

**Transcribed Notes from SW Community Learning and Listening Session on Affordable Housing
Saturday, October 14, 2017**

When light rail arrives, *what is your greatest hope or aspiration for housing in the SW Corridor?*

- Housing preserved along the corridor so that they remain affordable
- Increase diversity of housing choices. Many people don't fit into the "3 bedroom" choice.
- Housing remains affordable and that the transit line is accessible to residents
- Density around transit
- Walkability to transit and within neighborhoods. More density (housing) near light rail
- Makes sense to have multi-family housing around MAX Line. Building density and planning neighborhoods, not just have town centers, Big buildings (projects). Need some open space to make livable. Fix I-5/Capitol Hwy interchange. Work with Barbur World Foods and similar local businesses to build neighborhood. Any way to beautify the world's ugliest throughway (i.e. Barbur Blvd)? Make it easy for current homeowners to build ADUs in area around the corridor to dedicate to Affordable Housing.
- Implement Affordable Housing and infrastructure (sidewalks, bike paths) benefits along corridor earlier that start of construction. Don't wait for federal \$ for transit. Minimize displacement of current Affordable Housing and businesses. Increase density within communities to counter housing segregation by income and race (no 'projects'). It is socially healthier to do this.
- I hope for:
 - Comfort, personal space
 - Affordable housing options
 - Density near transit
 - Access to transit
 - Broad range of housing choices
- More dense housing near stations. Could be mixed with commercial/jobs
- More density near transit stations. For people who are here in need now! Not for high income newcomers. Local people.
- A lot of affordable housing in SW Corridor to assist in relieving driving and making it affordable to remain in area. Public/private partnership before private development for any property that developed first.
- Community are satisfied with solution and community buy-in

- Current residents along SW Corridor are able to reap the benefits of the new transit line and are able to continue to live in their communities without being displaced
- Maintain existing community needs while protecting mixed income housing growth. A blend of price points in new construction with subsidized affordable and lots of middle income housing.
- Affordable, Diverse, Welcoming, Open/friendly, Representative of the community, Environmentally friendly, Accessibility to schools and resources
- Everyone who needs a place to live has a place to live
- I think that instead of “when” the question should be “how”. Will we pursue a strategy that can produce efficient and “equitable” housing in SW Metro Portland regardless of whether or not light rail is built. I would also encourage that a process be identified that makes sure that and all housing in the area sustainable and resilient.
- Families and households who call this place home can find/keep housing that meets their needs before and after new services is provided.
- City policies that require affordable and age friendly housing along corridor. High enough for elevators that are feasible- handicapped-accessible. 0 step entry. Bathroom on first floor. Hallways and doorways wider than normal.
- Tualatin Park and Ride – planned for 10 story building with parking, mixed use and housing - Owned by government now
- Rent stays low.
- LRT is an opportunity to expand housing choices. There’s a question: How do we preserve the existing housing and the goal is to figure out how to make that happen: preserve and expand housing options for ALL in the corridor.
- Affordability, developer funding for affordable housing, maintain diversity
- 690 affordable units in Tigard. 49 added since 2003. Rent increases ~77% each year, therefore ~\$75/mo. Affordable housing for people who are here, in need, not for high income newbies.
- Realize the value of public investments. Remain mindful of impacts and avoid known mistakes. Serve marginalized communities.
- Policies that require affordable, age friendly housing close to light rail. High enough to have elevators financially feasible, 4-6 floors. This makes all units friendly to all TABS “Temporarily Able Bodied” (AARP phrase). Helps with moms/dads with strollers + ADA issues
 1. 0 step entrance
 2. Bathroom on 1st floor
 3. Wider (a little wider) halls + doorways
 Tigard wants affordable housing! Housing for people who live here now.

- More diverse neighborhood with opportunities to intermingle
- I've lived here since college – went to PCC and PSU by bus. I want people my daughter's age to be able to live here the way I could when I was young.
- Walkable villages with a good mix of single-family, apartments, condos, sizes, open spaces, fun streets, trees, libraries, schools, entertainment places

Notes from group discussions:

Group 1:

Main point: Breaking cycle of poverty by de-segregation housing and ensuring access to training/jobs

Challenges:

- Increase afford/accessible for refugees in SW but not in large projects- INTEGRATED in community
- Economic inequality for immigrant/refugees needs to be tackled
- Prejudice against immigrant/refugees needs to be addressed
- Market forces working against preservation/creation of more affordable

Ideas:

- Look at Mormon model- immigrant/refugee work half day, train half day (language and skills)
- Mixed income developments, inclusionary zoning – CET
- Rent control (change state laws)
- "NOAH" acquisition fund
- Why do regulators create so many barriers to financing mixed-income properties?

Group 2 (Matt/Bimal):

Rental challenges:

- Management by property owners
- Training
- Location of affordable housing in high traffic areas

Rental solutions:

- Locate close to green spaces needed
- Community gardening

Homeownership challenges:

- Displacement – avoiding of renters/owners and businesses
- Access to scenery and transit
- Funding differently between PDX and Tigard
- Cost per houses – property taxes

Homeownership solutions

- Investment in people
- Regional funding/ integrated approach with local dollars
- Local funding push needed. Voters involvement needed

Planning and Implementation

- Jurisdictional level (PDX and Tigard together)
- Overall approach also

Housing strategy needed to be ready with LPA

Funding mechanism besides URA

Other issues:

- Relocation?
- Predatory action going on – targeting low-income homeowners
- Emergency preparedness?
- Solar panels
- Seismic and green building
- Flood plain issues

Solutions:

- Pocket or hub communities like Orenco Station
- Katz wanted dense housing like Brooklyn, NY
 - “I lived in NYC- grocery, school and transit and parks within 10-minute walk”
- Look into NYC Co-op laws
- Require new building to be ADA to begin with – then you don’t have to move later

Group 3

Challenges:

- State land use rules
- Developer lobby
- Lack of mixed-use property, zoning inflexibility outside of corridor. Need broader zoning footprint
- NIMBY attitude
- Short-sighted development approaches
 - No “master plan” communities
- Service-district charges

Ideas:

- Variety of housing options
- Including mixed-use, multi-level and
- handicap accessible choices

Group 4:

Challenges:

- Everyone is trying to make as much money as possible right now (landlords)
- This is a big change for residents along the corridor. It’s a big project that will change rent costs.
- Need money and permanent community commitment. Needs to stay affordable forever
- Displacement of existing residents
- Advertising of holistic view, how it all fits together
- Community control/ownership of land and housing

Big Ideas:

- Government should buy land for affordable housing
- Money, permanent affordability
- TriMet has the money, they need to make a commitment to housing

Key idea/Need:

- Money and commitment from who’s driving the transportation project (TriMet)
- Don’t act on transit until housing money is secured

Group 5:

Renter challenges:

- No control over rent
- Less choices for affordable housing in SW. Historic lack of investment
- Less financing options available to combat gentrification

Ideas:

- Action to incentivize developers to take part in solutions (development agreements)
- Leverage opportunities with market institutions (OHSU, PCC, others?)
- What role do employers have to ensure housing here?
- Homeshare opportunities
 - Cultural change to live in community
- Ensuring a mix of housing stock, not just single family and large apartment buildings
- Addressing a range of accessibility options thru housing
- Ensuring a variety of amenities are coupled with housing (groceries, transit, walkability, banks, drugstore -> affordable housing? etc.)

Group 6 (Asher/Pamela)

Biggest challenges to anti-displacement:

- Greed/cash in on investment (note unreasonable!)
 - What is fair compensation for both property owner and renter?
 - Incentives are needed, or reallocate resources
 - *Families need stability!*
- Real estate development is slow
- Domino effect of project planning
 - *Long-term planning*

Ideas:

- Location of new rail lines should not impact existing affordable housing - subsidized or natural
- Moving is expensive – People need relocation assistance
- If eminent domain is exercised, tenants should benefit
- Require housing for very low income households at all new development – make it a condition of permit
 - Affordable precedes market rate
- Focus on deeply affordable
- Rents need to be affordable without subsidy (Section 8)

Questions that should be considered:

- Low-income renter and homeowner services – Don't ignore, they keep households stable
- Engage people who are currently on the streets to find out what services are most needed
 - Currently unhoused people aren't included in this discussion
- Shared housing model for unrelated people? Current code limits to 5 unrelated people.
- Shared housing clearing house
- Townhouses – Not accessible. People need ground floor flats or elevators

Group 7

Displacement:

- In-home accessibility/aging in place
- Taxes increasing
- Costs of buying and maintaining homes rising
- Water/utility bills rising
- Crime
- Concern of renter protection in renting apartment affecting supply of affordable housing
- Increase ease of more ADUs

Ideas:

- Sales tax
- Decrease car use, increase transit
- Increasing walkable access...
- Tool/other sharing resources at very local level
- Free/cheap circulator/ smaller circuit buses
- Update existing row infrastructure (S/W, etc.)
- Keep away of from isolating/grouping lower income households
- Pro-integration

Challenges to new homeowner opp:

- Prioritize housing for families
- Safety, solidarity, comfort to grow from
- Increasing middle housing options

Ideas:

- Incentives to convert larger homes to increase units within
- Age friendly! Universal design
- With limited supply require residency or other eligible requirements (like taking families first) for units
- Are amenities (affordable units) attracting even more lower income residents?

Notes from discussion questions handout:

1. What are the biggest challenges facing this issue?

- Education of residents re: options and resources
- State land use laws (renter control) – change
- Mixed housing stock – multi-use structures
- Buildings need to be accessible
- Need one level homes for aging population
- Service district and utility costs – problem for fixed income people
- Portland tax structures too high compared to other jurisdictions
- Avoiding displacement
 - People, services, businesses
- Reducing housing cost increases – preserving affordability
- URA Fund drawbacks – Lag in accumulating sufficient revenue, capital projects only none for services
- Displacement of renters and homeowners who can't afford property taxes (in PDX)
- Environmental justice if affordable housing is in a busy traffic corridor (air pollution, noise, safety issues)
- Need housing stability especially for children and seniors
- Renter restrictions/protections can be too disruptive
 - Issues: taxes increasing, maintenance, high water bills, no sales tax, incent public transit, increased crime

2. What are the big ideas to overcome these challenges?

- Waive system development fees (water/sewer etc.)
- Age friendly/universal design
- Zoning that accommodates a larger variety of homes and people
- Developers are not always the best people to make the type of housing (co-op housing) needed
- Incentivizing builders to build smaller homes instead

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- 4 stories for an elevator
 - Preserve existing de-facto affordable housing
 - Fund maintenance in exchange for long-term affordability limited rent increases
 - Investments in people
 - Training, childcare for parents getting training/edu, provision of headstart, apprenticeship (women in trades) – IDA accounts for education and housing
 - Investment in community: energy and transit that more generally reduce housing costs – Bike/ped/multimodal transportation
 - Increase options to develop underutilized land (rezone, especially within 1 mile of transit). Build more multi-family units of all kinds – “missing middle”
 - Need greenspaces nearby affordable housing
 - Need services such as parks and community gardens and schools and community centers and libraries and grocery stores as much as transit (and places for worship)
 - Sales tax
 - Metro home share
 - ADU ease
 - Update sidewalks and bike paths near affordable housing
 - Mixed income

3. What are the questions you want to be considered as the housing strategy is developed?

- Need plenty of parks and green spaces, trees, good air quality, public plazas.
- How can newly developed spaces address historic environmental inequities?
 - Locate proximate to top and avoid extreme pollution exposure (property swaps)
- How can we encourage/incentivize multi-family property owners to maintain long-term affordability?
- Land banking needs to be done now because property values continue to soar. Look at areas within half mile of existing frequent transit service as well as SWC stations.