

DATE: August 29, 2019
TO: Kim Rybold, City of Wilsonville
FROM: ECONorthwest, Communitas, and Commonworks Team
SUBJECT: Wilsonville Equitable Housing Strategy – Stakeholder Outreach Themes to Date

As of August 29th, 2019, we have conducted three focus groups with employers, nonprofit service providers in Wilsonville, and nonprofit affordable housing providers. We have also conducted five interviews with for-profit developers and a representative from the real estate industry. This document provides an overview of key themes we have heard in our initial outreach with stakeholders. This document will be supplemented with feedback from additional stakeholder interviews, outreach, and survey results over the course of September.

- **Wilsonville’s rental market is perceived as having newer, higher quality, more expensive developments with longer waitlists.** The market is perceived as being more similar to Lake Oswego and West Linn than to Milwaukie or Oregon City. The County gets fewer calls on discrimination/repairs/landlord-tenant issues from residents in Wilsonville. The City has a lot of amenities that make it an attractive place to build housing.
- **There is ongoing concern about HOA fees and property taxes driving up housing costs.**
- **Some see isolation among some residents.** More social connections needed for residents who do not have a community gathering space. The city’s parks are a wonderful asset and people feel safe there.
- **Needed housing types:** Single-story units; triplex/duplexes; houses with basements for ADUs; low-cost, single-room occupancy units for people transitioning into the area; roommate matching/homeshare.
- **Who needs help with housing:** single parents, single working adults, people with disabilities, seniors (people cannot age in place easily in Wilsonville).
- **There are not a lot of services for homeless people available locally.**
- **Like affordable rental housing, affordable homeownership projects require subsidy.** About \$100,000 to \$120,000 in subsidy is needed to build a new home affordable at 60% to 80% AMI; if purchasing an existing home, a buyer needs about 20% of value of home. The subsidy can come from several sources: land write-downs, permit fee/SDC waivers, outright subsidy, etc.
- **Affordability is a key issue for employers.** In a recent survey of the city’s employers, approximately 30% identified housing costs as a problem for local businesses.
- **The cost of housing presents challenges for those relocating from out of state.** Employers are challenged to find affordable, temporary housing for employees moving

to the area. Those arriving in the area find housing costs to be out of line with their previous location. Many employers have to increase wages as a result.

- **Workers commuting to Wilsonville face increasing congestion** (especially shift workers). Many would like to see increased transportation options for workers, such as regional transit connections and bike/walk options for workers.
- **Employers do not have capacity to offer housing assistance** because they are increasing wages. Instead, employees (particularly lower-wage employees) are finding lower-cost housing in places like Salem, Keizer, Woodburn, and Canby.
- **Additional workforce housing and affordable student housing is needed** to help accommodate growing employment and student populations.
- **Developers working in Wilsonville find some of the City's regulations to be onerous**, including the stormwater regulations, high SDC fees (though these are comparable to other areas). Many were complimentary of City staff but would like to see a more seamless review process. There has been public pushback on infill development due to density and parking concerns, which has led to increased carrying costs.
- **There is the perception that there is not a lot of land to accommodate new development and some missed opportunities** for (1) including residential in new planning areas and (2) encouraging new housing types (like homes with ADUs in new residential neighborhoods) with incentives (e.g. Vertical Housing Program) and an easier/clearer path for small and medium infill development.
- **Some developers referenced incentives that other communities provide:** SDC waivers for ADUs, Tigard's Lean Code, tools for preserving affordability, and tools to reduce carrying costs.
- **The list of developers working in Wilsonville is short.** Developers who might be a good fit for infill development in the Town Center or other areas are not familiar with the City's opportunities or potential incentives. While many developers are focusing attention on suburban markets, they remain interested in opportunities near good transit and existing services and retail. Infill developers are looking to partner with a city and would be open to an array of incentives. Supports could include land write-downs, SDC waivers, tax abatements, urban renewal support for infrastructure development, etc.
- **The City and County could have a closer working relationship, potentially through information sharing, relationship-building and formal agreements on County and other housing resources.** Information and referral linkages between the City and County regarding services for older adults are strong; what is needed is more actual onsite (in Wilsonville) delivery of County programs. More ongoing information sharing is needed about plans for Metro Housing Bond, assistance for renters, housing authority programs, use and availability of federal housing, and homelessness funding.
- **Wilsonville has a strong and positive history of working with affordable housing developers in the past.** For example, the City made land available, championed projects,

and cleared a pathway toward a tax exemption. This has solidified the City's good reputation among affordable housing developers.

- **A city's advocacy and support for affordable housing is key in making a project work.** Projects need champions on City Council, the Planning Commission, and among City staff to problem-solve development review projects and provide support for these projects at neighborhood meetings.
- **The Metro Affordable Housing Bond is a near-term opportunity to implement affordable housing.** The City is receiving calls from affordable housing developers who might be interested in working in the city.
- **The City-owned site near the WES station could be a desirable Transit-Oriented Development site.** To make property near WES station viable, the City needs to: provide a clear path for land use review, write down land cost, provide goals for the project, and make site issues known.
- **Affordable housing developers like being involved early in process.** They are happy to share expertise and can even bring development team to talk about ideas for potential sites. Possible opportunities for tours and additional engagement.