



**East Palo Alto 2<sup>nd</sup> Unit Implementation/Reducing Displacement Task Force**  
**YMCA-City Room**  
**550 Bell Street**  
**East Palo Alto, CA 94303**  
**July 11, 2017**  
**7:00pm-9:00pm**

**Meeting Notes**

**Meeting Purpose:** Task Force members learn about and provide input on best practices for code enforcement and the draft Scope of Work for displacement assistance  
**Objectives:**

- Task Force members learn about example best practices for code enforcement from San Mateo County and from the City
- Task Force members provide recommendations for code enforcement practices that could be used in East Palo Alto
- Task Force members provide input on displacement services to be included in the City's draft Scope of Work for displacement assistance
- Task Force members hear about the City's June 12, 2017 informational meeting on second units and plans for future meetings

Task Force Members Present: Belen Seara, Sister Trinitas Hernandez, Keith Ogden, Michael Mashack, Doroteo Garcia, Bernardo Huerta, Heather Peters, Cari Pang Chen, Senter Uhilamoelangi, Lisa Gauthier

Task Force Members Absent: Carlos Romero, Chester McCall, Jon Johnston, Tonga Victoria, Javanni Brown

City Staff: Carlos Martinez, Liz Lucas, Chris Gale

PCRC Facilitators: Nelmarie Vilaro Caro, Debbie Schechter, Jenny Skoble

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

Purpose: To set the stage.

City Manager Carlos Martinez introduced City staff:

- Liz Lucas, Management Analyst
- Chris Gale, Chief Building Official

Nelmarie Vilaro Caro (PCRC) explained that this meeting is not on a Thursday due to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday and the goal of maximizing participation. Future meetings will return to the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month.

At the request of a member of the public, Task Force members introduced themselves.

### **Agenda Review and Group Agreements:**

Nelmarie Vilaro Caro reviewed the agenda, noting that it is based on the ideas that came from the last meeting. She reminded the Task Force of the group agreements.

Task Force members shared with their neighbor what they've been hearing from the community about second units and code enforcement since the last meeting and what they've conveyed to the community about the work of the Task Force. Several Task Force members shared with the group:

What have you heard/what have you conveyed about the Task Force?

- ADUs & parking
- High hopes that the Task Force will come up with a solution
- Time: wants Task Force to move faster
- First two meetings were about learning – slow but right cadence
- Conversations about ADUs throughout the peninsula
- Balance between owner occupied and rental ADUs
- EPA is not alone – ADUs are a challenge; there are neighbor concerns

### **2. Community Forum**

Purpose: To provide information for the Task Force to consider as it works towards its objectives of facilitating 2<sup>nd</sup> units and reducing displacement. 2 minutes per speaker.

Stewart Hyland: Expressed that the Task Force is taking longer than people wanted. They are hoping for very specific steps. We are hearing very tough stories from residents.

Chris Gale: Mentioned that absentee landlords are buying properties and are coming in (three to five a week) wanting to build ADUs.

Carlota: Stated that when a property is taken down, it's important to recognize that a person is also damaged and they can't get loans from a bank

### **3. Best Practices for Code Enforcement**

Purpose: To provide information to the Task Force about best practices for code enforcement from other cities, learn about EPA's code enforcement practices, and for the Task Force to provide recommendations.

Belen Seara, San Mateo County Health Department, gave a presentation on model practices from other cities (see powerpoint).

Task Force members had the following questions for Belen. Responses are also captured:

- **Q:** Where is REAP and how does it work?  
**A:** REAP is in Los Angeles. It allows the code enforcer to determine rent reduction based on violations. It incentivizes the homeowner to bring the property up to code.
- **Q:** Under REAP, what is the incentive for the owner to make repairs if he's still getting some money?  
**A:** The tenant can make sure money goes to repairs or to have the money put into an

escrow account. The incentive is to get back to charging full rent.

- **Q:** What types of units are covered by REAP?  
**A:** Single family units
- **Q:** Who supports amnesty?  
**A:** Marin County, Daily City, City of Ventura & others
- **Comment:** Heather Peters, San Mateo County Department of Housing, mentioned that the County is working on a program to improve safety and health in existing unpermitted second units that will apply in unincorporated San Mateo County. Similar to amnesty, the County is calling this an ADU Certificate program that they hope to bring to Board of Supervisors by the end of the year. The County is also working on a loan program to pay for upgrades.

Chris Gale, City of East Palo Alto Chief Building Official, gave a presentation on EPA code enforcement responsibilities and practices (see powerpoint).

Task Force members and members of the public had the following questions for Chris:

- **Q:** Where do the 37 complaints a month come from?  
**A:** Residents.
- **Q:** Are most of the complaints about Latino homes?  
**A:** Yes, given the makeup of the community. People of other ethnicities get complaints too.
- **Q:** State law says fines can be dropped – can you do this?  
**A:** Yes, if owners continue to make progress
- **Q:** Can you describe what is an imminent hazard?  
**A:** Lack of structural integrity, electrical problems, heat producing device, rot, ventilation & gas connections, egress
- **Q:** How long does it take to address imminent hazards?  
**A:** No rule of thumb. Should be able to make repairs in 10 days. To knock down and rebuild should take 90 days. This is a resource issue.
- **Q:** Does code enforcement work on weekends?  
**A:** Yes.
- **Q:** How does a compliance plan work?  
**A:** The City deals with the egregious problems first. They give the property owner 30 days to address each issue.

Public comments on Code Enforcement presentations:

- Would like to see the amnesty program in writing
- Want code enforcement and Task Force materials in writing and translated-Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Spanish. The Task Force should come to the level of the people.
- The Task Force and the City should show respect to the public.
- Would like a financial report
- What are we supposed to do if they don't have funds to pay for repairs?
- There is no Spanish interpreter for the Task Force—the City should provide one.

Task Force Discussion on Code Enforcement Best Practices: The Task Force was asked:

What practices are priorities for you, in order to balance safety with the desire to keep people in their homes?

Due to the lack of time, Task Force members were asked to think about this question for homework and the discussion will take place at the next Task Force meeting.

#### **4. Draft Scope of Work for Displacement Assistance**

Purpose: Task Force members review the City's draft Scope of Work for displacement assistance and provide input on priorities and additional services needed.

City Manager Carlos Martinez summarized the draft Scope of Work which was included in the staff report and asked for feedback on what services were needed. The City has allocated \$425,000 for housing assistance, anti-displacement, and housing outreach. The draft Scope includes:

1. Rapid response to displaced tenants
2. Housing navigation and legal assistance
3. Housing assistance (funds for rent, motel vouchers)

The Task Force members provided input on the draft Scope of Work in response to the following two questions:

What do you think of the services identified in the SOW?

- Avoid duplication of services, work with existing organizations that provide the services
- Focus on how to get the best bang for the buck
- Concerned about the approach of having an RFP given existing services
- Rental assistance is the most pressing need: the City should focus on how to maximize and leverage funding
- Want to see innovative approaches to rapid response

What's not included that's important that's important to have?

- Would like to see gap analysis from El Concilio about what services are needed that they cannot provide
- Would like to have a study session with existing providers and Faith In Action
- Not enough services are currently being provided
- It's important to be explicit and specific about requiring providers to have cultural and linguistic capacity to work with the EPA community
- Tenants don't know rights or what services are available--need workshop, ways to let people know about services
- Connect to health & mental health services
- Add community outreach to scope of services
- How to get relocation money back and enforce right of first refusal/right of tenants to come back after problems are fixed
- Think more about 3a-rental assistance
- Maybe request for information about what's needed and qualifications first then issue RFP

- City could put a lien on property to recover funds, but it's a very slow way to get funds, as funds aren't recovered until the property is sold

As a result of the discussion, the City agreed to request additional information from service providers. This might be in the form of a request for qualifications or a request for information, or it might be a less formal inquiry (such as an email or online poll) that would complement a revised RFP.

### **5. Summary of 6/12 Informational Meeting and Plans for Next Meeting:**

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not covered. Carlos noted that there was a summary of the meeting in the staff report. The next informational meeting will be held on July 20, 6:30-8pm in the City Council Chambers.

### **6. Date and Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

The next Task Force meeting will be held on August 3 at 7pm at the YMCA. Based on the meeting topics identified at the previous Task Force meeting, the following are potential agenda topics for the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting:

- Prevention of displacement (topic and discussion)
  - What types of code violations do not require red-tagging, do not need to be fixed immediately, and allow tenants/property owners to work with the City and establish time frames for repair
  - Determine what is an imminent hazard (discussed at July 11 Task Force meeting)
  - Temporary housing materials
  - Village housing presentation from City of San Jose (as part of possible temporary housing topic)

### **7. Next Steps, Evaluation**

Purpose: Identify next steps to ensure continuity and focus for the Task Force.

Next Steps:

- Facilitators will work more closely with presenters on timing and will time their presentations
- Homework: Task Force members will think about which code enforcement best practices are priorities for them, in preparation for a discussion at the August 3 Task Force meeting.
- The City will begin preparing an information request for service providers, with a goal of releasing it in September 2017.

Pending Issues/Ideas: This is a running list of issues/ideas for the Task Force to consider in future meetings. Items shown with strikethrough have been addressed:

- One-stop shop: have a one-stop resource center for people interested in building and permitting 2<sup>nd</sup> units.
- Have relocation services come with code enforcement, when necessary.

- ~~Consider providing hotel vouchers; establish partnerships with hotels~~—this is provided by El Concilio and they discussed it as part of their presentation
- Look into the LADA cube—a pre-manufactured, sustainable building option
- Reduced permit fees for second unit: the Task Force requests information on whether this is possible
- Prevention of displacement—will be addressed during Meeting #4