

## Rising Housing Prices Prompt New Political Response

By Lindsay Szymanski, J.D. Candidate 2019 | November 22, 2016

It is no secret that growing housing prices have plagued Silicon Valley, and as the tech industry continues to expand, many worry that the problem will become more pronounced. Indeed, the median home price in Mountain View, headquarters of Google, stands at [1.4 million](#), while Cupertino, the hometown of Apple, offers homes at a median price of [1.6 million](#). These prices are driving even highly paid tech workers into neighboring cities where the homes are less expensive.

However, such moves have spurred significant conflicts. As tech professionals seeking affordable housing prices move further away from their workplace, many long-time residents are frustrated by the urbanization of their once-quiet hometowns. Indeed many complain of the growing traffic and fear that minorities are being pushed out.

San Jose's recent lawsuit against the neighboring city of Santa Clara is a profound example of the growing tension. In July, San Jose sued to stop Santa Clara from building a world-class mall and office complex, claiming that the project would create 25,000 jobs, but only provide 1,350 apartments. This imbalance would shift the burden to house employees to San Jose, which is already struggling with its own housing crises.

These problems have prompted a shift in politics in many suburban Silicon Valley towns. Although suburbs like Mountain View and Cupertino have traditionally been averse to alleviating the housing shortage by building more apartment complexes, the results of last week's election indicate these cities increasingly support the promotion of housing growth. For example, in Mountain View and Palo Alto voters elected several pro-housing candidates to the City Councils. Richmond and Mountain View also voted in measures establishing [rent control](#).

Further, newly elected city councils are looking to expand housing options in impacted cities in hopes that businesses like grocery stores, bars, and retail shops will follow. For example, the Mountain View City Council is seeking to bring housing developments to neighborhoods like North Bayshore, which currently consists of several office buildings, but very few residential complexes for employees. Similarly, Menlo Park is looking to provide 4,500 housing units on industrial land in close proximity to Facebook headquarters.