

Challenge: Housing supply has not kept up with housing demand, particularly over the last decade and given the recent employment growth. This imbalance between supply and demand is leading to rising affordability issues.

- Guiding Principal: Increase the amount of housing that is available at all price and rent points, including market-rate housing. In the near term, Howard County should prioritize housing development to serve owner households making less than 120% of AMI and renter households making less than 60% of AMI, as well as remove barriers to market-rate rental housing development. In the mid to long term, Howard County should address existing policies that are impacting the types and amounts of housing that can be built—across product types and price ranges—to broadly increase available housing supply.
- Policy Interventions:
 - Undertake planning and zoning efforts to allow more development on a by-right or streamlined basis. Methods may include (non-exclusive):
 - Create and/or update a county-wide system of neighborhood/corridor/area plans, with mandatory provisions related to preservation, missing middle, affordability & mixed-income, diverse/special needs populations, or other critical needs
 - Create a single-family neighborhoods overlay or form-based code to encourage growth and more diverse housing typologies across the county
 - Update MIHU policy to increase production through regulatory flexibility and additional incentives, including density bonuses.
 - Loosen zoning requirements unrelated to health and safety for affordable housing and prioritized housing typologies. Examples of relevant issues can be parking, setbacks, height, etc.
 - Streamline the entitlement, review, and approval process for new development.
 - Remove zoning barriers to mixed-use neighborhoods and developments. This should include both vertical mixed use (example: housing over ground floor retail) and horizontal (example: allowing residential on-site or nearby existing shopping plazas).
- Other Metrics/Targets:
 - Housing production relative to population and economic growth
 - Housing production by building type
 - Housing production by tenure
 - Distribution of production by type and tenure in each County region

Consultant Observations:

- Howard County is experiencing significant employment growth, with much of that growth requiring a skilled or well-educated workforce. This growth is placing tremendous pressure on the local housing market, resulting in rising affordability challenges.
- Howard County has fewer housing units for every job than nearly other jurisdiction in the Washington-Baltimore region. To catch up to jurisdictions with more balanced relationships between housing and jobs (e.g., Montgomery County, Anne Arundel County, etc.), Howard County would likely require more than 20,000 units.
- When coupled with entitlement constraints and regulatory/approval processes that increase development costs, unmet demand for high-end homes crowds out opportunities to serve the middle of the market.
- Looking at existing owner households and for-sale housing units, demand exceeds supply at less than 80% of AMI.
- New single-family detached homes and townhomes are larger and more expensive in Howard County than they are in other neighboring jurisdictions.
- Looking at existing renter households and rental housing units, demand exceeds supply at less than 60% of AMI, and at over 120% of AMI.
- A lack of new, market-rate rental housing is creating additional competition for workforce and moderate-income housing, since many upper-income households are having or choosing to rent units that are affordable to and might otherwise be occupied by lower- and middle-income households.
- Local practitioners in Howard County agree on the necessity of new development, though there is substantial debate about where and how that development should occur.

- Most significant limiting factors include infrastructure/school capacity, APFO, and community opposition.
- Fees and processes for entitlements/approval and community engagement make development more difficult and, in many cases, deter it from occurring in the first place.

Task Force Observations:

- Additional density and growth in the Rural West will be necessary to keep up with housing demand going forward, given that most remaining land and school capacity is in this part of Howard County. This development will be important to consider in the Housing Plan given the status of the General Plan, which can facilitate concurrent conversations about the investments that are necessary to accommodate growth in the west (e.g., schools, transportation, infrastructure, etc.).
- Redevelopment and infill development can help add density, potentially through zoning changes. Villages with older housing stock and areas along current transportation and retail corridors could be good locations for both additional density and affordability as the units continue to age.
- It will be important for this plan to consider market-rate housing in addition to affordable housing. New homes at the top of the market could entice higher-income families to move out of lower-priced homes, which could open up housing opportunities for others. Some Task Force members emphasized the importance of prioritizing recommendations that address the large supply gaps for lower-income renters.
- If possible, best practices in other jurisdictions could help identify targets and/or percentages of housing needed by affordability level or price point that generally contribute to the goal of increasing affordability without concentrating poverty.
- Additional capital is necessary to increase housing at all price points. Gap funding could be a strategy to consider.

Community Observations:

- Howard County needs more density to add more housing, and certain areas are more appropriate to accommodate this increase in density (e.g., CAC Zone, Route 40, Village Center redevelopment, Rural West, etc.)
- New housing typologies (e.g., ADUs, efficiency apartments, basement units in larger homes, etc.) could help increase housing inventory. However, zoning changes may be necessary to facilitate this production, particularly in the Rural West.
- Given the lack of greenfield land, Howard County needs to use its remaining land more efficiently, likely through rezoning, reusing existing housing stock, allowing people to modify/retrofit their homes, increasing flexibility (e.g., ADUs), etc.
- Howard County should prioritize affordable housing when it considers land use disposition and development decisions.
- Apartment and residential development should be tied to office park development.
- Supply is meeting demand in some areas, but not in the case of low-income housing. This mismatch suggests that builders might need incentives to build more affordable units.
- County-owned land could be used for mixed-use development in order to provide more housing.

Executive Order Statements:

- Recommending potential changes to current policies and programs to address the shortage of affordable units for very low/low/moderate income households, including workforce housing
- Identifying programs that can be implemented to incentivize private developers to partner with the County to create mechanisms that ensure the ongoing ability to develop affordable housing

Challenge: A lack of affordable housing throughout the county inhibits racial and socioeconomic integration. Historically disadvantaged populations, lower income households and households experiencing poverty find that most of the housing options affordable to them are concentrated in only a few locations. This challenge is especially problematic considering that most remaining land and school capacity is in the Rural West, where current zoning regulations largely prohibit affordable housing development of any kind.

- Guiding Principal: Increase affordable housing opportunities throughout Howard County, especially in locations that do not have them at this time. Identify specific locations in the county where additional mixed-income housing can be built in a fiscally and environmentally responsible way, even if it requires zoning, land use, and infrastructure changes to accommodate.
- Policy Interventions:
 - Review infrastructure capacity and retail nodes to identify zones for cluster development in Rural West
 - Update MIHU policy to ensure that incentives, requirements, and fee-in-lieu provisions enable production in all areas of the County
 - Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) throughout the county, reduce unnecessary regulatory burden to ADU approval, and encourage the use of ADUs as affordable housing through technical and financial assistance.
 - Establish programs to facilitate permanent homeownership opportunities throughout the County, such as a community land trust and/or shared equity program.
 - Note: Zoning and neighborhood planning recommendations highlighted under the previous challenge are critical tools to encouraging greater integration across Howard County
- Other Metrics/Targets:
 - Housing production by building type
 - Housing production by tenure
 - Distribution of production by type and tenure in each County region

Consultant Observations:

- As a whole, Howard County is demographically diverse, and it is becoming more and more so over time.
- High home prices throughout Howard County limit the housing and neighborhood choices for lower income households and households experiencing poverty.
- The Rural West lacks housing options for low- and moderate-income households.
 - Just 1% of homes in the Rural West are affordable to households making less than 60% of AMI, compared to 10% of homes in Columbia, 9% of homes in Elkrige, 9% of homes in Ellicott City, and 6% of homes in Southeast (8% in Howard County overall).
 - On the other hand, 94% of homes in the Rural West are priced to serve households making more than 120% of AMI, compared to 45% in Columbia, 49% in Elkrige, 55% in Southeast, and 67% in Ellicott City (58% in Howard County overall).
 - This difference is attributable to both the lack of rental housing in the Rural West, as well as the lack of smaller and more attainably priced for-sale homes in the Rural West.
- Zoning code and neighborhood opposition are the main barriers to housing stock diversification.
- Howard County has taken action to address housing choice through tenant-focused efforts, the impacts of which will be limited until housing availability and diversity are addressed throughout the county.
- The initial commitment to diversity and integration that shaped the initial development of Columbia is apparent to this day, as this area remains among the more diverse portions of the County. This suggests that such intentionality in policy and development decisions can lead to successful outcomes. However, as the County has evolved and changed it is unclear the extent to which stated commitments to diversity and inclusion are backed up by practice. There is concern that status quo policies/practices will erode county's socioeconomic diversity.

Task Force Observations:

- Historically, housing policies have enabled—and, in many cases, deliberately caused—socioeconomic and racial segregation, both locally and nationally. While Columbia was established with the intention of creating an integrated community that could serve as a model for other parts of the county and country, few other neighborhoods in Howard County have emulated these ideals, and the county as a whole was not spared the impacts of these policies. These impacts are visible within the housing analysis, which indicates that there continues to be racial and socioeconomic segregation.
- Right now, high-end and low-income housing options are concentrated in specific parts of Howard County, with pockets of affordable housing in certain areas (e.g., Columbia, Laurel, ElkrIDGE, etc.). There needs to be a better balance, with housing available at all AMI levels across Howard County.
- The housing inventory should be more balanced across Howard County in order to open up neighborhood choices for low- and moderate-income households, and to reduce the likelihood of concentrated poverty in one area, school district, etc.
- Historical zoning has led to racial and economic segregation by separating—rather than mixing—housing typologies. Howard County should encourage a greater diversity of housing going forward to prevent concentrated density, poverty, etc.
- Vouchers are insufficient at the moment because the waiting list is largely closed, except for persons with disabilities.
- Tax deferral programs are good, but many people do not know about them.
- Shared equity homeownership policies and community land trusts are interesting concepts that could expand homeownership opportunities and/or give people access to housing choices in places where they otherwise would not have it.
- The Live-Where-You-Work program should be expanded, since it only has a few units available at this time.
- A lack of transit should not get in the way of affordable housing development. Many households in need of affordable housing have cars, and—for those without cars—other options like shared vehicles could help bridge the gap.
 - However, Howard County should still try to improve transit, bike/pedestrian pathways, etc. to improve mobility, especially in the Rural West.
- It would be helpful to define targets for the number or ratio of housing units that communities should have at certain AMI levels. These targets could create opportunities for focused affordable housing development and/or migration strategies, wherein Howard County could add new below-AMI housing to areas that currently lack it, while redeveloping existing below-AMI housing in areas that have a lot of it.
- Howard County should find creative ways to encourage mixed-income communities, potentially through inclusionary affordable housing, outside market grants, etc. For example, Maple Lawn could have produced a more economically diverse community, had it been required to produce Moderate Income Housing Units instead of paying a fee-in-lieu. It will be important to know what the best practices for achieving these objectives are.

Community Observations:

- Lower-income households face significant barriers to homeownership.
- Poverty should not be concentrated in older housing developments in locations like Wilde Lake, Oakland Mills, etc.
- The re-segregation of the school system is due to the lack of diversity in home types and prices across Howard County. As a result, lower- and middle-income households have fewer neighborhood options available to them.
- The Moderate Income Housing Unit (“MIHU”) program should be expanded to require a minimum of 15% MIHUs in all new and redevelopment projects, across all zoning and regional planning areas, or the equivalent percentage of LIHUs or DIHUs.
- Fee-in-lieu policies can result in the “off-siting” of affordable housing, which can worsen challenges of economic segregation.
- New housing typologies (e.g., ADUs, efficiency apartments, basement units in larger homes, etc.) could help increase housing affordability across Howard County. However, zoning changes may be necessary to facilitate these changes, particularly in the Rural West.
- Parts of the Rural West (e.g., certain cores or corridors) should allow more density than what exists today.
- Zoning regulations should allow ADUs for affordable housing rentals in all zoning districts. These types of units could increase affordable housing opportunities, and help spread those opportunities throughout Howard County.
- Affordable housing should be a requirement in all of Columbia, not just in Downtown Columbia.
- Downtown Columbia must be inclusive.

- Even though new developments have affordable housing, there is not a net gain in some cases. Howard County needs more of these units in general.
- Restrictive policies can prohibit house-sharing for non-relatives.
- The-Live-Where-You-Work program was a success for hospital workers and may work in other parts of Howard County.
- The Master Plan needs to address and communicate biases within Howard County, so that people can better understand the benefits of diversity.
- The public housing model should be revamped. One community member pointed to the idea of social housing, which is a model done in other countries, where rent is based on a percentage of resident income.
- Could tiny home communities be an affordable housing solution without concentrating low-income families into one community?
- What are the right targets for affordable housing, and how can they be monitored over time?

Executive Order Statements:

- Identifying opportunities to more effectively utilize the County's existing inclusionary zoning program, Moderate Income Housing Unit program (MIHU) to develop affordable rental and home ownership opportunities, especially in areas of the county where these opportunities are in critically low supply
- Recommending opportunities to strengthen the County's commitment to affordable housing such as use of public lands, reliance on LIHTC projects, increased use of subsidies such as the County's Housing Stability Support Program and expansion of the "Live Where You Work" program
- Identifying how the County's zoning can be changed to ensure all areas of the County include affordable rental housing and ownership opportunities

Challenge: A large portion of housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households in Howard County is older and at risk of deterioration and/or redevelopment going forward.

- Guiding Principal: Maintain and increase the existing affordable housing stock while improving housing quality and household stability. For rental housing, identify at-risk properties and prioritize tools/resources most appropriate for the given property, including acquisition, repair/rehabilitation, and/or equitable redevelopment. For owner-occupied homes, provide tools and resources to ensure homeowners maintain housing quality and affordability.
- Policy Interventions:
 - Create a rental preservation inventory risk monitoring system, including both subsidized and market-rate properties.
 - Establish a protocol and toolkit for exercising the County's right-of-first refusal for rental property sales.
 - Negotiate rental agreements with private landlords
 - Provide capital subsidies for multifamily rental rehabilitation, including affordability provisions.
 - Provide zoning incentives for equitable redevelopment of existing affordable rentals.
 - Establish transfer of development rights program to create resources for preserving/rehabilitating existing rental properties.
 - Create a one-stop-shop for homeowner repair/rehabilitation supports, including education, outreach, technical assistance, and subsidy/program navigation.
 - Expand code enforcement in coordination with landlord and homeowner outreach, technical assistance, and subsidy provision
 - Expand resources and outreach for tenant legal assistance to ensure compliance with health, safety, and accessibility laws.
 - Coordinate rehabilitation subsidies in neighborhoods experiencing or at risk of disinvestment
 - Reduce regulatory and financial barriers to property improvement by addressing non-conforming elements of existing properties (loosening rules, "grandfathering in" conditions, etc.).
- Other Metrics/Targets:
 - Number of units affordable at various income levels (including trends over time)
 - Number of units at risk of loss due to appreciation and expiration of subsidy restrictions
 - Code issues/violations

Consultant Observations:

- Given the history and evolution of Howard County, much of its older housing stock is found in clusters.
- Housing stock is reaching the point where much of it is nearing the end of its useful life and needs to be recapitalized (e.g. older garden-style opportunities, older single-family homes). As this trend occurs, there could be opportunities to add more density in order to address growth patterns and affordability concerns.
- In some parts of the County with strong demand, older housing units that might otherwise be more naturally affordable to low- and moderate-income households are becoming more expensive.
- There is a lack of a defined strategy for preserving the quality and/or affordability of older rental housing.
- The strength of the market limits the affordability of redeveloped properties without proactive intervention.
- Redevelopment of rental properties—potentially at greater densities—may be necessary to preserve affordability.
- The vast majority of homes selling for less than \$350,000 were built before 1990. Many of these homes require repairs or updates, which result in additional and sometimes unanticipated costs for the households that occupy them.
- There are already some tools in place to help homeowners keep up with the quality of their homes, and while the communication around or usage of these tools could be improved, Howard County is not necessarily starting from scratch in this regard.
- Physical deterioration of a property affects nearby properties, and as such neighborhood-focused approaches to revitalization can be more effective than county-wide ones.

Task Force Observations:

- The inclusion of efficiency units in new rental apartment communities can lead to additional attainably priced housing options for low- and moderate-income households. However, current zoning policies discourage developers from including these units, given maximum allowable multifamily densities, as well as the APFO allocation system (which treats these units the same as larger homes).
- Redevelopment can affect existing property owners, causing property taxes to increase and making housing less affordable in the process.
- There is resistance to housing stock diversity in many areas, so the solution may involve the redevelopment of existing affordable properties to add density. For example, there are many older, lower-quality garden apartments in Downtown Columbia, where newer development is both higher density and more aesthetically pleasing.
- It is important to ensure that older, affordable homes removed for redevelopment are accounted for somewhere else.
- For rehabilitation efforts, communities with covenants receive help to make sure the homes are up to par.
- A program that provides training to homeowners would be helpful to ensure that they know the basis of how to maintain a home and prevent unnecessary repairs, which can be costly if left unaddressed.

Community Observations:

- The county needs to have programs that incentivize upgrading older housing, not just programs for people who need housing.
- Howard County should incentivize the preservation and redevelopment of affordable housing.
- The shadow rental market is an integral part of the local housing market, but additional policies may be necessary to ensure that owners keep up with maintenance and preserve the integrity of the neighborhoods.

Executive Order Statements:

- Identifying best practices used in jurisdictions economically and demographically like Howard County that could be implemented to help preserve existing affordable rental housing stock in the County

Challenge: New development today is less diverse than the housing inventory overall. In recent years, new development has shifted in favor of rental apartments, and—at the same time—the for-sale market has largely stopped building smaller, more attainably priced for-sale housing.

- Guiding Principal: Promote a greater diversity of housing options in Howard County by expanding by-right zoning for small lot single-family, townhome and other attached, and moderate-density multifamily development. Facilitate and encourage the expansion of existing properties to include additional units, such as basement apartments and accessory dwelling units (“ADUs”).
- Policy Interventions:
 - Note: Zoning and neighborhood planning recommendations highlighted under the first two challenges (supply and integration) are critical tools to encouraging greater integration across Howard County, in particular:
 - Allow and promote accessory dwelling units (ADUs) throughout the county
 - Creating and/or update a county-wide system of neighborhood/corridor/area plans, with mandatory provisions related to preservation, missing middle, affordability & mixed-income, diverse/special needs populations, or other critical needs
 - Create a single-family neighborhoods overlay or form-based code to encourage growth and more diverse housing typologies across the county
 - Loosen zoning requirements unrelated to health and safety for affordable housing and prioritized housing typologies.
 - Remove zoning and regulatory barriers to smaller units
- Other Metrics/Targets:

Consultant Observations:

- The market can support more diverse housing typologies, but zoning is a barrier.
- Developers will pursue higher-end development in most cases when there is clear demand, especially if lower cost housing types are not “by-right.”
- Zoning and regulatory barriers to producing diverse housing types—particularly barriers to rental housing development—can reinforce patterns of segregation originally entrenched through de facto and de jure discriminatory policies (such as redlining).
- The combination of high land values and current policies make it challenging to maintain the affordability of housing when redeveloping it (e.g. “McMansion-ization,” as opposed to densification).
- This dynamic is partly a result of the locations in which developable land still exists, and where schools are facing fewer constraints. At this time, most remaining land and school capacity are in the Rural West, where zoning regulations and development patterns favor larger, lower-density forms of housing.
- Ancillary requirements (parking, setbacks, etc.) can create de facto bans of certain housing types.
- The prevalence of lower-density housing typologies presents opportunities for infill redevelopment and additional density near existing infrastructure.

Task Force Observations:

- It would be helpful to identify the types of housing that Howard County needs to focus its efforts on, and to determine whether there are quantifiable goals that it can set.
- Current zoning policies preclude the incorporation of new (e.g., ADUs, basement apartments, etc.) or different (e.g., condominiums, townhomes, etc.) types of housing in many locations.
- Naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) can be called out as a proactive strategy.

Community Observations:

- Homeowners across Howard County should be able to make improvements to their properties—such as the addition of ADUs or basement units—without going through cumbersome processes. These improvements could be a helpful way of promoting housing diversity, especially in places such as the Rural West where there may be resistance to higher-density development.
- Current regulations and building materials requirements prevent the use of manufactured, modular, or prefab housing as construction methods for traditional multifamily or single-family development. This type of development is becoming increasingly common in other jurisdictions, and it can be used as a tool to address housing affordability by helping to reduce costs for developers in locations where land values are too high and can preclude affordable housing development. It is still possible to regulate design to ensure that these homes fit within existing communities.
- The shadow rental market is an important component of the local housing market, and it should be encouraged and allowed. Even if currently prohibited, house-sharing (e.g., renting out unofficial basement apartments) is likely already happening in Howard County, as it is in most locations across the region.
- Restrictive zoning ordinances limit multifamily housing.

Executive Order Statements:

WORKING DRAFT

Challenge: It continues to be difficult to supply housing for diverse populations, with significant needs going forward.

- Guiding Principal: Ensure that Howard County meets the unique housing needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and other diverse populations. Evaluate whether guidelines for special needs housing are actually appropriate for those communities' needs, and revise where necessary.
- Policy Interventions:
 - Create a local rental assistance program
 - Conduct a neighborhood accessibility/mobility assessment and inventory with a specific focus on identifying areas with characteristics that facilitate more independent living opportunities for seniors, persons with disabilities, or other needs.
 - Facilitate targeted housing production/investments in areas with these characteristics
 - Identify “tipping point” neighborhoods, where modest but targeted neighborhood/infrastructure improvements can have a significant impact
 - In all neighborhoods, ensure that larger scale developments and infrastructure improvements are designed in a way that increase accessibility/mobility for the neighborhood as a whole.
 - Explore cross-sectoral and philanthropic partnerships to issue “social impact bonds” that expand resources for creating permanent supportive housing, housing for formerly incarcerated individuals, and other populations that face difficulty finding housing.
 - Facilitate and/or provide community-based supports for potentially vulnerable households that enable independent living
 - Significantly expand landlord outreach programs
 - Create/manage a housing matching service/searchable database of accessible units and features to match households with available units
 - Expand asset building/stability programs for low income households
 - Expand resources for tenant legal assistance to ensure compliance with laws related to housing quality and accessibility.
 - Remove or adjust household occupancy requirements related to family status
- Other Metrics/Targets:
 - Number of available Permanent Supportive Housing Units
 - Number of specialized housing units available for various populations with diverse needs, based on a proportion of that population.

Consultant Observations:

- Diverse populations (e.g., non-white households, households with disabilities, and senior households, among others) are more likely to be “cost-burdened” than the general population as a whole.
- The average percent of income spent on housing is especially high for senior renter households, in particular.
- More rental assistance and service resources are needed to address demand.
- Existing home repair and modification programs are helpful, but can be difficult to navigate.
- Intentional intergenerational communities create promising opportunities for sustaining independence.
- Mobility and transportation is a critical barrier for many households.
- Coordination among nonprofit partners is strong in terms of providing services, but more strategic collaboration could increase impact.

Task Force Observations:

- There are significant challenges for seniors, people with autism, and aging foster children.
- The creation of grants for both rental and homeownership to increase accessibility is a good start.
- ADUs can help achieve this goal, by providing housing options for seniors, younger adults, and adults with disabilities. These units should be allowed and encouraged.

- There is disagreement as to whether new rental apartment buildings are doing enough to serve people with disabilities. Many of these individuals and other housing advocates believe that there are not enough ADA units in Howard County, but some developers indicate that their ADA units are often slow to lease.
 - This difference could suggest that the rents of new properties are too high for people with disabilities, which is especially problematic because many new properties contain features (e.g., elevators) that these households need.
- Howard County should try to combine rental assistance and subsidy with accessible units.
- Howard County should create tools for groups that provide resources for people who wish to stay in their communities (e.g., neighborhood associations, churches providing shared ride services and food, etc.).
- Physical infrastructure and transportation changes are necessary to help people who wish to age in place (e.g., sidewalks).
- There could be an opportunity to create a new type of housing, which integrates people with needs and caretakers in the same locations. Oakland Mills considered this idea, which could be a good redevelopment option.

Community Observations:

- Howard County could benefit from housing and resources that are specifically designed for seniors and people with disabilities.
- The state formula for awarding tax credits for subsidized apartments for seniors disadvantages these forms of development. It is difficult to get money from the state, so plans for this type of development are rare. It may be necessary for Howard County to create its own policies to mitigate this challenge.
- Many 55+ communities do not have enough space for households that have been established for a long time, or they do not meet ADA requirements. There are also just not enough of these units, in general.
- Even at affordable housing communities, annual rent increases often exceed the prices that seniors and low-income households are able to pay, which makes it difficult for them to find permanent housing. Rental subsidies could be a potential solution for this problem.
- Policies may be necessary to protect these populations from rent increases, and also to provide ownership opportunities.
- MIHU units should be considered for 55+ communities.

Executive Order Statements:

Challenge: Howard County lacks a cohesive strategy for prioritization, policy/program design, and resource allocation.

- Guiding Principal: Develop a comprehensive and collaborative strategy for addressing housing needs and prioritizing resources.
 - Policy Interventions:
 - Identify affordability and production targets, and adopt budgeting metrics according to that structure
 - Create inter-agency affordability task force and identify opportunities for collaboration in decision making processes
 - Maximize impact of nonprofit sector by providing additional support for coordination, joint planning, coordinated fundraising, and back office support.
 - Other Metrics/Targets:
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Consultant Observations:

- Big picture goals and priorities are necessary, and they should inform policy design and resource allocation moving forward.
- Policies that severely restrict development work at cross purposes with those that support affordability.
- There are opportunities for better coordination in policymaking and resource prioritization and allocation decisions, particularly as it pertains to housing, planning and zoning, and community resources and services.
- There are opportunities to better coordinate with private sector, philanthropic, and anchor institutions to better address housing needs.

Task Force Observations:

- This plan should discuss the components of successful communities, as well as how those components come together.
- Howard County needs interagency agreements for organizations to work together to provide housing, promote health, etc.
- This plan should outline specific and measurable goals (percentage of affordable units, amount of money to be spent, etc.), so that each organization knows its role in the plan. Include milestones and implementation strategies.

Community Observations:

- Howard County needs to regularly evaluate housing programs for effectiveness (e.g., fee-in-lieu) and reassess viability of groups who may be exempt.
- There may be an opportunity to establish a coalition between professional organizations within Howard County in order to develop alternative funding strategies if they are necessary.
- Suburban zoning has historically separated uses and housing types from each other: industrial over here, retail over there, apartments away from detached homes. Is there a better type of zoning, and what other zoning approaches create greater numbers of affordable housing?
 - Would a density bonus for projects with more than a minimum affordable housing obligation work?
- The process for applying for and receiving housing assistance is cumbersome.
- In many cases, density bonuses are ineffective with other restrictions in place.
- Certain county policies can impact housing affordability. For example, restrictive planning and zoning policies work against affordability by limiting multifamily housing. High taxes, especially when combined with HOA fees, can also make homeownership less affordable.

Executive Order Statements:

- Completing a comprehensive inventory of housing programs and policies in all departments and agencies of local governments, as well as those of community and human service organizations outside of local government
- Identifying potential long-term, sustainable and consistent public and/or private financial strategies and sources of revenue to help build and preserve affordable housing opportunities
- Identifying regulatory, legal, and other potential barriers that are restricting greater collaboration between HCHC and DHCD
- Providing guidance to the County as to how it can coordinate the delivery of affordable housing resources and services to efficiently achieve the goals of the Plan.

Challenge: **Existing resources are not sufficient to meet current and future capacity and demands (schools, transportation, etc.) while also dedicating funds to housing goals.**

- Guiding Principal: Develop funding sources dedicated specifically to housing.
 - Policy Interventions:
 - Establish affordable housing trust fund for capital investment in affordable housing
 - Capitalize in part with dedicated revenue source(s). Potential enhanced or new resources can include property tax levies/special assessments, MIHU fee-in-lieu, transfer taxes, AirBNB/room share fees, transfer of development rights payouts, hotel/tourism fees, demolition/condo conversion fees, etc.
 - Provide annually appropriated resources to accommodate increased demand
 - Structure as revolving fund, to be coordinated/leveraged with other affordable housing sources
 - Include PSH/special needs requirements
 - Adopt a robust public land development, community-serving real estate, and facility co-location strategy (see next Challenge: Infrastructure, for more detail)
 - Explore social impact bonds to address needs of diverse populations (See previous Challenge: Specialized needs, for more details)
 - Other Metrics/Targets:
 - Resources available for affordable housing production/preservation/rehabilitation
 - Units produced, preserved and/or rehabilitated
 - Per unit subsidy/costs by type (homeownership vs. rental; production vs. preservation vs. rehabilitation).
 - Federal, state, and private/philanthropic resources leveraged.
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Consultant Observations:

- Expanding capital for affordable housing is critical.
- Local capital can leverage additional external capital.
- Both capital and tenant-based supports are necessary.
- Sustainable and predictable funding sources can create greater impact. Ad hoc efforts are subject to political risk.
- Resources are not limited to local dollars. Land assets also create opportunities for housing development.

Task Force Observations:

- There needs to be a predictable funding source beyond fee-in-lieu revenue.
- If Howard County has a goal of adding more affordable housing, it should help to pay for it, as it does for other infrastructure and services.
- Enhanced incentives (e.g., waived parking requirements) may be an option for existing property owners and developers. Density bonuses are often not enough to encourage new development given additional regulations, fees, and costs.
- There is a concern that adding density in certain areas will prevent Howard County from keeping up with infrastructure needs.
- Adding enhanced incentives may be an option for existing property owners and developers.
- Howard County needs to strike a delicate balance between residential and commercial development.
 - Programs that tie affordability contributions to the decision of major employers to locate in a community
 - Downtown Housing Fund: portion of fund is paid by commercial rents, since commercial developments benefit from residential properties
 - Be careful not to disincentive commercial development with so many attractive options nearby.

Community Observations:

- Howard County should create a housing trust fund that is incorporated into each annual fiscal operating and capital budget, and that is funded by a separate dedicated funding source and/or annual contribution from the General Fund.
 - Potential Trust Fund uses include:
 - Subsidies for income-limited seniors, persons with disabilities, youth aging out of foster care, etc.

- Gap financing for affordable housing developments
- Rental deposit assistance enabling low-income families to move into affordable housing units.
- "Live Where You Work" program incentives
- Potential Trust Fund revenue sources include:
 - Commercial fees
 - Transfer Tax
 - Recordation Tax
 - Rental License Fees
 - Permit fees
 - Bonds (Tax increment financing; municipal/private bond issue)

Executive Order Statements:

- Considering tax abatement and incentives to foster affordable housing creation by the Howard County Housing Commission (HCHC), the County's housing authority, and private developers

WORKING DRAFT

Challenge: The current strategy to address infrastructure and public facility capacity issues (APFO) is placing significant limitations on the amount of housing that can be built, and it is potentially accelerating those capacity issues by limiting the ability to increase the tax base.

- Guiding Principal: Improve the balance between housing and infrastructure needs, and find creative ways to meet demands for both housing and infrastructure.
 - Policy Interventions:
 - Adopt APFO reforms. Options may include
 - Loosen limits in areas with existing transportation infrastructure and strong mobility/independent living characteristics
 - Exempt priority housing types (beyond those already established)
 - Adjust zoning reforms and regulatory streamlining to accommodate more density in areas below existing limits
 - Allow for transfers of density/development rights from areas closed to new development
 - Inventory public land assets, benchmark against community/educational facility needs, and adopt a robust public land development and facility co-location strategy
 - Facilitate the use of community-serving real estate (land owned by faith-based institutions, community groups, hospitals, colleges/universities, etc.) for affordable housing and/or co-located facilities
 - Other Metrics/Targets:
-

Consultant Observations:

- The amount of housing that Howard County has built has decreased in recent years. As a result, housing supply has not kept up with housing demand, particularly in recent years and at attainable price points.
- School capacity is the driving force behind APFO-related moratoria, and restricting development can deprive Howard County of critical resources to address this and other infrastructure needs.
- The APFO provides a framework that, if adjusted for market conditions and accompanied by strong infrastructure planning, could allow Howard County to balance planning and development with service and infrastructure needs.
- The APFO has the potential to disrupt the balance between housing supply and demand even further if Howard County is unable to keep up with the capacity requirements for new development to take place.
- The APFO is accelerating capacity issues by cutting off the ability of the county to increase its tax base.
- Many members of the Task Force and policy practitioners believe that new development is not the driving force behind school capacity problems.
- There are significant opportunities to address housing needs in a manner that helps address infrastructure/school capacity imbalances, independent of APFO provisions.

Task Force Observations

- Redistricting has not fixed the issues facing the school system. Howard County still does not have the land or money to build new schools, and income segregation is an equity issue for students.
- Some Task Force members note that the APFO is only limiting housing development at this time because Howard County did not keep up with growth early on, and that the system might work if given the time to catch up.
- However, other Task Force members believe that housing is a critical piece of infrastructure, just like schools, roads, etc. By limiting housing production, Howard County is also limiting its ability to collect critical tax revenue, which will be necessary down the line. Other jurisdictions (e.g., Montgomery County) have learned this issue the hard way, and have recently increased caps (towards 125%) in order to allow for more housing opportunities.
- Howard County should allow for more by-right development in the locations that are able to accommodate it, in order to stop an effective “freeze” on new construction. A goal should be to show the county council that there is a plan in place, so that long public approval processes—which often result in significant pushback—are not necessary.

- Some Task Force members believe that, in order to minimize impacts on schools, Howard County should focus on targeting specific populations and building specific homes, such as age-restricted housing.
- However, other Task Force members believe demographic diversity is an important component of communities, and that it is important for Howard County to have affordable housing for all populations.

Community Observations:

- The APFO should be revised to better balance affordable housing needs and school capacity issues.
- The APFO should prioritize housing for low-income households, including seniors and people with disabilities.
- Many community members believe that capacity issues—including schools, in particular, but also sewer lines—are holding new development hostage. Many of these community members also cite that housing policy should operate independently of the school system. However, there is generally a recognition that Howard County will need to expand services (e.g., water, sewer, transportation, etc.) as it adds more density.
- Focusing on the types of development that do not affect school capacity (e.g., seniors housing and active adult communities) could help add more housing in the near term. However, it is important to realize that this approach does not address the significant unmet needs of other populations, and age-restricted housing is not feasible—or can present issues down the line—for older adults who want or need their grandchildren to live with them.
- There is also a strong desire for increased walkability and connectivity, as well as transit access.

Executive Order Statements:

WORKING DRAFT

Challenge: **The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic disruption is exposing and exacerbating housing insecurity.**

- Guiding Principal: Ensure that Howard County is well equipped to deal with housing challenges that arise during economic downturns.
 - Policy Interventions:
 - Study results/impacts of COVID relief measures and adopt standing protocols for responding to future disasters
 - Expand resources for tenant and homeowner legal assistance
 - Create a permanent rental assistance program
 - Other Metrics/Targets:
-

Consultant Observations:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has broadened severe housing challenges and increased demand for services.
- Pandemic-related disruptions have brought to light the pre-existing vulnerability of many households. The pandemic has had disparate impacts on lower-income, minority, and traditionally disadvantaged populations, and these disparities are tied to pre-existing patterns of segregation and discrimination that have yet to be addressed.
- The current crisis may further entrench disadvantages caused by segregation and discrimination.

Task Force Observations:

- It is common knowledge that many low-income households are spending more than 50% of their income on rent, but it seems like Howard County views this behavior as a choice rather than a necessity.
- There needs to be a safety net to help vulnerable populations (e.g., tenant laws, funding that these individuals can access if/when they need help, etc.)
- Right-to-counsel laws should be considered.
- Other ideas to prevent eviction include the use of payment plans, sharing of job opportunities, and other services for which there is no integrated system.
- Many people are going to be looking for rental assistance now that the courts opened back up, so there is an impending crisis on evictions yet to come. Howard County could potentially consider having an emergency fund, funded by percentage of interest earnings on rental escrow trust funds.
- There is not enough money in and from Howard County to give rental assistance.
- Landlords also need protection from tenants not paying rent, even well before COVID-19.

Community Observations:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the importance of housing, which is now about safety in addition to preference and affordability.
- Provide revenue for additional financing or subsidies for rent that helps people facing eviction.
- Create policies that support economic longevity for renters/owners during downturns.
- There should be funding sources for additional financing or rental subsidies to help households facing eviction.
- What some may consider affordable housing is still not affordable for many people in need. The parameters for what encompasses affordable housing in Howard county need to be reexamined and current circumstances highlight this issue. People who were already paying 50%+ of income are experiencing are unable to afford housing if that income is lost due to COVID.

Executive Order Statements: