

# Report: San Jose landlords are 'Cashing in on Renters'

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A new Silicon Valley housing report points a critical eye toward landlords in San Jose, many of which advocacy groups claim are taking advantage of and displacing the city's poorest renters for their own financial gain.

The report, released Wednesday, comes out just in time for an important San Jose City Council vote slated for next week that would help implement stronger protections for renters in the city. Specifically, the proposed ordinance that will be discussed next week aims to curb no-cause evictions for low-income renters and help residents get relocation funds after being displaced.



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Two City Council members – [Raul Peralez](#) and [Sergio Jimenez](#) – spoke at a public unveiling of the new housing report Wednesday afternoon in front of City Hall.

“I, and other elected officials, recognize that we live in the Valley, with such abundance such material wealth,” Jimenez said. “And we also recognize that not everyone in the Valley is doing well. That there are folks that are struggling.”

Both Peralez and Jimenez said they are in favor of passing ordinances that would protect residents from being evicted without a cause, but said they weren't sure the proposal set to be heard April 18 goes far enough in helping renters.

The new report, called “Cashing in on Renters,” was put together by nonprofits Working Partnerships USA and Silicon Valley Rising to point out the financial disparities between

renters and property owners. It paints a data- and graph-heavy picture of poor local renters being displaced and silenced by rich developers and landlords.

The report's author, [Jeffrey Buchanan](#), director of public policy at Working Partnerships, said Wednesday that San Jose is “becoming a grossly unaffordable market” in large part because of no-cause evictions.

Some landlords, he said, have pushed long-term tenants out of rent-controlled units to raise rents to market-rate levels. Lease amounts in rent-controlled units can be raised in San Jose after a tenant voluntarily leaves or is evicted.

“This is when a renter could be doing everything right,” Buchanan said. “They can be paying the rent on time, maintaining their housing, not disturbing their neighbors, and they can find themselves with an eviction notice pushing them onto the streets.”

More than 2,200 no-cause evictions have been reported in the city of San Jose since 2010, the report says.

Among them is San Jose resident [Ruby Dominguez](#), who showed up to City Hall Wednesday to talk about her experience in being evicted from her longtime rental.

She and her children gave away most of their belongings after being served with a no-cause eviction notice years ago. Dominguez, who is now in her 70s, has since been hopping from hotels and family members’ couches since, and her housing situation is still not stable, she said.

“We had a stable home until a 30-day notice took that away,” she said Wednesday through tears.

The Cashing in on Renters report shows that about 70 percent of San Jose’s apartment stock is owned by groups based outside of the region.

Many of those are large companies with more than 40 units in the area, and are raking in an average annual profit of \$2.9 million, according to the report, which pulled from studies by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and a recent San Jose Apartment Rent Ordinance study, according to the report.

[Sandy Perry](#), president of the Affordable Housing Network of Santa Clara County, said Wednesday that he knows many landlords want to retain the right to evict tenants because some may be troublemakers or drug addicts. But he rejects the idea that those are the majority of people being evicted without a cause.

In San Mateo County, about 70 percent of those evicted were households with children, according to a 2016 San Mateo eviction report by the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo and Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, which Perry referenced.

Earlier this year, during a discussion about rent increase caps in San Jose, rental property owners [turned out to a public hearing](#) to encourage the City Council to loosen restrictions

on rent increases, noting that landlords are struggling in their own right. Some, seeing the tides of change for the city in terms of tightening rental property rules and restrictions, said they have even sold their San Jose properties.

But in light of the report released Wednesday, Perry maintained he was more concerned for renters and encouraged the City Council to pass rules to protect low-income tenants.

“No matter how much they complain, property owners in Silicon Valley are not an oppressed group,” Perry said. “Property owners in Silicon Valley are a highly privileged group.”