

CHILDREN AS AN INDICATOR SPECIES: How Can Cities Promote Affordable Housing for Our Families?

Annual WA APA Conference
Spokane
October 17, 2014



Seattle Planning Commission

Session Panel: Seattle Planning Commission members & staff

Moderator:

- David Cutler, Planning Commissioner (former Co-Chair)

Presenters:

- Amalia Leighton, Planning Commission Chair
- Catherine Benotto, Planning Commissioner (former Vice-Chair)
- Diana Canzoneri, Planning Commission staff (Sr. Policy Analyst)



Introduction

Family-Sized Housing Action Agenda

- Spotlight need for affordable, family-sized housing
- Call on Mayor and Council to establish an action plan



Family-sized housing: An essential ingredient for attracting & retaining families

Other ingredients also important:

- Good public schools
- Safe neighborhoods
- Sidewalks
- Parks & community centers
- Convenient, stroller-friendly transit
- Affordable childcare
- Grocery stores
- Other families with children





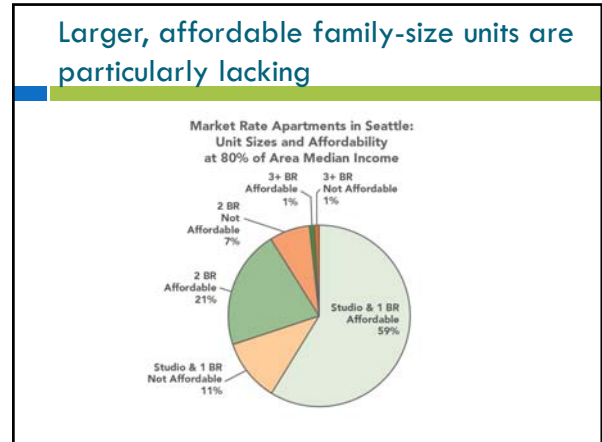
Impetus for concern

- Motivated by findings from Commission's 2011 *Housing Seattle Report*.
- Not enough units both affordable and suitably sized for families with children.



Photo courtesy Seattle Parks and Recreation

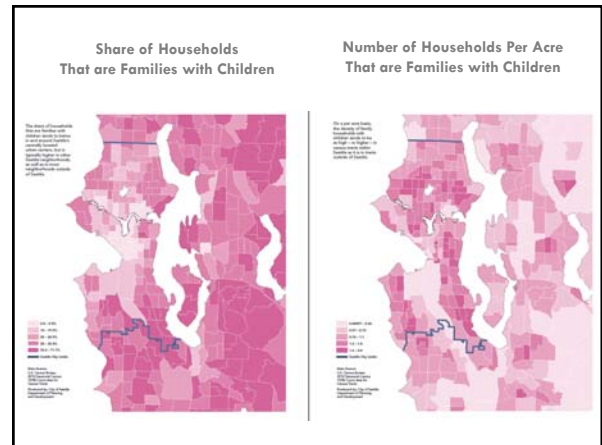
Context



Seattle: 2nd lowest share of households that are families with children

Population Density and Share of Households That Are Families with Children: Seattle and a Selection of Other Large U.S. Cities

City	Pop. Density Per Square Mile	Total Households	% of Households that are Families with Children
Los Angeles, CA	8,092	1,318,168	33.4%
Milwaukee, WI	6,190	230,221	33.4%
New York, NY	27,016	3,109,784	30.5%
Chicago, IL	11,844	1,045,560	29.6%
Baltimore, MD	7,676	249,903	27.9%
Denver, CO	3,915	263,107	24.7%
Portland, OR	4,347	248,546	24.5%
Minneapolis, MN	7,085	163,540	23.2%
Boston, MA	12,787	252,699	22.9%
Washington, DC	9,864	266,707	20.4%
Seattle, WA	7,255	283,510	19.2%
San Francisco, CA	17,169	345,811	18.0%



Recommended Actions

Action Needed!

Making meaningful progress on this issue, will require a variety of tools:

the City will need to both reinforce current efforts to encourage family-friendly housing and explore some strategies it has not yet tried.

Action Agenda Items


- Adopt a formal definition of family-sized housing:
 - 2-bedroom minimum



It is also imperative to address dearth of affordable 3+ bedroom units.

Action Agenda Items

- Add flexibility in some Single-Family zoned areas
 - Duplexes and cottage housing can provide attractive and affordable housing choices for families.
 - More flexibility on ADUs would provide more housing options to a variety of families (including single-parents and extended families).



Including a broader mix of low-density housing in would make it possible for a larger number of families with a wider range of incomes to live in these neighborhoods.

Action Agenda Items

- Strategic rezoning of some selected Single-Family to Low Rise Multi-Family
 - In Transit Communities
 - Existing family-friendly neighborhoods
 - Use new tools that actually yield family-sized units



Action Agenda Items


- Ensure that bonus development provisions and incentive zoning programs work to encourage family-sized units:
 - 3+ bedroom bonus
 - Recalibrate *Multi-Family Tax Exemption* and *Incentive Zoning (IZ) Programs*
 - Use revenues from fees to help support preservation and affordability of existing family-sized units

Action Agenda Items

- Continue placing a strong priority in affordable housing programs for families with children.


Subsidized and income-restricted housing programs play a critical role in enabling low-income families to access housing in Seattle.

Many low-income housing developers report a seemingly unquenchable demand for larger family-sized units.



Action Agenda Items

- City policies should use a family-oriented lens
 - Major Comprehensive Plan Update a great opportunity



Action Agenda

- Decision makers need to devote necessary resources to further inform, refine, and implement this agenda



Progress to Date

Media & Outreach



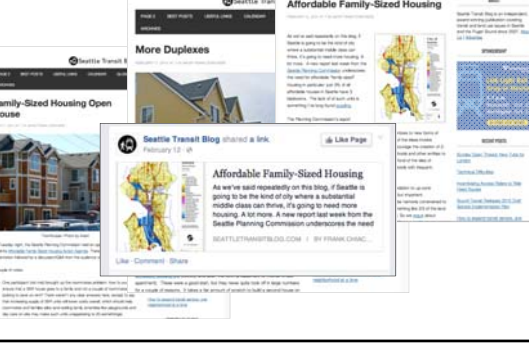
Media & Outreach



Media & Outreach



Media & Outreach



Media & Outreach

VIDEO: Many argue new housing isn't affordable, family friendly

Baltimore, MD 27.9%
 Denver, CO 24.7%
 Portland, OR 24.5%
 Minneapolis, MN 23.2%
 Boston, MA 22.9%
 Washington, DC 20.4%
SEATTLE, WA 19.2%
 San Francisco, CA 18.0%

Media & Outreach

Meeting the Needs of Low-Wage Workers: Seattle's Growing Affordability Gap

According to a new study by the Seattle Planning Commission, just 2 percent of housing units currently exist in the city that are affordable to low-wage workers. The study also found that the number of low-wage workers in the city is growing faster than the number of affordable housing units.

Media & Outreach

A Breath of Fresh Air

The Seattle Housing Commission, a coalition of community groups, has released a report that calls for a new approach to building affordable housing. The report, titled "Building Connections: A Report on the State of Affordable Housing in Seattle," was released on February 10, 2014.

Response from Chairs of Council Housing and Planning Committees

February 10, 2014

Dear Mayor: We are pleased to see the report and appreciate the work that has been done to address the issue of affordable housing in Seattle. We support the recommendations in the report and will continue to work with you and the community to find solutions to this important issue.

City Council: Workforce Housing

1. Resolution directing Planning staff to explore ways to increase accessory dwelling units (ADUs):

...[to] "encourage the creation of housing affordable to people from a range of ages, incomes, and family sizes..."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1/23/2014

City Council Approves \$1.1 Billion to Regional Affordable Housing Fund, Expands Backyard Cottage Exemption

SEATTLE - City Council unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the creation of a \$1.1 billion fund to support affordable housing near light rail and transit stations, and also expanded the Department of Planning & Development (DPD) to explore the expansion of backyard cottages and another key policy. These efforts are part of the Council's and Mayor's ongoing work to expand the availability of affordable housing in all income levels.

City Council: Workforce Housing

2. Linkage Fee resolution to be voted on by full City Council addresses family-size housing in several ways:

- Calibrates requirements to avoid encouraging smallest units over other sizes.
- Calls for guidelines for using program revenue on family-sized units.
- Possibility of layering with multifamily tax exemption.

Earlier draft below. Slightly **amended** version going to Council on Oct 20, 2014:

Amended Resolution 2014-01-01

The City of Seattle Department of Planning & Development (DPD) is pleased to present this draft resolution to the City Council. The resolution is intended to address the issue of family-size housing in several ways:

Mayor & City Council: Housing Affordability & Livability Agenda

Broad plan will identify new policies and programs to meet gaps.

"We have to intentionally plan to achieve housing affordability for a diverse mix of incomes and families in our city."
-Councilmember Sally J. Clark

The screenshot shows a news release from the Office of the Mayor, dated November 13, 2014. The headline is 'MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL LAUNCH NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORT'. The text discusses the Mayor and City Council's commitment to addressing the city's housing needs through a new agenda. It mentions that the agenda will focus on creating more affordable housing, improving the city's housing stock, and ensuring that housing is accessible to all income levels. Councilmember Sally J. Clark is quoted as saying, 'We have to intentionally plan to achieve housing affordability for a diverse mix of incomes and families in our city.'

Office of Housing: 2015 Budget

In reviewing successes and results of existing programs: **"family-sized units [are] both a success, and a challenge and an opportunity looking forward."**
-Steve Walker, Office of Housing Director

The screenshot shows a presentation slide titled 'Programs and Results'. It lists several programs and their corresponding results:

Program	Results
Rental Production and Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 11,000 rent- and income-restricted units in service 4,279 homeless units 2,854 2+ bedroom "family sized" units
Weatherization and Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2013: 176 houses and 862 apartments upgraded Focus on building systems and cost-effective repairs for meaningful energy efficiency gains
Multi-family Tax Exemption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 3,000 restricted units in service; 693 approved in 2013 Rigorous program administration and compliance monitoring Participation rates have fallen as market rents have risen
Incentive Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 600 units funded using CZ bonus dollars Over \$30 million received and committed by end of 2013 Complements Housing Levy as source for affordable housing development

Additional examples

- New City Council candidate campaigning on filling gaps in availability of affordable family-size units.
- Topic for upcoming joint meeting of Planning Commission and Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

The image shows a modern, two-story house with a light-colored exterior and a dark roof. A person is riding a bicycle on a paved path in front of the house. The house has large windows and a small porch area.

Q&A and Discussion

Q&A and Discussion

- Q&A with Seattle Planning Commission:
- Qs for audience:
 - Does your community have a shortage of family-size housing?
 - What do you see as the most promising strategies for attracting or retaining families?
 - Ideas, advice for gaining traction for action on issue?

Seattle Planning Commission Staff Contacts & Website

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www.seattle.gov/planningcommission
Go to "WHAT WE DO," and select "Housing"

The screenshot shows the Seattle Planning Commission website. The page features a navigation menu with options like 'Home', 'About Us', 'What We Do', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area highlights 'Family-Sized Housing' with a sub-section for 'Affordable Housing Solutions'. There are also links for 'Housing Data Report' and 'Family-Sized Housing'.

