



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

June 17, 2021

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Ben Berto, Director of Planning and Building Services

SUBJECT: Housing Element, Safety Element, Land Use Element update public engagement process and schedule

BACKGROUND

Work continues on both the three General Plan element updates (Housing, Safety, and Land Use) generally described as the Housing Element update, concurrent with development of Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS) for Fairfax. The draft ODDS toolkit was introduced and discussed at a Planning Commission special meeting on May 27. The Commission is now reviewing work on the Housing Element and other related elements.

A number of meetings have already occurred on the Housing Element-related updates since the consulting firm (EMC Planning Group) was hired by the Town Council on April 7. In addition to the joint Town Council/Planning Commission kickoff meeting with the consultant on April 21, staff and the consultants have met with the Town's Affordable Housing Committee, Climate Action Committee, and Open Space Committee. Pending meetings are scheduled with the Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee, with the Age Friendly Fairfax Task Force and Planning Commission subcommittee, and future meetings will be scheduled with the Affordable Housing Committee, and with the head of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority. These early meetings introduced the Housing Element process to members of those committees to and pointed out areas for committee involvement and feedback.

DISCUSSION

Consistent with the schedule set for in the consultant's proposal, the Commission tonight is reviewing the draft public engagement strategy and associated programs. The goal is to broadly and effectively interact with the community through a transparent process that shares information and builds trust. As will be shown in EMC's presentation, the strategy will be multi-faceted and designed to obtain public feedback on housing needs, constraints, and key priorities. Success outcomes will be specific and measurable, and recognize the ongoing time element.

As part of the engagement process design, the Commission will be asked to provide direction on how to elicit meaningful public participation, The central process component proposed is

an online platform, which your Commission is being asked to view and comment on at this hearing, before it is presented unveiled to the larger public.

Staff and the consultants are excited about the opportunities provided by an online platform. For example, instead of public feedback being largely limited to sometimes interminable public meetings, the platform will allow persons to participate when and to the extent that is convenient to them. Because these opportunities will be ongoing throughout the update process, instead of the typical lineal presentation, comment, and decision process, there will be built in ability for participants to develop knowledge, reflect, and re-engage as the Housing Element discussion proceeds.

The online platform will serve as a central hub for all public information relating to the process, posting links to pending meetings, video and from previously-occurring meetings, and materials on topics such as State laws, expert analysis, Town policies and regulations, etc.

The online process will also allow for more detailed and specific understanding and analysis of the varying participant's perspectives and needs, which in turn will result in policies and programs that better reflect and respond to those viewpoints and needs. One example of this are groups that are on the margins of typical public participation processes – the online forum is designs for individuals to self-identify and present their group affiliation (for example, worker in town, or renter) and garner important perspective from a more diverse audience than a late-night in-person meeting would encourage.

Of course, in-person meetings are hoped for and anticipated as California recovers from the pandemic and resulting restrictions on public interaction. In this case, in-person and online participation will serve as complementary engagement options.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the engagement strategy and program will attract a large number of persons affected by housing issues to Fairfax's Housing Element planning process. Everyone has a stake in a successful outcome, and the best way to achieve that is to participate in the process and help define what "success" means.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide direction to the consultants and staff on:

1. The overall engagement strategy.
2. The draft online platform.
3. Changes recommended to the strategy and/or platform
4. Questions

Attachment A – Latest Housing, Safety, and Land Use Element, and environmental review schedule.

Town of Fairfax Housing, Land Use, and Safety Elements Update

Activity ID	Activity Name	Start Date	Finish Date	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sept 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sept 22	Oct 22	Nov 22
				4 111825	2 9 162330	6 132027	4 111825	1 8 152229	5 121926	3 101724	31 7 142128	5 121926	2 9 162330	6 132027	6 132027	3 101724	1 8 152229	5 121926	3 101724	31 7 142128	4 111825	2 9 162330	6 132027
1	Project Start	4/7/21	4/7/21	◆																			
2	PC/TC Introduction	4/21/21	4/21/21	●																			
3	Aff Housing Comm 1	5/6/21	5/6/21		●																		
4	HE Data & Background	4/28/21	6/11/21		▬																		
5	SE Data & Background	4/28/21	6/11/21		▬																		
6	Climate Action Comm	5/18/21	5/18/21			●																	
7	Open Space Comm	5/25/21	5/25/21			●																	
8	PC Subcommittee 1	6/15/21	6/15/21				◆																
9	Racial Equity Comm	7/1/21	7/1/21				●																
10	Marin Wildfire Prev Auth	7/8/21	7/8/21				●																
11	Ad Draft Safety Element	6/1/21	7/16/21			▬																	
12	Draft Safety Element	7/19/21	9/3/21				▬																
13	Safety Element	9/20/21	10/8/21							▬													
14	Aff Housing Comm 2 TBD	7/12/21	7/16/21				■																
15	Site Exploration	5/28/21	8/20/21			▬																	
16	Open House 1	7/19/21	7/19/21				●																
17	Aff Housing Comm 3	7/22/21	7/22/21				●																
18	PC Subcommittee 2	7/27/21	7/27/21				◆																
19	Draft Site Options Report	7/21/21	8/30/21				▬																
20	PC Meeting alt1 - Sites	8/12/21	8/12/21					●															
21	PC Meeting alt2 - Sites	8/19/21	8/19/21					●															
22	Final Site Options Report	8/30/21	9/30/21						▬														
23	TC Report - Sites	9/28/21	9/28/21							●													
24	Traffic Report	6/25/21	10/12/21			▬																	
25	Noise Report	9/6/21	9/20/21						▬														
26	Preliminary Environmental	9/13/21	10/12/21							▬													
27	Draft HE Programs	6/21/21	9/15/21			▬																	
28	Ad Draft Housing Element	7/19/21	10/15/21				▬																
29	PC Subcommittee 3	10/5/21	10/5/21								◆												
30	Aff Housing Comm 4	10/12/21	10/12/21								●												
31	PC Workshop - SE/HE/IS/CEQA direction	10/21/21	10/21/21								●												
32	Open House 2	11/1/21	11/1/21								●												
33	TC Draft Report - SE/HE/CEQA direction	11/17/21	11/17/21								●												
34	HCD Housing Element	10/22/21	11/22/21							▬													
35	HCD Review	11/29/21	12/29/21									▬											
36	HCD Consultation	12/22/21	12/22/21									●											
37	Housing Sub Comm 4	12/27/21	12/27/21									◆											

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38 Aff Housing Comm 5	1/5/22	1/5/22																					
39 PC Report - CEQA	1/20/22	1/20/22																					
40 TC Report for CEQA	2/16/22	2/16/22																					
41 Public input on CEQA	2/14/22	3/15/22																					
42 Housing Sub Comm 5	2/21/22	2/21/22																					
43 Open House 3	3/15/22	3/15/22																					
44 Public Housing Element	3/1/22	4/26/22																					
45 Land Use Element Update	3/1/22	4/26/22																					
46 Ad Draft IS / MND (A)	3/1/22	4/8/22																					
47 Ad Draft EIR (B)	3/1/22	5/10/22																					
48 Draft IS / MND Prep (A)	4/11/22	5/17/22																					
49 Draft IS / MND Public (A)	5/17/22	8/8/22																					
50 Open House 4	6/27/22	6/27/22																					
51 Draft EIR Prep (B)	5/23/22	6/10/22																					
52 Draft EIR Public Rev (B)	6/10/22	7/28/22																					
53 Ad Final EIR (B)	8/9/22	8/26/22																					
54 Final EIR (B)	8/29/22	9/9/22																					
55 PC Hearing	9/15/22	9/15/22																					
56 PC initial HE Revisions	9/15/22	10/7/22																					
57 PC Hearing	10/20/22	10/20/22																					
58 TC Hearing	11/2/22	11/2/22																					
59 TC initial HE Revisions	11/2/22	12/2/22																					
60 TC Hearing	12/7/22	12/7/22																					
61 CEQA Filings	12/8/22	12/8/22																					
62 Final HE Revisions	12/8/22	12/16/22																					
63 File HE with HCD	12/19/22	12/19/22																					