

King County Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2024 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Location: Microsoft Teams (virtual)

Attendance

Members	Member Present	Alternate Present
Affordable Housing Committee Chair King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci		
Don Billen, Sound Transit	X	Thatcher Imboden, Sound Transit
Susan Boyd, Bellwether	X	
Affordable Housing Committee Vice Chair Alex Brennan, Futurewise	X	
Jane Broom, Microsoft Philanthropies	X	
Kelly Coughlin, SnoValley Chamber of Commerce	X	
Kirkland Councilmember Amy Falcone on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	Issaquah Council President Lindsay Walsh on behalf of Sound Cities Association
Kenmore Mayor Nigel Herbig on behalf of Sound Cities Association		
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	X	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	X	
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 called the meeting to order and welcomed AHC members in attendance.
- Vice Chair Alex Brennan previewed the AHC meeting topics:
 - No Community Partners Table briefing since the consultant was not present.
 - AHC staff briefing on the plan review program and the draft comment letters under consideration, followed by review and possible approval of each letter.
 - AHC staff briefing on their efforts to develop a monitoring and reporting framework for the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) Housing Chapter.

Action Item: Adoption of March 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Kirkland Councilmember Amy Falcone made a motion to approve the March 7, 2024 AHC meeting minutes. Issaquah Council President Lindsay Walsh seconded. Jane Broom abstained. Seattle Councilmember Moore was not present for the vote. The motion to approve the meeting minutes passed.

Action Item: Comprehensive Plan Review Comments

- The Vice Chair framed the briefing:
 - Since the last meeting in March, AHC staff reviewed and prepared draft comment letters for the cities of Algona, Burien, and Maple Valley.
 - He thanked Algona, Burien, and Maple Valley for being early submitters to the program.
- The Vice Chair explained that Burien's Community Development Director Liz Stead asked for a little more time to defer discussion on Burien's letter until May:
 - The Vice Chair proposed to defer discussion today on Burien's comment letter to allow for more staff coordination between staff.
 - The Vice Chair asked if there were any objections to a change in the meeting agenda.
 - Hearing no objections the change to the agenda was accepted.
- Vice Chair Brennan provided an overview of the other two draft comment letters under consideration at the May 2 AHC meeting:
 - Algona and Maple Valley staff have already responded to many of the draft letters' recommendations.
 - To clarify, the AHC does not expect jurisdictions to act on the comment letters that quickly nor respond to each comment prior to the meeting, just to incorporate the feedback prior to adoption of the plan. The AHC does not expect jurisdictions' drafts to be perfect. We are not looking for "gotcha" moments. The AHC is working in the spirit of dialogue and shared learning. At the same time, these comment letters raise serious issues for AHC discussion. This program will only succeed if we are able to work through difficult conversations.
- The Vice Chair introduced Isaac Horwith, King County AHC staff, who provided a status update on the comprehensive plan review process and early, emergent themes.
 - Horwith explained that the housing-focused draft comprehensive plan review program was established in the CPPs as part of the housing-focused accountability framework. The program is well underway, with Algona, Maple Valley, and Burien's plans currently

under review. Bellevue's plan is slated for review in June, while Seattle, Auburn, and Bothell are scheduled for July.

- Horwith also shared that AHC staff are conducting a Housing Interjurisdictional Team (HIJT) a peer review pilot to provide additional perspective on the draft comment letters.
- He noted that the team is staging up, with a new team member starting in two weeks.
- Horwith then delved into the plan review process, which involves multiple touchpoints with each jurisdiction, including meetings, technical assistance, and opportunities for feedback. Jurisdictions submit housing-related components of their draft comprehensive plans, a CPP completeness checklist, and an implementation strategies workbook. The AHC staff review the submissions based on three key standards: completeness, alignment with CPPs, and meaningful action to address housing needs.
- Early themes emerging from the plan reviews were also discussed. These include:
 - documenting and repairing harm to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) households;
 - prioritizing the housing needs of extremely low-income households (0-30 percent areas median income (AMI));
 - providing access to affordable housing throughout jurisdictions, with a focus on high opportunity areas; and
 - strengthening inventory and analysis sections.
- Horwith noted that he will share a memo further detailing these themes with the Committee in June.
- Vice Chair Brennan opened up the floor for discussion:
 - Council President Lindsey Walsh expressed appreciation for the format and readability of the staff reports, emphasizing their accessibility to those outside the cities. Overall, the comprehensive plan review discussion showcased the collaborative and iterative nature of the process, with jurisdictions, committee members, and staff engaging in substantive dialogue to refine and strengthen local housing policies in alignment with regional goals
 - Vice Chair Alex Brennan concluded the discussion by thanking the cities for their participation and emphasizing the Committee's role as a resource. He acknowledged the tension between identifying policy gaps and allowing flexibility for local solutions, stressing that the Committee's aim is to support jurisdictions, not just highlight issues.
- The Committee then moved into discussing comment letters for specific jurisdictions. Burien's letter was deferred to allow for additional staff coordination. Maple Valley and Algona's comment letters were the focus of more in-depth discussion.

Maple Valley Comment Letter

- Carson Hartmann, King County AHC staff, began with an overview of Maple Valley's demographics, housing needs, and relevant context for the committee's consideration:

- Maple Valley's located in southeast King County and is proximate to major transportation corridors.
- Has a population of around 29,000, higher median household income compared to the county average, and lower percentage of residents of color.
- Is predominantly a single-family home community, with about 85 percent of residents being homeowners. Home prices have outpaced income growth, with a median home price of \$730,000 and 20 percent of households experiencing cost burden, particularly BIPOC households.
- Maple Valley plans to grow by about 18 percent (1,720 housing units) between 2019 and 2044, which is lower than the countywide target of 32 percent.
- A significant portion of Maple Valley's housing need (68 percent) is for households below 50 percent of AMI.
- Is a member of the South King Housing and Homelessness Partners.
- Considered a bedroom community with a jobs-to-housing ratio of 0.5.
- Plans to transform its downtown into a mixed-use center, including redeveloping a publicly-owned site and implementing new design standards.
- The presentation shifted to the specific recommendations in the draft comment letter:
 - Hartmann noted that while Maple Valley's plan aligned well with many CPP Housing Chapter policies, the recommendation pulled for discussion (recommendation 4 in the draft comment letter) focused on increasing housing options for 0-80 percent AMI households throughout the jurisdiction, particularly in residential zones. This recommendation stems from the plan's concentration of lower-income housing along State Route 169 corridor and in commercial zones, with limited access in residential areas.
 - Hartmann walked through the relevant CPPs (H-9, H-18, and H-25) and how Maple Valley's draft plan could better align with them.
 - He acknowledged the city's thoughtful analysis of racially disparate impacts and its identification of affordability as a barrier to equitable access.
 - However, he noted that the draft plan could strengthen its approach to expanding affordable housing options in residential zones and mitigating exposure to environmental hazards along the highway.
- Community Development Director, Tawni Dalziel provided additional context from Maple Valley's perspective.
 - Recent efforts have been made to adopt new downtown design standards, including plans for over 100 affordable housing units at 70 percent AMI or lower.
 - The downtown area, located along SR169 and near Lake Wilderness, will benefit from a mix of affordable housing.
 - The distribution of affordable housing poses challenges, particularly in targeted mixed-use development areas.
 - Other parts of Maple Valley remain underdeveloped since its incorporation in 1997, with most development consisting of single-family homes.

- Limited undeveloped land and existing infrastructure, including major highways, complicate new development opportunities.
- Transit and supportive services for housing are minimal, adding to the challenges.
- The comprehensive plan and housing element are steps toward addressing these issues.
- Collaboration with the City Council and addressing King County's comments on affordable housing are ongoing.
- The comprehensive plan draft, prepared by the Planning Commission, will be discussed with the City Council in the coming months.
- Efforts are also underway to review draft codes to support "missing middle" housing in residential and commercial areas.
- Vice Chair Alex Brennan thanked Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello and Community Development Director Tawni Dalziel
 - Vice Chair Brennan addressed the challenges and importance of providing affordable housing options across different income levels in cities, emphasizing the need to break down patterns of racial and economic segregation. He acknowledged the complexity of determining the best methods to engage communities in understanding the importance of affordable housing.
 - Vice Chair Brennan expressed appreciation for Maple Valley's efforts in addressing affordable housing and highlighted the role of the committee in encouraging further progress. He noted a tension in the committee's approach of identifying gaps in the draft plan without suggesting specific policy changes, allowing local jurisdictions the flexibility to address these gaps in ways that best suit their communities.
 - He emphasized that the committee's goal is not to criticize but to support local efforts and that while specific solutions are not provided within the official process, there are opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing outside of formal meetings. Alex concluded by seeking a motion to proceed with the letter as is or to discuss further.
- After a motion by Councilmember Amy Falcone and a second by Council President Lindsey Walsh, the committee unanimously approved the comment letter for Maple Valley.

Algona Comment Letter

- Skye D'Aquilla, King County AHC staff, provided an overview of Algona's demographics, housing needs, and key recommendations, followed by input from city representatives and Committee discussion.
 - Algona is a small city of approximately 3,170 residents located in south King County, bordering Auburn and Pacific.
 - Despite having a lower median household income than the county average, Algona has a higher homeownership rate, particularly among white and Asian households.
 - The city's housing stock is primarily single-family homes and mobile homes, with a jobs-to-housing ratio of 2:1, indicating a strong employment base.
 - Algona plans to grow by 16 percent (or 170 units) between 2019 and 2044, lower than the countywide growth rate.

- The city's housing needs assessment revealed that only 38 percent of its new housing need is for households below 80 percent AMI, significantly lower than the countywide need of 63 percent.
- Algona's need for permanent supportive housing is also proportionally lower, at just 17 units over 20 years.
- Additional context included Algona's consideration of joining SKHHP, plans for a new town center subarea plan, and the presence of an existing waste transfer station in the heavy commercial zone, which is slated for replacement in 2026.
- D'Aquila also noted that Algona did not propose any zoning map changes in this comprehensive plan update.
- The presentation then turned to the specific recommendations in the draft comment letter.
 - While acknowledging several areas where Algona's plan aligned well with the CPPs, D'Aquila focused on recommendation 4, which addresses the potential for segregation and negative environmental health impacts from concentrating very low-income housing (0-50 percent AMI) in the heavy commercial zone near the waste transfer station.
 - D'Aquila explained that Algona's land capacity analysis identified the heavy commercial zone as the sole area to accommodate the city's 0-50 percent AMI housing need.
 - This zone is located along State Route 167, exposing residents to noise and air pollution, and is physically separated from the rest of the city by the highway.
 - The waste transfer station's final environmental impact statement also indicated that residential use would be the least compatible adjacent land use.
- While Algona's draft plan includes some policies to mitigate environmental hazards and proposes a new trail network and park in the heavy commercial zone, AHC staff still felt it was important to recommend that the city explore additional strategies to distribute affordable housing more equitably throughout the jurisdiction and in areas that promote residents' health and well-being.
- City Administrator Jessica Grace and planning consultant Andy McAndrews provided additional context, noting the challenges of updating the comprehensive plan with limited staff capacity in a small city.
 - They clarified that the new waste transfer station would replace the existing one and highlighted ongoing efforts to improve transit access in the area.
 - Grace and McAndrews also mentioned the city's work on middle housing and code updates, expressing appreciation for the Committee's feedback and a commitment to ongoing collaboration.
- Director Maiko Winkler-Chin inquired about coordination between county departments, such as Metro, to support cities in addressing issues like transit access.
 - AHC Staff McCaela Daffern and King County DCHS Housing and Community Development Deputy Director Sunaree Marshall explained that such coordination happens through various regional planning forums and is often informed by input from impacted communities, but the specific mechanisms depend on the issue at hand.

- After a motion by Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello and a second by Mayor Lynne Robinson, the committee unanimously approved the comment letter for Algona.

Monitoring and Reporting Development

- Carson Hartmann, King County AHC staff, provided an update on the development of the AHC's monitoring and reporting framework, a key component of the accountability measures established in the CPPs.
 - Hartmann began by reminding the Committee that the monitoring and reporting program is designed to track jurisdictions' progress in planning for and accommodating their share of the countywide housing need.
 - This work will take place annually between the adoption of comprehensive plans and the next planning cycle, complementing the front-end plan review process.
 - At the March meeting, staff had presented a preliminary proposal for comparing jurisdictional progress using the implementation strategies submitted as part of the comprehensive plan review process.
 - The key takeaway from that discussion was that the committee needed more information to evaluate the proposed approach.
- Hartmann explained that CPP H-28 directs the AHC to develop several components of the monitoring and reporting framework, including a comparative standard, standardized benchmarks, and key housing data trends.
 - Based on the Committee's feedback, AHC staff realized that it would be more effective to bring forward a holistic proposal encompassing all these elements, rather than presenting them piecemeal.
 - To that end, Hartmann outlined the staff's plan to collaborate with the HIJT and the King County Department of Community and Human Services' (DCHS) Performance, Measurement, and Evaluation team to develop a comprehensive monitoring and reporting proposal for the Committee's consideration in early 2025.
 - This proposal will include the comparative standard, benchmarks, and data trends, providing a complete picture of how the AHC will track and assess jurisdictions' housing efforts over time.
 - Hartmann emphasized that this collaborative approach, leveraging the expertise of the HIJT and DCHS evaluation staff, will result in a more robust and actionable framework.
 - He expressed excitement about bringing forward a refined proposal that incorporates best practices and responds to the Committee's desire for a clear, data-driven accountability system.
- Committee members did not raise any questions or concerns in response to Hartmann's update, suggesting general support for the revised approach and timeline.

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

- Vice Chair Alex Brennan thanked the committee for a productive meeting.

- AHC staff will share a memo on early comprehensive plan review themes at the June AHC meeting.
- Review of Bellevue's draft plan is tentatively scheduled for June, with Seattle, Auburn and Bothell slated for July.
- AHC staff will work with the HIJT to draft a complete monitoring and reporting proposal for committee review in early 2025.
- Sunaree Marshall announced her upcoming parental leave from mid-August through November, with Xochitl Maykovich stepping into her role on the Committee.
- The Vice Chair adjourned the meetings a few minutes early.

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