Beyond the Housing Challenge: Moving from Concern to Community Solutions

WASHINGTON COUNTY
BOARD OF REALTORS®



The Washington County Board of REALTORS® is committed to our community. From our world-class surroundings to the people that call Washington County home, this is an amazing place to live. As our county continues to grow, we understand that preserving the quality of life for residents will require informed, and sometimes difficult, conversations.

The Washington County Board of REALTORS® believes that when it comes to housing policy, we have more in common than not. This is why we commissioned a countywide public opinion survey. By better understanding how residents feel about housing affordability, growth, and the future of our communities, we can create housing policy that protects our quality of life and meets our housing needs.

The findings reveal both shared concerns and opportunities for common ground. By making this research available to the public, we hope to encourage constructive conversations that reflect the priorities, experiences, and aspirations of the people who call
Washington County home.

As REALTORS®, we see firsthand how housing shapes the lives of individuals, families, and the broader community. We also recognize that meaningful solutions require collaboration among residents, local leaders, businesses, and housing professionals. We are committed to being a thoughtful, solutions-oriented community partner, helping ensure Washington County remains a place where people can live, work, raise families, and build a future for generations.

A Community Worth Protecting

Washington County is a place people are proud to call home. Its natural beauty, strong communities, and quality of life have made it one of Utah's most desirable places to live. But as the county grows, maintaining the opportunities and amenities residents value requires critical, thoughtful planning for the future.

The housing market illustrates this challenge. According to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute's State of the State's Housing Market: 2025–2026, the median single-family home price in Washington County reached $580,000 in the first quarter of 2026, a 4.5% increase from the previous year. Despite continued homebuilding, just 17.1% of homes sold in 2025 were affordable to households earning 100% of area median income or less.

These numbers represent more than the cost of buying a home. They raise important questions about who can afford to put down roots, how local businesses attract and retain employees, and whether the next generation will have the same opportunities to build a future here.

Listening to the Community

Housing is deeply personal. Decisions about growth, development, and affordability affect neighborhoods, infrastructure, water resources, and the character of the communities residents love.

Recognizing these competing priorities, the Washington County Board of REALTORS® supported independent public opinion research to better understand how residents view housing affordability, growth, and the future of their community.

The findings reveal a community that values what it has built, recognizes the challenges ahead, and seeks thoughtful solutions that protect Washington County's quality of life. Understanding those perspectives is an important first step toward finding common ground.



$580K
Median single-family sale price | Q1 2026

17.1%
2025 sales affordable at or below 100% AMI

86%
Rate local quality of life good or excellent

Sources: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, State of the State's Housing Market: 2025–2026, Table 2 and Figure 35; Statara, Washington County Smart Growth Survey, August 2026.

Housing Affordability Is a Shared Concern

Washington County residents overwhelmingly agree on one issue—finding a home they can afford has become increasingly difficult.

In an August 2026 survey conducted by Statara, 80% of Washington County voters identified housing affordability as a serious problem, and 83% said finding affordable housing has become harder in recent years.

The concern extends well beyond households with the lowest incomes. Nearly nine in ten residents (88%) believe it is difficult for middle-income households to find housing they can afford, while 94% say the same for lower-income households.

A Challenge Residents See Up Close

Housing affordability is not simply a concern reflected in market reports. It is something residents are witnessing in their own families, neighborhoods and workplaces. 79% of voters personally know someone who has struggled to find housing they can afford in Washington County.

And for many, the consequences are significant. Nearly two-thirds (64%) report that they, someone in their household, or someone close to them, has considered moving because of housing costs. These findings point to a challenge that reaches across income levels and generations. Housing affordability is increasingly shaping not only where people can live, but whether they can continue to call Washington County home.

80%

Say housing affordability is a problem

83%

Say finding affordable housing has become harder

Residents see the challenge across income levels:

94%

Lower-income households

88%

Middle-income households

Source: Statara, Washington County Smart Growth Survey, August 3–6, 2026. Survey of 500 registered voters; overall margin of error ±4.4 percentage points.

Who Gets to Call Washington County Home?

Residents are concerned that the people who make Washington County a thriving community may struggle to find a place in its future. Housing affordability affects more than the ability to purchase a home. It shapes whether young adults can establish themselves in the communities where they grew up, whether essential workers can live near the people they serve, and whether long-time residents can afford to remain as their needs change.

The concern is widespread across Washington County.

The Connection to Our Local Economy

These concerns extend beyond individual households. 82% of Washington County voters believe housing costs make it difficult for local employers to recruit and retain workers, including 56% who consider it a major issue.

Together, these findings underscore a central question for Washington County's future: How do we preserve the character and quality of life residents value while ensuring that the people who contribute to our communities have opportunities to live here?

89%

THE NEXT GENERATION

Are concerned that young people who grow up in Washington County will not be able to afford to stay.

For young adults beginning their careers and families, the cost of housing can determine whether they have an opportunity to build their futures close to home.

86%

ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Are concerned that teachers, nurses, public safety personnel and other essential workers cannot afford to live in the communities they serve.

The people who educate our children, care for our families, and keep our communities safe are essential to the quality of life.

78%

SENIORS & LONGTIME RESIDENTS

Are concerned that seniors living on fixed incomes will struggle to remain in Washington County.

For older residents, housing affordability can affect the ability to stay connected to familiar neighborhoods, family, and community as their circumstances change.

Source: Washington County Smart Growth Survey, August 2026. Percentages reflect voters expressing concern about each issue or identifying housing costs as an employer recruitment and retention issue.

More Housing. Less Growth. Can We Have Both?

Washington County residents want more housing opportunities, but not at the expense of the communities they love. The survey reveals two strongly held perspectives that, at first glance, may seem difficult to reconcile.

80% of voters agree that Washington County needs more housing options for workers, young families, and seniors. At the same time, 74% agree that new housing development should be limited because of concerns about roads, water resources, and community character.

These findings highlight the complexity of addressing housing affordability in a growing community. Residents recognize that housing opportunities are becoming increasingly difficult to access, but they are also concerned about the infrastructure, resources, and planning that additional development requires.

Protecting Quality of Life Means Planning for the Future

For local leaders, these concerns create difficult decisions. New housing can create opportunities for families and workers, but development also brings questions about infrastructure capacity, water availability, transportation, and neighborhood compatibility.

The survey also reveals uncertainty about whether additional housing construction will meaningfully improve affordability. 56% of voters disagree that building more housing will reduce overall housing costs.

This skepticism matters. It suggests that simply calling for more development is unlikely to build public confidence. Residents want to understand how growth will be managed, where new housing makes sense and how decisions made today will protect the community's long-term quality of life.



A Shared Goal, Even When Priorities Differ

The challenge is not choosing between housing affordability and responsible growth—it's finding approaches that recognize the importance of both.

For Washington County, that means conversations grounded in local needs, thoughtful planning, and an honest understanding of the tradeoffs involved.

80%

Agree more housing options are needed for workers, young families, and seniors

74%

Agree new development should be limited because of roads, water, and community character

56%

Skepticism about the impact of additional construction with residents disagreeing that building more housing will reduce overall housing costs.

Sources: Statara, Washington County Smart Growth Survey, August 2026.

Finding Common Ground on Housing Solutions

Washington County residents may not agree on every approach to housing, but the survey identifies opportunities to move forward together.

When asked about specific housing policies, voters expressed varying levels of support. Proposals focused on making better use of existing developed areas and improving the development process received more favorable responses than broader changes to residential zoning.

Where Residents See Opportunity

63% support allowing older or underused commercial properties to be redeveloped for housing. Repurposing existing commercial sites offers one potential way to introduce new housing opportunities within developed areas. These projects still require careful consideration of infrastructure, compatibility, and local needs, but they may provide an opportunity to accommodate housing without relying exclusively on outward expansion.

56% support streamlining permitting and approval processes for new housing. More efficient review processes can provide greater predictability for housing projects while preserving the importance of local planning, infrastructure requirements, and community standards.

Where More Conversation Is Needed

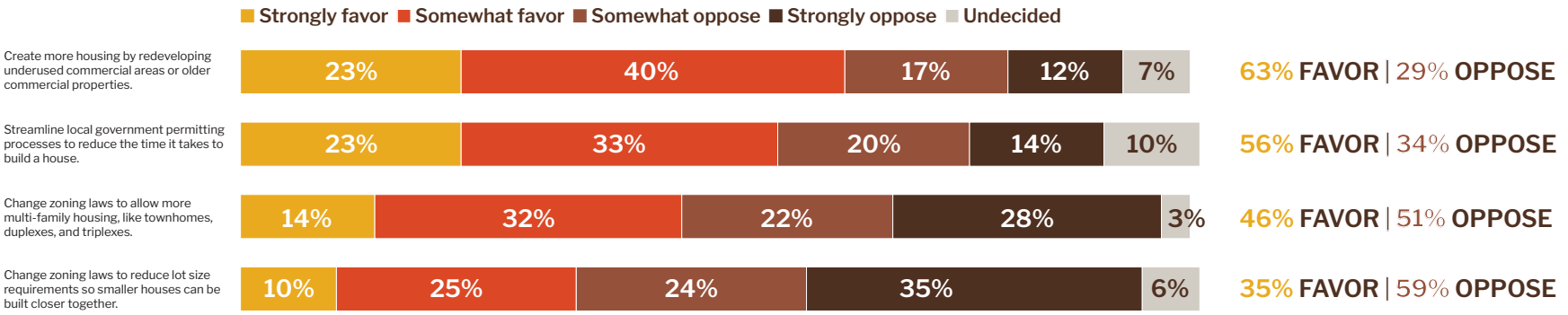
Other proposals face greater public resistance. 46% support zoning changes to allow more multifamily housing, while 51% oppose them. 35% support reducing minimum lot sizes, while 59% oppose the idea.

These findings do not suggest that every community should pursue the same solutions. Instead, they reinforce the importance of understanding local priorities, explaining the tradeoffs, and identifying approaches that respond to the needs of individual neighborhoods.

Moving From Agreement to Action

The path forward will require more than a single policy or project. It will take collaboration among local elected officials, residents, housing professionals, employers, and community partners. The survey provides a starting point: focus on practical opportunities, engage communities early, and build confidence that housing decisions can support affordability while protecting the qualities that make Washington County a desirable place to live.

Addressing Availability and Affordability Dilemma



Sources: Statara, Washington County Smart Growth Survey, August 2026.

Building a Future Worth Staying For

Protecting Washington County's quality of life means preserving the opportunity for people to build their lives here.

Across the survey, residents expressed a clear commitment to the communities they call home. They value the quality of life Washington County offers, recognize the growing challenges surrounding housing affordability, and want thoughtful decisions about how their communities grow.

That connection between housing and community well-being is especially clear in one finding: 87% of Washington County voters agree that quality of life suffers when the people who work in a community cannot afford to live there.

The Future Is a Shared Responsibility

Addressing housing affordability will not be simple. Water resources, infrastructure, neighborhood character, and the cost of housing all deserve serious consideration. Local leaders must balance these priorities while planning for the needs of both current and future residents.

There is no single solution that will work for every community. But the findings of this survey offer an important starting point: residents recognize the challenge, care about its consequences, and see opportunities for practical action.

Progress will depend on the willingness of local governments, REALTORS®, builders, employers, and community members to bring their perspectives and expertise to the table. It will require listening to legitimate concerns, understanding the tradeoffs, and working together on solutions that reflect local needs.

87%

Agree quality of life suffers when people who work in a community cannot afford to live there.

A Community Worth Working For

Washington County's future will be shaped by the decisions and partnerships being built today. The Washington County Board of REALTORS® is committed to being a constructive partner in these conversations, bringing housing market expertise, community connections, and a shared interest in preserving the opportunities that make this county such a special place to call home.

Because the measure of a thriving community is not only how it grows, but whether the people who contribute to its success can share in its future.



WASHINGTON COUNTY
BOARD OF REALTORS®
Empowering you to thrive.

1070 W 1600 S #A101, St. George, UT 84770
435.628.7374
washingtoncountyrealtors.com