

Mayor's Housing Quality Task Force Meeting Notes

Housing Affordability Sub-Committee

Date: June 29, 2016

Time: 10:30AM-12PM

Location: City Hall, Council Briefing Center

Defining Housing Quality & Setting Standards:

HUD's Definition:

- In general, housing for which the occupant(S) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs (i.e. insurance and taxes) and including utilities.
- Housing is affordable if they have income to pay for other essential needs i.e. transportation, health (medical), food, child care, taxes, clothing...etc.

Housing Affordability: Accessibility

A. Accessibility to Vibrant Neighborhoods – Economic Development

- Transportation
- Child Care
- Groceries
- Quality Education
- Schools
- Disability Accessible Unites
- Recreational Opportunities
- Walk-ability
- Safety
- Diverse
- Employment (including training)
- Funding Reserves (i.e. a savings account and/or emergency funding)

B. Mixed-income

C. Mixed-use

Housing Affordability sub-committee accepted the above definition of Housing Affordability and the list of standards.

- The definition is general enough to consider other essentials people need and that should be include in defining affordability. The second paragraph indicated that there are other standards that need to be considered and that for some people 30% may be too high in order to have access to additional necessities/standards i.e. health care, child care...etc.

- The definition incorporates the idea of raising people’s employment skills in order to have the ability to seek/obtain better jobs to get to a better standard of living.
- **Doing further research in order to define what affordability means for varying family sizes.**

Prioritizing Recommendations:

- 1 – **Inclusionary Housing** (*look into a targeted area approach*)
- 2 – **Development of registry which tracks affordable housing units developed**
- 3 – **Affordable Housing Impact Statement**
- 5 – **Enact relocation assistance ordinance for tenants displaced by development**

Combined Recommendations:

- 4, 6, 7, 8 (three groups combined this set of recommendations in to one recommendation)
 - **Prohibit Discrimination (refusal to rent) against Section 8 Voucher holders, Enact Just Cause Eviction Ordinance, Source of income protection; minimizing eviction impact; minimizing felony impact, prohibit discrimination against people with criminal histories that don’t impact safety.**
 - The recommendation would focus on providing a broader protection to renters regarding discrimination.
- 15, 16
 - **Establish local Housing Trust Fund that would make funds available for developing affordable housing and Housing Trust Fund would support by the City to increase state funds available for affordable housing.**
 - The recommendation would support the state Housing Trust Funds and would include a local conversation regarding housing affordability.
- 1, 20 (two groups combined this set of recommendations into one recommendation)
 - **Inclusionary Housing, Spokane City should be aggressive to make its own properties available to increase housing density.**
 - If the City was selling a city of property and/or requesting for an improvement to a city property then it should be tied to inclusionary zoning because in most cases city wide inclusionary zoning is not palatable but there may be opportunities on a property by property basis. An example would be to focus inclusionary zoning on areas that have accessibility to other amenities/transportation in order to create affordable housing opportunities and more density. This would result in the ability of offering market value housing and affordable housing or mixed-incomes.
- 12, 14, 15, 16 (two groups recommended this combination)
 - **Multi-family Tax Exemption, Waiving permit fees for affordable housing projects, Establish local Housing Trust Fund, and City support to increase state funds available for affordable housing (this item to provide the funding for implementation).**

- Currently the City can offer the Multiple-family Housing Property Tax Exemption to developers however developers don't typically apply for the exemption because the process for remaining tax exempt is too burdensome for the developer. Recommendation to evaluate the renewal process and consider removing the renewal process in order to encourage affordable housing development. Another recommendation would be to include additional incentives for the developer beyond the Tax Exemption to build affordable housing. If the developer chooses to participate in the Tax Exemption process then they become eligible for other incentive, the requirement would be the developer must develop affordable housing.
 - Item 12 currently exists, need more information.
- 10, 11 (two groups recommended this)
 - **Rental Registration Program/Rental Inspection Program and/or Rental Business License.**
 - A recommendation would be to identify a program where the fees for landlords to receive a Rental Business License would fund the Rental Inspection Program.
- 10
 - **Focusing this recommendation solely on the Rental Registration Program and/or Rental Business License**
 - Group felt that the Rental Registration and/or the Rental Business License would be a quick win whereas the Rental Inspection Program would take more time to implement.
- 14
 - **Permit Waivers** – Need to find out if this is something that is already in place/practice.
- 16
 - **Housing Trust Fund** – Recommend that the City get behind what the State Commerce program is doing in order to ask for increased funding locally.
- 17
 - **Water/Sewer tap notice when repaving** – Already being implemented.
- 21, 22
 - **Spokane City should be aggressive to make its own properties available to increase housing density, Consider other uses for infill; parks, stores, libraries...etc.**

Not currently on the list: Additional Recommendations

Land Trust – City owned property that could go into the land trust for affordable housing.
 Making the land/property permanently affordable.

Land Banking vs. Land Trust

Land Banking – purchasing property and developing at a later time. Acquiring various properties and develop at a later date. The Washington State Housing Finance Program allows people to borrow money to land bank properties for 4-8 years and develop later. Additionally, this allows for people to purchase properties next door to one another until they've acquired several parcels that will be eventually developed.

Land Trust – place the land into a trust to make it more affordable for development. In doing this it removed the cost of purchasing the land by leasing the land to the developer over a period of time. The City has the potential to fund a Land Trust by using the funds from City land sold to fund the Trust.

Recommendation to revive/resume the Spokane Community Land Trust.

Community Meeting Feedback:

- 50+ people in attendance
- Various groups attended the meeting (i.e. neighborhood people, landlords, tenants, developers...etc.)
- Questions asked at the meeting:
 - What is Housing Quality?
 - What is Housing Affordability?
 - What are the barriers?
 - What are the solutions?
- Good overlap in recommendations made by the community and the sub-committees