

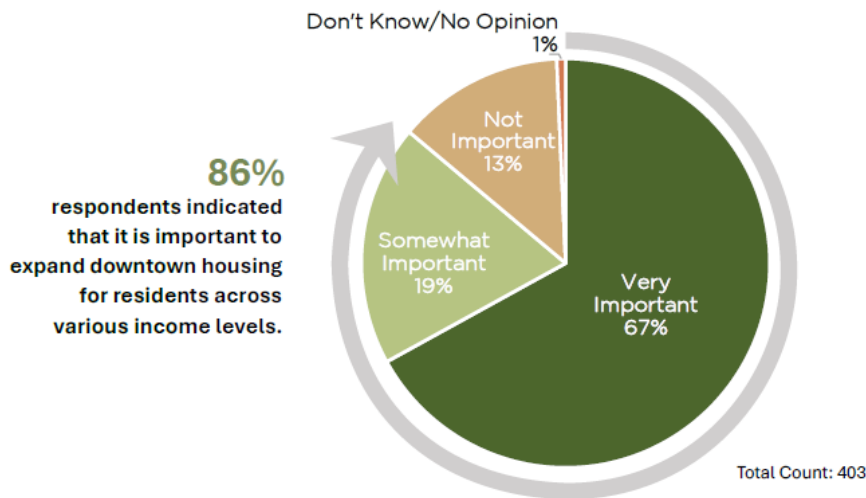


DOWNTOWN HOUSING PLAN

PALO ALTO DOWNTOWN HOUSING PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

The Palo Alto Downtown Housing Plan Community Survey was open from November 18 through December 20, 2024. The survey aimed to gather community feedback on the vision of the Plan and was centered around the different approaches and trade-offs that the respondents considered were critical to facilitate housing production in the downtown area. A total of 406 responses were received, and a summary of the survey results is below.

Q1. How important is it for Palo Alto to consider expanding its downtown housing stock to accommodate residents across various income levels?

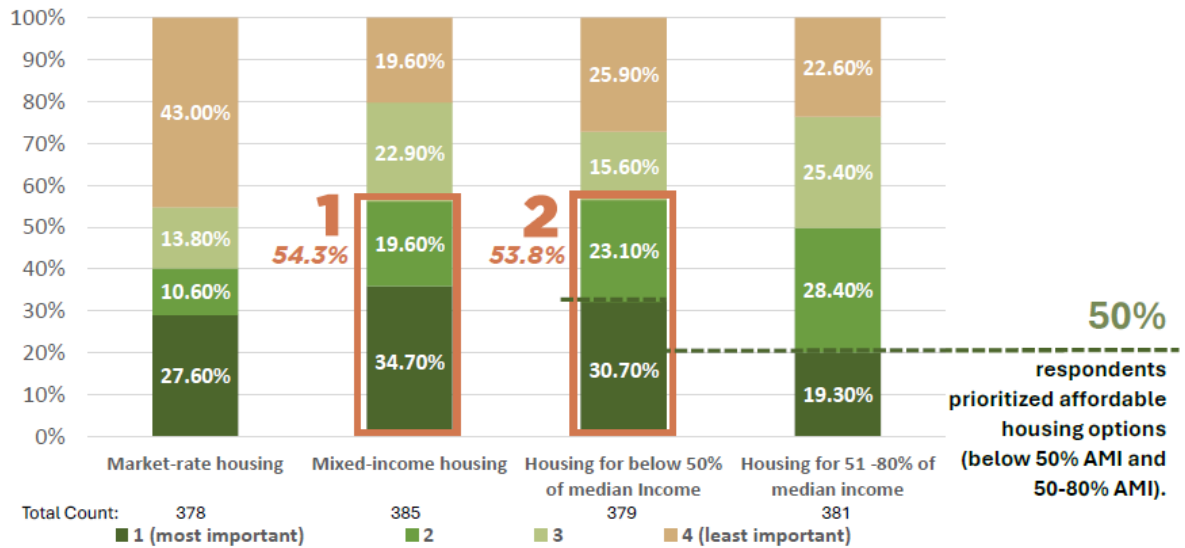


Q2. What types of housing are needed to achieve equitable access to housing for all income levels in downtown Palo Alto?

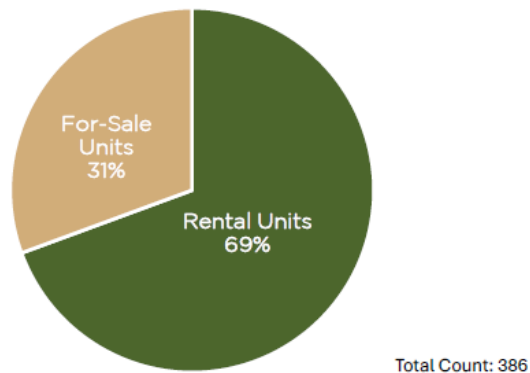
(Rank by importance: 1 = most important and 4 = least important)



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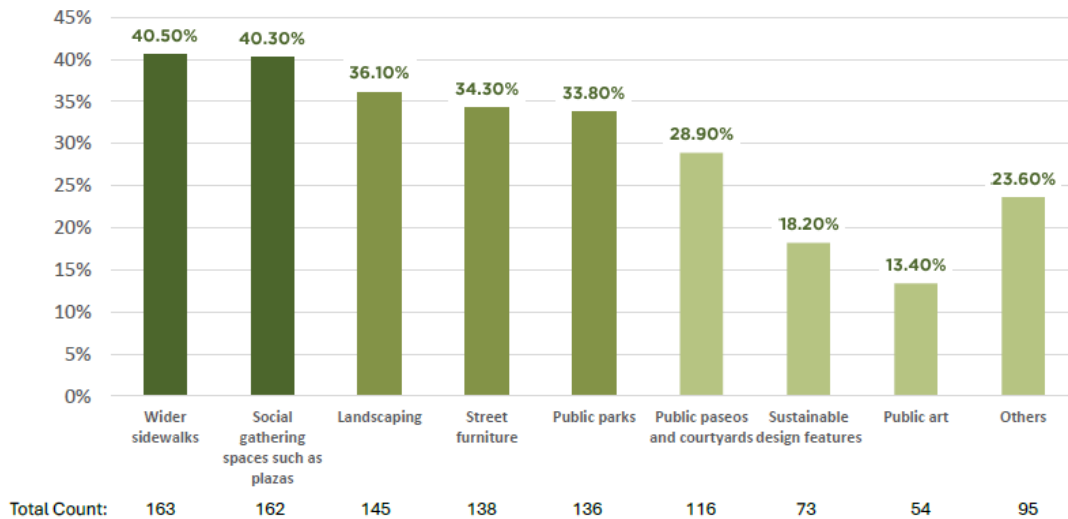
Q3. What type of housing is most important to downtown Palo Alto?



Q4. The City of Palo Alto is currently exploring options to improve the University Avenue Streetscape. From a housing perspective, what improvements to public spaces would enhance the downtown area and contribute to a thriving community?



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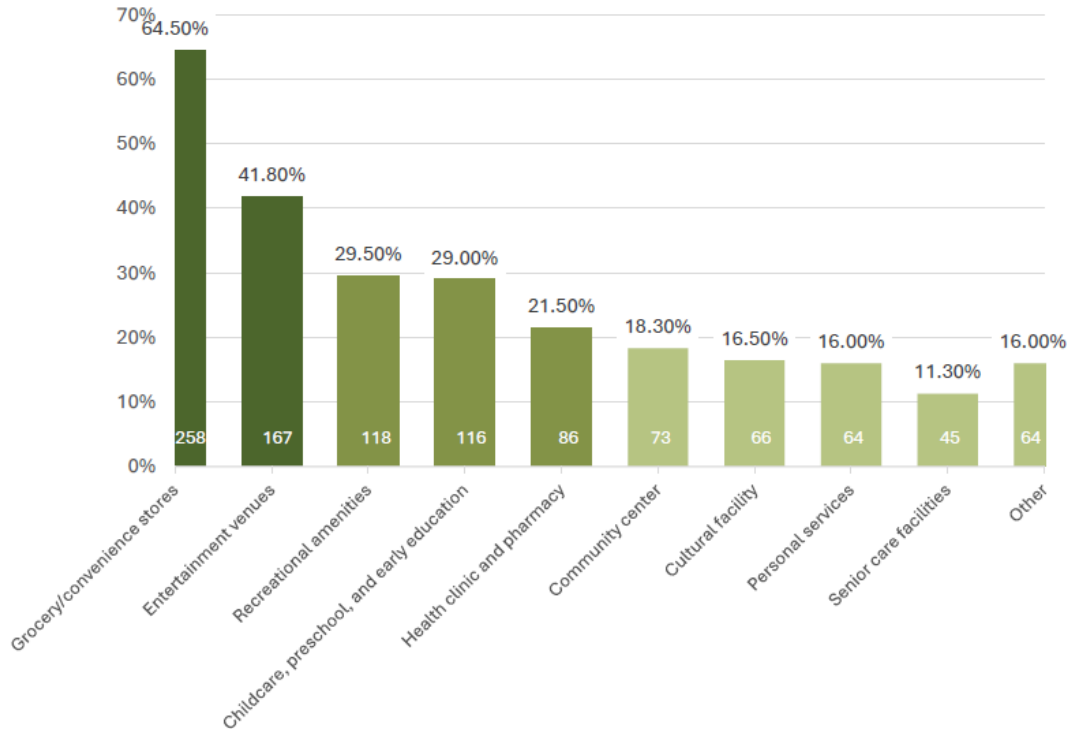
“Other”

- **Outdoor Cafes & Dining:** Expanding areas for outdoor cafes, restaurants, and sidewalk dining
- **Pedestrian Access:** Enhanced crosswalks, pedestrian-only areas
- **Cycling Infrastructure:** Protected bike lanes, bike parking
- **Public Amenities:** Public restrooms, clean streets, trash removal
- **Parking Solutions:** Additional street and off-street parking
- **Housing & Commercial Development:** Taller, mixed-use buildings
- **Safety Improvements:** Traffic control, reduced car access
- **Community Spaces:** Plazas, parklets, family-friendly businesses
- **Sustainable Features:** Stormwater infrastructure, EV charging, solar furnishings
- **Business & Retail Support:** Less retail vacancies, multi-purpose spaces
- **Traffic & Cleanliness:** Street cleaning, strict traffic enforcement

Q5. What kind of businesses and services do you think are needed to support more downtown residents?



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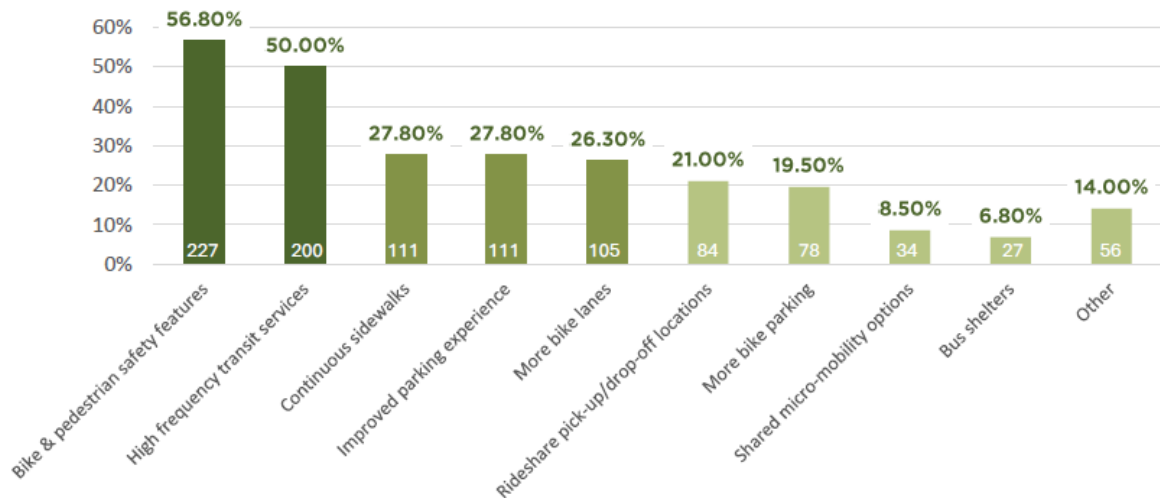


“Other”

- **A mix of practical, everyday services** such as grocery stores, hardware stores, gyms, bakeries, and bookstores to serve resident needs.
- **Affordable dining options**, ranging from casual to moderately priced, with diverse and non-chain restaurants to attract both residents and visitors.
- **Specialty and diverse retail** offerings, including art supply stores, boutiques, and pet goods stores with grooming and veterinary services.
- **Spaces fostering community and interaction**, like cafes, "third places," gyms, and community centers for teens or all residents.
- **Expanded parking availability** for residents and businesses to improve accessibility and convenience.
- Programs and initiatives to **encourage lower rents for businesses**, ensuring retention of unique, local establishments.
- **Clean and well-maintained parks and recreation areas**, including off-leash dog parks and tennis courts, to enhance livability.

- Streamlined entitlement and permitting processes for housing projects to facilitate balanced development.

Q6. What transportation improvements do you think are needed to support more housing downtown?



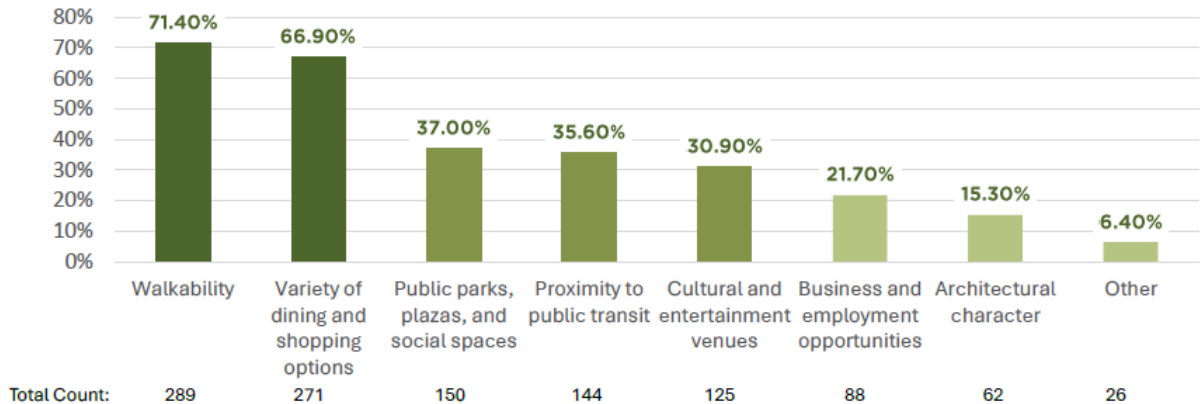
“Other”

- **Enhance parking options and enforce traffic laws** to ensure safety and accessibility for drivers and seniors.
- **Make University Avenue pedestrian-friendly** by exploring options like pedestrian malls, one-way traffic, and restricted car access.
- **Improve walkability and bike safety** with secure bike parking, synchronized traffic lights, and safer streets and garages.
- **Maintain a balance between parking, biking, and transit options** to cater to diverse transportation needs, avoiding over-prioritization of bikes or underutilized public transit.
- **Introduce reliable shuttles, rideshare services, and future-ready transit** options to connect residents to key destinations like Caltrain and downtown.
- **Address congestion** and ensure smooth traffic flow while minimizing impacts on outdoor dining and pedestrian spaces.
- **Develop high-density housing near transit hubs** while ensuring adequate parking for residents and accessibility for all, including seniors and non-drivers.
- **Preserve the functionality and aesthetics** of parks, sidewalks, and streets, prioritizing thoughtful planning over cosmetic upgrades.



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Q7. Thinking about what makes downtown Palo Alto a positive place to visit or live, which of the following aspects are most important to you?



“Other”

- Abundant trees, greenery, and thoughtful landscaping
- Adequate parking for shoppers and residents
- Walkability and vibrant mix of dining, shopping, and entertainment options
- Retention of local charm through unique, small-scale businesses and restaurants
- Clean and safe environment
- Essential services like grocery stores, dry cleaning, and banking
- Presence of pet-friendly areas and businesses
- Convenient access to Stanford University, public transit, and cultural hubs

Q8. What are some key opportunities for future housing production downtown?

A total of 267 respondents answered Question 8. The general themes suggested by respondents for the City to consider are summarized below:

- Promoting higher-density housing near transit hubs by increasing building heights and encouraging mixed-use development that includes both affordable and market-rate units.
- Identifying underutilized commercial spaces and surface parking lots and repurpose them to residential buildings with community amenities.
- Fostering walkable, mixed-income communities with family-friendly housing, integrated public spaces to enhance livability and social connection.



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- Reducing automobile dependency through architecturally thoughtful, transit-oriented designs with sustainable infrastructure that blends with existing character.
- Strategizing zoning changes, including upzoning and reduced parking minimums, to further enable efficient, inclusive growth while addressing traffic and infrastructure needs.
- Creating a balanced, well-planned downtown where residents of all backgrounds can live, work, and thrive.

Q.9. What challenges do you anticipate for future housing production downtown?

A total of 292 respondents answered Question 9. The general themes identified by respondents of potential challenges for future housing production downtown are summarized below:

- Growing traffic congestion, underestimated parking needs, and limited transit options that especially impact elderly and mobility-restricted residents.
- Strong resistance from homeowners and affluent communities, driven by concerns over property values, crime, and neighborhood character.
- High land and construction costs, restrictive zoning, and a slow permitting process, developers often prioritizing luxury housing to offset expenses.
- Political conflicts, public opposition, and a lack of coordination among the City, developers, and landowners.
- Additionally, there was concern about exclusion that the respondents highlighted, furthering the need to balance economic viability with inclusive, family-friendly design, open spaces, and a more collaborative, community-centered planning process.

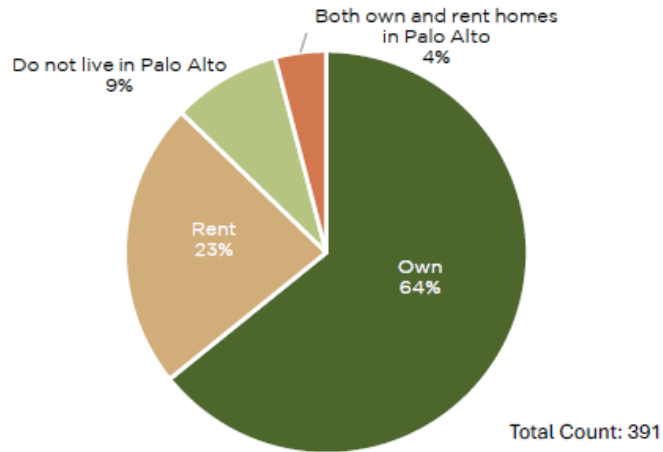
Q10. What is your home zip code?

Zip Code	Count
94301	166
94306	101
94303	54
94304	8
Others	1

Q11. Do you own or rent a home in Palo Alto?



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Q12. What is your connection to downtown Palo Alto? (select all that apply)

