

Workshop Summary Report

September 10, 2022



[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Notes](#)

[Common Themes](#)

Agenda

1. **Welcome**
 2. **Overview of the Housing Element Update**
 3. **Breakout Group Discussion #1: Introductions & Racial Equity Exercise**
 4. **County of Marin Tenant Resources Panel + Q&A**
 5. **Breakout Group Discussion #2: Housing Discussion Prompts**
 6. **Wrap Up & Next Steps**
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Meeting Notes

2. **Overview of the Housing Element Update**
 - a. Public Comments/Questions:
 1. Can you please make available all of the income requirements to qualify for affordable housing in Fairfax?
 - Note: the Housing Element Update project team will make this information available on the project website.
 2. Following up on the above, what are the rental rates for affordable units in Fairfax?
 - Note: the Housing Element Update project team will make this information available on the project website.
 3. It is important to include income guidelines within the Housing Element due to historical, systemic issues with people not meeting the requirements. It is important to include income levels and to prioritize units for those who are the most vulnerable.
 4. It is important for the Housing Element to have information about affordable housing and the differences between the various types of affordable housing. There are really different types of affordable

housing. For instance, sometimes it is affordable for families with multiple income streams but not for an individual with one source of income.

5. There are multiple definitions of affordable housing. It is important to be clear about what we in Fairfax mean by affordable housing in the Housing Element.
6. I would like to know the percentage of current renters in Fairfax so that figure can be directly represented within the new units being offered.
7. Is there a way to build into the plan preferences for those who have been living within Fairfax for a long time, so they are prioritized for the new affordable units?
8. Historically I have seen members of a community not want affordable housing units due to arguments with stereotypical and racist undertones. How do we talk about affordable housing in a way that respects the individual?
9. Marin County is grouped by HUD with San Francisco and other more affluent counties, so the Area Median Income for a very low income household is ~\$83,000/year in Fairfax. That is still very high.
10. Look at the new San Quentin affordable housing development. How did they get it done? We could use it as a model for development in Fairfax.
11. How do we ensure that new units are prioritized for specific populations or existing residents (i.e., local preference or workforce preference policies)?
12. Other communities have resisted affordable housing developments, citing untrue, negative narratives about their effect on the surrounding community. What legal or social strategies can we use to deal with that?
13. We should use the term “educator housing”, instead of “teacher housing,” in the Housing Element, to be inclusive of all educational institution staff, not just teachers.
14. Local residents are not excluded from accessing new housing units. We need to be clear about that in the Housing Element.
15. Is it still an option to set aside housing for specific workforce designations (e.g., educator housing, housing for healing arts practitioners)?

16. I am concerned about character. I want to keep this feeling/vibe of Fairfax. Are you looking at building height and design already? When will there be opportunities to provide feedback on design considerations?
17. What considerations will be given to the housing needs/design of persons living with disabilities?
18. Will Fairfax need to incorporate a buffer when trying to meet the mandated number of new housing units?
19. How are we proposing to reduce homelessness and also make the housing respectful for formerly homeless people? We need to include in the Housing Element how Fairfax will provide housing for persons living with illnesses, policies for construction on hazardous sites, and our commitment to increase environmental justice. You should engage and get direct feedback from persons living with illnesses about their housing needs and recommendations.
20. When does the 30-day public comment period begin for the draft Housing Element Update?

5. Breakout Group Discussion #2: Housing Discussion Prompts

a. What are your housing needs?

1. Affordable housing
2. Rent that is not burdensome
3. Inclusivity: address the local attitude toward folks who do not live here
4. Housing repairs
5. Contractors
6. Housing for retirement
7. Shorter housing waitlists (e.g., waitlist has been closed for 5 years)
8. Housing security
9. Home retention
 - Income and other support for repairs
 - Support for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
 - Landlord protections
10. Community members who need to be heard cannot attend these workshops
11. People who take care of one other, show kindness and solve injustices together

12. Better treatment for those experiencing homelessness
13. Greater accessibility within units

b. What have been the challenges, obstacles and difficulties in getting your housing needs met in Fairfax?

1. You have to have good credit in order to pass a background check
2. Discrimination based on race and age is rampant
3. Victory Village housing requires Section 8 vouchers, but no vouchers have been available since 2008
4. Housing availability
5. High move-in costs (i.e., first, last, current month = \$\$\$)
6. Application fees
7. I feel anger and frustration that we have not addressed the needs of low-income households and homeless residents
8. I am a commuter. I work in Fairfax but I do not live here. I hear locals ask “Do you live here?,” which is a real negative experience. I would love for us to figure out a way to be more inclusive in Fairfax. The attitude if you work here but do not live here is that there is something wrong with you
9. So many workers cannot afford to live here. Good Earth Natural Foods store employees are an example of this

c. What policies, programs and resources could help Fairfax protect its tenants facing housing insecurity and at risk of displacement?

1. Possibility of short-term affordable and/or subsidized housing for people with health challenges or in a training program
2. Concerns that rent control may/will diminish the housing supply
3. Funding to keep people where they are currently living instead of trying to find other locations (e.g., governmental rental assistance is not counted against Supplemental Security Income)
4. Renter protections
5. Registration on renter protections to get actual data. The Town Council is working on this now
6. Acknowledge the housing crisis and identify long-term housing needs in order to find sustainable solutions
7. Explore alternative funding models started by cities and towns. A Town Council committee is looking into funding

8. Rent control results in landlord cost increases rather than large rent increases when the unit vacates. I would like programs to recognize landlords as “mom and pop” small business owners
9. Tiers and policies for different categories of landlords (e.g., number of units, headquartered out of the area, large corporations different than local, small scale)
10. The housing issue is not one size fits all
11. Ordinances that are easily “amendable”
12. Hire a housing official/enforcer
13. Reduce burden of application fees
14. A place to list all available rentals - "Rooms for Rent”
15. Laws to protect landlords who rent one place versus a few places
16. Vacancy tax
17. Laws to protect renters/tenants
18. Finding out how many units are available and what obstacles keep them from being on the market
19. Changing the permit process to account for unique properties that do not meet the criteria for new units/developments
20. Greater use of the COVIA Home Match program
21. Include units for all income levels so all people have a chance to access housing in Fairfax
22. Subsidized rent to help people save up for homeownership
23. I am turning my garage into an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) that is accessible to a person living with a disability. I want policies that will keep the ADU manageable and affordable for both the landlord and the tenant
24. I am a mom and I would love for my children, the next generation to be able to come back home and live in Fairfax
25. We need to make housing more affordable. Implement rent control (using the strongest standard set in San Francisco). We could control rents to not exceed increases in the cost of living index.
26. We should figure out how to start using land grant funders (municipal land trusts) for financing, instead of HUD and state funding
27. Explore tiny homes. There may be challenges with assessments

Common Themes

- 1. Right size the amount of affordable housing units available with the demand/need**
- 2. Look into protections/policies that are advantageous for both landlords and tenants**
- 3. Look for ways to incentivize homeownership within Fairfax and Marin County**
- 4. Implement protections/policies that discourage discrimination and promote more inclusivity/equity/equality**