



Working Groups

PlanET Housing Working Group Meeting #1

Wednesday, February 22, 2012, 3:30pm – 5:30 pm
Cansler YMCA, Community Room, Knoxville

KEY FINDINGS

The meeting of 25 participants was called to order, followed by self-introductions. The group was briefed on PlanET and the role of the Working Groups, and the Housing findings of the Existing Conditions Memo were reviewed. Attendees were asked to react to the information contained in the Housing Section of the memo, which they received in advance, and to discuss the adequacy of the report. They were also asked to identify key issues, opportunities, and priorities in the subject area in the PlanET region.

Existing Conditions Memo Suggestions

- ❖ There should be some discussion of the range and types, locations and need for more special needs housing, particularly for seniors and also for youth, emergencies, the homeless, etc.
- ❖ Some important aspects of housing affordability not adequately presented, such as costs of housing upkeep to homeowners, how utility costs impact housing affordability, availability of housing assistance, etc.
- ❖ The region's housing trends/characteristics should be discussed in the national context of the changing housing market, including changing demographics and federal housing policy/funding that reflect long term shifts in housing and how that may impact the region.
- ❖ Neighborhood quality; including public services, amenities, safety, etc., have an effect on housing and should be more thoroughly treated in the report.

Priorities

Housing Affordability: This is a significant concern around the region though the particulars of it vary from place to place. Housing is not considered adequate for seniors who want to age in place comfortably nor for people with special housing needs or the poor. More affordable housing of all types is needed throughout the region and this includes programs and incentives to help move people from rental to homeownership and to help homeowners remain in their homes in difficult economic times. Housing affordability issues include costs such as utilities that can make homes unaffordable regardless of cost or rent.

Dispersed Housing Patterns: Many factors contribute to sprawl development, which is viewed as an inefficient and possibly unsustainable way to provide adequate housing resources. The region should try to get a handle on what contributes to sprawl and how to address it in a more effective way, some of which will need to be regulatory in nature.

Neighborhoods: Neighborhood quality of life and adequacy/desirability of housing are inextricable. There should be a focus on how to improve neighborhood quality of life where it is not considered desirable as one way to prevent or reverse housing deterioration and maintain a variety of housing types in many locations.