

Making Silicon Valley a Home for Everyone



35,000 total views, a rate of 800 views per month, embedded on the Dept. of Housing's "Affordable Housing Map"



48,400 views of the job classifications data set, embedded on the Human Resources Department website, with no fewer than 1,400 views a month on average, saving the department staff 4 hours of work a week



5 departments collaborating and sharing data to address housing and hunger issues



221,000 rows of property tax data by parcel now inform the discussion around affordable housing units being built in the county

San Mateo County, home to Silicon Valley, is located south of San Francisco and west of Palo Alto, California. The Bay Area county's climate is temperate, and its cities are full of yoga studios, well-ranked public schools, and plenty of restaurants and amenities. The flipside, however, is a high cost of living, and a housing shortage so severe that in a 2017 poll of all Bay Area residents, 40 percent were considering relocation due to the skyrocketing home costs.

Between 2010 and 2014, San Mateo County gained 54,600 jobs, but only 2,100 homes — during that same period, rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by 51 percent. And, with the median price of a home topping a million dollars, only 16 percent of San Mateo County households can afford to purchase one.

These hand-in-hand issues of low housing availability and rising costs have led to a migration out of the county — more than 60 percent of people employed in San Mateo live elsewhere, which in turn leads to constant traffic snarls and burdensome commutes.

Many residents and leaders in San Mateo County believe that it will only flourish when it meets the needs of all residents — not just those who are well-off — and ensures access to food, healthcare, affordable housing, and the other day-to-day services necessary for a reasonable quality of life. Home for All, a county program focused on increasing housing options, put it best: "San Mateo County is strongest when we recognize that what affects one of us affects us all."

Bringing Data to the Efforts to Improve the County's Livability

With Silicon Valley at the heart of San Mateo County — the birthplace of companies such as Netflix, Facebook, Google, and Tesla Motors — seamless delivery of services is essential. "The expectations for government technology in San Mateo County couldn't be higher," said John Ridener, open data community liaison for San Mateo County. "Residents want 24/7 access to services on their phones," and if there's a problem in the county, they want to know what's being done to fix it.

To help meet that 24/7 mobile access goal, San Mateo has invested in two Socrata-powered portals, Open San Mateo County and County of San Mateo Performance. The data on those sites is used to support and track efforts to improve services. "The Socrata platform functions as the muscles of our county. It's a great way for people to get their work done internally, and also benefits the public by allowing us to tell the story of what we're doing," Ridener said. "We can create maps, charts, and visualizations that respond to the public's needs. The platform does all the heavy lifting to make that possible."

"The property tax data set brings data to a conversation that has been fueled by strong emotions."

- John Ridener

Supplying Data, but Letting Organizations and Citizens Take the Lead

San Mateo County's guiding principle around data is to put it directly in the hands of the people and organizations who are eager to make improvements in the

community. "We work with organizations tackling issues and ask how we can help further their initiatives. That's more fruitful than if we build our own technological solutions and then look for someone to adopt them," Ridener said. That's where the county's volunteer-based Code for America (CfA) Brigade, which was co-founded by Ridener, comes in.

The group focuses on ways to improve access to social services with data-powered technology. "It's fulfilling to see how the platform helps the public use the data in a useful way," Ridener said.

Two of the biggest priorities for OpenSMC — as well as for the county government — are housing and hunger.

How Data Can Help San Mateo County's Housing Crisis

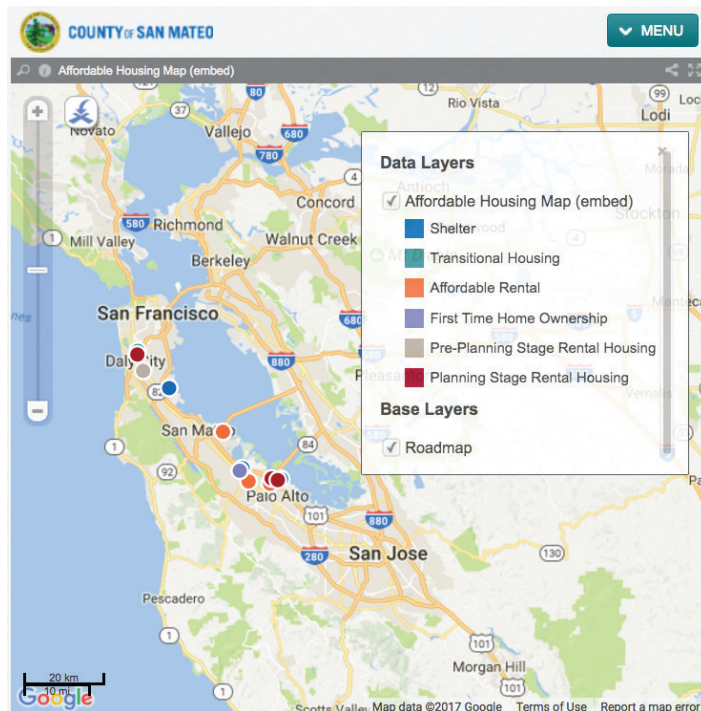
The county currently addresses the need for more housing on its County of San Mateo Performance, Home for All, and Department of Housing websites.

The performance site shares housing goals and related data. For example, San Mateo is tracking its "Housing Affordability Index," which calculates the percentage of households that can afford a median-priced home. The most recent data shows the index has dropped to 16 percent from 33 percent in 2012.

One of the most popular data sets on Open San Mateo County is a map of affordable housing, showing where projects have been approved and making the government's efforts clear. The county's Department of Housing has embedded the visual on its housing options webpage.

"I often refer people to the map who are looking for a visual of how affordable housing is spaced out around the county. People like the ease of seeing areas of concentration," said SMC Housing Department Webmaster Norman Pascoe.

Highlighting shelters, affordable rentals, and proposed affordable rentals, the map is updated daily as new data enters San Mateo's open data portal. The map embed has had nearly 35,000 total views, a rate of 800 views a month, since it was first posted.



Affordable housing map embed



"My goal is for people who live in San Mateo County to be able to use the open data without even knowing it."

John Ridener, open data community liaison for San Mateo County

Residents of San Mateo County have demonstrated their concern for housing availability by twice approving a half-cent sales tax designed to fund affordable housing programs and other quality of life services and facilities. San Mateo County tracks its use of these funds on its open performance site, including visualizations of "Leveraged Ratio of Affordable Housing Investment for Each Dollar of Local Funding Invested" and "Number of Households Benefiting Directly from County-Administered Loans and Grants for Home Purchase, Repair, or Rehabilitation."

Resistance to New Housing Met with Data

Although the funding had a resounding 70 percent "yes" vote, that doesn't mean the issue of building more housing is straightforward. Often, residents are concerned that apartment building developments will not fit the character of their city or neighborhood, and will also lead to decreased parking and even more traffic.

A newly introduced data set has the potential to address current resistance to building new housing. It shares property

tax amounts by parcel. In California, year-over-year increases to property taxes are nearly nonexistent because most are based on the original purchase price. Therefore, new housing developments can be huge revenue generators for the county. San Mateo's OpenSMC civic hacking group is using this property tax data set to create an app that allows users to explore the differing tax revenue generated by any parcel if it had a 20- or 40-unit building on it, instead of its existing structure.

"The property tax data set brings data to a conversation that has been fueled by strong emotions," Ridener said.

Improving Access to Food and Health Resources

Even after housing issues are addressed, the cost of food is another barrier to living in San Mateo County.

San Mateo County produces more Brussels sprouts than anywhere else in the world, but Ridener points out that the people who pick the produce often can't afford to purchase it. A story published in *The Atlantic*, "The Poverty Just Over the Hill," points out that the farmlands of San Mateo County often lack access to drinking water, septic, transit, and affordable food and housing.

There are resources available for lower-income residents but, often, they are unaware of the options. The county performance site reveals that the percentage of San Mateo

County residents receiving assistance through CalFresh, California's food stamps program, is below target.

Data can help drive outreach initiatives from the Human Services Agency, but OpenSMC is working to build a website called GetConnectedSMC, a combination of GetCalFresh and SMCConnect, that will easily guide residents through a questionnaire to determine eligibility for WIC, CalFresh, and other benefits, and then, direct respondents to sign-up forms or a map of nearby food banks by zip code. Residents will know where to get food today as well as in the future.

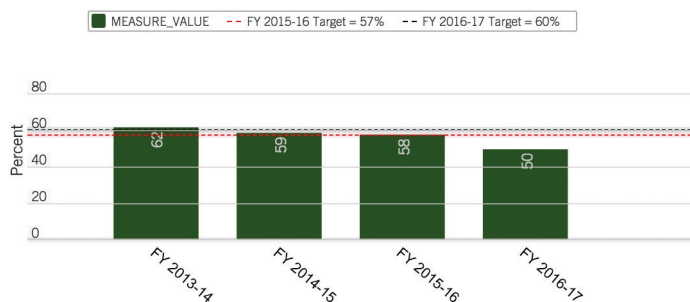
All the data for this system will be housed on the Open San Mateo County website, utilizing information from SMC Connect, which digitizes large binders of resources that were once only available to citizens at libraries.

Another project that sprung from the county's Code for America Brigade is an app that uses data to display when and where free or discounted flu shots are available in the county. The information is available on the web, but the app makes it easier to access on a mobile device. While the app itself is useful for flu shot access, Ridener believes it will be most beneficial as a framework for any time- and location-based data that's ideal to display in app form. He and the CfA Brigade plan to use it for food and housing access, as well.

Using Data Without Even Knowing It

"As we move into the future, data will play an increased role in San Mateo government," Ridener said. He believes with further automation, as well as making it second nature for departments to share data, the volume of data the county has access to will only increase, leading to a decision-making process firmly rooted in data. There will be benefits to the communities as well, when organizations, citizen groups, and developers take advantage of the plentiful data and easy access to it.

"Ultimately, my goal for the open data program is for people who live in San Mateo County to be able to use the open data without even knowing it," Ridener said.



Percent of residents receiving CalFresh benefits from total estimated population below 125% of poverty is below target

SOFTWARE THAT THINKS LIKE YOU DO.

Socrata is the market leader in making government data discoverable, usable, and actionable for public sector agencies and the people they serve. Acquired by Tyler Technologies (NYSE: TYL) on April 30, 2018, Socrata and Tyler form a perfect alliance, joining Socrata's focus on accelerating the shift to digital government with Tyler's mission to transform state and local government to create safer, smarter, and more vibrant communities. Both Socrata and Tyler empower the public sector - cities, counties, schools and other government entities - to become more efficient, more accessible and more responsive to the needs of their constituents. Tyler's client base includes more than 15,000 local government offices in all 50 states, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia and other international locations. In 2017, Forbes ranked Tyler on its "Most Innovative Growth Companies" list, and Fortune included Tyler on its "100 Fastest-Growing Companies" list. More information about Tyler Technologies, headquartered in Plano, Texas, can be found at tylertech.com.

