

CITY OF RIDGECREST HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE: HOUSING SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY





Introduction

The City of Ridgecrest is in the process of updating the General Plan Housing Element, as required by State law, to establish the conditions for housing at all income levels to be developed with a goal of meeting the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) number assigned by the state of 1,436 units.

The city has provided multiple opportunities and methods for residents to weigh in on the update process for the Housing Element. The surveys described in this summary were just one of the ways that residents were able to share their experiences and needs for housing. The project website: <https://www.ridgecrest-ca.gov/537/Housing-Element-Update-2023> contains the workshops schedules, email notifications sign ups, and survey links.

Methodology

The City of Ridgecrest conducted a variety of outreach activities to solicit community input for the Housing element update. Two surveys were conducted to solicit community input. The first survey focused primarily on housing policies and goals. This survey opened on February 22, 2023. The second survey focused primarily on housing needs and barriers. The second survey was circulated in English and Spanish. This survey opened on May 9, 2023. Both surveys closed on June 27, 2023. The total number of survey responses completed in English was 121 and 0 in Spanish.

The city used both digital and paper platforms for this survey. The digital Typeform platform was promoted extensively through City communication channels including email communications, the Housing Element Update webpage, and social media. The survey was shared via multiple Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and publicized online. City staff also conducted the survey directly with residents during the Salvation Army food bank drive through distribution.

The CBOs who supported the outreach efforts included:

- Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce
- IWV Collaborative
- Salvation Army
- Ridgecrest Area Association of Realtors
- Ridgecrest Vineyard Church & The Refuge

Key Findings

Highlights of the survey results include:

Housing Priorities

Top housing choices for Ridgecrest

Participants were asked to identify their top three housing priorities (out of seven choices).

- 56% identified “increase the amount of housing that is for affordable to moderate, low, and very low-income residents”
- 53% of respondents selected “create programs to help existing homeowners stay in their homes”
- 52% of respondents selected “make it easier to build in Ridgecrest”
- 46% of respondents selected “improve substandard housing conditions”
- An additional 43% identified “increase homeownership opportunities for moderate, low- and very-low-income residents”
- 27% selected “target efforts to address inequities in the housing market, including discrimination in renting”
- And the remaining 20% choose other with a fill in choice that will be provided at the end of the survey

Housing Barriers

Top barriers to affordable housing

Participants were asked to identify the top barrier to affordable housing (out of five choices).

- 46% of respondents choose “limited availability of affordable units”
- An additional 14% of respondents choose “lack of resources to help find affordable housing” and “quality of affordable housing does not meet my standards”.

Housing Needs

There is insufficient housing in my community for:

Participants were asked to select all that apply from seven choices. The top four choices were:

- Single individuals (38%)
- Families with children (35%)
- Low-income households (35%)
- Older adults (Seniors, Elderly) (32%)

The survey included 10 questions that were multiple choice. Some questions included “other” as a choice where participants could write in their response. The survey included an eleventh question that provided an opportunity for participants to provide any additional comments.

The following sections present the survey results for each question based on the responses received. There is also a summary of the key themes from the open-ended comments for each question.

Housing Needs & Barriers Survey Results

The complete survey results are summarized below.

The English survey had 99 respondents.

- 63 online
- 36 on paper

The Spanish survey had 0 respondents.

- 0 online
- 0 on paper

The following charts show responses. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Not all participants responded to each question and some questions permitted respondents to choose more than one answer.

Question 1. Do you live or work in Ridgecrest? (select all that apply)

96% of respondents stated they live within the City of Ridgecrest, and 55% also work within the City of Ridgecrest. The remaining 4% responded that they did not live or work within the city.

Responses	English	Spanish
Live in Ridgecrest	95 resp. (96%)	
Work in Ridgecrest	55 resp. (55.6%)	
Neither	3 resp. (3%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Question 2. How long have you lived in Ridgecrest?

64% of respondents to the survey have lived in Ridgecrest for over ten years.

Responses	English	Spanish
10+ Years	64 resp. (64.6%)	
5-10 Years	13 resp. (13.1%)	
1-5 Years	12 resp. (12.1%)	
I do not live in Ridgecrest	3 resp. (3%)	
Less than 1 year	7 resp. (7.1%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Question 3. What is your living situation?

The majority of respondents owned their home with an additional 20% renting.

Responses	English	Spanish
Own	61 resp. (62.2%)	
Rent	20 resp. (20.4%)	
Live with family or friends	11 resp. (11.2%)	
Unhoused	0 resp. (0%)	
Other	6 resp. (6.1%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Summary of additional comments include:

- Refuge Men's Recovery Home
- Homeless shelter
- Moving to Ridgcrest
- Owned and then sold and now renting before moving out of state

Question 4. What is your age?

Most survey respondents were between the ages of 30-49 with 56% of respondents. The next largest survey group were the 65 and over at 19% with the 50-64 age group of respondents at 13% of respondents.

Responses	English	Spanish
30-49	56 resp. (56.6%)	
65 and over	19 resp. (19.2%)	
50-64	13 resp. (13.1%)	
18-29	11 resp. (11.1%)	
Under 17	0 resp. (0%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Question 5. What is your race/ethnicity?

Most survey respondents were white with 71% of the respondents. Hispanic/Latino respondents were 10% of the respondents.

Responses	English	Spanish
White/Caucasian	71 resp. (71.7%)	
Hispanic/Latino	10 resp. (10.1%)	
Two or more races	5 resp. (5.1%)	
Black/ African Ancestry	4 resp. (4%)	
Asian/Asian Ancestry	3 resp. (3%)	
Native American, or Indigenous	2 resp. (2%)	
Middle Eastern	0 resp. (0%)	
I prefer not to say	4 resp. (4%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Question 6. What percentage of your income is spent on housing costs (including mortgage or rent and utilities, property tax, and homeowners insurance)?

The majority of respondents are spending less than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Responses	English	Spanish
Less than 30% of income	39 (39.4%)	
Between 30-50% of income	33 (33.3%)	
More than 50% of income	17 (17.2%)	
Does not apply	10(10.1%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Question 7. Select the top 3 housing priorities for Ridgecrest.

Respondents choose the top three priorities for housing from 6 possible answers and one fill in answer. The top selections are demonstrated in the table below.

Responses	English	Spanish
Increase the amount of housing that is affordable to moderate, low, and very low-income residents	56 respondents (56.6%)	
Create programs to help existing homeowners stay in their homes	53 respondents (53.5%)	
Make it easier to build in Ridgecrest	52 respondents (52.5%)	
Total	99 respondents	0 respondents

Note: Percentage will total over 100 since respondents were allowed to selected multiple choices.

Summary of additional comments include:

- Senior housing
- Market-rate apartments
- Code enforcement abandoned properties
- Temporary housing for displaced families

Question 8. How well does your current housing meet your needs?

The majority of respondents at 73%, stated that they were satisfied with their current housing, however 13% of respondents selected “none of the above”, and an additional 6% of respondents selected, “my unit is in bad condition, and I cannot afford to make needed repairs”.

Responses	
I am satisfied with my housing	71 (73.2%)
None of the above	13 (13.4%)
My unit is in bad condition, and I cannot afford to make needed repairs	6(6.2%)
I am unable to house additional family members	3 (3.1%)
My unit is substandard or in bad condition and I need my landlord to respond	2 (2.1%)
I would like to downsize but I am unable to find a smaller unit	1 (1%)
My unit needs improvements to make it easier to live with a disability	1 (1%)
Total	97 respondents

Question 9. There is insufficient housing in my community for (please select all that apply).

Top four choices:

- Single individuals (38.5%)
- Families with children (35%)
- Low-income households (35%)
- Older adults (seniors, elderly) (32%)

Responses	
Single individuals	25 (38.5%)
Families with children	23 (35.4%)
Low-income households	23 (35.4%)
Older adults (seniors, elderly)	21 (32.3%)
I don't know	16 (24.6%)
Persons with disabilities	14 (21.5%)
Other	4 (6.2%)
Total	65 respondents

Note: Percentage will total over 100 since respondents were allowed to selected multiple choices.

Question 10. Please identify the top barrier to affordable housing.

The top response at 46% was limited availability of affordable units. Additional choices like the quality of affordable units, lack of resources and the fill in option received 14% of respondent's choices.

Responses	
Limited availability of affordable units	43 (46.7%)
Quality of affordable housing does not meet my standards	13 (14.1%)
Lack of resources	13 (14.1%)
Long waitlists	10 (10.9%)
Other	13 (14.1%)
Total	92 respondents

Summary of additional comments include:

- Costs of buying (transactions fees- real estate, title, etc.)
- Income limits on affordable housing
- Senior living both assisted and independent
- Sentiment that there is already sufficient low income/rental housing

Question 11. Please share any other comments you have related to housing in Ridgecrest.

33 respondents wrote in comments that are included below.

- I enjoy living in Ridgecrest.
- I'm pretty satisfied with my living conditions at the program. I believe that we need more affordable housing. We need more sober living.

- As a new-comer to Ridgecrest and a Veteran, I am surprised to see the lack of low-income housing in what is supposed to be a military town, along with the need for support to accommodate Veterans.
- Affordable housing has long waitlists and limited availability.
- More programs for affordable housing for single people that have pets.
- It would help to have more programs and build more affordable housing for single individuals with no family, and that have pets. Ridgecrest is a great place to own a home!
- Quality of affordable housing does not meet my standards
- Quality of affordable housing does not meet my standards
- I'm an individual with no spouse living at parent's house trying to move out on their own. However, it's not affordable to move out as a single person. We need cheaper housing, especially for individuals.
- Ridgecrest has raised their housing by 20% in the past 8 years. It is very hard to get a decent house at an affordable cost, you either have to make a lot of money or have more than one-person w/ an income to live in a nice house. I would love to see housing drop a lil bit.
- limited availability of affordable units and long waitlists
- barriers to affordable housing are also long waitlists, and quality of quality of affordable housing does not meet my standards
- It is hard to find affordable living in Ridgecrest especially if you are on a budget or a single income household. Wish it was easier to buy or rent.
- We desperately need more attractive and comfortable apartment complexes for families and individuals. Two big needs: apartments for low/moderate income households and apartments for new Base employees who may not be ready/or want to buy houses in Ridgecrest. The new complex going in on Norma looks great! Hoping the proposed new complex on Bowman and S. Downs is as nice as the existing complex on S. Downs across from the REALMS school. Is ABnB or temporary contractor rental housing causing a shortage for local residents who need housing? Any attempts to figure this out or give statistics on number/percentage of temporary/short term housing in Ridgecrest?
- People have problems making too much to qualify for needed housing assistance programs but can't afford repairs.
- I live at family owned property. If I did not, I would be worried because of property owner discriminations.
- I would like to see more home ownership programs to help people afford their homes repairs and increasing costs.
- A lot of low-income families cannot afford rent, utilities, food, and childcare. Limited job opportunities.
- Subsidized housing needs to stop.
- I've looked at buying in RC but the costs are too high for the area. And low-income options for family members is nonexistent
- No more apartments. Build food. Stores. Activities. Also fix streets!
- Rentals are too expensive (cost more than mortgages) and have too many conditions but many young couples or singles who need rentals cannot qualify for a 250000+ mortgage.
- Too much low-income housing already
- The only reason my housing costs are under 30% of my income is that the house is fully paid for. If it weren't, I'd be in big trouble.

- People in the service and retail industries can't afford housing here. Not enough of it in their price range.
- While I like helping low income people with housing the taxes we have to pay to keep ourselves and them in homes is exhausting. Wish we didn't live in California. We need a better way to help these people rather than handouts. Help them earn skills to afford better jobs to afford better housing.
- We sold our home and plan to move out of state in 2024. The CA property taxes and IWW water fees are too much, the Ridgecrest streets are becoming littered with trash, poor siting of new homes and duplexes, and the poor quality of SSUSD middle schools, we will be transferring our employment out of state and leave. Good luck to those who stay
- Recommendation to check rental properties for code violations which may lead to unsafe housing units.
- We need a private, gated community
- There are a lot of empty, damaged, and abandoned buildings that often house squatters or homeless and make it scary to walk around the neighborhood
- Don't want more section 8 housing.

Housing Policy, and Goals Survey Results

The complete survey results are summarized below.

Twenty-two people took this survey through the online survey tool. The main goal of this survey was to determine early policies or housing goals of key stakeholders in the community within the business, builder and real estate industries.

Question 1. What is your connection to this Housing Element update?

The majority of respondents live and work in Ridgecrest.

Responses	
Live & Work in Ridgecrest	17 (77.3%)
A Business Owner in Ridgecrest	10 (45.5%)
Interested in Ridgecrest Housing Issues	8 (36.4%)
Live in Ridgecrest	8 (36.4%)
Work in Ridgecrest	5 (22.7%)

Question 2. What is your living situation?

The vast majority of respondents owned their own home.

Responses	
Own	13 (86.4%)
Live with family or friends	1 (4.5%)
Rent	1 (4.5%)
Other	1 (4.5%)

Question 3. How long have you lived in Ridgecrest?

Most respondents have lived in Ridgecrest for over 21 years.

Responses	
21+	12 (54.5 %)
11-20 years	5 (22.7%)
0-5 years	3 (13.6%)
6-10 years	1 (4.5%)
I don't live in Ridgecrest	1 (4.5%)

Question 4. What is your age?

Respondents' ages varied greatly as seen in the chart below.

Responses	
25-34	5 (22.7%)
45-54	5 (22.5%)
65-74	5 (22.5%)
18-24	3 (13.66%)

55-64	2 (9.1%)
75+	1 (4.5%)
Prefer not to answer	1 (4.5%)
35-44	0
Under 18	0

Question 5. Race and ethnicity.

The majority of respondents were white.

Responses	
White	16 (72.7%)
Hispanic/Latino or Spanish	3 (13.6%)
Asian	2 (9.1%)
Prefer not to answer	1 (4.5%)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0
Black	0
Middle Eastern	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0

Question 6. What is your total annual household income?

Responses	
\$97,000 or more	14 (63.6.7%)
\$72,000 to \$87,000	4 (18.2%)
Prefer not to answer	2 (9.1%)
\$35,000 to \$56,000	1 (4.5%)
\$56,000 to \$72,000	1 (4.5%)
\$87,000 to \$97,000	0
Up to \$35,000	0

Question 7. What are the preferred types of homes you would like to see built in Ridgecrest?

Respondents could choose multiple answers for this question. The most frequently chosen answer was single family homes at 72.7%.

Responses	
Single-family Homes	16 resp. 72.7%
Homes targeted for a specific purpose or population, including seniors, people with disabilities, permanent supportive housing (for people experiencing homelessness, transitional housing, etc.)	10 resp. 45.5%
Townhomes	7 resp. 31.8%
Mixed-income Housing	6 resp.

	27.3%
Low-density Multi-family Housing (duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes)	5 resp. 22.7%
Higher-density Multi-family Housing (15+ units)	4 resp. 18.2%
Accessory Dwelling Units/Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs/JADUs)	0 resp. 0%
Other	1 resp. 4.5%

Other response:

- Homeless shelter

The next questions respondents were asked to rate the importance of factors in meeting housing needs for the community. Respondents were asked to rate the level they agreed or disagreed with the statements from 1-5.

Question 8. Concentrate affordable housing in areas with closer access to commercial businesses and other amenities.

Average rating 3.4

Question 9. Integrate affordable housing throughout the community to create more mixed-income neighborhoods.

Average rating 3.2

Question 10. Create housing opportunities for the young professionals supporting the Naval installation.

Average rating 3.8

Question 11. Create incentives to build and rent out Accessory Dwelling Units.

Average rating 2.8

Question 12. Create mixed-use housing and commercial uses.

Average rating 3

Question 13. Are there other strategies to meet housing needs that you believe the City should consider?

- Provide affordable housing to low-income families.
- Housing that single parents can afford
- Providing finance management trainings, job/application training, available bathrooms/showers for the homeless populations. All to help provide people the opportunity to get on their feet and learn valuable information that can help them obtain housing.

- Transitional Housing for families/single adults with children is a need - Low income housing for seniors on a fixed income is a need
- Economic Incentives to encourage home builders
- Facilitate building new neighborhoods.
- Low income housing
- Developments that tailor to our Senior population with amenities as well as housing for the young engineers and their families that have family amenities

Question 14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about housing needs in Ridgecrest?

- There is a need to provide housing for homeless individuals and families.
- When people come to us with the threat of losing their housing, we do everything we can to keep them housed. Often times, the loss of the family member providing the income is the circumstance that now threatens their stable housing. We believe children, seniors, and those who are widowed or disabled need to be the focus for affordable housing. Often times, the unhoused are thought of as single adults with substance abuse or mental illness, but what we see is the people who are working hard to provide for themselves and their kids. If they or their child gets sick, or income suddenly changes, they need support through the rough patch. What we also see is one parent, caring for multiple children, and in many instances one of the children is mentality or physically disabled, and this makes it difficult for the one parent to work. We have many families living in vans, fifth wheels, and trailers. Families need to be safely housed. What we also see is the people who have no opportunity to earn more money for stable housing. There are many seniors who now can barely afford their rent and utilities. Everything costs more, but their income remains the same. While our unhoused population remains relatively low, per capita here, the living conditions for many need improvements, and the threat of becoming unhoused is increasing for many families and seniors. Thank you for finding the ways to care for those in need of housing in our community.
- quit bringing in subsidized housing that house potential criminals
- Turn some of the vacant commercial buildings into low income housing or housing for the unhoused.