1950's and were often exclusive to Whites only. Builders who attempted to develop integrated communities were unable to obtain federally insured financing.

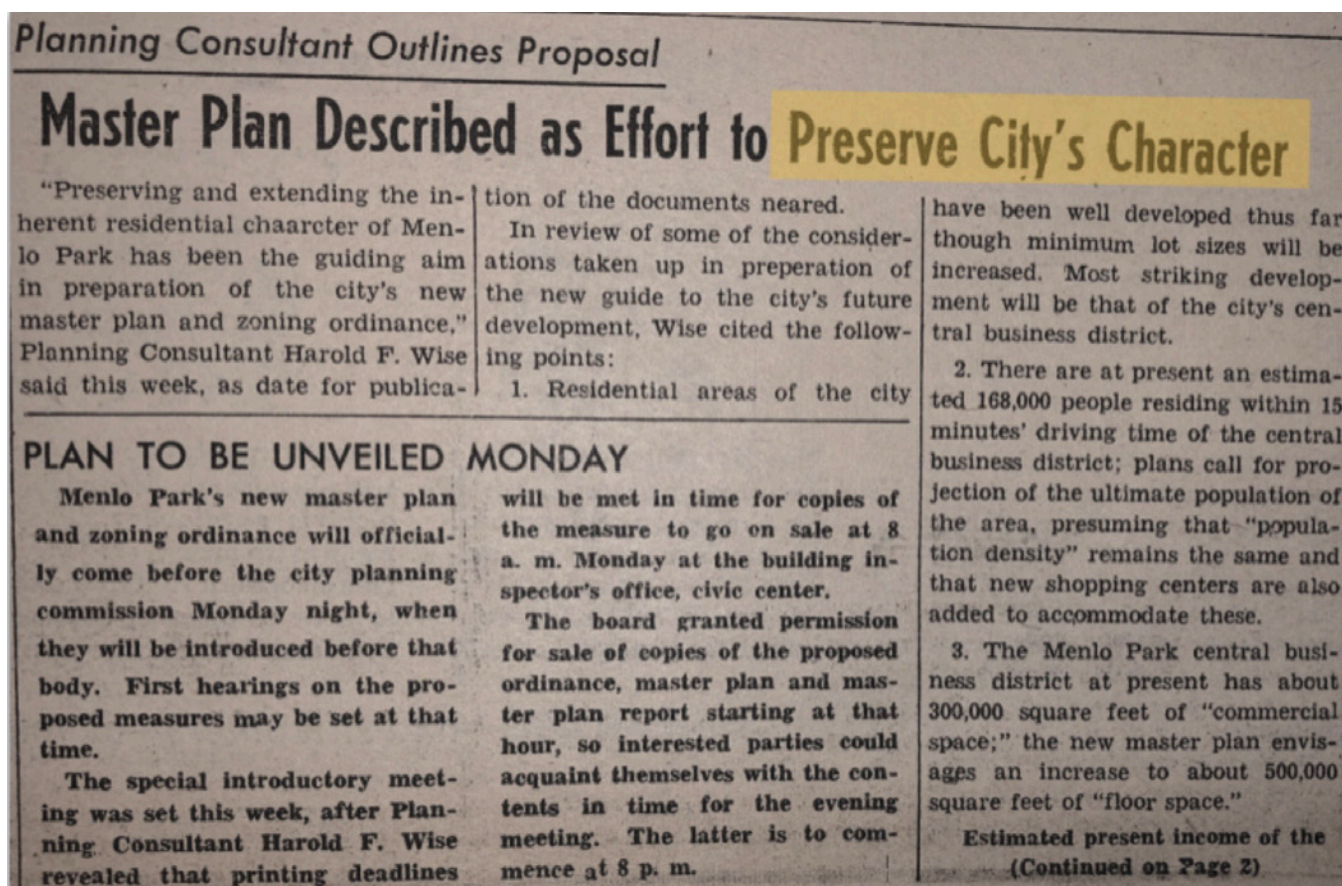
During this time, Highway 101 was widened, creating a barrier between Belle Haven and the rest of Menlo Park. The NAACP referred to the widened highway as the "Concrete Curtain."⁶¹ Furthermore, under the guise of "preserving the City's character" a planning consultant proposed to increase the minimum lot sizes in the Menlo Park Master Plan in 1952 (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Highway 101 Divides the Community, Before and After Widening



Source: Palo Alto Historical Archives

Figure 3. News article on increasing lot sizes in Menlo Park



Source: Menlo Park Recorder, June 5, 1952

Although racial zoning was ruled unconstitutional, zoning based on lot size and density became a race-neutral way to achieve similar exclusionary outcomes. Larger lot sizes restricted to single family housing raised the cost of land and housing, making it even more challenging for multifamily housing development and other affordable housing types in Menlo Park.

Because lot sizes in Belle Haven remained smaller and zoning permitted more modest housing, the neighborhood became one of the few places in Menlo Park where lower-income and non-white residents could live, reinforcing long-standing patterns of racial and economic segregation.

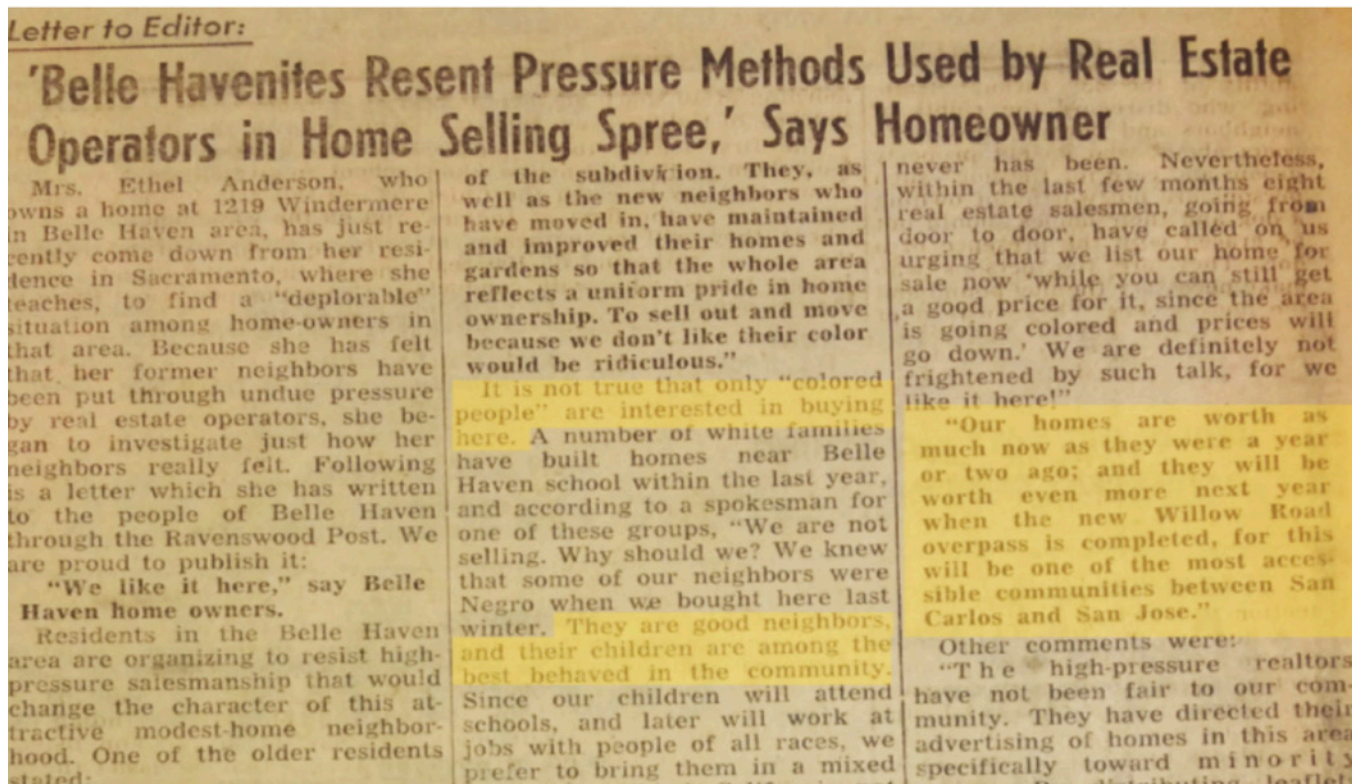
Belle Haven was originally developed as an affordable neighborhood and was more economically and racially diverse than other parts

of Menlo Park, with a mix of working-class white families and people of color. The demographics of Belle Haven began to shift as "blockbusting" became a practice among real estate agents.

This practice involved targeting Black homebuyers in San Francisco, Oakland, and Richmond to purchase homes in Belle Haven. As Black families moved into Belle Haven, real estate agents convinced white neighbors to panic sell, then resell the homes at higher prices to Black families.

This became common practice in several predominantly white neighborhoods, not just Menlo Park. Real estate agents used newspapers that served the Black community to market these unrestricted homes (Figure 5).

Figure 4. News article on Blockbusting



Source: Ravenswood Post, 1955

1960's

By the 1960s, racial segregation in Menlo Park communities became apparent in the school system, and newly proposed district boundaries reinforced it.

This resulted in the creation of a mostly Black high school (Ravenswood) and a mostly White high school (Menlo-Atherton). Belle Haven, along with East Palo Alto, was located within the Ravenswood attendance area.

Despite pushback from organizations like the NAACP, and residents of Belle Haven and East Palo Alto, the sentiment is reflected in the words of a Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD) board member who defends the move and says that "This would be putting our noses in something that does not concern us."⁶²

The issue was elevated to this U.S Commission

on Civil Rights, and Terea Hall Pittman, a NAACP Acting Regional Secretary, along with Elsa Alsberg, an Executive Director of the Palo Alto Fair Play Council, testified on the discriminatory housing practices in Menlo Park, and the effects that it has had on local schools.

1968

The Fair Housing Act was created to forbid individual acts of explicit racial discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing. Because this policy was designed to put the burden on the victims, requiring them to file a complaint and provide proof, or sue in federal court, restrictive neighborhood covenants continue to be passed on property records in Menlo Park. Many of them exist to this day, though they are no longer enforceable.

Figure 5. 1955 Advertisement in *The Sun-Reporter*, a newspaper serving the Black community in San Francisco

THE SUN-REPORTER Saturday, September 17, 1955



Your Home in the Sun

BEAUTIFUL BELLE HAVEN in Menlo Park



2 & 3 BEDROOM HOMES FROM \$ 8,250!

- EXCELLENT CLIMATE
Smog Free
Fog free
- CONVENIENT LOCATION
Commute distance
Schools - Shopping

\$ 250 down

PLUS CLOSING TO VETS
On homes of \$12,500. or less

FLOYD LOWE

Realtor

171 University Avenue
Palo Alto, California
Telephone Davenport 5-3221





Source: *The Sun-Reporter* (1955), as cited in *Menlo Together* presentation (2021)

1970's-80's

School district boundaries have historically reinforced racial and economic segregation in Menlo Park. Belle Haven was zoned into the Ravenswood City School District, which suffered from white flight, disinvestment, and ultimately the closure of Ravenswood High School in 1976. Efforts by nearby white neighborhoods to leave the district were repeatedly challenged due to concerns about racial segregation. Residents of

these neighborhoods continued to petition for this change in 2014, and 2018, when the California State Board of Education unanimously denied the appeal. In response to these inequities, the *Tinsley v. Palo Alto* settlement (1986) created a voluntary transfer program that allowed a limited number of students from Ravenswood, including Belle Haven, to attend better-resourced schools in other districts ([Figure 6](#)).

Figure 6. Margaret Tinsley et.al., Petitioners vs. Superior Court of San Mateo

Court of Appeal, First District, Division 1, California.

Margaret TINSLEY et al., Petitioners, v. SUPERIOR COURT OF SAN MATEO,
Respondent,
MENLO PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIST., et al., Real Parties in Interest.
Margaret TINSLEY et al., Plaintiffs and Appellants, v. PALO ALTO UNIFIED
SCHOOL DIST., et al., Defendants and Respondents.

Civ. 50497, Civ. 50997
Decided: December 23, 1983

...

Appellants are guardian ad litem parents and their children, the latter of whom either attend or are eligible to attend schools operated by the respondent school districts. They filed a petition for writ of mandate (Code Civ.Proc., § 1085) on October 5, 1978, alleging interdistrict segregation of respondents' schools and seeking an order compelling respondents to submit a reasonably feasible plan to alleviate racial segregation in schools within the named school districts.

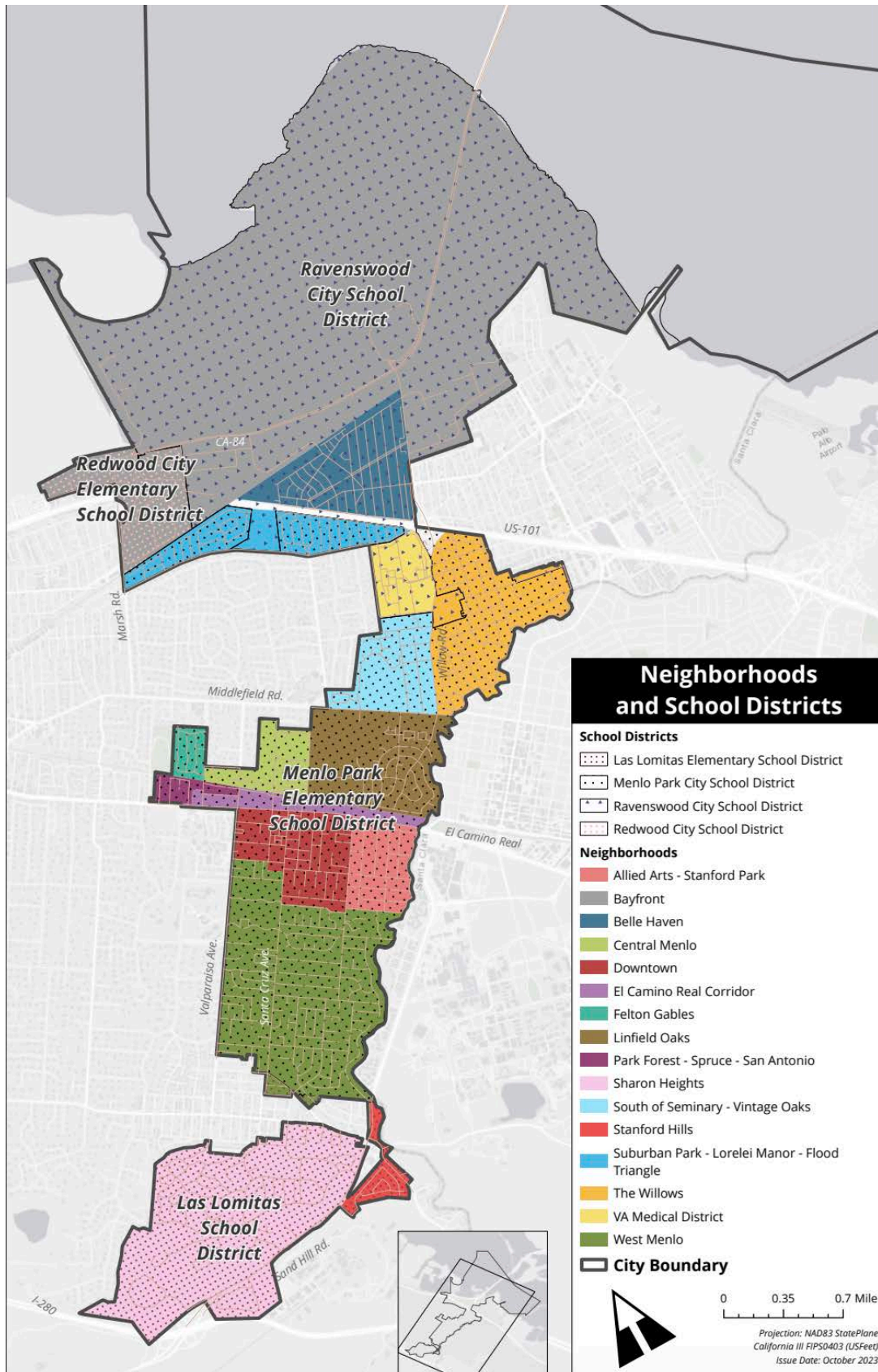
After a third amendment to the petition, respondents' demurrer to the petition was sustained without leave to amend and an appeal from that order taken to this court. On April 13, 1979, we decided, in *Tinsley v. Palo Alto Unified School Dist.* (1979) 91 Cal.App.3d 871, 154 Cal.Rptr. 591, that appellants' third amended petition did state a cause of action under the equal protection clause of the California Constitution (art. I, § 7) for inter-district relief from de facto school segregation, and the case was remanded.

Thereafter, on July 13, 1979, a fourth amended petition was filed, which in pertinent part alleges the following:

The student population of respondent Ravenswood City School District elementary schools is predominantly minority, while the student populations in the elementary schools of the other respondent school districts are predominantly white. Because of the inter-district racial imbalance in student enrollment, minority students are realistically isolated, and so a segregated school system exists.

Source: Menlo Together, 2021

Figure 7: Elementary and Middle School Districts and Neighborhoods Map



Source: Menlo Park Environmental Justice Element, 2024

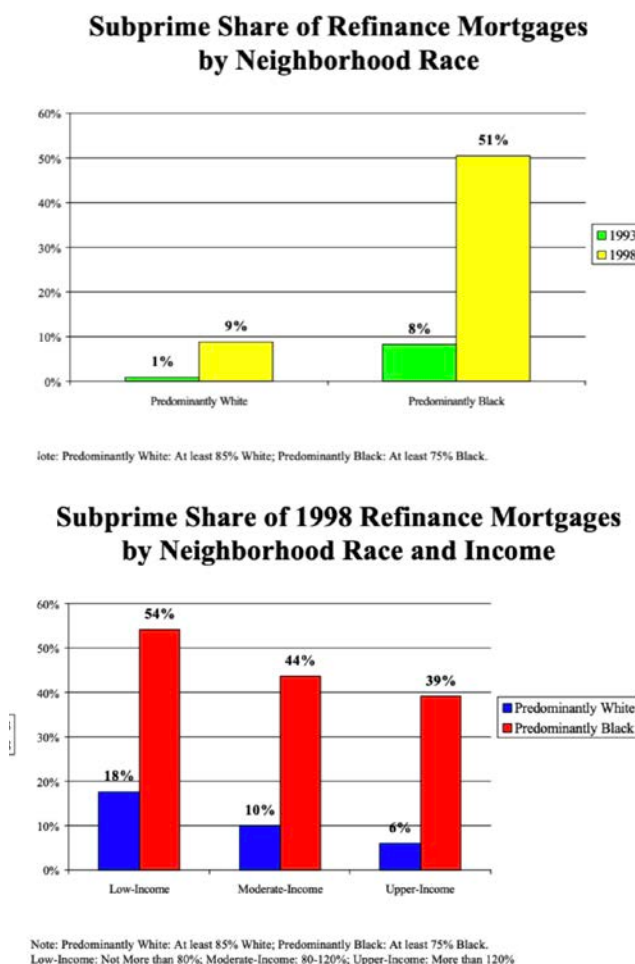
1990's-2000's

The 1990s tech boom in Silicon Valley saw rapid growth in the computer and internet industries, transforming the region into the global center for innovation and wealth that is still witnessed today. During this time, the imbalance between jobs and housing in the Bay Area was accelerated. Formerly disinvested communities of color, like Belle Haven, became increasingly desirable to Silicon Valley tech workers, placing long-standing residents, already harmed by past discriminatory policies, at greater risk of displacement.

During this time, predatory lenders were also going door-to-door in segregated minority neighborhoods to promote subprime loan refinancing. Several studies have shown racial bias in this practice. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development conducted a study⁶³ on almost one million mortgages reported nationwide in 1988 under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), which found the following:

- From 1993 to 1998, the number of Subprime Refinance Loans increased ten-fold, from 80,000 in 1993, to more than 790,000 subprime loans by 1998.
- Subprime Loans were three times more likely in Low-Income neighborhoods than in High-Income neighborhoods.
- Subprime Loans were five times more likely in Black Neighborhoods than in White Neighborhoods. In predominantly black neighborhoods, the high-cost subprime lending accounted for 51 percent of home loans in 1998 - compared with only 9 percent in predominately white areas.
- Homeowners in High-Income Black neighborhoods were twice as likely as homeowners in Low-Income White neighborhoods to have subprime loans.

Figure 8. Subprime Share of Refinance Mortgages by Neighborhood Race 1993 vs 1998, and 1998 Refinance Mortgages by Neighborhood Race and Income by Neighborhood Race and Income



Source: U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1998

2000-2010

Because subprime loans were offered to borrowers with poor credit, they typically carried significantly higher interest rates than prime loans. This meant that subprime loan borrowers paid more interest over the life of the loan.

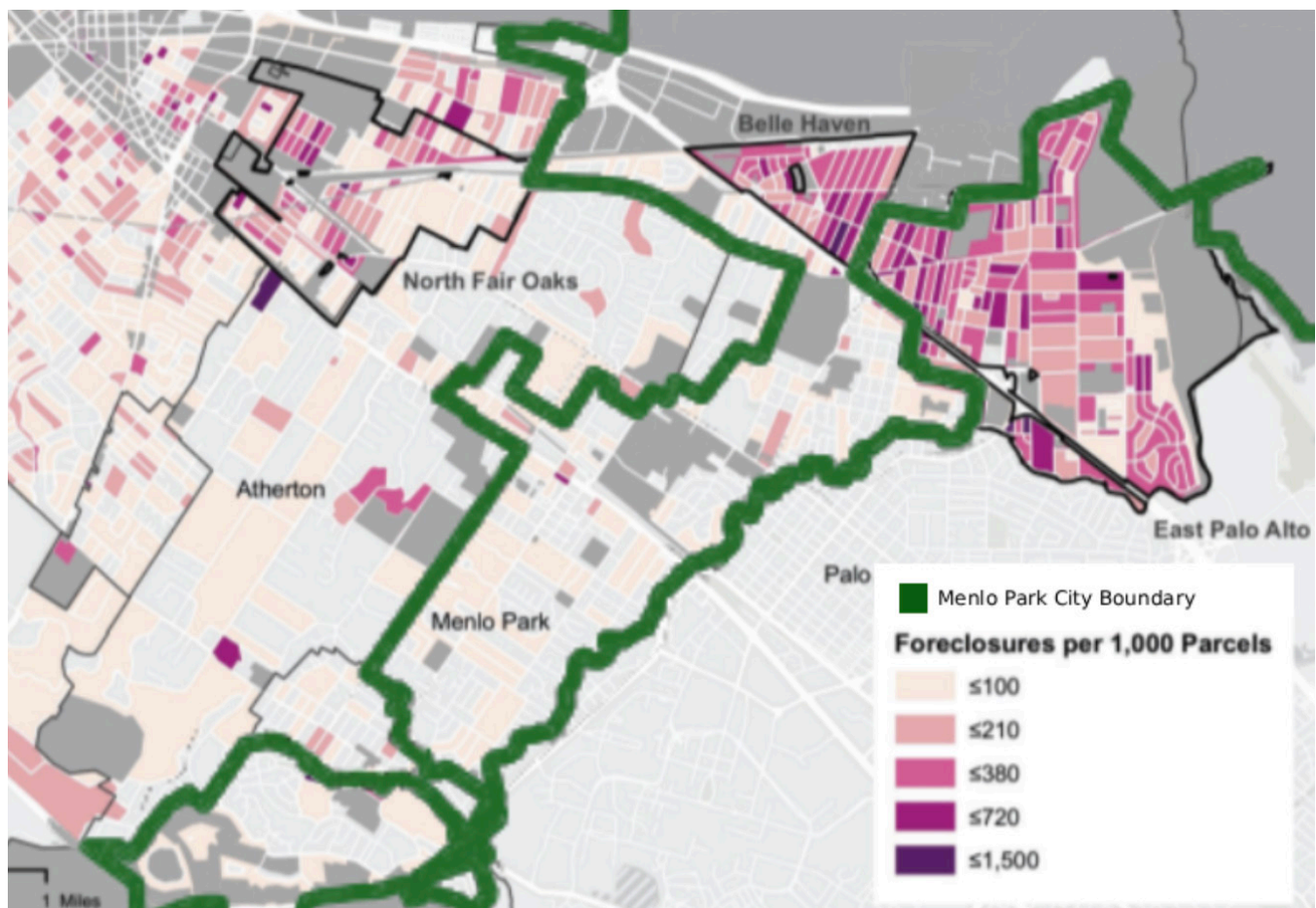
More commonly, however, were subprime loans with Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs), which means the interest rate can increase after an initial period, often significantly.

After the introductory period (typically 2–3 years), the rate may reset to a much higher rate, making monthly payments unaffordable for many borrowers after the initial period.

As seen in Figure 9, Belle Haven residents were severely impacted by this. The peak of foreclosures occurred in 2009 during the recession, with 99 homes lost to foreclosure in Belle Haven that year.

In fact, “Belle Haven experienced twice as many foreclosures as the rest of Menlo Park despite having only roughly one-quarter of the number of housing units”⁶⁴ between 2006 and 2012.

Figure 9. Foreclosures per 1,000 Residential Parcels (2006-2011), Zillow Transaction and Assessment Database, 2006-2011



Source: Cited in *Investment and Disinvestment as Neighbors: A Study of Baseline Housing Conditions in the Bay Area Peninsula*, January 17, 2020

2010's

In 2011, Facebook (now Meta Platforms) officially moved its headquarters to Menlo Park, taking over the former Sun Microsystems campus in the Bayfront area, next to Belle Haven on the other side of Highway 101. In 2015, the company expanded its presence with the opening of MPK 20, a 430,000-square-foot building designed by architect Frank Gehry, also located in the Bayfront and adjacent to Belle Haven neighborhood.

California law requires that local governments update their Housing Element every 8 years. Because Menlo Park did not update its Housing Element from 1992 to 2012, it faced a lawsuit from housing advocacy groups. In 2013, it published its 2007-2014 Housing Element. As part of the Element, it zoned for 4,500 new housing units in the Bayfront/Belle Haven area, and 680 units downtown.

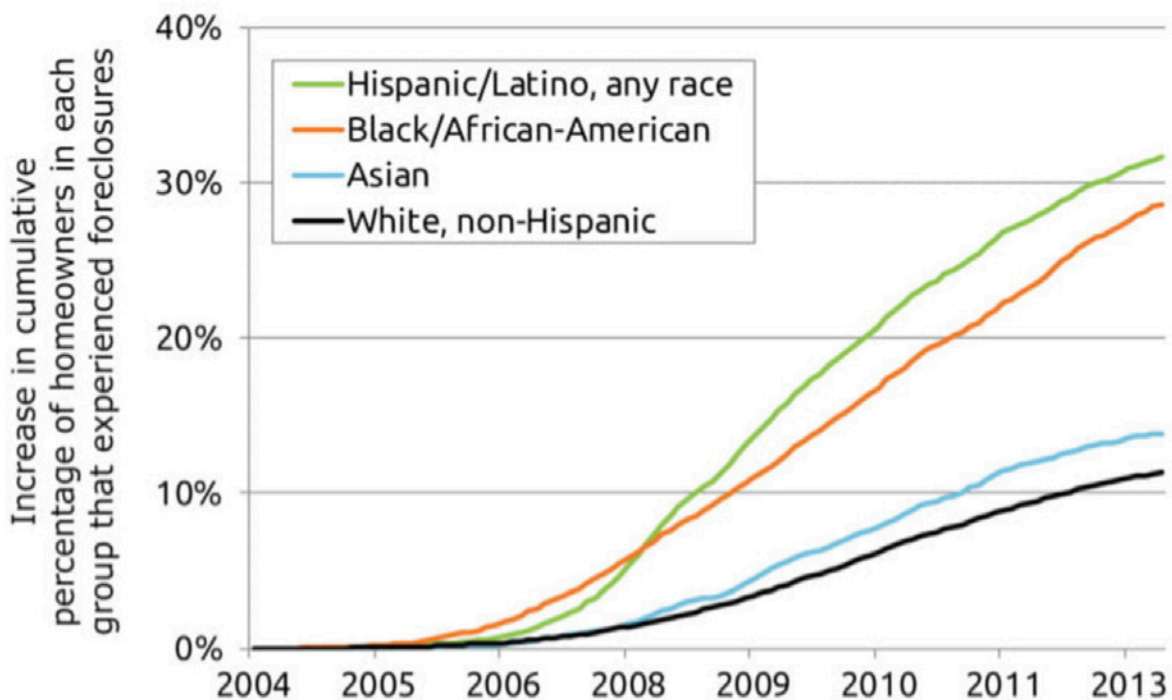
In 2016, it faced another lawsuit from East Palo Alto due to its General Plan updates, known as ConnectMenlo. ConnectMenlo created zoning allowing for 2.3 million square feet of new office space, 400,000 square feet of commercial space, and 4,500 new housing units.

Many of the units were planned as market-rate, primarily in the Bayfront Area, which includes neighborhoods near Belle Haven.

The City of East Palo Alto "alleged that Menlo Park violated the California Environmental Quality Act because the City underestimated the amount of new employment and traffic that would result from those changes to its general plan."⁶⁵

Figure 10. Subprime Foreclosures Nationwide from 2004 to 2013, St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank; Black Knight Financial Services; and HMDA data from Board of Governors

Subprime Foreclosures



Source: Cited in Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, 2018

Menlo Park Now

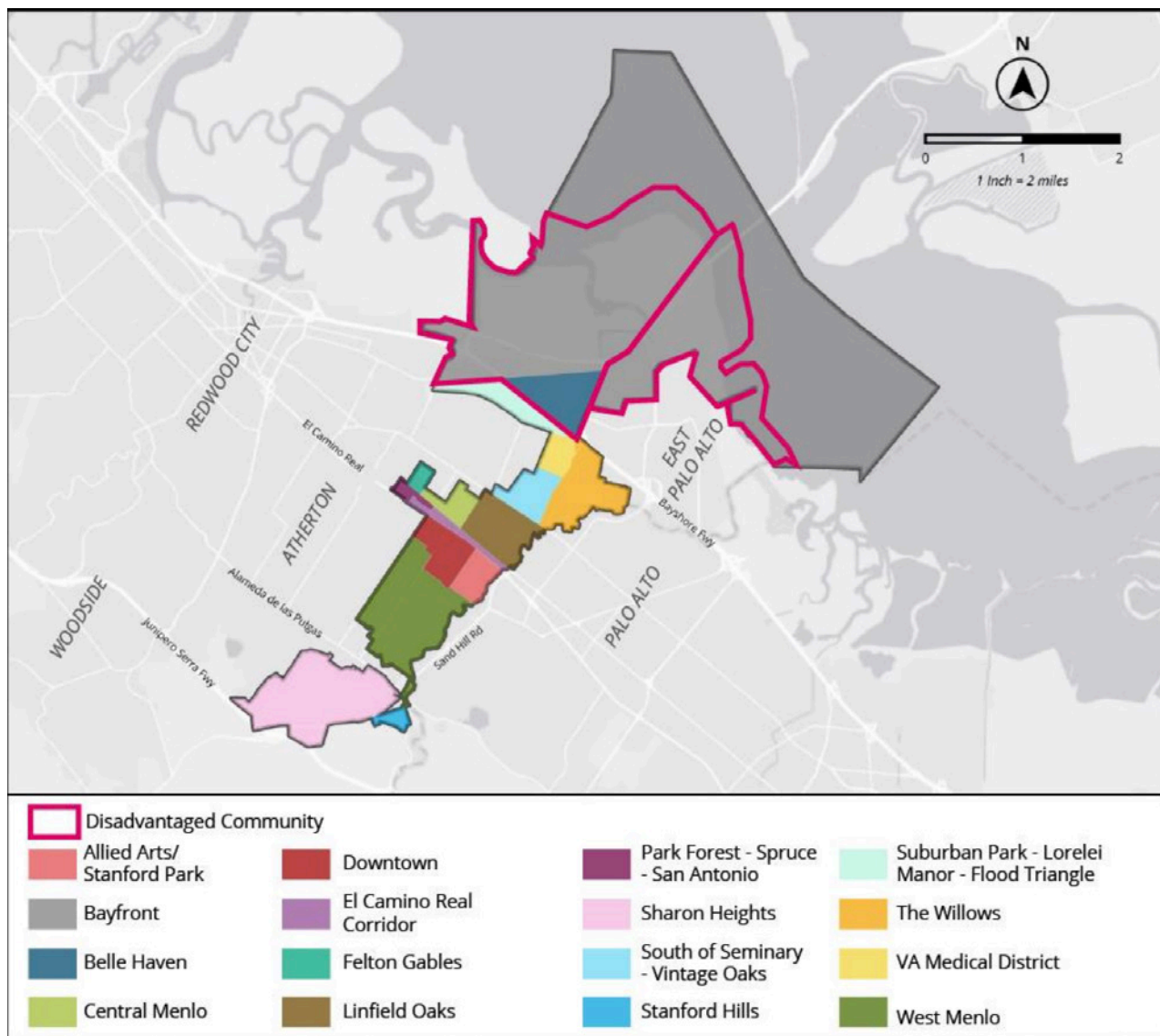
Menlo Park is a small but affluent city with a population of just over 35,000, known for its high median household income, well-educated residents, and significant economic disparities. The California Opportunity Map indicates that Belle Haven is the City's only Low Resource neighborhood, while most other areas are classified as High or Highest Resource⁶⁶.

Menlo Park has more jobs than residents, especially at both the low-wage and high-wage ends, yet few workers actually live in the city.

With home values 72% higher than typical home values in San Mateo County and over double the cost of home values in the State, as well as high rents, housing affordability remains a pressing issue⁶⁷.

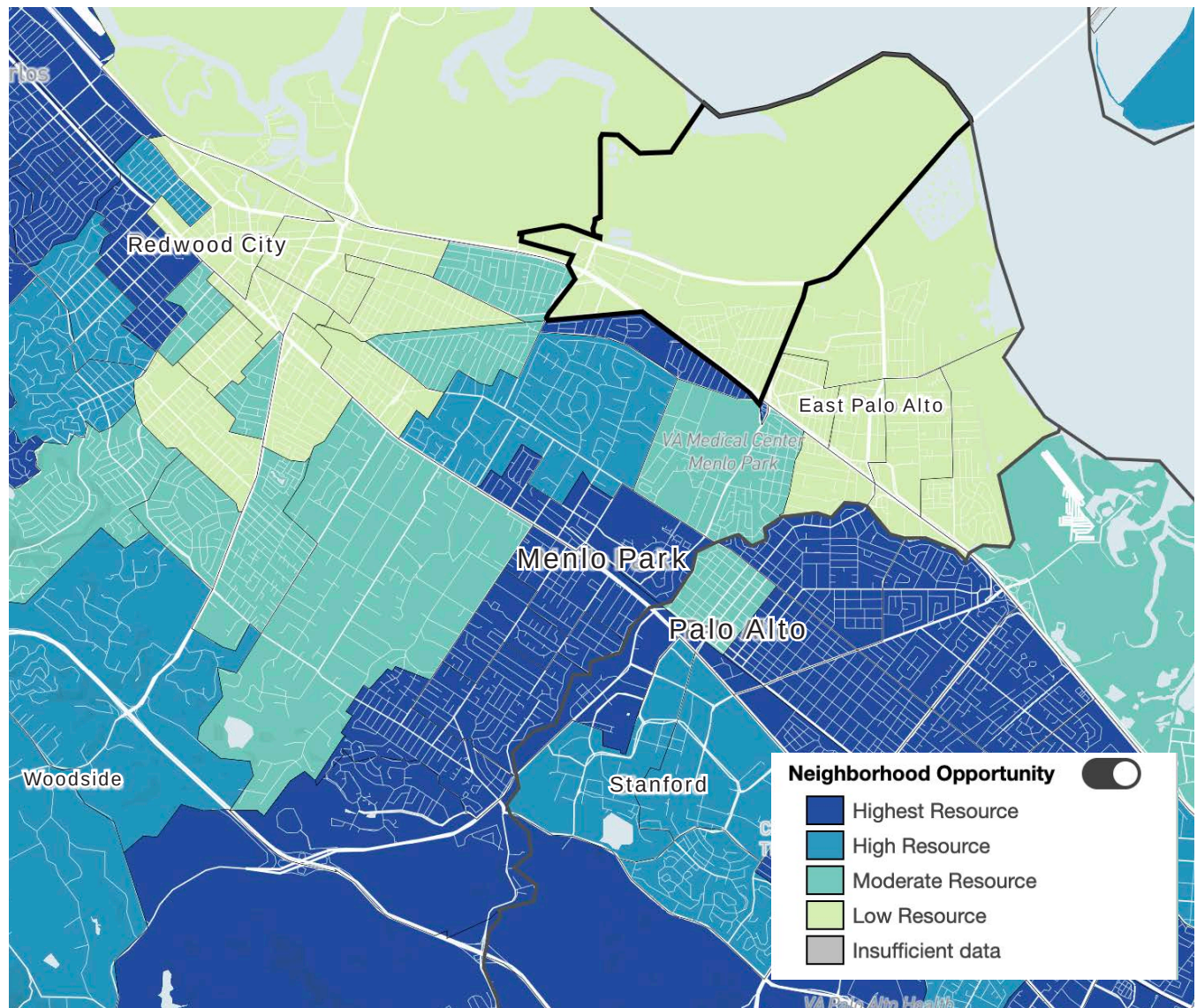
Despite the overall wealth, the Belle Haven neighborhood remains a disadvantaged community as shown below in [Figure 11 and 12](#).

Figure 11. Map of Underserved Community Census Tracts



Source: Menlo Park Environmental Justice Element, 2024

Figure 12. 2026 Opportunity and Neighborhood Change Map



Source: CTCAC/HCD AFFH Mapping Tool, 2026

Appendix A: Endnotes

57 San Mateo County Office of Education. (n.d.). Indigenous people of San Mateo County: About the Ramaytush Ohlone People. Retrieved from <https://www.smcoe.org/for-communities/indigenous-people-of-san-mateo-county.html>

58 National Archives. (n.d.). Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/treaty-of-guadalupe-hidalgo>

59 City of Menlo Park. (n.d.). Menlo Park history. Retrieved from <https://menlopark.gov/Community/Menlo-Park-history>

60 Belle Haven Empowered. (n.d.). Our history: Belle Haven and redlining. Retrieved from <https://www.bhempowered.org/>

61 The Almanac. (2021, March 12). Reflections on racial inequities that persist in Menlo Park. Retrieved from <https://www.almanacnews.com/news/2021/03/12/reflections-on-racial-inequities-that-persist-in-menlo-park>

62 The Almanac. (2021, March 12). Reflections on racial inequities that persist in Menlo Park. Retrieved from <https://www.almanacnews.com/news/2021/03/12/reflections-on-racial-inequities-that-persist-in-menlo-park>

63 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2018). Unequal burdens: Racial disparities in housing and homelessness. Office of Policy Development and Research. Retrieved from https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/unequal_full.pdf

64 Urban Displacement Project. (2021). Investment, disinvestment, and displacement: Framing research to address inequities (Issue Brief). <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/investmentdisinvestment-report-200117.pdf>

65 Almanac News. (2017, December 7). Menlo Park settles development-related lawsuit with East Palo Alto. <https://www.almanacnews.com/news/2017/12/07/menlo-park-settles-development-related-lawsuit-with-east-palo-alto/>

66 TCAC & HCD. (2026). California Opportunity Map. California Tax Credit Allocation Committee & California Department of Housing and Community Development. <https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/opportunity.asp>

67 City of Menlo Park, Housing Element 2023–2031 (Menlo Park, CA: City of Menlo Park, 2023), citing that “home values in Menlo Park are approximately 72 percent higher than typical home values in San Mateo County and over double the cost of home values in the state.”

Appendix B: Community Engagement

Appendix B. Community Engagement

Expert Interviews

Purpose

To gain in-depth insight into the most effective anti-displacement strategies that can be implemented in the Belle Haven neighborhood. These interviews aim to inform local efforts by surfacing proven practices, innovative solutions, and expert recommendations tailored to prevent displacement and support long-term community stability.

Pool of Questions

Please reference the Anti Displacement Strategies Chart in the following page as needed.

Introductions

- Tell me more about your work, and how it relates to community stability and anti-displacement.
- Which anti-displacement strategies have you worked with the most?

Impact and Implementation

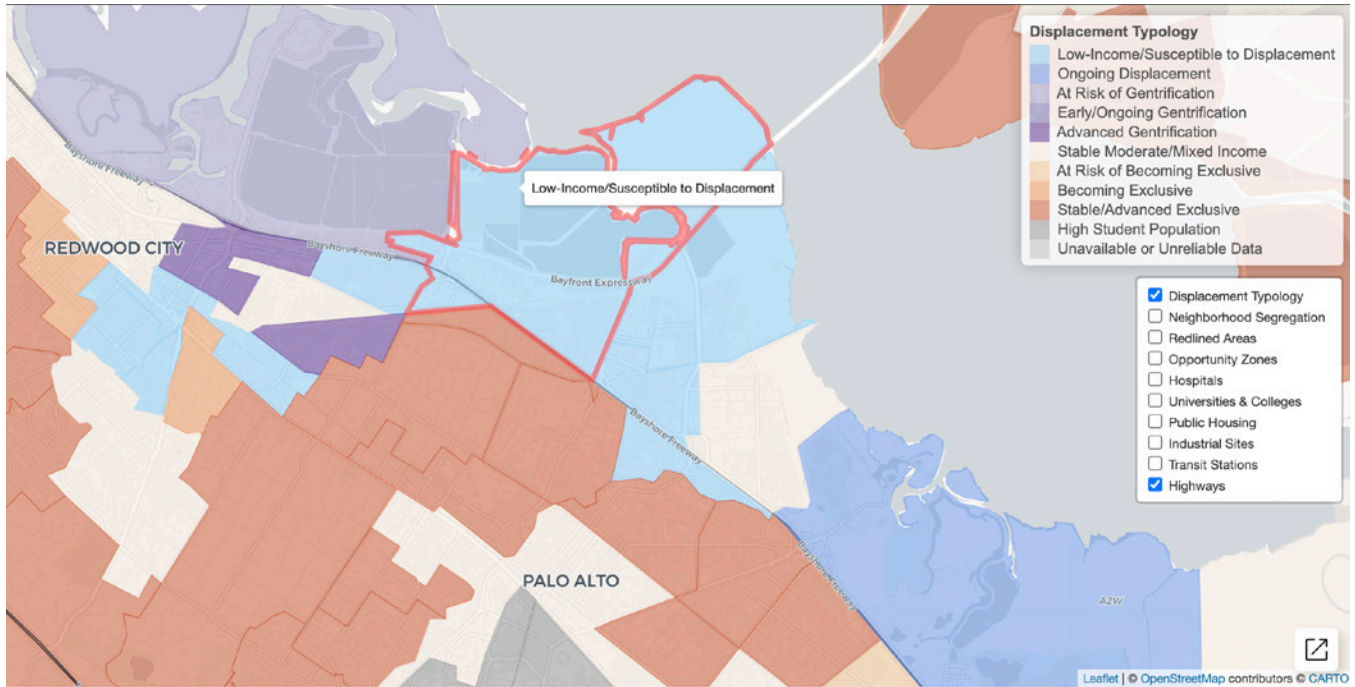
- Which anti-displacement policies have you seen have the greatest measurable impact?
- Are there any “high-impact, low-lift” approaches cities often overlook?
- What factors should be considered in implementing anti-displacement strategies?
- Which anti-displacement strategies do you think are the most politically viable?
- Ideally, what strategies would you have in place to address anti-displacement?
- What legal or policy interventions are most effective at preventing eviction?

City Specific

- What would you recommend specifically for Menlo Park, and more specifically, for Belle Haven, given its size, housing market, and regional dynamics?
- Are there any pilot programs or partnerships you think the city could try?
- In addition to the outreach completed as part of the housing and environmental elements, the city has held a community meeting in Belle Haven and on-line survey on displacement. Are there alternative engagement methods you recommend when turnout and survey response is low?
- Based on this conversation, is there anything you think that we are missing?

Information Emailed to Interviewees

The following map, Data Indicators chart, and Anti-displacement Strategies Chart were emailed to all interviewees right before the interview was conducted.



Source: Urban Displacement Project SF Bay Area Gentrification and Displacement

Data Indicators	Menlo Park	Belle Haven
Median Income	\$206,588	\$149,699
Median Home Value	\$2M	\$1.1M
Median Rent	\$3,156	\$3,252
Race	48% POC, 52% White	90% POC, 10% White
Owners	55%	45%
Renters	45%	55%
Housing Type	54% 1 unit detached	45% 1 unit detached

Anti-displacement Strategies Chart

Protection

- Consider neighborhood tenant preference for affordable housing
- Develop localized anti-displacement programs to large-scale developments
- Updated/expanded rent control
- Deposit Assistance (with a focus on veterans)
- Rental inventory/rental registry
- Create an eviction monitoring and data collection program
- Strengthened tenant harassment ordinances
- Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections
- Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions
- Identify new sources for Anti-displacement efforts
- Foreclosure prevention/mortgage assistance and rental assistance
- Examining limiting fees for tenants like laundry, parking, utilities, etc.
- 12 Month Lease Ordinance
- Modify tenant relocation assistance
- Provide legal assistance for tenants

Production

- Affordable Housing Production
- Explore change to existing BMR Requirements

Preservation

- Repair/Renovation Program
- Purchase & Preservation of existing housing (including community and tenant opportunity to purchase)

Prosperity

- Workforce develop. Pathways to tech jobs
- Down Paymnt Assist for 1st time/gen buyer
- Financial planning education and tutoring (tenants)

<i>Expert Interview</i>	<i>Most impactful Strategies</i>	<i>Things to consider</i>
Anti-Displacement Program Manager Bay Area Housing Finance Authority Expertise: • Indirect and Direct displacement • Tenant protections • Evictions • Homeless Prevention	Protection: • Provide Legal Assistance for Tenants (most impact) • Expand Just Cause Eviction Provisions (high impact, high lift) • Strengthen Tenant Harassment Ordinances (high impact, low lift) • 12 Month Lease Ordinance • Modify Tenant Relocation Assistance • Deposit Assistance (most impact) • Updated/Expanded Rent Control (high impact, high lift) • Rental Inventory/Rental Registry • Create an Eviction Monitoring and Data Collection Program (most impact) Production: • Affordable Housing Production (high impact, high lift) Preservation: • Consider neighborhood tenant preference • Right to Return Policies	• Pressure to fill units can undermine Right to Return and Tenant preference policies • Challenges of undocumented tenants • Protections can protect anyone • people of color are most at risk, but protections benefit everyone. • Education to elected officials on displacement is essential

Preservation Program Manager Bay Area Housing Finance Authority Expertise: • Displacement • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing • Welfare tax exemption preservation program • Income restricted regulatory agreements • Rent caps • Rent reductions • Annual monitoring • Preservation loan program • Local Preference • Technical assistance grant program to evolving developers	Preservation: • Repair/Renovation Program • Owner occupied Rehab Program • Look into Oakland program • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing • Community Land Trust • Cluster of single family homes • Look into Oakland CLT	• Partnerships with Affordable Housing Developers
Professor of Law & Clinic Director Stanford University - Evictions in San Mateo County Expertise: • Evictions • Tenant legal assistance in SMC • rental assistance • rent stabilization • just cause eviction	Protection: • Rental Assistance (all monetary assistance) • Financial systems cause 85% of evictions (non-payment) • Onerous processes delay assistance needed in 3 day window • SB 436, would have expanded 3 day notice to 10 days but it failed • Rental assistance can function as landlord subsidy	• Evictions create downward mobility for those displaced • EPA has staff that people can call, eviction notices have to say here is the number for rent stabilization office

Senior Vice President, Local Public Affairs California Apartment Association Expertise: • Landlord representation • Relocation assistance program • Just cause eviction • Production of housing • Education on housing laws	Protection: • Large scale developments with localized anti displacement strategies • put in measures to protect existing tenants • Rental assistance • Make process as easy as possible • Legal assistance • as counseling for tenants and owners • Mediation (tenant-owner and tenant-tenant) Preservation: • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing • City acquisition of properties for income restriction	• Why don't corporations fund a rental assistance fund? • A hotline at City hall to ask any questions • Including local protections in lease agreements • 12 month lease can negatively impact mom and pop owners • Some existing providers have better relationships with community than owners • Education and enforcement of local laws • Education to tenants on their rights • Education to owners
Professor Emerita of City & Regional Planning, Research Director Urban Displacement Project Expertise: • Quantitative and qualitative research • Gentrification and displacement • Displacement around transit • Policy maps	Protection • Rental assistance • low hanging fruit • Legal assistance • low hanging fruit • Expand Just cause eviction • high impact, high lift Prosperity • Workforce development, pathway to tech jobs • First source hiring Preservation • Repair/Renovation Program • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing • Preservation of NOAHs	• Affordable housing overlay • Air bnb regulations • Right to return policy • HIP Housing Home Sharing model • Incorporating social media in qualitative analysis and community outreach

Directing Attorney for Housing and Director of Litigation Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County Expertise: • Legal assistance • Homelessness prevention • Evictions	Protection • 12 month lease ordinance • Relocation benefits (if enforceable) • Rental Assistance • Deposit Assistance • Rental Registry • Rental registry allowed them to see landlord tried moving 3 different tenants by saying they were moving back in • Examining limiting fees for tenants like laundry etc. • Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions • Just cause eviction on single family • Legal assistance	• Enforcement is lacking • Relocation benefits in Half Moon Bay not being enforced, owner refusing to comply • Rent stabilization can be politically controversial • Stanford did an eviction study comparing 2019-2023, pre pandemic to post pandemic, 35% increase, 2024 another 10%, and in 2025 another 10% increase
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Executive Director Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto Expertise: • Legal assistance	Protections • Rental Assistance • Most effective; evictions often due to non-payment • Key in Tuesday eviction settlement conferences • Provider delays cause missed notice deadlines • Strict documentation blocks access, esp. for undocumented • Main causes: medical emergencies, job loss, reduced hours • Dont require forms for Landlords to fill out (they likely wont) • Can also be considered a landlord subsidy • Legal Assistance • 30% of eviction cases don't respond on time • Create an eviction monitoring and data collection program • Way for City to measure policy impact is through data monitoring • Examining limiting fees for tenants like laundry, parking, utilities, etc. • Have definitely seen trend of other fees, people didnt know they were supposed to be paying utilities etc until they are evicted • policies on how and when they can implement these fees • Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions • makes a big difference when it applies to single family homes (EPA) • Rent Registry • Most landlords are big corporate landlords, maybe different in Menlo Park (rent registry could help with this) • Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections • Stepping stone to more robust protections	• LA: Also a measure where they had a fee on properties on real estate transactions higher than 5m and goes into a fund for rental assistance and legal services
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President Belle Haven Neighborhood Association Expertise: Belle Haven legacy community	Protection - Provide legal assistance for tenants - Mediation - Full court representation - More flexibility and patience - Consider neighborhood tenant preference for affordable housing - Deposit assistance - Rental inventory/rental registry - Develop localized anti displacement programs for large scale developments - Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections - Door to door outreach Preservation - Repair/Renovation Program - For existing owners Prosperity - Workforce development, pathways to tech jobs Production - Explore changes to existing BMR requirements - BMR's should not just be apartments, but also ownership (affordable single family homes)	- Existing providers nonresponsive (Habitat for Humanity) - should there be penalties for those who buy houses and rent them out? - Code enforcement is lacking, dumping and blocking parking is a huge issue - City presence is important, collaboration more than outsourcing - adequate City staffing - Preservation of legacy community
Director of Programs Climate Resilient Communities Expertise: - Environmental justice - Community outreach and engagement - Belle Haven community	Protection - Rental Assistance - Include financial emergency assistance - Updated/expanded rent control - Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions - Foundation for future policy changes - Downpayment assistance program - Consider neighborhood tenant preference for affordable housing - Preference in BMR units, live/work/displaced - Examining limiting fees for tenants like laundry etc. - Regulated or limited fees	- Displacement #1 threat (research representing 25% of Belle Haven population) - Cultural displacement should be addressed - Vacancy taxes or vacancy controls - Real estate transfer tax on 10m+ properties - Sustainable funding for organizations and providers

Belle Haven Community Development Fund Expertise: • Seniors • Education • Belle Haven legacy community • CDFI • Environmental justice	Protection • Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections • Improved outreach on existing programs • Rental Assistance • 6 month rental assistance program Production • Explore change to existing BMR Requirements • more for 30-50% AMI • No annual income certification on BMR rentals (longer time frame) Prosperity • Workforce develop. Pathways to tech jobs	• Navigator/technical assistance • Cooperative homebuying • HIP Housing Home Sharing model • Policies to address Vacant homes • Homeowner assistance for unexpected costs
Program Manager Belle Haven Empowered Expertise: • Belle Haven legacy community • Community outreach	Protection • Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections • Improved outreach on existing programs Preservation • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing • Taking properties off the speculative market and making them income restricted	• Policies that prevent vacancies • Existing providers need living wage to be more personable and have less turnover • People who work with existing providers should be from the community • Navigator/technical assistance • Lowering BMR threshold • 5 year rent to own savings program (vs annual income certification for BMR rentals) • Navigating existing programs is onerous and doesnt feel secure (processing documents)

Menlo Together Expertise: • Equity • Housing Commission and Housing Element • Tenant protections	Protection • Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections • Improved outreach on existing programs • Modify Tenant Relocation Assistance • Rental Inventory/Rental Registry • Rental assistance • Make it easier to navigate • Legal assistance • Expand Just Cause Eviction • 12 Month Lease Ordinance • Legal assistance Preservation • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing • CLT – long term strategy	• Navigator/technical assistance (from the community) who is available 24/7 • Existing providers have limited hours (weekdays 9-5pm) • Hiring more City staff • Eviction notices can go to the city before they go to the tenant, not legally enforceable if its not filed with the City • Private housing fund wealthy people can donate to
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Community Meetings: Menlo Park's Anti-Displacement Event Results

Goal of Community Events/Anti-Displacement Forum and Survey:

To facilitate focus groups and capture the public's feedback on anti-displacement programs/policies through interactive activity with (2) interactive community events. Those in attendance will be shown pros and cons of each policy/program from both the Housing Element's H2.E Program and the Environmental Justice Element to produce ranked, tiered feedback for prioritization. Each person will be provided a set number (decided upon by the City) of choices but be given all of the policies and programs as options to select. By providing the pros and cons of each policy, those in attendance can make an informed decision as to which ones they deem the most important or potentially the most successful. In the end, the Housing Department will compile the feedback received and average out the data to confirm which policies/programs came out as the highest ranked from community members who attended the in person events and who took the survey via the Anti-Displacement webpage.

These methods help provide direction to our anti-displacement strategy and data for the future City Council study session (tentatively scheduled for 2025).

Of strategies per pillar:

- Protection: 14
- Prosperity: 3
- Preservation: 3
- Production: 2
- Total # of policies/programs: 22

Thursday, November 7, 2024 Event Results:

Attendance: 10 people

Feasibility Grid:

- Blue asterisk- EJ Element
- Red asterisk- Housing Element
- Purple asterisk- HEART

Protection	# of Votes
• Create an eviction monitoring and data collection program*	3
• Updated/expanded rent control *	0
• Consider neighborhood tenant preference for affordable housing*	4
• Develop localized anti-displacement programs to large-scale developments*	2
• Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections*	2
• 12 Month Lease Ordinance*	0
• Strengthened tenant harassment ordinances*	3
• Examining limiting fees for tenants like laundry, parking, utilities, etc.*	1
• Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions*	1
• Identify new sources for Anti-displacement efforts*	1
• Modify tenant relocation assistance*	0
• Rental inventory/rental registry*	3
• Deposit Assistance (with a focus on veterans)*	1
• Foreclosure prevention/mortgage assistance and rental assistance**	2

Prosperity

- Financial planning education and tutoring (tenants)* 2
- Down Payment Assist for 1st time/gen buyer* 2
- Workforce develop. Pathways to tech jobs* 2

Production

- Explore change to existing BMR Requirements* 0
- Affordable Housing Production* 0

Preservation

- Repair/Renovation Program* 0
- Purchase & Preservation of existing housing* 0
- Community and tenant opportunity to purchase * 1

Top programs/Policies with most votes:

- Neighborhood tenant preference* (4)
- Eviction monitoring/data collection* (3)
- Strengthening tenant anti-harassment ordinance* (3)
- Rental inventory/rental registry* (3)

Additional sticky notes:

- Under #4 Develop AD Programs later with large-scale developments: "Include regular 6 month reviews in DA."
- Under #12 Rental inventory/rental registry: "Include all rentals like single family homes, duplexes, apartments, etc."
- Under #13 Deposit Assistance (with focus on vets): "Leverage with vet housing programs."
- Under #14 Foreclosure Prevention/Mortgage and Rental Assistance: "Need CBO with a successful track record."; "Program should include pre-foreclosures"; "Does Samaritan House already do this?"
- Under #15 Financial Planning Education and Tutoring: "Reword the disadvantage stating low participation can be off-putting to the community. They may view this much needed resource as a waste of time."
- Under #16 Down payment assistance for 1st time/generation home buyers: "Need chart of income levels."
- Under #17 Workforce Development Pathways to Tech Jobs...: "This was part of the amenities DA-needs to be reviewed. How many BH residents benefited?"

Additional suggestions:

- "Affordable Housing throughout the entire city of Menlo Park" (ALL CAPS)= 4 votes
- "Senior Housing, discrimination laws, rights, protection" = 1 vote
- "Fair Housing, reverse redlining, landlord may not rent to black, Latino families" = 1 vote

Thursday, November 14, 2024 Event Results (SPANISH ONLY):

Attendance: 2 people

Protection	# of Votes
• Create an eviction monitoring and data collection program* • Updated/expanded rent control * • Consider neighborhood tenant preference for affordable housing* • Develop localized anti-displacement programs to large-scale developments* • Increase multi-lingual information and outreach about tenant protections* • 12 Month Lease Ordinance* • Strengthened tenant harassment ordinances* • Examining limiting fees for tenants like laundry, parking, utilities, etc* • Expand Just Cause Eviction provisions* • Identify new sources for Anti-displacement efforts* • Modify tenant relocation assistance* • Rental inventory/rental registry* • Deposit Assistance (with a focus on veterans)* • Foreclosure prevention/mortgage assistance and rental assistance**	0 0 1 1 0 0 1 0 2 0 0 1 2 0
Prosperity	
• Financial planning education and tutoring* • Down Payment Assist for 1st time/gen buyer* • Workforce develop. Pathways to tech jobs*	0 1 0
Production	
• Explore change to existing BMR Requirements* • Affordable Housing Production*	0 0
Preservation	
• Repair/Renovation Program* • Purchase & Preservation of existing housing* • Community and tenant opportunity to purchase *	0 0 1

Top programs/Policies with most votes:

• Expanding Just Cause Eviction Provision	(2)
• Deposit Assistance; focus on veterans	(2)
• Strengthening tenant anti-harassment ordinance	(1)
• Rental inventory/rental registry	(1)
• Develop AD programs w/large scale develop.	(1)

Additional sticky notes:

- Under #44 Community and tenant opportunity to purchase: "That the organizations that offer help when buying a home do not commit the buyer to pay with interest the loan received when purchasing the home and can freely sell their house in cases of economic need and not be committed to the organization."

Appendix C: Research

Methodology in Preparing Anti-displacement Plan

The development of the Plan used the Housing Element and EJ Element programs as a foundation and used a three-pronged approach to identify and prioritize strategies. The approach included the following:

1. Belle Haven neighborhood outreach;
2. Expert and stakeholder interviews; and
3. Review of research on displacement.

The information below constitutes the research sources for the various strategies.

Research

Research was conducted through several different sources on anti-displacement best practices. Sources of information included anti-displacement plans from different jurisdictions, publications on displacement on a national and local level, and research on specific strategies, such as the rental registry strategy and tenant anti-harassment. While there is a great deal of information about possible anti-displacement interventions, there is little research on the effectiveness of individual strategies. While many sources were reviewed, three studies provided the most information and data. The research strongly supported rental assistance and legal assistance programs, mirroring the feedback received during the interviews.

White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness

The most comprehensive and thorough source of research that is most cited in anti-displacement work is the “White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness”, prepared by Karen Chapple and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris for the California Air Resource Board in 2021. In their research, they reviewed over 150 articles as well as conducted 14 interviews with practitioners and academics. The research summarizes 17 anti-displacement strategies and their effectiveness. While there were no definitive conclusions on the individual strategies, there were some findings in the paper that should be highlighted, including supporting findings for rent control, rental assistance programs, Just Cause Eviction ordinances and legal assistance.

Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area

As the anti-displacement plan was being formulated, the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) also released two relevant studies—one focused on evictions and the other on legal assistance—which helped inform understanding of regional challenges and effective interventions titled “Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area”.

The BAHFA Bay Area Eviction Study also includes a regional eviction dashboard that provides renter demographics, and zip code eviction data for the 9 counties in the Bay Area. According to this source, there were 41 evictions in the 94025 zip code. This means that there is 1 eviction lawsuit for every 142 renter households in Menlo Park.

Data from Legal Aid Service Providers that Serve Menlo Park

In speaking with Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) and the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, two providers that offer legal aid services to Menlo Park residents, both state that evictions are increasing. Their data substantiates the findings from the County eviction and Bay Area eviction reports. Eviction cases are exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Data from the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County shows eviction cases have increased at the County and City level since the pre-pandemic levels.

Urban Displacement Anti Displacement Policy Map

The UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project has created an interactive policy map that tracks the number of anti-displacement policy measures in each City in the Bay Area. See the [Urban Displacement Project Anti Displacement Policy Map](#). Cities with the strongest anti displacement strategies but no formal strategy document include East Palo Alto, Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco.

Other jurisdictional Anti-displacement Plans

[San Jose](#)

As a response to COVID-19, San Jose created a three-year workplan for the top three highest priority recommendations of its Citywide Residential Anti-Displacement Strategy.

[Redwood City](#)

Redwood City has a comprehensive Anti-Displacement Strategy that was approved in 2022. Its workplan and timeline was amended in January 2025 and is still being implemented.

[Marin County](#)

The County of Marin, with the help of Community Planning Collaborative, recently created an anti-displacement strategy in early 2025, which makes recommendations and evaluates strategies for the County to consider.

[Berkeley](#)

The City of Berkeley, with the help of the Partnership for the Bay's Future (PBF), created a document in 2021 that outlines the City's existing 23 anti-displacement policies and programs, and how 12 of them are part of the 14 policies identified in the Urban Displacement Project SF Bay Area Policy Map.

White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness

Rent control

1. Rent control policies become more effective as anti-displacement tools if they are accompanied by other policies such as restrictions on condominium conversions or “Just Cause” eviction regulations.⁶⁸
2. The general conclusion of much of the research is that rent regulations are effective at stabilizing neighborhoods and preventing displacement.⁶⁹

Rental Assistance Program

1. Rental Assistance Programs offering low-income tenants emergency funds to pay rent during moments of economic hardship can be very effective in staving off eviction pressures and displacement.⁷⁰
2. Rental assistance can be very protective for low-income tenants, but challenges exist around the knowledge of existing programs and the ability to access them in a timely fashion.⁷¹

Just Cause Evictions

1. Among the limited research on the efficacy of “Just Cause” is a natural experiment that examined the incidence of eviction in California cities with and without these protections... The study found that cities with “Just Cause” protections saw the incidence of evictions and eviction filings decline after their passage and compared to their counterparts without such protections in place (Cuellar 2019)
2. Just Cause eviction ordinance – By itself, “Just Cause” leaves open the possibility for other sources of displacement, such as rent increases and tenant harassment.⁷²

Legal Assistance

1. Legal Assistance - The results revealed that tenants receiving legal representation were twice as likely to remain in their homes than those without representation (Boston Bar Association 2012)⁷³
2. San Francisco Right to counsel – (Former San Francisco) Supervisor Dean Preston highlighted that the City’s eviction filings had declined by 10%, and that two out of three tenants receiving full-scope representation retained possession of their dwelling unit (Fracassa, 2020). Additionally, these findings revealed that four out of five African Americans receiving legal representation in an unlawful detainer action remained in their home, preventing further displacement of African American San Franciscans.

General comments

1. Neighborhood stabilization (protection) policies have the most direct and immediate effect on mitigating displacement.⁷⁴
2. While particular anti-displacement policies or legislation may not fit all geographic contexts equally well, the lessons and impacts from the application of particular policies in jurisdictions of different states or even other countries could be useful to other jurisdictions. However, literature is generally lacking a discussion about best practices.⁷⁵
3. In the limited research that does exist on displacement, those policies that are implemented in the short-term seem to yield the most promising results for stabilizing low-income neighborhoods and mitigating displacement pressures.⁷⁶

Evictions in San Mateo County, 2019/2023

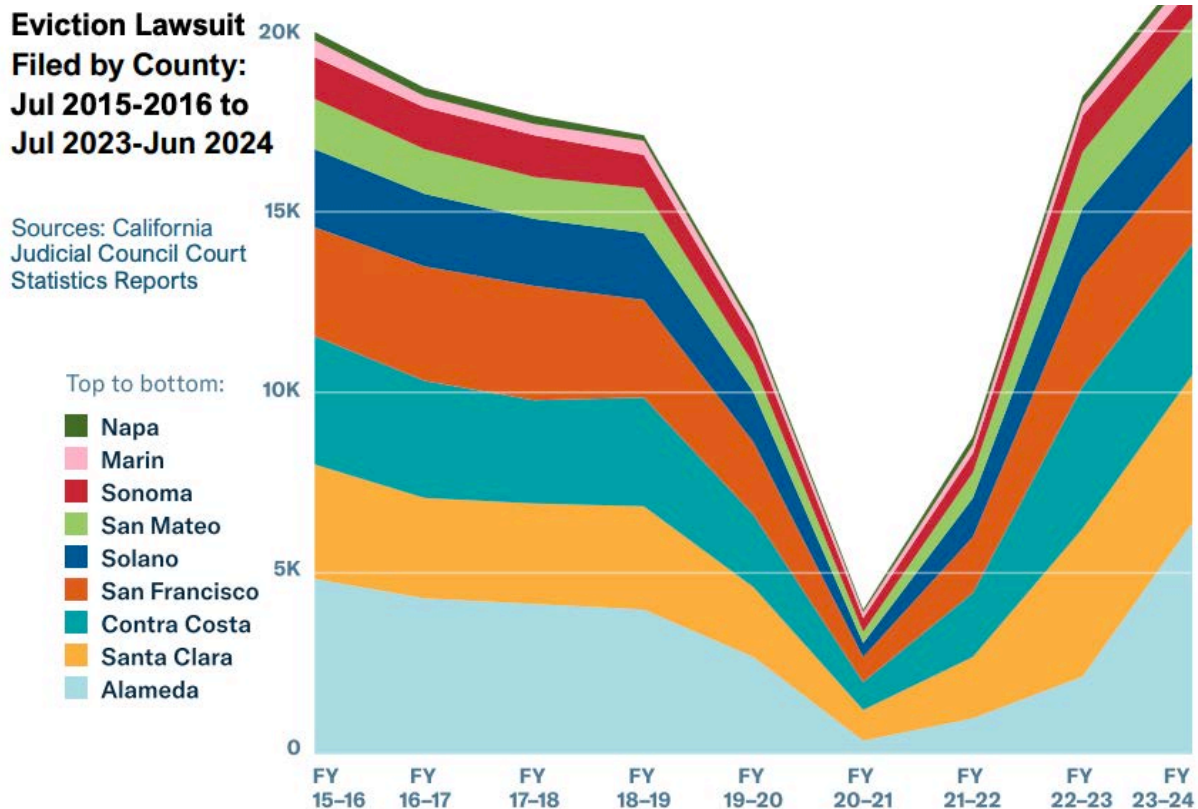
The study “Evictions in San Mateo County 2019/2023”, published by the Stanford Law School Community Law Clinic in 2025, compared evictions rates in 2019 to eviction rates in 2023. The study provided some clear findings to support legal assistance and rental assistance programs.

- The number of San Mateo County evictions in 2023 exceeded pre-pandemic levels.
 - There were 1,118 unlawful detainers cases (eviction lawsuits) in 2019 and 1,510 in 2023
- Most evictions are based upon alleged nonpayment of rent
 - The study found that in 2023, over 85% of unlawful detainers were based on alleged rent delinquency.
- Most landlords are represented by counsel, and most tenants are not, with the rate of landlord representation increasing from 2019 to 2023.
 - Landlord legal representation increased in 2023 from 87% in 2019 to almost 93% in 2023.
 - At the same time, tenant legal representation decreased from 7.7% in 2019 to 4.8% in 2023.

To note, a tenant was defined as “represented” only if an attorney appeared as of record for the tenant in the proceedings.
- Most landlord-plaintiffs are business entities rather than individuals, and the percentage of entity plaintiffs rose significantly from 65% in 2019 to 75% in 2023.
- The rate of judgment against defendant in both years was dramatically lower in cases in which the defendant-tenant appeared than in cases where the defendant defaulted.

The BAHFA study findings are very similar to the San Mateo County findings. Evictions in 2023 have exceeded 2019 pre-pandemic numbers in all nine counties as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Evictions Filed by County 2015-2023



Source: BAHFA “Evictions in Nine-County Area”

Other significant findings from the BAHFA study:

- 1. Consistent with local and national research, census tracts with high proportions of renters of color, households with children and female headed households faced higher rates of eviction across the region. (Page 18)
- 2. From July 2022-June 2023, judges in San Francisco and San Mateo counties issued court orders for eviction 48% of the time when the tenant was not represented, and 17% of the time when a tenant did have representation. (Page 16)
- 3. Similarly, regional data about default judgements in eviction lawsuits where a court rules in favor of a landlord because a tenant failed to respond — rather than based on the merits of the case — is difficult to obtain in consistent and reliable formats. Nonetheless, after reviewing default rates from multiple data sources, the study found default rates in nearly every county between 30-50%. This indicates that roughly one-third to half of tenants lose their cases of eviction without the opportunity to present a defense.

The latter finding regarding tenant response, similar to the San Mateo County study, demonstrates the significance of responding to the eviction case. Although there is no empirical or substantial evidence, it suggests that even some legal assistance or counseling can help the tenant avoid eviction.

Legal Aid Data

Data from the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County shows eviction cases have increased at the County and City level since the pre-pandemic levels.

Please note these were the cases that Legal Aid was able to assist. Please note that these are the cases in which they were able to offer assistance. There were additional inquiries and situations they were not able to provide assistance.

Eviction numbers are similar for CLSEPA cases and are evenly distributed between Belle Haven and Menlo Park.

Table 9. Evictions in Menlo Park and San Mateo County from Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County

Year	Menlo Park	San Mateo County
2022	20	788
2023	25	914
2024	38	889

Source: Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County

Appendix C: Endnotes

68 "White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness" by Karen Chapple and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Page 13

69 *ibid*, Page 61

70 *Ibid*, Page 14

71 *Ibid*, Page 82

72 *Ibid*, Page 65

73 *Ibid*, Page 66

74 *Ibid*, Page 14

75 *Ibid*, Page 16

76 *Ibid*, Page 76