Alternative Housing Ideas Challenge Update

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Summary

On 11 February 2019, Council endorsed an international Alternative Housing (Sustainable Sydney 2050) Ideas Challenge (Ideas Challenge).

The focus of the Ideas Challenge was for local and international participants to propose new and innovative housing options that go beyond the traditional categories of social, community and market housing, with the intent that the ideas will contribute to the delivery of local and broader alternative and affordable housing outcomes.

As part of Stage 1 deliberations from the Ideas Challenge, an independent jury of experts chose seven submissions to progress to the second stage of the Ideas Challenge (Stage 2 – Ideas Development).

Stage 2 was an invited proposal development phase, where the seven shortlisted participants spent time developing their initiatives in line with the City's objectives and to support and inform the development of the City's future community strategic plan and housing policy under the proposed Sustainable Sydney 2050.

The seven shortlisted participants were:

1.   Smart Home Sydney - Joe Colistra and Nilou Vakil, Kansas City, Kansas, USA.

2.   The Equity Housing Model - Eddie Ma and Linseen Lee, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

3.   Foundations of Equity: A Metropolitan Land Trust Policy - Jason Twill and Dr Louise Crabtree, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

4.   Pop Up Shelter - Robert Pradolin, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

5.   Rightsize Service - Dr Alysia Bennett and Dr Damian Madigan, Sydney, NSW, Australia, and Dr Dana Cuff, Los Angeles, USA.

6.   The Third Way: A Cooperative Affordable Rental Model for Sydney - Katherine Sunderman and Andy Fergus, Melbourne, VIC, Australia and Alexis Kalagas, Zurich, Switzerland.

7.   Pixel Pilot - Andrew Scott, Anita Panov and Alexander Symes, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

This report provides an update on Stage 2 of the Ideas Challenge and a recommendation for Council to note progress on initiatives arising from the second stage of the Ideas Challenge, which support the City's advancement of innovative housing solutions to address affordability.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

(A)   note the substantial progress in the development of ideas for innovative affordable housing options from the seven Shortlisted Participants of the Alternative Housing (Sustainable Sydney 2050) Ideas Challenge (Smart Home Sydney, The Equity Housing Model, Foundations of Equity: A Metropolitan Land Trust Policy, Pop Up Shelter, Rightsize Service, The Third Way: A Cooperative Affordable Rental Model for Sydney and Pixel Pilot;

(B)   note that the City will continue to:

    (i)   work with the Shortlisted Participants of the Alternative Housing (Sustainable Sydney 2050) Ideas Challenge to consider proposals; and

    (ii)   advocate for the provision of affordable housing options in line with the shortlisted initiatives submitted under the Alternative Housing Ideas Challenge; and

(C)   note that the Shortlisted Participants will be presenting their proposals at the Alternative Housing Exhibition, to be held in April/May 2020.

Attachments

Attachment A.   11 February 2019 Resolution of Council Item 6.7 - Alternative Housing (Sustainable Sydney 2050) Ideas Challenge

Background

1. The City of Sydney recognises the need for continued leadership on the issue of housing affordability with access to alternative and affordable housing being an essential component of a diverse, cohesive, and economically successful global city.

2. Sydney remains Australia's least affordable city. The high cost of housing is an important economic and social issue in Sydney, particularly within the city where housing prices are amongst the highest in Australia.

3. On 11 February 2019, Council endorsed an international Alternative Housing (Sustainable Sydney 2050) Ideas Challenge.

4. The aim of the Alternative Housing (Sustainable Sydney 2050) Ideas Challenge (Ideas Challenge) was for the local and international community to propose new and innovative housing options that went beyond the traditional categories of social, community and market housing.

5. One thousand and fifty-five participants registered for the Ideas Challenge, which was open from 26 March to 8 May 2019. On 13 June 2019, the Chief Executive Officer approved seven shortlisted proposals to progress to Stage 2 of the Ideas Challenge.

6. Stage 2 was an invited proposal development phase. The City of Sydney held five workshops between 19 June 2019 and 15 November 2019, where the seven shortlisted participants spent time developing their proposals, in line with the City's objectives.

7. This report provides an update on the progress of the work on the ideas arising from the challenge.

Alternative Housing Ideas Challenge Outcomes

8. On 13 June 2019, the Chief Executive Officer approved the following shortlisted proposals under the Ideas Challenge:

    (a) Smart Home Sydney - Joe Colistra and Nilou Vakil, Kansas City, Kansas, USA.

    (b) The Equity Housing Model - Eddie Ma and Linseen Lee, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

    (c) Foundations of Equity: A Metropolitan Land Trust Policy - Jason Twill and Dr Louise Crabtree, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

    (d) Pop Up Shelter - Robert Pradolin, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

    (e) Rightsize Service - Dr Alysia Bennett and Dr Damian Madigan, Sydney, NSW, Australia, and Dr Dana Cuff, Los Angeles, USA.

    (f) The Third Way: A Cooperative Affordable Rental Model for Sydney - Katherine Sunderman and Andy Fergus, Melbourne, VIC, Australia and Alexis Kalagas, Zurich, Switzerland.

    (g) Pixel Pilot - Andrew Scott, Anita Panov and Alexander Symes, Sydney, NSW, Australia

9.   Each of the above participants were granted $20,000 by the City to progress their proposals.

10. This report provides an update on Stage 2 of the Ideas Challenge and identifies areas in which the City could facilitate the uptake of a number of the proposals.

11. Stage 2 of the Ideas Challenge, was an invited proposal development phase, where the seven shortlisted participants spent time developing their initiatives in line with the City's objectives and to support and inform the development of Sustainable Sydney 2050.

Shortlisted Participants

12. Smart Home Sydney, is a technology based alternative housing concept where lifestyle and medical data is collected from residents and sold to offset the price of housing.

13. The Pop Up Shelter proposal, for short term crisis accommodation in empty buildings, is the subject of a grant application for consideration by Council in March from Housing All Australians to part fund research into the long-term costs of not building sufficient affordable, social and public housing. Housing All Australians plan to investigate how the lack of sufficient public, social and affordable housing for Australians may result in significant unintended costs to our future society.

14. The Pop Up Shelter proposal has also recommended the following:

     (a) City of Sydney should embed the Pop Up Shelter concept within the City's planning framework, in order to assist in the active identification of empty buildings; and

     (b) City of Sydney should advocate to the state government the potential to unlocking existing empty buildings by incentivising owners with the suspension of land tax to the property owners if their buildings are made available to Housing All Australians and if they are able to be converted into short term transitional housing.

15. Rightsize Service is a mixed design, finance and management model, that enables people to leverage their existing home to provide affordable housing (managed by a Community Housing Provider), while enabling the homeowner to age in place, provide additional income, eliminate displacement from the homeowner's long-term community and create socially cohesive co-housing arrangements.

16. As the Rightsize Service proposal allows for both upsizing and downsizing, or flexible occupation over time, Rightsize dwellings sit outside current land use definitions. The Rightsize Service proposal has recommended the following:

     (a) City of Sydney should consider the Rightsize Service proposal within the context of the City's planning framework.

17.   The four remaining shortlisted groups, Foundations of Equity: A Metropolitan Land Trust Policy (Community Land Trusts), The Third Way: A Cooperative Affordable Rental Model for Sydney (community led housing model) and Pixel Pilot (co-housing model) and Equity Housing Model (a life lease concept), have joined together to develop a Community Lands Trust Policy and Framework and are working on the concept of a pilot project that relates to a physical development, comprising affordable residential and mixed use rental accommodation in perpetuity, as a next stage initiative.

18.   A further report on progressing these ideas into potential projects will be brought to a future Council meeting(s).

19.   All seven shortlisted proponents are further developing their individual and joint proposals in preparation for the Alternative Housing Exhibition, to be held in April/May 2020.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

20.   Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:

(a)   Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City -

(i)   The Resilient Sydney Strategy and the City for All: Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan both identify more affordable housing as a key priority in building a diverse, cohesive, and economically successful global city. If successful the shortlisted concepts will support these strategic objectives.

(ii)   Housing affordability was identified as a high priority by the City for All: Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan and Sustainable Sydney 2030. It is the intention that the shortlisted concepts will contribute new and innovative solutions to address housing affordability.

(b)   Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies -

(i)   The Resilient Sydney Plan and the City for All: Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan both identify increased affordable housing and community cohesion for improved community resilience. The shortlisted concepts could deliver more vibrant communities and durable local economies.

(ii)   If successful, the seven shortlisted concepts could improve affordable housing choices (rent and owned) and promote a more inclusive, connected, and engaged city through participatory place-making and community-focused urban design.

(c)   Direction 8 - Housing for a Diverse Population -

(i)   If successful, the shortlisted concepts put forward in this report will result in new policies to support scaled growth of alternative affordable housing within Sydney. Delivery of alternative models will increase housing diversity within the City and cater to an underserved demographic not currently supported through traditional categories of social, community, and market housing.

(ii)   The shortlisted concepts in this report respond to Council aspirations for the City of Sydney to be a laboratory for alternative housing models that can be replicated across wider local government areas and beyond.

(iii)   These shortlisted concepts align with the City's position on affordable housing, homelessness and social sustainability, as set out in A City For All, the social sustainability strategy, as well as Housing for All, the City's housing strategy.

(d)   Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships -

(i)   Partnering with the shortlisted proponents to provide innovative and new ideas for the delivery of alternative and affordable housing will improve outcomes for the community.

Risks

21.   The shortlisted concepts may not have a measurable impact on the provision of affordable housing.

Social / Cultural / Community

22.   The shortlisted concepts, if successful, will result in providing the community with new alternative affordable housing options, beyond the traditional categories of social, community, and market housing.

23.   The shortlisted concepts will provide a positive impact on social diversity by contributing alternative affordable housing options and reducing displacement.

Economic

24.   Identification of new and innovative models of delivering affordable housing may reduce reliance on traditional development models.

25.   New alternative and affordable housing models may facilitate wider access to sector market share.

Budget Implications

26.   The report is for update purposes only.

AMIT CHANAN

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