



Housing Workshop #3

October 4, 2022, 6:00pm – 8:00pm at Newton Middle School

Workshop Summary

Overview

Approximately twenty people attended this event, the third of three workshops for the City of Centennial's Housing Study and Policy Development project. The workshop agenda was as follows:

- Welcome/Introductions (6:00-6:15pm)
- Introductory Presentation/Q&A (6:15-6:30pm)
- Open House (6:30pm-8:00pm)

The workshop began with an introductory presentation about the project background and scope, objectives of the Housing Needs Assessment, Housing Study, and several affordable housing strategies the City is currently researching and gathering public comment on. The Project Team answered questions and then focused on the second "batch" of housing strategies under consideration. The four housing strategies presented at the workshop were:

- **Subsidize or Reduce Development Fees for Affordable Housing**
- **Establish a Dedicated Funding Source to Subsidize Infrastructure Costs**
- **Create a Land Donation or Land Banking Program**
- **Incentivize Current Landlords to Lower Prices of Existing Units/Creation of a Rental Information Assistance Program**

Summary

The following is a summary of the input received for each strategy during the Q&A and Open House sessions of the workshop:

Subsidize or Reduce Development Fees for Affordable Housing

- 6 of 8 (75%) support for reducing fees imposed by the City.
- 3 of 5 (60%, 2 unsure) opposed to covering fees imposed by outside agencies

Establish a Dedicated Funding Source to Subsidize Infrastructure Costs

- Mix of support and opposition for both infrastructure funding and infrastructure flexibility, with somewhat more overall support for infrastructure flexibility.
- Comment: Not public utilities, but the City is used to building streets. We can help there.



Summary (continued)

Create a Land Donation or Land Banking Program

- Support for land banking, particularly when focused in multifamily or commercial areas.
- Comment: Later development is great but it does not need to be only affordable housing. Getting rid of abandoned property and making it vibrant again is good.

Incentivize Current Landlords to Lower Prices of Existing Units/Creation of a Rental Information Assistance Program

- Almost even split of support and opposition for both the original strategy and the companion program.
- Comment: Concerned about short term rental cash payments. I have no doubt there are people who could benefit but then what? What's the thought for those families' next step?

Other Ideas for Strategies

- Would love to see a strategy that promotes ownership options rather than tenant focused options. Down payment assistance option to be paid back to DP assistance fund if home is sold.
- Perhaps each development should be required to provide 30-50% at an affordable (lower case A) rate. Small units could make it work.
- One strategy that is missing is small housing.

Open House Boards

What inspired you to attend the workshop?

- Resident, Parent, Neuro-Inclusive Advocate
- Very motivated to keep West Centennial the lovely, low-density residential area it currently is.
- Love my neighbors and neighborhood. Planning is very important to keep city great.
- Resident of 20+ years who is concerned about lack of affordable housing for my young adult kids.
- After what the city decided on South Glenn, I am very concerned about future plans.
- Have not been able to attend other meetings and am very concerned about environmental impact. I wonder about new development and requirements for solar or contributions to mass transit.



Subsidize or Reduce Development Fees for Affordable Housing

Should Centennial help defray some of the costs of submitting an affordable housing development property for City review by reducing the application fees that are charged by the City?

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|--|------------|------------|---|------------|
| Yes, for all projects that include any affordable housing | 1 dot | | | 1 dot |
| Yes, for any project that includes a specific number or percentage of affordable housing units | 1 dot | 2 dots | 1 dot (25% of housing must be affordable) | |
| Yes, for projects that include only affordable housing | 1 dot | | | |
| No | 1 dot | | 1 dot | |
| Not sure/no opinion | | | | |
| Other (please specify on a sticky note) | | | | |

Should Centennial help defray the cost of application fees charged by agencies outside of the City by providing City funding for the applicant? For example (this situation is imaginary and just intended to help explain the question), if Arapahoe County decided to impose a fairground fee for all new housing to help pay for fairground improvements, should Centennial pay that fee for new affordable housing projects located in Centennial?

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes, Centennial should help pay for fees from agencies outside of the City | 1 dot | 1 dot | | |
| No, Centennial should not help pay for fees from agencies outside of the City | 1 dot | | 1 dot | 1 dot |
| Not sure/no opinion | | 1 dot | 1 dot | |
| Other (please specify on a sticky note) | | | | |

Comments:

- We need to find ways to limit/reduce fees. \$50K is absurd for tap fees.



Establish a Dedicated Funding Source to Subsidize Infrastructure Costs

The original strategy is focused on creating a funding source to help pay for project infrastructure. The CHSPD Working Group suggested an alternative approach looking at more flexibility in roadway design for affordable housing projects.

The City is exploring opportunities for rebalancing and/or reducing the overall costs to an affordable housing project. Many of a project’s infrastructure and utility costs are assessed by other agencies, such as water districts or Arapahoe County. Roadway infrastructure is within the City’s control and changes to road design on a site can make a difference in how structures can be located on the site.

Should Centennial explore funding options for affordable housing public infrastructure?

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 1 dot | 2 dots | -- | -- |
| No | 2 dots | 2 dots | 1 dot | 1 dot |

Companion Program

New development and redevelopment in Centennial are typically required to install or rebuild any roads that are needed on the site. Allowing some design flexibility, such as a narrower road design that creates a larger buildable area on a lot, or wider roadway design that includes on-street parking are both methods that might help an affordable housing developer fit a project design to a lot in a more cost-saving manner.

Should the City consider flexible infrastructure options

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 1 dot | 3 dots | 1 dot | 1 dot |
| No | 2 dots | 1 dot | 1 dot | -- |

Comments

- Question 2, District 3 Yes dot: East area of this district only
- Question 2, District 4 Yes dot: Only if for affordable housing for ownership
- Flexible infrastructure is a key to reducing housing costs.
- Not public utilities, but the City is used to building streets. We can help there.



Create a Land Donation or Land Banking Program

Should Centennial establish or partner with another organization to create a land bank with the authority to purchase (through voluntary sale from the property owner only) distressed properties, such as existing vacant or abandoned commercial properties or severely tax delinquent residential properties, and then clean-up and hold those properties for later development of affordable housing?

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | | 3 dots | 1 dot | |
| Yes, but only in areas that are mostly multifamily | | | | |
| Yes, for commercial properties only | | 1 dot | | |
| No | 1 dot | 1 dot | | |
| Not sure/No opinion | | | | |

Comments:

- By utilizing existing structures, the building is there and ready for conversion to living units. This seems a logical first step and fairly easy to accomplish.
- Later development is great but it does not need to be only affordable housing. Getting rid of abandoned property and making it vibrant again is good.
- For high density MF – must be near mass transit.
- This is a good idea only if affordable can be built on it.

Which of the following options do you think would be appropriate for land bank purchase (through voluntary sale from the property owner only) to eventually create long-term affordable housing redevelopment opportunities? Choose as many as you like:

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Anywhere land is available at an affordable price (market-driven) | | | | |
| Focused on purchase of underused or vacant commercial properties | 1 dot | 1 dot | | |
| In locations where public transportation is or can be available within walking distance | | | 1 dot | |
| In residential neighborhoods with aging single-family | | | | |



| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| homes that could be replaced with duplexes or townhomes | | | | |
| Not in favor of a land bank | | | | |
| Other (please specify on a sticky note) | | | | |

Comments:

- Mass transit availability only, i.e., 1-25 corridor – ½ mile radius

Landlord Rental Assistance Program

The original strategy proposed providing financial assistance to landlords to help reduce rental rates. The CHSPD Working Group suggested substituting that strategy with the creation of a renter education program focused on help with navigating existing state and federal rental assistance programs.

Sometimes community members need short-term help with housing costs rather than long-term help through construction of new housing. Depending on available funding, the City could establish a program that offsets market rental rates by paying money directly to landlords to make some units more affordable. For example, the median rent for a 2-bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment in Centennial is around \$1,900 and the average affordable rental rate for a teacher is \$1,250. The City could agree to cover the different for a year at a cost of \$7,800.

Should Centennial create a rental assistance program?

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 1 dot | 1 dot | 3 dots | 1 dot |
| No | 2 dots | 2 dots | 1 dot | |

Companion Program: There are a number of public and private organizations that can help cover housing costs through rental assistance programs. It may be challenging for residents who need this help to locate these resources. The City could create a program that would collect and consolidate information about other programs and make it more easily available.

Should Centennial create a rental assistance *information* program?

| | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 |
|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 1 dot | 2 dots | 1 dot | 1 dot |
| No | 2 dots | -- | 1 dot | -- |



Comments:

- Seems like a decent short-term solution, but would rather spend the money on longer-term solutions
- Would prefer incentives to be tax based or property improvement incentives rather than simply cash subsidies. Also would prefer this to be for 1 year + increases thereafter limited to 5% escalations for A-rated tenants.
- I have concerns about short term rentals – people tend to not take care of the property and have a criminal element.
- Concerned about short term rental cash payments. I have no doubt there are people who could benefit but then what? What's the thought for those families' next step?
- The idea of helping people who work in Centennial with short-term rent is good (or we could just pay the workers more). But not for non-workers.

Do you have any other ideas you'd like to see Centennial consider to help address the City's affordable housing needs?

- Highly opposed to density and height increases in low density (over ½ mile from I-25) areas of Centennial.
- I am very concerned about the environmental repercussions of increased development in Centennial. Water rights are beyond critical and we just don't have enough. I do appreciate the opportunity to express this thought during this planning stage however.
- We need to find ways to reduce the cost of housing, not find ways to subsidize housing.
- Individuals who purchase affordable housing should be restricted for selling the unit that the property remains in the A.H. pool. Deed restrictions, agency to monitor, etc.
- There are empty office buildings and empty retail spaces in shopping centers. Converting these buildings to apartments, condos, etc. could be useful.
- Would love to see a strategy that promotes ownership options rather than tenant focused options. Down payment assistance option to be paid back to DP assistance fund if home is sold.
- Perhaps each development should be required to provide 30-50% at an affordable (lower case A) rate. Small units could make it work.
- One strategy that is missing is small housing: 2-1, 700-900 SF house, tiny house communities, studio apartments

For More Project Information, visit:

<https://www.centennialco.gov/Government/City-Projects-and-Initiatives/Housing>

or Email the Project Team at:

Housing@CentennialCo.gov

