

Polling confirms builder research: Area residents prefer suburban living, fear rising housing costs

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Sacramento-area homebuilders are very customer-centric. Through one-on-one interviews, surveys and polling, they closely monitor buyer sentiment to make sure they are designing and building the homes potential customers want to buy.

Occasionally the BIA helps out as well, as we did recently when we joined with other area associations to conduct a poll of area residents on their views about housing and transportation issues. The results

largely confirmed what builder surveys show, but there were a couple of interesting twists as well.

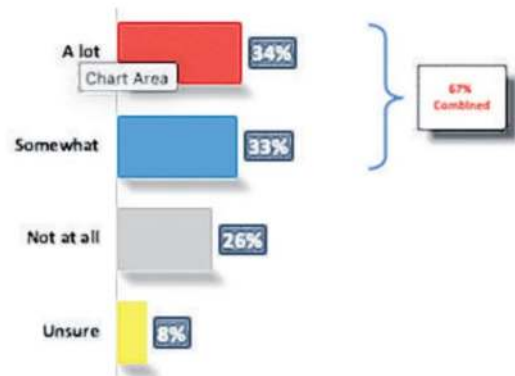
Needless to say, with the rapid increase in housing costs that we saw last year, affordability was a top issue.

Most tellingly, 72% of those surveyed don't believe the next generation will be able to purchase a home in the region. The industry continues to look for solutions to allow the next generation to become homeowners, which is an important means of accumulating wealth and improving the economy.

Encouragingly, those

polled understand the reasons housing costs here are so high. A recent BIA

study found that local government fees on building homes average just under



Do you think that too few new homes and apartments being built has contributed a lot, somewhat or not at all to the shortage of housing that is affordable?

\$100,000 per home in the region, and 78% of those surveyed said those fees should be reduced.

Two thirds agreed that the lack of new homes and apartments being built contributed a lot or somewhat to our high housing costs.

Furthermore, 67% believe that the fact too few new homes and apartments are being built in the region has contributed a lot or somewhat the shortage of housing that's affordable. Again, the industry is continually working with local governments to find ways to expedite the often-lengthy review process for new hous-

ing to allow builders to react more quickly to market demands.

And despite the continued push by many elected officials to limit new housing to the urban core, the vast majority of those surveyed continue to seek the American Dream of a home in the suburbs.

The poll found that 40% would prefer to buy a new home in the suburbs and nearly 28% would want to buy in more rural areas. Just under 29% prefer to live in the urban core of their communities.

Additionally confirming what builders understood

Polling

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about what buyers want, 59% said they would prefer to live in a larger suburban house where they would have to drive to work, while just one-third said they'd rather live in a smaller home near transit lines.

We also asked questions about transportation preferences.

Almost 46% said they thought driving to work was their preference and another 23% would prefer to work from home and not commute. Just under 5% prefer buses and light rail to commute.

The housing crisis Sacramento and the rest of the state faces will not be

solved by just increasing government subsidies for "affordable" housing. It will be solved when builders are able to build enough new home and apartment developments to finally catch up with the demand for housing.

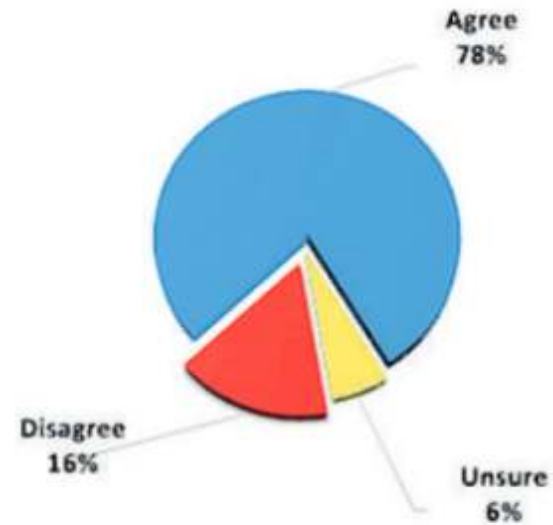
And these new units need to be built where people actually want to buy. That means encouraging building in the urban core, but also allowing homes to be built in the suburbs and rural areas.

It also means reducing fees, persuading local governments to expedite zoning and permitting to allow new homes and apartments to come to market more quickly and recognizing that limiting new housing

to politically preferred locations won't work. We need to give consumers what they want, just like carmakers and appliance manufacturers. The BIA will continue to work to make that happen and make homeownership available to many more California families.

The poll was conducted by Fallon Research and Communications, which specializes in land use and housing affordability issues nationwide.

A total of 306 registered voters in the city of Sacramento and unincorporated portions of Sacramento County were surveyed between November 1-5, with a margin of error of 5.6%.



In Sacramento, new homebuyers are required to pay close to \$100,000 in fees for government services, such as parks, roads, libraries, affordable housing and transit. Do you agree or disagree that local government leaders should be working to bring down these costs for new homeowners?