



Meeting Summary

Date: 12/10/2020

Time: 1:00-3:00

Location: Zoom Call

A Task Force meeting was held via Zoom on December 10, 2020. The following were in attendance:

Name	Sector	Employer / Organization
Task Force Members		
Kelly Cimino, <i>Project Manager</i>	Housing/ Community Development	Dept. of Housing and Community Development
Dr. Caroline Harper, <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Bill McCormack, <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Pat Sylvester, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing/Disabilities	Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation
Brent Loveless, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Education	PTA Council of Howard County
Peter Engel, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing	Howard County Housing Commission
Roger Barnes	Faith Community	African American Roundtable
Steve Breeden	Developer	SDC Group
Jennifer Broderick	Housing/Affordability	Bridges to Housing Stability
Anne Brinker	Health/Policy	The Horizon Foundation
Paul Casey	Housing/Policy	
Jenna Crawley	Aging	Office on Aging/Dept. of Community Resources and Services
Mavis Ellis	Education	Howard County BOE
Kevin Kelehan	Legal	Carney Kelehan
Mike Mitchell	Immigrant Community	FIRN
David Nitkin	Employer/Healthcare	Howard County General Hospital, Johns Hopkins Medicine
Linda Wengel	Affordability/Council Representative	
Phyllis Zolotorow	Seniors/Council Representative	
Consultant Team		
Erin Talkington	Consultant Team	RCLCO
Jacob Ross	Consultant Team	RCLCO
Michael Spotts	Consultant Team	Neighborhood Fundamentals
Tracee Strum-Gilliam	Consultant Team	PRR, Inc.
Elisabeth McCollum	Consultant Team	JMT
Allysha Lorber	Consultant Team	JMT
Sarah Diehl	Consultant Team	JMT
Additional Community Members		
Kim Eisenreich		



Khaled Helmi	Islamic Community	
Quanita Kareem		Howard County Dept. of Housing and Community Development
Matt Noonkester	Howard County General Plan Team	City Explained, Inc.
Jerah Smith	Howard County General Plan Team	City Explained, Inc.
Amy Gowan		Howard County Dept. of Planning and Zoning
Grace Kubofcik		
Jackie Eng		

The purpose of this meeting was to review the Task Force’s progress to date, present an update on the planning process (including results from continued community meetings and outreach efforts) and present select recommendations for discussion. There was also allotted time in the meeting for an open discussion and comments from members of the public who participated on the call.

The following items were discussed:

Process Update – Presented by Erin Talkington

- Erin explained that in this point of the process, we will be presenting to the Task Force the revised recommendations for the last round of feedback before handing them off to the General Plan team. This step will allow the consultant team to refine recommendations based on General Plan team feedback. This process will take place during January and February, and we will all come back together as a group in early March 2021.
 - Erin then turned the floor over to the General Plan team from City Explained, Inc. (CEI) to explain how the Task Force’s recommendations will be integrated within the General Plan.

Integration with the General Plan – Presented by Matt Noonkester

- Matt noted that the General Plan team has been monitoring and tracking progress of the recommendations of the Task Force; they are most interested in hearing from this meeting about preferences and priorities of the recommendations.
- Matt also explained that the County now has House Bill 1045 to consider - integrating affordable housing as a part of this process.
 - HB 1045 changed requirements for a general plan by state statute and talks about what topics need to be included. There are now rules that specifically require that housing affordability be considered and emphasizes data and analysis. As a part of the bill, it is optional to include goals and standards.
- The General Plan team is focusing most on recommendations that impact the type, uses, etc. of housing in the scenario process, which will be starting in January.
 - Scenario planning will involve looking at multiple future scenarios side by side. Conflict and differing opinions are invited as it helps provide a basis for better analysis.

Community Meeting & Outreach – Presented by Allysha Lorber

- Recap of outreach efforts overall
 - Draft recommendations posted online November 6th – this was advertised through many ways.
 - Hosted two interactive discussions online through Zoom and were able to talk to over 100 participants.
 - Public Survey: Open through most of November, allowed the public to provide feedback on specific issues.
 - Environmental Justice Outreach: Ongoing coordination

- November Public Open House Meetings
 - Combined total of over 100 attendees
 - Primary Themes:
 - Concerns over how an increase in housing density and affordable housing may affect established neighborhoods, infrastructure, school enrollment, and school assistance programs.
 - Questions about funding mechanisms, tax implications, etc.
 - Desire for better accommodations and programs for seniors and people with disabilities.
 - Support for programs that promote equity and engaging with diverse communities in the planning process.
 - Meeting summaries are posted [online](#).
- **Public Survey: Overview of Feedback – Presented by Jake Ross**
 - Ran Nov. 6th – Nov. 30th and was an opportunity for community members to respond to each of the 74 draft recommendations.
 - 220 complete responses – not representative of the county as a whole
 - Nearly 30% did not express support for any of the 74 recommendations.
 - Jake added that we are interpreting this feedback to mean that there is a sizeable portion of the community that does not believe the County should be addressing housing opportunities, or that it should be prioritizing other issues first.
- Most popular recommendations were those that largely would have direct positive impacts to those that are already living in Howard County.
- The least popular recommendations included those that suggest we make changes in zoning, facilitate more diverse housing, and making exemptions APFO.
 - This suggests there is some skepticism about if more housing or more affordable housing is really needed, but our analysis and understanding from conversations with the Task Force suggest otherwise.
 - Many of these recommendations are the types that require further evaluation, in some cases through the General Plan process. This approach will help us identify the recommendations that have the greatest potential before finalizing.
- Jake explained that the main themes from the open-ended responses suggest that communications and rollout of the final plan will be very important. People in the community need to hear about this plan by people like Task Force members, as this will help them to understand why it is important. Since the sample size of the survey respondents was not representative of the County, so it is important to continue to share information with your colleagues.
- **Environmental Justice Outreach – Presented by Traceé Strum-Gilliam**
 - Traceé explained that the team had planned to attend 15 community events in person throughout the spring/summer, but have had to pivot our efforts to reach out to EJ communities in the most effective ways during the pandemic.
 - Fliers promoting the survey, etc. were sent out in English, Spanish, and Korean and sent to many EJ organizations.
 - Recently, over 50 EJ advocacy groups and organizations were invited to attend two small group meetings, with follow-up emails and calls placed to all invitees.
 - 10 groups and organizations participated with others committed to review and share the draft recommendations.
 - Key themes from the meetings included concern regarding incorporation of recommendations to address senior community needs and requests for the development of strategies to manage “flight” risks in western Howard County as plans to expand housing choice move forward. There was also forward thinking regarding the creation of more isolated pockets of poverty across the

county and discussions regarding the incorporation of transit, transportation, and water infrastructure considerations.

- Traceé also noted there was a request for a small group meeting with the Asian immigrant community; these meetings will be held in native languages and are being scheduled.

Land Use, Planning, & Zoning Select Recommendations – Presented by Jake Ross

- Use Policy to Produce Income-Restricted Units
 - Recommendation I-1.1: Update MIHU rules and fee structures, with the primary goal of producing more units throughout the County that are integrated within communities.
 - Jake noted there are two strategies that MIHU policy can use: raise revenue and encourage development. The second approach has been favored.
 - Recommendation I-1.2: Create additional incentives to encourage the production of affordable, more deeply affordable, and/or accessible units beyond the MIHU baseline rules.
 - Recommendation I-1.4: Evaluate use of an affordable housing overlay.
 - Important because most of the affordable housing in the County is very concentrated. This helps to ensure equitable access across the entire area.
 - Recommendation I-1.5: Complement with process for affordable housing investment in “Preservation-Revitalization Neighborhoods”
 - Examples of these neighborhoods are Long Reach, Oakland Mills, and much of the Route 1 Corridor.
- Enable More Equitable Growth Throughout County
 - Recommendation I-2.1: Conduct a study to see if there are strategic locations in the Rural West (and other undeveloped, non-preserved areas) where it is feasible to accommodate increased development.
 - Recommendation I-2.2: Provide guidance on minimum growth and affordability goals countywide.
 - Jake noted that in regard to minimum growth, there should be at least 70 new housing units for every 100 new jobs in any given year. In terms of affordability, at least 15% of new units should be available to households making less than 60% of AMI.
- Facilitate Lower-Cost Housing Typologies
 - Recommendation I-3.2: Provide regulatory flexibility to increase ADU opportunities
 - Allow a wider range of building types with less restrictive design requirements, revise lot size requirements, and remove owner occupancy requirements.
 - Important to note that we are not recommending that any type of ADU be allowed in any location, nor are we recommending that the County remove occupancy requirements entirely. However, ADUs could be a helpful tool for providing more affordable, diverse, and/or age-appropriate housing opportunities, and increased flexibility is necessary for them to do so

Programs and Policies Select Recommendations – Presented by Jake Ross

- Improve Housing Sector Coordination and Boost Capacity
 - Recommendation II-1.1: Create an inter-agency housing opportunities task force.
 - Task force to include DPZ, HCD, and CRS – goal being to set strategic direction, prioritize resources, and ensure that housing affordability is considered in policies not explicitly about housing.
- Raise and Deploy Capital for Affordable Housing
 - Recommendation II-2.1: Identify new, ongoing funding resources that can generate a large, upfront allocation of capital.
 - Recommendation II-2.2: Establish an affordable housing trust fund to create a formal, coordinated, and predictable structure for allocating housing funding.

- Potential uses for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund could include “gap financing” for affordable projects, short-to-mid term acquisition funding for strategically important sites/properties, rental housing contracts with market-rate owners, among others.
- Create a Robust Multifamily Preservation Strategy
 - Recommendation II-3.: Allow density transfers and form/height flexibility to support mixed-income redevelopment when the redevelopment of existing affordable housing is necessary.
 - In cases when this is not possible, there are other solutions discussed below.
 - Recommendation II-3.8: When redevelopment is necessary, negotiate rental contracts and/or provide tax incentives to facilitate additional affordable units and/or deeper income targeting in the redeveloped property or others throughout the neighborhood
 - Recommendation II-3.9: When redevelopment is necessary, provide tenant relocation support, mobility assistance and counseling, and rental assistance to existing tenants who prefer to explore housing options in other neighborhoods.
- Support Households with Specialized Needs
 - Recommendation II-6.1: Create a local rental assistance pilot program to enhance housing stability for the highest need households, and to support County residents in times of natural disaster or economic instability.

APFO Select Recommendations – Presented by Jake Ross

- Identify Creative Mechanisms to Fund Housing and Schools
 - Recommendation III-1.1: Identify new, ongoing funding resources for capital investment.
 - Recommendation III-1.2: Allow developers to proffer land or a portion of a site for school or facility construction in exchange for zoning flexibility and/or density on the remaining portion of the site.
- Evaluate Targeted Changes to the APFO
 - Recommendation III-2.1: Consider amending APFO restrictions, moratoria, and fee structures for housing in areas with existing transportation infrastructure and strong mobility characteristics.
 - Recommendation III-2.2: Consider automatic exemptions from school-related moratoria for affordable housing in low FARM school districts and market-rate housing in high FARM districts.
 - Recommendation III-2.3: Consider whether specific types of housing should receive automatic or limited exemptions from moratoria as well.

Next Steps – Presented by Jake Ross

- During December, the consultant team will continue to share and revise recommendations based on feedback and continued outreach.
 - Recommendations will be shared with the General Plan team.
- RCLCO team will be working with the General Plan team during January and February to better understand impacts.
- The final plan will be presented to the Task Force in early March before it is presented to County Executive Ball.

Task Force Open Discussion

- Roger asked in the chat if it is correct to assume that wherever recommendations impact different areas of interest, i.e. housing vs. education vs. transportation, zoning, etc. that the County Council decides final outcomes instead of individual agencies?
 - Per Matt, the General Plan is a logical place to discuss competing interests in the County related to housing, environment, land use, transportation, community character, supporting infrastructure, etc. The public will be invited to weigh in on these topics (and the relationships between them) during our planning

process. Ultimately, the Planning Board will review the General Plan and make a recommendation for action to County Council. County Council adopts the General Plan and presumably weighs the relationships and priorities between various topics/interests in the Plan to plot a course forward.

- Paul asked in the chat about how the most recent survey results compare with the survey results from the preliminary survey done in late summer. Didn't the earlier survey generally support affordable housing initiatives?
 - Per Erin, yes, the survey this summer was very supportive of the need to address housing affordability. We had more responses and the demographics were very similar to the county's overall make-up.
- Steve noted in the chat that he wanted to be sure that when we say increase density or bonus density, that similar unit types can be achieved. A single-family home isn't the same as a townhome or apartments, so we need to be clear that the extra density used to offset the cost of the affordable unit needs to be careful that it does not reduce the value of the base unit.
- Steve also commented that in recommendation I-1.4, 40% of units at 60% of AMI is too high. Not enough market rate units will be left to pay for the 40%.
 - Mike mentioned that the purpose of the proposed overlay is for developments that are primarily affordable (i.e., subsidized or tax credit financed) to proceed in an area where there is minimal affordable housing. The plan's other provisions (such as the MIHU density bonus) would facilitate the creation of affordable units through market-rate development.
- David commented in the chat that he very much likes and supports the specific numbers for housing units tied to jobs, even irrespective of APFO. We've talked a lot about having specific targets in our recommendation, and he is supportive of this direction.
- Pat added that she thought that 15% of overall types of units is not adequate. 15% is too low for MIHU. We need to be thinking about making sure that the goal that we are setting does not include all the units that are already in the pipeline. What we are projecting should be over and above what is already in the pipeline.
- Paul asked what the 15% represents? If we get to that level, that keeps us at about the same level we are at now. How did we get to the 300 number? Does this include housing for seniors? How did we arrive at the number – it should be higher, and does it include various groups?
 - Mike responded that the 15% is meant to correspond with the current need for affordable housing given current population in the county.
 - He also noted that these are production goals; we should look at the land use to come up with an appropriate goal – we have other tools (rental assistance pilot, modifications to existing units, etc.) to address affordability. It is important to acknowledge that we need to do more than that to address specific needs.
 - Paul noted that he would appreciate drilling down to get more specific target. He's not sure that 15% covers all groups adequately.
 - David asked whether these are just targets or recommendations?
 - Mike noted these are separate targets – ways that the county can measure success in each of the areas.
 - Pat added that 15% is too low for affordability. We should have a separate goal regardless of what overall production is. 30% is also not enough.
 - Linda expressed agreement with Pat.
 - Paul added in the chat that he also agreed with Pat. The percentage should be greater. We know the percentage of affordable housing is not sufficient now and we should try to do better to reduce the gap. The mixed-income developments targeted for Downtown Columbia are proposed to be 50% affordable at 60% AMI and 50% market. They will have a combination of financing sources including LHITC and state funding. Does that model help to answer the question about how to finance the 60% AMI units?
 - Steve responded in the chat that Downtown Columbia has a very low land cost, as it was given 5500 units, and then ANOTHER 900 units to do the affordable housing. When we do projects outside of Columbia, we need to buy the land at market prices, and THEN

provide 10 to 15% for MIHU's which we actually build and rent at much lower rents. Therefore, the only way the MIHU's are supported is by charging extra rent for the 85 or 90% of the market rate units. Completely different from Columbia.

- Phyllis added that she is living in a senior citizen area and is looking for an explanation for affordability as she does not see this applying to seniors.
 - Mike responded that the recommendation for a local rental assistance pilot program would be open to seniors who are at 60% of AMI and below and spending more than 50% of income on housing, and the timing depends on the county's willingness to adopt and move forward.
- Paul expressed the need for an executive summary - we need to make it more comprehensible and explain the need for increasing affordable housing opportunities for the economic and social well-being of the county. For example, last year's Spending Affordability Advisor Committee warned that "county businesses will not have the incentive to grow, nor will new businesses wish to locate in Howard County, if housing for their workers is in short supply." We should outline the reasons why we are doing this, and he would like to see us do something that brings out the major themes as to why everyone would benefit from this. Also, to make it more readable, it might be helpful for side headings that create targets that make it easier to understand – might make the document more user friendly and less daunting.
 - Leo and Jen added that they agreed with Paul and thought it was a good idea.
 - Per Erin, we are planning for a more digestible version for the public facing document that details at a high level the need in the county and what the plan for various groups in the county is. It will also provide a high-level synopsis of goals and how different groups will each benefit from the recommendations (seniors, etc.)
 - Paul added that it is important to stress the support of affordable housing as found in the first survey.
 - Mike M. noted in the chat that he really appreciated Paul's points. The results of the survey suggest that at least some people may realize the depth of the challenges. If this is conveyed publicly and briefly, people can relate to people, neighbors and families.
- Brent noted that there are three themes that the PTA's membership has voted on; items that accelerate growth of housing without offsetting mitigation of school resources. We want to make sure we do not create competition for resources. Across the board, PTAs are not opposed to affordable housing, just want to make sure it is being done equitably and support the measures to get to that goal.
 - Mavis noted in the chat that she was thankful for Brent sharing from PTACHC and the concerns about having adequate school capacity.
- Bill suggested that the high level recommendations created from the Task Force led discussions (the blueprint) be used as the executive summary, and that, combined with toolkit from consultants will be used to get the work done.
 - Erin asked the group if this adequately represents the will of the Task Force.
 - Linda noted that the authors of the report should author the executive summary to ensure the same terminology is used.
 - Pat added the consultants should draft the executive summary and that Bill did a great job of putting together the general concepts but it would need some work to fit into the direction of the report.
 - Paul asked if Bill's recommendations can be an addendum to the report? We don't want to lose them as they have value. How can they be included into what we are doing?
 - Erin noted this is something we can discuss with Kelly as far as the direction of the report.
 - Leo added that we need to watch how we write and phrase things to match in tone. He did not see what Bill wrote as different from what the consultant team came up with.
 - Caroline noted there must be a space for transparency. There is a version of meetings that we have had that includes everyone and there are also independent conversations that have happened amongst those with particular interests. It is clear that these are different conversations

- that came to the same conclusion. If there are any gaps or things that were not realistic, this should be noted. There needs to be a clear record as to how we got here for future reference.
- Paul said he would not want this addendum to counteract the rest of the proposal. It is important not to create a sense of creating recommendations but to show how the Task Force discussions helped to feed the ultimate recommendations
 - Bill noted the Task Force led discussions were held because some members thought they needed more time to discuss. The document he put together used the format of the plan of Howard 2030. Going through these draft policies, there was feedback as to what the Task Force thought. Changes were made and modifications proposed that were sent to Kelly and Caroline for editing and consideration to act as a final representation of the results of the smaller Task Force led discussions.
 - Kelly noted she has been sharing summaries with the consultant team throughout the process so they are aware of what they have been talking about. The Task Force led summaries are a little more aggressive than the current recommendations from the Task Force – it is challenging to take the things that are in the Task Force led discussion and fit them into the plan, and there will have to be a delicate balance of how they are integrated.
- Paul noted that he thought we have some conflict in that we don't think some of the recommendations are aggressive enough in terms of numbers. It would be best to have a report that everyone puts into as much as possible to be most effective - we may need to push to be a little more aggressive on some of these numbers.
 - Leo agreed; we need to support what the body says.
 - Caroline added there needs to be a history and understanding of how we got here. There are ways that we can write things to include future considerations, etc. to acknowledge the work that has been done while being transparent. What is our legacy as a Task Force and what do we show for the work that has been done?
 - Pat asked that as the General Plan team looks at scenario planning, will we get a copy of what they find? What happens between now and March – how do we work through that if it looks much different?
 - Per Matt, there are project advisory committee meeting twice in January. He encouraged the Task Force to continue to provide comments to keep it fresh and on their radar. Continued advocacy will benefit the process.
 - Sign up for the mailing list of the General Plan [here](#). Announcements will preview what will be going on during the meetings.
 - <https://www.hocobydesign.com/> is the one stop shop for everything with the General Plan.

Additional Comments from the Meeting Chat

- From Pat: I'd like to see stronger language related to accessible and affordable housing for people with disabilities integrated and included into every community and development in the county. II-6.8 is vague. Can we add recommendation that county prioritize and make a condition for funding/support that property have units accessible and affordable to PWDs?
- From Steve: When we all agreed to compromise and come up with recommendations for the APFO Task Force a few years ago, members who did not like some of the compromises came out against the task force agreements. We did not have any agreement among the members to support the recommendations. The same thing could happen here, which would again undermine our work over this past year.
- From Pat: On homeownership, can we add language about not just helping people buy in areas with less expensive homes and being willing to provide additional assistance to help people buy in high barrier or more expensive neighborhoods to ensue de-concentration results?
 - On policy and programs there is a lot here that will require growth of HCD and this should be coordinated with HCHC so we don't duplicate efforts/experience.

- From Paul: The definition of Minimum Growth indicates an average of 1,125 new housing units each year between 2010 and 2019, but isn't the average number during the past two years is much lower? If the report showed that declining trend of new units each year, I think it would underscore the critical need now for taking action to provide more housing opportunities. It makes the case for action stronger.
 - In section III, I suggest that the recommendation of Creatively utilizing land assets in the County should more strongly indicated a preference for use for developing affordable housing opportunities.
 - The recommendations use the term "retail nodes" for reference to West County areas for potential housing opportunities, I think Jacob previously used the term Service Area which would seem to be a more user-friendly term and I would recommend using that term.

Public Comment & Wrap-Up

- Kelly thanked the consultant team and Task Force members and appreciated all of the opinions that have come forth during development of recommendations. If you have additional feedback, email it to her, and she will share it with the consultant team.