

# Mukilteo Housing Action Plan

## Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #4

February 11, 2021 | 4:00 – 6:00 pm | Zoom |

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### Objectives

- Share project updates.
- Review preliminary draft Housing Action Plan.
- Prepare for the legislative process.

### Agenda

Time	Activity	Lead
4:00	Meeting Start & Housekeeping	Lauren Balisky, City of Mukilteo
4:05	Welcome & Agenda Overview	Lauren
4:10	Project Updates	Dawn Couch, BERK Consulting
4:20	Draft Housing Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Discussion Questions:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Does the HAP represent what we've talked about at the SAG and other meetings on the HAP you may have attended?</i></li><li>2. <i>Are the purpose and recommendations clear?</i></li></ol></li></ul>	Dawn
4:50	Prepare for Legislative Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Why is a legislative process required?</li><li>▪ What does it mean to “adopt the Housing Action Plan”?</li><li>▪ Review and update process</li></ul>	Lauren
5:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Closing of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee</li><li>▪ Discussion Questions:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>What would you like the Planning Commission and the City Council to know about your shared perspective on the</i></li></ol></li></ul>	Dawn



*Housing Action Plan?*

- 2. Now you have invested time thinking about the future of housing in Mukilteo, what have you learned and what would be helpful for the larger community to know?*

5:35 Adjourn

## Attendees

### Stakeholder Advisory Group Members Present

Carolyn “Dode” Carlson

Melinda Woods

Jonathan Waters

Boris Zaretsky

### Stakeholder Advisory Group Members Absent

Adam Braddock

Shana Swift

Greg Krabbe (provided comments in advance)

Donna Vago (provided comments after the meeting)

Ricardo Romero-Heredia

### Stakeholder Advisory Group Members Excused

Glen Gardner

### Elected Representatives

Mayor Jennifer Gregerson

### Staff and Consultants Present

City of Mukilteo Staff: Lauren Balisky, Garrett Jensen, David Osaki, Steve Powers

BERK Consulting: Dawn Couch

## 1. Welcome and Overview of Agenda

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.



## 2. Project Updates

Dawn Couch, BERK Consulting, provided an updated to the community meeting. Since the prior meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) in December 2020, the staff and consulting team have made the following presentations:

- On December 10, 2020, city staff provided an update on public input to the Planning Commission.
- On January 11, 2021, city staff and the consulting team provided a project update, an overview of the Housing Needs Assessment findings, and summary of public input to the City Council.
- On January 14, 2021, city staff and the consulting team hosted the second Community Meeting. Some of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee members participated in that meeting. The meeting provided an overview of potential housing strategies similar to what the SAG considered in December, with additional information about the development process.
- On January 28, 2021, city staff and the consulting team provided an overview of potential housing strategies to the Planning Commission.

Dawn shared the polling results from the Community Meeting, which were presented together with the SAG polling results to the Planning Commission on January 28, 2021. She noted that the polling results were not the only community input the Planning Commission reviewed. They also reviewed all the public comments, the interview findings, and the meeting summaries. The summary of Community Meeting #2 was not yet available at the time of the Planning Commission meeting.

Dawn provided an overview of the polling results.

**Boris** commented that he was concerned about some of the polling results. Specifically, that the SAG results showed greater support for evaluating changes than the community at large. He wonders if the SAG is truly representative of the community.

Dawn showed that the first topic, Accessory Dwelling Units, was the one with the most difference in support between the SAG and the Community Meeting. This question was structured as a “chose all that apply” question. When she reviewed the data in more detail a lot of the Community Meeting participants only chose one topic for further study. They may have only supported further evaluation of one option or may have not understood that they could choose more than one option.

**Boris** commented that it looks like to him that the community at large supports the evaluation of potential changes a lot less than the SAG. That is a concern to him. Dawn clarified that were looking at people who attended the community meeting as opposed to the “community at large.” Boris agreed with that point.

Garrett shared that staff felt it was important to distinguish between the two groups because the SAG was assembled as part of the process.

Mayor Gregerson added that the SAG has gone through hours of review and consideration of these topics and



are potentially more experienced than the people attending the community meeting. People who have only heard a short presentation may have more remaining questions. **Boris** agreed with the Mayor's point. He also agreed that those who attend community meetings on this topic are typically the ones who have a pre-conceived notion to disagree.

Dawn explained that the Community Meeting focused on questions of housing form, whereas the SAG also considered questions of process. The reasons for that are that the City has received more public questions and feedback about housing form or types as opposed to process concerns, and that the team did not have enough time in the Community Meeting to cover the process questions.

Dawn shared that the Planning Commission did not have many technical questions about the draft strategies and that most of the questions related to the Housing Needs Assessment.

Lauren said there was a robust discussion at the community meeting with a lot of fantastic questions. We will get the summary out soon. We were able to answer almost all the chat questions at the meeting, but the summary will address any unanswered items that were in the chat box. We are also compiling a document with all the public comments sent by the public.

### 3. Draft Housing Action Plan

Dawn provided an overview of the draft Housing Action Plan (HAP). The draft HAP is meant to be a high-level strategic plan with the technical information provided as attachments.

The draft HAP is the document that the SAG reviewed prior to today's meeting. The other parts of the plan will be viewed as Exhibits (*note: these were later changed to Attachments*):

- The Housing Needs Assessment is being finalized based on community questions and feedback.
- The Housing Policy Review and Recommendations is the analytic piece that led to some of the recommendations.
- Community Input includes all the comments that have come in via the project website or mailed directly to staff. These are public comments that were not provided in a specific meeting. Lauren has been compiling this document since the beginning of the project.
- Interview Findings are based on 19 interviews that were conducted before the project began. They were conducted last summer. The findings were about how to do the community engagement and run the process in Mukilteo.
- Stakeholder Advisory Group and Community Meetings will include the summaries of the four meetings with the SAG and the two Community Meetings.

We are trying to keep the document at a high level and understandable. All the strategies are recommendations for further study. The HAP does not introduce any assumptions about what the outcome of



potential further study may be. The HAP provides a high-level overview of the general support for the various strategy categories. All the qualitative and detailed feedback is provided in the attachments.

The strategies presented in the HAP are a combination of several inputs:

- The findings of the Housing Needs Assessment;
- The consulting team’s review of the City’s housing policies and development regulations with reference to the Housing Needs Assessment;
- Staff input based on their experience in their customer service role, where they have observed when the regulations are confusing, are not working, or seem to be adding steps or process but not changing the outcome of projects.
- Community-driven strategies, which are ideas submitted by community members. They have been somewhat grouped.

Dawn noted that the strategy called “expand senior housing options” is being further refined. The discussions that led to this suggested strategy were not for assisted living or senior housing, but rather for design improvements and accessibility considerations that would make housing that allowed for aging in place. The next version of the HAP will have an updated title focused on design incentives for accessible housing and things that make housing suitable for older adults.

**Boris** stated that the “do nothing” strategy was missing. He felt there was strong support for doing nothing among members of the community and felt it should be one of the strategies listed. Lauren clarified that Council could choose not to adopt any of the strategies in the document. The potential cost to doing that, which is certainly within their right to do, is that we do not get reimbursed for the final \$30,000 of work on the project. **Boris** stated that he is only saying that we are not documenting all the strategies.

Dawn noted that we have documented statements of un-support throughout the process. For example, in the first community meeting a participant said that he does not like ADUs because, while they seem to not encumber upon the house they are attached to, they are in everyone else’s face. We documented that concern but did not interpret it as a “do nothing” strategy. She asked if Boris felt that was sufficient. He does not, he thinks that a strategy to “do nothing” would be supported by a large number of people in the community. He is not saying he thinks it is the right strategy, but he thinks the “do nothing” strategy is missing.

**Boris** noted that the listing of all the SAG members on the first page of the document may suggest to the reader that there was consensus among all members of the SAG. He would like to see a statement in the Introduction explaining that there was not a consensus on each of the issues and to allow SAG members in the appendix to voice their positions where they disagree with the conclusions in the HAP. Dawn stated that we were doing that today with the discussion questions, which would capture the SAG’s comments to be included in the report attachments. Dawn clarified with **Boris** that he feels that having SAG names on the inside cover of the report could appear as an endorsement of the entire plan. **Boris** confirmed that was what he was saying. He agrees with some parts of the report but not others. He wants the opportunity to write a paragraph



stating what he agrees with and what he does not and suggests that other SAG members would like the same opportunity. Dawn suggested that the best way to accomplish that kind of statement would be to submit a formal comment through the public comment form. That way the content will be in your own words and the city leadership will have full access to your direct input.

Dawn suggested that we add a phrase on the inside cover that says “participants” to honor the time the SAG members have put into the process and reduce the presumption that it is a full endorsement of the Plan. Boris feels this solution is satisfactory.

Mayor Gregerson stated the introduction page that BERK Consulting created is meant as a “thank you” page, so adding some language about thanking the SAG members would help make it clearer. She also offered that if any of the SAG members want to express their experience or viewpoint to the council members, the best way to do so would be to email them. An email will be read more than an appendix.

Dawn reviewed the discussion questions and invited SAG member’s input. The discussion questions are:

- Does the HAP represent what we’ve talked about at the SAG and other meetings on the HAP you may have attended?
- Are the purpose and recommendations clear?

Dawn shared that Skip Ferderber, who had been a diligent participant on the SAG, has now been appointed to the Planning Commission. He is not able to serve in both capacities. He was not aware that the last SAG meeting would be his last, but he did participate in the January 28, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.

**Jonathan.** I think the HAP does represent what has been discussed. He has had some difficulties with the language surrounding what we’re doing, but no issue with the actual plan. He feels that it is a definite need for the City. The purpose and recommendations are clear.

**Boris.** He is clear on what the HAP represents. He has provided specific recommendations for Lauren about what the Needs Assessment is because it can be confusing for those not involved with urban planning. The purpose and recommendations are clear. He has some questions regarding specific recommendations. He thinks those will best be discussed when we discuss the specifics.

**Dode.** I have enjoyed the process and was paying attention before we started because it was such a hot issue in the community. The purpose and recommendations couldn’t be more clear. I appreciate being able to be involved in the process. Thank you.

**Donna.** (Donna was not able to attend the meeting so Boris shared comments that she sent to him prior to the meeting). Donna’s email to Boris included concerns regarding the long-term impacts of rezoning, whether increased density is necessary with low growth projections, and whether housing development in Snohomish County is already meeting the needs of workforce and low-income housing in the City<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Donna provided an email directly to the City on February 17, 2021 at 8:48 AM, with updated comments on the preliminary draft Housing Action Plan. Her comments will be made available in the next version of [Housing Action Plan Attachment 3: Community](#)



**Greg.** (Dawn shared Greg’s feedback that he provided in advance). His response to the first question was “yes”, and his response to the second question was “yes.”

We will be producing another draft that will become the public review draft.

## 4. Legislative Process

Lauren noted that the HAP is a strategic workplan with an implementation plan. There is still another four months left in the process. We are now entering the formal legislative process. A public draft will be issued next week to give people the opportunity to comment on the draft. That draft reflects the feedback we have received on the technical pieces such as what people like, what they do not like, and so on. The attachments include all the preliminary analyses that led to the HAP. There also will be a chance for the Planning Commission and Council to give feedback in March. Comments between now and the end of March will be compiled into the final draft HAP.

The final draft HAP will be presented at the Planning Commission public hearing and will give the opportunity for additional written and verbal public comment. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to City Council on which strategies to exclude and include. City Council will hold a public hearing after the formal recommendations from Planning Commission. This will also be an opportunity for written and verbal public comment. We generally do not change the draft between these two meetings. The City Council reviews the same draft as the Planning Commission, along with Planning Commission’s specific feedback. The City Council will make a final decision on what will be done by a resolution. This is not a law, it is a resolution since we are adopting a work plan.

## 5. Closing the SAG

Dawn introduced the next section of the agenda, which is the closing of the SAG. There are two discussion questions:

- What would you like the Planning Commission and the City Council to know about your shared perspective on the Housing Action Plan?
- Now you have invested time thinking about the future of housing in Mukilteo, what have you learned and what would be helpful for the larger community to know?

**Boris.** I think it is important for the City Council and Planning Commission to know that within the SAG group there were a number of disagreements on different issues and that the final HAP does not necessarily represent the views of all the SAG members. It may represent some views depending on the recommendation. We really did not have a consensus on a number of issues and I think it’s important for them to understand

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[Input](#)



that. For the second question, I really appreciate the abbreviated course on urban planning. I am a curious person by nature and learned a lot of new things.

Dawn asked Boris if there was a particular issue he was concerned about. **Boris** thought one of the things that the SAG would do tonight is review each of the recommendations to see if the report reflects our conversations. He asked whether that is on the agenda for this meeting. Dawn clarified that we were not planning to review the draft HAP at that level of detail. The prior section of the meeting was meant to address any content questions or concerns the SAG members have. Boris provided an example, wondering if there was a problem with his recollection of the conversations. There was a statement in the draft that Mukilteo was so expensive that many people who work in Mukilteo can't afford to live in Mukilteo and this put business owners in Mukilteo at a disadvantage since they can't attract the workforce they could if the cost of housing was less expensive. Boris noted that he had had one employer on this SAG and another in the community meeting, but he does not recall this being said. Boris wonders if someone made an assumption, as he doesn't remember hearing this in any meeting. Dawn asked where he is reading that interpretation. She suggested that if we can find where that comment is made, we can take another look at the language and make sure we want to make that assertion given the input we have received.

The second point, which he made previously to Lauren, relates to how the Housing Needs Assessment is described. Someone reading the "Housing Needs Assessment" may interpret the report as being what the residents think Mukilteo needs, but in fact it refers to state-wide laws about what Mukilteo needs to meet state requirements. These are two very different things. He feels this confusion could turn people off of the Housing Needs Assessment.

Dawn clarified that we have heard this feedback and tried to be clearer that the Housing Needs Assessment uses state guidance on establishing housing needs. The new draft will be released next week and she is interested to know if Boris thinks we have sufficiently clarified that point.

Boris noted that the community feedback to the Housing Needs Assessment findings that housing is too expensive for workers and Mukilteo needs housing that is affordable to people who cannot afford to live here was, to put it bluntly, 'how is this my problem?' In truth this is a problem for us because if we don't meet state law it will be a problem. The previous draft does not address this sufficiently. The Housing Needs Assessment is what the City needs to do to comply with legislative requirements.

Dawn clarified that the next version of the Housing Needs Assessment would be for the general public and available on the website.

Dawn asked Boris if there were other areas where the conclusions did not match his recollection of the conversation. **Boris** will review the report and put his comments in writing and send it back to Lauren.

**Dode.** I think we've come up with a great plan and consensus isn't always the rule in a committee—it's just a way of hearing everybody out. I appreciate the mention of my name because my priority to the City Council would be taking the senior stance because a lot of us are sitting on homes that are too big for us and we can open housing for younger people, but it would be of high value. We can go into a condo or senior housing built specifically for us. I know several people in that situation. I know some people in companies, because I go out





to eat a lot, and most of them are servers in local restaurants and most of them can't live here because they can't afford to. And sometimes establishments lose these kids because they can work closer to home. It happens. Mayor Gregerson, I hope she doesn't mind me sharing, but left to get a master's degree and then lived with her parents for some time because she couldn't find something she could afford. It's difficult for young people to get back into the City even with skills, skills beyond me anyway. I think it is a necessary thing to do. I have not found fault with it. I appreciate my voice being heard about seniors and their concerns.

**Jonathan.** I had a conversation about what the Planning Commission was going for in regards to the Housing Action Plan. I think I was speaking with Marcia with BERK. I want to reiterate what Dode said—there is consensus to move forward but we will have disagreements with what moving forward looks like. I've heard the arguments before of why suburban cities shouldn't grow, that they should stay the way they are, and that we should keep certain elements out. It usually means keeping lower income people out because the belief they will bring in crime. I've seen this, and I am only 34, I've heard this as a black individual growing up in the suburbs. It's nice to see that a city, while still hearing the complaints and fears, unfounded as they might be, trying to get involved in the work and trying to uplift different models for the how the city can move forward. As much as you try to fight it, change does come. There is a sense of renewal, what once was will turn over. How do you want that change to happen? Kicking and screaming? Or work to make it amenable to all sides. I think this is a good step. I think it is warranted and needed and is good to see. For the second question, I am a younger individual, my wife and I have substantial jobs and are raising our kids here. I would like to see more individuals like myself represented in the city that I live in. There is a fear of younger folks who are more diverse, who have higher incomes, would somehow disrupt the homeostasis of the community. I think people like myself participating shows that I am invested in the community. Hopefully more people like me will invest their time to do this for their City. I am excited to move forward and am ready to assist going forward.

**Melinda.** Playing off of what Jon just said, I am sitting on this committee as a low-income, single parent with a biracial child who has experienced homelessness. What I know is that when you invest in communities then communities are more invested. This idea that crime will go up if you build low income housing is wrong. Crime goes up when there are no opportunities, when people feel segregated, when there are blatant 'haves' and 'haves not', when people don't have access to healthcare, and so on. From my perspective, based on the work in housing and homelessness that I have done the past 10 years, communities are stronger when everybody has a place to live. Whether you want to rent or own. When you have a variety of housing options, housing options that are actually affordable to everyone at different income levels, when people can live near where they work, then they are going to spend those dollars in the areas that they are close to. They will reinvest those dollars back into their community. When you have safe, stable housing options for everybody then people are able to focus more on job opportunities and educational opportunities and live up to their full potential. When everyone feels safe and stable, not just the middle core, then you have a richer, more diverse community that is more invested in where they live. When people have more time and the mental space to get involved in civic engagement and community events, it builds a stronger, more productive, and more vibrant community. If you only focus on a single segment, you are missing out. That will cause more crime, more homelessness, and more people struggling. That will create impacts to the community. What would be helpful for the larger community to know? The message is the same: When everyone has a safe, stable place to call home, then you have a more stable, vibrant community.



**Greg.** (Dawn read his comments that he provided in advance). Housing affordability is best predicted by traditional supply and demand models. In my experience artificial measures, price fixing, and mandatory affordable units to provide affordability fall short. Increasing supply is Mukilteo's best option to increase affordability and accommodate a wider range of residents. I got the impression that most of the participants were not excited about future growth in Mukilteo and even questioned the City's growth projections used in these presentations. If anything, I think the projections are too low. Housing prices in the greater Seattle and Bellevue area are rising so fast additional housing demand and price increases in Mukilteo are inevitable and you are correct to plan for them.

Dawn pointed out that the meeting summaries will be submitted as an Exhibit (*Attachment*) in the final Housing Action Plan. Please review the final meeting summary to make sure it reflects the conversation we've had today.

Dawn thanked the SAG for the time they put in and the members' willingness to take on subjects that are technical and cumbersome to wade through. For a group that has such diverse viewpoints, it has been a very functional group and very helpful to moving the process forwards.

Lauren thanked the SAG for the time they have given, not just at the SAG meetings but in community meetings and Planning Commission meetings. Boris and Skip, especially, for giving us additional time as we prepped for the community meetings. Even though we did not come to consensus on all topics, she thinks the draft HAP is much better for all the discussion and input we've had as part of the SAG. She also is grateful for the state making the funding available. For her, it means that we're able to spend more time having these conversations than we would otherwise would.

Mayor Gregerson echoed her appreciation for the SAG members. She thinks housing issues are really important, reflecting on what Greg said, it will come and run us over if we're not planning for it. You have put in a lot of time, which we appreciate. If you have additional input we'd like to hear it at the upcoming Planning Commission meetings and City Council Meetings. You have become some of the experts in the community on these topics.

**Boris** shared that he appreciates the learning he has received from the city, BERK, and the other SAG members. Even when we disagreed, we did so civilly. He has learned much more about the work that Lauren and BERK does and appreciates that they record his comments as he states them, not what they wish he had stated.

Meeting ended at 5:30 pm.