



**GroWNC Housing Workgroup Meeting
October 12, 1:00-3:00
Meeting Notes**

Attendees:

Philip Bisesi – Black Mountain Housing Commission
Mike Butrum – Asheville Board of Realtors
Marnette Colborne – Haywood Habitat for Humanity
Donna Cottrell – Buncombe County
Robin Merrell – Pisgah Legal Services
Rick Molland – Community Housing Coalition of Madison County
Jerry Brewton – Disability Partners
Jeff Staudinger – City of Asheville
John Connell – Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Karen Kiehna – Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Linda Giltz – Land-of-Sky Regional Council

Project Update and Next Steps (handout of presentation is attached)

John provided an update on additional outreach activities that occurred over the summer. We contracted with 15 individuals who organized and facilitated 89 meetings, involving 824 participants. We also distributed surveys to senior centers and public housing neighborhoods and at various events and have collected over 250 completed surveys.

A short survey for businesses is on the GroWNC home page (top right corner). Area chambers, Economic Development Workgroup members, CIBO have been asked to promote it to their members and we have received a number of responses so far. Rick volunteered to follow-up with the Madison Chamber and Marnette will follow up with Haywood Chamber to get the survey link out to businesses.

John also reviewed the draft alternative scenarios that will be presented at the community meetings and the schedule for community meetings and the next Steering Committee and Workgroup meetings.

Review Objectives and Performance Measures

Jeff Staudinger started the conversation noting that the Center for Neighborhood Technologies recently completed a study, working with the City of Asheville, that looked at the housing and transportation costs related to locations in the area – “Location Efficient Affordable Housing for a More Sustainable Asheville” (May 2012). The study estimated a realistic number for the “Housing and Transportation Index” measure. We should refer to this study to determine what to use in the modeling. It also contains recommendations for locating more affordable housing and types of incentives to use to do this. The study is available on this webpage:

<http://www.ashevellenc.gov/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/PlansReports.aspx>

Then the group discussed the following objective and performance measure:

Increase the Supply of Universally-Accessible Housing

- *Number of homes with universal design features*

Jeff pointed out the need to **think about accessibility more broadly** – e.g. for people to get to services they need from where they live. Some housing choices are very remote and not accessible to public transportation services.

Phil brought up the issue of what happens when I/we stop driving – a universally-designed house is on one level; need to have access to community services; features inside house need to be accessible (these are typically covered under universal design)

What is realistic? What is sustainable? The measures may be different in Madison County than in Buncombe County/Asheville. Historically, we have more multi-family/multi-generational neighborhoods. Need to emphasize that there will be alternatives/choices.

Suggested adding another performance measure:

- The number of people who live __ miles from community services

Then the group decided to step back and review all the objectives before going into more details on any one of them. They suggested some re-wording of these objectives:

Objectives: (reworded as follows)

- Increase the supply of safe, **durable** and **energy resource** efficient housing ~~accessible to all~~
- ~~Encourage~~ **Promote** the development of affordable/workforce housing
- Promote Housing Choices
- Increase the Supply of ~~Universally-Accessible~~ Housing Accessible to the Elderly and Special Needs populations

Universal design is not the best way to measure how housing meets the needs of elderly people. There are a number of alternative living arrangements that are emerging – e.g. cohousing, shared housing – that are “intentional communities.” The reasons for this are varied. People come together for economic reasons, to live in a community, due to cultural norms, etc. It is interesting that Census measures non-family housing and it is becoming more common. But the Census is not keeping up with the changes in housing and living arrangements.

Rick asked whether we should we name **another objective that is “to enable emerging models of housing and community living (a.k.a. intentional communities)?”**

Another suggested **new objective: “Promoting mixed-income communities”** (through public policies and regulations). Mike was concerned that this objective is unrealistic because people

do not choose this in the market. Robin noted that this may be a generational phenomenon. She suggested that if we promote mixed-income communities, then maybe some of the divisions based on income may break down. Mike stated that he supported the objective but thinks it will take a long time to change society.

Mike offered that building costs have gone up 12% through this recession. This is a challenge for creating affordable housing. We need government to work with builders and developers to make existing land more accessible/affordable rather than place more restrictions on development.

The group then discussed the following objective and related measures: (comments in red)

Increase the supply of safe, **durable** and **energy resource** efficient housing ~~accessible to all~~

- Number of new housing starts and building permits for renovations
- Residential energy consumption (data available from Duke/Progress Energy)
- Number of LEED-registered, LEED certified and ENERGY STAR-certified buildings (residential) – Take out LEED certified terminology – keep EnergyStar – **Advanced Energy** certifies these – we can get data from them. LEED adds a lot of cost to building – need a “LEED light” option to save costs. Change to: **The number of energy efficient “certified” homes** (EnergyStar, LEED, Habitat, Healthy Built or similar program)
- Percent substandard housing (data from Census; property valuations – condition of housing)
- Crime rate – This didn’t appear to be very important to this group. Note that realtors are not allowed to provide this information.
- Safety is related to indoor air quality, lead poisoning, mold – what is the modern indicator for safe homes? Ask project consultants for advice.

Promote Development of Affordable/Workforce Housing

- Percent of population paying more than **30%** of income on housing and transportation (get number from Jeff; from recent CTE report referenced above)
- Number of affordable units available for rent (HUD defn. of affordable – may need to explain)
- Number of affordable units available for sale
- Proportion of rental housing units that are subsidized – we can’t do anything about this
- Average wait for public housing
- Value-to-income ratio – take this out unless we learn that it is meaningful (ask LandDesign)
- Payback periods (Number of years that a median-income family needs to pay back a loan equal to 90% of median home value) – this could be valuable if we could standardize this over time. This could help us understand if the housing is affordable

to people in the region. Calculate **median family income / median home value** for past years and follow into the future.

- Percent homelessness
- Housing Density per acre (new measure)
- Number of vacant houses / Occupancy rate (new measure)

Note – Access to affordable housing is related to mortgage credit – credit availability and qualification.

Promote Housing Choices

- **Number and** Percentage of single residential units
- **Number and** Percentage of multi-family units
- **Number and percentage of mobile homes (rather than “Proportion of population living in mobile home units”)**
- Number of co-housing units
- Number of accessory dwelling units
- Home ownership **percentage**
- **Percentage of population that rents (better way to say this?)**
- **Numbers of different types of households**

Note – a **strategy** would be to enable more housing choices in local regulations and policies and we could count how many zoning codes allow the various types of housing to get a baseline.

Increase the Supply of ~~Universally-Accessible~~ Housing Accessible to the Elderly and Special Needs populations

- Number of homes with universal design features – **if we can measure this**
- **Number of publicly-financed residences built with universal design features (new)**
- Percent population age 65 and over
- **Percent of population with special needs (new)**
- People 65 and over living in households
- People 65 and over living alone
- People 65 and over living in group quarters
- **Accessibility – how can we measure this? E.g. have service providers survey to residents; building permit information.**
- **Number of homes within ½ mile of public transit (new)**
- **Number of homes with sidewalks in front of the house (new)**

Note that we need to think about how to measure the newer forms of housing.

How do we address rehabilitation /repurposing of vacant and underutilized properties? In the strategy development phase.