Built Environment Meeting

March 23, 2022

Meeting Notes

What kind of housing is missing? (prompt)

* Missing middle
* Low income – affordable
* Community scale
* Zero carbon/emission housing
* Homes for farmworkers and the unhoused
  + Need to bring ag companies that have built housing into conversation
* General comment on mixed use – needs large housing component, or surrounding high density housing to work. Easy to get too much commercial
* Transit-oriented development
* 2-4 plex buildings (single-family housing needs to go)

Breakout and general group comments

* Need more permit streamlining – costs and time.
  + What bumps can we find and smooth?
  + Megan did mention this is sometimes relative between communities, and the Permit Center has made improvements
  + *Did not get a chance to go into – all the state streamlining*
* Requiring housing with environmental benefits has higher upfront costs, but lower operating costs. Some (unsure of the example) have figured out a way to calculate the savings into the initial price, lowering the cost to buy.
* How can we build/get housing for those already living in Salinas? - Fair Housing law prohibits discrimination, which is good means this is hard to explicitly achieve. Inclusionary lotteries have weights for living/working in Salinas, and developers are supposed to work on a local marketing plan.
* How do we protect our poorer neighbors and address displacement fears?
  + What are the kinds of displacement? One commenter did not think there were many examples of buildings being bought for redevelopment with residents removed...
  + This kind of displacement is feared though. Example of CCA’s work around Carr Lake.
  + Seniors also are facing displacement as they can’t keep up with the cost of housing. Need help to age in place.
* Is there warehouse space we can turn into lofts or other housing?
* Critical to still maintain a jobs/housing balance
* Need for education/job training components/pathways -> especially for low income

*What stood out to me (Jon)*

* *Need to identify and define the types of displacement (younger generations not being able to get into market, redevelopment displacement, rising rents/costs forcing to relocate, etc.)*
* *Multiple people expressed concern over “too tall” buildings. Need to define this (maybe in workshops). What is too tall?*
* *Need to explain the tradeoffs with more housing – need more units to ease overcrowding and price crunch, but can’t discriminate and stop people from moving here (and brining their cars – need alternatives that are easy to use)*
* Is it possible to become our own developers? If so, how would this be possible?
* W need a reevaluation of the permitting process to be able to build faster.
* Create a more efficient permitting system/process
* Consider economic partnerships if the City does not have enough funds for building.
* By improving Natividad and Creek bridge area we may improve development.
* Look into creating homes that are targeted towards local people.
* Can this be possible? How?
* Maybe by creating different programs/partnerships?
* Address displacement as it is a big issue in our community.
* This is mostly coming amongst elderly because they can’t afford the cost of maintenance and repair.
* We should also have assistance for disability accommodations.
* The developing process is very expensive, however, how can we keep certain areas affordable for buyers and renters?
* Such as housing surrounding Carr Lake to avoid displacement.
* Can we work with organizations (non-profit) that can buy houses and make them affordable?
* In regard to building houses with filter, is it possible to have a representative from the health department to assist meetings to discuss health issues that come from dust, such as allergies?
* We need to have a job and housing balance.
* Places for businesses to establish.
* How can we prevent rents from going up?
* Promoting education can also improve housing affordability since people with an degree have higher possibilities of obtaining a job with higher salary.
* Create houses more energy efficient.
* Address increasing heat
* Increase green spaces and work on greenhouse gases