

Farmworker Advisory Commission Housing Listening Session

April 15, 2026

DRAFT Feedback Summary

prepared July 2, 2026

On April 15, 2026, the San Mateo County Farmworker Advisory Commission (FAC or Commission) hosted a listening session at the Pescadero Elementary School regarding housing. The purpose of the listening session was to collect feedback from farmworkers and other community members on their experiences with housing on the Coastsides.

Listening Session Overview

The listening session was held in response to concerns regarding farmworker housing on the Coastsides. The meeting was planned by FAC members Stephanie Perez, John Vars and Corina Rodriguez, with assistance from the San Mateo County Office of Community Affairs (OCA). The meeting was facilitated by Debbie Schechter of Schechter Consulting along with staff from OCA. Portions of the meeting were in English and portions were in Spanish, with simultaneous interpretation provided for both languages. Outreach for the meeting was conducted by FAC members, community organizations and County staff via flyers, social media, email and word of mouth. Twenty-three community members and seven Commissioners attended the meeting. Community members included farmworkers, other Pescadero-area residents, and community advocates/non-profit organization members.

At the start of the meeting, Stephanie explained that the purpose is to provide feedback to the Commission about farmworkers' experiences with housing and ideas for improving housing on the Coastsides. At the meeting, community members shared their experiences and feedback regarding housing in breakout groups of four to eight people each. Breakout groups were led by a facilitator and feedback was captured by a notetaker. Three breakout groups were conducted in Spanish and one was conducted in English. Commission members participated in the breakout groups as listeners only. Participants responded to the following questions:

1. Current living situation: What is your current living situation? What do you like and dislike about it? What keeps you in your current situation?
2. Experience finding a house/apartment: What has been your experience when trying to find a place to live on the Coastsides? Do you prefer to rent or own?
3. Solutions: What should/could the County do to help with farmworker housing needs? Who else should be engaged to help meet farmworker housing needs?

Community Feedback Received Regarding Housing

A summary of the input received at the meeting is provided below.

1. Current Living Situation

Community members described a variety of current living situations including shared housing on farm property, trailers, small rental units and previous experience living in a large room with bunkbeds for farmworkers. Most noted that the space they rent is small, especially considering the number of people in their household. Some expressed that their situation is okay and that the landlords treat them well while others noted that housing is in poor condition and they are fearful of raising issues to landlords. Most mentioned that housing is expensive, though some mentioned that it is affordable in comparison

to other places. Participants were currently renting their homes/apartments. Many expressed that they would love to own their own home but it is not possible. Most continue to stay in their current situation because it's close to work and school and they have no other options nearby. Transportation is a particular challenge in Pescadero.

"Who wouldn't want to buy a house? Everyone does. But how is that possible?"
– Participant

2. Experience finding a house/apartment

Similar to the first question, community members noted that it is extremely difficult to find affordable housing on the Coastsides and purchasing a home is virtually impossible. A few people noted that the restrictions at Stone Pine Cove in Half Moon Bay mean that you can't truly own a home there. Several also mentioned that they are concerned about where they would live if the landlord sells the property.

"Renting is like money being thrown out. And renting can come with restrictions like no pets and no children."
– Participant

3. Solutions for farmworker housing

Participants shared several ideas focused on increasing the supply of affordable housing and improving housing conditions on the Coastsides and in Pescadero in particular. Key ideas included:

- Improve collaboration among state and county officials, departments, community-based organizations, philanthropies (Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Sobrato Foundation) and homeowners to build affordable housing and improve housing conditions as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Present the recent report from Urban Habitat on the farmworker housing crisis to the Board of Supervisors. Urban Habitat completed a report in April, 2025 based on interviews with 22 Coastsides farmworkers: [Semillas del Cambio: Advancing Dignified Housing for Farmworkers on the San Mateo County Coast – Urban Habitat](#).
- Find ways to reduce regulatory barriers and red tape that impede housing construction: address challenges associated with septic needs and flood zone maps to allow more housing to be built
- County should use existing County property and structures for housing and/or buy land and build housing for farmworkers
- Provide more housing in Pescadero similar to Stone Pine Cove (mobile home ownership).
- Improve housing conditions including problems related to mold and lack of heating and insulation. Inspect and enforce requirements for housing conditions at farms. Investigate farm management and inspect farms without providing advance notice. Subsidize costs to improve housing conditions.
- Reduce rental costs: Provide subsidies where possible to lower housing costs and incentivize improvements. Consider rental rates based on income/ability to pay.

4. Other comments and ideas

Other themes from the conversation included the following:

- County should communicate honestly and openly about the housing situation. Improve transparency about potential projects, policies and timelines (e.g., Puente property).

- Lack of results: Several community members mentioned that the conversations about the need for affordable, safe housing have been ongoing for years and that people are discouraged because there are no results.
- Need for information on housing assistance: The County should provide clear information to community members about programs to assist with housing including financial assistance for first-time home buyers. Information should be provided on an ongoing basis (every three to six months) via flyers, text messages and updates from the Supervisor.

"The County knows what the problems are and they need to work on them."

– Participant

Next Steps

At the end of the listening session, Stephanie Perez explained that the feedback received at the meeting would be compiled into a summary report that would be presented at an upcoming Farmworker Advisory Commission meeting. The Commission will review and discuss the feedback and identify possible recommendations to present to County staff and the Board of Supervisors.