



Deep Dive Discussion #3: Preservation and APFO Housing Opportunities Master Plan & Task Force

Meeting Summary

Date: 10/26/2020

Time: 3 – 5:40 p.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting

The third and final deep dive discussion was held using Zoom on October 26, 2020. Four members of the public attended in addition to the following Task Force members and Howard County representatives:

Name	Sector	Employer / Organization
Task Force Members		
Dr. Caroline Harper, <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Bill McCormack, <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Peter Engel, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing	Howard County Housing Commission
Brent Loveless, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Education	PTA Council of Howard County
Pat Sylvester, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing/Disabilities	Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation
Steve Breeden	Developer	SDC Group
Jennifer Broderick	Housing/Affordability	Bridges to Housing Stability
Rose Burton	Community Resource	Howard County Office of Community Partnerships
Paul Casey	Housing/Policy	
Kim Eisenreich	Youth	Howard County Local Children's Board
Victoria Hathaway	Aging	Bob Lucido Team of Keller Williams
Kevin Kelehan	Legal	Carney Kelehan
Cindy Parr	Disabilities	The Arc of Howard County
Jackie Scott		Howard County
Linda Wengel	Affordability/Council Representative	
Phyllis Zolotorow	Seniors/Council Representative	
Consultant Team		
Erin Talkington	Consultant Team	RCLCO
Jacob Ross	Consultant Team	RCLCO
Tracee Strum-Gilliam	Consultant Team	PRR, Inc.
Michael Spotts	Consultant Team	Neighborhood Fundamentals
Allysha Lorber	Consultant Team	JMT
Elisabeth McCullom	Consultant Team	JMT
Laura Van Wert	Consultant Team	PRR, Inc.
Julie Pagaduan	Consultant Team	Neighborhood Fundamentals
Additional Attendees		
Quanita Kareem		Howard County Dept. of Housing and Community Development
Mary Kendell		Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning



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The purpose of this meeting was to focus discussion on preservation and APFO recommendations of the Task Force. These deep dive discussions are to ensure that the Task Force is on the same page with the recommendations before the next community meeting where they will be presented in draft form.

Tracee Strum-Gilliam kicked off the meeting by thanking Task Force members for attending. She handed the meeting over to Mike Spotts who lead the deep dive discussions.

The following items were discussed:

Meeting Overview

- Mike noted that the Task Force indicated during the last meeting that the team was headed in the right direction with high-level recommendations, and since the last meeting, the team has moved forward in drafting policy detail in that direction. He added that within the work there are some examples where there is a clear path forward with recommendations, but we want to make sure that the Task Force has time to discuss them and determine whether the group is on the right path with these specific recommendations.
 - If there are different directions that the team should be taking, now is the time to encourage that debate between Task Force members.
- There is overlap between recommendations and strategies, many of which were discussed during the other deep dive discussions. Mike will be highlighting these ideas throughout the course of the meeting, and it may be appropriate to table that discussion for another meeting.
 - This is the last of three virtual Task Force discussions.
- The project team was introduced - RCLCO, JMT, PRR, Inc., and Neighborhood Fundamentals
- General housekeeping reminders
 - Please keep yourself on mute if not speaking
 - Try and hold discussion to designated discussion time in the meeting.
 - This meeting is being recorded and will be posted on the project webpage.

Relevant Challenges covered include:

- 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.
- 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.

Interventions for Focused Discussion:

- **Adopt APFO reforms**
 - 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
- **Task Force Discussion: What concrete, actionable ideas do you have to make APFO work better?**
 - Mike – There is no single way that jurisdictions manage growth.
 - Bill McCormack – APFO is a barrier to school and road infrastructure, which is not true. We should state what APFO does stand as a barrier against.
 - Mike Spotts – Finding that APFO is serving as a barrier to housing affordability. We can rephrase that for our intent.
 - Paul Casey – One concern is that APFO is a lightning rod issue. People are passionate because of the need for good schools. One idea is creating an exception to APFO for affordable housing. There may be a way to look at that kind of modification – have had some modest success
 - Pat Sylvester – Would like to see the exemption for certain types of housing be more automatic. We should carefully craft what the exemption for housing would look like. Look at schools with FARM rates at 25 percent or more, and allow an exemption for market-rate housing for farms areas but are above the county average. Allow affordable housing to be exempt in low FARM rate districts.
 - Peter Engel – Likes this idea. Going back to big picture – APFO doesn't reduce crowding in schools. Would look at the whole policy broadly because he doesn't think it's accomplishing what people want

- it to accomplish. Build more capacity on current school sites. Would need to look at density in east and west when it comes to building.
- Brent Loveless – Not hearing anyone talk about traffic intersections, so we're focused on schools. School Board member isn't present because they're on an APFO call. Numbers and formulas need to be very accurate. Our recommendations are for APFO to work as intended but without sacrifice to the community. The entire community will benefit from everyone having adequate facilities.
 - Steve Breeden – Montgomery County's APFO limit is 120 percent capacity. We don't have to build another house in HoCo and that's not going to fix the problem. Would throw out APFO. We've got to change something to make something work.
 - Brent Loveless – 473 additional units on Maple Lawn. Haven't even talked about affordable housing exemptions.
 - Caroline Harper – What are the needs of different groups across Howard County? Look at our population as whole.
 - Mike Spotts – Consultant team recommendations include
 - Creating a joint funding mechanism for housing and schools to help alleviate underlying issues that APFO works to address.
 - Recalibrating APFO provisions to allow growth where it is beneficial
 - Allow for growth where school capacity is not a problem.
 - **Open up for discussion:**
 - Brent Loveless – Goal is to create enough capacity for the children as we grow. Pay to Play – does not support. Want these controls to ensure that there's an adequate condition across Howard County. Have some competing overlaps – socioeconomic versus growth – so we need to make sure that initiatives align.
 - Mike Spotts – Similar model used in Atlanta, via a tax-increment financing district – the concept for building support by addressing the issue of schools and housing simultaneously is the take-away from that effort.
 - Peter Engel – Was trying to think of revenue options.
 - Paul Casey – Affordable housing trust fund – what amount could we raise from these other resources? Suggestion in the west – as a practical matter, doesn't it involve what are the limits of water and sewer infrastructure? I don't think we can make the recommendation without taking the next step to make sure that that infrastructure would work. We need to factor that in if we're going to make that recommendation.
 - Mike Spotts – Yes, this is overlapping with the general plan where we'll coordinate with them to factor those things in.
 - Steve Breeden – You have to have the zoning to do those things. Then APFO. Open the west. Put some villages out there. Bonus density. Then APFO.
 - Pat Sylvester – Columbia – that is where FARM rates are high and our housing rates are lower. There's already a struggle to redistrict. We need to be careful in where we concentrate.
 - Brent Loveless – Our membership does support affordable housing and keeping the FARM rates low. Also do no harm to public education.
 - Pat Sylvester – There should be a broader involvement of the non-school population to determine what is a quality school and what is capacity. Maybe a housing-schools inter-agency cooperation. Perhaps a virtual world needs to be included too.
 - **Public Land discussion:** Mike Spotts – specific sites be reserved for a percentage of affordable housing.
 - Paul Casey – Enthusiastic about making use of public land. Not much is left.
 - Mike Spotts – Goes over examples in King County and Sound Transit 80-80-80 (most ambitious).
 - Paul Casey – We're talking in abstract but where can we actually do this?
 - Steve Breeden – What do we mean when we say public land or affordable housing?
 - Mike Spotts – Examples include co-locating an affordable senior housing building with a community center as part of a redevelopment.
 - Bill McCormack – general goal to including consideration of housing issues by all agencies.
 - **Identify creative opportunities to advance housing development and facility expansion goals**
 - 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
- Mike Spotts – Broadening the range of partners past the county government. A church building affordable housing in its parking lot, etc.
- **Create a robust multifamily preservation strategy**
 - 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
 - Establish transfer of development rights program to create resources for preserving/rehabilitating existing rental properties.
- **Preservation strategy discussion:**
 - Mike Spotts – interventions needed. It's easier to keep what you have than to build new. Gain understanding of what should be preserved.
 - Peter Engel – Department of Housing in Baltimore did it, so did the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Seeing cosmetic upgrades and then raising rent \$300
 - Mike Spotts – Lengthy planning zoning study wouldn't be worth it if owners are going for value added.
 - Brent Loveless – We're going to have a lot of garden apartments coming.
 - Mike Spotts – Good point – creates a call to action before neighborhood is fully gentrified.
 - Bill McCormack – Preservation done in context of communities, schools, etc. North Laurel has an overabundance of apartments. Owings Mills – would help to get high-end single family housing up there on lots of land. Will help move the FARM rates more toward the average. No net decrease.
 - Mike Spotts – Slide that directly addresses some of what Bill just mentioned. One-for-one replacement. We want to think about what we mean when we say "preserving affordability." Not incompatible with wanting income diversity. Social equity – want people who currently live there to benefit – be allowed to return or move to different communities, but it should be their choice. Involuntary displacement does great harm to low-income households.
 - Joan Driessen – Ability to stay in neighborhoods when things happen is beneficial.
 - Peter Engel – Forced displacement is a bad mechanism for diversifying neighborhoods.
 - Mike Spotts – Sometimes a property cannot be preserved, but affordability can be preserved in the neighborhood through redevelopment.
 - Brent Loveless – more described examples of density flexibility
 - Mike Spotts – Tearing down a garden-style apartment, you could have half of the parcel of high-end townhome, and the other end condos. Or a 4-5 story apartment and a community park.
 - Bill McCormack – Wouldn't want preservation from deterring development in communities with high FARM rates. We need to be able to work toward more balance.
 - Caroline Harper – How do we diversify opportunities? Can contradict each other – so caution.
 - Mike Spotts – Don't want to create a scenario where a whole neighborhood is income restricted.
 - Paul Casey – Thought of HOPE VI program where there was significant displacement of families. The effort was to acknowledge failures and concentration in some communities. One of the overall policies that we want to promote is to diversify housing. Talk to residents about if they want to return.
 - Caroline Harper – Was evaluating HOPE VI Program in Baltimore and D.C.
 - Peter Engel – Maybe we continue to look at this and tailor it. Density limits have been used for so long to keep people out.
 - Mike Spotts – This is the first time that we've presented this concept and it still needs some refinement. Based on our outreach, the concerns are potential displacement. There are concerns about residents not wanting to be gentrified out of their communities. This is the first draft of the recommendations – please reach out to consultants – this is the start of the conversation.
 - Steve Breeden – Whoever is buying these things, they have to make a decision quickly. Negotiate rental agreements with private landlords.



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- Caroline Harper – In areas like Oakland Mills if you want to do something to your private home , that you give a family an opportunity for private owner to accept a voucher with no pressure to return to the apartment.
- Quanita Kareem – 99% of the time, the county isn't going to exercise the right.

- **Improve housing quality in neighborhoods experiencing disinvestment/poor housing conditions**
 - Coordinate rehabilitation subsidies in neighborhoods experiencing or at risk of disinvestment
 - Provide capital subsidies for multifamily rental rehabilitation, including affordability provisions.
 - 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.
- **Housing conditions discussion:**
 - Brent Loveless – Chief of Police was conducting all code enforcement in Columbia. Beachcrest – trailer park that was in disarray and was bulldozed. Then hyper enforcement. His request is that we need additional resources but also checks and balances.
 - Quanita Kareem – Does have a repair department https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Housing_Repair

What's next? Next step is to finalize draft recommendations and then there's the public meeting process and final recommendations in the winter.

Closing

Bill McCormack and Caroline Harper thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the discussion.

For more information, please visit the Task Force webpage at:

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/HousingTaskForce>