

King County Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2022 | 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

Introductions

Members & Voting Alternates	Present	Alternate	Members & Voting Alternates	Present	Alternate
CC Claudia Balducci	X		CM Ryan McIrvine	X	
Don Billen			CM Teresa Mosqueda	X	
Susan Boyd	X		Michael Ramos	X	
Alex Brennan	X		Kelly Rider	X	
Jane Broom	X		Mayor Lynne Robinson	X	
Kelly Coughlin	X		Russell Joe	X	
CM Jeanne Kohl-Welles	X		Brett Waller	X	
Mayor Nigel Herbig	X	CM Amy Falcone	Tim Walter	X	
CM Marli Larimer	X	CP Lindsey Walsh	Maiko Winkler-Chin	X	

Non-voting Alternates

DM Dana Parnello	X
CM Chris Stearns	X
CM Dan Strauss	
CM Rob Wotton	X

* CC = Council Chair, CM = Councilmember, CP = Council President, DM = Deputy Mayor

Introductions and Agenda Review

- The Chair welcomed Affordable Housing Committee (AHC or Committee) members and Community Partners Table members in attendance

Action Item: Adoption of April 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes

- Vote to approve by CM Amy Falcone, seconded by Mayor Robinson
- Approved

Briefing: Community Partners Table

- Sarah Ballew, Change Management and Policy Consultant with Headwater People, provided an update on Community Partners Table progress and the development of their recommendations report
- Sarah invited present Community Partners Table members to share the following highlights from their recommendations report:
 - There is a huge need for affordable housing in East King County. The bulk of the current housing supply is affordable to those earning above 80 percent of area median income (AMI), but more housing is needed for households earning between 30 percent to 50 percent AMI. Low-wage workers cannot afford to live in East King County, so they have to take multiple buses to get to work.

- South King County provides affordable housing and also needs more affordable housing to grow with increasing demand.
- South King County needs as much affordable housing as East King County because there are a lot of low- and middle-income people in the area. People are moving to South King County because they cannot afford other areas. There are also low-income people and blue-collar workers who do not have appropriate housing in South King County because they cannot afford the area.
- A Table member shared that Kent’s Housing Action Plan talks about the need for housing under 30 percent AMI. The Table member raised the need to think about the other services needed to support people, such as access to education, healthcare, and transportation to build a strong community. The data gathered by the Community Partners Table shows that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) families have larger families than the average King County family. Seventy-six percent of BIPOC folks who responded to an Open Doors for Multicultural Families survey indicated that they have more than three people in their household. The Table member discussed the need affordable homeownership opportunities, in addition to affordable rental housing, so families can accumulate wealth. The Table member encouraged the Committee to think about all the factors that intersect with affordable housing, such as income, age, mobility, access to food or technology.
 - Housing needs to be accessible for elders and people with disabilities because there are many households that are multi-generational.
- The Chair expressed appreciation that the Community Partners Table is pointing the Committee towards the characteristics in addition to affordability that create healthy and inclusive communities. The Committee will need to think about how to build those characteristics into planning.
- Committee member stated that the report is missing recommendations about access to after-school programs and how children can get to school.
 - Table member responded that access to after-school programs is encompassed in wraparound services and early childhood services and that these are factors that impact a family’s housing stability.
- Committee member asked how to build affordable housing into the entire community and prevent the segregation of affordable housing and low-income households.
 - Table member responded that the biggest challenge for affordable housing development is finding funding sources for low-income affordable housing. The Table member stated that eliminating red tape would allow market-rate and low-income developers to come together to create mixed-income developments.

Decision: Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) Motion 21-1 Accountability Framework

- McCaela Daffern, lead staff to the Committee with King County’s Department of Community and Human Services, briefed the AHC on:
 - GMPC Motion 21-1 requirement to recommend to the GMPC an accountability and implementation framework for equitably meeting affordable housing needs across King County
 - The framework actions and resulting areas of support and questions from the prior AHC and GMPC meeting
 - The staff response to AHC questions for *Action 1a. Plan Review* and *Action 1b. Plan Review and Certification*

- The Chair opened the floor for questions
 - Table member: In my experience, if there are no clear measures, they will not be implemented. A yes/no approach is not successful. Even if we just have a yes/no approach, we need to ask “why yes” or “why not.”
- Committee members discussed the accountability and implementation framework
 - Committee member expressed concern about jurisdictional capacity to participate in certification, but still sees value in certification and wants it to happen in some manner. Fully supports *Action 1a Plan Review* and pilot of *Action 1b Plan Review and Certification* with subset of cities. A clear process and checklist will make it more clear and less time-consuming for jurisdictions. Piloting certification with a subset of different types of cities has multiple benefits because it would allow more time to process certification and work out any problems that arise. A pilot might also alleviate some cities’ concerns if they see other cities go through the process. If it goes well, a roll-out can happen from there.
 - Another Committee member discussed an additional benefit with piloting certification. Staff and cities can learn from the experience and cities can go through process without any penalty.
 - Another Committee member stated that the compromise of a full plan review and pilot of certification is an interesting in-between option. Is there a way to structure a pilot into *Action 2b* to make it more effective and practical too? They then expressed support for a pilot. It is important to remember that regardless of if county does certification, all jurisdictions must comply with Washington State law with updates to comprehensive plan. It’s always better to know ahead of time if cities need help. This has potential to be a time saver and cost saver.
 - Another Committee member agreed with the approach, stating that other cities going through the process first would be helpful for smaller cities
 - Staff asked if Committee members have other options they want explored.
 - Committee member raised concern that an opt-in approach might only encourage big cities to participate. They want to incentivize a diverse set of jurisdictions to participate in order to have a fruitful pilot.
 - The Chair agreed that a pilot needs to have geographic diversity and cities of different sizes and from different places in the county. A proposal should name specific cities. The process could start with volunteer jurisdictions but then might need to recruit more jurisdictions.
 - Staff requests more detail about what opt-in looks like when thinking about staff capacity for jurisdictions to participate in this process. Another potential idea is framing this process as a continuous improvement opportunity rather than just an opt-in approach. Cities could learn through the review process and provide feedback.
 - The Chair summarized questions that came up during discussion:
 - How many cities participate? Is five a reasonable number?
 - How do we identify the cities?
 - This exercise could test certification and provide a sampling of a deeper review of some jurisdictions.
 - A Committee member raised concerns about staff capacity for small jurisdictions like Snoqualmie and North Bend. The Committee member suggests providing resources to participate in this process.
 - The Chair responded that King County does not have extra staff capacity either so the Committee will have to consider resources for this process

- A Committee member suggested using the checklist that the cities will have to complete and develop a methodology for the Committee to evaluate that checklist so there is less burden put on jurisdictions. The Committee member also suggested not naming cities or removing names from the comprehensive plans when reviewing the plans so the review is done in a neutral manner.
- A Committee member suggested reaching out to the Department of Commerce for potential funding resources. Commerce could potentially give grant funding preference to jurisdictions opting into a certification review to acknowledge the additional responsibility taken on by the jurisdiction. Commerce could also provide grants for consulting support to support the AHC staff and jurisdictions.
- The Chair stated that the certification pilot should be an educational opportunity rather than punitive.
- A Committee member asked if there are any jurisdictions willing to volunteer.
- A Committee member stated they hope Kirkland will volunteer.
- The Chair suggested Committee members asked their cities if they would be willing to participate in the process.
- Staff asked if there is a need to check in with the parent committee, the GMPC
- The Chair stated that she does not think there is a need for the GMPC's authority since this is a pilot.
- Staff stated they have enough information to move forward and will check in on this work at the July meeting.
- The Committee empowered staff to develop a proposal that works in practice.

Action 2a. Monitor and Report and Action 2b. Monitor, Report, & Require Adjustments

- McCaela presented the staff response to AHC questions for *action 2a. Monitor & Report* and *Action 2b. Monitor, Report, & Require Adjustments*
- Members were asked “Are you supportive of *2a. Monitor and report* or *2b. Monitor, report, and require adjustments?*”
 - Committee member stated the Sound Cities Association AHC caucus supports *2b* because this is how jurisdictions can be held accountable. There is time to build this process out and the Committee member looks forward to developing the definitions. The Committee member raised several questions that need to be answered:
 - Should the Committee consider an appeals process?
 - How will the process credit cities who contribute to affordable housing regionally through ARCH?
 - How do we incorporate Community Partners Table member priorities?
 - Committee member expressed support for *2b* because there is time to figure out how to make it work well. The pilot can be a learning experience that can inform what *2b* implementation looks like.
 - Staff stated they will bring Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) amendments for the Committee to consider in September, and if any questions arise, staff will bring these questions to the Committee in July.
 - The Chair proposed proceeding with *Action 1a* with a pilot of plan certification and *Action 2b*.
 - Mayor Robinson motioned to move forward with the proposal and CM Amy Falcone seconded the motion.
 - A Committee member stated this is a thoughtful proposal.

- The Chair stated this proposal creates accountability and agrees that this is a thoughtful approach.
- The Chair called for a voice vote. No Committee members opposed, so the motion carried unanimously.

Direction: GMPC Motion 21-1 Jurisdictional Shares of Countywide Housing Needs

- Sunaree Marshall, Housing Policy and Special Projects Manager with King County’s Department of Community and Human Services, briefed the Committee on the GMPC Motion 21-1 requirement to establish subregional or jurisdictional affordable housing needs, informed by local data and Commerce’s data
- Staff invited members to ask clarifying questions:
 - A Committee member raised concerns about using Census data because in their experience, the Census does not provide accurate data about unincorporated King County. The Committee member was nervous about using Census data due to the number of migrant workers who may not be represented in the data. The Committee member believes the data does not accurately represent income levels for unincorporated King County. The Committee member also stated the need for workforce housing is missing.
 - Staff responded that there is a member of Commerce’s Advisory Committee informing the development of countywide need projections that works on farmworker issues who has raised similar concerns. Farmworkers are not covered in statute, but this does need to be tracked. The County allocates to urban areas throughout the County, including in unincorporated King County urban areas.
 - A Committee member stated they do not see any focus on vouchers which allows people to integrate into their communities. The Committee member stated the Committee should advocate for more vouchers.
 - Staff responded that Commerce’s draft guidance allows using vouchers to reach smaller allocation goals. Staff stated vouchers can be used together with other subsidies to reach deeper affordability levels.
 - A Committee member stated conversation about equitable distribution of affordable housing between jurisdictions is critical, but it may be more important to have equitable distribution of affordable housing within jurisdictions. The Committee member stated the Committee needs to be cautious of creating massive blocks of affordable housing to avoid community pushback. Upzoning can be a method to create both mixed-use development and mixed-income affordable housing
 - Staff responded that there are CPP policies about equitable distribution throughout a jurisdiction to avoid a concentration of affordable housing. Inclusionary housing is also a method to have mixed-income buildings. Financing sometimes requires an entire building to be affordable.
 - A Committee member stated that even with source of income discrimination protections, voucher holders rely on affordable housing units because federal rental caps sometimes force tenants with vouchers to pay more than 30 percent of their income in rent. It is important to have affordable housing so voucher holders can live in their communities.
 - A Committee member stated that small communities are concerned about the emphasis on transit-oriented funding. Snoqualmie has 3,500 people commuting a day on Highway

18 but there is no transit. People live in more affordable areas such as Kent or Covington but are forced to drive to other cities, requiring households to have two cars. A better transit system would allow households to reduce their reliance on cars, freeing up money for other things. A robust transit system would be cheaper and faster than addressing affordable housing needs. The Committee member stated that smaller jurisdictions need more flexibility because they do not have the ability to absorb the amount of housing needed.

- Staff presented three methods to allocate housing: Method 1 – Housing Needs Allocation Tool (HNAT); Method 2 – Weighted Allocation; Method 3 – HNAT without Housing Growth Targets as a Cap on Need Allocations
 - Staff asked the Committee if it makes sense to pursue the presented methods and if there is anything missing from what was presented. Staff will bring back more detail as Commerce’s guidance evolves.
 - The Chair is interested in seeing what constraints are causing different outcomes in order to compare the methods. She is interested in what non-constrained growth targets look like compared to constrained growth targets
 - Table member stated that if decisions are left to jurisdictions themselves, they will not cover the people most in need. Method 1 is better than the other two because it takes care of the people who are most in need.
 - The Chair agreed that the focus on those most in need is important, especially if there is a cap.
 - A Committee member agreed with the Table member. They state there is a tension between the cap of the overall growth targets and the overall affordable housing needs is something the Committee needs to dig into. The Committee member does not think the Committee should throw out the growth targets but at the same time, anticipates the Committee will find places where the affordable housing need is significantly above growth targets. If that happens, the Committee will need to revisit growth target allocation or to find a way to fund affordable housing within the existing housing stock.
 - A Committee member asked about how jobs and related factors (salaries, location of jobs, etc.) are incorporated into these methods. The Committee member also stated that these methods are not talking about preventing homelessness. The Committee should have conversations about how to identify people who are about to become homeless and provide them with the necessary support to prevent homelessness.
 - Staff responded the second method incorporates the location of low-wage jobs.
 - A Committee member expressed concerns about creating unattainable targets. They asked if there is recognition of naturally occurring existing affordable housing or just the units that have a covenant or income-restrictions. The Committee member stated it is important to prioritize weighing jobs, wages, transportation (not just built transportation but also buses). The Committee member also asked how these methods scale for small cities, especially for cities with small housing allocations or cities that contribute towards housing built in other cities with entities like ARCH.
 - Staff responded that the methods focus on the need without taking into account available resources. The goal is to determine if jurisdictions are ready for resources that may come in for housing. Staff will research the question further of naturally occurring affordable housing and income restricted housing. Staff hear that jobs and wages are important factors. The dataset staff currently has is a bit of a crude measure (measures whether job pays above or below

- \$75,000). For ARCH cities, allocations can be provided first and then discuss methods on how to meet the allocations through partnerships.
- Staff asks if transit should be weighted more in the methods.
 - A committee member asked if there is a way to take the transit factors further by using other aspects like bus-rapid transit, light rail, transit frequency, to show how much more effective those areas are for people with lower income.
 - A Committee member would like to see more emphasis on transit.
 - A Committee member asked if it is possible to look at existing housing affordability and how it pairs up to existing transit
 - Staff responded that the County has a dashboard map that includes level of affordability near planned and existing transit. Staff will determine what else can be said about transit depending on available data.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- The Chair wrapped up with possible agenda items for the next meeting on July 27, including:
 - Community Partners Table update
 - Consideration and selection of a preferred affordable housing target methodology
 - Possible direction to staff on various CPP amendment questions