

Mukilteo Housing Action Plan

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #2

October 29, 2020 | 4:00 – 6:00 pm | Zoom

Objectives

- Review growth planning context in Washington State
- Review and discuss housing needs identified in the Housing Needs Assessment ([Preliminary Draft - October 7, 2020](#)). Available on the Mukilteo Housing Action Plan website: bit.ly/mukilteohap
- Review and discuss the structure and content for Community Meeting #1

Agenda

Time	Activity	Lead
4:00	Welcome & Housekeeping	Lauren Balisky, City of Mukilteo
4:05	Welcome & Overview of Agenda	Marcia Wagoner, BERK Consulting
4:15	Overview of growth planning in Washington <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Q & A	Dawn Couch, BERK Consulting
5:00	Housing Needs Assessment Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Q & A	Kristin Maidt, BERK Consulting
5:40	Community Meeting #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What we have heard so far▪ Community meeting purpose, plan, and materials▪ Discussion about approach	All, led by Marcia
5:55	Next Steps	All, led by Marcia
6:00	Adjourn	



Attendees

Stakeholder Advisory Group Members Present

Adam Braddock	Glenn Gardner	Melinda Woods
Carolyn “Dode” Carlson	Greg Krabbe	Donna Vago
Skip Ferderber	Jonathan Waters	Boris Zaretsky

Stakeholder Advisory Group Members Absent

Ricardo Romero-Heredia Shana Swift

Staff and Consultants Present

City of Mukilteo Staff: Lauren Balisky, Garrett Jensen

BERK Consulting: Dawn Couch, Marcia Wagoner, Kristin Maidt

1. Welcome

Lauren Balisky, City of Mukilteo, welcomed participants and reviewed housekeeping items related to Zoom. Lauren let participants know that the meeting was being recorded and simultaneously broadcast to Facebook Live.

In the previous meeting, a participant asked for a map of the City’s available land. Lauren explained that work is currently being done by Snohomish County as part of its Buildable Lands update. They will provide a draft map of available buildable land by mid-November.

Marcia Wagoner, BERK Consulting, reviewed the meeting’s agenda. She explained that the presenters will take clarifying questions during the presentation and will have an additional Question & Answer session after each segment.

2. Growth Planning in Washington State

Dawn Couch, BERK Consulting, presented an overview how land use planning regulations and growth targets are set in Washington State. She reviewed the Growth Management Act, growth targets as established by the Office Financial Management, the Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2050, Countywide Planning Policies, and Mukilteo’s Comprehensive Plan.

- **Boris** asked if the planning information is used for changing zoning and building permits. Dawn clarified that the growth targets will impact zoning to the extent that jurisdictions must demonstrate that their zoning allows for enough development capacity to meet the growth targets, however what is actually constructed depends on the market. Building permits are different and are only issued if someone approaches the City with a building proposal. The growth planning targets do not issue permits.
- **Skip** asked when the PSRC plan was produced. Dawn clarified that [VISION 2050](#) is in its final phase of



development and was in the process of being approved on October 29, 2020.

- **Skip** asked how the changes at Boeing will impact the projected growth. Dawn pointed out that Boeing makes up a smaller proportion of the economy relative to the four-county region than it does in Snohomish County. Boeing had significant changes in the 1970s and 1980s, but the chart shows that the impact on the overall region is somewhat dampened given growth in other industries.
- **Boris** commented that the idea of concentrating growth near transit is a pre-COVID way of thinking since now people work for home. He asked if there will be any rethinking of the underlying strategy. Dawn said there may be in future updates, but noted that for a lot of people, their work and need to travel has not changed.
- **Boris** asked if this is top-to-bottom planning, bottom-to-top planning, or some combination thereof. Dawn clarified it is really both. It is fundamentally a community-planning process that starts at a community-level. The framework and targets are established at the top, but each community has a lot of latitude in how they want to plan for growth. There is a wide variation in how communities have chosen to plan for growth across Washington.
- **Skip** asked whether it is true that Mukilteo is only planning for 400 – 600 people total, and if so, is this all a waste of time. Dawn clarified that it is a relatively small number of people, but that the community still has the prerogative (and obligation) to choose how it wants to plan for that growth.
- **Donna** asked for clarification about why Mukilteo is considered a High Transit Capacity City when the facilities that are here mostly serve people moving through Mukilteo. Dawn agreed that a lot of the transit happening in Mukilteo may be people traveling through. She clarified that the regional strategy favors directing growth to where those facilities are.
- **Skip** asked for clarification on when the Comprehensive Plan will be updated. Lauren clarified that the next major update is due in 2024 and the work will probably begin in 2021. The Comprehensive Plan Update will include community engagement as part of the update process.
- **Boris** asked how the Housing Action Plan relates to the Comprehensive Plan Update. Dawn clarified that the Housing Action Plan provides recommendations which will inform the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Comprehensive Plan Update has its own public process, the Housing Action Plan does not take the place of that process.

3. What are Mukilteo's Housing Needs?

Kristin Maidt, BERK Consulting, presented key findings from the Draft Housing Needs Assessment. The complete draft is available on the project's website ([Preliminary Draft - October 7, 2020](#)), along with additional background on the purpose of the Housing Needs Assessment and what is required by the grant.

Kristin reviewed growth trends in the region and in Mukilteo, market trends, patterns of housing cost burden, and gaps in available housing relative to current residents' incomes.

- **Boris** asked whether the data on housing cost burden considered the presence of housing mortgages. He notes that homeowners who do not have a mortgage have lower housing costs. Kristin clarified that the

measures of housing cost burden compares a household's income to a household's housing costs, so mortgage costs would be included as part of the housing costs.

- **Donna** suggested that the data may be unclear for older adults who have paid off their homes. They may have low incomes, but since their housing costs are low, they are not actually cost burdened even with their low incomes. Kristin clarified that the data on cost burdened is based on the relationship of actual housing cost and incomes for Mukilteo residents. An older adult would only be considered cost burdened if their housing costs exceeded 30% of their income, regardless of equity they may have in the home.
- **Skip** commented that the general data may not reflect the actual hidden wealth of Mukilteo residents.
- **Skip** commented that there appears to be no undeveloped land zoned for multi-family homes.

Discussion

Marcia introduced three discussion questions and invited SAG members to choose one of the questions and provide their answer. The questions were:

- What information surprised you?
- How do the findings we just covered reflect your experience?
- Given all that we've gone over, what do you see as Mukilteo's priority housing need and why?

Dode: I am going to answer the second question. I appreciate both your presentations. I have done a lot of background work on how many seniors there are and how many we will have. Like a broken record, I am going to talk about seniors. We're going to need some good housing because we're outgrowing our housing in Mukilteo. I've seen what you presented in my own research and I really enjoyed hearing more about it. We need senior housing for seniors, housing available for those with reduced incomes!

Adam: I would love to see how that 450-ish number is derived over 15 years. We sold about 360 houses in the last twelve months. That only reflects homeowners, not rental. Surprise that it is only 450 people—I would anticipate that it will increase substantially from that. In terms of priority housing, I agree with Dode, I would love to see more senior housing here as well. That is a burgeoning population and a lot of people are desiring something that is a livable space without the inconvenience of stairs and unnecessary square footage.

Mindy: I'm going to go along with Dode, but not just seniors. Anyone who is on a fixed income like SSDI or disability. For myself, I can work right now and afford my rent but when the moratorium is lifted my rent is due to go up and will put me in the cost burden range. Just thinking 10 years from now, what would I be able to afford? Just thinking about housing options, a great variety, at all income levels. The presentation said there is a gap, that is really a concern. Right now, the population of the country is 50 years or older and that is only going to increase.

Skip: I've already expressed concerns that the data may not be the best possible means for us to do what you are asking us to do. I asked the city for a map of developable lands. Looking at this 2020 zoning map, it looks like multi-family usage is already built out. How would we develop new land to fulfill a more affordable housing cluster? How would we build more affordable housing in this community, a community that I see in my own mind



as a NIMBY community. I agree that seniors need more help, but I wonder whether real estate is the answer. Maybe it is providing other support so people can afford the real estate.

Donna: I did my homework, so I will try to go over it fast. It surprised me that there is such low population growth, I didn't expect that. That Mukilteo has less single-family housing than Snohomish county overall and more multi-family units, that surprised me. That Carvel was acquired by HASCO (Housing Authority of Snohomish County) in 2016 and there are low-income units there. I didn't know that. For priority housing need, I mostly have questions:

- What are the goals?
 - Is it to close the gaps for the existing residents that are housing cost burdened?
 - Is it to create jobs for the people who live here so that they don't have to commute outside of town?
 - Or is it to build more efficiency-sized units for lower-income people or single person households?
- Is this all going to zoning to make high-density housing?

I am not really for high-density housing. I don't think that is good for the city. I don't know how this all reflects my experience. I do believe in market forces and foresee that market forces will adjust and absorb the people that will move into this area.

Boris: What surprised me the most is that more people commute into Mukilteo than commute out of Mukilteo, that was really surprising, I expected something totally different. The findings reflect my experience, you prove that Mukilteo is a desirable place to live. What the needs are: the number one need is to preserve high property values of our homes to maintain the tax base to preserve schools and all the other amenities that the residents of Mukilteo enjoy.

Greg: I thought this presentation was really good, it did lay down the groundwork for making the decisions or having the conversations needed for this program. What surprised me the most was the relatively low forecast of people who want to move into Mukilteo. I build homes in Mukilteo, Bellevue, and Kirkland, what's happening in Bellevue and Kirkland is unsustainable. People are going to have to move to the outlying areas like Mukilteo. People will be moving further away from I-5 and come into these outlying areas. What I think the priority in housing in Mukilteo needs to be is supply.... just like what was pointed out earlier. I have built townhomes and cottages at higher densities, provide more supply, while maintaining higher values. We broke records in value by square foot for our townhomes and cottages. We could have done better if the city's code could have accommodated better architecture that is more in demand rather than suppressing architecture to 1930s standards. The code can be improved to allow these housing types to be built better in a fashion that is more desirable and more in demand.

Lauren invited SAG members to send any additional comments to her after the meeting.

Greg offered clarification on what "cottage housing" is. It varies by city. In general, it is a single-family residence on a smaller lot, typically with a limited dwelling size of less than 1000 s.f. They often only require a single car garage, which is a lifestyle choice. They are popular and do quite well in the area.

4. Community Meeting #1

Marcia shared with the group the project's community outreach efforts so far. She also shared some high-level themes of the feedback that has been contributed so far.

Marcia introduced the objectives and approach for Community Meeting #1. She invited SAG members to give feedback or advise to the consulting team around the following questions:

1. Do you have recommendations for improvements?
2. Are there things we should avoid?
3. Are there misconceptions we should be sure to address?
4. What questions do you think we are likely to encounter?

Discussion

Dode: The major misconception to me came up at City Council a few months back and that is: 'you can't shove low-income housing down our throats.' I took issue because of seniors again, I think that is a misconception. It is about affordable housing I guess, and helping people live a better life in our community.

Mindy: I think as in every meeting that has to do with housing, there will be a lot of NIMBYism. When you present things I find people are more receptive to hearing about seniors and helping them stay in the community. That seems to be less controversial than families with kids for some reason. But being really clear about what your intention is, that you are looking to hear community input, and every voice is important in shaping our future.

Skip: The NIMBY factor is extremely important. In this town, this will be screamingly important one. I agree with Mindy. However, I think if we give the reality that this community is not going to be flooded with new people, that statistic is very important. Everybody is thinking we're going to be a community with a lot of development, with cranes all over the place like downtown Beijing. I would suggest being clear about speaking about the number people we're expecting over a 30-year span. We're talking about people making sure senior citizens can afford to stay here. That will be important for people to understand. We're not talking about a ton of development. I wanted to talk to Greg to know is our concern about available land and zoning founded? I think the point is that Greg's knowledge of housing options is very valuable. We need that level of knowledge rather than general planning issues, we need more knowledge specific to building in Mukilteo.

Adam: [responding to Skip] Resources are very limited here, which is an issue. I can't fathom where significant development could be built, there may be some small pockets some places, but yes, I do think it is an issue. Could you upzone some areas? You may be able to do it, but the City would have to take a closer look.

Boris asked if Mukilteo would have to incorporate currently unincorporated areas to have more space. **Adam** thought that was a possibility but doesn't know for sure what is available.



Boris: I think Dawn's presentation is missing the first slide about how all this works and what the role the HAP is in it. You have heard today and in numerous comments that people are confused, and confusion leads to misconception. I would be happy to review comments in advance. I think you have heard most the question you are likely to encounter today.

Donna: People are going to want to know what this is going to cost them in real terms. How will it affect taxes. If you are going to do a program for affordable housing—there is no free lunch so that will cost people in terms of taxes. You are going to have questions about zoning coming up and look at options for rezoning and building in rezoning areas. I think it is important to look at the impacts of potential rezones, because that does impact home prices. A lot of people are concerned about what you're building and rezoning and how that will affect their quality of life, their taxes, and their home values.

5. Next Steps

Marcia reviewed upcoming meetings and thanked participants for their contributions.