

OpenAI, Anthropic and the AI Economy Are Reshaping Home Buying in the Bay Area, Says San Francisco Realtor Nona Ehyaei

San Francisco Realtor Nona Ehyaei shares how AI professionals are changing Bay Area homebuying and the neighborhoods they're choosing.

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As artificial intelligence transforms industries around the world, it is also reshaping one of the country's most competitive housing markets.

According to [San Francisco Realtor](#)

Nona Ehyaei, AI professionals are

becoming one of the most influential buyer groups across San Francisco and the Peninsula, bringing new priorities, faster decision-making, and renewed demand for neighborhoods that balance career opportunities with long-term quality of life.



Beautiful homes on a quiet Noe Valley street

“

Artificial intelligence isn't just creating new companies - it's creating a new generation of homeowners making long-term commitments to the Bay Area.”

Nona Ehyaei, PhD, Realtor at Compass

The rapid growth of companies including OpenAI, Anthropic, Databricks, Scale AI, Perplexity, Figma, Notion, Sierra, Google, and Meta has helped position the Bay Area at the center of the global AI economy. While much of the public conversation has focused on funding rounds, office expansion, and anticipated IPOs, Nona says another story is unfolding: AI professionals are increasingly choosing to make the Bay Area their long-term home.

"Artificial intelligence isn't just creating new companies - it is creating a new generation of homeowners who are making long-term commitments to the Bay Area."

AI Professionals Are Becoming a Larger Share of Homebuyers

According to Nona, inquiries from professionals working in artificial intelligence have increased

significantly over the past year.

Her clients have included employees from companies such as Meta, Google, OpenAI, and several venture-backed AI startups, reflecting the growing influence of the sector across the region's housing market.

"Many of these buyers aren't waiting for a future liquidity event," Nona said. "They're choosing to establish roots now because they believe the Bay Area will remain the center of AI innovation for years to come."

Rather than viewing a home as a short-term investment, many AI professionals are looking for neighborhoods where they can build careers, raise families, and become part of the local community.

Mission Bay Starts the Conversation - [Noe Valley](#) Often Wins It

Mission Bay has emerged as one of San Francisco's most important AI employment centers, but Nona says buyers rarely limit their search to the neighborhood where they work.

"Nearly every AI buyer asks me about Noe Valley."

According to Nona, buyers are attracted to Noe Valley because it offers a rare combination of quiet residential streets, walkability, highly regarded schools, neighborhood restaurants, parks, and convenient access to Mission Bay and downtown employment centers.

Other neighborhoods frequently considered include Potrero Hill, Cole Valley, Bernal Heights, Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow, the Marina District, Burlingame, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, and Palo Alto.

"People want access to the AI ecosystem, but they also want neighborhoods that feel established and livable," she said.

What Today's AI Homebuyers Want

After working with an increasing number of AI professionals, Nona has noticed several consistent priorities that distinguish today's buyers.

Dedicated home offices remain one of the most requested features, reflecting the continued importance of hybrid work and the need for distraction-free space.

Outdoor living areas are also high on buyers' wish lists, whether that means private backyards, gardens, or terraces that provide space to recharge after demanding workdays.

Quiet residential streets continue to rank ahead of nightlife for many buyers, particularly those planning to stay in the Bay Area for the long term.

Move-in-ready homes consistently outperform fixer-uppers among AI professionals.

"These buyers are incredibly busy," Nona said. "Many would rather spend their weekends exploring San Francisco than managing a renovation."

Single-family homes remain the preferred property type for many buyers, particularly those thinking about future family needs.

Lifestyle Is Becoming More Important Than Square Footage

Nona believes AI professionals evaluate homes differently than many previous generations of technology buyers.

While commute times remain important, buyers increasingly prioritize neighborhoods that offer walkability, privacy, outdoor recreation, and a strong sense of community.

Views, modern architecture, natural light, and thoughtfully designed living spaces are frequently mentioned during home searches.

"Buyers are optimizing for both commute time and for quality of life."

According to Nona, proximity to Mission Bay remains important, but buyers are equally interested in restaurants, neighborhood character, parks, schools, and places where they can build relationships outside the office.

Fast Decisions Require Preparation

One pattern has become especially noticeable.

Although AI professionals often spend considerable time researching neighborhoods before entering the market, once they decide to purchase, they move quickly.

"They're analytical. They do their homework. But once they've identified the right home, they're prepared to act."

Nona encourages both buyers and sellers to understand that preparation matters more than ever in today's market.

For buyers, that means financing, inspections, and decision-making strategies should be in place before the right property becomes available.

For sellers, understanding what this growing buyer demographic values—from home offices and outdoor space to modern finishes and move-in-ready condition—can help position a property more competitively.

Questions AI Buyers Ask Most Often

According to Ehyaei, many conversations begin with the same questions:

Should I buy before an IPO?

- Which San Francisco neighborhoods are best for AI professionals?
- Is Mission Bay the best place to live, or simply the best place to work?
- Should I buy in San Francisco or on the Peninsula?
- Which neighborhoods offer the best balance of walkability, schools, and appreciation potential?
- Is a single-family home a better long-term investment than a condominium?
- Which neighborhoods provide the shortest commute to Mission Bay while maintaining a residential feel?

"Every buyer has different priorities," Ehyaei said. "The goal isn't simply finding a house - it's finding the neighborhood that fits the life they're building."

Looking Ahead

Ehyaei expects artificial intelligence to remain one of the most important forces shaping Bay Area housing over the coming years as hiring continues, companies expand, and employees establish deeper roots throughout the region.

"The AI boom isn't just changing the economy. It's changing how people think about homeownership."

"The question I hear most isn't 'What's the biggest house I can afford?' It's 'Where do I want to build my life?'"

"As San Francisco continues to strengthen its position as the global center of artificial intelligence, I believe buyers will increasingly prioritize neighborhoods that combine community, convenience, and long-term opportunity."

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