

## Other Business

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 14, 2021

**Subject:** Continuation of the Housing Work Group and Appointment of Members

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Bylaws of the Metropolitan Council, art. III.C.

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Charlie Zelle, Chair, 651-602-1390

**Division/Department:** Chair's Office

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve Chair Zelle's recommendation to:

1. Continue an internal Housing Work Group through December 31, 2022.
2. Appoint the following members to serve on the work group: Reva Chamblis, Chair; Judy Johnson; Chai Lee; and Robert Lilligren.

### Background

The Metropolitan Council is involved in housing in a variety of ways, including through rent subsidies provided by the Metro HRA, planning for a full range of housing options, and through Livable Communities funding. With growing homelessness and housing instability in the region, the Council also participates in many cross-jurisdictional efforts to address housing needs. In 2020, the Council undertook its decennial process to negotiate affordable and life-cycle housing goals with local governments so that they may re-enroll in Livable Communities Act programs for the next decade (2021-2030).

In May 2020, the Council took initial action to establish a Housing Work Group to further the Council's efforts around housing. The Housing Work Group was intended to provide a forum for Council Members to work with Council staff on the following items:

- Implementing the strategies as identified in the Council's Housing goals
- Guiding the Council's work in evaluating the Livable Communities Act programs
- Guiding the Council's work in addressing homelessness
- Identifying emerging housing issues for the Council's consideration

### *Work Accomplished in 2020*

The business item establishing the Group directed the Group to guide staff research, implementation, and actions related to these issues, and help to identify additional topics for exploration as they emerged. The initial action established the group through December 31, 2020, and including direction to report or provide recommendations on the following:

- Progress on the implementation of strategies identified in the Council's Housing goals
- Evaluation of the Livable Communities Act (LCA) programs for consideration for the 2021 Fund Distribution Plan
- Report on emerging housing issues and recommendations on action steps to take
- Evaluate and make recommendation for continuation of the Housing Work Group with an identified set of items to address, if appropriate

The Housing Work Group spent most of its time in 2020 on the evaluation of the LCA programs and guiding staff's evaluation and proposed changes for the 2021 LCA Fund Distribution Plan. Proposed changes were presented to the Community Development Committee in [November](#), [December](#), and [January](#), with continued conversation planned in February 2021.

Progress on the implementation of strategies identified in the Council's Strategic Plan was initially reported in December at the Community Development Committee, with further discussion planned for January. The progress report is summarized in [this report](#), with the [accompanying presentation](#) providing more detail. As noted in the report and presentation, several strategies are currently underway with additional work planned in 2021. Further, there are five strategies that Council staff have not yet started. Staff will continue conversations with the Community Development Committee to prioritize and plan for those strategies in 2021.

At this time, the Housing Work Group has not identified emerging issues in addition to those discussed and addressed as part of the LCA evaluation.

### **Rationale**

Because Council staff plan to start additional projects and initiatives identified under the Housing Goal in the Council's Strategic Plan, there remains a need for a continued forum to guide the implementation of this work. Remaining strategies include:

- Explore a first-time home-buyers program through the Housing Choice Voucher program.
- Explore a housing choice indicator tool to provide more specific recommendations about housing needs in specific communities in the region.
- Build regional capacity and technical assistance to support the expansion of housing opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Explore the Council's ability to use Council-owned land to support affordable housing development.
- Explore employer-provided housing benefits for employees.

The Housing Work Group will guide staff research, implementation, and actions related to the above issues, and help identify additional topics for exploration as they emerge. This group will not make any formal decisions. The group will continue to provide reports and recommendations to the Community Development Committee and the Council on the following items:

- Progress on the implementation of strategies identified in the Council's Strategic Plan Housing goal
- Continued support and refinement of criteria for the Livable Communities Act programs
- Report on emerging housing issues and recommendations on action steps to take

The Housing Work Group will be expected to make its recommendations by the end of each calendar year through December 31, 2022, at which time the group's work will be completed, unless the Council determines that the group should be continued for an additional period of time to address any items identified for further consideration.

### **Thrive Lens Analysis**

The Housing Work Group will take an integrated and broad approach to the Council's housing work, including supporting strategies to further the Council's Housing goal and thinking cross-divisionally about how the Council approaches this work. This Housing Work Group will improve the Council's ability to advance the policies of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* and outcomes identified in *Thrive MSP 2040* as they relate to housing.

**Funding**

The Community Development Division will provide primary staff support of the Housing Work Group as part of its regular work.

**Known Support / Opposition**

There is no known opposition. Current members of the Housing Work group have expressed support the continuation of this work for the next two years.