Hi Yoshi,

I enjoyed hearing your ideas about how to increase code compliance in Chattanooga. I liked that both you and Melissa thought beyond simply increasing compliance rates and thought about underlying issues that are associated with the compliance problem.

Of the several ideas that you proposed, the one that stood out to me is the idea of funding the creation of local businesses to help residents fix the issues on their property. I like that it can create local businesses, employ youths and engage the communities. But, besides for senior citizens who could get the service for free, I think you need to think about whether residents would be willing to pay for it and if not, how to encourage them to do so. Also, whether the businesses could be sustainable in the long run.

If I recall the rest of your ideas correctly, they were all sticks instead of carrots. It seemed from both your presentations that community engagement will be critical and I think that using sticks to increase compliance runs against that. For example, instead of punishing non-compliant renters by making them lose eligibility for housing assistance, prioritize the ones who are compliant because they’ve earned it as proven “responsible residents.”

Even with the idea to target the biggest landlords in the area, I’d be hesitant to jump right to shaming by publishing a list of the worst offenders. Though the landlords themselves may not be part of the communities that they own property in, it could still be valuable to try and engage them as well. Being the major property owners, they could be powerful allies in improving these areas so it would be bad to make enemies of them right from the get-go.

* Jeremy