

# Housing Affordability and Homelessness Task Force



## Meeting #4 Summary

September 26, 2018 | 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Development Services Building, Auditorium  
150 Beavercreek Road, Oregon City.

### Attendees:

#### Name

Anna Geller  
Ken Fisher  
Larry Didway  
Cole Merkel  
Ruth Adkins  
Alma Flores  
Nate Ember  
Nina Carlson  
Shelly Mead  
Patti Jay  
Graham Phalen  
Jerald Johnson

#### Affiliation

Geller Silvis  
Clackamas County Business Alliance  
Oregon City School District  
Clackamas County Citizen Representative  
Kaiser Permanente  
City of Milwaukie  
Built Architecture, Community + Design  
NW Natural  
Bridges to Change  
Clackamas County Citizen Representative  
Clackamas County Sheriff's Office  
Johnson Economics

#### County staff

Jill Smith  
Dan Chandler  
Abby Ahern  
Emmett Wheatfall  
Julie Larson  
Martha Fritzie  
Jamie Zentner  
Maria Magallen

#### County Commissioners

Commissioner Paul Savas  
Commissioner Sonya Fischer

#### Facilitators

Alice Sherring, EnviroIssues  
Emma Sagor, EnviroIssues

#### Guests

Bonnie Lender, LEDIC

*Apologies – Bart Berquist, Chris Scherer, Dave Carboneau, Jane Leo, Kari Lyons, Katrina Holland, Commissioner Nancy Ide, Pastor Jesse Christopherson, Paul Grove, Rob Hawthorne, Shelly Yoder, Vahid Brown, Councilor Wilda Parks, Yelena Voznyuk*

## Welcome and opening remarks

Dan Chandler, Assistant County Administrator, welcomed task force members and guests. He thanked task force members for their contributions to the process thus far.

Alice Sherring, facilitator, reviewed the group's meeting ground rules agreed to in the task force charter. Ms. Sherring then recapped key accomplishments of the task force to date:

- At the first two meetings, the group identified five key focus areas:
  - Two were considered priority focus areas: *shelter, services, and assisting key populations*; and *planning and housing development*.
  - Three were considered cross-cutting focus areas: *funding and costs*; *strategy and evaluation*; and *community engagement*.
- At meeting number three, EcoNorthwest provided an overview of the tools currently available to cities and agencies to address housing affordability and homelessness.
- Ms. Sherring explained this meeting will move the task force forward deeper into the action planning phase.

Ms. Sherring asked if any edits were needed to the meeting #3 summary. No edits were requested, and the summary will be considered final.

## Project updates

Ms. Sherring noted additional work has occurred since the task force met in July:

- County staff compiled information to respond to information requests raised at previous meetings. This information was provided to task force members via email prior to the meeting. Task Force members can contact County staff for clarification on any materials provided.
- Task force member Kari Lyons organized a site tour of affordable housing projects. Ms. Sherring extended a thank you to Kari for this effort on behalf of the committee.
- Ms. Sherring recognized the ongoing work of the task force equity subcommittee, who are developing an equity lens to support the task force's work and thanked the subcommittee members.

Mr. Chandler noted the County will begin work on its county-wide housing needs assessment (HNA) in approximately two weeks. The HNA will provide additional data for responding to task force information requests and questions. Almost all cities in the County have agreed to participate. Mr. Chandler noted the HNA will go beyond state requirements, looking at affordability issues more broadly and considering the interconnectedness of different jurisdictions within the County. Mr. Chandler invited County Commissioner Paul Savas to address the committee in opening remarks.

Commissioner Savas said the County has been working for more than two years to establish a transitional shelter for veterans, and the doors to this facility opened a few weeks ago. Residents will begin moving in this or next week. Commissioner Savas noted the shelter is modeled after similar projects in Lane County, which County elected officials and staff have visited. Commissioner Savas said he is impressed by how many veterans have dedicated themselves to helping other veterans and

said this will be the first permitted veterans shelter in the state. Mr. Chandler thanked Commissioner Savas and Commissioner Schraeder for their leadership in realizing this effort.

Jill Smith, Deputy Director of Health, Housing and Human Services, said the County has identified \$1.2 million in general fund dollars to be used for affordable housing development and services. Ms. Smith said the County will extend a request for proposals shortly. She noted applicants will be awarded extra points for creative solutions. Once the County receives proposals, Ms. Smith said they would like volunteers from the task force to work with staff to score applications and decide which projects to fund. County staff will follow up with more information via email.

## **Equity discussion**

At the next task force meeting, the equity subcommittee will be presenting a draft equity statement for task force review and discussion. To inform this conversation and in response to some comments from preliminary equity subcommittee discussions, County staff provided presentations to the task force about existing County equity efforts. Ms. Sherring asked task force members to take notes during the presentations to assist in shaping the discussion at the next meeting when the group will have the opportunity consider and review the draft equity lens.

## *County Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*

Emmett Wheatfall, Deputy County Administrator, provided an overview of the County's equity, diversity and inclusion framework. Emmett prepared a document provided to task force members to summarize this framework. It includes a working definition of equity in use by the County:

*“Equity is the principled commitment to ensuring the absence of visible and invisible barriers to fairness in representation, opportunity, and access.”*

Key highlights from Mr. Wheatfall's presentation are summarized below:

- Mr. Wheatfall noted the County's equity, diversity and inclusion program is 10 now years old.
- He noted the commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion begins at the most senior level of the organization.
- The Board of County Commissioners has unanimously passed three resolutions supporting equity, diversity and inclusion.
- There are three equity, diversity and inclusion councils that guide the County's efforts: one comprised of county employees, one comprised of County management staff and one comprised of community members.
- The County is committed to equipping staff with knowledge, tools and resources to promote equity, diversity and inclusion, including employee networking groups, internal orientations and external trainings.
- The County is a member in various equity-based initiatives and groups, including Partners in Diversity and Say Hey!
- Equity, diversity and inclusion principles are captured in the County's six core values and customer bill of rights.
- The Board of County Commissioners has agreed that all 23 departments in the County must develop an equitable service delivery plan. Originally the target date for this was 2019, but the timescale has been extended to be more realistic. Each department must identify an

inequity that impacts internal or external customers and develop a plan or system to remedy that inequity.

Cole Merkel asked if there are any equity lenses already in use by the County that this task force could adapt.

- Mr. Wheatfall said there is no single equity lens that applies to every process. Each individual department is tasked with coming up with their own.

## *Coordinated Housing Assessment Equity Analysis*

Jill Smith said the Health, Housing and Human Services department serves thousands of people in poverty across the County. The Department has undertaken extensive internal research and analysis to evaluate whether they are serving people equitably. She noted there is no requirement to do this work, but the department wanted to better understand the distribution of its services.

Abby Ahern provided an overview of this equity analysis work. This data analyzed users of the County's Coordinated Housing Analysis (CHA). The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all agencies that receive Continuum of Care funding to have a central access point for screening, evaluation and eligibility of homelessness services. Because of this, CHA provides a significant database through which to analyze the equity of the homeless services system. Ms. Ahern explained Clackamas County is ahead of the curve compared to other counties in establishing a CHA, which was implemented in 2015.

Key highlights from Ms. Ahern's presentation are summarized below:

- The CHA equity analysis aimed to answer the following questions:
  - *Do the distributions of race and ethnicity for CHA 2015-2016 match what is expected based on census data?*
  - *Do the distributions of race and ethnicity for individuals housed through CHA programs match what is expected?*
- The analysis compared demographic data from the U.S. Census of people experiencing poverty in Clackamas County to the demographics of those who accessed the CHA in 2015 and 2016. Staff looked at how under or overrepresented each group was in the CHA.
- Ms. Ahern explained the task force needs to understand who the system is currently serving to inform the development of an equity lens for use going forward. To lead to more equitable outcomes, the task force must understand who is currently being served and who is being left behind.
- Broadly, the analysis indicated Asian county residents experiencing poverty are underrepresented in the CHA, while residents identifying as African American/Black or two or more races are overrepresented. Hispanic/Latino county residents experiencing poverty are slightly underrepresented, though the effect appears to be small.
- Ms. Ahern noted this analysis raises more questions: why are some populations being underserved or overserved? Where do we need to gather more information to understand the patterns we see?
- Ms. Ahern also noted using census poverty statistics does not paint an accurate picture for all populations. For example, nationally, 4.6% of people in poverty are Asian, but the proportion of people who are homeless who identify as Asian is much less. This could be because outreach is insufficient, cultural reasons, or a variety of other reasons. By contrast, 23% of

people in poverty nationally are African American, but they represent 42% of people in homelessness. This may be because of the legacy of redlining, increased criminalization, discriminatory landlord practices, or other reasons. Ms. Ahern noted additional analysis is needed here.

Task force members provided the following questions and comments following these presentations:

- *What is the national poverty level, and how does it compare to Clackamas County?*
  - Staff will provide this information to the task force.
- *Are there other jurisdictions or counties who have done this analysis? If so, how does it compare to Clackamas County's results?*
  - These analyses are fairly rare, but increasingly occurring. Multnomah County is currently working with a national research firm to analyze their coordinated entry program. They learned their access tool inadvertently was screening out people from communities of color as it asked about traumatic experiences but did not include experiences with systemic racism as part of its criteria. Clackamas County's CHA tool is much more basic.
- *How do populations experiencing poverty and populations experiencing homelessness compare demographically?*
  - County staff will provide more information on this comparison to the task force.
- *Has a similar analysis been conducted on the homelessness point-in-time county data?*
  - The point-in-time count occurs over a three-week period every other year. The CHA data pool is a better representation of the overall homeless population and who is being served.
- *Would more frequent point-in-time counts result in more accurate data? Does using the CHA data mean we're missing people who face barriers to accessing services?*
  - It may. The County does do significant outreach to encourage people to access the CHA, however.
- *Is the CHA intake done in person, online or over the phone? Has the data been evaluated to see if this may lead to any bias?*
  - Intake is mostly done over the phone but can also be done in-person. The County does not have the capability to do intake online. Engagement is easiest in person because of the relationship building that often needs to occur, but the County is exploring additional intake methods, particularly to reach youth.
- *Can we have a summary of the high-level results and key takeaways of this analysis?*
  - County staff will prepare this and distribute to the task force.

## **Action planning: Shelter and services**

Mr. Chandler provided an update on a recent Ninth Circuit Court ruling (*Martin v. City of Boise*), which stated it is unconstitutional to criminalize sleeping outdoors on public property if people have no option for sleeping indoors. In Boise, a group of homeless individuals sued the city after being arrested for sleeping outside. Boise had three homeless shelters: two of which were faith based and required participation in religious activities to stay for extended periods and one shelter that was time limited. Boise's camping ordinance made it a misdemeanor to camp on public property or in any place, public or private, without permission. The Ninth Circuit Court ruling was based on a decision that arresting campers is cruel and unusual punishment as it is based on the false pretense that they are camping voluntarily.

Mr. Chandler said since the ruling was made in early September, the County has noticed an increase in camping activity in areas that were previously swept. He said the ruling has raised several questions around what this means for the County, and may lead to challenges around clean up and public health if sweeps are no longer allowable.

Task force members asked if the County will cease conducting sweeps as a result of the ruling. Graham Phalen, Clackamas County Sheriff's office, said the County's unlawful camping ordinance and criminal trespass ordinance are two separate rules. He noted there are ways the County can move people from public property through administrative action that does not involve criminalizing the behavior. Mr. Phalen noted many of the people affected by sweeps in Clackamas County move back and forth between Multnomah and Clackamas counties.

Task force members asked for more information on the existing camping ordinance.

- Mr. Phalen said it is unlawful to camp on public property under Ordinance 6.10. Once law enforcement provides notice, campers have five days to relocate, though the Sheriff's office typically provides more time than this. Mr. Phalen said law enforcement tries as much as possible to not impound private property and aims to involve campers in the clean up process and help homeless individuals access services at the Clackamas Service Center.

In light of the court ruling, Mr. Chandler explained the task force would focus at this meeting on identifying near term actions related to shelter, services and assisting key populations. Ms. Sherring split the task force into pairs to brainstorm the following:

- Potential actions related to shelter, services and assisting key populations
- Funding/cost considerations related to these actions
- Strategy, evaluation and process considerations
- Community engagement considerations

The table in appendix A summarizes the results of this brainstorming exercise. Task force members were encouraged to review meeting summary 3 to assist in building on the outcomes of previous meeting discussions.

During the report out, the goal of eliminating homelessness among children in the county was raised for discussion. Ms. Sherring noted that this was a proposed goal that had now been raised on multiple occasions. Ms. Sherring asked if task force members felt this was a goal with shared support from the task force and if so, County staff could provide some additional information to further refine this goal. Some members noted not many unsheltered individuals are children, which means this goal is not directly tied to the current focus area under discussion. Furthermore, there was discussion around the definition of homeless children because of school systems define homelessness differently. The group agreed to revisit this goal with additional information provided by the County and potential other goals developed by staff at the next meeting.

## **Next steps and closing remarks**

Ms. Sherring noted that the Task Force had just completed their fourth meeting and it was timely for the facilitation team to check-in with each Task Force member. This important next step would

identify ways to continue to work successfully as a group and potential opportunities to improve future Task Force meetings.

Task force members provided the following comments and questions related to future meetings:

- Support for spending more time in discussion rather than on presentations.
- Interest in clarifying and differentiating imminent needs versus long term actions.
- Need for additional clarity on who we are trying to serve (e.g. unsheltered individuals, youth, etc.) and where the greatest need lies.
- Desire for the County to identify **clear goals** for the task force to work towards and more information on what the Commission would like the task force to accomplish.
  - Commissioner Savas noted the Commission will communicate any priorities through Mr. Chandler and Ms. Smith.

Ms. Sherring reviewed the **action items** determined at this meeting:

- Staff will respond to the information requests raised during the meeting, including:
  - What is the national poverty level?
  - How does Clackamas County's population experiencing homelessness compare to national demographics?
  - A request for examples of other county/regional/or national equity analyses for comparison
  - Geographic analysis of what types of needs are greatest where
  - More information on the different definitions of homelessness among children to help refine a potential goal in this area
- Staff will prepare a high-level summary of the key takeaways from the CHA equity analysis.
- Staff will circulate the actions that came out of this meeting, in addition to the actions identified in the previous meetings.
- Staff will reach out to each task force member to conduct a one-on-one interview to inform future planning efforts.
- The equity subcommittee will prepare a draft equity lens for discussion at the next meeting.
- Staff will identify a list of potential goals for the task force to consider at the next meeting.

Mr. Chandler thanked task force members for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

**Appendix A: Results of brainstorming exercise**

Summary includes some grouping of common ideas from the Committee

<b>Shelter, services and assisting key populations</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Funding/Cost considerations</b>	<b>Strategy considerations</b>	<b>Engagement considerations</b>
<b>Identify space for and create a shelter (or shelters)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding needed to develop a shelter</li> <li>• Saves costs currently expended on camping sweeps and moving people around</li> <li>• County could provide land?</li> <li>• Implement a construction excise tax</li> <li>• Partner with non-profits</li> <li>• Luxury tax</li> <li>• Direct bottle tax to services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One for women and children and one for men</li> <li>• Identify properties                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vacant Albertson's in Milwaukee?</li> <li>○ Utilize existing County buildings and facilities for emergency shelters</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify stakeholders and jurisdictions</li> <li>• Keep safety in front of effort</li> <li>• Provide services on site</li> <li>• Partner with people who are already really good at this (e.g. non-profits, for profits, groups that can donate space)</li> <li>• Need a map of what types of needs are greatest where</li> <li>• Easy access to transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to communicate cost savings</li> </ul>
<b>Bring back the Rapid Response Street Outreach team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding to support staffing</li> <li>• Need highly flexible funding that could be dedicated quickly to a variety of urgent needs (e.g. moving costs, bus tickets, food handlers card)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on success of I-5 Balldock relocation effort</li> <li>• Design, train, dispatch response teams— County already has the expertise and staff; need to augment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need robust engagement between response teams and those you are hoping to engage</li> </ul>
<b>Allow self-governing tent cities, camping communities, or planned mini-camps of modular transitional housing (short-term)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need funding to support services and structures that support these areas</li> <li>• Think of ways to redirect resources (e.g. revenue from dumps)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify land for these sites</li> <li>• Consider zoning changes to make this easier</li> <li>• Must be trauma-informed</li> <li>• Model after Portland's Right to Dream communities (cooperative models)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage churches to start</li> </ul>



<b>Shelter, services and assisting key populations</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Funding/Cost considerations</b>	<b>Strategy considerations</b>	<b>Engagement considerations</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider service needs (sanitary service, trash, etc.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Identify space for legal RV camping (e.g. parking lots)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model after Eugene’s efforts</li> </ul>	
<b>Create a plan for increasing mobile hygiene services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health service providers could help fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with health service providers</li> </ul>	
<b>Create a social enterprise that would provide trash service for camps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund approximately 5 vehicles and 20 staff (at least minimum wage)</li> <li>Cost could be covered across rate base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employ people who are experiencing homelessness</li> <li>Locate camps, engage neighbors, hand out trash bags</li> <li>Leverage relationships with groups already doing this work</li> <li>Consider logistics involved with moving trash</li> <li>Learn from Central City Concern’s “Clean and Safe” program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most NIMBYism is about trash and cleanliness</li> </ul>
<b>Capitalize on success of existing organizations (e.g. Northwest Housing Solutions and Habitat for Humanity)</b>			
<b>Change rules and regulations to reduce red tape</b>  <b>Change rules around using brownfield sites for short-term housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not cost anything</li> <li>May result in a loss in funds for agencies from reduced fees, etc.</li> </ul>		
<b>Set a goal focused on eliminating homelessness for children</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,700-1,800 homeless children in the County today. In 5 years, could rise to 3,000</li> </ul>	
<b>Adopt a “housing-first” model; provide housing for people</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute housing carefully by need, equitable access, etc.</li> </ul>	

<b>Shelter, services and assisting key populations</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Funding/Cost considerations</b>	<b>Strategy considerations</b>	<b>Engagement considerations</b>
Use County's emergency declaration to work more rapidly			
Develop a strategy for helping people who need access to mental and behavioral health support services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must consider harm reduction</li> <li>• Consider resources like needle deposit sites</li> </ul>	
Fund non-profits to meet the need and build capacity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a dearth of non-profits that do this work in the County</li> </ul>	
Regularly identify needs of our unsheltered population		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous surveys showed that needs change quickly. Use volunteers and peers to accomplish this work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to build trust</li> <li>• Leverage first responders already out in the community as a daily contact</li> </ul>

*Additional contributions for planning, zoning and development*

<b>Planning, zoning and development</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Funding/Cost considerations</b>	<b>Strategy considerations</b>	<b>Engagement considerations</b>
Conduct a zoning audit to understand opportunities for increasing flexibility and adding supply		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crucial to consider the connection between transportation, housing and economic development</li> </ul>	
(Long term) Transition zoning to allow more alternative types of housing			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will require engagement to address NIMBY opposition</li> </ul>
Leverage funding and incentives at the County to increase housing supply for vulnerable populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RETT – community impact focused</li> <li>• Community development financial institutions</li> <li>• Metro Bond</li> <li>• E-zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage private market</li> <li>• Partner w/philanthropic organizations</li> </ul>	

<b>Planning, zoning and development</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Funding/Cost considerations</b>	<b>Strategy considerations</b>	<b>Engagement considerations</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction Excise Taxes</li> <li>• System Development Charges</li> <li>• VHTZ</li> <li>• CDBG</li> </ul>		
<b>Focus on addressing affordability across the full spectrum of housing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60-120% MFI</li> <li>• Non-profit portfolio of product</li> <li>• Land bank</li> <li>• Streamline permitting</li> <li>• Buy existing product</li> <li>• Support non-profit partners</li> </ul>	