

Affordable Housing Steering Committee

Thursday, July 29th, 2021, 3:00 PM
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Summary Minutes

In attendance	
<u><i>Steering Committee Members:</i></u> Emily Harris-Shears - <i>Affordable Housing Trust Fund Administrator, City of Missoula</i> Carrie Benton – <i>Seeley Lake community member</i> Andrea Davis – Homeward	<u><i>Community and Planning Services staff:</i></u> Jordan Lyons, Housing Specialist Melisa Gordon, GCP Manager Karen Hughes, Asst. Director CAPS Chet Crowser, Director CAPS Heather Powers, Administrative Asst. <u><i>ECONorthwest:</i></u> Lorelei Juntunen, Partner, VP Operations Oscar Saucedo-Andrade, Project Manager

Introduction

Minutes from the June 26th meeting were reviewed and adopted with the correction that Carrie Benton is a Seeley Lake community member but not a community council member.

Timeline overview

- This is the last meeting but not the last opportunity to provide feedback.
- Focus has been on action items and telling the story of why action is needed.
- They are in the process of wordsmithing and drafting final deliverables (Vision, Goals, and Actions)

Existing Conditions – high level data points

- shortage of 2400 units
- ratio of units to households is lower than national trends
- housing costs have more than doubled in the past ten years (109%) – a recent, steep jump in growth is evident when looking at trends from year to year
- ~~median income has only increased 1.9% since 2000~~
- over 50% of renters are cost burdened, and 25% are severely cost burdened (more than 50% of annual income is spent on housing costs)
- The County's Community Needs Assessment (CNA) survey for 2021 included a section specific to housing – results highlight the need felt by the community to improve housing affordability, supply, and infrastructure – specific priorities included subsidizing low-income housing and providing down payment assistance, as well as finding ways to protect mobile homes, restrict VRBOs, and address homelessness.

Problem Statement

- The County needs more of everything

- The County is uniquely positioned to...
 - Enable construction of new affordable and market rate units by providing planning infrastructure to support new development outside of the city and provide funding to affordable housing developers
 - Provide programs and services that help low-income residents and renters access and stay in affordable housing
 - Build implementation capacity through internal County investments and building strong partnerships

Vision & Goals

Vision: *We envision a Missoula County where every individual and family has a home they can afford.*

- What does affordability mean? Based on the standard 30% of income figure (take-home pay) – assistance and subsidies contribute to the larger concept of “Affordable”

Goals: there are three big, overarching goals...

- Use the County’s toolkit to add to housing supply
- Provide programs and funding to help people access and stay in stable housing
- Build implementation capacity through strong partnerships and administrative functions

Strategy Framework

Identify and prioritize action items in the near term, 1-3 years, using the following filtering questions:

- Does it achieve one or more of the goals or objectives?
- Does it address the County’s unique housing needs?
- Does it leverage the County’s strengths?
- Does the County have the funding/administrative capacity for successful implementation?
- Is it supported by stakeholders and partners?

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Use the County’s toolkit to add to housing supply

- 1.1 reduce regulatory, expand infrastructure
- 1.2 preserve affordable stock (subsidized or naturally occurring – define “naturally occurring”)
- 1.3 support development of housing stock for those most in need
 - Affordable vs. attainable, capital A vs. a (need clarity of language in the plan)
 - city steering committee conversation – potentially use attainable for market reach and affordable for subsidy programs?
 - Perhaps, simply strike the word from this objective to avoid terminology confusion

Goal 2: Provide programs and funding to help people access and stay in stable housing

- 2.1 align programs and resources for supporting low- to moderate-income housing
- 2.2 increase availability and access to workforce housing to county residents outside city

Goal 3: Build implementation capacity through strong partnerships and administrative functions

- 3.1 improve coordination of funding, programs, and staff resources among agencies

3.2 invest in the administrative capacity necessary for successful plan implementation, monitoring, and updates

Strategy & Actions Discussion

What was taken to the BCC was high level – this is a deeper dive into the meat of the document.

Goal 1:

- 1.1 begin work in “the donut”, Lolo, and Seeley – expand after 3-5 years
- 1.2 explore a Regional Housing Trust Fund creation – feedback from city has been incorporated
- 1.3 using/acquiring county land to use for affordable housing development (Emily Brock, Economic and Lands Development Director....was under Dori’s umbrella, and position has evolved since her retirement)
- 1.4 the zoning code update is in progress
- 1.5 incentives – built into new zoning code with a goal to refine and expand beyond that
- 1.6 permitting processes – improve communications and streamline the process within the limitations governed by state statute (increase of staff, raising fees, etc.)

Goal 2:

- 2.1 down-payment assistance – creating objectives/actions for this goal will require research to be inclusive of diverse ideas, such as including employer trust funds for workforce housing (but do not name specific non-profit partners within the plan)
- 2.2 low-cost market rate housing – take inventory and develop a preservation program
- 2.3 funding – find and develop new, locally controlled sources (diverse list of options), then connect appropriate sources to appropriate actions
- 2.4 expand services to more people/households – find unmet need – wordsmithing to clearly determine the action and recipients, person-first language needs tweaking for clarity
- 2.5 condition the right of first refusal or deed restriction on subsidized housing receiving County funds
- 2.6 study short-term rental and ADU impacts – necessary step for informing policy development. Should the county try to align with the city? We are not quite there – it is difficult, varied data to acquire and assess (rural vs. urban, etc.) Need to understand how much of a contributing factor short-term rentals actually are.
- 2.7 identify and clarify County role in homelessness services

Goal 3:

- 3.1 state and federal advocacy
- 3.2 master flowchart of all organizations doing affordable housing work (identify gaps)
- 3.3 inventory of affordable units which are funded with County grant money

Implementation, plan update, and maintenance

In general, data analysis is lacking and data difficult to gather – Montana is a non-disclosure state – identifying these limitations to assessment and determining what the county should be tracking and reporting on. (there are urban vs. rural data indicators)

Indicators to track may include:

- Rates of cost burdening and people experiencing homelessness
- Undersupply of housing and rental vacancy rates
- Number of rent-restricted affordable units built, or preserved number of households helped with down payment and/or other housing programs

- Creation of missing middle and/or small-lot size housing (in county outside of the city)
- Displacement risk ratio (might be more applicable in the city)
- Price to income ratio

Is there a way to track all of these metrics geographically as Missoula urban area vs. the rural County area?

Next steps

- Draft of plan will be coming to the Steering Committee for review
- Where does the plan belong and where will it be most effective?
 - Can formally attach the plan to the Growth Policy as an amendment – public and Planning Board process to give weight to the decision (this is the preference)
 - Can support the with a less formal BCC resolution – still leads to action and sets priorities
- How will this decision affect the plan update process? (Growth Policy review at least every 5 years) The plan can inform more frequent updates.
- Issue plans or neighborhood plans (transportation) can be reviewed and adopted to growth policy as needed
- Explore meaning in the review process as objectives and accomplishments develop – next steps, goals, etc. can be updated and included over time, as appropriate
- Metrics can/will guide updates

Focus and purpose of August meeting

- “Final” detailed draft will go out for review to the steering committee prior to taking the draft to the public
- Survey for the committee to submit questions for guided public input

Meeting adjourned

This was the final Steering Committee meeting.

Minutes prepared by Heather Powers, Community and Planning Services.