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## Housing Focus Group – Meeting 2

March 7, 2017

### Housing Policy Options

Important Key Trends from the Imagine Duluth Kick Off Events:

1. 40% of people like where they live and want to continue living at their location
2. A main concern is the cost to rehab existing housing
3. A majority of people said “proximity to services” is a higher priority than the type of housing

*How can Duluth become a more “Livable Community” valuing health and fairness?*

#### Broad Concept #1: Accessibility to Places to Work, Shop, and Play.

Housing policies:

1. New build: Near transportation and social centers (3 block radius from bus routes, near schools, shops)
2. Increase number and condition of sidewalks
3. Increase housing density near existing social centers
  - a. Mixed use housing in social centers
4. Limit city sprawl (thereby limiting inaccessibility to services)
5. Educate and promote Universal Design concept

#### Broad Concept #2: Promote Inclusiveness of Diverse Populations: Provide Housing for Different Needs.

Housing policies:

1. Increase housing opportunities for all people in all income levels.
  - a. Allow for single family, duplex, triplex, and multifamily developments in all neighborhoods.
  - b. Place higher density developments near social centers and transit areas.
  - c. Provide housing in all price points in all neighborhoods.
  - d. Provide a choice of housing types in all price points.
  - e. Respect existing densities and development patterns, but allow for creativity to expand community benefits.
  - f. Educate and promote healthy homes initiatives

- g. Actively assess class and racial equity
2. Increase housing options for young professionals at market rate
    - a. By 2019 projected to have 41% of households making incomes that can afford new market rate rental housing (currently at 39%).
      - i. This can open more housing options for low and moderate income households
    - b. Research and consider student loan reduction incentive programs to encourage recent college graduates to purchase a home
  3. Expand diverse housing options: single family, multi-family, mixed use etc. to provide culturally relevant options
    - a. Expand in all neighborhoods
    - b. Expand at all price points
  4. Increase senior housing options throughout Duluth (affordable and market rate):  
Senior housing: Households with ages 55+ expected to increase substantially by 2035. In the northland, individuals 65+ is expected to grow from approximately 60,000 to 100,000.
    - a. Desire convenient living, less upkeep than traditional single family homes
    - b. Townhomes, single-level apartments, condominiums
    - c. Should be near public transportation hubs, in walking distance of grocery stores and other services, and near greenspace.
    - d. Incentivize mortgage loans to modify existing homes to meet seniors' needs (For example, Access Home Modification Program)
    - e. Continuing Care Retirement Communities:
      - i. Provide a range of living options in one setting (from independent to needing nursing care)
    - f. Assisted living facilities
    - g. Single-level housing options
    - h. Age in place options for seniors to remain in their chosen housing location

### **Broad Concept #3: Maintain unique characteristics of Duluth neighborhoods while improving and increasing housing options**

#### Housing policies:

1. Encourage mixed use housing near neighborhood social centers
2. Conduct neighborhood needs assessments in areas that have not yet been studied to understand the unique traits and opportunities of each area
3. Recognize existing neighborhood plans and implement suggested policies
4. Implement neighborhood safety initiatives in all areas
5. Increase "curb appeal" by incorporating artwork in neighborhood social centers

## Broad Concept #4: Affordable, Attainable Housing Opportunities

### Housing policies:

1. Increase total number of housing units, which should decrease demand and cost/unit
  - a. Total housing demand estimated at 4, 470 units (vacancy rate 3.3%, should be 5% or more)
2. Increase accountability of landlords to provide safe, well-maintained affordable rental units
3. Utilize tax incentive programs, including but not limited to:
  - a. Tax-increment financing
  - b. Tax exempt bond financing (with municipal guarantee)
  - c. Tax incentives/direct subsidies to support new construction and/or replace blighted property
  - d. Tax incentives to improve infrastructure/economy in low income neighborhoods (to do as a part of neighborhood revitalization)
4. Identify unused public lands, consider selling for new housing development
5. Promote increased flexibility with zoning requirements (i.e., mother-in-law apartments in single family homes, zoning setbacks, lot coverage)
6. Promote energy efficiency incentives
7. Promote and encourage home improvement loan programs, including:
  - a. Deferred loan programs for low-income homeowners: loan amounts awarded up to a set amount for safety and maintenance improvements. The loan remains deferred until the home sells, or after a set number of years (15) the loan is forgiven. (Example: Hennepin County and St. Louis Park program)
  - b. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency home improvement loans
  - c. Energy-related rehab loans (see link for energy efficiency incentive programs)
  - d. Organize home remodeling and green home fairs to educate homeowners on home revitalization support
  - e. Tax incentives for market rate homeowners to rehab older homes
8. Promote programs to rehabilitate blighted/vacant properties
9. Research best practices in housing resiliency to increase protection against natural disasters
10. Increase housing opportunities for all income levels
  - a. 2015: Public housing vacancy rate: 1.6%; public housing waiting list 995; unused housing vouchers 0%
  - b. Continue to streamline Coordinated Entry System to decrease homelessness
  - c. Collaborate with the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
  - d. Promote low income housing tax credit programs
  - e. Promote down payment assistance programs

## References

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