

**The Community Foundation of Tompkins County
and
The Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
A Community Conversation: Housing in Tompkins County
February 12, 2004**

Results of Group Discussions (as taken from Scribe sheets on walls)

Table #1

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Supply of affordable housing for lower income households**
 - 2) **Creating community with housing (access to shopping, post office, transportation) and don't stratify or segregate housing by income level**
 - 3) **Housing for special needs – especially aging population**
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **Forum between stakeholders – include low-income people/direct voices**
 - 2) **Zone and plan pro-actively ...not just reactively**
 - a) **multi-family in communities**
 - b) **allow denser/small-lot development for affordable units**
 - c) **plan for special needs housing, especially for aging population**
 - 3) **Intermunicipal tax revenue-sharing – cooperation**
 - a) **for efficient and equitable use/access of resources**
 - b) **for balanced infrastructure and economic development**
 - 4) **Enforcement of noise, traffic, controls, and head-off NIMBY Concerns**
 - 5) **Need local funds to help developers apply for affordable housing subsidies (\$50K-75K up front cost for 30% chance of getting subsidy for the project)**

Table #2

- **Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Address the barriers to the development of housing priced at a reasonable percentage of median household income**
 - 2) **“Working households” (affordable) housing impact on a community**
 - 3) **Increase earning power of low-income housing consumers**
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **Sustained public relations campaign to educate and facilitate community awareness/discussion about how the county's housing problems affect the overall quality of life**
 - a) **e.g. newspaper series on housing issues (personalizing situation)**
 - b) **e.g. county plan/municipal officials/elected officials**
 - c) **Lead > committee from Roundtable attendees**

- 2) Identify key incentives to stimulate the development of “workforce” housing
- 3) Lead > builder/developer industry group with TC Chamber

Table #3

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) Identify developable land in county: rezoning, sell higher density
 - 2) Need for affordable housing: rental and homeowner opportunities
 - a) political support
 - a) public perception in opinion
 - 3) Need for higher quality housing
 - b) rehab neighborhood
 - c) revitalization
 - 4) Infrastructure (water and sewer)
 - 5) Senior housing
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) Coordinated public education
 - a) Identify barriers to development
 - b) Examples of mixed use, affordable quality of housing
 - 2) Advertising campaign > education and coordination
 - a) Rezoning
 - b) Coordination among municipalities to address home rule issue; led by county
 - c) Identify affordable, smaller scale (i.e. septic tanks)

Table #4

- **Quality of Life**
 - 1) Lack of varied housing for all (special needs, income levels, elderly)
 - 2) Obstacles to housing mobility
 - a) sub-standard housing to safe/decent/affordable housing
 - b) renters to owners
 - c) downsizing for seniors
 - 3) High/increasing taxes, eroding tax base
 - a) <% of property taxes going into services
 - b) state/Federal passing costs to localities
 - c) losing potential community members
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) Work to develop public-private partnerships to address housing issues
 - 2) Determine sites for development of new housing stock and existing stock
 - a) density study
 - b) examine pre-existing mixed-use plans
 - 3) Study other models for housing
 - a) co-housing

- b) cooperatives
- c) rent-to-own
- 4) **Involve University populations and administration**
Work with and encourage local government representatives to lower property taxes and to support community initiatives, NPOs in search of funds and partnerships

Table #5

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Government leaders need to work objectively on affordable housing issue**
 - b) zoning
 - c) allocate % of resources to infrastructure development
 - 2) **Look at how to build at lower costs, density (zoning) infrastructure**
 - a) Need stability of housing for neediest and jobs to pay for it.
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **Educate leadership re: value of affordable housing to change zoning and encourage housing growth**
 - 2) **Educate public re: need and benefits of affordable housing**
 - 3) **Publicize statistics: need, positive economic impact, positive social impact**
 - 4) **Foster interrelationships of jobs-childcare-health care-housing need to be addressed together**

Table #6

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 2) **Provide incentives for affordable rental and privately owned housing (for builders and communities)**
 - 3) **Imbalance in NYS property tax burden**
 - 4) **Increase supply and acceptability of new and affordable housing**
 - 5) **Identify alternative building technologies to reduce new construction costs**
- **Next Steps**
 - 2) **Incentives for more affordable housing**
 - a) **Govt.: Identify what incentives are available and what has worked in other places**
 - b) **Housing Providers and Developers: Have discussion and consensus on needs and impediments to construction**
 - c) **Local Government: Examine local ordinances and make changes, as appropriate**
 - d) **Local Government: Reduce roadblocks(application process) and costs for developers**
 - e) **Government and Stakeholders: Update housing market analysis**

- 3) **Taxes (public sector/pushback): Assess feasibility of property vs. income tax and other revenue generating means**
- 4) **Supply and Acceptability:**
 - a) **County and Local Government – community education on benefits; identify and maximize use of Federal funds**
 - b) **Local Government – package developer incentives; no/low interest loans for developers; employer assisted housing programs; education and dialogue between the banks/landlords/local government**

Table #7

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Increase supply of affordable, quality housing for low/moderate income folks**
 - 2) **Reduce obstacles to have ownership/occupancy**
 - a) **high taxes**
 - b) **“anti” development pressures**
 - 3) **Improve acceptance of affordable housing**
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **What?**
 - a) **promote development of mixed income housing**
 - b) **increase access to capital for lower income home buyers**
 - c) **develop county-wide coordination/consistency in land use planning**
 - d) **increase incentives for development of higher density housing**
 - e) **education on community benefits of affordable housing**
 - 2) **Who?**
 - a) **municipal housing coalitions with county**
 - b) **focus groups for consumers/county developers**
 - c) **coop extension work with housing association**

Table #8

- **Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Infrastructure/water/sewer/transportation and employees**
*improve – especially in targeted affordable areas (Groton, etc)
 - 2) **NIMBY: address by proactive growth plan with incentives for mixed use (income/rental/ownership)**
 - 3) **Promoting ownership and equity vs. rental; encourage low-income Access to capital**
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **Chamber as convener to bring together stakeholders for public/private housing development**
 - 2) **Start with strategy meetings with all stakeholders**
 - 3) **Goal is mixed used (ages, income, uses)**

- 4) Could use public land
- 5) Consider model where residents own stock in the development

Table #9

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) **New housing stock for low-income(60% of median income) families that is of good quality and financial means (mixed economic environment) near services (e.g. transportation)**
 - 4) **Repair existing stock**
 - 5) **Increase residential stability**
 - 6) **Change strong attitude barrier**
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **Planning high-level committee for unified plan (city and county) connected to government (stakeholder groups represented)**
 - 2) **Reduce NIMBY**
 - a) **smaller developments**
 - b) **education/outreach**
 - 3) **Create supportive legislation**
 - 4) **Grant-writing support for affordable housing initiatives**

Table #10

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Improve quality of housing stock**
 - 2) **Support home repair for low-income residents; can't afford repair for own home**
 - 3) **People who work in the city can't afford to live in the city**
- **Next Steps**
 - 1) **Improve quality of housing stock using**
 - a) **incentive for landlord/developers/homeowners (i.e. tax credit/breaks for landlords who will keep properties at high standards; utilizing rating system for landlords, incorporating internet capabilities)**
 - b) **increase code enforcement)**
 - 2) **Organize forum of stakeholders that will focus on affordability**
 - d) **expanding city limits, meaning more increased supply of housing and lower costs of housing**
 - e) **town/city consolidation; merge into one unit**

Table #11

- **Improve Quality of Life**
 - 1) **Our preamble: "safe and affordable housing is a basic right."**
 - 2) **Safety in the home**
 - a) **structural**
 - b) **neighborhood revitalization**
 - 3) **Public education and outreach on low income housing/affordable housing**

- a) dispelling myths
 - b) value of all citizens
 - 4) Neighborhood planning and zoning
 - a) inter-municipal cooperation
 - b) put *people first* and housing needs on all economic and community development
- Next Steps
 - 1) Develop Task Force groups
 - a) re: public outreach on affordable housing
 - (1) bring skilled and informed facilitators to communities on a grassroots, municipal, neighborhood association, church groups, media level
 - (2) define community dialogue outcomes
 - informed dialogue
 - make intelligent connections to issues related to affordable housing
 - assist communities to be pro-active; to develop an understanding of needs of the low income vs. affordable
 - (3) bring the voice of individuals impacted by the availability of affordable housing

Table #12

- Improve Quality of Life
 - 1) Housing affordability
 - a) lowest income people face the biggest problems
 - b) age and condition of housing
 - c) high property taxes
 - 2) No system to distribute affordable housing throughout Tompkins County
 - 3) In-commuting for jobs
 - a) traffic
 - b) travel time
- Next Steps
 - 1) Promote different forms of housing
 - a) mixed income
 - b) non-traditional partners
 - c) condo/coop
 - 2) Public education about housing issues
 - 3) Regional planning: inter-municipal cooperation

Table #??

- Improve Quality of Life
 - 1) Support home repair for low income residents; can't afford repair for own home

2) Affordability – people who work in the city can't afford to live in the city

3) Quantity of affordable housing

- **Next Steps ** (this piece was not present with the other sheets)**