

Appendix B: Stakeholder Outreach Process and Themes - **DRAFT**

This document provides an overview of key themes the project team heard in outreach with stakeholders. To understand the housing challenges in Wilsonville and possible solutions to them, the team conducted a stakeholder engagement process with the following activities:

1. Focus groups and interviews during summer 2019.
2. An informational kiosk at the Wilsonville Public Library in December 2019.
3. A set of online surveys and feedback forms on Let's Talk Wilsonville, the City's online public engagement platform from August to December 2019.
4. A survey of people living in rent-regulated affordable housing in December 2019.

1 Focus Groups and Interviews

The project team conducted three focus groups with employers, nonprofit service providers in Wilsonville, and nonprofit affordable housing providers. The team also conducted ten interviews with for-profit developers and a representative from the real estate industry.

Key Findings

- **Wilsonville's rental market is perceived as having newer, higher quality, more expensive developments with longer waitlists.** The market is perceived as being more similar to Lake Oswego and West Linn than to Milwaukie or Oregon City. The County gets fewer calls on discrimination/repairs/landlord-tenant issues from residents in Wilsonville. The City has a lot of amenities that make it an attractive place to build housing.
- **There is ongoing concern about HOA fees and property taxes driving up housing costs.**
- **Some see isolation among some residents.** More social connections are needed for residents who do not have a community gathering space. The city's parks are a wonderful asset and people feel safe there.
- **Needed housing types:** Single-story units; smaller homes; triplex/duplexes; houses with ADUs; low-cost, single-room occupancy units for people transitioning into the area; roommate matching/homeshare.
- **Who needs help with housing:** single parents, single working adults, people with disabilities, seniors (people cannot age in place easily in Wilsonville).
- **There are not a lot of services for homeless people available locally.**

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- **Like affordable rental housing, affordable homeownership projects require subsidy.** About \$100,000 to \$120,000 in subsidy is needed to build a new home affordable at 60% to 80% AMI; if purchasing an existing home, a buyer needs about 20% of value of home. The subsidy can come from several sources: land write-downs, permit fee/SDC waivers, outright subsidy, etc.
 - **Affordability is a key issue for employers.** In a recent survey of the city's employers, approximately 30% identified housing costs as a problem for local businesses.
 - **The cost of housing presents challenges for those relocating from out of state.** Employers are challenged to find affordable, temporary housing for employees moving to the area. Those arriving in the area find housing costs to be out of line with their previous location. Many employers have to increase wages as a result.
 - **Workers commuting to Wilsonville face increasing congestion** (especially shift workers). Some businesses mentioned having a difficult time retaining employees, partly due to transportation costs. Many would like to see increased transportation options for workers, such as regional transit connections and bike/walk options.
 - **Employers do not have capacity to offer housing assistance** because they are increasing wages. Instead, employees (particularly lower-wage employees) are finding lower-cost housing in places like Salem, Keizer, Woodburn, Oregon City, Tualatin, and Canby.
 - **Additional workforce housing and affordable student housing is needed** to help accommodate growing employment and student populations.
 - **Developers working in Wilsonville find some of the City's regulations to be onerous,** including the stormwater regulations and high SDC fees (though these are comparable to other areas). Many were complimentary of City staff but would like to see a less discretionary, streamlined review process. There has been public pushback on infill development due to density and parking concerns, which has led to increased carrying costs.
 - **There is the perception that there is not a lot of land to accommodate new development and some missed opportunities** for (1) including residential in new planning areas and (2) encouraging new housing types (like homes with ADUs in new residential neighborhoods) with incentives (e.g. Vertical Housing Program) and an easier/clearer path for small and medium infill development.
 - **Capacity for ADUs and infill development in most neighborhoods is unknown:** The majority of Wilsonville's residential areas are covered under covenants and restrictions (CC&Rs) established by the original developers. The capacity for existing homes to add ADUs or infill on a large lot is unknown by the City and many property owners. New developments could add provisions for ADU development in the future, but there is no incentive for developers to deviate from writing CC&Rs to match the original plans.

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- **Some developers referenced incentives that other communities provide:** SDC waivers for ADUs (Wilsonville has this provision in policy), Tigard's Lean Code, tools for preserving affordability, and tools to reduce carrying costs.
 - **The list of developers working in Wilsonville is short.** Developers who might be a good fit for infill development in the Town Center or other areas are not familiar with the City's opportunities or potential incentives. While many developers are focusing attention on suburban markets, they remain interested in opportunities near good transit and existing services and retail. Infill developers are looking to partner with a city and would be open to an array of incentives. Supports could include land write-downs, SDC waivers, tax abatements, urban renewal support for infrastructure development, etc.
 - **The City and County could have a closer working relationship, potentially through information sharing, relationship-building and formal agreements on County and other housing resources.** Information and referral linkages between the City and County regarding services for older adults are strong; what is needed is more actual onsite (in Wilsonville) delivery of County programs. More ongoing information sharing is needed about plans for the Metro Housing Bond, assistance for renters, housing authority programs, use and availability of federal housing assistance, and homelessness funding.
 - **Wilsonville has a strong and positive history of working with affordable housing developers in the past.** For example, the City made land available, championed projects, and cleared a pathway toward a tax exemption for affordable units. This has solidified the City's good reputation among affordable housing developers.
 - **A city's advocacy and support for affordable housing is key in making a project work.** Projects need champions on City Council, the Planning Commission, and among City staff to problem-solve development review projects and provide support for these projects at neighborhood meetings.
 - **The Metro Affordable Housing Bond is a near-term opportunity to help fund affordable housing.** The City is receiving calls from affordable housing developers who might be interested in working in the city.
 - **The City-owned site near the WES station could be a desirable Transit-Oriented Development site.** To make property near WES station viable, the City needs to: provide a clear path for land use review, write down land cost, provide goals for the project, and make site issues known.
 - **Affordable housing developers like being involved early in process.** They are happy to share expertise and can even bring development team to talk about ideas for potential sites. Possible opportunities for tours and additional engagement.

2 Library Kiosk

In December 2019, the project team placed a kiosk survey board in the Wilsonville Public Library to gather resident input on what kind of housing Wilsonville needs most. The board was presented in English and Spanish to gather input from a wider range of residents who live in Wilsonville, focusing on residents who have not provided project feedback through other venues such as Let's Talk, Wilsonville!

In total there were over 320 votes, which ranked eight different potential housing types for Wilsonville (participants could choose to place as many votes as they wanted). Every housing option received votes, and the top three choices were single-level homes where people can live their whole lives, smaller single-family homes, and homes with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). Smaller homes were preferred more often than bigger single-family homes at a ratio of two to one. Co-housing, which ranked fifth, received higher interest than smaller apartments or live-work spaces; both of these options ranked last, with fewer votes overall.

Most popular responses

- Single-level homes/accessibility was the most popular response
- Smaller homes (but not as much interest in smaller apartments)
- Homes with an accessory dwelling unit

3 Let's Talk Wilsonville Survey and Submitted Stories

The City of Wilsonville released a survey about equitable housing on its online open house platform, Let's Talk Wilsonville, in August 2019, and a quick poll in December 2019. In addition, website visitors could submit stories about their housing experiences in the city.

Key Findings

- A total of 80 residents took the online survey. Respondents tended to be longtime residents (10+ years, 36%) or fairly new to the City (1-5 years, 39%). Renters were highly underrepresented, with 76% of respondents stating they owned their home.
- General takeaways from people who rent their homes:
 - Properties are seen as fairly well-maintained.
 - All but one respondent was at least somewhat stressed about the possibility of rent increases (79% responded yes).
 - The biggest challenge respondents identified to buying a home in Wilsonville is finding a home they can afford (68% of respondents).
- General takeaways from people who own their homes:
 - Affording maintenance needs is not generally a problem, but 88% of owners are at least somewhat stressed about affording overall monthly housing costs.

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- There is close to a 50/50 split on whether homes are suitable for aging in place. Multiple floors seem to be the biggest factor in this perception.
 - Less than half of owners (41%) think they could afford to buy a home in Wilsonville in today's market.
 - Commute and schools were the top two choices of why people chose Wilsonville.
 - Respondents were split on whether there is an adequate variety of housing types in Wilsonville.
 - Housing concerns are mixed:
 - Just under half of respondents indicated concerns about cost of housing and expressed a need for more affordable housing.
 - About one-third of respondents shared concerns around themes of quick growth, density, too many apartments, etc.
 - Other comments indicated that more unit types are needed in the City.
 - A separate "quick poll" asked "Which of these ideas would most help ensure that people from different backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, incomes, and physical abilities have an opportunity to enjoy Wilsonville?" (*a total of 31 responses were recorded as of January 13, 2020*)
 - The most popular response was "encourage builders to construct more single-level homes with features that make independent living easier." (31% of responses)
 - Other responses that garnered interest were:
 - Work with apartment owners to maintain housing for the long term and keep rents from increasing too rapidly (all types of apartments, not only "affordable housing") (21% of responses)
 - Make it easier to build different types of homes – single detached homes, cohousing, townhomes, cottage clusters, apartments, mobile home parks (17% of responses)
 - Themes of stories shared on Let's Talk, Wilsonville!: (14 total submitted)
 - Lack of starter homes affordable for first time homebuyers
 - Increased cost of rent over time
 - More housing types needed
 - Little housing for working class
 - Need for more outreach and education on available services
 - Good quality of life – parks and schools
 - Need to plan for infrastructure to support increased growth

4 Renter Survey

In order to improve the project's engagement of underrepresented groups, including renters and communities of color, housing surveys were distributed to residents living in Wilsonville's subsidized affordable apartment complexes in December 2019. A total of 14 responses were returned to the project team.

Key Findings

Residents surveyed seem to be connected to the community of Wilsonville:

- Most of the respondents do not plan to leave Wilsonville in the next five years.
- Around 36% of respondents only looked in Wilsonville for housing.
- Most respondents were somewhat long-term residents, five years or more.
- Around 40% of respondents would contact friends or family in times of need, which suggests they have a strong network nearby.

Survey respondents feel secure and satisfied with their housing:

- Compared to the national averages, respondents found affordable housing very quickly.
- The majority also did not feel that they are at risk of losing their housing or not being able to afford their current home in the future.
- While many of the responses to the quick poll and library kiosk indicated a need for more housing suitable to aging in place, all but one respondent to this survey felt they are able to age in their current home without issue.

Survey respondents may not feel it is possible to be homeowners or are just not interested:

- The most picked answer for the last question, which asked about strategies that would help ensure that people from different backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, incomes, and physical abilities can live in Wilsonville was "working with apartment owners to maintain housing for the long term and keep rents from increasing too rapidly."
- Very few respondents aspired to buy a home. This could be due to how satisfied they are with their current living situation. However, it is interesting to note that they believe the biggest barrier for anyone to buy a home in Wilsonville would be finding a home they could afford. This suggests that, if they did aspire to own a home, they see it being a big challenge to stay in their community.

Detailed Results

Question 1: How long have you lived in Wilsonville?

Twelve survey respondents have lived in Wilsonville for more than five years.

Question 2: Why did you choose to live in Wilsonville?

Housing cost was at least one of the reasons 10 survey respondents choose to live in Wilsonville. For half of the respondents, parks and open space was one of the reasons they choose Wilsonville. Only one survey respondent chose Wilsonville because of the proximity to work. No respondents choose to live in Wilsonville for the school system or because they liked the home.

Question 3: When you were looking for your current home, how long did it take before you found it in Wilsonville?

Ten respondents only looked for housing for between zero to six months before finding housing in Wilsonville. The other respondents found housing between six months and two years. No respondents waited more than two years to find housing.

Question 4: When you were looking for your current home, what other areas were you considering?

Five respondents were looking for housing in only Wilsonville. The two other cities most commonly chosen were Tualatin and Oregon City.

Question 5: Do you feel your home is suitable for aging in place?

All but one respondent felt that their home is suitable for aging in place.

Question 6: Is your home big enough to meet the needs of your family?

Twelve respondents felt their home is big enough to meet their needs.

Question 7: If you could improve one thing about your housing now, what would it be?

The majority of respondents chose other. There did not appear to be any trend for the other responses. The second highest response for this question was more bedrooms.

Question 8: How well do you feel the property owner is maintaining your home?

Ten respondents feel their property is well maintained. No respondents felt their home is poorly maintained.

Question 9: Do you feel stressed about your ability to afford monthly housing costs?

Nine respondents indicated they are not stressed about affording monthly housing costs. Only one respondent felt stressed with two feeling somewhat stressed.

10. Do you plan to stay in your current home for at least the next 5 years?

Ten respondents planned to stay in their current home for the next five years. Three were unsure.

11. Do you aspire one day to buy a home?

Ten respondents do not aspire to buy a home.

12. What do you think would be the biggest challenge to buying a home in Wilsonville?

Ten respondents believed that finding a home that they could afford would be the biggest barrier to buying a home (some respondents chose more than one response).

13. If you had an issue with your living situation or needed assistance, who would you go to for help?

Seven respondents indicated they would go to County or State services for help, and seven indicated they would go to family or friends (some respondents chose more than one response).

14. Which of these ideas would help ensure that people from different backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, incomes, and physical abilities can live in Wilsonville?

Nine respondents thought that working with apartment owners to maintain housing for the long term and keep rents from increasing too rapidly would help the most (some respondents chose more than one response).