

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) 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 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 *

JoeThompson.CA@gmail.com

Your Name

As it will appear on the ballot

Joe Thompson

District you are running in

State, District, Any other relevant information

District 5

Campaign Email

Best email to stay in touch about candidate forums, etc

Joe@votejoethompson.com

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

Yes. Both students and Santa Cruz residents face a housing shortage in district 5.

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

Zoning Laws: The current zoning is very restrictive and is mostly zoned for single family units, I believe we need to update our zoning to make it easier to build different types of housing all over the city.

Height Limits and Density Restrictions: I will oppose any height and density restrictions, I believe that we need to develop up instead of out so we can protect more green space and building near transit corridors is ideal.

Parking Requirements: Excessive parking requirements can increase construction costs and reduce the available space for housing units, and encourages car centric development.

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

I am a member of YIMBY and Student Housing Coalition, and since I have got to Santa Cruz, I have been very vocal supporting multiple housing projects that came before the council. If elected, I will work with YIMBY, Student Housing Coalition, and other pro-housing groups to continue to fight our housing crisis.

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://votejoethompson.com/get-to-know-joe>

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!

Housing is a human right. We need to create a future where that isn't just a dream but a reality.

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]

Yes.

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

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

I strongly believe in promoting inclusivity and expanding housing options in our community. In exclusionary communities, it is essential that we diversify our housing stock to meet the needs of our residents and address the challenges of housing affordability. Here are some types of housing that I would like to see in such communities:

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): ADUs are a fantastic way to increase housing options in single-family neighborhoods. They allow homeowners to create additional, smaller housing units on their property, which can be used for family members, renters, or others. ADUs are a flexible and cost-effective solution to address housing shortages.

Duplexes: Promoting duplexes in single-family neighborhoods can help add more housing while maintaining the character of these areas. Duplexes offer a middle ground between single-family homes and larger apartment buildings.

Missing Middle Housing: Encouraging the construction of "missing middle" housing, such as triplexes, fourplexes, and townhouses, can provide a variety of housing options that bridge the gap between single-family homes and high-rise apartment buildings.

Subsidized Affordable Housing: It's vital to ensure that we have affordable housing options available for low-income individuals and families. Public and private partnerships should be encouraged to develop subsidized affordable housing that is accessible to those in need.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Promoting housing near public transportation hubs not only reduces car dependency but also encourages more sustainable and affordable living. We should encourage mixed-use development near transit centers to provide residents with easy access to public transportation.

Co-Housing and Cooperative Living: Exploring innovative housing models, such as co-housing and cooperative living arrangements, can provide affordable housing options and foster a sense of community.

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 un-

representative 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?

There were multiple lawsuits challenging the construction of the Housing West project on campus, but a state law was passed to change that. I will work to streamline the construction of housing in order to ensure an growing housing stock.

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 in support of raising taxes on wealthy individuals, and issuing bonds (most likely will support the housing bond measure in the works), and I supported the empty home tax campaign in 2022 and will continue advocating for revenue streams that benefit low-income folks over wealthy individuals.

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.

I will support a study in Santa Cruz to see what is the highest inclusionary zoning we can have without halting housing development in Santa Cruz.

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

Development Impact Fees: Santa Cruz imposes development impact fees on new housing projects. These fees are intended to cover the costs associated with providing infrastructure and services such as water, sewage, transportation, and parks to accommodate the new development.

Building and Permit Fees: The cost of obtaining permits and complying with building codes can be substantial. These fees include plan review fees, inspection fees, and other charges that builders must pay to ensure their projects meet local regulations.

Environmental Mitigation Requirements: Developers may incur significant costs related to environmental impact assessments, habitat preservation, and other mitigation measures.

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 believe in common-sense tenant protections that strike a balance between preserving the rights of tenants and ensuring the stability of the rental housing market. Some of the common-sense tenant protections I support include:

Rent Control: Implementing reasonable rent control measures to prevent excessive and arbitrary rent increases, while allowing landlords to earn a fair return on their investments. This should typically include annual caps on rent increases and vacancy decontrol to encourage the turnover of rental units.

Just Cause Evictions: Enacting just cause eviction policies to protect tenants from arbitrary or retaliatory eviction by requiring landlords to provide valid reasons for eviction, such as non-payment of rent or lease violations.

Tenant Anti-Retaliation Protections: Strengthening laws that protect tenants from retaliation by landlords for exercising their legal rights, such as reporting housing code violations or requesting repairs.

Also just to note, that I will seek to impose these standards on property management companies and landlords with many properties, not landlords with very few properties/tenants.

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?

Invest in expanded public transit networks, including bus and light rail systems, while also promoting safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Implementing incentives for carpooling and telecommuting can further reduce car reliance, and strategic urban planning can facilitate mixed-use development near transit hubs.

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?

n/a and none that I have seen come before the council, I supported some controversial projects such as 831 water St.

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

While increasing housing production is a crucial part of addressing homelessness, it's not the sole solution. Combating homelessness requires a comprehensive approach, including supportive services, mental health care, addiction treatment, and policies to prevent eviction. Housing is a vital component, but not the exclusive answer.

What are compassionate solutions to homelessness?

Compassionate solutions to homelessness involve providing stable, affordable housing, access to mental health and addiction services, job training, and wraparound support. These strategies focus on addressing the root causes of homelessness while treating individuals with dignity and respect.

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