

HALA Community Focus Groups

Focus Group Orientation

Monday April 4, 2016

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Seattle City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room



Question Cards

Focus Group meeting attendees posed questions to the City and facilitators, some of which were answered during the meeting. All have been documented here, with answers to be provided by City of Seattle staff.

The Grand Bargain

- What is the “The Grand Bargain”?
- When you’re talking about the “Grand Bargain” and inclusionary zoning, are you talking about the same thing?
- Why did we need to compromise with developers in order to pass a law mandating low income housing? Don’t we have laws mandating parking, commercial space, etc.?
- Will developers continue to receive the tax break they currently get for including affordable housing in new developments?
- Why is the linkage fee only on commercial development?
- Is there a minimum size of development for mandatory affordable housing requirements?
- Why is Seattle’s monetary developer kick-in only 2 – 5% of project, while New York City just passed a law mandating 20 – 30% per project, in order to fully fund the concurrent costs to infrastructure (water runoff overflow/current problem/and die off of native Puget Sound species). The current % age is not enough to cover current and future impact.
- Will the affordable housing units “expire”? Currently, I believe developers/property management have to keep them for only 10 years.

Single Family Zoned Areas

- If it’s a “Grand Bargain”, then why are SF home zones not adding affordable housing units?
- Why is upzoning not recommended outside of urban villages also?
- Leaving single family zones outside of urban villages out of the discussion dooms the plan to failure with respect to financial and social equity, and climate change. Why not have that question be part of this process?
- Mayor’s Action Plan (2015) took changes to SF zones, outside urban village, completely off the table.
 - May have shot ourselves in the foot by eliminating DADUs, right off the bat – cheap and plentiful land supply with low capital requirements.
 - When can we revisit this issue?

How In-Lieu Payments for Affordable Housing Will be Used

- Regarding the Grand Bargain, it sounds like developers can either choose mandatory affordable units on-site or pay a fee to support affordable housing. If developers choose the fee, where will the affordable housing those fees support be located? In the same area/urban village, or will they be “pushed out” rather than integrated?
- If builders pay in lieu fee instead of including % of affordable units, then will that pot of money be used in the area where the money is collected or citywide? Is using the word inclusionary true since these changes won’t happen in ~50% of the city (single family zones)? Might all builders opt out in a certain neighborhood?
- How will linkage fees and other fees collected by local government be used to help small businesses being pushed out of their places of business and also issues during construction that may damage equipment permanently?

Community Focus Group Formation and Process

- I saw the demographic info of all 700 + focus group applicants. When can we access the demographic info of the 169 selected participants? If it’s not available yet, when will it be? Thanks!
- 1) Your process guidelines state that “Focus group members represent the diversity of interests and perspectives in Seattle”, yet you restrict focus group comment to agreement with the HALA agenda. How are these points not contradictory? Many citizens have reasonable objections to HALA. Thanks.
2) Is EnviroIssues a consultant or a City entity?
- Can the staff please post the green card comments online?
- I spent over a year on Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee (NPAC). The report was extensive, but it gathered dust. How will this be different?
- When is SEPA analysis going to be done – on specific proposals (e.g. MHA), not in Seattle 2035 EIS?
- Were there any neighborhood representatives of the 50 members of the HALA committee? If so, were they part of the Grand Bargain?
- What is considered an “urban village”?
- Can we re-think housing in terms of community, not just income, allowing people to live in community based on similar backgrounds, interests, and ideas together instead of a mandated arrangement (similar to housing in Denmark, where housing is communal).
- With the topic of re-zoning or re-defining specific zones, what does HALA propose for the “commercial zone” which takes up roughly 50% of the Aurora-Lichton Springs Urban Village? These low-occupancy non-residential zones contradict the conceptual definition of an “urban village”.
- Will HALA encourage the City to better define Design Guidelines to encourage best development density to make the urban villages attractive, thus encouraging their expansion without the negative/low expectation of current housing development within them?
- It seems like the City continues to use the word “bold” over and over. Why is this “bold”? Is it bold enough?