



Portola Valley  
**Community  
Conversation  
About Housing**

May 5, 2018

## Meeting Summary

### Project Overview

The Town of Portola Valley hosted the second in a continuing series of “Community Conversations About Housing” on May 5<sup>th</sup> focused on ADUs (accessory dwelling units) or second units.

At the first “Community Conversation About Housing” event on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, residents shared their interest in learning more about second units – how to build them and expand their production-- as well as their desire to learn more about prefab units and “tiny homes.”

The May 5<sup>th</sup> convening represented a wide range of perspectives, drawing nearly 50 participants including longtime residents and representatives of local institutions interested in building second units. Some sought more information on how to build an ADU on their property, while others wanted to learn more about constructing tiny home communities in Portola Valley. Many had attended the March 3<sup>rd</sup> event, while others had never previously attended a Town-sponsored community meeting.

Moderated table discussions followed two presentations by Town Staff on definitions of second units (including prefab units and tiny homes), building regulations, and a Q and A with participants.



## Themes from Table Discussions

Strong Support for Shared Housing Principles – Meeting participants strongly supported addressing housing needs consistent with the principles created by the Town Council contained in the Housing Strategic Plan:

- Create more opportunities for those who wish to age in place in Portola Valley
- Increase housing for children who grew up here but can't afford to stay
- Find ways to allow more workers, including firefighters, teachers, and other critical workforce, to live in the community

*"There must be a way to keep families together in our community"*

*"Teachers and firefighters should have an opportunity to start out here in Portola Valley"*

*"We would like to offer housing for young families and others who need housing here"*

Allow All Residents to Build Second Units – The Town currently does not allow second unit construction on lots smaller than one acre. Many meeting participants were keen to create opportunities to allow such construction on properties that are less than one acre.

*"We have a smaller lot and want to build an ADU"*

*"The Town and the County should offer more flexibility in design and type of second unit"*

*"All lots should have second units on them!"*



Mitigate Potential Roadblocks to Construction – Participants were very interested in learning more about impacts from potential sewer hook-ups, tax implications of a second unit, and overall construction costs.

*"Could the Town pre-approve prefabricated unit designs?"*

*"If the Town's rules are not easily understood, perhaps a check sheet could be created to quicken the process"*

*"Remove any restriction that are barriers to second units!"*

Best Practices from Successful (and perhaps not so successful) Local Projects – Some Portola Valley residents have already built second units, and participants were eager to hear from those who have successfully (or perhaps not-so-successfully) tackled an ADU project. Hearing from architects on layout and design was also high on the list.

*"Please identify residents who have built second units and ask them to mentor us"*

*"Let's host an ADU discussion meeting with architects, homeowners who have built ADU's, and a tax advisor to answer questions"*

## Housing Options Strategic Plan

The meeting also included a quick overview of the Town’s Housing Options Strategic Plan, which was adopted in the fall of 2016. The plan includes six core elements:

Housing Options Strategic Plan Elements	
<b>Community Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a variety of opportunities to have a Town-wide conversation about housing, both to educate community members about current conditions and to allow decision makers to hear about the community’s needs and the kinds of housing strategies that fit with the Town’s character</li></ul>	<b>Second Units (ADUs)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make it easier for homeowners to propose and receive approval to build an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on their property</li><li>• Increase the number of locations where ADU construction is allowable to increase the supply of rental housing or units for additional family members</li></ul>
<b>Affiliated Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Longstanding program in Portola Valley allowing three institutions (The Priory, The Sequoias, and Stanford) to build housing for their employees</li><li>• Explore expansion of the program</li></ul>	<b>Town-Owned Property</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore the potential of building homes on Town-owned land, as well as occupancy criteria for those whose needs the Town would prioritize (e.g., public safety officials, residents aging in place, etc.) – <i>Report completed in 2017</i></li></ul>
<b>Shared Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broaden the community awareness of HIP Housing, a nonprofit organization that facilitates home sharing for the benefit of both homeowners and those who need an affordable place to live</li></ul>	<b>Affordable Housing Funds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider how to spend the Town’s existing funds for affordable housing (approximately \$3.5 million)</li><li>• Uses of moneys to be determined after Housing Strategic Plan is fully implemented</li></ul>



I applaud what I’ve seen so far, including the two meetings.

- Participant



## Next Steps

- This summer Town Staff will bring forward second unit ordinance amendments, including allowing second units on all residential properties, with adoption of new regulations scheduled for late fall.
- The Town will reconvene the Ad Hoc Housing on Town-Owned Property Committee this summer, with a “Community Conversation About Housing” event focused on this topic in the early fall.
- The Town will also reconvene a meeting of Affiliated Housing Partners in late summer to hear about potential new housing. The Town will invite prospective new Affiliated Housing Partners to hear about their housing ideas
- If you want to know more about the Town’s second unit regulations, or are thinking about building a second unit, feel free to contact us at [towncenter@portolavalley.net](mailto:towncenter@portolavalley.net)



And please add your voice to the conversation [by sharing your thoughts](#) on both the May 5<sup>th</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup> conversations – let’s keep the conversation going!

### SAVE THE DATE

## Portola Valley Community Conversation About Housing: Housing on Town-Owned Property

**Date TBD – Coming this Fall!**



[www.homeforallsmc.com](http://www.homeforallsmc.com)  
[www.secondunitcentersmc.org](http://www.secondunitcentersmc.org)

CommonKnowledgePlus

[www.ckgroup.org](http://www.ckgroup.org)



[www.portolavalley.net](http://www.portolavalley.net)