



## Meeting Summary

**Date:** 5/14/2020

**Time:** 3:00-5:00

**Location:** Virtual Call

A Housing Market Workgroup Meeting was held on Zoom on May 14, 2020. The following were in attendance:

Name	Workgroup Affiliation	Employer / Organization
Pat Sylvester – <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing/Disabilities	Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation
Dr. Caroline Harper – <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Bill McCormack – <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Kelly Cimino	Housing/Community Development	DHCD
Steve Breeden	Workgroup Member/Developer	SDC Group
Jennifer Broderick	Workgroup Member/Housing/Affordability	Bridges to Housing Stability
Jeff Bronow	Workgroup Member/Planning/Zoning	Howard Co. Dept. of Planning & Zoning
Roger Barnes	Workgroup Member/Faith Community	African American Roundtable
Maria Miller	Workgroup Member/Housing/Finance	Brightview Senior Living
Brent Loveless	Task Force Member/Education	PTA Council of Howard County
Leonardo McClarty	Business	Howard County Chamber of Commerce
Aaron Greenfield	Public	Maryland Multi-Housing Association
Jackie Eng	Public	Affordability Coalition
Charles Thomas	Public	N/A
Laura Salganik	Public	Affordability Coalition
Jessie Keller	Public	Maryland Multi-Housing Association
Jacob Ross	Consultant Team	RCLCO
Elisabeth McCollum	Consultant Team, Facilitator	JMT
Michael Spotts	Consultant Team	Neighborhood Fundamentals
Sarah Diehl	Consultant Team	JMT
Tracee Strum-Gilliam	Consultant Team	PRR, Inc.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the engagement strategy of the Taskforce moving forward in response to COVID-19 and to present new housing market research to the Workgroup. Additionally, the



meeting was to be used to facilitate a group discussion of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Howard County based on the information presented during the meeting.

The following items were discussed:

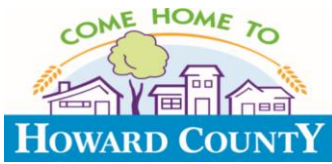
Kelly Cimino welcomed all workgroup members to the meeting and thanked them for their time. She also let everyone know that the Task Force has received a request from Brian McLaughlin to substitute Christine Madigan to serve in his place. Her contact information has been added on the website.

### **I. Update on Project Process Given COVID-19 – Presented by Elisabeth McCollum**

- Adjusted Schedule due to COVID-19
  - The survey will be launched earlier than originally scheduled (next week or two)
  - Additional Workgroup meetings added (including today's meeting)
  - Project extended into early 2021 instead of late 2020
- Public Engagement Strategy and Activities
  - Hoping for a public meeting July – if not possible, there will be a presentation and video on the project website
  - Another public meeting in November if possible
  - Will rely more on website to get information out
  - Much of the environmental justice research and outreach will take place in the fall
  - Taskforce assistance is key - reach out to personal network and get the word out about the project, the survey, etc.
- Website Enhancements
  - Information will be added, including FAQ section, question/comment box, updated fact sheets at key milestones, virtual presentations
- Workgroup Question, referring to public engagement: What is a Pop-Up Meeting?
  - Per Elisabeth, a pop-up meeting is meant to be where the Taskforce would have a table set up at a community event, such as the Howard County Green Fest. These events allow us to engage with the public and catch people out in the community, particularly community members who may not have heard about the project or do not know about the website.

### **II. Role of Task Force & How We Will Use Goals**

- Housing Market Workgroup Goals: Primary focus on understanding and leveraging the housing market to support the overall Task Force Goals
  - Evaluate ways that the market can be incentivized to provide a broader diversity of housing than what exists in Howard County today
  - Leverage additional information and research from the upcoming General Plan update to understand the impact of future growth on housing needs
  - Determine what housing needs and means are outside control of County Government – school development process, Columbia Downtown Housing resources, etc.
  - Assess opportunities for different housing types to meet a broader market supply
- None of the groups had the same goals, but there was some overlap in themes, etc.
- Goals are meant to guide the Workgroup's work



### **III. Presentation of New Information – Presented by Jake Ross**

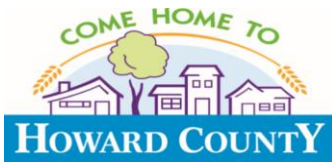
- Findings are generally the same from last presentation. Some numbers have changed based on new data that was received from the county.
- Key Findings / Lessons Learned-To-Date
  - The employment base in Howard County is increasing
  - Howard County has more families and middle-aged households than its neighbors
  - Fewer people live and work in Howard County than in neighboring jurisdictions
    - This suggests a lack of housing
  - Most new rental housing is affordable to households making around 80% of AMI, equivalent to \$60,000 for a two-person household
  - Very little new for sale houses that are affordable to households making less than 120% of AMI, equivalent to roughly \$110,000 for a four-person household
  - Howard County has less than its fair share of low- and moderate-income households than other nearby counties, particularly in the case of low-income singles and couples
- Next steps from last set of Workgroup Meetings
  - The consultant team wanted to expand on the analysis that has been done and focus on looking into the amount that people are paying for housing in relation to income.
  - What is the character of housing supply, beyond its cost and size? How do these things vary across the county? These items have helped frame the focus of this presentation.

### **Housing Production and Supply**

- Howard County has more jobs than housing units
- Howard County likely requires between 30,000 and 40,000 additional housing units to reach the housing units-to-jobs ratios seen in other nearby jurisdictions
- Howard County added an average of 2,960 new jobs per year over the last decade
  - The county has built about half of what it should have considering growth: Howard County is not building enough housing to keep up with job growth.

### **Housing Demand & Affordability**

- The AMI bands for the Baltimore PMSA – which includes Howard County – were used for analysis. It is important to be using these regional bands, as they are helpful to identify differences between Howard County and other surrounding areas.
- Howard County has its own AMI bands as well – these are used for local programs like its Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) program.
- The majority of households in Howard County (50%) are homeowners that make over 120% of AMI
- Relative to its neighbors, Howard County has high homeownership rates
  - This is largely due to higher income households, and many low and moderate income households are renters
  - County should be thinking through ways to preserve this trend
  - 74% of households are owner-occupied



### **For-Sale Housing Supply**

- The for-sale housing inventory is diverse, but that diversity is not based on what is being built today: diversity is being lost
- Market is not maintaining diversity
- Overall number of homes (new construction homes as well as re-sales) being sold has gone down from what it was 15-20 years ago
- Higher priced homes are more likely to be newer on average
- Homes under \$350,000: there are a decent amount being sold, but the majority are old homes that may require substantial updates or may not be as desirable. Looking at single-family detached product, there are five times as many homes at this price point currently available in both Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties than there are in Howard County. Plus, the homes at these price points are newer and larger than they are in Howard County.
- On average, new townhomes are roughly \$100,000 more expensive in Howard County right now than they are in Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties, and new single-family detached homes are roughly \$250,000 more expensive
- Just 10% of housing built in last ten years is affordable to those making less than 120% of AMI

### **Rental Housing Supply**

- Most rental housing is older, garden-style units
- New product has been affordable to a wide range of households
- It is important to build new rental housing but also preserve what is already there to preserve its affordability
- The bulk of rental housing available is concentrated in Columbia, Ellicott City, or the Route 1 Corridor
  - Outside of these locations there are fewer options; homeownership rates are higher
- New apartments (those built in the last 10 years) in Howard County are more affordable to middle-income renters than its neighbors
- Question from Roger Barnes: Do the developers building rental housing received financial incentives from the county?
  - Per Steve Breeden, no incentives are received from the county

### **Reconciliation of Supply & Demand**

- Large gap between supply and demand of rental housing when looking at 120% AMI households
- When looking at the cost burden of rental housing, it is mostly felt by low and very-low income households
- Cost burden of for sale housing is felt by households in all AMI bands, though low and very-low income households spend much more of their incomes on housing, on average, and are also more likely to be cost burdened
- Underserved Groups: Workforce Families, Market Rate Families, Seniors, Low-Income Renters, Professionals and other Renters-By-Choice
  - Strategies to serve them better: Households that are diverse in terms of age; a larger amount and greater diversity in type is needed than what is being provided today.
- Workgroup Question: with new rental garden style apartment buildings, are there requirements for ADA such as elevator access for the elderly, disabled, etc.?

- Per Jeff Bronow, age restricted units are the only unit types that are required to have universal design. Pat Sylvester added that ADA requirements in new construction only require the units on the ground floor to be accessible. However, if an elevator is added to the building, then all units must be accessible (or be able to be retrofitted to be accessible). Steve Breeden agreed, adding that to make economics work, we must build up and not out – most all new projects have elevators in them. Pat stressed that this is something that we must think about, and especially consider seniors, who are most likely to be on the lower end of the income spectrum.

### **Submarket Comparison**

- Used County's five planning areas to make comparison: The Rural West has a much different makeup of housing types than other submarkets in the county.
  - Amongst the other submarkets, the makeup of housing types is similar
- Most of home sales outside of the rural west are happening below \$350,000
- There is a clear difference between Columbia and the rest of Howard County in terms of housing age – the housing stock is much older in Columbia (majority built in the 1970s, 1980s)
  - These houses might require a lot of updates, etc. that aren't reflected in initial cost.
- Premium for new product: highest in Columbia, likely due to limited supply.
  - Jeff Bronow added that the Columbia planning area includes "New Town" zoned Columbia as well as a lot of the outparcels. All of the new single family homes have been built in the outparcels and not necessarily in "New Town" Columbia. Pat noted that within the outparcels, there are no Columbia Association (taxes).
- Lack of housing is pushing households to spend much more on housing than they should

### **Summary**

- Many of the key findings are the same from previous presentation
- Large takeaway: Howard County needs to add an additional 30,000-40,000 additional units to catch up with job growth.
- Most low-income renters are spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing. In Howard County, three-quarters of such "cost-burdened" renters make less than 60% of AMI.
- Cost burdens are seen at all AMI bands in the case of for-sale housing.
- Today, underserved groups in Howard County include market-rate families, workforce families, seniors, low-income renters, and professionals and other renters-by-choice. In almost all cases, these households require a greater amount and diversity of housing than what exists today.

### **Questions from the Workgroup**

- Pat Sylvester: When looking at homeownership rates or cost burden at different income levels, did we look at age distribution?
  - Per Jake, we looked at that for owners, but not renters

### **IV. Group Discussion of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Based on Information Presented**

- The consultant team has filled out a draft SWOT Analysis based on data, but it is important to get feedback from those who live and work in the county.



- A SWOT Analysis = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
- Strengths and Weaknesses = Within our control and present
- Opportunities and Threats = external factors, little control over. Something in the future looking towards.
- A SWOT Analysis is a foundation component of a planning study: what can we leverage and what do we need to address?
- **Strengths Discussion:**
  - Workgroup feedback re: Maple Lawn as part of the missing middle – we need to go back in and make sure that is really the case.
    - Per Steve, Maple Law doesn't include apartments or condos and is all single family. Because only a limited number of units could be built, they are all fairly large units.
    - Jeff agreed, Maple Lawn is at high end of the price spectrum, not the missing middle. Maple Lawn has fairly high density - neotraditional community but at a high cost.
  - Feedback re: the hypothesis – need to go back and remove the public housing reference. There is no public housing in the traditional sense in Howard County, but there are elements such as tax credit deals, etc.
  - Jennifer Broderick brought up all of the housing organizations that are present in the county: The Housing Commission, different entities, etc. There are many established housing advocates.
    - Caroline agreed, and suggested we add the engaged advocated- these groups include everyone and are responsive; reflect all aspects of the population. The non-profits and philanthropic community are also very active and engaged.
  - Pat: requested that the language be softened re: special needs, suggested diverse populations
  - Maria added a strength: the strength of the school system is driving the housing demand
    - Pat countered that the school system can also be considered an issue as to why we do not have more housing; might need to revisit under threats
  - Steve added strengths:
    - Location between Baltimore and Washington; leads to demand
    - There is room for expansion (only 30-40% is densely developed)
  - Pat added a strength: The Downtown Columbia Plan has density and affordability components, and should be diverse
- **Weaknesses Discussion**
  - Jeff added a weakness: no clear strategy to address infrastructure. Howard County does have an APFO, but it may need to be changed to be clearer and adapt to the current situation.
    - Pat added that there is a strategy, but it is not doing a good job of balancing multiple needs
    - Leonardo added that the APFO could be a threat
  - Leonardo questioned the statement that far fewer people who work in Howard County live there today
    - Per Jake, comparisons depend on the data source, in general the range in Howard County is 15-20/25% lower than neighboring counties. There is a lack of housing units when looking at ratio of housing to jobs.
    - Leonardo asked what the numbers have been historically? If the numbers mirror what have traditionally been the case, is that a good comparison?



- Jeff has data that shows that over time the share of people living and working in Howard County has gone up, but unsure how that compares to other counties. It is important to keep in mind that we live in a regional economy – not sure how important this statistic is based on where Howard County is located. Howard County is a great place to have an office building - lots of people coming in from neighboring counties.
  - Pat suggested new weaknesses:
    - Lack of transit and public access for travel to DC/Baltimore, everything is reliant on cars.
    - Suburban housing model (bedroom community) may not be appealing to younger generations.
  - Leonardo added a new weakness: lack of public transit and the timing/usage service hours does not fit the hours that people are traveling to jobs
  - Roger added a new weakness: lack of infrastructure and recreation amenities for families with young children (teenage children) - but depends on where you live in the county
    - Jen and Pat disagreed: this is a mixed bag issue, depends on the teen
  - Pat suggested a new weakness to expand on Roger's: finding ways to engage young people to take advantage of the available amenities - need better educational opportunities and access
  - Bill McCormack suggested a weakness: the 2-pole education system (the County average FARM rate)
  - Caroline added a weakness: concentrated poverty and NIMBYism
  - Steve added a weakness: not a lot to do for young adults (college age and young professionals) in Howard County
- **Opportunities Discussion:**
  - In general, the Task Force has received mixed feedback about the first item: "The market is capable of supplying many types and price points of housing that are not being built today, with limited or no subsidies."
    - Pat added that the market could be capable of supplying types or price points with limited or no subsidies but might need to open up parts of the county currently considered "off-limits" (rural west) to allow for more dense development. This would allow for new product types.
    - Jeff added that most of the rural west is preserved, so would not consider "lots" of land, but there is land available.
    - Maria challenged the bullet: need to consider density boosts or some way to create opportunities to do more with what you have
      - Steve agreed - we don't have the low value land that allows for increase in development that allows for economics to work
- **Threats Discussion:**
  - Roger added a threat: the lack of affordability threatens cultural diversity – the attractiveness of the County is diversity. It is important that we don't forget that culture is a big part of that and must be considered.
  - Pat added a threat: COVID-19 and the future societal/economic disruptions that it will have.
  - Steve, regarding the wording of "general resistance to new development:" get rid of the word "general" as there are specific instances.



- Leonardo added a threat: policies that have been introduced in the last couple of years have made development difficult and have impacted affordability (raising taxes and fees, curbing development, etc.)
- Pat added a threat: people struggle to talk across silos – people focused on just one issue, it's a threat if we cannot listen to people we do not agree with – need to listen and learn from each other
  - Roger agreed, cited single-issue advocacy.

#### **V. Open Discussion and Comments from Non- Workgroup Members**

- Immediate Workgroup Tasks:
  - Members should look at the draft survey that was sent out and provide comments to the team by the end of next week
  - Members should provide any ideas they have regarding possible FAQs to be included on the website
- Community member Jackie Eng suggested that looking at disaggregated data might be helpful, particularly in looking at equity issues across the county
- Community member Chuck Thomas added that a significant portion of people who leave the county (for work) barely cross the county border when commuting to NSA, so it is just as easy to live in Anne Arundel County
- Community member Laura Salganik suggested that cost burden or rent burden data be disaggregated by race and that this would be interesting to look at
- Steve Breeden added to make sure APFO is included in the threats
- As the meeting wrapped up, Bill McCormack and others expressed their thanks to the consultant team for putting this together and for the quality of materials presented.

***As a reminder, please refer to the Housing Opportunities Master Plan and Task Force Website for Zoom invitations and additional Workgroup Meeting Schedules. This information will also be emailed out in advance of each meeting.***

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/HousingTaskForce?fbclid=IwAR1kslsqE-RWcgo3hSaPQMRvhERjtcCpejCF78nsCrjTnvPkU08ulzi99-o>