



CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN
FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES

A Regional Report

San Diego County



The Housing Situation in the 74th Assembly District
Assemblymember Martin Garrick

The housing market in San Diego County is broken. Most of what has been built is still too expensive, leaving far too many families without options for an affordable place to live.



People who are key to the local economy cannot even afford to rent a home. To afford an average two-bedroom apartment, a San Diego County household needs an income of \$56,720 — significantly more than preschool teachers, school bus drivers, and emergency medical technicians earn.

Homeownership is even further out of reach. As of October 2009, median sales prices were still extremely high in communities like Carlsbad (\$560,000). Even with home prices dropping, a first-time buyer must earn \$61,239 to afford an entry-level home in the county (\$325,000).

This gap between housing costs and wages highlights the need to create more balance in the housing market. We need greater housing variety and supply so everyone can find a place they can afford.



Some of the San Diego County residents who would benefit include:

VERY-LOW-INCOME EARNERS*

Pharmacy Technicians	\$ 36,799
School Bus Drivers	\$ 35,226
Dental Assistants	\$ 34,488
Paramedics and EMTs	\$ 32,751
Medical Assistants	\$ 30,490
Preschool Teachers	\$ 29,362

*below 50% of median income

LOW-INCOME EARNERS**

Emergency Dispatchers	\$ 52,005
Kindergarten Teachers	\$ 49,308
Carpenters	\$ 48,498
Social Workers	\$ 48,179
Computer Support Specialists	\$ 47,872
Electricians	\$ 48,449

**below 80% of median income

Increasing the predictability and stability of the housing market will bring many benefits to the 74th District.



Benefits to Business

In a 2006 San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC) survey of business leaders on the local business climate, 90% of companies said the housing situation negatively affects their ability to do business in San Diego County, while 100% of the businesses named housing as the biggest challenge for employees.

According to the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, "The inability to create housing for the region's workforce poses a significant threat to its ability to attract and retain entry and mid-level jobs. ... Clearly, there is not sufficient new housing to accommodate the needs of new employees. Consequently, companies will begin to relocate or expand outside of the state if salaries are inadequate to pay for increasing housing costs." Per the EDC, "The competitive effects are borne out in State of California figures showing that many more people have left San Diego County for other parts of the country than have moved here in the past few years."

A greater range of local rental and ownership choices improves businesses' access to an ongoing labor force, including the younger and lower-wage workers they need to be competitive. If young adults graduating from UCSD, Cal State San Marcos, and other universities can find an affordable place to live, they will be more likely to remain in the area and contribute their skills to the local economy. Affordable rental/apartment homes also provide opportunities for families and younger workers to increase their assets, so they can eventually own a home.

Employers benefit from a reduction in costly employee turnover and increased productivity when employees can afford to reduce their commutes and live closer to work. Residents living near their jobs become customers for local businesses, decrease traffic congestion, and increase sales tax revenues to provide services that help support the business community. Shorter commute times allow more time for family and involvement with children's activities.

Building homes that increase variety and balance in the market also creates more local construction employment. Even in these tough economic times, affordable homebuilders are continuing to provide well-paid, construction-related jobs that help support families and the local economy.

Benefits to Public Safety

Public safety also benefits when there is a range of housing that people can afford.

In too many neighborhoods in San Diego County, high housing costs have led to overcrowding. University students pack into homes and apartments, while families double or triple up with relatives to afford the rent. This overcrowding strains parking, law enforcement, fire departments, and public services. However, we could decrease these costs if families could find adequate places to live without needing so many others to cover rent.

More options in the housing market would reduce other public safety costs as well:

- Today's affordable homebuilders reduce demands on law enforcement by screening their tenants carefully and closely managing their apartment communities to make sure that they are safe, quality places to live.
- With additional options, battered women and their children can more easily afford to leave their abusers without risking homelessness and further victimization on the street, reducing law enforcement and related costs. More than half of the cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in 2000 reported domestic violence as a main cause of homelessness.
- With housing and treatment, people with mental illness will be less likely to end up in jail or prison. The cost of incarceration is roughly \$110,000 per year for those with serious mental conditions. If people with mental illnesses can find a home with supportive services that helps them remain stable, they are less likely to experience breakdowns or engage in criminal behavior. This saves significantly on costs related to law enforcement, courts, imprisonment, and parole.

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The success of a community involves everyone

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Benefits to Veterans

Approximately 1,200 veterans are homeless in San Diego County, and San Diego providers are beginning to see new homeless veterans who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan with physical and/or mental traumas.

Without a stable living environment, California's former servicemen and women have difficulty seeking needed care and treatment. Homeless veterans have disproportionate rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and substance abuse, along with hepatitis C, diabetes, prostate cancer, and HIV/AIDS, which can be life-threatening without proper treatment and a stable home.

According to San Diego's Regional Task Force on the Homeless, "Homeless veterans do not always fare well in programs designed for the general homeless population. Dropout and recidivism rates can be high and therefore programs that specifically tailor their services to veterans are needed." Veterans programs that provide a home with supportive services are critical so that veterans can address their medical, mental health, substance abuse, and employment issues and successfully reenter society.

