



Meeting Summary Notes

CHALLENGES Study Group Meeting*

March 28, 2024 12:00pm – 2:00pm

*The Zoom meeting and associated documents are posted on the Housing Task Force website:

<https://deq.mt.gov/about/Housing-Task-Force>

Welcome and Co-Chair Introductions

The Zoom meeting had 37 total participants: 21 public guests, 14 Housing Task Force (HTF) members, two invited presenters, and two DEQ administrative support. Public comments were solicited and addressed during the meeting and encouraged to be submitted through the HTF website. The meeting lasted approximately 110 minutes.

Guest Presentations on Housing Topics

Alex Horowitz, PEW Charitable Trusts. "Housing Affordability"

Alex presented a slide show with information on the outcomes of housing policy changes. He summarized research performed by PEW that characterized obstacles to affordable housing. Specifically, he showed national statistics on rent cost by household membership, housing size (footprint), location, proximity to amenities, etc. He illustrated the relationship between low housing inventory and rent growth by vacancy rates. New data confirms that a greater housing supply results in lower housing costs, i.e. rent growth is low where housing has been added. Jurisdictions with zoning reform have lower rental costs, while jurisdictions with minimum lot sizes have higher housing costs. He also discussed the link between the high cost of housing and the increase in homelessness.

Tony Jordon, Parking Reform Network. "Parking Reform and Housing Affordability"

Tony presented a slide show with information on parking reform and housing affordability. He showed information on parking mandates that illustrated the high variability between Montana communities. He noted there are no parking standard authorities and that it is often an unscientific determination. Tony introduced the concept of the trade-off between parking spaces to living spaces. Solutions to housing affordability include the elimination of parking mandates with less governmental oversight. Establish market pricing on parking areas and invest in public transit / multi-modal connectivity. These solutions, in part, will allow more types of housing to become available and affordable.

Member Discussion

Following the presentations, the Study Group co-chairs facilitated a discussion using the Assignment #3 worksheet and captured ideas and suggestions about the types of housing challenges, their potential root causes, and potential solutions. Assignment #4 will use, in part, the worksheet information to draft recommendations.