

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: December 16, 2002

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: INTERIM REPORT FROM THE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY TASK FORCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council review and receive the following report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Beginning in September, the 19-member Housing Affordability Task Force Chaired by the Mayor met two times per month. The Task Force is developing a list of recommendations that will be presented to the City Council in May for each of the seven issues. To date they have developed 10 preliminary recommendations. At the end of the nine-month period, they will prioritize the list and present the findings to the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

In August, the City Council formed the 19-member Housing Affordability Task Force and asked that they address the issues outlined in attachment 1 within nine months. In addition, they were asked to provide an interim report to the City Council after four months to present their progress.

The goals of the Task Force are to increase the preservation, production and livability of affordable housing in Pasadena and to increase the awareness of current affordable housing programs in the City. The Task Force will prepare a series of recommendations that will lead to the preparation of an implementation plan. This plan will identify solutions to current barriers limiting the production of affordable housing and suggest new tools which can be prioritized by the Council. The plan will provide a foundation for the next cycle of housing policy planning in the city.

Summary of the first six meetings

The initial meeting in September focused on introductions, logistics and meeting schedule. The facilitator (Robin Hyerstay, a consultant from The Enterprise Foundation) presented a format for discussion of each of the seven items. This format included presentations from City staff on current programs, presentations from local experts and a list of "best practices" by other cities around the country for each item. At this meeting City Staff made presentations on the current state of housing in the greater Pasadena area.

The next two meetings focused on regional housing issues. City staff made presentations on current programs and identified the issues, opportunities and barriers to regional housing cooperation. The Enterprise Foundation presented several examples of strategies that other parts of the country have implemented in this area. These strategies span a variety of topic areas including coordination between local governments, legislative action and policies, regional dissemination of information, and capacity building of local housing developers. The Task Force selected recommendations that they felt were attainable and significant.

The Task Force, after addressing the Regional Coordination issue, determined that it would be more productive to address the remaining topics in a more consolidated manner. By doing this the Task Force would be able to receive the detailed level of education and examples they needed to make thoughtful recommendations to the City Council on each of the seven (7) areas they were charged with examining. The Task Force analyzed the topics and found that three common themes were present. These were Process, Production and Programs. An outline of what will be covered in each topic is listed below.

PROCESS - Under this topic the Task Force will focus on how housing is developed in Pasadena. This will include the City's process for approval, land use, building permits, and funding priorities.

PRODUCTION - Under this topic the Task Force will focus on ways to encourage housing production and preservation, where housing is being produced and educational programs for the public and housing developers.

PROGRAMS - Under this topic the Task Force will analyze whether the City has the right mix of programs to meet the housing needs of Pasadena. In addition an explanation of existing programs and their effectiveness will be undertaken.

Interim Report on Process

To date, the Task Force has addressed the first topic: Process. City staff made several presentations on how development projects are processed for land use and building permits, how affordable housing projects receive entitlements and what areas might be improved. Staff described the measures that have been taken to improve the process over the past two years.

The Task Force discussed the improvements to the permitting process involving staff and commissions. The Task Force affirmed the need for public input into the development process as it is one of the qualities that make Pasadena a unique place to live. At their upcoming meeting they will discuss various alternatives to streamlining this process.

The Enterprise Foundation presented a variety of incentives and expedited review programs that are in place in cities around the country. These options were discussed at the last meeting in December. Specific and detailed recommendations will be made at their meeting in early January.


Future Steps

In the next three months the Task Force will cover all of the topics listed. A series of recommendations will be generated for each topic. The Task Force will create a matrix of these recommendations, which will be linked back to the original list of seven issues presented by the City Council. For each of the seven issues, the Task Force will prioritize the recommendations to a list of things that they feel will make the most impact in the City of Pasadena. This list will be presented to the Council in May.

Respectfully submitted,


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Attachment 1: Charge of the Task Force