

# **WINSTON-SALEM**

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION**

### **2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Affordable Housing Coalition (Coalition) was established by the Winston-Salem City Council to identify and recommend strategies that:

- Expand affordable housing opportunities;
- Engage supporters of and advocates for affordable housing;
- Coordinate and secure sustainable resources for affordable housing; and
- Advise the Winston-Salem City Council on the use of City funds to support affordable housing development.

As set forth in the enabling resolution, the strategies identified and recommended by the Coalition must:

- Improve the quality and increase the quantity of affordable housing;
- Equip people to better afford and access housing;
- Assist in the development of additional strategies to support affordable homeownership opportunities;
- Help to promote opportunities related to affordable housing like open houses, housing information workshops, RFPs, and surveys; and
- Help to identify and secure sustainable, long-term resources for affordable housing.

The Coalition is also charged with submitting an “Affordable Housing Coalition Annual Report” to the Winston-Salem City Council outlining how the implementation of the recommendations have improved the housing choices of Winston-Salem residents. The following outlines the Coalition’s goals, desired outcomes and recommended strategies to address the preservation and production of affordable housing.

Since its inception, the Coalition has reviewed various studies and reports detailing the affordable housing needs of Winston-Salem and discussed a variety of strategies to reduce the shortage of affordable homes. It has also offered letters of support for changes to the Unified Development Ordinance related to cottage courts and accessory dwelling units.

As part of its deliberations, the Coalition determined that an over-arching, multi-year plan is needed to address Winston-Salem’s affordable housing shortage. The goals and desired outcomes of a plan, as identified by the Coalition, are to:

1. Develop a comprehensive housing plan that centers the community’s needs and engages them in a long-term process to provide housing opportunities for the people of Winston-Salem;

2. Preserve existing supply and expand the total supply of affordable rental and homeownership opportunities based on data;
3. Prevent future displacement through development activities and continued study and policy review;
4. Develop routine and emergency Housing Navigation Services for all citizens of Winston-Salem;
5. Improve quality of life and preserve neighborhood character while enforcing and promoting fair and equitable housing policies;
6. Encourage innovative and sustainable design in housing, transportation, and infrastructure;
7. Increase accessibility for all, including residents with special needs (homeless, people who are differently abled, voucher holders, refugees, etc.);
8. Examine existing policies with a racial equity lens and the impact those policies have on goals 1-7; and
9. Develop an ongoing communications and outreach process, which may also include creation of a Vision/Value statement or new strategic goal.

## **STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

The Coalition believes it is necessary to build cross-sector partnerships between rebuilding organizations, community development corporations, neighborhood associations and governmental agencies to develop an implementation plan that will further identify, and then establish the process for addressing, the unmet housing needs in Winston-Salem—a housing plan developed by policy makers, civic leaders, advocates, lenders, community development organizations, developers, and community members.

An implementable strategy is needed which will result in an affordable housing plan that:

1. Is responsive, proactive, and designed for the long-term;
2. Encourages stronger and more creative partnerships between housing organizations and the city, state, lenders and philanthropy to improve the leveraging of resources in a public capital-restricted environment;
3. Uses equity as a growth strategy by leveraging community assets;
4. Identifies areas of the city to focus strategic redevelopment;
5. Increases specialization and collaboration among housing organizations to reduce over-competitiveness in certain markets and housing program sectors, thereby creating a stronger, more productive community development industry; and
6. Increases community engagement and awareness about housing-related issues, reducing the gap between people and programs.

## **STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION and WORK PLAN**

The process of developing a housing strategy will include informed planning, inclusive

dialogue, and efficient coordination to establish achievable goals. The aim is to create a long-term Housing Plan which reflects the input of housing developers and community members from across the city, and that allows funders, housing developers, and community members to see how every potential affordable housing development can assist in meeting the needs of low-to-moderate-income families.

Measurable objectives for each phase enumerated in a proposed Work Plan include:

- **Phase One:** Review existing financing and policy strategies, including nationwide best practices as well as policies that make sense on the ground in Winston-Salem. This includes producing a comprehensive review of all existing city and state housing agencies and their production efforts and plans.
- **Phase Two:** Conduct interviews with stakeholders and focus groups with community members from across the city to review and revise the guiding principles in a housing plan for Winston-Salem.
- **Phase Three:** Host a Neighborhood Summit.
- **Phase Four:** Produce a Housing Plan document based on research outcomes from Phases one, two and three and which will include strategies for implementation, timelines, and phasing suggestions.
- **Phase Five:** Conduct launch event with invitees from across the city and from every sector needed for implementation (public, private, non-profit, community development). This includes policy recommendations for the 2022 or 2023 legislative session.

## SUMMARY

*What we aim to achieve:* A comprehensive, long-term plan for providing quality, affordable and accessible housing for the people of Winston-Salem. Focus areas of the plan will include the following:

1. A more balanced and reasoned approach to existing housing stock, current residents, and new development, based on input from housing partners, policy makers and the community.
2. A stronger focus on low-to-moderate income families. The absence of an active and enforceable affordable housing plan means that Winston-Salem's lower-income residents remain vulnerable to the whim of politics. This plan would instead guide the allocation of shrinking federal resources and allow private dollars to be invested more wisely.
3. An expanded set of funding sources that makes maximum leverage of scarce public resources, including sources not traditionally involved in affordable housing, such as businesses, corporations, large and small employers, insurance companies and unions.