

AFFORDABLE HOUSING WEEK

Displacement in San José: Strategies and Solutions

Background

In 2018, the City of San José joined the PolicyLink All-In Cities Anti-Displacement Policy Network as the only California city of 10 cities selected nationwide. The cities include Austin, TX; Boston, MA; Buffalo, NY; Denver, CO; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; San José, CA; Santa Fe, NM; and Minneapolis and Saint Paul, MN. Through this experience, San José staff and community leaders have exchanged ideas, strategies, and best practices to prevent and mitigate urban displacement. The City and its partners will conduct on-going community outreach through summer 2019 and bring forward a citywide anti-displacement strategy to City Council in fall 2019.

What is Displacement?

According to the UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project (UDP), Displacement occurs when a household is forced to move from their residence - or is prevented from moving into a neighborhood that was previously accessible to them due to conditions beyond their control.

San José's displacement challenges are not solely due to unaffordable housing, however, unaffordability was the displacement challenge most cited by San José residents the team has spoken with. Below are a few quotes from some of our recent conversations:

“Our church membership has declined. 70 families have left in the last 3 years. I know of a family that left to Lathrop. They moved to Lathrop but still come to church and work at the Hilton in downtown San José.”

- Deacon of a church on Story Road

“Pretty much everyone I talked to said they have to move. They are actively looking in Hollister, Los Banos. 1 neighbor moved to Arizona. I noticed lots of houses have been sold and now are rented.”

- President of TOCKNA, 31-year resident of Welch Park

“Flowers are growing in the hood as soon as people are leaving.”

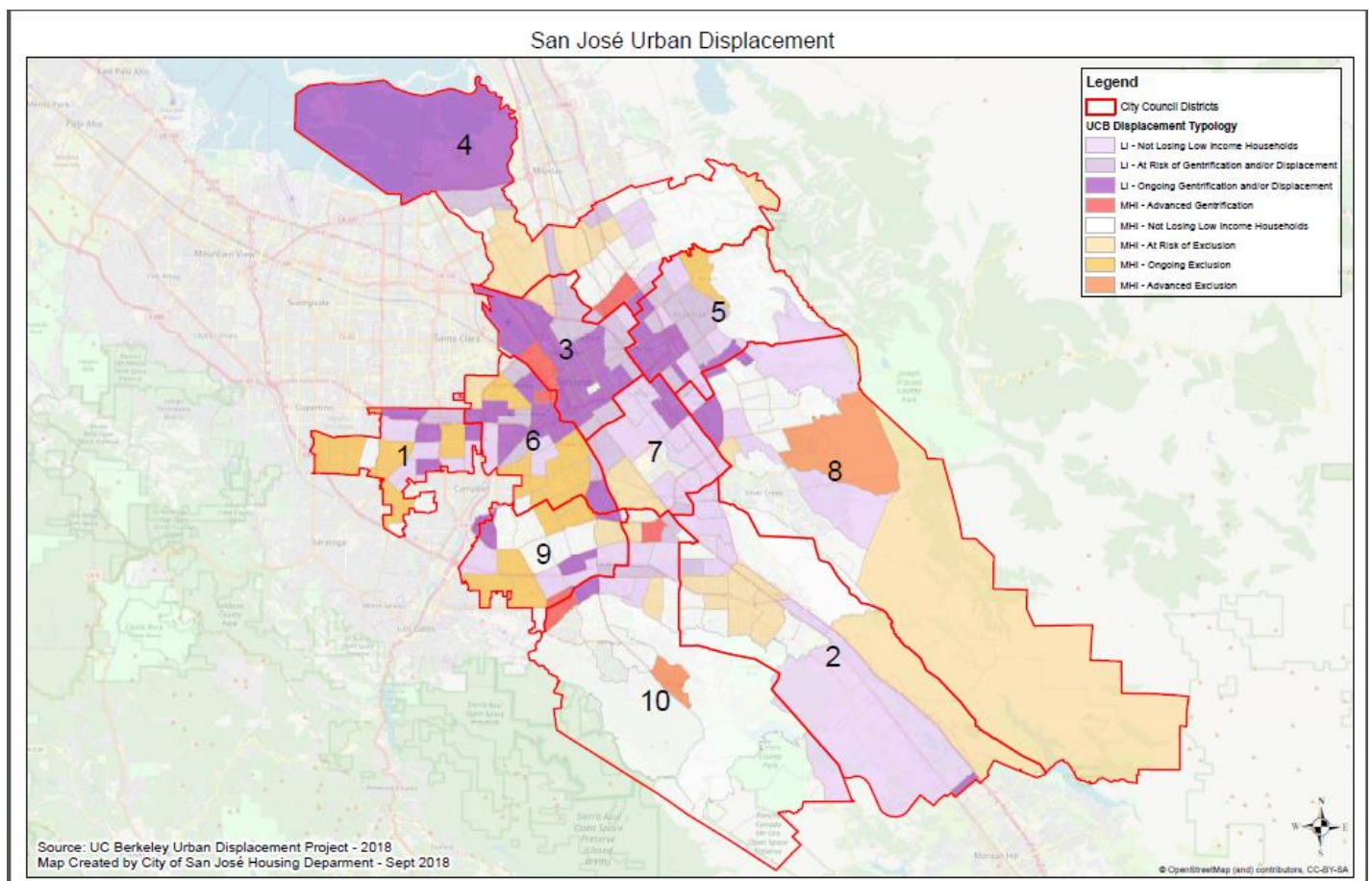
- Teen girl at Cafecito in Mayfair Neighborhood

Research

WHERE IS DISPLACEMENT HAPPENING IN SAN JOSÉ?

The UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project map shows the extent of gentrification and displacement across the Bay Area. The below map shows, at the census tract level, areas in San José at different stages of gentrification, displacement, and exclusion. The dark and light purple areas are low income areas that are undergoing gentrification/displacement or are at risk. The light orange areas are moderate- and high-income areas that are at-risk of exclusion or have ongoing exclusion. Exclusion means rents and home prices are so high, it is very difficult for low income residents to live there. The dark orange areas represent advanced exclusion.

- 43% of all census tracts in San José are low-income census tracts at-risk of or are undergoing displacement according to UC Berkeley research.
- Council Districts 3 and 5 have the most at-risk and on-going displacement census tracts.



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CONSEQUENCES OF DISPLACEMENT

The Urban Displacement Project surveyed 124 renters in Santa Clara County in their report *Disruption in Silicon Valley – The Impacts of Displacement on Residents’ Lives*. The respondents included 80 renter households who have not been displaced and 44 renter households who have been displaced in the last two years.

The researcher’s findings were consistent with the larger body of existing displacement research: households that had been displaced were more likely to be severely rent burdened after they moved, meaning they spend 50 percent or more of their income on rent each month. They also found that the displaced renter households were more likely to end up in precarious housing situations, such as living in a hotel, “doubling up” with friends or family, or couch-surfing. 5% of the displaced households were experiencing homelessness.

Anti-Displacement Strategies

The team is evaluating new anti-displacement solutions to advance in San José. Here are some options that have been shared in the Anti-Displacement Policy Network or during renters focus groups. The team has not made any final recommendations.

PRODUCTION

New source of funding for Affordable Housing	The City could pursue an affordable housing bond in 2020, or pursue other efforts to increase funding for affordable housing such as a commercial impact fee or other tools in San José for affordable housing.
Expedite Affordable Housing Development on Publicly owned Sites	This would recommend the City identify and prioritize potential opportunity sites for affordable housing on publicly owned land in San José.

PRESERVATION

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act/Right of First Refusal	This would first give the current tenants the opportunity to purchase the property they live in if the property goes up for sale.
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PRESERVATION (cont.)

Affordable Housing Preservation Program	This would recommend the City focus on rehabbing and preserving housing with expiring affordability restrictions or preserving unsubsidized affordable housing to avoid displacement of current residents.
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PROTECTION

Right to Legal Counsel for Tenants Facing Evictions	This would recommend the City study expanding its current legal assistance programs to provide legal assistance for tenants facing eviction regardless of the tenant's ability to pay.
Housing Resources for Undocumented Residents	This would recommend the City survey existing anti-displacement policies and programs to remove barriers for service for undocumented residents when possible.

Renter Survey

Are you a renter? Have you been displaced in the last 10 years? We'd like to hear from you.

Renter Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KFPCMJ8>

Staying Involved

City staff began community engagement with a series of listening sessions through community leader 1-1 interviews and renter focus groups in November 2018 – April 2019. Please join us at upcoming events regarding the City-wide Anti-Displacement Strategy:

Community Forums: August – September

City Council Study Session: TBD – August 2019

City Council consideration of City-Wide Anti-Displacement Strategy: Fall 2019

If you have questions or would like to join the City-wide Anti-Displacement Strategy email listserv, please contact Jacklyn Joanino at Jacklyn.joanino@sanjoseca.gov or 408-794-7472.

Citywide Anti-Displacement Strategy website: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?nid=6366>