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Pensacola City Council Receives Recommendations from Affordable Housing Task Force

Report Lays out a Framework to Create 500 Homes in 5 Years

Pensacola, FL: In order to successfully fulfill their goal of “Creating 500 Homes in 5 Years”, the city of Pensacola will need to lead a cohesive land use, financing, and strategic partnership framework to carry out its vision, details the Final Report of the Pensacola Affordable Housing Task Force. On Thursday, representatives from the Florida Housing Coalition presented the Task Force’s findings to the City Council. The Affordable Housing Task Force, made up of twelve local leaders and stakeholders, was formed in early 2020 with a goal of creating “500 homes in 5 years”, and brought in the Florida Housing Coalition to help guide the research and development phase of the Task Force’s work.

With six priority strategies as voted on by the Task Force, the Final Report serves “as an actionable blueprint for steps the city can take to encourage and facilitate the development of long-term affordable housing units ,” added the Coalition’s Legal Director Kody Glazer. “The Report is centered around three main pillars for the city to follow when implementing its housing plans: equity, accessibility, and affordability.” With homeownership rates decreasing, and the number of cost-burdened households increasing, Pensacola has a severe affordable housing shortage. In response, last year Council President Jewel Cannada-Wynn introduced the goal of creating 500 Homes in 5 Years.

The Final Report details that financial and regulatory incentives for the private sector to develop affordable housing are critical, such as a revolving loan-interest loan fund using locally generated dollars and regulatory reform that lowers overall housing development costs. The Report also discusses strategic partnerships with community-based organizations that can further the city’s goals through organizational and asset support.

In addition to an attractive fiscal and regulatory environment, the city will need to be creative and critical when identifying available land to use for affordable housing purposes. The report details that the city will need to be open to providing zoning and regulatory flexibility, reducing fees for affordable housing projects, and ensuring that the development process is easy to navigate to attract the private sector. Leadership from local elected officials and key stakeholders will be essential to a sustained, long-term vision where all Pensacola residents can afford housing; this Blueprint can serve as the starting point to that vision.

The Florida Housing Coalition is the state's nonprofit provider of training and technical assistance dedicated to affordable housing from ending homelessness to first-time homeownership. The Coalition works with local governments on land use and financial planning for affordable housing development.