



Land Use & Environment Committee

Briefing on Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinances

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Title

Briefing on Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinances

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Briefing only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Local affordable housing advocates will provide a briefing on Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinances (TOPO) and how this could be used in Olympia

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler, Strategic Projects Manager
Grace Lee, TOPO for the People Coalition
Miles Nowlin, TOPO for the People Coalition
Sam Green, TOPO for the People Coalition

Background and Analysis:

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinances (TOPO) aim to provide long-term protection of already existing affordable housing by allowing tenant groups the first opportunity to negotiate and bid on rental properties when they come up for sale.

A local group of housing affordability advocates (TOPO for the People Coalition) is working to educate and advocate for TOPO within the City of Olympia. Members of this group were invited by the Land Use and Environment Committee to provide an early-stage briefing. While TOPO for the People Coalition is making a recommendation for how TOPO could be used in Olympia (see attachment), further consideration including public and stakeholder engagement would need to be

conducted before any recommendation is made by staff and the City Manager.

TOPO is a potential tool for implementing the draft Housing Action Plan which is currently under development and will be considered by City Council in June. TOPO could assist with one particular strategy, to “increase the supply of permanently affordable housing for households that make 80% or less of the area median income.”

Under a TOPO, the local government would require property owners of designated housing types to provide tenants, non-profits and government entities with a notice of intent to sell. Additionally, the tenants would be provided first right to purchase the property or transfer their purchase rights to a non-profit, land trust or government agency. Ultimately, the aim is to tie the purchase of the property to a land trust or co-operative arrangement for long term ownership and preservation of affordability.

Typically, opportunity to purchase laws have been for Manufactured/Mobile Home communities only. Washington, D.C. has the most robust policy in the country and has applied it to other types of housing. Other cities like San Francisco, Berkley, Oakland, Seattle, Burién, Minneapolis and Baltimore are exploring and adopting their own versions of Tenant Opportunity to Purchase.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Housing affordability is of great concern to the Olympia community. Specific interest in TOPO is unknown at this time.

Options:

1. Receive the briefing.
2. Do not receive the briefing.
3. Receive the briefing at another time.

Financial Impact:

None at the time.

Attachments:

TOPO for the People Coalition Recommendations
Link to TOPO4thepeople.org