

Mukilteo Housing Action Plan

Mukilteo Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) Meeting Summary

March 9, 2021 | 6:00 – 7:30 pm | Meeting Not Recorded

Attendees

MYAC Members		
Rohini Arangam	Bomi Kim	Lorencia Pak
Ramya Arumilli	Aaron Lee	Allison Seo
Shubham Bansal	Tyler Lo	Alice Zhang
Mina Hwang		

Staff		
Lindsey Arrington	Lauren Balisky	Garrett Jensen

Council
Councilmember Harris

1 Introductions & Welcome

Lauren Balisky, Planning Manager, City of Mukilteo, introduced herself and Garrett Jensen, Associate Planner, City of Mukilteo.

Lauren explained that the Council had requested that tonight’s meeting be recorded, however it would not be recorded due to concerns about recording minors without parent or guardian consent.

Garrett introduced the Housing Action Plan (HAP), the purpose of the plan, and why it was important to hear from youth voices on issues that face the Mukilteo community. Garrett emphasized that Council and other community members wanted to make sure that youth voices were reflected in the HAP process.



2 Why a Housing Action Plan?

Garrett presented an overview of the HAP. He explained that over the past decade, housing prices have grown significantly faster than household incomes. This has had a disproportionate impact to low- and moderate-income households.

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature took actions to address affordable housing issues in Washington, including housing subsidies, tenant protections, and the grant program that allowed the City to pursue the HAP. Sixteen (16) other cities, including Lynnwood, Everett and Shoreline, are working on single-city plans. Other cities cooperated together on a plan.

Garrett explained that Mukilteo is required to plan for housing attainable to all levels of income in the community. Mukilteo plans under the Washington State Growth Management Act, which includes housing goals and requires the City to plan for its share of regional growth. While Mukilteo is required to show that it can accommodate growth assigned to it, the community gets to decide what that looks like and how to accommodate it.

3 Housing Action Plan Process and Findings

Garrett provided a summary of the HAP process, which began in July 2020. The HAP is made up of various elements, including:

- Community input;
- The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA);
- A review of existing policies in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations; and
- The HAP itself, which includes strategies to address the needs from the HNA and policy review, and an implementation plan.

Lauren explained in the chat box that the Comprehensive Plan was the long-range vision for the City, and that the development regulations implement that vision, and provide the specific requirements for how and where things can be built.

Garrett noted that since housing can be a contentious topic, it was especially important to do extensive community outreach and to be as transparent and open about the process as possible. Garrett described the various outreach methods, including the interviews, Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), community meetings, and ongoing input.

Garrett described planning process, project timeline, the HNA and the data that went into that – population, housing, income, employment, housing stock, etc. The group went over summary slides for each finding.



Alice asked for clarification about area median income (AMI) and the income levels for Mukilteo. **Lauren** provided data from the [final draft HNA](#) to the chat box.

Garrett then provided a summary of the strategies in the draft HAP and the feedback staff have been hearing from the community.

Staff then invited questions or comments so far.

Alice asked who pays for construction of housing, and whether any city or state funds are used?

Lauren explained that the HAP was focused on housing constructed by the private market, since the City has more ability to promote that through its policies and regulations. Larger jurisdictions and housing authorities are more likely to have adequate funding to construct housing.

Alice asked about the concerns of Preserve Mukilteo.

Garrett listed some of the common concerns, including density, traffic, crime, the potential for rezoning, as well as an overall desire for Mukilteo to stay the same.

Lindsey asked about what kind of development regulations are needed to allow for affordable housing?

Lauren responded that while there are tools available under State law, the City is not currently taking advantage of many of them for low-income housing. These tools include things like tax incentives and inclusionary zoning, which requires a certain amount of units be affordable. Other programs, like Section 8, are programs that landlords choose to participate in.

Garrett clarified that the HAP strategies address market-rate affordable housing by streamlining the regulations and process to help reduce the amount of time it takes to get a permit.

Alice added information about Section 8 to the chat box. Councilmember Harris concurred, and further added that government pays for the portion of rent that the qualified low-income tenant can't pay for.

Shubham asked about whether housing would be built on privately-owned land?

Lauren replied that most, if not all, new housing would be built on privately-owned land, and explained the role of regional housing authorities in providing subsidized housing options.

Councilmember Harris encouraged MYAC members to ask any clarifying questions and reiterated that he and Council valued their perspectives and voice on this issue.



4 Discussion

Garrett invited conversation on a series of questions, including:

- Do the findings in the Housing Needs Assessment reflect your experiences within the community (i.e. family, friends, classmates, etc.)?
- Are you surprised by any of the findings?
- Based on your experiences, what haven't we looked at or considered that maybe we should?
- Do you have any strategies you'd like to suggest that may help address current gaps and needs?
- Ideally, what will housing look like in Mukilteo in 20 years? How do we achieve this?
- What are your expectations for housing as it relates to your future?

Garrett clarified that the group could discuss or ask whatever they wanted to; the questions were just intended to give some ideas.

Councilmember Harris asked MYAC members to think about what they like about Mukilteo now, how it can be improved, or what should stay the same.

Alice asked about regulations for affordable housing near transit.

Lauren responded that regulations for housing near transit are typically called "transit-oriented development" (TOD). Generally, the City does not have frequent-enough transit or density to support such regulations. She explained that Snohomish County is working on regulations for TOD within the City's Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA) to plan for future light rail stations. She provided a link to the County's [Light Rail Communities](#) project in the chat box. **Garrett** added that the City does allow for some parking reductions near transit, if the developer can demonstrate they meet the criteria.

Aaron asked about the Harbour Reach Corridor Project (HRCP), and whether any new housing would go along that road.

Lauren responded that no housing was envisioned along Harbour Reach. The area is currently zoned for industrial uses and there are many wetlands in the area. She provided a link to the [HRCP Project webpage](#).

Aaron asked whether the project was informed by people who build housing.

Lauren responded that members of the SAG included representatives from real estate, development, and housing specialist in addition to community members.

Garrett discussed typical City processes for working with property owners, community members and other stakeholders.

Shubham asked whether City taxes could be raised to pay for needed housing.

Lauren discussed the property tax cap, showed MYAC how to look up tax levy rates on the Snohomish



County Assessor website, and explained that the City's portion of property taxes is only one portion of the property taxes that are paid.

Councilmember Harris spoke to the decision-making process around raising taxes at the local level.

Chloe appreciated the concentrated area near Kamiak and Harbor Pointe Middle School, including the YMCA, library, and the public track at the middle school.

Bomi expressed concern about the lack of activities for high school students.

Lorencia likes that Mukilteo is quiet and that there are lots of natural areas preserved. She agrees with Bomi that there is not much for younger residents to do, and that you must drive to another city for entertainment.

Alice commented that she works with a program at the University of Washington that interacts with low-income populations and noted how important accessibility and availability of transit and housing are.

Bomi added that she is also concerned about the safety of trails, especially when the dirt is wet or muddy. She later clarified that the addition of boards and gravel, like in other communities, could make the trails accessible to more people.

Aaron likes the small-town feel and appreciates that Mukilteo isn't super busy. He noted that it is very peaceful around here. He acknowledged that the work of staff and Council is very hard, having to balance between a small-town feel and needing to adapt, especially when prices are so high. Aaron expressed surprise at how high the median income was for Mukilteo and acknowledged the privilege enjoyed by many residents here.

Shubham agreed that having amenities and nature within a short distance of Harbour Pointe is a nice perk.

Lorencia likes having airport service nearby at Paine Field.

Allison likes that everything is well-maintained and it feels safe to walk alone. She also appreciates that public transportation and the ORCA system are easy to use and accessible.

Bomi is grateful that the police and fire stations are close to the schools in the event of an emergency and thinks the QFC is great.

Chloe would like to see public, indoor sport courts due to the weather.

Lorencia lamented that it is too bad that Starbucks is a main hangout / option for kids, and how this highlights the need for additional kid- and teen-friendly entertainment options.

Lauren and **Councilmember Harris** invited MYAC to send additional questions or comments in by email anyone wanted additional information.