

National Association of REALTORS®

**CA San Fernando Valley Smart Growth Poll
June 2021**

American Strategies designed and administered this telephone survey conducted by professional interviewers. The survey reached 600 adults (479 weighted), age 18 or older, who indicated they were registered to vote in Burbank, Glendale, or Los Angeles, California. There were 100 interviews each in Burbank and Glendale, and interviews were down-weighted to reflect a representative sample of the region. The survey was conducted from June 27-30, 2021.

Seventy-four percent of respondents were reached on wireless phones, ten percent on VOIP phones, and seventeen percent on landlines. Quotas were assigned to reflect the demographic distribution of selected zip codes within San Fernando Valley in California, including Burbank, Glendale, and parts of the city of Los Angeles. The data were weighted to ensure an accurate reflection of the population. The sample was drawn from a third-party vendor voter file. The overall margin of error is +/- 4.5%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.

Executive Summary

Locals split on quality of life. Quality of life is considered excellent or good by just under half of locals (48 percent), though voters' satisfaction lacks intensity with only 9 percent describing quality of life as "excellent." Just over half (52 percent) rate their quality of life as just fair or poor, with twice as many saying their quality of life is poor (18 percent) than saying it is excellent. A bare majority in each city rate their quality of life as fair or poor, but poor ratings are highest in Burbank (21 percent) and lowest in Glendale (9 percent). Six-in-ten or more of Hispanic voters, voters living with family or friends, and voters making under \$75,000 rate their quality of life as just fair or poor.

Homelessness and housing costs dominate the issue landscape. When asked what the biggest issue they would like their local governments to focus on, 61 percent of voters volunteer homelessness. The related issue of housing affordability (14 percent) ranks a distant second.

Overwhelming majority of voters believe both home prices and rent are too high, but there is considerably less concern about housing supply. Sixty-eight percent of voters say the cost to buy a home in their part of the San Fernando Valley is much too high, while another 20 percent of voters say home prices are somewhat too high (88 percent total too high). The cost to rent an apartment (60 percent much too high, 82 percent total too high) is slightly less concerning to voters, but the cost of rents is still extraordinarily high. Fewer say that the availability of homes available to buy or rent in their part of the Valley is either a very (27 percent) or fairly (17 percent) big problem, and 54 percent say there are enough housing option in their area.

Renters, voters in Burbank, and women are among the most concerned with both rent and home prices.

Executive Summary

Locals see a shortage of all types of housing. Most believe there is a shortage of housing for people with low incomes (77 percent say too little), young people just starting their careers (73 percent too little), older people who are looking to downsize or have special needs (61 percent too little), and people with moderate incomes (60 percent). Despite acknowledging the lack of housing for these groups, only 53 percent of voters say too few new single-family homes are being built and only 29 percent say there are too few new apartments and condominiums being built.

Low wages are biggest obstacle to homeownership, while finding the right home at the right price and down payment and closing costs are also significant obstacles. Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of voters say having a full-time job but still not making enough to afford a home is a huge obstacle that makes buying a home too difficult or expensive, while another 20 percent see it as a medium obstacle. Being able to find a home they like and that they can afford is also seen as a large barrier to home ownership (64 percent huge obstacle, 24 percent medium obstacle), as is having enough money for a down payment and closing costs (63 percent huge obstacle, 27 percent medium obstacle). Voters under age 35, renters, those making less than \$75,000 a year, and voters of color report higher barriers to home purchases than their older, higher-earning, homeownership, and white counterparts.

Voters prefer to increase housing supply over protecting the status quo. When forced to choose between new development to expand housing options or limiting development to maintain character and protect quality of life, voters express a preference for increasing the housing supply (54 percent) over limiting development (42 percent). Despite reporting the biggest concerns with housing costs and availability, Burbank voters prefer maintaining character over more building, as do voters aged 50 to 64.

Executive Summary

Voters support developer incentives for construction of affordable housing and upzoning changes. Nearly three-quarters of voters favor providing incentives to developers to construct quality housing units that cost less to rent or own (36 percent strongly favor, 72 percent total favor). Nearly six-in-ten back changing zoning laws to allow the construction of more multi-family homes, like townhomes, duplexes, or apartment buildings (27 percent strongly favor, 58 percent total favor).

Reducing building regulations appeals only to a bare majority. In contrast, voters are less favorable about reducing state and local building regulations that increase housing costs (51 percent favor and 44 percent oppose). Voters often express concerns about safety with reducing housing regulations. It is possible that the Surfside condominium collapse, which happened immediately prior to fielding the poll, amplified these concerns and made this policy proposal less palatable to voters.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are popular, and most believe they have the potential to address housing affordability issues. Three-quarters of voters support allowing more ADUs in their neighborhood (48 percent strongly favor, 74 percent total favor). About a fifth (21 percent) say ADUs would be very effective in addressing the Valley's housing affordability issues, while 44 percent believe ADUs would be somewhat effective.

Executive Summary

Voters agree that higher housing costs are driving young locals out of the area and that more affordable housing is needed to keep public servants and first responders local. Strong majorities of voters agreed with these statements on housing, although housing affordability is considered more pressing for public servants than first responders.

- *Young adults who grew up in the area can't afford to live here and are leaving for places where housing is more affordable. (63 percent strongly agree, 87 percent total agree)*
- *We need more affordable housing options so that teachers, police, and other public service employees can afford to live in the community they serve (59 percent strongly agree, 86 percent total agree)*
- *Medical technicians, nurses, and first responders can't afford to live in the San Fernando Valley. Without more affordable housing, public health and safety will be threatened as medical professionals move to more affordable places to live. (41 percent strongly agree, 68 percent total agree)*

However, voters also respond to statements critical of expanding housing options. Voters believe more housing means more people, more cars, more traffic, and more air pollution (55 percent strongly agree, 81 percent total agree). There is also concern that building more modest housing in the San Fernando Valley will attract more low-income residents from surrounding communities (31 percent strongly agree, 69 percent total agree).

Executive Summary

Many voters feel burdened by housing costs and four-in-ten are considering a move. When thinking about the strain of rent and mortgages on their personal budgets, just under two thirds of local voters say their housing costs are either a significant strain (34 percent) or a slight strain (29 percent). Forty-one percent are considering a move. Of those who say they may relocate, 29 percent say they would stay in the Valley, and another 18 percent say they would relocate within the Los Angeles area. Seventeen percent say they would move elsewhere in California, and a third say they would move out of the state.