

**Subject:** New submission from Contact us

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**Message**

I write to enthusiastically encourage Cities Association of Santa Clara County to support the CASA compact in order to address the dire housing needs within the county and the Bay Area as a whole. As a Palo Alto renter and psychologist for homeless veterans, I am acutely aware of the severity of our housing crisis on both personal and professional levels. Please support this compact's effort to address all 3 P's for homeless prevention: produce housing for all income levels, preserve existing multifamily housing supply, protect renters.

Professionally, I provide supportive services, in the form of in-field specialty mental health treatment, to homeless and previously veterans. Most of the veterans I serve experience barriers to owning or driving a car (e.g., low income, DUI history, etc.). Reliant on transit, many veterans find it difficult to locate housing within an affordable range within reasonable public-transit commuting distance to a rich array of services at the hospital in Palo Alto, limiting their access to healthcare and work.

As a 32-year old professional, I struggle to imagine a financial future for myself in the Bay Area as a result of lack of affordable housing options. Notably, I am among the highest paid of my coworkers as the sole psychologist on a team of social workers: our team, unsurprisingly, struggles with recruitment and retention. As a renter, I live in fear of losing my housing due to factors beyond my control including sudden dramatic rent increases or property sale. Last year a Palo Alto house I rented--along with two apartments on the same property--was sold to an LLC that proposed to demolish all 3 rental units in favor of building a very large single family home. When I called city staff about the project, they informed me that no discretionary review was needed to demolish the 3 units, the third of which was illegal.

My experiences are underscored by the data presented within the Grand Jury report. Our Santa Clara County cities have consistently and systematically failed to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing, particularly for low income people. While city leaders assert that local control must be preserved, the data suggests that local control fails to produce desired housing for the region. Those who claim the compact is a "one size fits all" solution are advised to consider that most cities mandate a majority of land be used solely for single family homes, a home type which, in our current housing shortage, does not fit the needs of the vast majority of citizens who cannot afford homes in excess of \$1.5 million. While this compact is certainly a compromise and is not perfect in my assessment, it is a step in the direction of comprehensive regional reform, which is precisely what Santa Clara County needs.