



Langley Affordable Housing Meeting Follow Up

1) Shelly Ackerman: With regard to the affordable housing issue, I wanted to email to say why I believe Langley (and Island County) should allow tiny houses. The city of Portland just allowed Tiny Houses as legal ADU options in April! How I am defining Tiny House is a home built on a trailer platform that can be moved. They provide a flexible solution - since it is not permanent, if demand were to drop, those homes could be easily moved. Also, this allows people to potentially own their own home. So they build and retain equity versus just renting a backyard cottage. This could allow the individual(s) to save enough to be able to get into a home or buy property down the road. There are many reputable companies building quality tiny houses and there are certifications being considered and created. Canada has one already.

Not only might home owners be able to open their back yards up to tiny houses, I envision one large parcel that allows several tiny homes which could accommodate a number of our service industry workers in Langley. If planned out well, these can be very aesthetically pleasing housing areas. There are a number of these communities that exist already in WA and OR. There could be a limited number allowed in Langley, and it would be important to make sure that they don't just become additional vacation rentals, but that seems like something that could be figured out.

Response - When we adopted the code amendments to permit tiny homes the Planning Advisory Board discussed permitting tiny homes on wheels. The decision at the time was to not permit this use, but to require the unit be on a foundation and connected to utilities. Utility connection is an important consideration.

2) Patricia Herlevi: I'm a renter unfortunately living with my parents in Oak Harbor which is a stressful city for me to reside. I am an energy healer looking for an ADU on the south end. I was involved in community groups for affordable housing in Bellingham. Familiar with the problem and interested in city planning.

Response - Hope you'll stay involved.

3) JR Fulton: Will City at next meeting identify potential not for profit partners.

Response - Yes, we will be identifying and hearing from non-profit partners. Please forward any suggestions you may have to planning@langleywa.org.

4) Patricia Herlevi: The island needs a tenant's union like they have in Bellingham. I've seen landlords on the island charging \$2,000 a month for rent for one-bedroom apartments. It's getting crazy.

Response - Thanks for this suggestion.

5) Michael Oyola: What is the City of Langley doing for affordable housing?

Response - Langley has adopted numerous code amendments/programs to incentive development of affordable housing units by way of density bonusing.

Innovative Permanently Affordable Housing Projects

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Langley/#!/Langley18/Langley1804.html#18.04>

Accessory Dwelling Units

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Langley/#!/Langley18/Langley1822.html#18.22.155>

Boarding House

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Langley/#!/Langley18/Langley1822.html#18.22.280> Add chapter references

Tiny Homes (multifamily)

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Langley/#!/Langley18/Langley1822.html#18.22.290>

Multi-family Infill Form Based Code

[https://www.langleywa.org/departments/community_planning_and_building_department/multi_family_\(mf\)_infill_zoning_code.php](https://www.langleywa.org/departments/community_planning_and_building_department/multi_family_(mf)_infill_zoning_code.php)

There are some reductions for utility rates for seniors and households earning low incomes.

It's important to remember that one jurisdiction alone cannot solve the affordable housing issues facing South Whidbey.

6) JR Fulton: Will City be identifying any City incentives? For consideration for qualified affordable housing: 10 year property tax moratorium, zero or reduced water/sewer participation fee, reduced or zero building permits, use of City owned land for affordable housing. Will City identify the maximum allowable annual limited equity percentage for return on investment for innovative housing?

Response - The city has established incentives by way of density bonuses.

The purpose of the first meeting was to generate ideas and opportunities around the subject.

The subject of the second meeting is to discuss available or potential tools and solutions.

Some tools are not available to Langley, for example under state legislation the city of Langley can't utilize the MF Tax exemption due to its small population.

We are a small city and have limited resources to grant incentives for building permit fees and utilities. The City has to balance the needs of various programs with how it provides various services. Answers to affordable housing will not come solely from incentives. This is why we must work together.

Affordable housing projects require public private partnerships and support from senior levels of government.

7) Michael Oyola: How is the current declaration of emergency affecting affordable housing?

Response – It has prevented evictions and has led to changes at the state and federal level which will take time to come into effect.

Moratoriums are not long term solutions as they can provide a disincentive to landlords and housing developers.

8) Patricia Herlevi: The affordable housing crunch is happening across western Washington. I've experienced this from Seattle, to Mount Vernon, Bellingham, Port Townsend and now, I'm witnessing the situation on the island. I feel that tiny house communities on land trust is something looking into for single people and couples

Response - That is possible. The City encourages community members to come together to create a community land trust.

9) Margaret Andersen: I understand that Habitat for Humanity has been approved to develop multiple units for the Heron Park. What portion of "need" will that address?

Response - Habitat for Humanity provides home buyers with affordable mortgages that do not exceed 30% of the family's monthly income.

Response from Habitat for Humanity -

Habitat for Humanity of Island County currently owns two parcels on 3rd Street in Langley. One of these is zoned for multifamily housing but there is currently a Planned Unit Development in place with a binding site plan that only allows us to build four single family homes. Because of our land trust model, these homes will remain permanently affordable. So, while four homes may seem like a drop in the bucket compared to the current need, we know that there is a downstream effect. When four families move from renting to homeownership, four open-market rental units are freed up. This may also cause low-income rentals to open up as families move from subsidized to open market rentals.

This housing continuum is an important element to growth in our communities.

10) Kim Drury: Yet the Habitat for Humanity project - multifamily units if I recall correctly - languishes . . . why is that?

Response from Habitat for Humanity -

Habitat for Humanity of Island County is committed to all of Island County, and we are constantly working on creative ways to build and repair more homes. Our vision of a world where everyone has a decent, affordable place to call home is at the center of every decision we make. We feel the pressure to get more permanently affordable homes built for our workforce. Land acquisition and land development are the two biggest hurdles we face, the cost of these two elements takes a significant amount of money and time. The timing of land we purchase and put into our Habitat Land Trust needs to be planned out carefully. We must have it developed and ready to build upon as we complete our builds in progress, but we can only invest so much of our funds at any given time to ensure we can build at a constant rate. We currently have land development in progress for 12 homes (seven in South Whidbey). HFHIC currently is taking aggressive measures to increase construction and support staff to work toward solving this housing crisis. This is a math problem that we can't solve alone.

11) JR Fulton: Can anything be done to change the status of the 55 and over requirement for subsidized housing?

Response - These are not city entities and the city has no control over this.

12) Dinah Stinson: Hoping zoning obstacles to tiny houses will be addressed.

Response - The City adopted a tiny home code in 2018 that addresses these.

13) JR Fulton: Are we the oldest city in Washington?

Response - Steilacoom is the oldest incorporated city in Washington, with a founding date of January 1851. If you are asking if we have the highest elderly population in Washington, the answer is no. Sequim has the highest percentage of seniors in the state.

14) Patricia Herlevi: Lower price building permits for those building ADU's and detached dwellings on their property to rent as affordable housing.

Response - BP fees are based on the cost of the project and are roughly 1% of the hard costs of construction.

Building permit fees are intended to cover costs related to that service. Reducing these fees imposes a burden on the City's general funds.

The City does not currently charge impact fees whereas many other cities do.

Policy is related to city revenues are a complex consideration. We are encouraging folks to look at different opportunities themselves.

15) Patricia Herlevi: Port Townsend has an older population too. It's mostly retirees.

16) JR Fulton: Can we create a low interest fund for first time buyers that have difficulty qualifying for a mortgage?

Response - It is a possible tool, however not something the City can do. Community development financial institutions exist to provide this service.

17) Paul Schissler: permanently affordable, owner-occupied homes are one of the specialties of nonprofits that use community land trust methods.

Response – This is a possible strategy for addressing affordable housing in Langley.

18) Michael Oyola: How much and at what rate does the City of Langley want to grow and expand?

Response - The Comp Plan identifies these projections based on a joint analysis with Island County. These were prepared in 2016 and adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in 2018. These projections have been met. When the City updates the Comp Plan in 2025 we will work with Island County to prepare new projections.

19) Patricia Herlevi: What about middle age single women with a home based business?

Response - This is one segment of the population in need of housing. The code currently does permit home based businesses of different scales or intensity. See City Code section 18.22.060 <https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Langley/#!/Langley18/Langley1822.html#18.22.060>

20) JR Fulton: Sewer and water, if we changed out all the toilets and shower heads to ultra high efficiency-0.8 gallons per flush and 1.0 gallon per minute shower heads, we could reduce domestic water use by close to half.

Response - Low flow fixtures are required by Building code and there is nothing preventing someone from installing fixtures that are more water conserving.

21) Mary Michell: There used to be a Whidbey Island Share a Home that helped with matching people with seniors that would like a housemate.

Response - Unfortunately it no longer exists.

22) Patricia Herlevi: That concept of the cap on the cost of the house sounds like the Kulshan Community Land Trust in Bellingham.

23) Vicki Robin: what percent of housing is restricted to over 50 it older? does that keep young families from establishing themselves?

Response - Federally subsidized housing units in Langley are all restricted. Island housing authority manages these units.

24) Mary Michell: School district in California has sold property in order to have affordable housing built for teachers!

Response - That is a great example.

25) Vicki Robin: I am leaving my house to an agency for affordable group housing. Maybe estate planning can be part of the mix.

Response - Great suggestion. Can you share the name of the agency you are working with?

26) susiemaclean@yahoo.com: curious about tiny houses

Response - Note Tiny Homes in the Name of Christ has a project at 744 Camano Ave and it is currently under review and moving forward with a 9 unit Tiny Home Development. The City adopted a tiny home code in 2018 but these units are required to be on a foundation and connected to utilities.