



Meeting Summary

Date: 9/29/2020

Time: 3:00 – 5:10

Location: Virtual Call

A Task Force meeting was held over the phone on September 29, 2020. The following were in attendance:

Name	Sector	Employer / Organization
Housing Market Workgroup		
Pat Sylvester, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing/Disabilities	Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation
Dr. Caroline Harper, <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Roger Barnes	Faith Community	African American Roundtable
Steve Breeden	Developer	SDC Group
Jennifer Broderick	Housing/Affordability	Bridges to Housing Stability
Housing Affordability Workgroup		
Peter Engel, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Housing	Howard County Housing Commission
Anne Brinker	Health/Policy	The Horizon Foundation
Joan Driessen	Community Services	Association of Community Services /Housing Affordability Coalition
Mavis Ellis	Education	Howard County BOE
Mike Mitchell	Immigrant Community	FIRN
Cindy Parr	Disabilities	The Arc of Howard County
Paula Seabright	Employer/Council Rep.	Comcast
Linda Wengel	Affordability/Council Representative	
Housing Policy Workgroup		
Kelly Cimino, <i>Project Manager</i>	Housing/ Community Development	Dept. of Housing and Community Development
Brent Loveless, <i>Workgroup Chair</i>	Education	PTA Council of Howard County
Bill McCormack, <i>Task Force Co-Chair</i>	Housing/Policy	
Paul Casey	Housing/Policy	
Jenna Crawley	Aging	Office on Aging/Dept. of Community Resources and Services
Kevin Kelehan	Legal	Carney Kelehan
David Nitkin	Employer/Healthcare	Howard County General Hospital, Johns Hopkins Medicine
Larry Twele	Economic Development	Howard County Economic Dev. Authority
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
Julie Pagaduan	Consultant Team	Neighborhood Fundamentals
Additional Community Members		
Mary Kendall	Planning/Zoning	Howard Co. Dept. of Planning & Zoning
Hiruy Hadgu	Advocate	
Jackie Scott	Advocate	
Charles E. Thomas	Advocate	Village of Oakland Mills Board

The purpose of this meeting was to review the Task Force’s progress to date, present draft survey results, and present and discuss initial policy direction with the task force. There was also allotted time in the meeting for an open discussion and comments from members of the public who participated on the call.

Erin kicked off the meeting by thanking Task Force members and members of the public for attending. This is a pivotal point in the process where we will really be getting into the details of our framework for upcoming recommendations.

The following items were discussed:

Process Update – Presented by Allysha Lorber

- Schedule Moving Forward
 - Based on feedback from the chairs and the progress that has been made so far, we will be replacing the three separate workgroup meetings in October with three separate “deep dive” discussions based on structure of recommendations.
 - This will help to give us time to get on the same page with recommendations before the next community meeting, where they will be presented in draft form.
 - At each meeting, a set of three recommendations will be discussed in detail.
 - Each meeting will be open to the entire Task Force.
 - The meetings will be spread out over one to two weeks and will be scheduled for the weeks of October 12th and 19th. A scheduling email will be sent out after this meeting.

- August/September Community Meeting Wrap-Up
 - 68 Community Members in attendance, in addition to Task Force members and consultant staff
 - 8 breakout room discussions, with an average of 8-9 community members per room
 - 51% of meeting attendees heard about the meeting from a Task Force member, followed by 39% who heard about the meeting from a County email or web/social media post.
 - 31% of meeting attendees are renters, and 12% of meeting attendees receive housing assistance
 - 59% of meeting attendees were from Columbia, 16% from Ellicott City, and 8% from North Laurel/Southeast
 - We are continuing EJ outreach to increase geographic diversity going into community meeting #2.

- November Community Meeting Discussion – Potential Virtual Strategy
 - This meeting would follow a different format than that of the previous meetings. Materials to be posted online in early November include:
 - Summary of planning process to date and proposed recommendations
 - Detailed description of recommendations
 - Link to a public survey where participants can respond if they agree/disagree with the recommendations.
 - This survey would be open for a few weeks.
 - Virtual Open Houses to follow: for those who want to ask questions or have a dialogue, there would be a series of open house Zoom meetings that would have no formal presentation but a panel of team members would be present to host a discussion.
 - 2 to 3 blocks, ~1 hour long.
 - Participants would be able to come and go at their convenience
 - Open houses would be hosted at a variety of times to encourage participation.
 - Advertisement efforts
 - Flyer – distribution beginning week of October 5
 - Task Force member distribution
 - County social media
 - Continue environmental justice outreach

Draft Survey Results – presented by Elisabeth McCollum

- Survey Overview
 - Survey was released on June 16th
 - Closed September 28th
 - 2,312 responses as of September 18th
- Draft Results
 - 97% of respondents live in Howard County
 - 36% also work in Howard County
 - 71% own their home
 - 5.5% are receiving housing assistance
 - Over half (52%) of respondents do not think there are enough reasonably priced housing options in the County.
 - Preliminary graphics showing survey results are available in the presentation slides, and a detailed report outlining the results of the survey will be shared shortly.

Initial Policy Discussion – presented by Mike Spotts

- The consultant team is looking for a temperature check on the proposed interventions and metrics – what is going in the right direction, where are there a lot of outstanding questions, etc.
 - A time limit (10 minutes) will be set for each of the 9 recommendation slides.
 - Mike will provide a two-minute introduction to the challenge.
 - The remaining time will be a discussion – comments, etc.
 - Members will be able to provide their thoughts on if they feel the recommendation is headed in the right direction via a poll.

- **Challenge #1:** Supply has not kept up with demand.
 - **Guiding Principle:** 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. It should also 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.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 79%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 16%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 5%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 0%
 - **Feedback:**
 - Paul commented that he not sure if this has the right emphasis, it seems that the real emphasis needs to be on creating affordable housing opportunities
 - Mavis added that yes, supply has not kept up with demand, but what kind of incentives are we doing for people that want to purchase? Do these incentives exist?
 - Per Mike, we will be talking about some of these later
 - Brent brought up two core items – do we have enough education infrastructure and as growth occurs, are we creating socio-economic hotspots where we do not have such a diverse population. These methods can work towards that goal, but it may also not.
 - Steve commented that we need to cover all spectrums of housing
 - Phyllis agreed with Paul, this plan should be helping the people that need it.
 - Joan agreed – have not heard from anyone who says they have money but can't find a place to live. However, you do hear from people that are struggling – we need to focus more on the affordability side
 - Bill commented that one of the four major goals is to preserve and create housing opportunities for residents for ALL income levels, he feels that we can't design in vacuums and all houses are part of a community. He is finding there is a lack of balanced communities – it is very unbalanced within schools and demographics, and an overriding issue is how to create balanced communities throughout the county. The big picture is community development.
 - Pat commented that the policy interventions in this list are still too vague, they can pretty much do anything. We need to tie recommendations to specifics – where there is need, etc. We can streamline in a bunch of ways, but we need to emphasize affordability and the need to balance infrastructure. She also noted that we have not talked about overlays, etc. and was looking for clarification.
 - Mike explained that overlays provide alternative ways to achieve policy objectives.
 - Via the chat, David commented that this is going in the right direction, but his question would be about how effective “overlays” and “corridors” are – would supply get built quickly?
 - Paula agreed with this question in the chat as well.
- **Challenge #2:** Lack of affordable choices throughout the county.
 - **Guiding Principle:** 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.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**

- These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 80%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 16%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 5%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 0%
- **Feedback:**
 - Paul commented that he was assuming that when we do deep dive into these that there will be an opportunity to speak about specific recommendations? For example, updating the MIHU and coming up with recommendations how to specifically do this.
 - Per Mike, yes this is correct. There are certain questions that would require additional policy analysis to get to absolute specifics, but we can suggest that "MIHU would be increased..." Clear policy direction is a part of this effort.
 - Joan noted that it would seem that some target metric would be helpful to give to policy makers to give them a sense of what the real need is. What would really move the needle?
 - Brent agreed, and we need to do a deep dive into ADUs and the infrastructure needs and map the needs of where it is and isn't needed
 - Pat stated that potential metrics seem output and not outcome driven. It is her opinion that not everyone should be a homeowner, we should be looking at income levels at a minimum and maximum and not assume that homeownership is a solution for everyone
 - David added that zones for cluster development in the rural west is excellent idea and that ADUs should be encourage – this is in the right direction.
 - Peter questioned that in terms of where this would go – would we have a map that would show the number of units we think is needed in what area – are we talking that level of specificity?
 - Per Mike – we can set some broad targets in terms of geography. We have opportunity to set some targets that could be executed through the general plan.
 - Pat commented that she thought we were forming the housing section of the general plan.
 - Per Kelly, this plan will inform the general plan
 - Mary added that engagement for the general plan is just starting, the plan will not be complete until the end of 2021
- **Challenge #3:** New development produces less diverse housing types.
 - **Guiding Principle:** 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").
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 79%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 11%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 11%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand – 0
 - **Feedback:**
 - Bill noted that with allowing and promoting ADUs, there would be a lot of unintended consequences. This needs to be put in the context of creating balanced communities.
 - Kevin added the county and state are diverse and it is hard to have a one size fits all for all areas of the county.
 - Mike replied that allowing something throughout the county does not include provisions to do it in a different manner or context, there are ways to allow for differences in implementation depending on the area of the county

- Paul asked about potential metrics or targets- how or when are we discussing them? We need to specify a way that these recommendations will be met. We need to be sure that there are metrics for each of the goals and that they can overlay more than one. They need to be clear and measurable and able to be updated.
 - Brent agreed, we shouldn't be counting quantiles- we should be looking at ratios that are adjusted over time. We have some things (corridor plans) that are specific to specific locations and we also have some things that are applied throughout the county. Need to be aware of that.
 - Bill referenced the Task Force goals and that of providing metrics. We need to be doing this.
 - Pat noted that there are items within this challenge that are repeats mentioned elsewhere. She suggested that when we do deep dive, having the topics with the same recommendations should be discussed together (i.e. overlays, form based, etc.)
 - Per Mike- yes, they will be grouped together. Metrics are still a work in progress.
- **Challenge #4:** Older housing at risk of deterioration/redevelopment
 - **Guiding Principle:** 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 to homeowners to maintain housing quality and affordability.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 74%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 26%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 0%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 0%
 - **Feedback:**
 - Brent noted that most are very positive, particularly the one that states equitable and incentives- these are key hot items to ensure we do not create hot spots of inequity. We need to map these elements to specific areas.
 - Steve agreed and noted that incentives are what we really need.
 - Pat commented that we should not be reinventing the wheel and that she thought that the Howard County Housing Commission had done a rental study. We should look at other practices that have already been done. She would also like more info about the Transfer of Development Rights process.
 - Peter questioned what was meant by the first bullet regarding market rate properties- are these naturally occurring ones, etc.?
 - Per Mike, it depends on the availability of data and focused on creating assessment of risk.
 - Peter noted that some of these things require money and finding it will be a challenge.
- **Challenge #5:** Difficult to supply housing for diverse populations.
 - **Guiding Principle:** 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 community's needs, and revise where necessary.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 67%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 28%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 0%

- Not Sure/I don't understand: 6%
 - **Feedback:**
 - Jenna commented that she particularly appreciated this slide and that she thought that this is where ADUs are also relevant and should be noted especially considering multigenerational families.
 - Phyllis asked for clarification about fee in lieu when it comes to building for senior citizens and disabled. What is the actual benefit to low income seniors and disabled?
 - Mike noted that with fee in lieu of new development, there is an opportunity for a developer to pay the money to the county rather than producing the units themselves. County can leverage that money for other housing. Right now, we do not have specific recommendations concerning fee in lieu as it relates to senior citizens but this something we can look into.
 - Kelly added that we are using fee in lieu to develop additional units at a lower percentage and it is not being used for ongoing rental subsidies. This could be a recommendation of the plan.
 - Steve asked what are the other diverse populations that we mentioned on the slide?
 - Per Mike, this could refer to many different categories of people: youth aging out of foster care, formerly incarcerated individuals, etc. and contains certain subsets within. These are just examples and we do not want to limit them.
 - Jenna noted that there is a lot of dense information to unpack– there is significant differences as we are talking about populations and housing needs. It may not make sense to group these together in the same way. Also, the permitting process is a challenge in terms of building ramps (for accessibility). We need to think about what those policy interventions need to be and how we can support the process.
 - Brent noted that he highly supports the accessibility component. We also need to be careful about the “remove or adjust household occupancy requirements related to family status.”
- **Challenge #6: Lack of a cohesive strategy.**
 - **Guiding Principle:** Develop a comprehensive and collaborative strategy for addressing housing needs and prioritizing resources.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 56%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 44%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 0%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 0%
 - **Feedback:**
 - Pat commented that she thought this plan was going to create cohesive strategy and would include affordability and production targets. It ought to make sure we note strategies that do exist, and that we need to look at broader question if we are to be relying so heavily on the nonprofit sector.
 - Brent noted that high level objectives are great and would recommend we include interoperability – we cannot just pick a random number and build to achieve random objectives. We need to make sure we can provide adequate infrastructure to residents. Setting a raw number of units does not give us incentive to solve other hard parts of the equation.
 - Phyllis questioned whether the impact of COVID on the nonprofit sector cut money for programs for the next couple of years?
 - Mike responded that this is a risk that we will have to take a look at.

- Anne added that we need to look at the value that nonprofits bring – we need to look at matching dollars in development that are brought to housing and other related issues.
 - Joan commented that nonprofits bring additional dollars to the table but we stretch as far as we can and we do need the support – the salaries and benefits for nonprofits are often not equal to government entities and this is something that needs taken in to account.
 - Steve was concerned that this slide leaves out the bigger picture – all the market rate housing in Howard County. We do need production targets and goals; the rest is not set up for market rate.
 - Mike responded that the discussion would be inclusive of all housing types.
- **Challenge #7:** Existing resources are insufficient.
 - **Guiding Principle:** Develop funding sources dedicated specifically to housing.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 63%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 37%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 0%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 0%
 - **Feedback:**
 - Jen was unsure about the community-serving real estate wording of the key policy interventions.
 - Per Mike, these could be institutions that have public service focus, like faith based communities.
 - Roger noted that he has been in sufficient agreement with everything so far and has no outstanding questions.
 - Linda asked what the advantage is of having a housing trust fund over just accumulating revenue sources?
 - Per Mike, it might just be the naming of it. A housing trust fund is a set of protocols to clarify where the money goes – having a specific process and protocol to the money direction.
 - Pat added that if you have a special fund, there might specific limits regarding repayments and earnings and where the money goes.
 - Bill noted that he has been a part of conversations where it has been talked about getting outside funding sources interested in locating in Howard County – which would lead to redeveloped areas and housing that would be constructed to support their businesses.
 - Brent added that they have been working toward dedicated funding sources for schools for some time. What is our goal that we want to achieve based on metrics and what financial resources do we need to get there? Although they may be far fetching, at least the goals are out there and will help to justify objectives we are trying to achieve.
- **Challenge #8:** APFO limits housing growth.
 - **Guiding Principle:** Improve the balance between housing and infrastructure needs and find creative ways to meet demands for both housing and infrastructure.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 63%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 25%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 6%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 6%
 - **Feedback:**

- Steve commented that the school system shouldn't be involved with land use policy within the county
 - Brent added that this is something that has been worked on for years. The APFO seems to be educated focused. The PTA organization expects children to attend schools that are not overcrowded, and we have not invested the appropriate resources. We would not see restrictions if there were enough resources provided. School system is county wide and not located in one neighborhood. We need to make sure growth is sustainable with infrastructure and realize that this impedes the rate of growth.
 - Peter noted that without some changes to APFO he is not sure other suggestions will go very far as so much of the county is blocked from new development.
 - Caroline questioned that we need to have resources for students, so where does this money come from? We say that we do not have enough resources, but where do those resources come from, other than the state?
 - Brent noted the two sides to funding: one-time expenses and reoccurring expenses of growth. One-time expenses should be associated with the source of growth.
 - Caroline added why would we be advocating limiting resources for students?
- **Challenge #9:** COVID crisis broadens and worsens housing insecurity.
 - **Guiding Principle:** Ensure that Howard County is well equipped to deal with housing challenges that arise during economic downturns.
 - **Temperature Check of the Task Force:**
 - These recommendations are headed in the right direction, and we should continue to develop them: 82%
 - I have some outstanding questions about these recommendations: 0%
 - These recommendations are not the right direction, and we should consider other options: 18%
 - Not Sure/I don't understand: 0%
 - **Feedback:**
 - Pat noted that this belongs as part of a cohesive strategy and we need to be preparing to address this each and every day so that when there is a disaster, we are better prepared.
 - Paula added that the COVID crisis has demonstrated how dependent we are on nonprofits to do the work that the government should be doing (i.e. feeding people, providing resources, etc.) We need to be careful that what we do does not put the onus on the nonprofit sector to solve the problem.
 - Paul commented that we have learned that we need to have emergency rental assistance program. We should make certain that this program is focused – we cannot rely on ordinary resources and need to find a way to build an ongoing pool of resources that can be drawn upon when needed.
 - Kevin added that it is not one or the other (nonprofit or the government). There is a larger benefit by everyone having safe and affordable housing – it is a benefit to the community as a whole. It is a process that should involve the entire community and that we need to be taking a broader community picture.

Open Discussion

- Peter noted that this is the time to have a bullet about the race and segregation aspect. We need to remedy the past housing policies that have created the societies in which we live in today.
 - Joan agreed that it is critical that we address this in the housing master plan.
 - Mike added that this is addressed on the neighborhood segregation slide, but yes it should be called out more and the idea should be strengthened.



- Paul agreed that it should be strengthened. We can address the need for diverse neighborhoods through creating diverse schools.
- Pat also agreed that this should be a separate challenge.
- Community Comments: at this time the line was opened up to comments from community members that were still on the line. No community comments were received.
- Bill referenced the survey results and the idea that low crime rate was found to be more important to proximity to quality schools (slide 16, important factors when choosing a home). We have not talked about the crime aspect at all and perhaps we need to be considering some of that data as well.
- In closing, Mike noted that the consultant team wants to continue to hear any other specific thoughts between now and the next deep dive discussions. He encouraged Task Force members to continue to reach out with any additional questions or comments and reiterated that the updated Toolkit will be redistributed to the group.