

Housing For All: Community Feedback and Call to Action

11/5/2018, 6 p.m. @ Goodwill

Meeting Notes

Q&A: After the presentations, attendees were invited to ask questions of the presenters.

Community Member: This is a silly questions, I saw a 6 next to IPOD. What does that mean?

- This is the 6th interim planning district in the city, so it's just to show that.

Community Member: Is everything going to be all the same or is everything going to be different? Why would i want to pay 900 dollars rent and somebody is going to come in with much less money and get the same apartment. It's not fair to the developer.

- Through the time that the city has been doing this this research, a goal was to find out how both sides benefit or have the least amount of loss in the process. It is more of a hassle to acquire different materials or amenities for multiple units during construction based on if the unit is going to be "affordable". It was also found that the developer is acquiring materials and amenities at the same time in bulk so they will be charged a wholesale price regardless.

Community Member: Will the low income housing person be able to keep the property nice and keep up with the up-keep of the property?

- People of lower income are able to keep their property nice. There are difficult tenants across class levels. Property owners and management companies of luxury apartments have also dealt with challenges around their tenants keeping the properties "nice". There may need to be additional channels of communication or support organizations to help both sides with communication.

Community Member: Is this a question of supply and demand?

- Yes. There is a high demand to live in Lawrenceville due to its walkability and close proximity to Downtown. Although at one point this neighborhood had almost double the residents that are currently living in the area. Some may say that the development has to slow down, we have not seen that "slow down" in this community.

Community Member: Lawrenceville is not family friendly. What is the demographic of the neighborhood.

- There are about 1,000 school age children in the neighborhood.

Community Member: Who is allowed to do "off-site" and is there a mileage rate or zone?

- Some IZ policies have the option for developers to include "off-site" development as a way to fulfill the requirements. Off-site IZ development cannot be right next door to the planned luxury or market rate development -- so that developers can't just subdivide and make a building that houses all the low-income tenants. The policy would require any

off-site development to be within a ¼ of a mile of where the developer is happening. This would help ensure that it stays in the neighborhood.

Community Member: Why the off-site option?

- Flexibility is usually important to any IZ policy and it may help prevent legal challenges. There are also strategic reasons for why off-site development might be beneficial to the community. It could allow for partnerships. For instance, if a non-profit developer like ACTION-Housing were doing an affordable housing project nearby, it may make sense for the private developer to put the units there, as there may be supportive services and other things that ACTION is providing in that building that would benefit the tenants.

Community Member: Could there be tiers for certain amount of units or a certain zone?

- Yes, you can create tiers or levels for developers based on how many units they would include for an IZ. For instance, some of the units could be for 50% AMI and some of the units could be higher. Other municipalities do that.

Community Member: Could the return of Section 8 Vouchers be included in any IZ policy push?

- The Inclusionary Zoning Exploratory Committee recommended requiring developers to accept Section 8 Vouchers for the inclusionary units that are created. However, there's already City "Source of Income" legislation that would achieve the same purpose and that's making its way through a legal challenge in the courts. So if it doesn't get struck down that would apply to IZ units. Including it in the IZ legislation may just expose it to more legal risk. Section 8 housing and the opportunity to mandate it may more aptly be connected to [LERTA](#) legislation. The wise move is to position it alongside so that it kicks in once a development begins to acquire tax credits. Tax credits are an optional necessity when large scale development happens. So we doubt that developers would pass up the tax credits even if there was some tool of affordability attached.

Community Member: Will future phases of Arsenal 201 be subject to IZ policy? Has the second phase been approved?

- That is a question of timing or what they are proposing to build and when this legislation goes into effect. The second phase has not been approved by the city. Initially they wanted to create 625 units and maybe the softening of the market in Lawrenceville forces them to change their plan.

Community Member: Of all these units, what percentage are 2-3 bedrooms?

- Most of the projects that are covered under the threshold of this IZ policy are micro, 1 BR, and studio apartments, so that's definitely something we've been trying to work on, is how to create multi-bedroom affordable units because families have experienced a lot of the displacement in the neighborhood. The Lawrenceville Community Land Trust is a tool to support families because they've all been 2-3 bedrooms.

Community Member: Why are we appeasing developers who are saturating the market with market rate units. A lot of this is being masked under feasibility and what feasibility means?

- It is important to get the policy right because other cities have seen that when the % is set too high, it can actually stop development, which just makes housing prices go up even more. The Inclusionary Zoning Exploratory Committee vetted a lot of these considerations. LU has been pushing hard on a lot of these points and I don't think we appease developers and I think other housing advocates would back us on that. We have provided challenges to developers and served as strong advocates especially when compared to our sister organizations around the city doing similar work. The saturation of the market depends on who you talk to.

Community Member: What is the website to buy property that the city owns? Can't you go to a website and buy property for cheap from the city?

- The City does have a website that advertises all of the property they own. The landscape in Lawrenceville has changed. There is not much city owned property remaining "for cheap" in the neighborhood because developers have acquired a lot of it.