

# Santa Cruz YIMBY Questionnaire

YIMBYs are excited to see your answers and work with you to build a more equitable and affordable community. YIMBY Action chapters across the country are fighting for an integrated and environmentally sustainable society where every person has access to a safe, affordable home near jobs, services, and opportunity.

YIMBY Action ([yimbyaction.org](http://yimbyaction.org)) is active in multiple regions across the country and advocates for better housing policy at the local, state, and national levels. If YIMBY Action endorses in your area, you may see that endorsement referred to as both the YIMBY Action endorsement and the endorsement of an affiliated chapter (i.e. "Santa Cruz YIMBY").

Your answers will be made available to our membership during the endorsement process and may be posted on our website. We often use quotes from these questionnaires when promoting our endorsement.

We understand that candidates may be thinking about housing and land use for the first time, and we are happy to share with you our opinions and educational resources! If you have questions about anything here, please feel free to reach out to [hello@yimbyaction.org](mailto:hello@yimbyaction.org) or speak with a local member.

Additionally, we have collected introductory short videos, podcasts and articles that may help inform you about YIMBY perspectives on housing: <https://yimbyaction.org/2021/top-resources/>

Email \*

martinez4supervisor@gmail.com

**Your Name**

*As it will appear on the ballot*

Monica Martinez

**District you are running in**

*State, District, Any other relevant information*

5th Supervisorial District, Santa Cruz County

**Campaign Email**

*Best email to stay in touch about candidate forums, etc*

[martinez4supervisor@gmail.com](mailto:martinez4supervisor@gmail.com)

**YOUR COMMUNITY: Is your district suffering from a housing shortage?**

Yes. On top of being a very high cost of living area, which already makes it difficult to find housing, 911 homes were lost during the CZU Lightning Complex Fire in 2020, and more were lost or damaged during the 2022-2023 winter storms. As SLV property values are lower than other parts of the county, the 5th district is also one of the last places where “first-time homebuyers” are able to purchase a home. However, due to the shortage of properties on the market, home prices continue to rise and there are fewer opportunities available.

**YOUR COMMUNITY: Are there policies that make it harder to build housing in your community that you would like to change?**

Yes. Much of the 5th District is rural, mountainous Wildland-Urban Interface, and thus not appropriate for multi-family housing. However, the County of Santa Cruz has made it very difficult for people to rebuild their homes after the CZU fire and other disasters. We should allow these individuals more flexibility in rebuilding; the implementation of composting toilets and greywater systems to reduce or eliminate septic requirements is one example that other places in the United States with difficult soil conditions have allowed. We should also implement much faster and more consistent permit reviews, including allowing applicants to engage third party permit reviewers directly.

In infill areas (e.g. many areas within the urban services line and especially where there are jobs, walkable neighborhoods, and transit) we need a lot more density to solve the overall housing crisis. Many of the policy needs are well known - not requiring commercial spaces to be built in more areas, increased height and density in central locations, training staff in changing state regulations, actually allowing people to submit applications rather than join waiting lists just to apply to build housing, etc. That said, the state has provided the tools to many projects to address those barriers and has required the county to plan for more housing in the best locations via the upcoming housing element. However, the county needs a sensible and efficient permitting process that follows both the spirit and letter of state law.

**YOUR RECORD: Are there pro-housing policies or specific housing developments you have supported in the past that you would like to highlight?**

Yes. I have been involved in the movement to ensure housing as a human right. I founded the successful 180/180 Campaign, a grassroots community effort to house 180 of the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County. This campaign was successful and has since become a sustainable program to advance permanent supportive housing as a solution to homelessness. I worked with many partners on the Measure H campaign in 2018. I am currently working with Mid-Pen Housing to develop 72 units of affordable housing in Watsonville, alongside Encompass's Si Se Puede project.

## **YOUR PLATFORM: Do you have a section on your website about housing?**

*Please Link. If not, tell us a bit about your perspective on housing in your state, region, and/or city.*

<https://www.martinezforsupervisor.com/priorities> (bottom of page). Housing policy and affordable housing is incredibly important, as it is across the Central Coast. In the 5th District, our housing stock has been impacted by recent disasters, so we need to focus on preserving our existing housing stock by ensuring that damaged homes can be repaired or rebuilt as quickly as possible. We also need to invest in a sustainable housing ecosystem that prioritizes housing affordability and workforce and transit-oriented housing. On the issue of homelessness, we need to implement evidence-driven prevention strategies and ensure that those who are most vulnerable receive the support that they need to regain and sustain housing.

## **YOUR YIMBY-NESS: Do you have a pro-housing quote or statement you think YIMBYs would love to hear?**

*Something for our promotions if we endorse you!*

My position is pretty simple; I believe we need far more housing near jobs, walkable neighborhoods, and transit that is affordable at all income levels – low-income housing, workforce housing and market rate housing. We need to keep increasing infill density over time so that we can get back to a healthier housing market, continue to have a diversity of people and a local workforce, and continue to ensure that our natural and working lands are preserved from sprawl. Additionally, we need to do everything we can to support those who are rebuilding after the CZU fire and other climate related disasters.

## **ENDING EXCLUSIONARY ZONING**

American neighborhoods are defined by exclusion. Systems of [exclusionary zoning](#) ban [duplexes, apartments, subsidized affordable housing, student housing and more](#) in most “residential” areas. Excluding these types of homes keeps neighborhoods homogeneous and makes housing more expensive. Keeping the supply of housing low drives up housing costs, excluding people who are nonetheless an integral part of our community. “YIMBYs advocate for the end of this ban on apartments and other kinds of housing; we want to [end exclusionary zoning](#) (aka “upzone”).

Upzoning is especially important in wealthy, high-opportunity neighborhoods where current zoning laws reinforce racial and class segregation.

YIMBY Action advocates for ending exclusionary zoning and legalizing apartments. Communities that ban apartment buildings in residential neighborhoods are exacerbating inequality, increasing sprawl and greenhouse gas emissions, and stunting their own local economy.

**Would you fight to end single family home only zoning, ending bans on apartments and other types of housing in all residential areas? [Short Answer]**

I would support ending single family zoning where appropriate. I believe that appropriate areas include the residential area within the urban services line.

**What kinds of housing would you like to see in exclusionary communities?**

*(Accessory Dwelling Units, Duplexes, Missing Middle Apartment Buildings, Subsidized Affordable Housing, etc)*

Addressing exclusionary practices is crucial for promoting housing equity, reducing segregation, and creating more inclusive and diverse communities. I would like to see various types of housing implemented in exclusionary communities, including but not limited to what is listed above. Housing voucher programs can be very beneficial in exclusionary communities, as they assist low-income individuals in obtaining housing. I would also support allowing multifamily rental housing in such neighborhoods, affordable housing mandates in exclusionary communities, as well as incentives for developers to construct affordable housing.

**STREAMLINING PERMITS**

Even where housing is technically allowed, complicated and arbitrary permitting can slow, shrink, or stop housing proposals. Complicated and arbitrary permitting creates opportunities for corruption to flourish, makes building housing take much longer and further drives up the cost of new housing. The process of endless hearings and appeals is [where we often see NIMBYs dominate](#).

Instead of following clear rules about what is allowed and what is prohibited, communities put individual housing proposals through the political wringer, with endless community meetings and hearings with unrepresentative groups of constituents. Often local Planning Commissions or even City Councils will vote on whether a housing proposal will get their permits, creating an arbitrary and expensive process that stifles housing.

Improving permitting is especially important in exclusionary neighborhoods. In those neighborhoods, [wealthy homeowners often weaponize the permitting process to block new housing in their neighborhoods](#).

**Do you support “by right” permitting, where cities must make clear, objective zoning and building standards, thus allowing developers following these rules to build new projects without delay?**

[Short Answer]

Yes.

**Is there a specific policy that stops or slows down housing permitting in your area that you believe needs changing?**

Yes. The efforts of CZU and winter storm survivors have clearly demonstrated that the County’s septic requirements are too stringent, and that it is very difficult, if not impossible in many circumstances, to meet geotechnical requirements. Additionally, the County should accept and process permit application reviews more quickly and efficiently, including allowing applicants to opt into a third party review, rather than county staff review, although any project will still need to pass County inspections and be built to code. Finally, in denser areas that allow for mixed-use developments, the commercial space requirements that there is no demand for essentially stop any development from happening at all.

## **FUNDING SUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Most housing in the United States is “market-rate”. People or companies that own homes rent or sell them at a price where they can find a buyer. Even if housing becomes less expensive on the open market, there will likely always be people who can’t find housing at a price they can afford.

Public funding helps provide housing for people with very low incomes, often known as Affordable Housing. There are many different kinds of funding sources and types of subsidized Affordable Housing, but all are falling far below the needs of our communities. YIMBYs believe that we must increase funding for income-qualified housing at all levels of government. Increasing funding for affordable housing is critical to creating a future of housing for all.

**Do you support increasing public funding for subsidized Affordable Housing?**

[Short Answer]

Yes.

**What type of local subsidy for affordable housing should the municipality you are seeking to serve focus on by allocating resources? (ex: raise taxes, issue bonds, cut other spending, etc)**

I am open to exploring multiple avenues to subsidize affordable housing, including, but not limited to, direct budget appropriations, public-private partnerships, seeking out state and federal grants, tax increases on the wealthiest members of our community, issuing bonds, and making appropriate government-owned parcels available for affordable housing development.

## **FEES AND BAD INCENTIVES**

There are many ways we make housing more expensive and slow down decision-making. These policies range from excessive parking requirements to height limitations. Since many local governments have limited budgets and are disinclined to tax current residents, they often try to raise funds for public needs by charging fees on new housing projects, effectively taxing future residents who can't vote on these costs. These fees have a variety of names, such as "Inclusionary Fees", "School Impact Fees", "1-Percent-For-The-Arts", "Transit Impact Fees" and many more. These fees drive up the cost of building housing, ensuring that only the most expensive projects are built. They are "stealth taxes", paid by future residents. With added fees, housing for middle-income people is often prohibitively expensive to build.

In the long term, State and Federal Governments need to offer more help to local governments to fix these broken incentives. Cities need housing for workers and public funding to ensure transit and other infrastructure needs are met. We can't keep taxing something we need (housing) in order to fund all the other things we need. Reducing the fees we put on housing will make it more feasible for home builders to build smaller, less expensive new homes.

**The California state Department of Housing and Community Development recommends that a municipality proposing any "inclusionary" ordinance that requires housing projects to set aside more than 15% of their units as income-restricted affordable units be supported with a nexus study that justifies the feasibility of the rate of affordability for developers. Do you plan to follow this recommendation? Please explain.**

Yes. The goal of the inclusionary housing policies is to maximize the amount of affordable housing produced without public subsidy. If the inclusionary percentage is so high that nothing gets built, no affordable housing gets created. So we need it to be the right amount, and that is what a nexus study helps determine.

## **Fees we put on housing drive up the cost of construction, making new units more expensive. What are examples of this in your area?**

It's important to balance the need for regulation with the goal of affordable housing. Santa Cruz County's permitting fees and mitigation requirements are very high, and thus are a major barrier to keeping housing affordable. Many disaster victims attempting to rebuild have been priced out of the process, due to requirements to install very expensive mitigations, such as retaining walls. Additionally, as our county has a very high cost of living, labor and materials are very expensive, which also drives up costs.

## **TENANT PROTECTIONS**

As we pursue policies for abundant housing, YIMBY Action fights for development without displacement. The YIMBY movement is in many ways a consumer advocacy movement, representing the interests of people who want more abundant, affordable housing options near jobs and opportunity for all. We are renters, homeowners, families, parents, seniors, millennials, unsheltered, and more. Policies to build the housing we need must be coupled with policies to protect people living in the housing we have.

YIMBY Action supports policies like Right to Return, Tenant-Protecting Demolition Controls, Just-Cause Eviction Protections and more. We believe these policies can be well crafted to minimize negative impacts on the overall housing stock, while helping add more stability to the lives of at-risk renters.

## **What are common-sense tenant protections you support?**

I support many common-sense tenant protections, including anti-discrimination laws, just cause eviction, protection from retaliation, protection for tenants who are victims of domestic violence and the right of tenants to organize and form an association or union. I believe that it is important to balance the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants, ensuring that rental housing markets are fair, stable, and supportive of the well-being of all parties involved, while also ensuring that we can increase the rate of building new infill, multi-family housing.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

More questions on community connectivity, homelessness, and mixed use housing.



**What can your community do to improve public transit and other options for people to get around with less reliance on cars?**

Public transit plays a critical role in reducing traffic congestion, cutting emissions, and providing accessible transportation options for our community, and I am committed to finding transit solutions that reduce our dependence on cars. Sustainable transportation and responsible land use planning are essential elements of addressing congestion and environmental concerns. I will prioritize solutions that align with our goal of promoting sustainable transportation options. This includes ensuring that new developments are well-connected to public transit and encouraging alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use. When elected, I am committed to actively working with our state and federal partners to explore additional funding sources for public transit options, such as Santa Cruz METRO, including ParaCruz, and the Rail and Trail. This may include pursuing grants, advocating for increased funding allocations, and seeking innovative funding mechanisms to support and improve our public transit system. Investing in our public transit system and making it more accessible to all is a win-win proposition for our community. It's an essential step toward building a more sustainable and inclusive transportation infrastructure.

**As an elected official, have you voted against any affordable housing projects and why? If not currently in office, are there any projects that you would/have voted against?**

I am not aware of any affordable housing projects that I would have voted against.

**Do you believe that homelessness can be solved with the production of more homes? Please explain.**

I believe that building more homes is one important and absolutely necessary step in the long and complex process of ending homelessness. I strongly believe in the Housing First approach to homelessness, which provides stable, permanent housing to homeless individuals without preconditions like sobriety or participation in treatment programs. Housing First recognizes that having a safe and stable place to live is a fundamental human need and a crucial first step in addressing other issues that contribute to homelessness. In addition, the majority of all homelessness can be prevented by having a far more affordable housing market, so we have to do our fair share of moving California back to sufficient housing abundance through much more sustainable, infill housing production.

### **What are compassionate solutions to homelessness?**

Compassionate solutions to homelessness involve addressing the root causes of homelessness and providing support, services, and housing to help individuals and families find stable, long-term housing. These solutions require a multi-faceted and holistic approach that takes into account the individual circumstances of homeless individuals and families. Collaboration between government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the community is essential to creating lasting change and reducing homelessness in a compassionate and effective manner. Housing First, which I mentioned above, is one compassionate solution; increasing the availability of affordable housing is vital. Supportive housing is another, which combines affordable housing with services such as mental and physical health care, substance abuse treatment, and job training. Prevention is also important, including providing emergency financial assistance, help finding housing, legal aid, and other services that help people avoid being homeless. Finally, public education and awareness can help reduce the stigma associated with homelessness and build community support for compassionate solutions.

---

**Building more housing will help ease the housing shortage and bring down housing prices. Dense, more walkable, more affordable communities will reduce carbon emissions, reduce segregation, reduce homelessness and build a better community. Do you agree?**

Yes.

---

**In general do you support changing local housing policies to allow the construction of more housing at all levels of affordability, including both subsidized-affordable and market rate homes?**

Yes.

---

This form was created inside of Yimby Action.

Google Forms