

RENTON HOUSING ACTION PLAN

Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Summary

October 7, 2020, 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Meeting Objectives

1. Review City's housing strategies to date
2. Discussion of Values to guide policy options
3. Workshop of some policy options to guide evaluation of a broader set of options

Attendees

Angela San Filippo

Benita R. Horn

Benjamin Paulus

James Alberson

Kathleen Hosfeld

Linda Smith

Melissa Glenn

Millie Phung

Nancy G. Osborn

Richard Wagner

Roberto Perez

Rocale Timmons

Meeting Summary

Agenda Item ① Welcome and Introductions

Dawn Couch, BERK Consulting, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the agenda. Committee members were asked to send the project team feedback and revisions on the Housing Needs Assessment DRAFT by **October 18th**.

She reviewed the project plan and described the current phase of analysis. The next phase of the project is the Housing Policy Review where we will look at the strategies the City currently uses to encourage development of housing and how those may be improved to better serve the needs we identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. The focus of today's meeting is reviewing the City of Renton's existing approach to addressing the housing challenges in the community and establishing some criteria to evaluate potential options for the City to consider.

Housing Policy Review



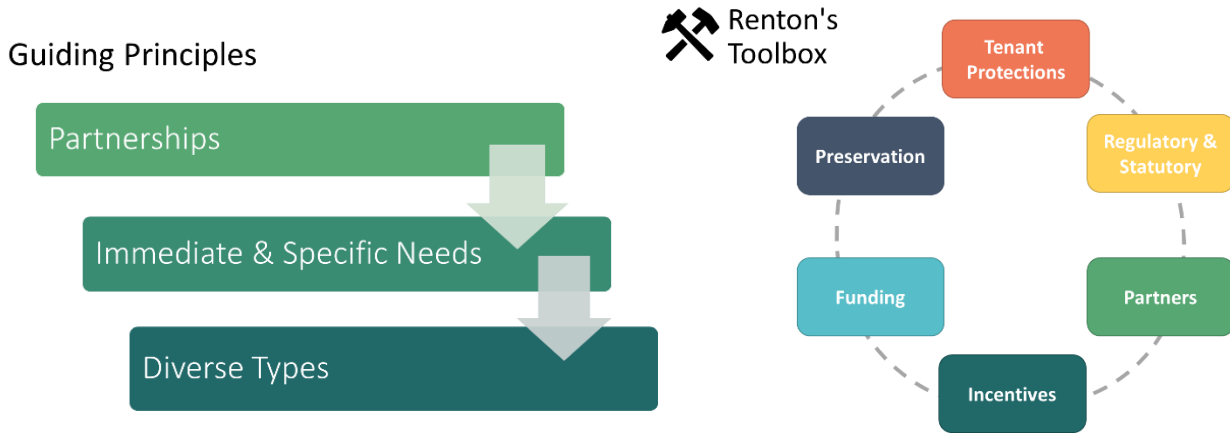
Agenda Item 2 How has Renton been addressing the housing affordability crisis?

Hannah Bahnmiller, City of Renton’s Housing Programs Manager, provided a background on the City’s recent housing efforts. She notes that Renton has been trying to stake steps to increase availability and affordability of housing in the community.

She began her discussion with the Values and Guiding Principles that City uses.

1. **Partnerships.** Partnerships are foundational to housing work since the City itself does not create development. It regulates where development can happen and offer support to residents, social services, and planning for vibrant communities. The City has to work with its for-profit developments, its not-for-profit developers, and it social service organizations. The City has a history of effective partnerships within the community.
2. **Immediate & Specific Needs.** There is a significant region-wide dilemma. In the past people may have thought that affordable housing was an issue in Seattle, but in the last few years it has become evident that this is a regional issue and issues of affordability and access are driven by regional dynamics. Nevertheless, Renton does try to focus on the immediate and specific needs of the community.
3. **Diverse Types.** We know we will need diverse and flexible options to meet the needs in the

community. We know that different families need different homes at different times in their life. Likewise, developers need diverse options for housing types to find options that are feasible to build. We have been trying to incentivize ADUs, duplex, townhomes, these mid-sized options so we can have more affordable options and more diverse housing types.



Hannah shared an overview of Renton’s “Tool Box” and discussed who is generally served by the different types of tools. For example, Tenant Protections typically benefit the community’s most vulnerable members or those in households with income between 0 and 30% of AMI. Incentives are typically targeted to increase the amount of affordable housing that is accessible to households earning up to 80% of AMI. Regulatory tools are designed to encourage underrepresented housing types.

Renton’s Toolbox

Incentives	Regulatory & Statutory	Preservation & Protections	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MFTE • Bonus Density for Affordable Housing • Waived Fees for Affordable Housing • Reduced Parking for Affordable Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessory Dwelling Unit code revisions • Planned Action EIS • Transit Oriented Development Subarea Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Repair Assistance Program • Manufactured Home Park Zone • Rental Registration Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Opportunity Fund • State Sales Tax Credit • SKHHP Capital Fund

To date the City has accomplished things in each of these categories, but there is opportunities to expand and refine.

- **MFTE.** The City does have a Multifamily Tax Exemption program. We've had 3 market rate developments and 1 affordable housing program get exemptions.
- **Waived Fees.** We offer waived fees for affordable housing, Three developments have use that incentive.
- **Bonus Densities.** We offer bonus density on a site for affordable housing. We've gotten 7 affordable units across three sites.
- **Accessory Dwelling Unit Code Revisions.** We've looked at streamlining ADU regulations as a way to increase housing type diversity.
- **Home Repair Assistance Program.** Our home repair assistant program for homeowners.
- **Rental Registration Program.** Newly added a rental registration program to increase health and safety in rental units.
- **State Sales Tax Credit.** This is a big one. Early this year we claimed a state sales tax for affordable housing. We just started just last month. ON Monday the City Council approved an increase of 1/10th of 1%.
- **SKHHP Capital Fund.** Working with South King Housing and Homelessness Partners to set up a capital funds to leverage with other South King County jurisdictions.

There has been a lot of work, but we recognize that there are still unmet challenges and needs in the community,

Dawn asked how long the ADU regulations have been in place. Rocale said that the regulations have been in place for 10 years. Mark clarified that there have been less than 10 built.

Nancy asked about the local options on the sales tax. She was pleased that the City Council passed it and shared that it was in the Seattle Times today. Will the City be working primarily with the Renton Housing Authority for the use of those funds? Is that correct?

Hannah explained that RHA currently has a project in design phase that would be eligible for funds, but the revenues are on going so the City will have options for how to use the funds going forward. There may also be some focus on services and support services.

Benita noted King County chose not to act on behalf of all the cities. Renton has a benefit of having Renton Housing Authority, where other cities rely on King County.

Rich asked if all the fees are waived and whether they are waived for private developers who are doing affordable housing. Hannah clarified that it is not all fees that are waived and incentive is available to for-profit developers as long as they meet the affordability requirement for the units produced.

Benita asked that the committee members receive the PowerPoint Slides in advance to help people.

Agenda Item ③ Discussion of Policy Options

Andrew Bjorn, BERK Consulting, explained that the next section of the agenda will focus on how we will evaluate policy options for the City. This will in part be based on what we learned from the Housing Needs Assessment. He provides a high-level cap of the Housing Needs Assessment findings:

Andrew explained that the Housing Action Plan, funded by the 2019 Washington State Legislature E2SHB 1923, is focused on increasing the diversity and supply of housing. This included the following about the overall goals of Housing Action Plans:

“The goal of any such housing plan must be to encourage construction of additional affordable and market rate housing in a greater variety of housing types and at prices that are accessible to a greater variety of incomes, including strategies aimed at the for-profit single-family home market.”

It was noted that the emphasis in the legislation is about increasing overall supply, but so far the framing of the needs has been mostly around meeting the need for affordable housing for lower income households.

A concern was raised that without directly addressing the affordable housing needs in the community, with clarity and urgency, and those who are negatively impacted by the lack of affordable housing, we are not likely to have outcomes that are more equitable than they are today. They City is claiming to being an organization committed to equity and social justice, so any plan must hold up those values.

Kathleen noted the in statewide housing debates, private developers will often claim that the market will deliver the needed housing if the regulators would get out of the way, but history has shown that to not be the case.

Andrew provided an overview of how the recommendations will be developed. They will start with overarching values based on the feedback the consulting team has received from the community. We will then establish Goals derived from the Values and our understanding of community needs. The Goals will be supported by Objectives that can be met within the 5 year horizon of the planning process. The Plan will include Policy options to meet those Objectives.

Policy Priorities

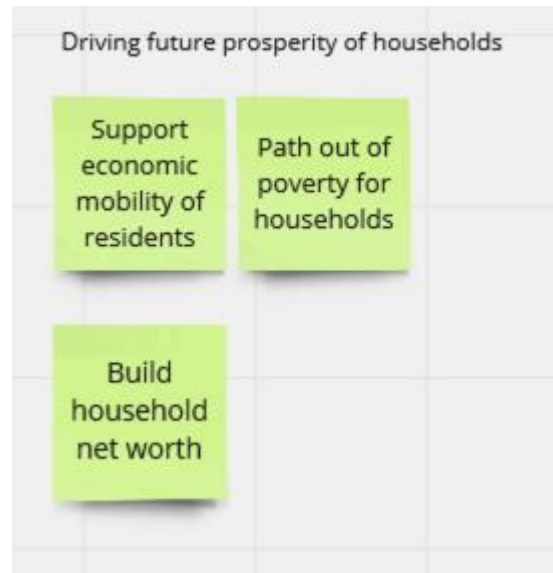
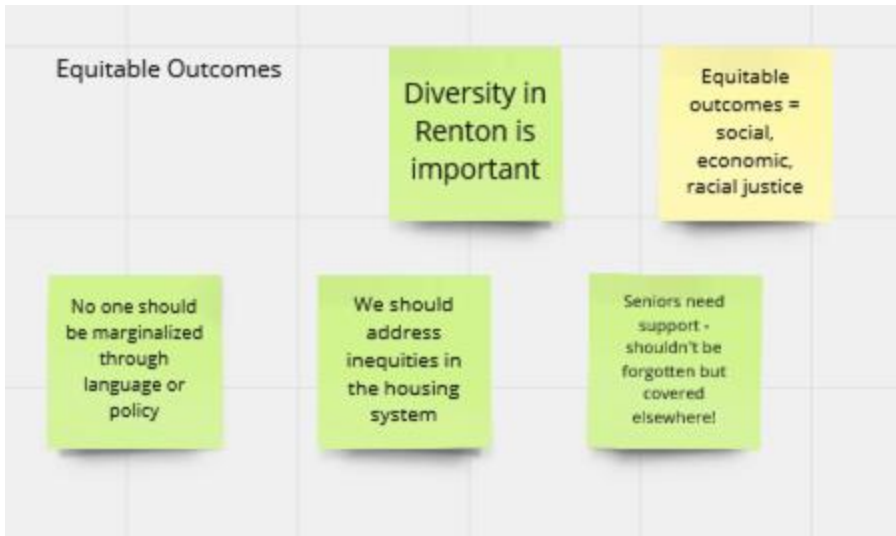


The group then participated in a sorting and organizing activity around values using [Miro](#) as a visualization tool. Andrew presented a collection of ideas (in green boxes) that committee members had shared previously, either in discussion or as a review of work in progress. The Committee members discussed how those concepts were related and also added additional ideas that were missing (depicted in yellow boxes).

By organizing and supplementing the concept board, the group came to five unifying themes as follows:

- **Effective Policy** (Including ability to update as the community changes and to adjust if the policy creates unintended outcomes particularly for the most vulnerable)
- **Equitable Outcomes**
- **Healthy Housing Ecosystems**
- **Future Prosperity of Households**
- **Partnerships**

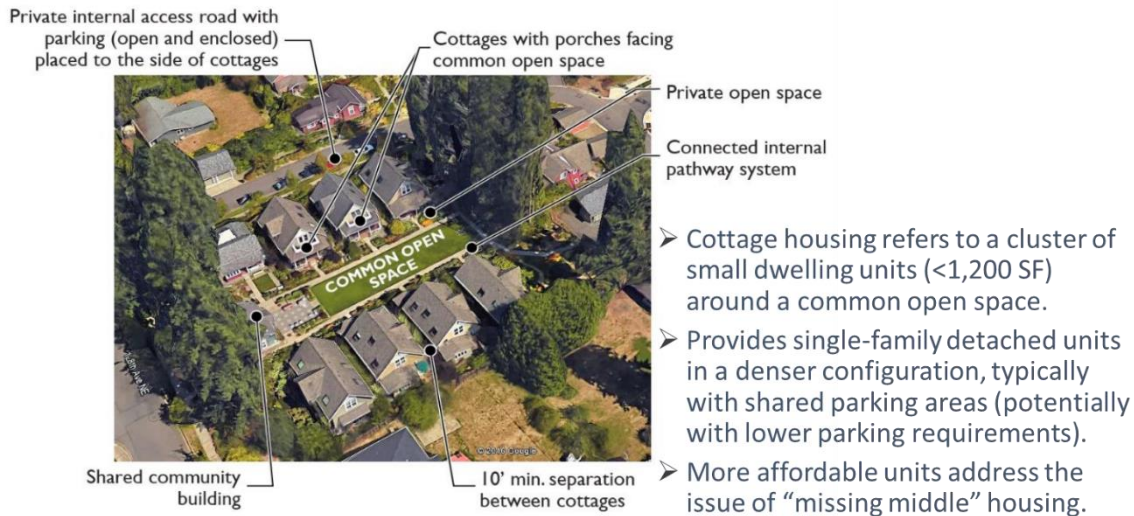






Cottage Housing

Andrew then led a brief evaluation of “cottage housing” as a potential policy options for the City. Andrew explained what Cottage Housing is and some of the advantages and disadvantages of the housing type.



- **Advantages:**
 - Cottages promote greater housing diversity and affordability through “missing middle”
 - Provides options for seniors

- **Disadvantages:**
 - Requires larger vacant/redevelopable sites.
 - Can break up the frontage of a single-family neighborhood.
 - Less familiar type of housing product.

Andrew led the group in an evaluation of cottage housing as an option for the City to consider. The guiding questions were:

1. How aligned is this housing type to our values?
2. Do you believe this would be effective for meeting Renton’s housing needs?

Rich explained that even though the pictures look nice from the interior courtyard, they do not look nice from the street or from a neighborhood perspective. The units are not as affordable as you think they would be and this option has some design constraints that make it challenging: off-site parking, interfaces with surrounding housing, multiple stories that would be less accessible for seniors.

Committee members discussed an existing example of this housing type in Renton and noted that the design of the development was not the best fit in the neighborhood. However, some elements of the design were seen as positive.

Agenda Item ④ Next Steps

Dawn reviewed the next steps for the Advisory Committee.

1. Committee members will review the DRAFT Policy Analysis on their own as homework.
2. The next Advisory Committee Meeting will be in early December. The focus of that meeting will be reviewing proposed recommendations.
3. Based on the Committee’s feedback, the consulting team will develop a draft Housing Action Plan draft report that the Committee will review independently.
4. We will decide at next meeting whether the Committee will need to meet again in advance of the Planning Commission Hearing and the City Council Hearings in March and April.

Meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm