



ONTARIO HB 2001 & HB 2003 UPDATES Community Outreach Program Memo (9/11/20)

INTRODUCTION

Ontario has been growing at a much slower rate than projected in the City's 2007 Housing Needs Analysis¹. However, nearby Idaho counties have experienced relatively high population growth. Ontario currently has an adequate buildable land supply to meet long-term housing needs, but the City has struggled to attract a range of housing options for its current and future residents. Although housing demand is high, housing production is not. Ontario is significantly "rent burdened" with 29% of all rental households paying more than half of their incomes on gross rent alone.

Without the types of housing in demand by working and middle-income households, slow housing production has also stifled economic development. Over the years, several firms have rejected Ontario as an investment opportunity, in part due to the lack of housing choice.

To address housing need and encourage economic development, the City has received a grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to contract Winterbrook Planning. Winterbrook is currently in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of Ontario's existing programs and the development of new program options to increase the supply of housing for all income levels. Broadly, the grant will result in:

1. **Duplex Code Audit/Amendments and Statutory Requirements:** Revise Zoning Ordinance to meet local housing objectives that comport with HB 2001 duplex provisions before statutory deadline of June 30, 2021. The City should also comply with accessory dwelling unit requirements (ORS 197.312) and requirements for siting of manufactured homes on individual lots (ORS 197.314).
2. **An updated Housing Needs Analysis and Buildable Lands Inventory (HNA/BLI):** The City's existing HNA is 13 years old and is based on growth assumptions that have not come to pass. Although Ontario has more than a 20-year supply of buildable land within its UGB, the available land supply may not be properly zoned, located or serviced to meet the City's housing needs. The updated HNA will determine needed housing types and densities at affordable price levels and will provide a solid qualitative basis for identifying effective measures to achieve the state's and community's housing objectives.
3. **Housing Strategy Implementation Plan:** Develop an action plan to implement high-priority housing strategies identified in the HNA and heard by community stakeholders. The plan will comply with HB 2003 requirements. The Ontario housing strategy will build upon existing measures and will likely include changes to zoning regulations and maps, incentives for housing that is affordable to a wide range of income groups, and non-regulatory tools, such as cash bonuses for investing in new or rehabilitated housing, SDC reductions, deferred infrastructure improvements, land-banking affordable housing, SDC waivers, or other non-regulatory tools.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will guide the consultant and City officials on product development and will be asked to assist in targeted outreach to better understand broad consumer preferences, regional housing market demands, core community values, and the unique housing needs of different demographic cohorts. This outreach memo will be a living document guiding public engagement efforts on housing discussions in Ontario.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this outreach program is to consult and collaborate with Ontario community members to:

¹ The City's 2019 population estimate is 11,485. Ontario's 2035 coordinated population projection (12,763) is less than the 2027 population projection adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan in 2007 (13,451).

- 1) Better understand the barriers (real and perceived) to housing production in the region;
- 2) Gather the qualitative housing elements that stakeholders would like to see in the community; and
- 3) Based on feedback, develop tailored production policies, strategies, tools, and financing that will promote equitable community benefits and be accessible to all.

EQUITY LENS

To ensure authentic and representative engagement from all affected voices, an equitable community engagement framework will ground this outreach program. First, potential under-served and underrepresented communities will be identified by TAC members and other project leads, and targeted outreach will be planned to involve these groups in meaningful discussions. Second, proposed zoning code, comprehensive plan, and potential policies/strategies will be evaluated based on their potential impact to these groups. If adverse impacts are identified, alternatives and/or mitigation measures will accompany the consultant recommendations to TAC.

Through deliberately inclusive engagement and evaluation of the recommendations, this outreach program will seek to involve and balance all voices.

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

This list of potential stakeholders and community partners is not comprehensive and will be revised / updated to reflect conversations with TAC members and local and state agencies. TAC members will be requested to serve as liaisons between potential stakeholders identified here and the consultants. Under-served / underrepresented groups should be expressly identified and actively engaged with.

LOCAL CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS / BUSINESS PARTNERS

Revitalize Ontario	Ontario Recreation District	
Community Strategic Plan Partners	Four Rivers Community School	
Treasure Valley Community College	Ontario School District	

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Ontario Area Chamber of Commerce	Snake River Economic Development Alliance	Developers
Malheur County Economic Development	Real Estate Professionals	Home Builders
Civil Engineers	Surveyors	

PDAC & SERVICE PROVIDERS

Malheur County Planning	Ontario Recreation District	Ontario Code Enforcement / Police
Building Department	Jacobs Engineering (Public Works)	
Idaho Power	Fire department	
Ontario Sanitary Service, Inc.		

REGIONAL, AND STATE AGENCIES

DLCD Representatives	Housing Authority of Malheur County	
Business Oregon	Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs	

PLAN & STRATEGIES

During the age of COVID-19, large, in-person meetings are impractical. To engage with community members. The following strategies will be used to consult and collaborate with potential stakeholders.

Project Website

A project website will be available through the City's domain page. The site will be organized by TAC / Planning Commission / CC meetings, listing the meeting calendars and any meeting materials as they become available.

Project Specific Email

To streamline communications, an email specific to the project will be hosted by the City. Here, community members and interested parties can voice their general thoughts, ideas, concerns, and opinions.

TAC Meeting #1

TAC and other officials involved with the project will be asked to discuss their top 3 obstacles and top 3 measures for housing production in Ontario. The team will use this exercise as a temperature check and guide to determine a committee member's potential next steps for community engagement.

"Kitchen Table" Conversations

TAC members will be asked to facilitate meetings with potential stakeholders and community partners. The conversations could happen as standalone events or as part of existing regular meetings (service organizations, church groups, professional associations, classrooms, youth activities, etc.). Each TAC member will be asked to leverage their existing relationships in the community to ensure that all voices are heard. This meeting strategy will be one of the main ways to involve under-represented groups.

Interviews

Consultant and TAC members will conduct interviews with housing production actors such as developers, financiers, real estate agents, and public side facilitators like public works or Housing Authority officials. Interview formats will be designed to illicit feedback on City code, policies, fees, and other mechanisms that impact housing development.

Online Survey

A brief online survey will be available to the public throughout the duration of the outreach program. The survey will be hosted on the project website, and it will be advertised through the City's Facebook page and provided to other outlets to advertise, like regional Cities/Counties, news outlets, and other private or public organizations. The City's Planning Technician – Marc Berg – will be responsible for tracking and summarizing survey result for consideration by the TAC.

Virtual / In-Person Open House(s)

At least one virtual or in-person open house will be planned with City and TAC members to provide both project updates as well as create space for open dialogue based on a thematized discussion around housing preferences and development constraints. The open house will be open to the public and will be heavily advertised on multiple platforms and through multiple community partnerships to increase the likelihood of public participation. Open house materials and follow-up/comment cards will also be available on the project website.

Planning Commission / City Council Joint Work Session

After TAC recommendations, a joint work session will be held with the Planning Commission and City Council. This work session will be open to the public and provide another opportunity to learn about the project recommendations, factual basis for the decision makers, and state requirements. The work session will be held 2 to 3 weeks before the joint Planning Commission / City Council public hearing. Information will be provided to the public at the work session for how to provide comment in the public hearing process.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

All outreach programs must overcome barriers to participation. Traditionally, these can contribute to group under-representation. A common example is a language barrier where either an individual or group of individuals are not informed of the potential

engagement opportunity or translation services are not available at an event or on the survey to allow for their full involvement. Project team members and the TAC should consider potential barriers to participation during this new age of COVID-19. Some barriers and solutions are listed here, but this list should continue to be built upon and re-addressed as the outreach program continues.

BARRIERS & SOLUTIONS

Non-English Speakers	Ensure that materials are available in Spanish, and that translators/translations can be requested and provided to community members.
No internet or computer access	Provide organizations with hard copy materials or the information needed to reach ensure participation from their constituents. Create options for phone interviews and allow participants to join open houses / public meetings using only conference call capabilities.
People with physical or intellectual disabilities; youth or elderly	Connect with local and state agencies working with these populations to strategize on accessible formats and materials for collaborative participation.
Non-traditional schedules	Allow for multiple opportunities for public participation both on an individual’s own terms and during group conversations.

OUTCOMES & REPORTING

For effective collaboration, reporting metrics and project updates need to be available to participants. Reporting back to groups/individuals on how their input contributed to decision-making minimizes “extractive” interactions that are not as fulfilling or meaningful to participants. Further, TAC and Planning Commission / City Council members need to have a clear understanding of the public consensus to make informed policy decisions. Public participation outcomes and reporting will be managed in the following ways:

Participation Memos

Public participation through any medium will be summarized into a public participation memo and available for review on the project website. Raw surveys, interviews, and any meeting notes will also be available for public / decision-maker review on the website. TAC members will be updated on the public participation efforts and feedback to-date and each TAC meeting through the project.

Contact List

The City will maintain a project contact list that will be used to report back to participants on how their input has influenced the TAC’s recommendations as well as the planning commission and elected official decisions.

Equity Matrix

The TAC will be asked to evaluate potential housing strategies based on market factors and their impacts to under-represented groups. A matrix or other display will be used to discuss positive, negative, and neutral consequences of the proposed housing strategy. When negative consequences are found, alternative options and/or mitigation measures will be presented.

Community Outreach Results Memo

A draft and final outreach memo will be available for public review and presented to the TAC. This results memo will summarize all interviews / surveys / meetings to distill themes and main concerns for TAC members. Non-housing related feedback will not be removed from the outreach results memo, but rather highlighted as community areas for concern. This feedback could inform other City / County planning efforts.