

Embark Housing Advisory Group
Meeting Summary

July 26, 2018

- Committee Members in attendance: Nick Bracco, Rick Edson, Will Jasper, Stanley Koussis, Michelle Krockner, David Levine, Shelley Murphy, Soledad Portilla, Georgia Rangel, Lynne Strobel.
- Opening Remarks: Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Director, Tom Fleetwood opened the meeting, and those in attendance introduced themselves.
- Advisory Group Roundtable: Advisory group members commented on what was going on in the Richmond Highway Corridor and what was important to them regarding affordable housing and development. Comments included:
 - The feeling that revitalization was occurring in the area
 - The desire to see the proper amount of finance/funds set aside to accomplish what the group identifies
 - Preservation of affordable housing is important, but also preservation by replacement
 - The need for incentives for land-owners so that they will want to change
- Review of Affordable Housing Toolbox: Mr. Fleetwood stepped the Advisory Group through a PowerPoint presentation on the “Affordable Housing Toolbox”. He spoke of the strategies identified in the Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan and stated that all of the strategies are related to Embark and some could be piloted in the area. Mr. Fleetwood identified potential tools for the Embark area, including developing an affordable housing preservation strategy specific to the area. The preservation strategy would include an overall inventory of market affordable units and “income-restricted” housing that is kept affordable due to financing restrictions. Advisory group comments regarding the inventory included:
 - Having the inventory is critical.
 - The relationship of Embark to Opportunity Zones needs to be a focus; involves incentives for developers.
 - For developers, identifying properties that the group wants to keep would be beneficial, for if it is not done quickly, it could be too late to preserve the properties.
 - Mobile home parks may deserve their own area of attention.
 - Part of the inventorying should include what the County owns in the area and what could be re-purposed for affordable housing.

Mr. Fleetwood stated that the planned order for the inventories was: 1) housing – affordable housing inventory first, then market units; 2) County-owned stock; 3) vacant and under-utilized commercial property; 4) properties owned by churches/places of worship. Staff would move forward with the affordable housing inventory first.

A question arose regarding what percentage of Area Median Income (AMI) would be used to determine affordable housing. Looking at 60 percent of AMI was determined appropriate. Suggestions were provided on how to obtain information on what units were renting for and included utilizing information from Co-Star reports.

- Activity: Which Tools Should be Explored: This activity was tabled as advisory group members felt they did not have enough information to make the exercise meaningful.
- Discussion of Next Steps: Mr. Fleetwood stated that HCD staff will be working on a roadmap for the advisory group. For the next meeting members were asked to come with ideas for a list of solutions. HCD will come with affordable housing inventory information and a plan for the market housing inventory.

Next meeting to be August 30, 2018.