

# 1 Introduction and Regional Collaboration

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The Housing Element provides a coordinated strategy for preserving existing housing stock and advancing opportunities for new housing in a smart and sustainable way that enhances quality of life and equitable access to resources. It also serves as a strategy to address housing needs across the economic and social spectrum, reflecting the needs of each jurisdiction.

The County of Merced, and the cities of Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos, and Merced have jointly developed this Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element (MJHE), coordinated by the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). This Housing Element was prepared for the planning period of 2023 to 2031 and represents the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element.

## 1.1 Housing Element Purpose and Content

The State of California has stated that the availability of decent and suitable housing for every California family is “a priority of the highest order.” This objective has become increasingly urgent in recent years as communities across the state struggle to meet the housing needs of all their residents. The Housing Element is the primary tool for cities and counties to create a road map to meet their housing goals. The Housing Element is a comprehensive strategy for encouraging development of safe, decent, and affordable housing for all residents and preventing housing loss. The Housing Element must include:

- Identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs, resources, and constraints;
- A statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for preservation, improvement, and development of housing;
- Identification of adequate sites for housing;
- Assessment of fair housing issues; and
- Adequate provision for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

Many new state housing laws have taken effect since the last Housing Element update (the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle). This Housing Element update incorporates and addresses pertinent housing law changes through analysis, new policies, or new programs.

The Housing Element helps each jurisdiction determine how to address existing and future housing needs and plan for future growth. While housing policies cannot commit the jurisdictions to construct new housing units, the Housing Element identifies ways in which each jurisdiction will provide for the housing needs of current and future residents during the Housing Element update cycle. Each jurisdiction will then adjust their zoning designations to accommodate the county's housing needs.

### 1.1.1 Organization of the Regional Housing Element

The Regional Housing Element is comprised of the following components:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** provides a brief overview of the purpose and background for the Housing Element and a summary of the document.
- **Chapter 2: Regional Housing Needs Assessment** analyzes demographic and socio-economic conditions, housing conditions, and other factors to evaluate current and future housing needs in Merced County.
- **Chapter 3: Regional Housing Constraints** analyzes regulations and conditions that constitute constraints to housing production and preservation across the region, including governmental regulations, infrastructure requirements and nongovernmental market conditions such as costs for land, construction, and labor.
- **Chapter 4: Regional Assessment of Fair Housing** provides an assessment of compliance with fair housing laws, fair housing conditions, and disparities in access to opportunities in Merced County, compared to other counties in the region.
- **Chapter 5: Regional Housing Resources and Development Trends** documents resources available for housing development and an analysis of development trends throughout the region.

Corresponding analyses for each participating jurisdiction follow the Regional Housing Element as appendices. Jurisdictional analyses also include summaries of public participation and engagement materials.

## 1.2 Regional Housing Requirements

State law requires that every housing element include an inventory of land suitable and available for residential development to meet the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). MCAG plays a key role in the RHNA process. Every eight years, the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) provides MCAG with a regional determination, which represents the number of units the region must plan for across five income categories. MCAG is responsible for developing a methodology for allocating these units by income category to each city and the Merced County. Once jurisdictions have their share of the RHNA, they must adopt a Housing Element that demonstrates how they can accommodate their share of the RHNA. The 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA is based on population projections, income distribution, and access to jobs.



I would love to see more diversity in housing choices within walkable neighborhoods to foster connectivity and access to essential amenities like parks, trails, schools, and transit.

- City of Merced Resident

The RHNA is broken down into affordability categories based on Area Median Income (AMI). For planning and funding purposes, HCD has developed the following income categories based on the AMI of a metropolitan area:

- **Extremely Low-income:** households earning up to 30 percent of the AMI
- **Very Low-income:** households earning between 31 and 50 percent of the AMI
- **Low-income:** households earning between 51 percent and 80 percent of the AMI
- **Moderate-income:** households earning between 81 percent and 120 percent of the AMI
- **Above Moderate-income:** households earning over 120 percent of the AMI

### 1.3 Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

According to California Government Code Section 65302, the General Plan must include eight state-mandated elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, environmental justice, and safety.

All elements bear equal weight, and no element has legal precedence over another. California Government Code Section 65583(c) requires the Housing Element to maintain internal consistency with other General Plan Elements. For example, residential density limits established by the Land Use Element are reflected in the Housing Element and form the basis for analyzing residential capacities within the jurisdiction. When any element of the General Plan is amended in the future, each jurisdiction will review its own Housing Element and, if necessary, amend it to ensure internal consistency is maintained.

### 1.4 Data Sources and Methods

Data from a variety of sources is used to complete the Housing Element. The most commonly cited source is the U.S. Census, which provides consistent demographic characteristics that are widely accepted. The American Community Survey is a feature offered by the U.S. Census and includes five-year estimates on population and demographic characteristics. Other data sources include the following:

- U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)
- California Department of Finance (DOF)
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- California Housing Finance Agency
- California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC)
- Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)
- Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) lending data
- Regional Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count
- State Employment Development Department (EDD)
- Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Jurisdiction Staff

## 1.5 Public Outreach

The Housing Element must reflect the values and preferences of the community. Accordingly, community participation is an important component of the development of this Element. Government Code Section 65583(c)(8) states that the local government must make “a diligent effort to achieve public participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element.” This process not only includes community members, but also participation from local agencies and housing groups, community organizations, and housing sponsors.

Each jurisdiction solicited input from stakeholders and community members through interviews, surveys, a project-specific website, community events, and public meetings. To jumpstart the outreach process and to inform the community about the Housing Element Update, the cities of Dos Palos, Merced, Los Banos, Atwater, Livingston, and Gustine, and Merced County compiled a list of 42 stakeholders and organizations that provide affordable and market-rate housing, homeless and other non-profit services, economic development services, and community members. Staff asked organizations to forward the information to their own stakeholders and requested assistance and partnership in community outreach.

These entities were included in all notifications associated with the Housing Element update, including community events, housing survey, and release of the public draft Housing Element. A summary of the public participation is detailed below.

### 1.5.1 Public Notification

To reach the largest and broadest spectrum of community members and stakeholders, the cities and the County utilized the following notification methods throughout the Housing Element update process:

- Posts to the cities’ and the County’s social media accounts, including Facebook and Instagram, announcing project website launch, survey, public meetings, and release of the Draft Housing Element for public review.
- Email lists of community and advocacy groups, non-profits, faith-based organizations, school-based organizations, disability advocates, and neighborhood groups to provide outreach and regular updates on the project. In addition, the cities and County are maintaining an “interested parties” list for those who have requested regular updates about the Housing Element.
- Flyers in English and Spanish advertised the project. Specifically, the cities and County developed and circulated a bilingual, introductory flyer informed residents about the Housing Element, the need for adequate housing, how to plan for new housing, types of housing, a project schedule, and contact information. Flyers were distributed to government facilities, community centers, and local businesses.

### 1.5.2 Project Website

To facilitate the distribution and gathering of information, a project website dedicated to the Housing Element update was created. The project website provided detailed background information on the Housing Element, answers to frequently asked questions, links to upcoming and past event materials, links to articles and videos on the general plan topics, including the Housing Element. Educational materials included an introduction, informational flyers, and frequently asked

questions specifically on the housing element ([mercedmjhe.com](http://mercedmjhe.com)). Project materials associated with the Housing Element update were regularly posted on the project website, including documents available for public review, information for upcoming events, and workshop PowerPoint presentations and video recordings. A link on the website enabled people to sign up for project email updates and provide comments at any time throughout the project process.

### 1.5.3 Community Workshops

Community workshops were held in September and October of 2023 to help inform the 2024-2032 Merced County Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element.

Seven in-person workshops were conducted to introduce new Housing Element goals and requirements to the cities included in the Housing Element. The workshops aimed to educate the community on housing element requirements and assess participants' housing needs, priorities, and concerns in their community. The workshops also aimed to obtain feedback from participants about housing needs in the community, their experience finding housing, potential programs to address housing needs, and input on the housing opportunity sites.

Flyers advertising the workshops were posted on the cities' and the County's websites in advance of the workshop series to encourage public attendance and participation. The flyers provided meeting details (dates, times, locations, zoom links), the Housing Element Update website and email, and were bilingual (English and Spanish).

Workshops were hosted in the cities of Merced, Atwater, Livingston, Gustine, Dos Palos, Los Banos, and the County of Merced on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, August 28<sup>th</sup>, August 29<sup>th</sup>, August 29<sup>th</sup>, August 30<sup>th</sup>, August 31<sup>st</sup>, and September 26<sup>th</sup>, respectively. Each workshop consisted of an informative PowerPoint presentation on housing sites, a questionnaire about the proposed sites, and a Q&A and public discussion period. The workshop activities invited participants to share their opinions on what



**The affordability of desired housing remains a challenge, especially when it comes to accessing resources. I would prefer it if there were resources more readily available for middle-class working families like mine because the dream of owning a home is often hindered by lack of support. I find that I am caught between earning too much to qualify for assistance yet earning too little to save for a down payment.**

- Los Banos Resident

makes their neighborhood great and their experience finding housing, take part in a sticker activity to rank the most effective housing programs, and reasons it is difficult to find housing in their communities. Participants were also asked to weigh in on the selected housing opportunity sites. The PowerPoint presentation was available in Spanish via written translation. Live Spanish translation was available upon request.

For more specific information on findings from each community's workshop, please reference Chapter 7, *Public Participation*, for each jurisdiction.

### 1.5.4 Stakeholder Interviews

Jurisdictions also participated in a series of stakeholder interviews with service providers, community organizations, and affordable and market-rate housing developers held between August 8 and August 23, 2023, via Zoom. Stakeholders were identified through an iterative process with MCAG and the cities of Merced, Atwater, Livingston, Gustine, Dos Palos, and Los Banos, the County of Merced, and consultants from Rincon Consultants, Inc., and represented a variety of organizations and segments of the community.

Community organizations identified the need for housing near medical facilities and public transportation. Additional housing needs include transitional housing and citywide and countywide rent control. Compared to larger cities in the region, smaller, rural areas have vastly fewer amenities and housing resources. According to market-rate housing developers, barriers to developing housing include high construction costs, limited resources offered for affordable housing within the central coast, and lack of subsidies for affordable housing units. Affordable housing developers described the need for more attainable zoning and entitlement approvals and the necessity of transit being near affordable housing locations. According to affordable housing developers, cities can foster strong relationships with affordable housing providers and maintain knowledgeable staff to pursue grant opportunities for affordable housing.

#### **Community Service Providers: Key Findings**

- Need for deeply affordable and climate resilient housing.
- Community stewardship (land banking, land trusts, limited equity homeownership opportunities), allow to maintain deeply affordable housing over generations.
- Housing needs to be located near public transit, jobs, and resources.
- Tenants' rights, particularly for minority communities that experience discrimination are needed. Housing navigators and legal assistance can help.
- Affordability covenants expire, properties are then purchased and existing tenants are displaced. An Affordable Housing Trust Fund can serve as a way to acquire properties or develop a land trust with residents to keep them permanently affordable.
- Property maintenance is a large issue. Landlords are often reluctant to make repairs. Landlords are often not held accountable.
- The vast majority of community-based rent relief programs are out of funds and were strained even more by the severe weather and the ongoing recovery efforts.

## Housing Developers: Key Findings

- Building affordable units is very expensive. Large government subsidies are needed. However, resources are scarce. The entire Central Valley of California is at a disadvantage, as State subsidies are often directed to the coastal areas.
- There is a need for a variety of different housing types (smaller lots, ADUs, triplexes, etc.), but builders are reluctant to build more affordable housing. Minimum lot size requirements is a constraint on other types of development, particularly within rural areas.
- Two types of housing are developed, either 100 percent subsidized or housing for high income households. There is very little middle-income housing, which is a significant need.
- Rises in interest rates have reduced demands for purchasing housing. People who have low interest rates are not moving, reducing supply of available housing.

## Community Members: Key Findings

- Significant concerns regarding the cost of living and stagnating wages. Housing is very expensive.
- Housing condition is an issue but repairs often cause an increase in rents. There are high rates of evictions in the region. Desire for a rent stabilization program to keep housing affordable, and increase code enforcement programs, such as a rental registry.
- Concerns over ADUs being used for short-term rentals instead of adding to the housing stock.
- Access to water and sewer is a concern, particularly in South Merced. Air pollution is also a concern.
- Mobile homes are not protected in the same way as traditional rental units. Residents feel taken advantage of

### 1.5.5 Community Survey

An online survey to help inform the 2023-2031 Merced County Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element. The survey is one part of a broader community engagement and outreach strategy to inform housing needs and preferences the Merced region, specifically in the cities participating in this Housing Element: Merced, Atwater, Livingston, Gustine, Dos Palos, and Los Banos, and the County of Merced. The survey was available in English and Spanish from March 27 to December 22, 2023. The survey consisted of 16 questions and used different formats for questions: checkbox, ranking, and open-ended questions. A total of 172 people responded to the survey. The following key themes were collected from community input:

- Most survey participants reported being residents of the city of Merced or the unincorporated county. Most own their own home and live in single-family homes.
- Most respondents' households are multi-generational.
- The top three most important aspects of housing when looking for new housing were affordability, the quality and size of housing, and location close to work and/or school.
- When asked to rank the largest barriers to finding affordable housing, respondents said the cost of quality housing is too high, there is a lack of available rent-restricted housing, and there is not enough housing overall. The most urgent housing challenges were similar, but also included homelessness.

**Merced County Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element (2024-2032)**

- The three most selected beneficial programs to assist residents with housing needs were: 1) Rental assistance or housing vouchers, 2) Homebuyer loan counseling services, and 3) Housing assistance for residents with special needs. Respondents also cited pathways to homeownership and programs for first-time homeowners as beneficial programs to assist with housing needs. More than 40 percent of respondents also identified home rehabilitation assistance and over 20 percent identified landlord/tenant mediation services as beneficial programs.
- “Housing with 3 or more bedrooms” was ranked as most needed in the region followed by “housing with 1-2 bedrooms,” and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- “Respondents ranked areas near public transit stops, employment, and shopping centers;” “downtown or town center locations;” and “areas with existing housing (increasing the number of housing units that could be built on each property such as with fourplexes, courtyard houses, and other types of apartment complexes)” as the highest priority areas for housing development.
- When asked to rank preferred forms of ADU assistance, most responded “Financial assistance with construction expenses” and “Educational ‘How to’ webinar series regarding financing, construction, and permitting processes.” Thirty-five percent expressed interest in building an ADU, while 34 percent said they were not interested.
- About 40 percent of respondents identified as Hispanic/Latino (of any race), and 31 percent identified as Caucasian, not Hispanic/Latino. The majority of respondents were in the age range 41 to 65 years old, followed by 26 to 40 years old (25 percent). One-quarter of respondents reported their household income as over \$100,000, and the next most common income categories were less than \$25,000, \$25,000 to \$49,999, and \$50,000 to \$74,999 (16 percent in each).

Full survey results can be found in Appendix 1 to the Regional Housing Element, *Community Survey Results*. Responses specific to jurisdictions are summarized in each jurisdictions’ housing element.



# Appendix A1

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Survey Results Report

# Community Survey Results

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The County conducted a community survey to inform the 6th Cycle Housing Element update. This summary memorandum presents the results and key findings from the survey responses.

## Survey Marketing Summary

A variety of outreach efforts were conducted to encourage survey participation. The survey was also made available during various community outreach events. Below are some of the outreach efforts used to bring the survey to the community:

- Merced County Multijurisdictional Housing Element Website (<https://mercedmjhe.com/>)
- Merced County website (<https://www.countyofmerced.com/2374/Planning>)
- Merced County social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

## Methodology

The survey questions were developed by the consultant team with input from Merced County Association of Governments and participating jurisdiction staff. The survey was released to the public online on March 27, 2023, and remained open until December 22, 2023. A total of 186 people responded to the survey.

## Survey Format

The survey consisted of 16 questions and used different formats for questions: checkbox, ranking, and open-ended questions. The checkbox questions asked respondents to indicate their preference for answer options. The ranking questions asked respondents to rank answer options from most to least important. The survey was made available in both English and Spanish.

## Survey Results

The survey was presented in electronic form (online), and it should be noted that responses received may not represent the entire population being queried. Since only a portion of the county population responded, results do not represent the views or preferences of the entire County or jurisdictions within. However, the survey results can provide a general sense of residents' priorities and visions for the county of the topic areas presented. The survey received 172 responses in English and 14 responses in Spanish. The following provides a summary of survey responses and includes responses submitted in both English and Spanish.

**Question 1 Do you live, work, own a business or property, or go to school in one of the following jurisdictions? (Check all that apply)**

Question 1 asked respondents in which jurisdictions they live, work, attend school, or own businesses or property. The results are listed below:

**Table 1 Responses to Question 1**

Jurisdiction	Count	Percent of Total Responses
Atwater	19	10%
Dos Palos	13	7%
Gustine	3	2%
Livingston	4	2%
Los Banos	12	6%
Merced (city)	135	73%
Merced County	62	33%
Other	5	3%

Based on a total of 186 responses, most survey participants live, work, attend school, or own businesses or property in Merced (73 percent of all participants), followed by unincorporated areas of Merced County (33 percent), with the remaining participants responding that they live, work, attend school, or own businesses or property in other cities throughout Merced County. Custom responses are listed in Table 2 below:

**Table 2 Custom responses to Question 1**

Winton
Hilmar
Hilmar
Winton
Winton

**Question 2 Do you represent a group, organization, or business? For example: community group, business organization, service provider for a special needs population, tenants' rights group, or housing developer?**

Question 2 asked respondents if they represent a local group, organization, or business. The results are listed below:

**Table 3 Responses to Question 2**

Response	Count	Percent
Yes (provide the name of organization or business)	19	10%
No	167	90%

Based on a total of 186 responses, most survey participants do not represent a local group, organization, or business (90 percent). Approximately 10 percent of participants do represent a local group, organization, or business. Of the participants who represent a group, organization, or business, most live, work, attend school, or own a business or property in the city of Merced and/or Merced County. Custom responses are listed in Table 3 below:

**Table 4 Custom responses to Question 2**

City of Merced Public Works
Valley Land Alliance ngo
PGEU (Community Group) / Faith in the Valley
NAACP Merced County
PLTI
Central valley regional center
DNA Downtown Neighborhood Association
I am secretary for Winton MAC
Franklin county water district
In Care Home Service
Cultiva La Salud Merced
Cultiva la salud
Grupo comunitario
Valley Onward
PLTI, Cultiva la Salud ,
Cultiva la salud
Consejo de Liderazgo
Coalición latina
Cultiva la Salud

**Question 3 If you live in the region, which best describes your housing situation?**

Question 3 asked respondents to describe the housing situation, including if they own or rent and who they live with. The results are listed below:

**Table 5 Results of Question 3**

Living Situation	Count	Percent
Own my house, condominium, apartment, or mobile home	100	54%
Rent a house, condominium, apartment, or mobile home	46	25%
Live with roommates/family and assist with rent or mortgage payments	19	10%
Live with family/friends, do not own or pay rent	13	7%
Live in emergency, transitional, or supportive housing	2	1%
Other (please specify)	1	1%
Do not live in the region	0	0%

The majority of respondents reported that they own their own house, condominium, apartment, or mobile home (54 percent), followed by those who rent (25 percent). Approximately 10 percent of participants reported they “live with roommates/family and assist with rent or mortgage payments,” seven percent “live with family/friends, do not own or pay rent,” and one percent live in emergency, transitional, or supportive housing. All survey participants live within the region.

**Question 4 If you live in the region, what type of housing best describes where you currently live?**

Question 4 asked respondents to identify their current housing type. The highest possible score for each item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected that answer, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that answer. The results are listed below:

**Table 6 Results of Question 4**

Housing Type	Count	Percent
Single-family home	152	82%
Apartment	13	7%
Duplex, triplex, or fourplex	8	4%
Mobile home	6	3%
Condominium	4	2%
Do not currently have a permanent home	1	1%
Accessory dwelling unit (also known as a granny flat)	0	0%
Do not live in the region	0	0%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

Most survey participants live in a single-family home (82 percent), followed by an apartment (seven percent), and duplex/triplex/fourplex (four percent). Approximately three percent of participants live in a mobile home, two percent live in a condominium, one percent (one respondent) do not currently have a permanent home, and none of the survey participants live in an ADU.

**Question 5 If you live in the region, which of the following choices best describes your housing arrangement?**

Question 5 asked respondents to identify their current living arrangement based on who they live with. The highest possible score for each item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected that answer, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that answer. The results are listed below:

**Table 7 Results of Question 5**

Housing Arrangement	Count	Percent
Multiple generations living together (adult children, parents, grandparents, etc.)	59	32%
Couple living together, no children	43	23%
Couple with children under 18 living at home	41	22%
Living alone	32	17%
Single or couple, living with roommates	22	12%

Housing Arrangement	Count	Percent
Single with children under 18 living at home	18	10%
Multiple families living together, or family with roommates	3	2%
Other (please specify)	1	1%
Do not live in the region	0	0%

Survey participants reported a variety of living arrangements, with almost one third of respondents (32 percent) living in a household consisting of multiple generations, 23 percent consisting of couples living together without children living at home, 22 percent consisting of couples living together with children living at home. Additionally, 17 percent of respondents are living alone, 12 percent are living with roommates, and 10 percent are single parents. Two percent of participants identified their housing arrangement as consisting of multiple families living together or family living together with roommates. One participant reported their housing situation as “Other.” Custom responses are listed in Table 8 below:

**Table 8 Custom responses to Question 2**

Family living together
\$

**Question 6 Which of the following aspects are important to you when looking for housing? (Check all that apply)**

Question 6 asked respondents choose what aspects are most important when they are looking for housing. Higher scores indicate that more survey participants selected the aspect as important and lower scores indicate that fewer survey participants selected the aspect as important. The resulting scores were the following, listed from highest to lowest:

**Table 9 Results of Question 6**

Housing Aspect	Count	Percent
Affordability	145	78%
Quality and size of housing	126	68%
Close to work and/or school	103	55%
Close to shopping and services like groceries and medical facilities	103	55%
Close to public transit stop	42	23%
Able to construct or own an accessory dwelling unit (ADU)/granny flat or second unit on property	41	22%
Able to have land to grow crops and/or have a ranch	31	17%
Able to house multiple generations in one home	29	16%
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility	20	11%
Other (please specify)	16	9%

“Affordability” was the most important aspect when looking for new housing according to survey participants, as 78 percent of participants selected this as important. “Quality and size of housing” (68 percent), and “Close to work and/or school” (55 percent) and “Close to shopping and services like groceries and medical facilities” (55 percent) were also selected as important to most survey

participants. “Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility” was selected by the fewest participants as important when looking for new housing (11 percent). In addition, 16 participants included other aspects as important when looking for housing. Many of these participants cited safety and affordability as important aspects for housing. Custom responses are listed in Table 10 below:

**Table 10 Custom responses to Question 6**

one without cockroach infestation
School district
Safe and secure area
Safe neighborhood
affordable homes to purchase
somewhere that isn't charging the same as a mortgage payment in other states.
Our own backyard. Community Pool. Getting CHILDREN OUTSIDE in safe spaces away from technology.
House in a good neighborhood with little to no crime
quality of home, value of home, neighborhood
able to have garage for more than 2 cars
safety, very quiet and peaceful neighborhood, neighbors who keep up their property, no commercial activity, little vehicle traffic
Close to Medical Services
Private yard for pets
Live my life without having to always deal with the rent is too damn high. I don't feels secure. Not enough tenant protections.
Un Lugar sin tanta delincuencia

**Question 7 What do you believe is the single largest barrier to affordable desirable housing in the Merced County region?**

Question 7 asked respondents to identify the largest barrier to affordable housing in Merced County. The highest possible score was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected the barrier as the largest barrier, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that service as most needed in the community. The resulting scores were the following, listed from highest to lowest:

**Table 11 Results of Question 7**

Largest Barrier	Count	Percent
Cost of quality housing is too high	61	33%
Lack of availability of housing that is rent-restricted (affordable housing)	33	18%
Not enough housing	33	18%
Cost of housing is too high in areas with good jobs and services	27	15%
Other (please specify)	18	10%
Discrimination based on race/ethnicity, religion, number of children in household, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or another characteristic	8	4%

Largest Barrier	Count	Percent
There is no barrier to affording desirable housing	4	2%
I do not know	2	1%

Survey participants identified “Cost of quality housing is too high” as the largest barrier to affordable desirable housing in Merced County (selected by 33 percent of participants). “Lack of availability of housing that is rent-restricted (affordable housing),” “Not enough housing,” and “Lack of availability of housing that is rent-restricted (affordable housing)” were all selected by 18 percent of participants as the largest barrier to affordable desirable housing in Merced County. Fifteen percent of respondents selected “Cost of housing is too high in areas with good jobs and services.” The least commonly selected barrier to affordable desirable housing in Merced County was “Discrimination based on race/ethnicity, religion, number of children in household, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or another characteristic.” Four participants reported “There is no barrier to affording desirable housing” and two participants selected “I do not know.”

**Table 12 Custom responses to Question 7**

There are numerous reason, we should be able to pick more than one. Lack of availability housing that is not rent restricted, cost of quality housing is too high, not enough housing, to be more specific there is very little apartments, townhouses and/or duplexes in Los Banos. The middle income earners are squeezed out as make too much too qualify for programs and earn too little to save t purchase.
Cost of living inflation by Biden
Cost of quality housing which should be the gold standard for ALL housing. One day wonders are the norm in Merced City. Shameful!
So-called "non-profits" that push their own agenda. Thereby limiting good residential AND commercial development projects that will have a positive result in providing more housing and jobs for the region. These groups increase the time and cost for developers that would otherwise bring positive change to the community.
Lack of skilled/educated population; lack of jobs paying adequate income
The community is not pro-business and keeps focusing on the symptoms of this rather than the problem. More Jobs, More \$, Homes become more affordable.
First, we live in a valley, which means we have set boundaries. There simply isnt room. As for the rental situation, that has beeb caused by owners being ruined by the laws and regulations favoring renters to the point that the home is ruined and the owner is stuck. Homeowners cant afford to trust a renter anymore. That is the fault of governments
Available single family housing being converted to airb&b and rent by the room college housing
Too many regulations
Low-paying jobs, low wages and low education levels while an increase in housing prices
Investors are pricing out residents, houses should be limited to people who will live in the house
not enough jobs that offer a decent income, stagnation of real wages since 1970s thanks to globalization and corporate greed, rich getting richer and pooper getting poorer, erosion of the middle class
Lack of jobs, beyond service jobs; Lack of housing types
1) Policitians not investing local budget dollars to Affordable Housing. 2) Politicans not supporting Inclusionary Zoning. 3) Politicans not forcing developers to build Affordable housing. 4) Money in Politics. You need money to become a politician. So most of the time only rich people can become politicians and they only look out for themselves and other rich people.
Safety. Good safe neighborhoods.
density of housing



To many people

I see affordable housing as an issue in many cities and states.

**Question 8 What do you believe are the most urgent housing challenges in the Merced Region? (Choose the three most urgent issues)**

Question 8 asked respondents to rank seven housing issues in unincorporated Merced County in order from most to least urgent. The highest possible score for an item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent ranked the issue as the most urgent, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondents rated the issue as the most urgent. The resulting scores were the following, listed from highest to lowest:

**Table 13 Results of Question 8**

Housing Challenges	Count	Percent
Affordability of desired housing	161	87%
Availability of desired housing	129	69%
Homelessness	114	61%
Housing quality	71	38%
Overcrowding (more than one person per bedroom)	27	15%
Fair housing/discrimination	24	13%
Other (please specify)	17	9%
There are no urgent housing issues	7	4%
I do not know	7	4%

Survey participants identified “Affordability of desired housing,” “Availability of desired housing” (87 percent), “Availability of desired housing” (69 percent), and “Homelessness” (61 percent) as the most urgent housing challenges in Merced County. “Overcrowding (more than one person per bedroom)” and “Fair housing/discrimination” were the least commonly selected as urgent housing challenges. Ten percent of respondents selected “Other”, and respondents left a total of 17 individual comments. Multiple participants reported lack of affordable housing, lack of quality jobs, and too many regulations as the most urgent housing challenges. Custom responses are listed below in Table 14:

**Table 14 Custom responses to Question 8**

Numerous reasons, affordability of desired housing. The middle class working families have no resources to help purchase a home. They either make too much to qualify for help and always make too little to save to even purchase a home.

more housing inventory

build more units rent control

Development regulations. Policies like inclusionary zoning.

Applications fees has become a way for Property Managements to make income, majority of the time applicants are denied housing.

first time homebuyer programs

Homelessness is not a housing issue. Drug & Mental Health issue. Need MORE higher end homes to draw in job creators.
permit costs
Reduce regulation and have right to work to lower housing costs
Sanctuary State
factors that lead to homelessness such as loss of income, insufficient income, ridiculously low wages, lack of childcare for working parents especially single mothers, drug addiction, lack of mental health care
Lack of quality jobs; lack of housing variety
Qualified tenants who can afford to rent without govt assistance
Politicians do not care about housing and do not invest in housing and do not pass policies to support building Affordable housing and do not pass rent control. Politicians do not care about housing. They only care about dairy farms, prisons, companies, and rich people.
Housing prices are unreasonable
Safe neighborhoods
affordable housing is a problem in many areas of the country

**Question 9 What do you believe would be the most beneficial programs to assist residents with housing needs in the Merced County region? (Choose the three most beneficial programs)**

Question 9 asked participants which programs would be most beneficial in assisting residents with housing needs in Merced County. The highest possible score for each item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected that answer, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that answer. The results are listed below:

**Table 15 Results of Question 9**

Beneficial Program	Count	Percent
Rental assistance or housing vouchers	121	65%
Homebuyer loan counseling services	100	54%
Housing assistance for residents with special needs (physical or developmental differences)	80	43%
Home rehabilitation assistance	80	43%
Landlord/tenant mediation services	66	35%
Foreclosure prevention services	46	25%
Other (please specify)	28	15%
Mobile home preservation and assistance	23	12%
I do not know	14	8%

Among the seven programs “Rental assistance or housing vouchers” (selected by 65 percent of respondents) and “Homebuyer loan counseling services” (selected by 54 percent of respondents) were the most commonly selected as the most beneficial programs by survey participants while “Mobile home preservation and assistance” was the least commonly selected as the most beneficial program (selected by 12 percent of respondents). Approximately 15 percent of participants selected

“other” as a beneficial program, citing programs for senior housing, first-time homebuyer assistance, and more affordable housing overall. Custom responses are listed in Table 16 below:

**Table 16 Custom responses to Question 9**

Programs to help middle income earners to purchase a home.
More housing stock and better jobs, lower Biden inflation.
Build more affordable housing
case management
Senior living. Meadows Senior apartments has a 5 - 7 year wait to even be offered the opportunity of a apartment. People are skipping the line IF THEY know someone who either works there or has other connections. Continuation of RAMPANT "it's who you know".
Homebuyer GRANT programs that don't vanish overnight; Making property ownership by foreign investors ILLEGAL.
First time buyer assistance
rent control
Help residents with money to build a dwelling for family members to live in
Limit new builds to people who plan on living in new builds, landlords should not be buying new builds
Senior housing options. Senior living communities such as apartments or senior living communities w/homes for purchase
More housing built
programs that help with home-buying for first time buyers
Free up business! Scariest words in the English language. "Hi, I'm from the Gov't and I'm here to help."
More moderately priced housing such as condos or smaller homes
No more programs. Get out of peoples business and the problems will take a natural course toward resolution. Renters need to be held responsible for thei committments
single family homes should be rented or sold to single families not to individuals or groups converting single family housing for other purposes
We need landlords to charge way less rent, its extremely unaffordable for all. Property Managements are obstacles to being able to rent a home. Mainly require high credit scores or double deposit and rent up front. Its a ripoff. Then when you want to move out of a housing unit the property management keeps your double deposit you gave them.
affordable assistance for middle class and lower middle class energy efficiency
more jobs that offer a real living wage; help for homeless people in getting and keeping jobs; childcare for working parents especially single mothers; readily available addiction recovery programs that are compassionate and effective; coordinated social services for homeless individuals to address their various needs; coordinated assistance for homeless individuals to transition into decent jobs, healthy and drug-free lifestyles, and housing
Grants to build ADUs
Inclusionary Zoning - policy where developers have to put 15% of what they build to be Affordable Housing for Low income families and Very-Low Income families.
Rent control and more affordable houses for purchase
Small single family homes built instead of just apartments
Financial assistance for LOCAL first time home buyers
Apoyos para remodelacion

**Question 10 Using numbers from 1 through 7, with 1 being the most needed and 7 being the least needed, please rank the type of housing that you believe should be developed in the Merced County region:**

Question 10 asked respondents to rank seven housing types on a scale of 7 to 1 based on the most to least needed type of housing in Merced County. The highest possible score for an item was 7, meaning that every respondent ranked that housing type as least needed, and the lowest possible score was 1, meaning that every respondent rated the housing type as most needed. The resulting scores were the following, listed from highest to lowest:

**Table 17: Results of Question 10**

Rank	Beneficial Program	Score
1 (most needed)	Housing with 3 or more bedrooms	3.1
2	Housing with 1-2 bedrooms	3.5
3	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or additional housing units on single-family and multifamily properties	3.7
4	Efficiency homes such as studio apartments	4.0
5	Emergency, transitional, or permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness	4.3
6	Housing for people with social and/or medical services for special needs (group homes, supportive housing)	4.5
7 (least needed)	Live/work housing (examples: work lofts with ground floor retail unit and upper floor living space)	4.9

Survey participants selected “Housing with 3 or more bedrooms,” “Housing with 1-2 bedrooms,” and “Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or additional housing units on single-family and multifamily properties” as the most needed housing types in Merced County. The least needed housing types according to participants are “Housing for people with social and/or medical services for special needs (group homes, supportive housing)” and “Live/work housing (examples: work lofts with ground floor retail unit and upper floor living space).”

**Question 11 Using numbers 1 through 6, with 1 being the best and 6 being the worst, please rank the areas where you believe housing should be developed in the Merced County region:**

Question 11 asked respondents to rank the areas where housing should be developed in Merced County. The highest possible score for each item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected that answer, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that answer. The results are listed below:

**Table 18 Results of Question 11**

Rank	Areas for Housing Development	Score
1 (best)	Areas near public transit stops, employment, and shopping centers	3.2
2	Downtown or town center locations	3.6
3	Areas with existing housing (increasing the number of housing units that could be built on each property such as with fourplexes, courtyard houses, and other types of apartment complexes)	3.7
4	Agricultural land on the edges of the cities	4.0
5	Land that could be converted from an underutilized non-housing use (e.g., office/store) to residential or mixed-use (e.g., apartments or condominiums with ground floor stores or restaurants)	4.2
6 (worst)	On existing single-family properties (accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or granny flats)	4.4
7	Vacant land on the edges of the cities	4.8

Survey participants selected “Areas near public transit stops, employment, and shopping centers” and “Downtown or town center locations” as the best areas for new housing development. According to participants the worst areas for housing development include “Vacant land on the edges of the cities” and “On existing single-family properties (accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or granny flats).” In addition, participants left 14 custom responses were received which are listed in Table 19 below:

**Table 19 Custom responses to Question 11**

Areas near schools
away from established neighborhoods
Your survey asks to rank from 1-5 but gives 7 choices. Confusing.
Land from underutilized non-housing use ends up with a home next to apartments/condominiums. Granny flats end up being used by people on Megan's list. totally unacceptable.
Stop putting SLE homes/low income in the remaining good areas of the city.
Is this question for market rate housing? or for affordable housing? If this question is for affordable housing, affordable housing should be built in North Merced. If this is for market rate housing, this should be built in South Merced.
Assuming #1 is on vacant lots within the city, if not, then this idea.
Que construyan estudios, para que las personas puedan pagar más poco dinero y sea más fácil de rentar ,para las familias de bajos ingresos.
Habilitar casas abandonadas o terrenos abandonados
Lugares habitaciones, tipo pies de casa para que a manera de las posibilidades la vayamos ampliando
Vender el terreno que nos rentan a las casas móviles

**Question 12 Are there specific neighborhoods, streets, or areas in your city and/or local community where you would like to see housing developed? (Please specify)**

Question 12 asked respondents to identify areas where survey participants would like to see housing developed. The results are listed below:

**Table 20 Custom responses to Question 12**

Convert properties that are not currently being used. There are dwellings downtown that could be converted.
near the lake. one thing that would be ideal Would be to have all the Agencies that assist in housing be centrally located by walmart/college area.
There are vacant land located on G Street & Alpine and R Street and 19th, (cross streets could be off a little) where a complex could be developed. Providing future tenants access to public transportation, shopping.
Along highway 33 near Dos Palos. Along Blossom st in Dos Palos across from the mini storage.
Main Street, Merced
all over
Anywhere in Dos Palos. People are constantly looking for somewhere to rent or buy. Existing apartment complexes are very outdated.
South Dos Palos
Around Nero Avenue (Like of Almond St and Blossom Ave) or say Westside of Dos Palos or in between Dos Palos and South Dos Palos. More housing definitely needed in Dos Palos.
Dos Palos ca
Where services are located, shopping, education, etc.
land by hospital, land by bearcreek and parson
East of Thornton, South of Hwy 140
downtown, rehab older homes, strengthen standards for maintenance
Not sure.
The former Castle Air Base would be a great place to build housing with grocery stores and public transportation.
away from established neighborhoods
Peach Street, Olive, Robin.
I live in North Merced. I've been to South Merced. There are people who care about their homes. But there are some landlords that should be ashamed of themselves! There are also homeowners that may need help. I used to be involved in homeowner assistance programs through CDBG grants. The program was very successful in Los Banos, and Livingston. Senior citizens and single parents lives were changed. I know Merced doesn't have to compete for those funds. I would like to see more work done in South Merced.
Any vacant lot.
South Merced
Not in flood plain, in town, not sprawled where you need car for all activity such as Bellevue Ranch and north far from town, not for investors to rent bedrooms as now happening
Downtown and all areas close to it. Plus affordable housing or apartments in north merced
It would be great for low income residents to get help financially to build accessory dwellings for their relatives.
There should me much more dense housing available in the downtown area since it walkable and would boost the local economy. I also think the area surrounding the mall would be a good area to build more dense housing for the same reasons. Finally, I think the area surrounding the new campus parkway leading to UC Merced would be the perfect area to build more mixed use housing and commercial spaces.

Merced County Association of Governments  
**Merced County Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element (2024-2032)**

Affordable housing and mixed use housing in underdeveloped areas of Merced and Merced County
In atwater on the corner next too and behind the CHP office
North Merced continues to grow, yet, other parts of Merced (such as East Merced remain undeveloped)
Empty lots in the city of merced. a lot og buildings have been removed
west 16th
The city should annex pockets of county land that are surrounded by city parcels to make for comprehensive service, landscape, responsibility and service. The city should market themselves to Developers that are known to build mixed developments including multigenerational units along with couple units. The city should regulate property management much like they do dispensaries to ensure for higher quality, legal tenant/owner treatment. Subletting rooms from homes is causing inflated prices as more students with much more disposable income drive rental prices higher and higher and the community pay the price for the more expensive cost of living causing gentrification
Between South and North Dos Palos, there are large stretches of land that feel as though they thin out our community. Also housing near our schools and closer to the main part of our town. There are lots of abandoned buildings that could house people that have been left to rot.
Planada, north of highway 140
Vacant lots within city jurisdictions
No
Ag land on Green Sands, east of Buhach.
Main street Atwater would benefit from mixed use...to liven up downtown
Affordable housing
Around the mall, willowbrook neighborhood, South Merced around home Depot.
Everywhere
near the uc or near Mission Blvd.
empty lots and/or abandoned buildings
In the outskirts, encourage nice, \$800,000+, gated HOA communities with 1/2 Acre lots to encourage job creators and families to stay and benefit the region.
Livingston next to rancho san miguel.
Childs Ave
North Area Past the Hospital
The empty plot of land on the corner of G Street & Donna Drive. The empty plot of land behind the Urgent Care on Olive Avenue. The empty plot of land on G Street across from the In-Shape shopping center that has the Auto Resources sign on it. The empty plot of land on M Street and Yosemite Avenue that used to be a church before they demolished it. The empty plot of land on Paulson and Yosemite with a Auto Resources sign on it. The empty plot of land behind the surgical center on Yosemite and Parsons. The empty plot of land by the little dog park on Yosemite Avenue.
I would like to see shopping closer to the older part of town. Near the freeway would be the center of such an area. A Winco or Trader Joe would be a great addition the center where Savemart used to be, between 16th and 17th
n/a
The downtown area of Merced City needs serious redevelopment and is lacking maintenance. Infrastructure should be redesigned to be more walkable and less car dependent to minimize urban sprawl. Redeveloping areas needs to include rezoning for multi use to create "third places" for people to gather and live in.
undeveloped, abandoned property in established neighborhoods
Gerrard and Childs area
No. This land is already being developed for single family homes.
I say built on lots that are empty in town that are not being utilized. I say many lots empty in the community for years.

At the East child Ave between Martin Luther King and 99, there is plenty of empty land
In areas where there is no interference with agricultural land.
No
In-fill developments on pre-existing lots and/or vacant buildings
There should be more multi-family housing options in North Merced City. More affordable, rent controlled units are needed throughout the county.
as close to uc merced as possible
n/a
dre
Dan word Beachwood area
Between 99, 59, and mission avenue
Build east of the expressway
Not really. I'd like to see a lot fewer people overall on this planet, but voluntary population control doesn't seem to be a high priority for the human species. That aside, developing downtown housing might be desirable to accommodate people who want to forego cars and use mass transit. However, mass transit is abysmal in Merced as in most US communities. Higher-density apartment housing is needed in Merced, especially for UC students and working-class singles and couples. Temporary, affordable, supervised accommodation is needed for homeless people transitioning to jobs and more stable lives. Rigorous supervision is essential to keep out drugs and crime that undermine rehab and stable living arrangements. I don't see a good solution to the housing question, and I am not prepared to have my single-family home neighborhood transformed into a medium- or mixed-density housing neighborhood. These plans always look sexy to developers and politicians, but they don't work. Call me a NIMBY. I don't care. I have rented apartments or homes most of my 60+ years and found the majority of my neighbors to be noisy, rude, and lacking in any respect for the rental property they inhabited. Six years ago, I was finally able to afford a home in a relatively decent neighborhood. I have a severe chronic pain condition, and peace and quiet are essential to my physical health. My husband works from home, and so do many of our neighbors. People who work from home also need peace and quiet. And all people deserve a decent night's sleep. Unfortunately, renters tend to be noisier than the homeowners who are my neighbors. The one rental home nearby has consistently been inhabited by noisy proles, one group of which had gang connections and were probably operating an unlicensed daycare facility. The ear-splitting shrieking of children all day, every day, was ridiculous. Frankly, I don't want the value of my nest egg to decline because of slovenly renters, and I have had my fill of noisy, rude yahoos. The fact that there is such a severe shortage of affordable housing seems to be due to (a) lots more people in California, whose population is roughly 2.5 times what it was the year I was born, (b) unfettered real estate speculation and gouging in urban areas like the Bay Area and LA, and (c) stagnation of living wages for all working- and middle-class Americans since the 1970s. Thank you, corporate greed! Perhaps we should take all the tent cities and dump them into the backyards of those who helped create them, namely the ultra-rich, their hangers-on, and their political toadies.
Merced Mall
Not certain
Within and surrounding the Downtown Area.
Is this question for market rate housing? or for affordable housing? If this question is for affordable housing, affordable housing should be built in North Merced. If this is for market rate housing, this should be built in South Merced.
Current empty lots throughout the city.
more infill near downtown and public transportation and commercial
No
south merced
Off of Campus Parkway
South East merced
El redondo, where the big mansions are near the UC, Bellevue



South merced
Yes we do near some areas where people can have Acces to near thw stores or even by the schools
Small single family homes with fences in rural areas on the outskirts of the city.
N Hwy 59, Santa Fe , Beachwood area and behind Merced college seem like good areas
No
No.
Un used parcels
Castle Air Force Base Maybe some apartments.
More apartments near Merced JC, and put on the base property such as low income apartments.
Beachwood area
More multi unit housing in empty lots near Yosemite and Olive
Near grocery stores, parks, schools
Hostetler ranchwood/stonefield has bought up all the lands surrounding los banos. the city is landlock. Get rid of hostetler property and we will have plenty of land to build on.
There are a few vacant lots downtown, within neighborhoods, where maybe a house burned down (not sure) that could be used.
It don't matter where, it just needs to be more affordable and less stipulated on approval
Filling up vacant lots in the city with multifamily units, either duplexes/triplexes or apartments.
South of Merced
Livingston por winton way
no
En las áreas baldías,pueden construir también apartamentos de una recámara,para las familias pequeñas,para que puedan vivir solos,porque cuando uno vive en casas grandes o apartamentos,se generan muchos problemas con los compañeros de viviendas grandes.
El terreno de la Childs Ave y Canal St
Badger flat, volta pioner, ingomar
Si hay mucha falta de vivienda en todo California
La readly Rd
Sullivan road
Su, en las salidas del pueblo, ambos lados, por la Pacheco Blvd.
Cerca a los centros de servicios

Survey participants expressed overall support for development of affordable housing, multi-family housing, and higher density housing. New housing development is desired in areas near services, grocery stores, parks, shopping, and schools and in downtown areas of cities throughout the region. Participants support housing development on vacant lots and land with unused or underutilized buildings.

In Atwater, participants suggested areas for housing development on Main Street and on vacant lots throughout the City. In Dos Palos participants recommended housing development throughout the city, including along Nero Avenue and State Route 33. In Livingston, participants recommended housing development in the northwestern parts of the city and near Peach Avenue and Robin Avenue. In Los Banos participants suggested new housing development near Walmart, on vacant lots, and near Hostetler, Stonefield Homes, and Ranchwood Park. In the city of Merced, participants

suggested housing development throughout northern and southern parts of the city, in downtown, near East Childs Avenue, near Dan Ward Road and Beachwood Drive, near State Route 59, near State Route 99, near Mission Avenue, near the University of California, Merced, and on vacant and underutilized lots. Participants suggested new housing development in Planada, Bear Creek, near Castle Air Force Base, and unincorporated parts of the county near services, near hospitals, and on the outskirts of cities.

**Question 12 Which accessory dwelling unit (ADU) assistance services would be beneficial for residents? (Select all that apply)**

Question 12 asked respondents to identify beneficial ADU assistance services from a list of six options plus an “Other” option. The highest possible score for each item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected that answer, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that answer. The results are listed below:

**Table 21 Results of Question 12**

ADU Assistance	Count	Percent
Financial assistance with construction expenses	115	62%
Educational “How to” webinar series regarding financing, construction, and permitting processes	102	55%
Pre-approved floorplans	88	47%
Homeowner one-on-one consultations with an ADU expert	87	47%
Advice on what type of ADU would work best for your situation	88	47%
Education on how to become a landlord	58	31%
I do not know	21	11%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

Almost all of the listed ADU assistance services were selected as beneficial by a substantial number of survey participants. The most frequently selected ADU assistance services were “Financial assistance with construction expenses” (selected by 62 percent of respondents) and “Educational “How to” webinar series regarding financing, construction, and permitting processes” (selected by 55 percent of respondents). The least selected ADU assistance service was “Education on how to become a landlord” (selected by 11 percent of respondents).

**Question 13 Would you be interested in developing an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on your property?**

Question 13 asked survey participants if they would be interested in developing an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on their property. The highest possible score for each item was 100 percent, meaning that every respondent selected that answer, and the lowest possible score was zero percent, meaning that no respondent selected that answer. The results are listed below:

**Table 22 Results of Question 13**

ADU Assistance	Count	Percent
Yes, on my existing or future property	66	35%
No	64	34%
Not sure	27	15%
I don't own or do not plan to own property	28	15%
I already have an ADU on my property	1	1%

Survey participants were split on whether or not they are interested in developing an ADU on their property. Approximately 35 percent of participants are not interested, 34 percent are interested, and 15 percent were not sure. Only one participant already has an ADU.

**Question 14 Optional: What is your race/ethnicity:**

Question 14 asked respondents to identify their household income level. The results are listed below:

**Table 23 Results of Question 13**

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	72	39%
Caucasian, not Hispanic/Latino	57	31%
Black/African American	15	8%
Other (please specify)	13	7%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	6	3%
Native American/Alaska Native	1	1%

Over one third of survey participants identify as Hispanic/Latino (39 percent) and 31 percent identify as Caucasian, not Hispanic/Latino. In addition, eight percent of participants identify as Black/African American, seven percent identify as other, three percent as Asian American/Pacific Islander, and one percent as Native American/Alaska Native.

**Question 15 Let us know if there is anything we missed! What other information or housing-related issues would you like to be considered for the Housing Element? (Please specify)**

Question 15 was a call for open-ended answers. A total of 44 custom responses were received, and are listed below in Table 23:

**Table 24 Answer for Question 15**

Age	Count	Percent
Under 18	0	0%
18-25	18	10%
26-40	47	25%
41-65	87	47%
66-85	19	10%
Over 85	0	0%

Approximately 47 percent of survey participants reported they are between the ages of 41 and 65, and 25 percent are between the ages of 26 and 40. Ten percent of participants reported they are over the age of 65.

### Question 15 Optional Open Forum

Question 15 was a call for open-ended answers. A total of 44 custom responses were received, and are listed below in Table 25:

**Table 25 Answer for Question 15**

We need affordable housing for seniors that don't qualify for any assistance and for young adults just venturing out
No
Energy efficient housing
Need some skills for success graduate from a shared living home with a group of peers who have successfully been taught life skills, homeless people do not budget, buy and prepare meals, clean the bathroom, do laundry, make their bed. You give them a key to a door and are surprised when they tear the place up. If they don't know better what do you expect?
Housing that is near the Atwater Commerce Center as it grows.
We need to hold absentee landlords accountable for their property. No one wants to live in a hovel!
Continue housing development construction on past areas that were built or focused on but died. Example Christian st homes at Dos Palos being built then nothing when growing up.
yes this is an unfair survey .all answers lead back to the answers the county wants to hear. not the real answer that I want you to hear or acknowledge
Community centers, for both the unhoused and housed.
3e3
Sounds like you are pushing ADU's. This will create more revenue as more tax dollars.
none
I think you need to get the city councilperson and supervisors representing their district to get the lead out and talk to residents for issues on this topic. They don't seem to do much except collect a paycheck.
Like I was mentioning in the last commento have all the agencies in the area that help with housing in one location preferably near downtown they seemed to be scattered throughout the town and that would include the HSA also.
Build more housing and no housing trustfund and no limits on the scam of affordable housing. You cannot define what affordable housing is.
quality housing needs to be built. Nice custom/large homes as well as your standard track homes with/without ADU's
Have a workable plan for our homeless community that are good citizens.
I have a family member who is utilizing subsidized housing in a two bedroom apartment through Behavioral Support Services. More one bedroom subsidized units for folks dealing with mental health issues would be beneficial. People should not have to deal with a housemate when both are dealing from mental health problems. This current set up is NOT supportive to either client.
Stop building low income housing in established neighborhoods.
ADU policies and rental assistance are not the answer. Easing development regs and reducing barriers to new development will have the greatest positive impact on housing numbers in our community.
rent control, stop the outside investors, educate people to save for emergencies, discourage people from purchasing home without large downpayment, save older structures, encourage mixed use, plan for walking and bike riding off roads, infill, use more roundabouts to keep traffic flowing, but slowed down

Please research data on how single family homes are actually occupied. Especially in the newer developments geared to investors...how many of these single family homes are occupied by families vs individual renters sharing a house. Before we focus on building more single family homes, consider how many would be freed up if there were more apartments available. And think of how sustainable it would be if apartments were built near commercial and public transit or paths so people could save money and not own cars they can't afford. Housing should be built closer to commercial services and amenities so we don't need to drive so much.

Stop property management/companies from taking applications fees as a way to get an income.

I think there should be more of an emphasis on housing as it relates to public transit, walkability, and alternative modes of transportation.

Resources for un- and under-housed

If additional housing is going to be developed, we need to consider how this will impact schools, traffic in the region, pollution, ect. will additional parks be built?

housing authority needs more workers who can handle cases quicker. especially if their site will not work properly to begin with

Rent control. When will we explore this option?

A big topic for Merced and Atwater but the region as a whole is the presence of inflated rental prices caused by UCM lack of student specific housing options that cater to students, leaving single family home or apartment complexes to lifelong residents. There is no mention of the UCM student overflow into the city or how it inflates prices by landlords setting up rental arrangements to sublease individual rooms. This inflates cost of living as long-term residents cannot afford the prices that UCM students can pay for the same house (\$300-600 per room) and it decreases the quality of life for the entire community.

First-time homebuyer education courses.

County tends to give favorable to realtors instead of buyers or renters

Need to build more Sr. housing communities where people can gather in a safe place & make friends. We don't have many independent living facilities & the ones we have are not very enticing as they are old & don't offer many amenities.

Yes

Have Child Care Services on site

A lot of properties do not have room for ADU due to very small properties. If the city only started providing. High density homes I would leave area. Providing homes for homeless would create very bad areas in the city without addressing the reason the person is homeless.

Get government out of our lives

Programs that qualify low-income/restricted income persons (SSI, Unemployment (seasonal jobs), Students) to buy a small 1-2 bedroom homes.

None

New, single-family houses should be limited to natural persons (not companies, LLCs, partnerships) and priority should be given to people who intend to live in the house instead of investors

Require address or specific motel information before providing cash aid. Stop providing Cash aid to the homeless. Provide one way ticket back to the counties that sent them here.

You can't solve the housing problem if people can't afford housing. Merced needs a lot more jobs that offer living wages.

Support for seniors with existing aging residences with contractors, work costs, technical advice to maintain reasonable serviceability of residence.

Diversity in housing choices within walkable neighborhoods. Neighborhood connectivity and access to walkable neighborhood amenities (e.g., parks, trails, schools, transit).

Inclusionary Zoning - policy where developers have to put 15% of what they build to be Affordable Housing for Low income families and Very-Low Income families. Rent Control.

Great survey
More regard for those who make 50,000-85,000. As we are struggling with inflation and rent prices also
For housing Merced needs to open up section 8 again help some family or single parents mom that are single rents are getting to high and some the houses are not in good condition and rent is to high
I would like to see more available affordable housing in merced.
There needs to be an option for homeless individuals that have addictions. Displacing and excluding homeless people doesn't work and costs extra money
Housing is not affordable for most people anymore. There is a need for incentives for local buyers, first time home buyers, etc. There is also a need for respectable transitional and permanent affordable housing for homeless, but often housing restrictions are too stringent for those with criminal records, substance use disorders, and/ mental illness. There's a need for funding for supportive care management services.
A utility like MID that uses solar or wind to help residents with energy costs.
Diversity, Inclusion and Equity!!!
Too many people for the county. They use too much water and energy.
The housing, Homes, Apartments are too expensive for some one making minimum wage. Some apartments are very low quality and residents are not people you would want around. Yet, these apartments are still too expensive for someone on minimum wage.
What about filling the gaps that already exist. I understand that there were over 600 high value assets built. No change in low-income assets. Why?
Elderly Condo community would be nice at affordable prices.
Build affordable housing with the opportunity to rent-to-own.
Viviendas para personas con salario bajo
Dar permiso a las dueñas de casas ,que construyan estudios o apartamentos en sus terrenos gratis.
Incluir a la gente trabajadora que carece de estatus legal en el pais
Capacitacion
En las viviendas arrendadas, el mantenimiento necesario y sistemático para vivir en óptimas condiciones
Casas Mobiles tenemos derecho a comprar el terreno?
Asequibles en el costo.

**Question 16 Optional: What is your total annual household income:**

Question 16 asked respondents to select their community from a list of 23 unincorporated communities in Merced County, as well as offering an “Other” option. The results are listed below in Table 26:

**Table 26 Results for Question 16**

Annual Household Income	Count	Percent
Less than \$25,000	30	16%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	30	16%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	30	16%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16	9%
\$100,000+	46	25%
Decline to state	20	11%

Survey participants reported a mix of annual household income, ranging from less than \$25,000 to more than \$100,000. Approximately 25 percent of participants have an annual household income of more than \$100,000. In contrast, 16 percent of respondents have an annual household income of less than \$25,000.