



MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING FORUM
AUGUST 17, 2022

Link to Recorded Session: <https://youtu.be/NXoSfNJMm6Y>

Disclaimer:

The robust panelist discussion of the Missing Middle Housing Forum utilizes the experiences of each panelist to facilitate the discussion for educational purposes and may also include personal opinions and viewpoints of the panelist participants. However, the personal opinions and viewpoints held by the participants do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Decatur, the Decatur City Commission, or the City Schools of Decatur.

0:01 Welcome to the Missing Middle Housing Forum by Mayor Garrett.

2:28: Missing Middle Video

9:11 Slide Presentation and Question Discussion by Kristin Allin, Planner, Affordable Housing Initiatives *Questions answered during this forum that have come in through the online Pre-Forum Questionnaire and chatted during the forum.*

10:01 Housing types including duplexes and other missing middle were allowed until 1988. At this time no new duplex, triplex, or quadplexes are allowed to be built or converted.

11:02 Trajectory: larger and more expensive homes (added 478 single-family homes from 2000 to 2020), loss of diversity of race and income, loss of smaller households (lost 342, 2-4 unit dwellings from 2000 to 2020); loss of age diversity (20-35, over 55).

13:27 National Citizen Survey: Decatur scores high in quality-of-life issues, but very low (21%) in Availability of Quality of Affordable Housing.

15:11 Zoning for single-family in Decatur: 67%; AARP as missing middle supporter.

16:04 Traffic, climate, and workforce housing.

17:27 Missing Middle as one aspect of overall housing goals.

19:02 What are the two proposed policies for Missing Middle housing in Decatur?

20:46 Missing Middle examples, possibilities and renderings.

Questions from the Community

22:02 Impact estimates, number of units

23:05 Impact estimates on School Enrollment

24:26 Investor-owned home purchases in Decatur

25:08 On street parking and safety in neighborhoods

25:59 Impact on City and County services

26:59 Next steps: short term rental policy, investor-owned housing, preservation of properties

28:14 Next steps: in person sessions, Book Festival Oct 1, Planning Commission and City Commissions

Panelist Discussion

32:24 Joel Dixon: Urban Oasis Development

Evolution of Atlanta and area since around 2004, saw dramatic increase in price points of homes that he was building. In his view, this was unsustainable. Why can't we have a mixed set of housing options in neighborhoods that historically had more options. New neighborhoods require significant infrastructure while building "urban infill" utilizes existing infrastructure.

44:16 Mike Carnathan: Atlanta Regional Commission, Neighborhood Nexus

Macro level discussion of trends and data. Decatur already has walkability, transit systems, but we don't have the diversity of housing stock needed for lifelong communities. Must increase supply of housing, preserve the supply of affordable housing we have today, must reduce costs including transportation costs, we need to ensure housing stability, we need to expand capital resources to create and preserve housing that is affordable and accessible, we need to develop local leadership around these issues and work together to take concrete steps to create a more affordable housing stock.

58:07 Maria Pinkelton: GCDD, Affordable Housing Task Force, Decatur Education Foundation, Lifelong Community Advisory Board, Senior Homestead Exemption committee

Maria's role on the Affordable Housing Task Force was informed by Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and Decatur's Lifelong Communities board. Decatur has tried many times to address affordable housing. Maria feels this time is different because the task force recommendations are complete or mostly in progress, including the hiring of a full time staff person (Kristin) to help implement affordable housing. Missing middle policy is one way to help bring options and diversity back to Decatur's housing market.

1:07 Daniel Immergluck: Professor of Urban Studies, GSU

Discussion of the history of "downzoning": why he thinks cities reformed zoning to disallow missing middle housing types and allow only single-family home construction. Addresses affordable housing and impact on property values: the "zombie myth." Discusses lack of city/county options for local rent control, vouchers.

1:19 Jim Cheeks: Red Brick Homes DBA Fortas Homes: Builder for Oak Cottage Courts

What do some real-life examples look like? His company is focused on building unsubsidized, affordable housing. Missing middle housing types can be built as affordable or market rate. Discusses building “for sale” quadplexes. In 1970 the average home size was 970 square feet and 2.4 people lived in that home. In 2020, the average home size was 2,550 square feet and 2.2 people lived in that home. It’s not only a supply issue, but it’s a size issue. Jim discussed the Cottages on Vaughn, which is one of his projects, and talked about the term “gentle density” of missing middle housing development.

1:28 Paula Collins: Decatur Education Foundation, Better Living Together, Affordable Housing Task Force

Paula discussed some “misnomers” of affordable housing: that renters don’t pay property taxes, which is false, and how home ownership is “subsidized” through homestead exemptions. Paula also discussed why she feels more rental and ownership options of smaller housing are needed in the neighborhoods in Decatur, and how missing middle is part of the neighborhood fabric of Decatur.

1:36 Question from chat: would these missing middle housing be required to conform to the same tree ordinance and standards around impervious surfaces as a single-family home? The answer is yes.

1:37 Forum ended