

Workshop helps pinpoint St. Charles' future housing needs

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ST. CHARLES – St. Charles resident Larry Kelley said when it comes to housing, he'd like to see more senior housing that's close to amenities that seniors may need to use, such as a grocery store that accepts food stamps and a shuttle service.

His input was part of a Homes for a Changing Region community workshop held Wednesday, where about a dozen people in attendance voiced their opinions about what housing should look like in St. Charles in the next 20 to 30 years.

The workshop is helping identify housing needs in Geneva, Batavia and North Aurora, as well. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Local Technical Assistance program, in partnership with the Metropolitan Planning Council, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Kane County, are providing the housing planning service to each municipality free of charge.

After learning some statistics about St. Charles' current housing market, attendees broke into small groups to pinpoint key development areas on maps. One map focused on the entire city and another focused on the Route 38 and Randall Road intersection.

These are the big parcels out there for development," said city planner Matthew O'Rourke about the Route 38 and Randall Road intersection. "There is going to be development pressure on those in the future. It's something we really wanted to focus on."

Each group shared similar ideas for developing that intersection. Cindy Holler, who chairs the St. Charles Housing Commission, said her group wanted to see a "continuum of care" type of facility that would cater to individuals older than 55, who need assisted living and those who need nursing home care, much like The Holmstad in Batavia.

King Harris, senior fellow with the Metropolitan Planning Council, urged attendees to think about ways to use the Fox River as a way to draw in younger people so housing doesn't become lopsided in the next 20 to 30 years.

"The riverfront can be an interesting way to attract young people who want to go boating, biking and hiking," he said. "The river's worth really thinking through carefully."

Representatives from Chicago Metropolitan Agency plan to deliver a rough draft recommendation to city staff by December with hopes of presenting a final plan in May.

Those who were unable to make it to Wednesday's workshop still can participate in the housing conversation through Nov. 30 by visiting www.foxvalley.metroquest.com.

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