



Community Forum on Workforce Housing May 4, 2006

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Commission

At this event participants worked to collectively come to an understanding of how the lack of Housing available to Ashland's workforce is impacting our community. To examine this complex issue six questions were asked of all participants. The following represents the raw comments received by the participants on one of the six questions. For the complete listing please go to www.ashland.or.us/sospforum for links to each of the questions and all the comments received.

Focus Group Question # 1:

How Big is the Problem?

- Any community that is as desirable as ours (Aspen, Sub River, etc) will face this problem
- Need housing in the form of apartments
- It's a big interconnected problem, less apartments....less diversity
- Won't be able to attract good people to jobs
- Is SOU Student housing a model, does SOU have a problem?
- What do people who rent do in retirement, they have no equity?
- Ashland's desirability means Ashland is for sale to the highest bidder
- Destroying community
- Jobs and housing are intertwined
- Young people have to move a lot to find affordable rentals
- We didn't get our chosen Planning Director.
- University was questioned on the definition of "workforce housing"
 - classified staff and others not making a living wage
- Service workers living way outside of Ashland
- Employers don't have their choice of workers
- If Ashland becomes elitist, other towns grow -not all bad.
- Problems on the rise include a change in community lifestyle
- Less diversity
- Without diversity of age and income in the community the less able the community is able to absorb change, its less resilient.
- Too reliant of outside incomes (SS, Retirements plans, investments) and the economic growth can't sustain the community
- Losing schools
- Declining enrollment in schools – families can't afford to live here, what do schools do?
- Two school closures in the past three years.
- When teachers are not able to live here, as well as police & firemen, they become detached from their constituency
- Professors at SOU: cant keep good [professors] if housing is too expensive, same is true for health care professionals

- Young families can't stay here
- Ripple effects: Spend more time commuting, social stress, lose wealth, kids go into social programs. Hospital will leave if it doesn't have constituency
- Losing pedestrian lifestyle (more commutes)
- Erosion of leadership, might be more involved in Medford
- Traffic will increase, so many people commuting
- We all [people who own homes] have to see what we can do to have young families here
- Stigma on "affordable" housing, and "HUD housing".
- Workforce housing is needed whenever one has a [any] source of income that is not enough to cover their housing costs.
- Long time residents cant afford to move
- People move out of Ashland and commute
- We need children to be able to live here
- Use the schools to promote housing for children
- Broaden definition of "workforce housing"
 - anybody that works
 - small businesses
 - home occupations
 - ALL INCLUSIVE
- Our college educated kids can't afford a home here
- Older people moved and re-moved to stay in Ashland , face increased rents and downsizing