

Project Summary

Housing Price Prediction Using Machine Learning

Decision Support System for Real Estate & Policy Analysis

Author: Lama Turki

Role: Data Scientist – Analytics & Forecasting

Tools: Python, Scikit-learn, Pandas, NumPy, Jupyter Notebook

Models: Linear Regression, Decision Tree, Random Forest

1. Project Overview

Housing price estimation is a complex problem influenced by socioeconomic, demographic, and geographic factors. Traditional pricing approaches often fail to capture nonlinear relationships between income, location, population density, and housing characteristics.

This project applies machine learning techniques to build a **data-driven decision support system** for predicting residential house prices. The goal is to evaluate multiple models, identify key price drivers, and provide actionable insights that support **real estate decision-making and housing policy analysis**.

The project demonstrates an end-to-end data science workflow, covering:

- Problem formulation
 - Data preparation and exploration
 - Model selection and evaluation
 - Business-oriented interpretation of results
-

2. Business & Policy Relevance

Accurate housing price prediction is critical for multiple stakeholders:

- **Buyers & Sellers:** Supporting fair market valuation
- **Real Estate Investors:** Assessing pricing risk and investment potential
- **Government & Policy Entities:** Monitoring housing affordability and urban development trends
- **Financial Institutions:** Supporting mortgage risk assessment

Poor price estimation can lead to financial losses, market inefficiencies, and misleading policy decisions. Predictive analytics provides a scalable and objective solution to these challenges.

3. Data Description

- **Dataset Source:** Public California Housing Dataset
- **Number of Records:** ~20,640 observations
- **Target Variable:** Median House Value

Key Features:

- Median income
- Housing age
- Average number of rooms and bedrooms
- Population size
- Latitude & longitude (location indicators)

Data Challenges:

- Feature scaling requirements
- Multicollinearity between predictors
- Nonlinear relationships between variables and housing prices

4. Methodology

Data Preparation & Exploration

- Missing value validation
- Feature scaling and normalization
- Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) to identify correlations and trends

Models Evaluated

Several models were tested to compare performance:

Model	Purpose
Linear Regression	Baseline comparison
Decision Tree Regressor	Nonlinear modeling
Random Forest Regressor	Final selected model

Why Random Forest?

Random Forest demonstrated superior performance by:

- Capturing nonlinear patterns
- Modeling feature interactions

- Providing robustness against overfitting
-

5. Model Evaluation

Performance was evaluated using:

- **R² Score**
- **Mean Absolute Error (MAE)**
- **Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE)**

Final Model Results:

- Strong predictive accuracy
 - Stable generalization on unseen test data
 - Clear improvement over linear baseline models
-

6. Key Insights

- **Median income** is the strongest predictor of housing prices
 - **Geographic location** (latitude & longitude) significantly impacts valuation
 - **Ensemble models** outperform traditional linear approaches
 - Housing prices are driven by **interacting factors**, not single variables
-

7. Business Interpretation

The final model can be used as a **decision-support tool** for:

- Residential price estimation
- Market comparison analysis
- Risk-aware investment decisions
- Housing affordability monitoring

This demonstrates how machine learning models can translate raw data into **strategic insights** for both commercial and public-sector use cases.

8. Limitations

- Model performance depends on historical data
- Sudden market shocks (policy changes, economic crises) are not captured
- External macroeconomic indicators (interest rates, inflation) are excluded

9. Future Enhancements

Potential improvements include:

- Incorporating temporal data for trend-based forecasting
 - Adding economic indicators such as interest rates
 - Deploying the model as an interactive dashboard or API
 - Integrating explainable AI techniques for transparency
-

10. Conclusion

This project demonstrates the practical application of machine learning for housing price prediction and decision support. It highlights strong analytical thinking, model evaluation skills, and the ability to translate technical outputs into business-relevant insights—key competencies for a Data Scientist role in analytics, forecasting, and policy-driven environments.



GitHub Repository

github.com/lamloom-maker/ml-decision-support-system