

Housing Implementation Study Meeting #3

November 2, 2020

1:00 PM

Participants: 29

James Prout, Bill Fiander, Brent Trout, Charlene Robuck, Councilwoman Valdivia-Alcala, Corrie Wright, Dan Warner, Haley Hishmeh, Councilwoman Hiller, Kathy Smith, Linda Briden, Lloyd Rainge, Marsha Pope, Molly Howey, Shanae (JUMP), Steve Schiffelbein, Steve Vogel, Susan McClacherty, Bryson Risley, Tawny Stottlemire, Teresa Baker, Tim Vincent, Michael Bell, Chris Palmer, Katrina Ringler, Rick Kready, Councilman Duncan

2. Review Draft Implementation Plan Document

Committee and Contributors –

Review of Document and Edits – Mr. Fiander states that a lot of feedback came in and we may not have time to touch base on all of that information at this meeting.

Scope of Work/Process –

Mr. Fiander – to distill this into a purpose of “where do we start?” That has been the biggest question surrounding the study. The purpose and intent is to lay out the actions for 2021. Discussion to the **Core Housing Documents** has been added to show how this document fits within the context of other documents. The three **Core Housing Documents** are the Consolidated Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and the Citywide Markey Study and Strategy. This Implementation Plan should be annually done and works best when the Market Study or Con Plan are being done so we ensure the contents align. If tools, initiatives or items are not included in this document it does not exclude them from being pursued.

Mr. Fiander – There have been a lot of comments about the chart and how it looks and how it functions to ensure it is used how it is intended. If there are any questions on scope or Process now is the best time to discuss those issues.

C.W. Hiller – Comments have been provided, but one way or another other people will look at this as if it is the plan. If the chart was left in it needs to be shown that this chart was provided in the original market study, rather than assuming this was the actual plan for implementation.

Mr. Fiander – Once changes have been made, if it still remains unclear then changes can be

made. The chart and the Executive summary of the Market Study will likely receive the most views.

Mr. Schilleftein – Perhaps we should take anything that was included in the Market Study and move it to another section so it doesn't fall into the Tier A and Tier B tactics.

Mr. Fiander – This section was intended to help, not to confuse. If this section is not coming through appropriately then we need to reconsider its use. The chart does not include all of the efforts that are being pursued at this time.

Action Plan – Tier A / Tier B

Mr. Fiander – There were no major material changes to the contents, just formatting changes. The outliers were title changes to “Take 2” Housing and Downtown “Area” Housing. There were comments about the “who” column. For instance, Aging in Place, the “who” column represents who would take the lead and move the action forward. It is not intended to give a full description of how it will be implemented. There is an assumption through all of these columns that communication will have to be had between the different organizations. Community Outreach could be included in all. It was specifically outlined for the Landbank because it may be difficult for everyone to understand the steps as they currently are.

Mr. Bell – Maybe there is some blanket statement that can be made as an introduction that states the City will be seek and working with neighborhood and other organizations throughout this process.

C.W. Hiller – There is really a desire for the neighborhood folks to grow and have input and work on these projects. No one wants to take time away from the other groups as they bring forward their information, but neighborhoods want to have a chance to provide more feedback and be involved in the initiatives.

Mr. Fiander – Comments that are coming in want to take the step to start laying out more of the details. As groups come together to work on the specifics that would likely be the best opportunity to involve the neighborhood groups.

C.W. Hiller – Members of the neighborhood do not always know who or where to send ideas related to Tier A and Tier B Tactics.

Mr. Fiander – The “who” would be the responsible party to conduct outreach to other outside organizations. Staff will be checking in on the tactics, but we will ask for updates and see how we can assist or help advance the tactics.

Mr. Trout – If an individual feels there is something that needs to be done and fits into the Tier A or Tier B category, then it should be sent to us for consideration. These are related to the bigger ideas.

C.W. Hiller – Infill housing is not listed anywhere besides Downtown, but assumption is that it

falls under the AHTF. Is that sub group working on other ideas or should it be explicitly stated as an action. Recommendations related to this have been sent in for consideration.

Mr. Trout – Something like infill may fit into one of the existing categories or multiple.

Mr. Schiffelbein – AHTF focuses on LMI areas and how to make those neighborhoods healthier. The AHTF will not be something that pays for projects on its own. The review committee will be referencing Neighborhood Plans and anything the neighborhood wants to see. Knowing we only have \$300,000 in City funds and maybe \$700,000 in private funds the review committee will still dictate spending.

C.W. Hiller -

Steve Vogel – Who will oversee the AHTF?

Mr. Trout – We have been waiting to pursue money until the Implementation Plan was outlined. We need to outline still who will direct the AHTF and the funding will be kept in a separate fund for the City with City Staff will help with allocations.

Steve Vogel – Concerns with the lack of progress over the last five years for the AHTF moving forward.

Mr. Fiander – Was also on the Affordable Housing Committee. Belief was that the people needed to be identified first before pursuing money. Excellent guidance is located within the ordinance or within the data of the Market Study.

Metrics

Mr. Fiander – Metrics can be found in the Executive Summary and the Key Findings of this Implementation Plan. Are we filling the gaps? The progress will be tracked with data. While infill isn't explicitly stated in the Actions it is included in the metrics, and is implied that infill housing will be very important.

Lack of Quality Affordable Housing

Mr. Fiander – Consider underlining “Quality” in the header. The number of units broken down here were pulled from the study. There is a five year horizon on the numbers. The Study outlines a 20 year need, but shortening the goal makes it more attainable. We need 800 affordable units by 2025. The \$200,000 on the public side is something we will need to figure out sustainability to fund. \$300,000 is set aside for the first year.

Steve Vogel – Sites CJ Online article \$314MM. Where does the money come from

Mr. Fiander – The total number is what is needed for an equitable market, with the bulk coming from private investment. The AHTF will act as a gap filler. The hope is to leverage Trust Fund dollars to bring in more investment. It is an Action Plan.

Steve Vogel – Agrees the vast majority is already being done, but is not being properly

measured. People are buying properties but not “reporting” it. More is needed to build an equitable housing environment.

Shanae – Current data shows that yes the private side does make the largest investment, but it requires the public investment to attract the private investment. The continued revenue on the public side will help create the incentive needed to attract investors.

Mr. Fiander – the emphasis is that this is **extra** money and does not mean the money we have now is necessarily included.

Limited Senior Options

Mr. Fiander – Senior was also broken out into 5 year needs.

Cost-Burdened Households

Mr. Fiander – We have overly burdened households. We need to track this information and it may not necessarily have an action associated with it. This acts as one way to track our other actions to ensure they are working.

C.W. Valdivia Alcala – The Study points out that there is a need for a living wage. We need to make sure this is brought up in our discussions. Even though the lack of a living wage is not addressed explicitly in the document, we should (as a governing body) see what kind of impact a living wage has on communities. We need to address the underlying issue or we will continue to spend money on these programs.

Mr. Fiander – We have included the note that a \$16/hr minimum wage is needed to rent a quality 2 BR unit.

C.W. Valdivia Alcala – These are the conversations we need to have parallel to the housing discussion.

Mr. Schiffelbein – Need to define where the data and metrics come from.

Mr. Fiander – Yes, the sources are in the Study and often come from the Census or American Community Survey (ACS).

C.W. Hiller – Would like to see a master plan. A document with the big numbers and set them as a community wide goal. She does not want to see the numbers minimized and wants to stimulate private investment. We should celebrate when people spend in LMI neighborhoods. It’s the reverse of the broken window theory. Neighborhoods want to capture how we can share these stories of whole blocks investing because they’ve seen a neighbor make a change. We also need to make sure we are not counting units twice.

Mr. Fiander – All of the metrics we have outlined, we know we can do and manage with staff. We are trying to pull the data we believe is most source worthy. Metrics from others would be great because it would help defend what we are hearing.

C.W. Hiller – The study has helped defend some of the numbers provided by JUMP, and helped break those out into other categories. The total goal numbers would help show what the overall need actually is.

Core Neighborhood Disinvestment

Mr. Fiander – Where is the housing investment? These units represent all units created, not just affordable. These have been broken down by population and size to allocate a share among the neighborhood health. Intensive care are our most challenged and distressed. At Risk are better but would likely receive a higher share of units. A benchmark number for these allocations would be helpful. We want to show more investment in our core neighborhoods.

Steve Vogel - At a Hi-Crest event, someone stated they believed people did not even feel safe entering the neighborhood. If people don't feel safe, who is going to invest in these neighborhoods? It takes a certain type of real estate investor to invest in these areas. It is very important to understand the difficulty to produce new/rehabbed properties in these areas.

Charlene Robuck – Owns multiple properties in these struggling neighborhoods. But it is tough to own in these areas.

Shanae – The ability we have as community leaders is to bring hope to a neighborhood. There is nothing that is different about Topeka. Lots of cities have neighborhoods that have significant disinvestment, and these cities find ways to invest in these areas. The research SENT has conducted shows there is a need for 300 new homes in Hi-Crest to begin to “turn” the neighborhood. We know what is needed, but we need to get everyone on board to make these investments.

Mr. Bell – This is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Neighborhoods have recognized the “donut hole” where neighborhoods are being forgotten.

Mr. Vogel – Appreciates the efforts of SENT within Hi-Crest. They have set an example for how. Wants to know if SENT screens tenants.

Tim Vincent – Confirms SENT does screen tenants through THA. And whether or not the tenants are accepted is more of a case by case basis not just the high risk/ banned list.

Mr. Vogel – Individuals listed on the list are at a higher risk of being evicted.

Tawny Stottlemire – Important to keep in mind everyone should have an opportunity to rent. It is always an issue of resources and what is available.

Chris Palmer – Cornerstone is a non-profit and they are the second chance landlord who works with high risk populations. But they also are forced to evict households. The bar and banned list is from THA. We cannot solve all of the problems and sometimes the discussions are tough to have. They are still a business.

High Housing Vulnerability

Mr. Fiander – This topic covers much of our data regarding those who face eviction. This data comes from eviction lab, and any feedback about that data would be helpful.

C.W. Hiller – The eviction rate is not always a great metric. That is just an indicator and not a specific metric.

Mr. Fiander – Improving Homeless rating includes City compared to the State and minors as a percent of the homeless count. Do we think this is reliable data? We need the input from those who work in that field.

Limited Housing Choices

Mr. Fiander – We need to diversify to add choices to the inventory. We are seeing some growth in the multi-family percent this year. Where does the new housing go? We also have two new multi-family housing rehabs going on.

Mr. Kready – Yes, the Casson building development is a partnership between us and THA. We are also renewing LIHTC for Curtis Jr. High.

Mr. Fiander – Last section is an article. Some personal stories to help build a narrative around the study

Mr. Bell – Yes, we are hoping to get some stories. Working with CJOnline will potentially help the discussion/sharing of the stories.

C.W. Hiller – The stories can help describe what the stable lives provided through housing can be. People buy the properties on their block to help stabilize blocks. People on this call can help identify who these people are.

Mr. Fiander – Has some ideas for how we progress this concept along.

Tim Vincent – has a story that may work with a recent tenant.

Mr. Fiander – Any other questions or comments at this time? We want to get this ready for Council on Nov. 17th and get this back out in the next few days for comment.

Steve Schffelbein – The non-profit sector is really working to expand what they are doing. They are coming together to continue and grow their activities without any additional money.

Mr. Fiander - Thank you for all of your participation.