Renter Protections
City Council Work Session
March 13, 2019

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Focus Areas

• Review national and local rental market trends
• Review perspectives of renters gathered through a survey and listening sessions
• Review recent actions related to renter protections
• Consider areas of focus for next steps
Who rents and why?

- There has been steady growth in the number of households that rent both locally and nationally.

- Nationally, 36% of households rent compared with 31% in 2005 and 36% in 1994.

- Renting has increased across all age groups, household, and income types.

- Households headed by people age 30-69 have driven most of this growth.
Overview of Eugene’s Rental Market

- 51% of Eugene households now rent their homes.

- Median rents have increased for all unit types across Eugene and vacancy rates remain low.

- The number of rental units has increased steadily over the past several years to over 18,000 units.

- There are over 3,500 subsidized affordable rental housing units in Eugene with extensive waitlists.
Eugene Rental Units by Structure Type

Eugene Rental Properties - January 2017

- Single Family Housing, 49%
- Two Family Housing Unit (Duplex), 26%
- Multi-Family, 23%
- Mobile Home and Other

Legend:
- Single Family Housing
- Two Family Housing Unit (Duplex)
- Multi-Family
- Mobile Home and Other
Dimensions of Housing Need

Affordability
Availability
Stability
Access
Quality
Gathering Renters’ Perspectives

Housing Policy Board - Renter Protections Task Team

- Formed in 2017, part of HPB Work Plan
- Started meeting in Oct. 2018
- 12 members, landlord, renters, student, Legal Aid representation

- Survey
  - Developed by the Task Team in multiple meetings and discussions
  - Posted online, January 2019; Handed out at listening sessions
  - 851 surveys completed - 98% of respondents live in Eugene

- Listening Sessions (Nov. 2018 - Feb 2019)
  - Approximately 112 participants
  - Associated Students University of Oregon, Jefferson Westside, Whiteaker Community Council, Active Bethel Citizens
Occupation of Respondents

- Employed Full-time
- Employed Part-time
- Not Employed
- Student

Number of responses
Survey Respondents

- Living alone: 25%
- Family with children: 28%
- Non-family: 19%
- Family without children: 28%
Satisfaction with current rental home

- Yes: 44%
- No: 56%
Experience finding current rental home

What best describes your experience finding your current rental home?

- Quick and easy: 15%
- Other: 14%
- Competitive and stressful: 71%
Concerns about current home

If you are not satisfied with your current rental home, please check the reasons that apply.

- Rent is too high
- Home's condition
- Size of home
- Location
- Other

Reasons:
- Rent is too high
- Other
- Home's condition
- Size of home
- Location
Challenges faced by renters

Have you ever experienced issues with your current or former property owners with regards to:

- Rent increase
- Habitability
- Deposits
- Fees
- Other

Number of responses
If you have ever been asked or forced to leave a rental home in Eugene, lease specify why

- Rent increase, could no long afford
- No-cause lease termination
- Other
- Eviction
- Home was foreclosed

Number of responses: 14
Concerns about rental home’s quality

• Of the 661 renters who indicated that they are not satisfied with current housing, nearly 38% indicated the rental home’s condition, habitability, maintenance are substandard
  • Some renters were willing to live in substandard conditions because it’s what they can afford
  • Others are fearful of asking the landlord to make repairs (rent increase, no-cause lease termination/no-cause eviction)
Almost 30% of respondents felt they had been discriminated against while searching or renting.

Most common basis for perceived discrimination:
- Legal source of income, including Section 8 housing vouchers (75 respondents)
- Disability (74 respondents)
- Familial Status (69 respondents)
- Age (62 respondents)
Topics identified in the Survey and Listening Sessions as additional barriers

- Amount of rent; monthly pet rent
- Credit scores
- Income (not matching market rate rent)
- Application fees (multiple)
- Deposits (first and last months rent, plus security deposits of up to 3 x rent)
- 5 year required rental history
- Criminal background
- Physical disabilities
Other Comments about the rental housing market (566 received)

- 450 people wrote in comments about high cost or increasing rent
- Rentals are not being maintained
- Not enough support for tenants
- Rental housing is big source of financial stress and an embarrassment for some
- Renters are moving, or looking to move outside of Eugene because cost of rent
- High rent keeps people out of home ownership
- Tenants feel vulnerable and stuck – cannot afford to stay (high rent) and cannot afford to move (deposits, fees, moving expenses)
Awareness of Current Resources

Answered: 486  Skipped: 365

- Eugene's Rental Housing Code
- Lane County Legal Aid
- Fair Housing Council of Oregon
- Eugene's Human Rights Office
- Community Alliance of Tenants (Portland)

Number of responses
# Overarching Themes

| Availability          | • Many competing for limited number of rental units  
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<th>• Shrinking supply of lower cost units in private market</th>
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| Affordability         | • Rents continuing to increase for many  
|                      | • Fees and deposits are a barrier for many |
| Quality               | • Many reports of substandard conditions  
|                      | • Some fear using existing tools such as rental housing code |
| Access                | • 30% of survey respondents believe they experienced discrimination in the housing process  
|                      | • Particular challenges for those with poor credit |
| Stability             | • Number of factors leading to loss of existing housing and challenges securing new housing |
Recent Related Actions

**Availability**
- Multiple efforts to increase overall housing production
- Increased development of regulated affordable housing

**Affordability**
- SB 608 moderates rent increases in market rate housing
- Increased development of regulated affordable housing

**Quality**
- Increased outreach has raised awareness of Rental Housing Code

**Access**
- Increased fair housing outreach and training to inform both renters and landlords of rights and responsibilities

**Stability**
- SB 608 limits use of no-cause evictions
Next Steps

• Listen to Council perspectives on desired focus areas
• Work with HPB to further analyze survey results
• Identify potential options related to identified focus area.