

**League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County
Observer Report
Tacoma City Council Study Session-11/10/2020**

Observer: Ann Williams

Members Present: Woodards, Ushka, Hunter, McCarthy, Walker, Thoms, Hines, Blocker, Beale
Members Absent: None

This study session had three agenda items. This report is about item 2, the Home in Tacoma Project (Affordable Housing), presented by members of the planning department. The presentation focused on one of the major efforts to increase housing, that is by infill of existing residential zones to diversify the types of housing by relaxing land use standards, providing technical assistance, and with financial incentives. These housing types represent what is often referred to as the “missing middle” of housing types, that between detached single family and large-scale multi-family buildings. Examples include duplexes, accessory dwelling units and small apartment buildings.

The presenters noted that 40% of Tacoma households are cost burdened by housing and at all income/housing levels costs of rent/mortgage are increasing at twice the rate as income. Households with low and moderate income are most negatively affected by lack of affordability. For those with less than 30% of the average median income (AMI) there is a rental gap of 7142 units. Currently 75% of residentially zoned, buildable land is locked into single family housing, making it difficult to increase the diversity of housing types.

The project has entered its community and stakeholder engagement stage. Go to the website (cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma) and take the survey and learn as much as you want about the project. The department will develop a draft of its recommendations for public review by early Spring and will be presenting this to the council for review and action between April and June 2021.