

# Housing Affordability and Homelessness Task Force



## Meeting #7 Summary

December 12, 2018 | 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Development Services Building, Auditorium  
150 Beaver Creek Road, Oregon City, OR

### Attendees:

#### Name

Anna Geller  
Cole Merkel  
Dave Carboneau  
James Adkins  
Katrina Holland  
Ken Fisher  
Larry Didway  
Patty Jay  
Ruth Adkins  
Shelly Mead  
Yelena Voznyuk  
Wilda Parks

#### Affiliation

Geller Silvis  
Clackamas County Citizen Representative  
Home First Development  
Home Builders Association of Metro Portland  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Clackamas County Business Alliance  
Oregon City School District  
Clackamas County Citizen Representative  
Kaiser Permanente  
Bridges to Change  
NW Housing Alternatives  
Clackamas County Economic Development  
Commission

#### County staff

Jill Smith  
Dan Chandler  
Jennifer Hughes  
Abby Ahern  
Vahid Brown  
Chuck Robbins  
Sarah Present  
Don Krupp

#### County Commissioners

Commissioner Paul Savas

#### Facilitators

Alice Sherring, EnviroIssues  
Emma Sagor, EnviroIssues  
Mari Valencia, EnviroIssues

*Apologies –Alma Flores, Bart Berquist, Chris Scherer, Graham Phalen, Jane Leo, Jerold Johnson, Julie Larson, Kari Lyons, Nate Ember, Pastor Jesse Christopherson, Nina Carlson, Commissioner Nancy Ide, Rob Hawthorne, Shelly Yoder*

## Welcome and opening remarks

Alice Sherring, facilitator, welcomed Task Force members to the meeting. She reviewed the group's meeting ground rules agreed to in the Task Force charter. Ms. Sherring then reviewed the agenda and meeting packet for tonight's meeting.

Ms. Sherring provided a staffing update. Ms. Sherring introduced her colleague, Mari Valencia, who has joined the Consultant Team supporting the Task Force.

Ms. Sherring led group introductions then handed the floor to Dan Chandler for opening remarks.

Mr. Chandler thanked all members for their participation. He expressed that he feels the group is moving in a synchronized direction and is excited for their continued work going forward. Mr. Chandler shared a task force member update. Kari Lyons has stepped down. The County is also connecting with the faith community and other organizations for future Task Force membership.

Mr. Chandler provided a brief overview of the County's goal setting framework. He explained the County sets goals using the S.M.A.R.T approach which conforms to the following criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. With the recent Metro Bond, it is important for the County to revisit their goals, report on them and update the County budget as needed. County goals must be ambitious but reasonably achievable and in alignment with agency values.

Mr. Chandler then stated he felt the Task Force's Shelter and Service focus area, including the draft Safety of the Streets (SOS) recommendations are ready to move forward as near-term opportunities with significant positive impacts the County could pursue. He noted he would like the recommendations to be included in the next County budget cycle and so asked Task Force members if they felt comfortable having County Staff present the draft recommendations to the County Commission. Task Force members provided the following comments:

- Wilda Parks expressed her approval for the recommendations to move forward. She mentioned that the City of Milwaukie is currently undergoing a two-year process to update their comprehensive plan. The City Council has been receiving routine updates to stay active on key milestones. She mentioned this approach has allowed Councilors to remain connected to the project and on top of its progress.
- Anna Geller favors moving the SOS recommendations forward. She said it is important to keep County Commission engaged and active on the Task Force's work. The SOS recommendations are ready and have come together nicely and therefore should be moved into the next steps of the process if possible.
- Katrina Holland echoed Ms. Gellers sentiments. She also noted Safety Off the Streets will be ever so important as we approach Winter.

Ms. Sherring asked Task Force members if they approved the County moving the SOS recommendations forward. No objections were noted, and the County will present the draft recommendations to the County Commission.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, stated that the Clackamas County Veteran's Village comprised of 15 sleeping pods, all of which have been successfully filled. The village opened on October 4. He noted some of the Village residents have secured employment and/or enrolled in school. This model of getting people safely off the streets and connected to services right away is a successful example of

a Safety Off the Streets approach. He also noted a press release was available December 10 and encouraged Task Force members to review it for more details on the Clackamas County Veteran's Village.

Ms. Parks encouraged fellow Task Force members to visit the Veteran's Village if they haven't done so. She said the Village is amazing consisting of two big houses with full amenities including showers, toilets, a kitchen area, and gathering spaces. She is pleased to share the Village is working well.

Following the opening remarks Ms. Sherring asked if any edits were needed to the meeting #6 summary. No edits were noted, and the summary will be considered final.

## **Information sharing – Housing Stability**

### County Presentation – Housing Stability

Abby Ahern, Clackamas County, provided a presentation to inform the Task Force's Housing Stability action planning conversation. The presentation summarized the County's existing efforts to keep people from homelessness and associated gaps and needs. Key points from the presentation and discussion are summarized below:

- Housing Stability is about catching people from “falling off the street.” Ms. Ahern noted Housing Stability and sheltering off the streets are important components but equally as important is the moving of people from the streets into housing. She prepared a one-page analysis of Clackamas County's Coordinated Housing Access (CHA) system for Task Force members that is included in their meeting packet. She noted this CHA Analysis provides a summary of the County's system attempting to shift people from homelessness to housing.
- The County currently has three approaches to Housing Stability:
  - Prevention: Keeping people in current rental housing by connecting them to resources (i.e. rental assistance, utility assistance, relocation assistance, and connection to other resources).
  - Diversion: The process of co-creating a plan with the person experiencing a housing crisis to prevent homelessness. Diversion recognizes the person experiencing a housing crisis as the experts and therefore staff ask questions that would support the development of plan to prevent homelessness. Diversion programs have been used around the country in many ways; the County is specifically using it to address the housing crisis. While some counties in Washington state have a 10-20% resolution effect from diversion programs, Clackamas County is roughly at 50%.
    - Larry Didway asked for a real-life example of diversion in Clackamas County.
      - Ms. Ahern described a recent case where a woman called the County for support. The woman was paying roughly \$1,800 in rent and \$600 in childcare and barely getting by each month. Her case manager sat down with the client and together they reviewed her expenses, created a budget, and connected her to supportive services to fill the gap struggle. This support kept the woman from falling into homelessness.
      - Ms. Holland noted that her organization, Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) also offers diversion support.



- The County needs the following to support their existing housing stability approaches:
  - Funding to support staff trainings to properly implement diversion programs. Roughly \$15,000 is needed to support staff training.
  - Short-term rental assistance (STRA) programs like that of Multnomah County. Multnomah County’s STRA programs provide rental assistance for up to six months to people experiencing and/or at risk of homelessness. The STRA programs are dispersed among community organizations across the county and have served over 3,000 households in the past year; average support of \$2,445 per household.
    - Ruth Adkins asked how Multnomah County’s STRA program is funded.
      - Jill Smith, Clackamas County, said Home Forward, Multnomah County’s Housing Authority, funds the STRA program. As the contract administrator, Home Forward works with 15 culturally specific organizations across the county to support their STRA program.
    - Ms. Adkins suggested the County provide the Task Force with a budget summary to better understand Clackamas County’s STRA needs.
      - Ms. Smith said yes and to keep in mind that new money could always be redirected to new programs.
    - James Adkins asked if the County could redirect operation funds for diversion and prevention programs from the Housing bond funding?
      - Ms. Smith noted this would be a great suggestion.
    - Ms. Geller suggested the Task Force also receive a cost breakdown for diversion programs.
      - Ms. Adkins said she will work on getting the numbers and will provide it to the Task Force when it becomes available.
      - Mr. Chandler said the County will provide the Task Force with a matrix containing known funding options.
  - Highly flexible funding. Programs like STRA are not successful without flexible funding support.
    - Ms. Adkins asked if hospitals are part of the County’s service provider network.
      - Ms. Ahern said the County has outreach specialists that connect people to hospitals but there aren’t any currently within the County’s service provider network.
      - Ms. Adkins and Ms. Ahern will work to see how Kaiser Permanente can be part of the County’s service provider network.

Ms. Sherring moved the conversation to tenant protections and invited task force members to share their expertise on the subject matter.

Ms. Holland shared her organization, Community Alliance of Tenants, is a statewide renter’s rights organization. CAT supports policy that advances the ending of homelessness and addresses the realm of need. Ms. Holland noted that relocation assistance is successful when acting as part of a diversion program. She also noted that screening criteria becomes a barrier for people trying to secure housing and supports policy that would remove screening criteria requirements especially under our current statewide housing crisis. Ms. Holland explained there is currently no system or

database in place that tracks the number of housing units across the state and therefore there is no real idea about the quantity that is available. She recommends the County understand their rental system (i.e. how many units available, unit size, etc.) in order to develop sound policy.

Ms. Geller expressed concern over the recommendation to eliminate screening criteria. She mentioned experiencing a murder in one of her rental properties and could see the removal of screening criteria requirements as not beneficial. She expressed support for tenant protections but recommended judicious handling as to not affect other tenants.

Ms. Holland shared her support for a registry or database of some kind but noted this will require hiring staff to manage the system.

Ms. Smith also expressed support for tenant protections but feels there is a balance that must be handled in a gentle way. She shared her past experience as a landlord and board member of Multifamily NW informs her belief that no cause evictions are not necessary. She explained the right approach is talking to people and negotiating terms that work for both parties.

Ms. Sherring asked the group if others had supplemental comments. No further feedback was received, and the conversation was directed to resident services. She invited Yelena Voznyuk to share her expertise on the subject matter. Her slides are appended to this summary.

Ms. Voznyuk provided an overview of her organization and her work with NW Housing Alternatives. She explained NW Housing Alternatives provides affordable housing options for families, seniors and people with special needs in Oregon. Supportive services are also offered to residents to support their health and stability. Her work focuses specifically on the resident services piece. She connects NW Housing Alternative residents to services available within the community. She noted that through her work in four different counties she has come to learn there are an array of services are available. The biggest issue is most people don't know the services exist.

Ms. Voznyuk described a three-prong approach she uses with her work: Community Support, Community Partner, and Community Resources. Community support includes welcoming residents, ensuring they understand their lease, connecting them to supportive classes (i.e. cooking, recycling English Second Language (ESL)), helping them communicate with their landlord and neighbors, and service coordination. Community partner entails identifying partners within the community that NW Housing Alternatives should partner with to support their residents then securing those partnerships. Community resources are the services and/or resource residents can access.

Ms. Voznyuk shared a brief client story. A couple came to her for support. Through working with this couple, she learned they were paying \$600 in medical insurance. After reviewing the health insurance terms, she learned the couple were overpaying. Ms. Voznyuk explained this happens too often because support is not sought out or provided.

- Mr. Chandler asked Ms. Voznyuk to explain the bullet listed as “individual development account” on her PowerPoint slide.
  - Ms. Voznyuk explained that an individual development account is a savings account program to help residents acquire assets and generate money for a specific savings goal. Residents pursuing higher education. seeking to purchase a vehicle, or seeking to purchase a home will be matched \$3 for every \$1 put in.

- Mr. Chandler asked what the nonprofit and for-profit partnerships looks like in Clackamas County.
  - Ms. Voznyuk said the partnerships within Clackamas County are comparable to those of Multnomah County. However, she said partnership expansion will require capacity building for staff in similar roles as hers.
  - Ms. Geller stated there are plenty of non-profits in Clackamas County and recognizes those in Multnomah County as leaders.
  - Ms. Ahern said there is at least one nonprofit per service offering. The housing provider network is small enough for them to all convene and work together. She reiterated that a major gap in Clackamas County is a shortfall in culturally specific organizations and partnerships. She also noted there is only a couple of anti-poverty organizations that provide an array of services beyond those offered by NW Housing Alternatives and NW Family Services.
  - Ms. Voznyuk stated that there are a lot of services overlap between Clackamas and Multnomah Counties but are not recognized as such. For example, Community Warehouse in Multnomah County offers free and/or inexpensive furniture without checking zip code meaning Clackamas County community members can access this service.
    - Ms. Smith noted a key benefit to Multnomah County’s STRA program is their accessibility to community members. STRA program services can be accessed comfortably by community members because they are located within the community.

## **Action planning – Housing Stability**

Following the information sharing session, the Task Force engaged in an action planning session to refine and add to the list of previously identified suggestions around Housing Stability. The group was provided a Recommendation Framework to use to record thoughts and suggested edits. Task Force members broke into three groups to discuss proposed refinements. Each group then reported out its recommendations to the group. The results of this discussion are captured on the Housing Stability Draft Recommendation Framework appended to this summary.

## **Next steps and closing remarks**

Ms. Sherring reviewed the outcomes of the meeting and the following action items:

- County staff will circulate the results of this meeting’s Action Planning process, and Task Force members are invited to provide additional feedback and suggestions vial email to the County.
- The Task Force will complete a similar action planning process to refine all three focus areas – Shelter Services and Assisting Key Populations, Planning, Zoning and Development, and Housing Stability – at the January 22 meeting.
- County staff will work with Ruth Adkins to partner with Kaiser Permanente and include them within their service provider network.
- County staff will provide the Task Force with a matrix containing known funding options.

Ms. Sherring asked Task Force members to complete a meeting evaluation form, thanked members for their time and contributions and adjourned the meeting.

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