



Housing Focus Group – First Meeting
Thursday, October 20th, 2016, 4:00 p.m.
Room 303, Duluth City Hall

1. Welcome & Introductions

Present: David Bolgren, Tom Brost, Alice Buria, Carmel DeMaioribus, Hadrian DeMaioribus, Maranda Desanto, John Grobe, Brenna Fahlin, Adam Fulton, Danielle Goldfarb, Terry Guggenbuehl, Rosemary Hampton, Keith Hamre, Gary Kalligher, Suzanne Kelley, Liz Johnson, Rachel Johnson, Sandy Johnson, Jill Knutson- Kaske, Pam Kramer, Denette Lynch, Amanda Michaelson, Karen Oleson, Sarah Priest, Alex Rogers, Frank Rush, David Peterson, Mike Schraefer, Kathleen Spencer, Lee Stuart, Kate Van Daele, Chad Watzale, Katie Williams, Tiersa Wodash, and Andrea Woyt.

Attendees were asked to introduce themselves, if they were a homeowner, renter, landlord, etc. identify what type of housing is most needed in Duluth, the top challenges for housing, and what kind of housing is needed be it single family, multi-family, duplexes/ townhomes, etc. This exercise was similar to questions found in the Imagine Duluth survey that was given out earlier this summer.

2. Brief overview – Timeline, Process, Initial Outcomes

City staff reviewed the four phases of updating the 2006 comprehensive plan. Phase one was just completed and included data analysis and collecting the public's input. In June, a needs assessment survey was created to collect input from the public. In September, the survey closed and a total of 4,175 surveys were collected. Phase one also included creating social media pages, the creation of the Vision Committee, and attending over 65 community events throughout Duluth.

Phase two began in September with a Kick-off Event that took place at Denfeld High School. Preliminary survey results, updated area maps, and small group discussions were held around big ideas for the future and the two newly proposed governing principles: fairness and health. Over 250 residents attended the event and gave valuable feedback that will be used throughout the next year in the planning process. Phase two will launch focus groups around four topics; economic development, housing, open space and transportation.

The plan is scheduled to be finalized by August of 2017 and implementation will begin in September.

3. Review preliminary data gathering and identify other potential resources

Several reports and studies have been done on housing in Duluth. In addition, there have been small area plans done on several neighborhoods within Duluth. Small area plans can be found by visiting <http://duluthmn.gov/community-planning/planning-library/> All of these plans have provided characteristics, identified challenges, opportunities and demographics of those living in Duluth.

4. Review implementation strategies that have been completed or partially completed from 2006 Comp Plan to determine if the strategy is still relevant

According to a Maxfield Study in 2014 the City of Duluth needs 4,474 units of housing by 2020 to meet the housing needs of residents. The needed units were broken down by the total need by income:

- 1,275 units will be for low-income <50% of the Annual Median Income
- 1,207 units will be for moderate income 50%-80% of the Annual Median Income
- 1,092 units will be at market rate
- 900 units will be for ownership: 180 units of entry level housing, 470 units of move up housing, and 250 units of executive housing.

Housing Stock Trends between 2012-2014 on average 1,581 alteration permits were issued. This is an increase from the 804 permits that were issued between 2003-2011.

In 2015, 410 new residential housing permits were issued which is the highest number of new dwellings since 2006.

Challenges for building new homes and developments continue around the high costs of building in Duluth. Developers have been hard to attract and new developments have been higher in rent.

A key point to remember is that 45% of all homes in Duluth were built before 1939. With an aging housing stock rehabbing old homes or demolishing them will certainly continue to come up in conversations.

5. Review research questions for the Imagine Duluth 2035 process

Do other topics need discussion or further research?

There will be four focus groups that will meet over the next six months to provide clarity and understanding around housing efforts in Duluth. To do this we need to keep our neighborhoods and small area plans in mind. These plans have shown the culture, opportunities and challenges within specific neighborhoods.

Looking directly at the survey that was recently closed, there are several questions that this group will be paying attention to in recognizing trends within economic development.

Survey Question #5: What housing type(s) do you feel is most needed for Duluth's success?

-The top two responses were single family homes and mixed use.

-It should be noted that a majority of the “other” comments were around the need for affordable housing.

Survey Question #8: What should be the City of Duluth’s highest priorities over the next 20 years?

-Top responses were attracting new employers and improve the existing road network even if it means raising taxes or fees.

6. Discuss any other emerging issues for this section of the Comp Plan Update

The following were questions that were posed by attendees as issues that they would like to be considered during the Comprehensive Plan update. Answers to these questions will be given at the next focus group meeting in January 2017.

- How can we reduce construction costs? If this was reduced, additional development wouldn’t be as difficult as it is now.
- If we are looking at densities within the city, shouldn’t we be looking at transportation and housing additions to areas with a higher density?
- Have we looked at rent burden as compared to income burden within the city? How do these connect?
- Why do neighbors and Duluth residents need to be a part of this process?
- What are other cities doing to provide one story options for seniors who are not yet ready to move into dependent living centers?
- We need to implement design standards- let’s not have Duluth look like cookie cutters
- Are we using tax abatement and tax increments when possible? Should we be doing more of this?
- Let’s focus on reducing crime in our neighborhoods
- How can we increase rehabilitation assistance? What additional resources are out there to clean up the blight in Duluth?
- We need more townhomes!
- How can we eliminate the stigmas of neighborhoods? This is killing development efforts, and slowing down increased population efforts in Hillside and West Duluth.
- We have enough social services in town. Do we really need more?
- Let the police deal with enforcement issues- not city staff!
- Are we doing enough for snow removal? If walkability is really important to people, then we need to address enforcement on removing snow from sidewalks.
- How do we increase the amount of mixed income families in neighborhoods?
- If Mixed use housing and commercial are a growing trend we need to be more strategic on where we put them so that we can make sure that the businesses succeed and not add to an already large amount of open storefronts within the city.

7. Wrap-Up & Next Steps

Questions that were brought up during this meeting will be answered at the next meeting. It is expected that we will have up to four focus groups around this topic. Attendees that signed in and gave their email address will be contacted in December to alert them of the next focus group meeting in January 2017. The goal of the focus group will be to help city staff craft the housing update for the comprehensive plan.

If you were not at the first housing focus group meeting and would like to be alerted when the next focus group will be please send us an email at compplan@duluthmn.gov

Thank you all for coming! We look forward to working together!

** In addition to the questions listed below, the city has received great feedback from partners who specialize in housing issues within the community about these questions, and will discuss those revisions to the questions below at the Focus Group meeting.*

Housing

Duluth is a city of distinct neighborhoods that provide housing for today's residents. But what about the housing needs of the city's residents in 2035? As Duluth grows and changes over time, the Community Planning Division will be reviewing the following questions with the help of community members to identify housing needs within our city:

- What three qualities make your neighborhood a great place to live?
- What three aspects of your neighborhood would you like to see changed?
- What does a healthy neighborhood look like?
- Are there types of housing missing from Duluth?
- Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of housing that is affordable to you?
- Is there enough quality housing that is affordable to people of modest means?
- What kinds of housing should be planned for individuals and families moving here?
- How should people who need assistance with daily living tasks be provided with housing?
- How should parking needs of residential uses be accommodated in neighborhoods?
- Do neighborhoods need assistance in managing small conflicts like noise, trash, parking, and snow removal?
- Should there be more incentives to improve existing housing rather than new construction or vice versa?
- Are you concerned about the resiliency of your neighborhood to withstand a natural disaster?
- How and where should/could we densify the community, particularly if we want more convenient locations for mixed uses (corner grocery)?
- Should we consider a "no build" (or urban growth) boundary to limit infrastructure extensions and preserve open space at the periphery of the city?