

Attachment 7: Town of Atherton | June 2023 Community Survey Results

Summary of Community Survey

In June of 2023, the Town launched a Housing Element survey with the intent to gain a better understanding of the community's concerns and potential solutions for potential Multi-Family housing in Atherton. The survey was made up of eighteen questions tailored to Atherton residents but was open to the public, including anyone who works or wishes to live and work in the Town.

To advertise the survey, a quick access link was shared with community members at the Town Hall meeting that took place on Monday, June 19, 2023. Hard copy surveys were also provided for those who requested it. There was a total of 98 attendees including those in person and on Zoom. One hard copy survey was collected from this meeting and represented in the data analysis.

The Town website hosted the survey through Monday, July 3rd, for other members of the public to provide insight. City Manager Rodericks also included the survey in his weekly newsletter to the community. This was an opportunity to expand the network of respondents as everyone had the necessary information to participate and share the survey with others, including those who received the link to the survey, a notice of the survey, or came across it on the Town Website.

The Town of Atherton website is home to all Housing Element surveys, previous and upcoming meetings, as well as new and updates to the Housing Element:

The screenshot displays the Atherton California website's 'Housing Element Update' page. The page features a navigation bar with links for Government, Services, Resources, and How Do I. Below the navigation bar is a large image of a town planning map. The main content area includes a breadcrumb trail: Home > Government > Departments > Planning > Housing > Housing Element Update. The page title is 'Housing Element Update'. The main text explains that the Housing Element is one of seven required elements of the Town's General Plan, updated every 8 years. It mentions the 2023-2031 Draft Housing Element and provides a list of links for various documents, including the Draft Housing Element, various appendices, and public comment materials. A footer section contains icons for Stay Connected, Permits & Licenses, Agendas & Minutes, Report a Concern, Police Services, and Events.

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A total of 35 responses were collected online and in person and reflected in the summary of results below:

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS:

The first four questions of the survey sought to capture the general demographics of the respondents. A summary of the results is provided below:

Question 1: Age

Of the 35 respondents, 77% are over the age of 55 years old and 23% of respondents are between the ages of 30 and 54 years old. Individuals under the age of 30 years old made up 0% of the survey responses.

Detailed Breakdown for Age of Respondents

- 17 years or under | **0%**
- 18 – 29 years | **0%**
- 30 – 54 years | **22.8%**
- 55 – 64 years | **28.6%**
- 65 years or over | **48.6%**

Question 2: Ethnicity and Race

The ethnic and racial representation of the 35 respondents is below. For this question, respondents could choose more than one, if applicable.

Detailed Breakdown of Ethnicity and Race of Respondents

- White | **65.7%**
- Asian | **14.3%**
- Hispanic / Latinx | **2.9%**
- Black or African American | **0%**
- American Indian or Alaska Native | **0%**
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | **0%**
- Other | **17.1%**

Question 3: Homeownership in Atherton

The rate of homeownership among respondents is high, 94.3% of the 35 respondents stated that they own their home in Atherton.

Detailed Breakdown for Homeownership

- Own | **94.3%**
- Rent | **0%**
- Neither/Other | **5.7%**

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Question 4: Residency in Atherton

Of the 35 respondents, 67% have resided in Atherton for over 20 years. Approximately 23% of the respondents have resided in Atherton for 11 to 20 years. Approximately 12% of respondents are newer residents to the Town with less than 10 years of residency.

Detailed Breakdown of Residency (in years)

- 0 - 2 years | **2.9%**
- 3 - 5 years | **2.9%**
- 6 - 10 years | **5.7%**
- 11 - 20 years | **22.9%**
- More than 20 years | **62.9%**
- Not applicable | **2.9%**

GENERAL HOUSING QUESTIONS:

Questions 5-9 focused on identifying equity and access concerns, as well as the priorities and preferred housing typologies of respondents. For each question, this summary includes the range of options, selection process, and response.

Question 5: Identifying Housing Equity Issues

Potential equity issues included: limited supply of housing, not enough variety of housing types, and unaffordability. Respondents could also choose: all of the above, none of the above and other. Respondents were encouraged to select all that apply.

Of the three potential equity issues and 34 responses, the results are:

- Unaffordability (16.7%) was recognized as the highest equity issue in Town.
- Not enough variety of housing types (11.1%) was the second most identified equity issue.

Limited supply of housing (2.8%) being the least identified equity issue in Atherton. Additionally, 33.3% of the responses stated that there are no housing equity issues while 2.8% selected all as potential equity issues in Atherton. Of the 33.3% who selected “Other” as an option, the following equity issue themes were mentioned:

- Housing on school sites for employees
- The impact rezoning will have on property value
- State control of local issues

Detailed Breakdown of Equity Issues (numbers below represent a count not percentage)

- Limited supply of housing | **1**
- Not enough variety of housing types | **4**
- Unaffordability | **6**
- All of the above | **1**
- None of the above | **12**
- Other | **12**

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Question 6: Priorities to Improve Housing Equity in Atherton

To understand the priorities for improving housing equity, especially affordable housing in Atherton, community members were asked to identify their priorities or preferences to potential solutions. Of the potential solutions, 20% of respondents support the **strategic siting of affordable housing** along major corridors as the highest priority to improving housing equity in Atherton. Following that were the options of **allowing a mix of housing types** throughout the Town and **improving resources** in low-resource neighborhoods. Respondents were encouraged to select all that apply, which produced a total count of 40 selections.

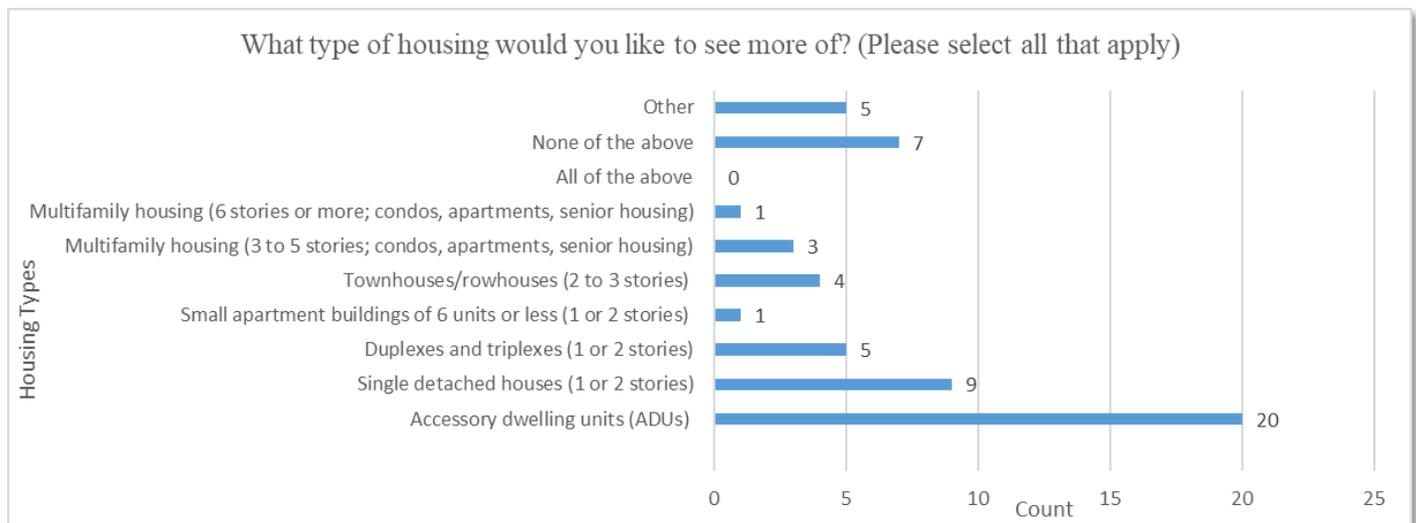
Detailed Breakdown of Priorities

- Allow a mix of housing types throughout the Town | **12.5%**
- Improve resources (parks, transit, and food access) in low-resource neighborhoods| **12.5%**
- Allow more affordable housing in high-resource neighborhoods| **2.5%**
- Strategic siting of affordable housing along major corridors | **20%**
- All of the above| **5%**
- None of the above | **47.5%**

Question 7: Potential Housing Types

To address the statewide housing crisis and work with local jurisdictions to address this issue, survey respondents were encouraged to select all applicable housing types to be potentially used to meet the Town’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Of the 55 total selections, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) were identified as the most preferred housing type to be incorporated into the Town’s housing solution strategy. Other identified preferred housing types included the single detached houses, and duplexes and triplexes. Other suggestions provided by respondents included cottage clusters and senior housing.

Detailed Breakdown of Preferred Housing Types

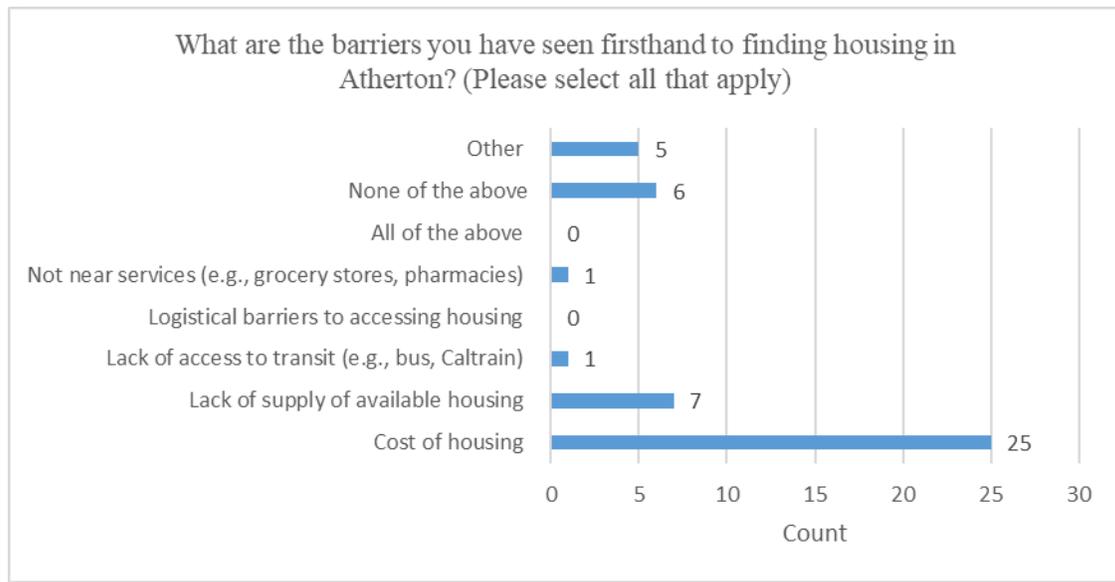


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Question 8: Barriers to Housing

Atherton is recognized as a high-resource area with high property value Townwide. Consequently, the **cost of housing** (25.5%) was recognized to be the largest barrier to housing. The second largest barrier to securing housing in Atherton was the **lack of supply of available housing** (7.1%). Others wrote-in that the Town’s ruralness does not have the capacity to have the few transit corridors be deciding factors for new housing while others were concerned with some “unreasonable” attitudes towards Multi-Family development.

Detailed Breakdown of Housing Barriers



Question 9: Important Criteria for New Housing

In an effort to obtain the community’s vision for housing and their community, the project team asked participants to select all important values to consider when developing new housing. Respondents were not limited to the number of values that they could select. The following factors had 72 selections and are listed in order of respondents’ preference.

Detailed Breakdown of Important New Housing Criteria

1. Preserving the town’s unique character and aesthetics while accommodating new housing | **37.8%**
2. Minimizing the impact on traffic congestion and improving transportation infrastructure | **20.3%**
3. Prioritizing sustainable and environmentally friendly housing practices | **10.8%**
4. Promoting collaboration and partnerships with neighboring communities and stakeholders | **9.5%**
5. Ensuring adequate access to quality education, healthcare, and other essential services | **8.1%**
6. Balancing the interests of homeowners and renters in housing planning decisions | **8.1%**
7. Ensuring affordable housing options are available for diverse income levels | **5.4%**

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POTENTIAL HOUSING STRATEGIES:

Questions 10-16 focused on Multi-Family housing and questions 17-18 addressed the Town's role in addressing the State's housing crisis, providing an opportunity for write-in suggestions. Community members were reminded that the State is requiring jurisdictions to identify opportunities for Multi-Family housing to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH). In doing so, the project team asked respondents to share their concerns and select strategies that they could potentially support.

For questions 10-13, respondents had the option of selecting whether they agreed or disagreed with certain potential housing strategies. A breakdown of the results to 35 responses is below.

Question 10: Locate any new Multi-Family housing near Highways, Arterial Roads & Emergency Access Routes such as: ECR, Stockbridge Ave., Atherton Ave, Middlefield Rd., Valparaiso Ave., Alameda de las Pulgas, Ravenswood Ave.

Agree | **40%**

Disagree | **60%**

Question 11: Locate any new Multi-Family near Parks and Schools.

Agree | **51.4%**

Disagree | **48.6%**

Question 12: Locate any new Multi-Family housing near retail services and/or job centers.

Agree | **51.4%**

Disagree | **48.6%**

Question 13: Locate any new Multi-Family housing near public transit (bus & Caltrain) routes.

Agree | **54.3%**

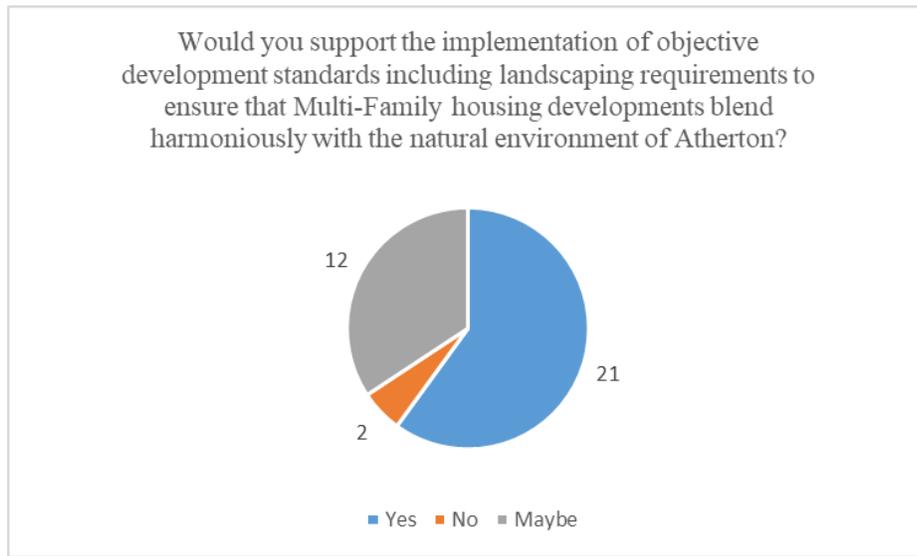
Disagree | **45.7%**

Question 14: Support for Objective Development Standards

When asked if one would support the **implementation of objective development standards**, including landscaping requirements, to ensure that Multi-Family housing developments blend harmoniously with the natural environment of Atherton, 60% said Yes, while 34% said Maybe. This gives the Atherton community an opportunity to be involved with and adopt development standards for new Multi-Family housing in Atherton.

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Detailed Breakdown of Support for Objective Development Standards

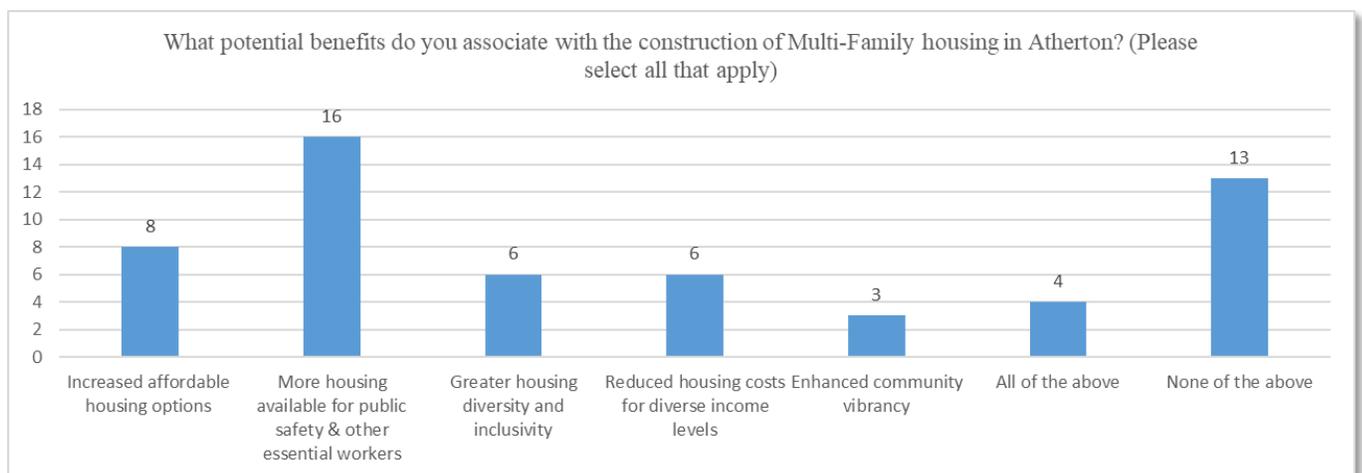


Question 15: Potential Benefits of Multi-Family Housing

Further expanding on the potential development of objective standards, respondents were asked to reflect on the benefits they may associate with the construction of Multi-Family housing. Respondents were asked to select all options that applied. 57 selections were made to the associated benefits of Multi-Family housing.

- **28%** agreed that Multi-Family development would provide more housing for public safety & other essential workers;
- **14%** of the responses indicated that the construction of Multi-Family housing could increase affordable housing options;
- **25%** of responses reflected that none of the options would be a benefit of Multi-Family housing;
- **7%** of responses showed support for all the options to be associated benefits.

Detailed Breakdown of the Potential Benefits of Multi-Family Housing

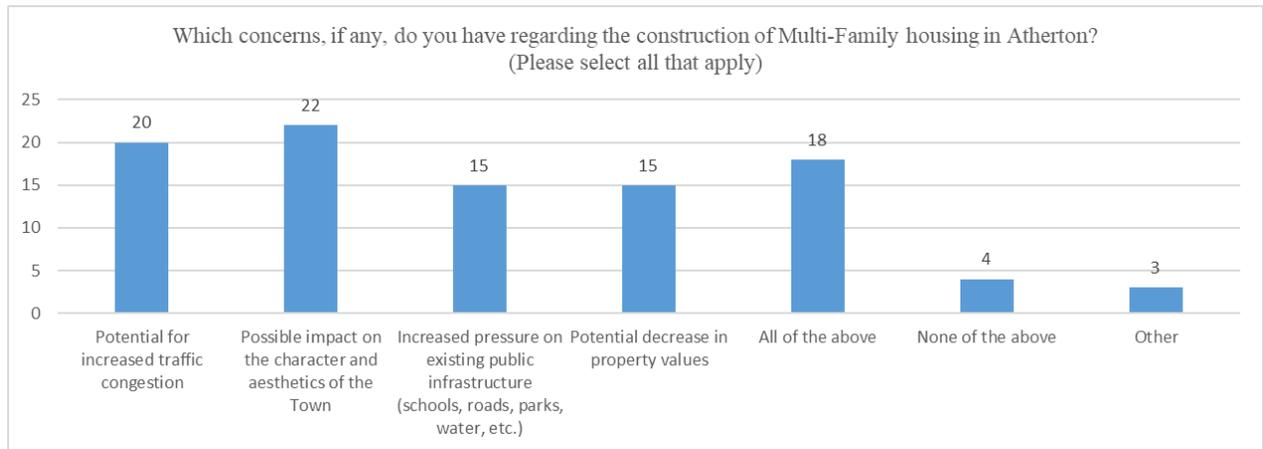


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Question 16: Housing Concerns

Participants were asked to identify their concerns relative to Multi-Family development and were not limited to the number of options selected. Of the 97 selections, the four major concerns were identified to be the possible impact on the character and aesthetics of the town, the potential for increased traffic congestion, the potential decrease in property values, and the increased pressure on existing public infrastructure.

Detailed Breakdown of Housing Concerns

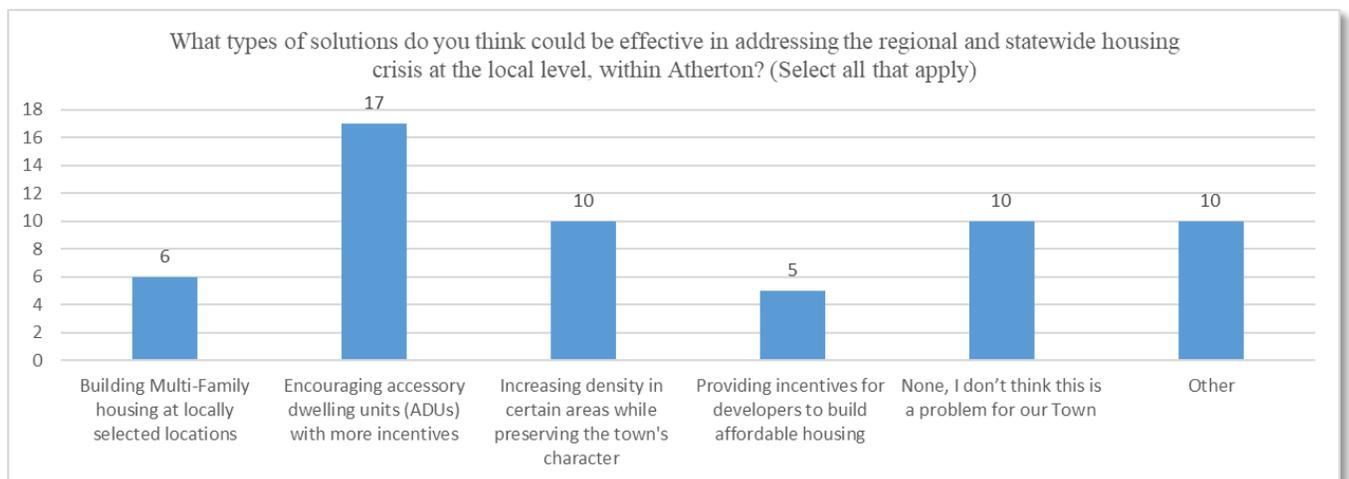


Question 17: Potential Housing Solutions

In an attempt to incorporate the community’s needs and concerns, while also addressing the regional and statewide housing demand, survey respondents were asked to provide insight on potential effective solutions. Again, respondents were not limited to one selection. Of the potential solutions and 58 selections,

- 29% supported the encouragement of ADUs with more incentives.
- 17% support increasing density in certain areas while preserving the Town's character
- 17% voted that they don't think this is a problem for the Town.

Detailed Breakdown of Potential Housing Solutions



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Question 18: Request for further Information

If the options to any of the questions were not representative of the community, respondents had the option to write in a response when asked to ***“Please provide any other information you would like to share with the Town staff & housing consultants regarding the potential location of new Multi-Family housing locations.”*** Specific write-in responses are provided at the end of this discussion.

Survey respondents that expressed their opposition to dense Multi-Family generally recognized the need to comply with the demand for housing. These participants expressed that the Town should focus on school sites first, then consider Holbrook Palmer Park while preserving the facility and allowing ADUs to be deed restricted. There was also shared support for lot splits including the allowance of half and quarter-acre lots for the Town to consider allowing. Senior housing as potential low-density Multi-Family was supported by a few.

Those in support of Multi-Family housing requested that they be well-designed and well-situated to preserve the Town’s charm. Other feedback requested zoning for Multi-Family on properties owned or acquired by the Town and proposed dense corridors of rowhomes while upgrading the Town’s infrastructure to support more biking to nearby cities and services.

Compatibility and belonging were also a concern for incoming low-income families. Respondents recommend that the State concentrate on improving housing where low-income families currently live instead.

Detailed Breakdown of Anonymous Responses

- “A handful of well designed, well situated Multi-Family projects will be much less destructive to the Town than the results of “ADU-Mania” will prove to be.”
- “I would like to encourage the study of housing at Holbrook Palmer Park.”
- “I would support multifamily zoning on properties owned or acquired by the Town, as well as in areas near major transportation corridors. I would also support smaller minimum lot sizes.”
- “Preserve Atherton, please.”
- “My family has owned their property for over 45 years. 10 years ago, the property might have been worth 2 million. However, recently a lot of the same size sold for about \$22 million. There is a problem if developers are able to meet owners buy out price, to simply chunk up the lots. The Atherton community will lose the quiet peaceful environment to simply build overpriced market rate housing to meet the state quotas, when theses market rate housing are made to deteriorate in 10 years & often have musty landscaping.”
- “My personal rights are being taken away - the State has no right to mandate this. It should be put to the voters in CA to decide on by each City/ Town.”
- “I didn’t see anything about the Town allowing big lots to be split. Allowing one acre lots to become 2 half acre or 4 quarter acres. This process should be made easy. It would not Multi-Family housing with 20 units per lot, but it is a way to add more single-family homes, while preserving the Town’s character.”

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- “Atherton is zoned for single property homes and has been since inception. If forced to build homes, then buy unused retail along train corridor or 101 or El Camino (in other towns), annex the space and build 20-40 story high rise apartments like other countries do that have limited land.”
- “Multi-family housing at schools makes sense, but not parks. If Multi-Family is built, there needs to be more infrastructure for biking and walking around it to reduce the incentive to add to traffic congestion. Providing deed restricted ADU incentives may be a good idea for Atherton to meet its RHNA low-income housing targets.”
- “Along CalTrain rail line. Select thoughtful limited multi family. Also, north Middlefield near town border with Redwood City.”
- “I’d love to see us build dense corridors of rowhomes while upgrading our infrastructure to support more biking to Menlo Park and Redwood City for access to services.”
- “Multi-Family housing should be encouraged on public property and corporate/school property, but NOT allowed on any private residential property.”
- “I believe and hope there will be a proposition on the ballot in 2024 that will reverse SB-9 and SB-10 and put control of housing development back in the hands of cities, towns and counties.”
- “Again, absolutely no Multi-family housing on private property.”