

HOPE Community Advisory Committee

Highlights of Second Meeting

February 24, 2023

The second meeting of the Housing, Opportunity, Priorities and Education (HOPE) Community Advisory Committee (February 15, 2023) focused on potential uses of housing funds, and how community values could help guide how to prioritize expenditures.

Community Values

When asked to name **attributes of Burlingame as a community**, suggestions from the committee members included:

- Welcoming
- Natural beauty/trees
- Downtown hub, amenities
- Access to transportation
- Family oriented
- Diverse residents, different ethnicities, "all walks of life"
- Small businesses, locally owned
- Community pride

When asked to suggest **changes they are hoping to see in the community**, committee members mentioned:

- More housing for more kinds of people
- Wanting it to become more diverse, more welcoming
- Support for people in low wage jobs that the community counts on
- Wish it was less "auto-centric"
- Want adult children to be able to stay
- More opportunities for home ownership

Funding Options

The current housing fund balance is \$7.3 million. It could grow to \$62+million by 2025 if all projects currently under review are built. These are one-time funds and are not a regular stream of income.

A review of possible allowable uses of the funds were shared during the meeting. HOPE Committee members and meeting attendees then participated in small group discussion followed by a discussion among the whole group. The following preliminary observations reflect whole group discussion from both meeting #1 and #2.

Committee members appear interested in a combination of options, including providing funding towards construction of new units, as well as preservation of existing older housing stock that might already have moderate rents.

Committee members expressed an interest in utilizing funds so that the benefits would be realized as soon as possible, though members also want to understand options that are the most cost effective in helping as many as possible over the long term.

While the one-time housing funds have parameters (e.g., related to workforce), they are also more flexible than some other types of monies/grants for affordable housing, so several committee members indicated that funds should be used to help people in the extremely low income categories. This matches the extensive County-level research performed by the County of San Mateo Housing and Community Development Committee (HCDC), which is provided as an attachment.

Questions and Answers (Q&A) Follow-Up

Some questions were raised in the meeting, and staff promised follow-up answers. Here are answers to a couple of projects that came up in the meeting:

Q: If the City (or a designated non-profit) were to acquire an existing apartment building, what would happen to the existing tenants?

A: One of the challenges in acquiring an existing apartment building is that the owner rarely knows what the incomes of the tenants are. One can try to get income verifications of the tenants prior to purchase, but it would be voluntary on their part and can be difficult to obtain.

If one assumes that the City does not want to displace any tenants when acquiring property (both for compassionate and financial reasons – City acquisition would trigger compliance with Relocation Assistance laws and could be expensive), it is difficult to estimate how long it would take for the entire building to become affordable.

Typically, after acquisition, tenants are required to submit income verifications to ascertain their eligibility for the intended rent structure. Those who are "over income" could be asked to leave and provided relocation assistance (see above), but they could also be allowed to

stay. If the rents at time of acquisition are lower than market, they can be brought up to market for the over-income tenants. This may encourage those tenants to move out on their own, but not necessarily. Over time when and if the over-income tenants leave, these units can become available to income eligible tenants at affordable rents.

For tenants that are income-eligible, the rents can often be reduced based on their income.

Q: The school district has expressed some interest in building affordable housing for its staff on its property. Would these projects be eligible to receive City housing funding?

A: If the City contributed funding, the housing would most likely need to be available also to people other than school district staff. One possibility would be for the housing to be available to "public employees." Likewise, district staff would be eligible to reside in City-sponsored projects such as the Village at Burlingame since they are employed within the city.

Q: Does the City have vacant land it can contribute towards development of affordable housing?

A: The City does not have empty parcels, but has a number of public parking lots in the Downtown and Broadway commercial districts. While each lot currently serves the function of providing parking for the respective business districts, lots could be redeveloped over time in conjunction with parking management strategies. For example, the Village at Burlingame utilized two public parking lots: one was developed with the affordable housing, and the other developed with a parking structure that replaced the parking that was being displaced. In fact, the parking structure was built to replace more than the total parking displaced by the housing development, with the thought that the additional parking in the structure could allow additional downtown city parking lots to be redeveloped.

HOPE Committee Webpage

A webpage for the HOPE committee has been posted on the City's website at www.burlingame.org/hope. The page includes slides from the committee meetings and the Q&A document. Additional documents will be added to the page as the committee continues its work.

If you have suggestions for other information we should include, please contact Joseph Sanfilippo, Economic Development & Housing Specialist, by email at jsanfilippo@burlingame.org or by phone at 650-558-7264.