



Home In Tacoma Project: Housing Equity Taskforce

Sixth meeting (February 4, 2021)

Meeting objectives:

- Understand the Planning Commission's draft recommendations and process
- Provide guidance on
 - Housing + Anti-racism Strategy
 - Housing + Anti-displacement Strategy
- Strategize on roles and tasks for the HET moving forward

Agenda:

1. Housekeeping all (10 min)
 - a. Approve notes from last meeting
 - b. Report outs & questions
2. Public review package staff (10 minutes)
 - a. What will be in the package?
 - b. What are the big moves?
 - c. Timeline, getting the word out, next steps
3. Guidance on anti-racism and anti-displacement strategies all (45 minutes)
 - a. Discuss preliminary recommendations
 - b. Observations (problems to be addressed)
 - c. Recommendations (actions to address problems)
4. Looking ahead to strategize on the HET's roles and tasks all (15 minutes)
 - a. Home In Tacoma Project
 - b. Other efforts related to housing + equity
5. Next steps all (10 min)
 - a. Upcoming meetings
 - b. Identify homework and staff tasks

Upcoming agendas:

- Home In Tacoma - Public Review draft package
- Targeted outreach during the public review process

Attachments:

1. Housing Equity Taskforce Preliminary Recommendations
2. HET Meeting notes from 11-05-20 (attached)
3. Housing + Anti-racism strategies (draft)
4. Housing + Anti-displacement strategies (draft)

Staff Contacts:

Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, (253) 312-4909, ebarnett@cityoftacoma.org.

Andreta Armstrong, Program Manager, (253) 591-5849, armstrong@cityoftacoma.org.

Web: www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma



City of Tacoma
Housing Equity Taskforce

Chris Karnes, Co-Chair
Sarah Rumbaugh, Co-Chair
Ryan Givens
Michealea Lemons
Anna Petersen
Allen Ratcliffe
Lisa Snyder
Alyssa Torrez

Human Rights Commission
Planning Commission

January 22, 2021

Dear Fellow Commissioners,

It is our honor to present the Housing Equity Taskforce's (HET) Home In Tacoma Project housing policy recommendations. The primary objectives of these recommendations are to increase housing supply, housing choice, and housing affordability throughout the city in order to make progress toward Tacoma's equity and antiracism goals.

The HET was convened through joint action by the Human Rights Commission and Planning Commission in late 2019 to provide policy recommendations on equity and antiracism goals as part of the Home in Tacoma Project. The Taskforce was entrusted with a mission to bring diverse perspectives to a focused effort founded on our shared commitment to equity and antiracism in all actions. Our meetings involved City staff, Taskforce members, and were open to the public and covered topics ranging from expanding public engagement, recognizing patterns of institutional racism in housing, identifying key themes to improve equity in planning and zoning actions, and review of the housing policy framework. This effort answers the City Council's call for antiracism transformation in all City actions and spheres of our civic experience.

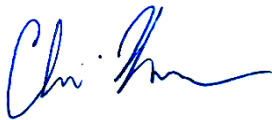
Housing meets a fundamental human need for shelter. Housing location can either connect or it can isolate us from family, community, education, employment, recreation, health and other opportunities that fundamentally affect the course of our lives. **Tacoma's housing crisis affects everyone and has disproportionate impacts on people of color and others facing economic disadvantages.** These are complex and difficult challenges, but we can make real progress through proactive action. We are striving to aim high, as called for by the City Council to address the enduring impacts of systemic racism as well as of today's housing crisis on those most in need.

Observations - HET's policy recommendations are founded on a set of seven observations made with an equity lens, pulling from local history, personal experience, and information on current conditions. Our stance is to right an historic wrong perpetrated by systemic racism and to advance the concept of welcoming all current and future residents to Tacoma. We identify deficiencies in the current housing growth strategy, disparate impacts to people of color and those facing economic disadvantages, and recognize that past housing policies were created without equitable representation. We identify one crucial mechanism to help reverse racially disparate impacts by enabling more diverse and affordable housing options citywide, commonly referred to as "missing middle" housing.

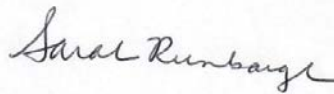
Seven Housing Strategies - To create a more equitable and antiracist housing reality for Tacoma, the Taskforce recommends seven strategies for (i) changes to Tacoma's housing growth framework; (ii) actions to promote housing affordability; and (iii) steps to empower under-represented people; improve access to opportunity; combat displacement; and undo the impacts of systemic racism. We do not intend a direct, one-to-one relationship between each observation and strategy-we believe the strategies would address multiple observations. We also recognize that this is and will always remain a work in progress-Tacoma must continue to ask difficult questions and believe we can do better to connect people with housing in inclusive, vibrant, and resilient neighborhoods throughout our City. We have sought to think holistically, recognizing that these strategies will be implemented collaboratively by multiple programs and teams. Many are already stated in city policy and being implemented as part of the AHAS and other actions.

In summary, our recommendations call for Tacoma to return to traditional, more inclusive, walkable neighborhood patterns and take steps toward a reality in which all of us benefit equitably from opportunities. These recommended strategies are rooted in (a) reducing regulations (b) restructuring systems founded on principles of exclusion and separation.


In the spirit of service,



Chris Karnes, Co-Chair



Sarah Rumbaugh, Co-Chair

Ryan Givens 
Michealea Lemons
Allen Ratcliffe
Lisa Snyder
Alyssa Torrez

Attachment:

Housing Equity Taskforce Recommendations, January 7, 2021

OBJECTIVE: Increase housing supply, choice and affordability throughout Tacoma by providing more diverse and affordable housing options, in order to make progress toward Tacoma's equity and antiracism goals.

OBSERVATION 1

Tacoma's housing growth strategy is not meeting our community's housing needs (for supply, affordability and choice)

- The current strategy sets aside about 75 percent of housing land supply for single-family housing
- Single-family housing uses more land per unit, limiting capacity and choices while driving up cost
- Tacoma is growing rapidly along with the region
- Tacoma is a mature City with little undeveloped land, meaning that growth must generally be infill, redevelopment, or taller structures
- Many people today are seeking walkable, urban living close to jobs, shopping, schools and transportation choices

OBSERVATION 2

Tacoma's housing crisis has disproportionate impacts on people of color and others facing economic disadvantages

- Tacoma's housing crisis affects lower income households most severely
- People of color disproportionately earn less, have less accumulated family wealth and are less likely to be homeowners
- People of color have historically been barred from living in some neighborhoods and faced discriminatory lending practices
- Lower income households are at increasing risk of displacement as housing costs rise
- People with disabilities, non-English speakers and people with criminal records face heightened barriers in finding housing

OBSERVATION 3

Tacoma's housing policies were initially created without equitable representation

- We reside on the ancestral homeland of the Puyallup people which was stolen by people of European descent
- People of color and others facing barriers have historically been excluded or under-represented in policymaking around housing growth

- More vulnerable groups often face heightened obstacles to participating (language, physical access, childcare, work hours), and also have fewer resources to react to neighborhood change

OBSERVATION 4

People of color have less access to the vital livability, accessibility, economic and educational opportunities that come with housing location

- Tacoma's neighborhoods are unequal in terms of the opportunities that people can access
- Many people are finding themselves priced out of Tacoma's higher opportunity neighborhoods
- People of color are less likely to live in high opportunity areas, reflecting historic systemic racist practices including redlining

OBSERVATION 5

People care deeply about their homes and neighborhoods and rely on them as investments

- Home ownership is often a household's single largest financial investment and a major source of household and family wealth
- Poorly designed or out-of-scale infill could build opposition to further infill

OBSERVATION 6

Without public and nonprofit sector actions, market-rate housing construction will not be enough to meet affordability needs

- Market-rate housing constructed in Tacoma is typically not affordable to those earning 80% of Area Median Income or less

OBSERVATION 7

Increasing Missing Middle housing options is an essential part of a multifaceted solution

- Changing the housing growth strategy is within the City's power to implement
- Tacoma must also pursue all AHAS objectives
- Tacoma must seek to build household earning potential

OBJECTIVE: Increase housing supply, choice and affordability throughout Tacoma by providing more diverse and affordable housing options, in order to make progress toward Tacoma's equity and antiracism goals.

STRATEGY A

Encourage infill of Missing Middle housing types throughout Tacoma's neighborhoods

- Change the Single-family Land Use designation to Low-scale Residential
- Allow diverse housing types including small lot single-family, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, fourplexes, cottages, tiny/mobile houses, shared housing and small multifamily
- Establish form-based design and site standards to ensure that infill complements neighborhood form and scale
- Ensure that infrastructure and services are adequate to support infill

STRATEGY B

Encourage infill of mid-scale, walkable urban housing near Centers, Corridors and transit

- Designate areas within easy walking distance of Centers, Corridors and transit for mid-scale housing
- Establish standards to ensure a smooth transition from higher-scale to low-scale residential areas
- Promote inclusion of larger housing unit sizes to accommodate larger households

STRATEGY C

Use multiple strategies to produce housing affordable for lower income people

- Partner with housing developers by exchanging bonuses (such as height/density bonuses, or parking reductions) for affordable housing units
- Tailor regulatory incentives to serve unmet need in Tacoma's housing market
- Locate affordable housing throughout the City, particularly in high opportunity and growing areas
- Partner with nonprofit affordable housing providers to serve unmet needs
- Establish affordability targets for new projects in designated Opportunity Zones

STRATEGY D

Empower people of color and other under-represented groups to fully participate in policymaking

- Educate and empower all community members to participate in shaping housing policies

- Commit to more diversity on City policymaking bodies such as boards and commissions
- Focus engagement efforts on empowering underrepresented groups to take more control of policy decisions that affect them
- Invest resources into crafting education and engagement opportunities to these groups
- Seek to build long-term relationships based on trust and sharing of power

STRATEGY E

Address inequitable access to opportunity in Tacoma neighborhoods

- Plan for and invest in low opportunity areas to address challenges, gaps or barriers
- Build walkability, transit service and amenities, particularly in low opportunity areas
- Prioritize funding to address deferred public utilities and infrastructure to neighborhoods with lower income people and people of color

STRATEGY F

Combat displacement for residents, businesses and community anchors

- Implement an anti-displacement strategy including resources to mitigate evictions, affirmative marketing tools, and resident preference for at-risk households
- Support local businesses and institutions to remain in their neighborhood

STRATEGY G

Actively address housing inequities resulting from systemic racism

- Promote access to housing and homeownership to build intergenerational wealth for people of color
- Identify and address unfair/discriminatory housing, lending and appraisal practices
- Educate and support people of color seeking to build infill housing or invest in their homes
- Seek to increase representation of people of color in building, lending and housing professions, and City employment/contracting
- Recruit developers that serve lower income households and people of color



MEETING NOTES

DATE: Thursday, January 7, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Karnes (Co-Chair), Ryan Givens, Michealea Lemons, Sarah Rumbaugh, Lisa Snyder, Alyssa Torrez

SUPPORT STAFF: Andreta Armstrong, Elliott Barnett, Wesley Taylor, BT Doan

1. HOUSEKEEPING

a. Approval of Agenda –

- Commissioner Lemons noted the misspelling of their name in the notes from the previous meeting.
- Chair moved to approve notes, seconded.

b. Approval of previous meetings notes –

- Chair moved to approve notes, seconded.

c. Report outs

- Staff Barnett discussed the growth strategy document draft that would be use in connection with the planning commission to reporting out to the public for review around housing issues in Tacoma.

d. Questions about meetings / methods?

- No questions or methods were shared among the group.

2. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

a. Education campaign – story map and online café series

b. Online survey

c. Reaching under-represented groups

- *Topics above were not directly addressed*

3. Discuss preliminary recommendations

a. Observations

- Staff Barnett discussed the growth strategy document draft that would be use in connection with the planning commission to reporting out to the public for review around housing issues in Tacoma.

- Members of task force provided feedback, suggestions on the Housing Equity Taskforce Preliminary Recommendations in both the observations, strategies, in addition to the layout of the document.
- Commissioner Chair Karnes, Lemons and Givens offered to help assist in drafting cover letter to accompany the recommendations.

b. Recommendations (actions to address problems)

- The HET reviewed the draft observations and strategies and provided direction on a number of changes. In the strategies, the numbers would be removed and changed to letters instead.
- Commissioner Chair Karnes moved to adopt the Housing Equity Taskforce observations and strategies as outlined and send these to the planning commission with cover letter, seconded, passed.

4. Next Steps

a. Upcoming meetings

- February 4, 2021 5:30-7:00

b. Identify homework and staff tasks

- Commissioners Karnes, Givens, and Lemons agreed to the task of drafting of a cover letter to accompany the Housing Equity Taskforce Preliminary Observations and Strategies.

**These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture.*



Home In Tacoma Project: Housing Equity Taskforce

HOUSING POLICY GUIDANCE (draft)

- Anti-racism strategy
- Anti-displacement strategy

DRAFT

- Establish policies to achieve antiracism goals in housing

The Housing Equity Taskforce has provided recommendations, which are reflected below. The HET's full recommendations are attached. The HET took a holistic approach recognizing the many connections between antiracism and housing. At their February 4th meeting, staff will continue the discussion and seek the HET's direction regarding how to reflect antiracism in the Housing Element specifically.

Observations:

1. Tacoma's housing growth strategy is not meeting our community's housing needs (for supply, affordability and choice)
2. Tacoma's housing crisis has disproportionate impacts on people of color and others facing economic disadvantages
3. Tacoma's housing policies were initially created without equitable representation
4. People of color have less access to the vital livability, accessibility, economic and educational opportunities that come with housing location
5. People care deeply about their homes and neighborhoods and rely on them as investments
6. Without public and nonprofit sector actions, market-rate housing construction will not be enough to meet affordability needs
7. Increasing Missing Middle housing options is an essential part of a multifaceted solution

Strategies:

- A. Encourage infill of Missing Middle housing types throughout Tacoma's neighborhoods
- B. Encourage infill of mid-scale, walkable urban housing near Centers, Corridors and transit
- C. Use multiple strategies to produce housing affordable for lower income people
- D. Empower people of color and other under-represented groups to fully participate in policymaking
- E. Address inequitable access to opportunity in Tacoma neighborhoods
- F. Combat displacement for residents, businesses and community anchors
- G. Actively address housing inequities resulting from systemic racism

- **Establish a City anti-displacement strategy**

Lower income Tacoma residents are already experiencing displacement, and displacement risk will continue to increase as the city and region grow. As demonstrated in the Existing Conditions analysis, between 2016 and 2019, rental units priced between \$625 and \$875 per month, serving households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000, declined by 5,300 units. This effort will identify tools that the City can bring to bear, including affordable housing production, to help people, businesses and institutions to remain in their neighborhoods.

Consultant recommended actions include the following. The HET will be reviewing and providing additional, focused recommendations:

1. To ensure equitable distribution of housing opportunities, implement land use changes to allow more missing middle products citywide.
2. Require that developers benefiting from land use changes, property tax exemptions, fee waivers, expedited processing, and city funding use affirmative marketing in advertising unit availability.
3. Implement a resident preference policy that applies to both residents at-risk of displacement and neighborhoods with high-displacement risk.
4. Working with local architects and lenders, create a set of affordable ADU designs and a financing package to facilitate the construction of ADUs by lower income households.
5. Require redevelopment of large parcels with city investment include deeply affordable rental and ownership products (e.g., publicly-assisted rentals, land trust)
6. Coordinate with the Tacoma Housing Division to ensure that residents at-risk of displacement have the resources they need to mitigate eviction and displacement.
7. Support anchor institutions and businesses at risk of displacement by providing city subsidies for leases and implementing first rights of refusal for city-subsidized commercial in redeveloped sites.
8. Empower people of color and others who have been historically under-represented in policymaking to take a stronger role in implementing policy.