



## Community Forum on Workforce Housing May 4, 2006

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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](http://www.ashland.or.us/sospforum) for links to each of the questions and all the comments received.

### Focus Group Question # 6: How can we build the political will?

- Where to start? Start with a project to show the City what can be done
- Will take some discomfort
- Use internet/technology
- Use the term "workforce housing" instead of "affordable housing." The term "affordable housing" scares people.
- Call it family housing or co-housing -- gives hope to people -- people can get behind it.
- Define the term "workforce housing" better, more broadly.
- Bargain as unions for benefits -- use organized labor
- Expand Urban Growth Boundary
- Developers/Big \$ have a lot of influence over city government (this was questioned by someone else in another group who thought that Ashland is not as bad in that regard as Medford)
- Build a force to carry something forward
- Understand what your community needs/wants: first step is listening, second step is figuring out common points
- Community vision
- Neighborhood based issue management process -- issue-based community vision -- don't deal with problem in isolation -- what about the 98% of people who will never come to meetings? -- we need to get out into the neighborhoods so that we know what people really think so that when we go public we have support -- go network to network asking "Who else should we talk to?" (Kevin Preister, Discovery Process)
- Housing Trust Fund
- Letters-to-the-editor
- Need to enunciate what is at risk
- Elect politicians who care about workforce housing
- Letters to state representatives regarding inclusionary zoning
- Co-housing for all ages -- older people can do childcare (if they like) while parents are at work; opportunities for different generations to live together

- We need models of positive images regarding what we envision for Ashland -- diverse ages -- co-housing -- put on RVTV
- Chamber of Commerce in a town in CA funded signs on buses with pictures of firefighters, teachers, doctors, etc. -- awareness campaign
- "Faces of Ashland" marketing campaign with pictures of OSF actor, director, doctor, teacher, retiree, young family, SOU professor (unified culture of Ashland -- loyalty to Ashland)
- Awareness campaign can direct people to a housing trust fund where people can donate
- People can give their homes to a housing trust fund if they don't have heirs
- Retirees need to be educated about the effects of lack of workforce housing
- Businesses work with SOU to provide housing for workers -- symbiotic relationship
- Neighborhood focus groups -- what's okay and not okay for the neighborhood
- A lot of the same issues in Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Idea of workforce housing is abstract -- actual reality of doing a workforce housing development or expanding UGB will affect someone (NIMBY's will come out). Have goals and hold government accountable.
- Social capital -- get an idea of what people want
- How do the larger institutions help their employees? SOU? ACH? OSF?
- Brainstorm ideas -- give incentives to homeowners with apartments available
- Ultimately will be a negative financial impact on City -- taxes will need to increase
- Benefits of workforce housing need to be explained to people (for example, split lots would help but neighbors might not like)
- Get groups together to work together on this (City, Schools, etc.)
- Work in partnership with other groups
- School District overwhelmed with meetings and work but could work with other groups on the issue -- needs help, school district can't do it alone
- West Medford Community Coalition -- agencies came together to improve West Medford