Talking Points

Some Reasons Why a Workforce Housing Program Prescott Makes Sense in Prescott

The Prescott Workforce Housing Committee was established in 2022 to address concerns about the availability and accessibility of housing for service employees in the community, such as police, firefighters, nurses, teachers, and other professions that are critical to a community's functioning. The committee is comprised of local stakeholders and industry experts and is working on short- and long-term goals to address availability and accessibility of workforce housing in Prescott.

Workforce housing plays a crucial role in creating diverse, vibrant, and sustainable communities. Here are several compelling arguments for how it enhances a community without negatively affecting home values:

- Stabilizes the Workforce: Workforce housing ensures that workers, such as teachers, healthcare professionals, and first responders, can live near their workplaces. This reduces commuting times, increases job satisfaction, and ultimately leads to a more stable and reliable workforce. This, in turn, benefits local businesses and institutions.
- Promotes Economic Growth: A stable, well-housed workforce is vital for economic development. When workers have affordable housing options, they are more likely to remain in the area, reducing turnover costs for employers. Additionally, when employees have more disposable income due to lower housing costs, they tend to spend more in the local economy, thus stimulating economic growth.
- Fosters a Diverse Community: A mix of income levels and backgrounds enriches the fabric of a community. Workforce housing allows for a diverse population, contributing to a more inclusive and dynamic neighborhood. This diversity can lead to a stronger sense of community and a wider range of perspectives and talents.
- Supports Educational Systems: Teachers and other education professionals are essential to a thriving community. Having affordable housing options near schools helps to attract and retain high-quality educators, which in turn leads to improved educational outcomes for children.
- Supports Healthcare Systems: Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals provide an important service to our community. Providing affordable housing options near medical facilities helps attract and retain high-quality medical professionals, which in turn leads to improved healthcare delivery.
- Encourages Civic Participation: When people live close to their workplaces, schools, and community amenities, they are more likely to engage in local activities and events. This fosters a sense of belonging and encourages civic participation, leading to a more engaged and active community.

- Maintains Property Values: Well-maintained, thoughtfully designed workforce housing can have a positive impact on property values. Studies have shown that when affordable housing developments are properly integrated into neighborhoods, they do not necessarily lead to a decrease in surrounding property values. In fact, they can help stabilize property values by reducing blight and vacancy rates.
- Mitigates Traffic and Environmental Impact: When workers can live close to their workplaces, there is a reduction in traffic congestion, which leads to fewer environmental impacts as well as reduced stress on the public safety infrastructure.
- Addresses Housing Shortages: Many communities face housing shortages, which can lead to inflated home prices and limited availability. Workforce housing initiatives can help alleviate some of this pressure by increasing the overall supply of housing options.
- In summary, workforce housing is not only a social imperative but also an economic and community-building asset. When thoughtfully planned and integrated into a community, it can enhance the quality of life for all residents without negatively affecting property values. It contributes to a more inclusive, economically vibrant, and sustainable community for everyone involved.

Without acting on the Workforce Housing issue, recruitment and retention of quality service providers will continue to erode. Prescott residents will experience longer wait times, reduced service levels and, in some cases, have to go outside of the area for services. There may also be an overall increased cost of services locally. Prescott may experience less diversity in population, and service providers will be disconnected from the community.