

Workforce Dwelling Unit Policy Task Force

Meeting Summary

July 24, 2019 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

WDU Policy Task Force Members Attending: John Carter, Steve Cerny, Abdi Hamud Richard Kennedy, Michelle Krocker, Caitland Roberts and Lynne Strobel.

Other Attendees: Tom Fleetwood, Amber-Lee Leslie, Kelly Atkinson, Sophia Fisher, Sara Morgan, Paul Stanford and Rex Peters.

Review of Meeting Summary and Schedule: Staff reviewed the June meeting summary. The August meeting will focus on finalizing the recommendations for the WDU Rental Program. There will be a meeting in September added to schedule to finalize all the Task Force recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Virginia Center for Housing Research Rental (VCHR) Analysis Overview: Staff provided an overview of the VCHR Rental Analysis and reviewed the updated analysis for Reston. The update was based on comments from the Task Force to utilize market rate rents for mid-rise and high-rise projects built 2013 and after.

Upon reviewing the analysis, the Task Force discussed the Area Median Income (AMI) used for the WDU Program. The discussion led to other indexes used by federal affordable housing programs such as the Small Area Fair Market Rents which are calculated based on ZIP Codes. Staff informed the Task Force that the WDU Policies require that the AMI is used to calculate rents.

Discussion of Rental Program: Staff reviewed the proposed WDU Rental Program Strawman which the Task Force began to discuss. Ms. Krocker stated that the income tiers served should reflect the need for affordable housing. The group discussed the income tiers that the ADU and WDU Programs served. Staff informed the Task Force that ADU Program serves up to 70 percent of the AMI and the WDU Program serves between 60 and 120 percent of the AMI. Ms. Strobel stated that the intent of the WDU Program was to serve a different income tier than the ADU Program. There was discussion of modifying the minimum 12 percent expectation under the Countywide Policy. Ms. Fisher with Department of Planning and Development (DPD) expressed that the 12 percent should be the baseline expectation. DPD staff would be uncomfortable with supporting a percentage below 12 percent.

Ms. Krocker informed the Task Force there are fewer ADUs being constructed and that the ADU Program is not producing units that serve households earning up to 70 percent of the AMI. The Task Force requested staff to provide the number of ADUs and WDUs produced over the last five years. Ms. Leslie acknowledged that one program cannot address all the affordable housing needs.

Ms. Leslie proposed that the WDU Program serve only the 80 percent of AMI income tier and offering incentives to developers to produce units at the lower income tiers. The Task Force discussed the proposal and considered serving 80 and 100 percent of AMI. The Task Force discussed the advantages and disadvantages of serving one income tier. Staff highlighted that some projects proffered to providing WDUs at lower income tiers. However, the group acknowledged the negotiation of those proffers was most likely due to the location of the project. Mr. Carter stressed his concern that some members of the Planning Commissioners were not comfortable with approving proffers outside the WDU Policies. Staff offered to provide the Planning Commission a presentation on the WDU Policies and Programs.

The Task Force briefly discussed the concept to allow WDU Rental Program applicants to qualify at initial occupancy and allowed to remain in the WDU if their income did not exceed 100 percent of the AMI. Staff will explore the concept which will require an administrative change to the WDU Rental Program. This concept should not impact the objective and recommendations of the Task Force.

The Task Force discussed the expectation of commercial contributions to create affordable housing. Mr. Fleetwood provided historical background on past proposals for commercial contributions. Staff provided an overview of the current WDU Policies for commercial contribution for affordable and workforce housing.

Discussion of For-Sale Program: The Task Force deferred the discussion to the next meeting.

Discussion of Next Steps: Mr. Fleetwood closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation especially the staff from Planning and Development and the Supervisor's Office. At the next meeting, staff will provide the number of ADUs and WDUs produced over the last five years. DPD will solicit comments from their staff on the Strawman proposal. Ms. Strobel and Mr. Wright will work together to review the Strawman to provide comments. Ms. Strobel will also follow up with the Tysons Partnership for their feedback.