

# Rumblings of rent control in Silicon Valley in 2015

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2015 was a mixed bag for both rent control advocates and opponents in Silicon Valley, with Mountain View and San Jose being the focal points of discussion for the once-taboo subject.

While no regulations were passed in San Jose, Mountain View's council approved some renter

assistance programs that left both rent control opponents and advocates dissatisfied.

## HOME OF THE DAY



### Architect's Sophisticated Beach Getaway

Read on to check out the key moments in 2015 in each city, and go to the very bottom of the story for an interactive infographic showing how rents have increased across Silicon Valley in the last year.

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#### San Jose

##### May

See All Homes of the Day Councilman [Raul Peralez](#) proposes modifying the city's rent control ordinance, which limits annual rent increases to 8 percent but only applies to units built before 1979. Peralez said he wants to lower the rent increase cap, possibly to 4 percent, and extend ordinance to cover all houses built through 1995.

##### July

City council directs staff to study policies that could strengthen rent control.

Working Partnerships USA, a labor-aligned think tank, releases the results of a survey that found 72 percent of San Jose residents expressed some degree of support for rent control that would limit annual increases to 2 percent.

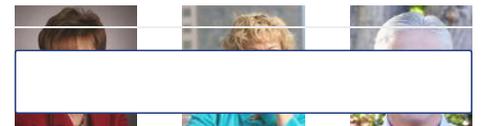
##### September

Council votes 9-2 to explore reducing the current 8 percent annual rent increase cap. Staff will conduct public meetings with landlords and tenants, and is expected to present an updated rent control ordinance to council in January 2016 (San Jose Mercury News). That date has been pushed back to March, according to San Jose Housing Director [Jacky Morales-Ferrand](#).

#### Mountain View

##### July

## PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



**Françoise  
Gilbert**

**Sharon  
Kirsch**

**Craig  
Jory**

Greenbe  
Traurig,  
LLP

McManis  
Faulkner

XL  
Construc

Renter evictions become a regular topic of discussion at council meetings.

Residents of Forest Glen Townhomes go public with their story of receiving eviction notices from their new landlord, Prometheus, because of renovations. The company ends up delaying its project and withdrawing the notices.

### August, September

Mountain View residents pack council chambers on weekly basis to share stories about rent hikes and displacement.

### October

A six-hour special session is held by the city to discuss a slew of options to assist renters, including:

Enacting rent control/stabilization measures, such as limiting how much landlords are allowed to increase rents.

A just-cause eviction statute that would only allow evictions for specific reason such as nonpayment or other breaches of the contract.

"Right to lease" regulations that would require landlords to offer a 6-month or year-long lease to tenants.

Increase direct short-term monetary assistance to renters.

An urgency ordinance that would put a temporary freeze on rent increases.

Increase tenant relocation assistance requirements, which obligate a landlord to pay a certain amount of money to evicted tenants

City council ends up not passing any of the discussed regulations in a later meeting.

### December

Council passes rent relief program, provides \$150,000 to Community Services Agency to assist tenants with rent for up to four months.

Council approves first reading of right to lease ordinance.

Council orders staff to prepare formal guidelines for a three-stage, tenant-landlord mediation program that would include binding arbitration.

(All December information comes from Mountain View Voice articles)

*Bryce Druzin is economic development reporter at the Silicon Valley Business Journal.*