



Lynnwood Housing Action Plan

Summary of Listening Sessions 1 & 2: Rental Housing Needs and Displacement Issues

July 7, 2020 | 3 – 4 pm | Zoom

July 9, 2020 | 11 am – 12 pm | Zoom

MEETING PURPOSE

- Gather perspectives from the Stakeholder Advisory Group and Council Policy Committee about rental housing needs and displacement issues in Lynnwood.

STAFFING

City of Lynnwood

Kristen Holdsworth
David Kleitsch
Ashley Winchell

Consultant Team

Rebecca Fornaby, BERK
Lisa Johnson, BERK
Rachel Miller, MAKERS
Radhika Nair, BERK

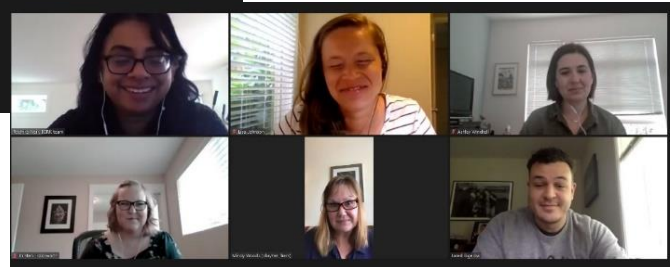
PARTICIPANTS

Jared Bigelow, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission Member and resident
Chris Collier, Affordable Housing Alliance
Mary Anne Dillon, YWCA
Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood City Council President
George Hurst, Lynnwood City Council
Duane Landsverk, Landsverk Quality Homes
Bob Larsen, resident
Nick Nowotarski, AvalonBay Communities, Inc.
Fred Safstrom, Housing Hope

Mark Smith, Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County
 Scott Shapiro, Eagle Rock Ventures (provided email notes)
 Kimberly Toskey, Council Housing Policy Committee
 Galina Volchkova, Volunteers of America
 Mindy Woods, Council Housing Policy Committee



July 7, 2020 Session (Left)
 July 9, 2020 Session (Below)



WHAT WE HEARD

A facilitator led participants through a series of four questions about rental housing needs and displacement issues in Lynnwood. Highlights from participants’ responses are summarized below.

Would you consider Lynnwood’s rental housing to be decent, safe, and affordable? Why or why not? If not, what could the City do to make rentals decent, safe, and affordable?

Most participants agreed that Lynnwood lacks affordable housing, but many felt they could not comment on whether Lynnwood’s available affordable housing was also decent and safe. Individual comments included:

- Safety of housing is case-by-case—landlord-specific—but there is a systemic affordability issue.
- Lynnwood has no housing accessible to a household making 40-50K annually.
- New, decent, and safe multifamily housing is being built but it’s in the upper end of the market and not affordable.
- Last year, only 142 affordable units were built in the entire county.
- Low-income areas are over-policed; crime occurs everywhere.
- Rental housing shortages are both in the private market rate housing and in subsidized housing; the private market cannot typically serve families with the lowest incomes.

Are there rental housing types that are needed or undersupplied in Lynnwood?

Most participants agreed there is a need for housing in the “missing middle,” including a wider range of housing types, such as cottage, ADU, DADU, duplexes and triplexes, townhomes, single family detached homes on small lots, and family-sized apartments. Individual comments suggested Lynnwood increase the following housing types:

- Mid-size apartment buildings—between 10-20 units.
- Low-rise rentals that can blend in and fit with character of single-family neighborhoods. This can meet several needs, for example, this could be a typology that meets the needs of families, since it can include green spaces and other design features.
- Rentals that appeal to families, i.e. with 3 + bedrooms, with green space or walkable access to schools and parks. There is a real lack of these units either as multi-family or rental single-family
- This shortage is also reflected in subsidized housing and there is need for additional affordable family-sized housing like the YWCA’s 3-4-bedroom units, which are highly sought after.
- Small apartments, including microhousing.
- Culturally appropriate housing with well-maintained shared facilities, such as a washer and dryer, that families can easily use.
- Affordable housing for seniors, including individuals aging-in-place.
- Housing that meets the needs of veterans and others who may have disabilities and/or not be comfortable living in larger group housing.
- Affordable housing for individuals with disabilities that meet requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Older housing stock does not meet current ADA accessibility standards.
- Midrise (“five over two”) housing that reaches the 70-foot height limit.
- Additional development along Highway 99, like in Shoreline.

Have you observed or experienced residential and/or business displacement happening in Lynnwood (not just recently, but within the past 3 years)? Is it happening in specific locations or citywide?

Most participants agreed that as rents increase, families are moving north to Marysville, Sultan, and other more affordable cities. This displacement is particularly disruptive to families with children and attachments to schools and other aspects of their community. Participants also referenced examples of economic eviction for renters, especially for seniors and families, as landlords either raised rents or added on additional fees (facilities, parking etc.,) that impacted their ability to afford the housing. Other issues discussed included:

- People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately people of color (POC).
- Landlords set rents just above the threshold for Section 8 to avoid renting to certain demographics.
- There is a limited supply of rental units that take housing vouchers and often times the vouchers expire before a suitable unit can be found. Communities of color are more likely to use the voucher program, so this shortage affects them more than others.

- 70% of Whispering Pines' 240 units are Section 8. When the complex is demolished, residents will be displaced.
- Displacement in mobile home parks is an issue in Lynnwood.
- Incoming light rail is causing displacement in South Lynnwood. Development and city investment in the area will cause property values to rise, likely leading to long-term displacement.

If so, what do you think Lynnwood can do to help prevent or mitigate displacement?

Participants shared the following ideas for creating more affordable housing and mitigating displacement in Lynnwood:

- Increase density across the city to allow more development and reduce pressure to redevelop the limited areas where redevelopment is allowed or is feasible.
- Change zoning to incentivize development and allow a wider variety of "missing middle" housing types.
- Preserve existing affordable housing.
- Partner with local nonprofit developers when making code changes, such as Housing Hope and Catholic Housing Services. It is important to reach to these developers early and partner with them for better solutions.
- Consider developing affordable housing on publicly owned land.
- Consider evaluating regulations to ensure there is no unintended impacts such as fire regulations that require doors that are difficult for older adults to operate.
- Consider using the SHB 1406 money for rental assistance.
- Mitigate opposition by educating community members about the value of affordable housing.
- Allow housing to be built without parking or with reduced parking requirements especially in areas where alternative transportation modes are available.
- Create a displaced persons ordinance.

Questions from Meeting Participants

- "How many condos are in Lynnwood?"
- "Does Lynnwood have rental regulations? Does Lynnwood limit who can rent rooms out? (if you do a registry for room rentals, it becomes a big deterrent- exempt out rental of individual rooms from future programs)"
- "How many units will be affordable at mall? Will Lynnwood consider requirement for affordable housing?"
- "What is Lynnwood doing to encourage more diverse neighborhoods, units, preserve units, etc.?"

"Businesses choose to not locate in Lynnwood because it's not economical to their employee base.

Businesses are relocating to Marysville. Has the city managed to attract business in light of all the regional growth?"