

King County Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2024 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Location: Microsoft Teams (virtual)

Attendance

Members	Member Present	Alternate Present
Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) Chair King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci		
Don Billen, Sound Transit		Thatcher Imboden, Sound Transit
Susan Boyd, Bellwether		
Affordable Housing Committee Vice Chair Alex Brennan, Futurewise	X	
Jane Broom, Microsoft Philanthropies		
Kelly Coughlin, SnoValley Chamber of Commerce	X	Rob Wotton, Umpqua Bank, on behalf of the SnoValley Chamber of Commerce
Kirkland Councilmember Amy Falcone on behalf of Sound Cities Association		Issaquah Council President Lindsay Walsh on behalf of Sound Cities Association
Kenmore Mayor Nigel Herbig on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	
Ryan Makinster, Washington Multi-Family Housing Association		
Sunaree Marshall, King County Department of Community and Human Services, on behalf of King County Executive Dow Constantine	X	
Renton Councilmember Ryan McIrvine on behalf of Sound Cities Association		Maple Valley Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello on behalf of Sound Cities Association
Seattle Councilmember Cathy Moore	X	
King County Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda		
Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	
Veronica Shakotko, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties		
Robin Walls, King County Housing Authority	X	
Maiko Winkler-Chin, Seattle Office of Housing, on behalf of Mayor Bruce Harrell	X	

Introductions and Agenda Review

- In the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) Chair's absence, Vice Chair Alex Brennan welcomed AHC members in attendance.
- Alex previewed the AHC meeting topics:
 - AHC staff are currently working on comprehensive plan review and a method of comparing jurisdictional progress for planning for and accommodating housing need.
 - This, along with legislative priorities, will be the focus of today's meeting.
 - We will return to the charter amendment discussion at a future meeting.
 - There is no Community Partners Table (CPT) report out today but we will hear from them again soon.

Action Item: Adoption of March 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- Alex asked for a motion to approve the February 1, 2024 AHC meeting minutes. Maple Valley Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello approved the motion and Kenmore Mayor Nigel Herbig seconded. The motion to approve the meeting minutes passed.

Proposed Method to Compare Jurisdictional Progress

- Alex introduced the agenda item:
 - AHC staff Carson Hartmann with King County Department of Community and Human Services Regional Affordable Housing Planner will present on the comparative standard, which is a way to compare jurisdictions.
 - In 2021 the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) tasked the AHC with a way to compare progress among jurisdictions. This is now codified in the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) amendments. Annual CPP Housing Chapter monitoring and tracking will occur.
 - Staff has fleshed out a proposal on how we will do these comparisons.
 - This is a time for the Committee to provide feedback to staff. We are not taking a vote today; this is about receiving input from you all on this process.
- Carson presented:
 - The AHC created the accountability framework in 2021-2022 in response to GMPC Motion 21-1. This framework is broken out into three stages:
 1. Review Plans (2023-2024): AHC reviews the housing-related components of all King County jurisdictions' draft comprehensive plan for consistency with CPP Housing Chapter and comments. AHC staff checks that housing-related elements of plans are complete, they include implementation strategies, and are meaningful.
 2. Monitor and Report (2025-2035): AHC reports on progress to plan for and accommodate housing needs annually. Monitoring includes: a comparative standard, housing data trends and standardized benchmarks.
 3. Five Year Check In (2029): Five years after plan adoption, GMPC or designee assesses progress, identifies nature of shortfalls, and then the jurisdiction takes steps to address shortfalls.

- The "comparative standard" is an annual effort to compare jurisdictional progress on planning for and accommodating their housing needs by using a standard method of comparison.
- "Planning for and accommodating housing needs" means that jurisdictions comprehensive plans are aligned with the goals and policies of the CPP Housing Chapter and that the jurisdiction takes action to advance CPP Housing Chapter goals and policies, including but not limited to aligning land capacity, removing barriers, assessing racially disparate impacts, and taking action to fill gaps and address identified problems.
- The GMPC and AHC will use the comparative standard to track progress. Jurisdictional planning staff and elected officials will also use this to see how they are doing compared to their peers and glean ideas from other jurisdictions on implementation. This allows us to celebrate jurisdictional progress.
- Carson paused staff and invited members to ask clarifying questions.
 - Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson asked where the data comes from and how recent will the data be? She doesn't want to see old data used to show Bellevue housing progress.
 - Carson replied that the proposal uses the most recent available data on the implementation of comprehensive plans. There are still lingering questions on how data on housing production and cost burden will be used, considering lags in data. For this proposal, we will have recent information (the previous year) about implementation of actions that jurisdictions lay out.
- Carson resumed the staff briefing:
 - In June 2023, the AHC reviewed three options to compare jurisdictional progress on an annual basis. The AHC agreed on a preference for a framework based off of The [Human Rights Campaign's State of Equality Index](#). This index reports on policy implementation rather than the impact that those policies have in communities.
 - The proposed framework for AHC consideration today would report on the housing-related implementation strategies jurisdictions employed since comprehensive plan adoption, report annually to the AHC by jurisdictions through an annual survey, categorizing jurisdictions based on how many implementation strategies they have followed through on.
 - The data would be collected, analyzed and reported on in a three-step process.
 1. Jurisdictions (CPP H-27) submit implementation strategies that will be reviewed by AHC staff. Jurisdictions can update the strategies if necessary and will report on their progress in AHC's annual survey.
 2. AHC staff takes data and implementation strategies, zoning changes and survey, and categorize jurisdictional progress using AHC-approved categorization method. The following is a potential way of categorizing jurisdictions: No progress, some progress, solid progress or significant progress, determined based on the degree to which they have implemented at least one strategy for all CPP Housing Chapter policies that require implementation.
 3. AHC staff will report each jurisdiction's status online. This will include the progress category of each jurisdiction as well as details on the status of each implementation strategy to understand the specifics of what each jurisdiction is doing to align with

- o the CPP Housing Chapter. AHC staff would solicit Housing Interjurisdictional Team (HIJT) input on findings and brief the AHC.
- o The proposal is informed by feedback thus far from the Housing Interjurisdictional Team and King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) staff.
 - HIJT members offered feedback on the preliminary concept in February 2024. The HIJT thought it was headed in the right direction; with some needed changes/considerations (e.g., the categorization strategy, reporting strategy, and how/when impact data should be monitored). HIJT members suggested the categorization labels should be positive rather than condemning (e.g., instead of “no progress” it could read “opportunity to X”). Feedback also included the frequency of comparing jurisdictional progress to be considered. It does not need to be every year, but it does need to inform five-year check in, so it must be more frequent than every five years.
 - King County DCHS staff suggested considering how to report which implementation strategies the AHC commented on during plan review and whether strategies were adjusted in response.
- o Carson reviewed a proposed timeline for development of a comparative standard.
 - Following AHC input today, staff will consult with the CPT on April 12th with the CPT. Proposal refinement could occur in August or later due to anticipated deluge of comprehensive plans for the AHC to review.
 - AHC staff should also brief the GMPC.
 - The development of annual monitoring and reporting methods and procedures could lead to revisions to the Regional Affordable housing Dashboard or to the creation of a new reporting tool.
 - The CPP policies about the five-year check in says the GMPC will use annual monitoring and reporting data to identify shortfalls and make recommendations that jurisdictions address shortfalls.
- o Carson concluded his presentation with a question: Does the AHC think this proposal is going in the right direction?
- Alex thanked Carson for his presentation, saying it is clear that staff put a lot of energy into this proposal. He then opened the floor for discussion.
 - o Robert Wotton SnoValley Chamber of Commerce alternate said that he is representing Snoqualmie and thinking about rural equity and rural flexibility. For all jurisdictions with less than 20,000 in population, this is a heavy lift. We have a lack of public transportation, meaning transit-oriented development is not really an option for them as a financing source. Our most recent affordable housing community is Panorama, with 191 units on Snoqualmie Ridge. There is no bus service from there. It serves a population of 60 percent area median income (AMI) and under. We have 400 emergency calls/year coming from 191 total units. Compare that to a King County housing project that is downtown Snoqualmie with 30 units over the same course of a year we had 400 emergency calls. When we have affordable housing we have to also balance it with social services. Those of us in the rural communities lack those services. We are concerned about the growth targets because we are being expected to have 700 housing units under 50 percent AMI over the next 20 years. We don't have the land, water or social services that are needed to accommodate this. Can

you give us more flexibility? These targets are probably more achievable in higher density areas.

- AHC lead staff McCaella Daffern replied that I know that Snoqualmie has been in communication with the GMPC about their growth targets so it is on their radar.
- GMPC lead staff Ivan Miller stated that Snoqualmie passed a resolution that will come to the County and GMPC to consider a change to Snoqualmie's growth target. We changed the way targets are done in the 2021 CPPs and jurisdictions came to us with a number they were interested in and those were the numbers we adopted. However, leadership in jurisdictions change and for the first time we are considering a growth target reconciliation process. King County GMPC staff are waiting for a letter from Snoqualmie and then the GMPC will engage in it over the coming year. I am working on a work plan for the GMPC and will talk to the IJT about that. I can share the direction it is going in at another AHC meeting if it is of interest.
- Alex said that his understanding is that an intent of the CPPs is to have some flexibility and may not be meant to be a one-size fits all approach to addressing housing need. Perhaps staff can provide some examples of how one CPP takes shape with different jurisdictions of different sizes and conditions.
- Carson noted that when he first consulted with the AHC in June 2023 on the comparative standard, the AHC said the standard should not be too prescriptive. Under this framework, the AHC would monitor implementation strategies, but the implementation strategies are chosen by the jurisdictions because the AHC respects that jurisdictions understand their communities best and will choose strategies consistent with the CPPs.
- Issaquah Council President Lindsey Walsh said she is unsure if showing trend or year over year progress really does anything. The Human Rights Campaign State of Equality Index is very focused on what have you done and what have you not done. They present that for current time, not trends. The reason to show trends is to show that we are making progress and, maybe that's good, but I'm struggling with this point. It doesn't seem very accessible. How is this different from the current dashboard's metrics that we already have? Is there a true use or user base to this that's different from what we already have?
 - (In chat) Kelly Coughlin says Carnation and North Bend agree, seconded by Lynne Robinson.
 - Carson replied that the housing policies enacted piece on the current dashboard relate to policies that the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Five Year Action Plan encouraged all jurisdictions to enact. The CPP Housing Chapter policies are not that prescriptive. They propose examples of policies that you could enact but are not as narrow or specific as the housing policies jurisdictions should enact listed in the Five Year Action Plan. The subheadings in the CPPs is staff's attempt to ask if the jurisdiction is adopting policies that prioritize 0-30 percent AMI households, for example. But going deeper/more specific, as we've heard from AHC members previously, feels too prescriptive.
- Issaquah Council President Lindsey Walsh asked if this would then replace the current housing policies enacted and thus we would lose some of that granularity?
 - Carson replied that you would see the policies and implementation strategies enacted by that particular jurisdiction and whether they have been adopted or

- not. It is possible we revise the current dashboard to be of use to the annual monitoring and reporting requirements in the CPPs, or it could be another tool.
- Thatcher Imboden said he is worried this doesn't consider the impact or difficulty of individual strategies.
 - Carson noted that this is on the minds of AHC staff and was similar to feedback he received from DCHS staff on the proposal. The plan review process is meant to check for impact and level of quality of the implementation strategies. We will consider this concern.
 - Bellevue Mayor Robinson said that the current dashboard had such potential but never helped us because the data was never current. Data can be seven years old. If you are putting comparisons up for the world to see, this data needs to be updated every year otherwise it is not fair.
 - Carson said that he understood and very much agreed with her.
 - Maiko Winkler-Chin said that metrics are hard. Maiko asked, "What is it that we're trying to measure?" She is unsure what "solid" or "significant" really means. Are some jurisdictions unable to ever reach "significant?" What we really need is housing units and don't want to lose sight of that through all of this.
 - Carson said that he agrees that the progress categories should be meaningful. Tracking of housing units is one of the minimum things they are meant to track and will be part of this work. Whether or not it is incorporated into the comparative standard, we will definitely track housing units and will consider your comment as we move forward.
 - Sunaree Marshall said that she was the "DCHS internal feedback." What she was getting at is something she is hearing as a thread through these conversations – what is the meaningfulness of what we're tracking. If you sign yourself up for what you are going to do, but what you do doesn't actually impact anything, is it a good thing if you end up in the "significant progress" category? If we flag during this very staff intensive review of comprehensive plans that a jurisdiction's plan does not demonstrate that they'll get them anywhere meaningful, shouldn't we reflect that in this process? To Maiko's question, there is this dance we are doing where jurisdictions are different, they have different capacities and abilities to use policy to implement change. We want housing units to increase and factors exist to impede people's progress toward this. Even if a jurisdiction doesn't achieve a specific metric, it doesn't mean they're not trying everything they can in their capacity. Do we want to measure effort towards the goals in the CPPs, or do we want to measure what have you actually gotten done and what is the impact of it? As Mayor Robinson described, the data does lag. Local data lags by about a year, national data lags even longer than that. So, we can't take action immediately against someone who is not showing those hard units. We can say "hey, you signed yourself up for all these strategies and you haven't done any of them." Do we have a super long dashboard that encompasses so much it doesn't mean anything to anyone else besides us? To Robert Watton's point, maybe some jurisdictions in certain areas shouldn't be asked if they are implementing housing near high-capacity transit if high-capacity transit isn't in their plan. Are we trying to measure what a jurisdiction committed to in their comprehensive plan or are we trying to measure

what is on the books and is it making a difference? Are we trying to do both or one or the other?

- Robert Wotton (in chat) stated that what might be helpful is having the feedback mechanism to acknowledge the roadblocks and adjust public policies and investments needed to provide more affordable housing outcomes.
 - Carson, in response to Sunaree's points, said that really speaks to the tensions that staff are dealing with in this project. Conversations with my colleagues emphasized for me the importance of the five year check in. It emphasizes the importance of the housing data trends, standardized benchmarks, the reporting commitments that the AHC made, and CPP H-27. The midcycle check in needs to bring all of it together: are strategies being implemented and are we seeing results? And if we aren't seeing results, it becomes a constructive process to identify and say, "you've made incredible effort to try and address this housing crisis, however we are not seeing the needle move." We need to come together again as a region and think through what we should do in order to improve upon the strategies we've laid out. This is meant to be a continuously improved system. We understand this can be framed as chastising people for not doing a good enough job, but I really see it as a constructive exercise to improve upon the strategies that we have.
- Alex Brennan asked Carson: As you were saying there are three pieces of this monitoring work that staff will be doing. There is the comparative standard that we are talking about today, there's also the benchmarks and the data which you don't have a proposal to share with us today. Part of what I'm hearing is how do these three things interact – can you talk more about how we're going to hear about how the three fit together?
 - Carson said that staff have started to explore potential metrics in developing this proposal. DCHS's Performance, Management, and Evaluation team has helped him explore possibilities, so this is in development. My project plan was to start this discussion in early Q3 2024 but I'm hearing from you that people want to see how all this will interact simultaneously, so we may need to update the plan to do so. We originally planned to integrate that second piece into the comparative standard proposal, but it is challenging to do if we are committing to annually updating this due to the data lag concerns that Mayor Robinson highlighted. It is still possible to provide annual updates with data lags, so we will consider this moving forward.
 - McCaela noted that the AHC adopted a work plan that said AHC would approve a comparative standard this year. That was an effort to get some piece of this work shaped and developed to give planners some clarity around what will be tracked coming out of their comprehensive plans. If there's interest, we could readjust the schedule. It may mean we do more work with the HIJT on this topic, keep it at the staff level, and bring a proposal back next year while the AHC is focused this year on comprehensive plan review. If folks are okay with that, we can

internally synthesize this conversation and come back to the next meeting with what we are thinking.

- Alex then wrapped us the agenda item:
 - It would be great to have staff reflect on this and think about what's possible.
 - I also want to be respectful of staff capacity and be respectful to our AHC Chair, King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci, being absent today. I don't want to be making any major changes to the staff workplan without her input.
 - A thread throughout all the comments today do seem to point to staff putting more work and thought into this and bring something back next month for the Chair's input.
 - The other thread that I heard through a couple of different comments is the breadth versus depth aspect of this—is depth being captured through this scorecard? It is easy to measure whether a strategy has been implemented or not rather than to measure and provide a qualitative analysis of whether that strategy is a really impactful one or not. As Sunaree mentioned, how this connects to comprehensive plan review, even with an approved plan with a lot of support, there are more impactful and less impactful strategies within that plan. This would be another important piece to dig into at a future conversation.
 - He flagged that the group heard from several different governmental members, but not from nongovernmental members except for him. If folks coming from a nongovernmental place have thoughts on what kind of information would be helpful for them to see jurisdictions making progress on these policies, I'd encourage you to share those thoughts.
 - One of the things I brought up last month was potentially the need for some nongovernmental caucusing to have more support to engage in these conversations. I'll reiterate that that the silence here might reflect the lack of caucus that has been able to happen.

Briefing on AHC 2024 State Legislative Priorities

- Alex invited Isaac Horwith, King County DCHS Affordable Housing Planning Program Manager, to brief the Committee on the AHC 2024 State Legislative Priorities.
- Isaac provided a short briefing on the state legislative session:
 - Today is the end of session.
 - AHC adopted 2024 state legislative priorities grouped around three high-level goals:
 1. preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing;
 2. support local jurisdictions in planning for and accommodating housing affordable to households at or below 80% AMI; and
 3. increase housing stability for low-income renters.
 - He reviewed three bills most responsive to AHC legislative priorities:
 1. House Bill (HB) 2160: Promoting community and transit-oriented housing development - did not pass
 2. HB 2219: Sales tax exemption for affordable housing by nonprofits - did not pass

- 3. HB 2329: Study on the property and liability coverage for 0-30% AMI housing – passed; included \$85,000 in funding
- He then reviewed other housing-related bills members might be interested in:
 - HB 1245 Lot splitting – did not pass
 - HB 1473 Wealth tax – did not pass
 - HB 1892 Workforce housing – passed, but appears that there’s no funding for this in the budget
 - HB 1998 Co-living housing – passed; requires cities allow (or reduce barriers to) shared kitchen facility styled housing.
 - HB 2012 Local funds property tax exemption – passed; rather than only being exempt from paying property tax if affordable housing projects received state or federal funding, they now won’t have to pay property tax if funded solely from local dollars.
 - HB 2113 Commerce GMA compliance review – did not pass
 - HB 2114 Rent stabilization – did not pass
 - HB 2276 Affordable Homes Act – did not pass
 - SB 5770 3% property tax cap – did not pass
 - SB 6015 Parking configurations – passed; requires cities to allow more flexibility in how parking can be configured.
 - SB 6136 B&O tax on rent – did not pass
 - SB 6152 County housing gap analysis – did not pass

Briefing on Housing-Focused Comprehensive Plan Review Program

- Alex invited Isaac Horwith to brief the AHC on comprehensive plan review.
- Isaac provided a short briefing:
 - DCHS continues to staff up to ensure proper support for plan review. Skye D’Aquila joined the team in February and are expect to post another position next week to support plan review.
 - AHC staff are conducting more outreach to jurisdictions.
 - Plan review has commenced this year. Maple Valley and Burien have submitted their plans for review.
 - Our goal is to keep dialog between us and the cities, so there are no surprises in the comment letter. We will meet with each city at least twice, in addition to back-and-forth emails, making our review process a minimum of two months.
 - Our goal is to come to May AHC meeting with draft comment letters for Maple Valley and Burien (potentially others if they submit this week).
 - We expect review submissions from Seattle, Bellevue, Algona, Sammamish, and Tukwila this month, and Issaquah, Covington, and Federal Way in April.
 - The AHC will likely have a lot of letters to review at the August meeting since the AHC does not have a July meeting.
 - Jurisdictions should submit very soon if they want to receive a letter before August.
- Alex opened the floor for discussion:

- Seattle Councilmember Cathy Moore said she is new to the Committee and unaware of what the housing-focused comprehensive plan review program is. She asked Isaac to explain this.
- Isaac clarified that the draft housing-focused comprehensive plan review program is the first step of the CPP Housing Chapter accountability framework, the second step being the annual monitoring and reporting work that Carson spoke about earlier. Authority for the AHC to review and comment on plans is established in CPP H-26 and the goal is to review all King County jurisdictions draft plans and give comment letters based on CPP housing chapter alignment. The AHC reviewed King County and Redmond's draft plans last year and we now have 38 more jurisdictions to go. AHC staff hope to get comment letters to jurisdictions with enough time for them to incorporate the recommendations and suggestions. Letters will be approved by the AHC and posted on the AHC's website. Beyond just alignment in their draft plans, The AHC is also asking jurisdictions to submit to AHC staff strategies on how jurisdictions will implement those policies. As Carson said, the AHC will use these implementation strategies moving forward to assess progress.

Good of the Order, Wrap-up, and What's Next

- Alex Brennan shared gratitude for everyone. There was good input about the comparative standard and looking forward to hearing back from staff as they continue to work through it.
- The AHC meets next on April 4 . We can expect an update from the CPT, to resume charter amendment conversation, and receive a further update on the comprehensive plan review program.
- Meeting adjourned.