



**Howard County Housing Opportunities Master Plan  
Task Force Led Discussion #1  
August 27, 2020  
3:00 – 5:00 PM**

**Task Force Members:**

Bill McCormack, Jr.  
Brent Loveless  
Dr. Caroline Harper  
Jennifer Broderick  
Joan Driessen  
Leonardo McClarty  
Linda Wengel  
Pat Sylvester  
Paul Casey  
Roger Barnes  
Steve Breeden  
Victoria Hathaway

**Ex-Officio Members:**

Jeff Bronow  
Kelly Cimino  
Peter Engel  
Cheryl Brower for Yolanda Sonnier  
Jason Jannati for Larry Twele

**Guests:**

Charles Thomas  
Jackie Scott  
Quanita Kareem  
Tonya Tiffany  
Tracy Deik

The meeting began at 3:03 PM.

Bill McCormack welcomed Task Force members and guests to the meeting and gave an update on the two community meetings that took place in August. Bill noted that the meetings had a disproportionately large number of members from the Columbia area and asked the Task Force for suggestions on how to get more people from other parts of the county involved.

Today's discussion will focus on a holistic approach and will address more than just housing.

- **What attracts people to Howard County? What Works?**
  - Good quality school systems & government services
  - The County's strong reputation
  - Howard County's central location/ access to jobs in DC & Baltimore
  - It is a relatively safe place/ great place to raise families
  - Multiple job opportunities
  - Diversity (income, race, ethnicity)—Howard County is the most diverse county in the state
  - Open spaces/ trails for biking & walking/ playgrounds



- Howard County's amenities/ planned outdoor & recreational activities
- The county offers many opportunities to get involved in the community
- Planned communities (grocery stores, banks, etc.)
- Quality of life
- Access to medical systems & local resources/ social services for residents/seniors
- Clean/ well maintained roads & communities
- A responsive government entity
- Friendly people/ respectful atmosphere
- **What does our county have that adjacent counties don't?**
  - Main Street Ellicott City
  - Train Depot
  - Enchanted Forest (past attraction)
  - Merriweather Post Pavilion
  - Columbia Association facilities/ ice rink
  - Recreation & Parks facilities
  - HC Pathway System
- **Possible enhancements?**
  - Utilizing available land/ zoning to create more diverse communities
  - Recognizing the limitations of diversity & addressing the barriers/ challenges
  - Transportation—Finish Complete Streets policy for roads, streets and sidewalks
  - Creating a system that holds people accountable for maintaining their properties
  - Helping residents utilize a holistic approach to create a thriving and vibrant community & county
  - Developing the New Cultural Center/ Housing to attract more people
  - Continuing the vision of Jim Rouse
- **What doesn't work?**
  - Howard County is exclusive
  - There is a lack of social-economic diversity
  - Housing is inadequate, expensive and fairly segregated (factors due to cost, location, zoning)
  - Apartments in the county are not equally distributed
  - There is a lack of housing assistance—the county lacks a source of dedicated revenue for creating a housing trust fund
  - Ineffective planning—too many zoning restrictions that create forced clustering



- Lack of available land to develop/ inefficient use of land
  - Overcrowding in certain school areas
  - There is a disconnect between housing policy & schools
  - School systems are segregated (reflected in FARM scores)
  - There is a shortfall in school funding/ need to correct financial mitigation
  - The county's failure to acknowledge/ address racial & economic inequalities/ failure to acknowledge the number of people in the county who are struggling
  - The county struggles to get out of silos (housing/school/business perspectives)
  - There is a lack of transportation in the county
  - HUD vouchers pay more for living in Columbia vs. living in other parts of the county
- **Possible solutions**
    - Finding ways to encourage policies, practices & programs that result in diverse neighborhoods
    - Goals to protect the community should be backed up with actions/ policies that create change
    - Implementing the Downtown Columbia Plan
    - Prioritizing land use for affordable housing
    - The capacity for school systems need to grow with residential growth
    - Increasing the budget for geographic systems/ data analytics to get a comprehensive idea of where Howard County stands in comparison to other counties
    - Creating a system/database that reflects the number of schools, type of housing and household income to see where the gaps are
    - Housing quantity/density needs to be addressed
    - The government needs to honor its obligations
    - The Housing Commission is working to change voucher payment standards to include higher rent areas so that voucher holders can live in other parts of the county
    - Allocating funds for development & housing assistance
    - Minimizing the use of the fee-in-lieu provision to create more affordable housing
    - Look at the possibility of creating intergenerational housing opportunities
    - The county needs to do what is in the best interest for the population served
    - As residential areas grow, services like water/ well/ sewer need to increase



## Discussion

- Joan Driessen shared the link for *HoCo Population Analytics*: [www.acshoco.org/hoco-population-analytics](http://www.acshoco.org/hoco-population-analytics), which shows how racial and ethnic patterns have changed in the county over time by regional planning district.
- Jeff Bronow shared the link for *HoCo By Design*: [www.hocobydesign.com](http://www.hocobydesign.com), which provides an opportunity for community members to have conversations about these issues. Comments are collected via “*On the Table*” and shared with the Department of Planning & Zoning to help with the planning process.
- Brent Loveless shared information about the school system’s reevaluation of Policy 6010, which will determine how schools are redistricted.
- The Task Force discussed additional ways to advertise the public meetings/ survey. Ideas included advertising in the Columbia Flier/ Howard County Times; posting to the County’s calendar & other social media platforms; and asking the Fire Department/ County Council/ Members of the Delegation/ church communities to share this information with the public.

The meeting ended at 5:01 PM

Next Task Force Led Discussion: September 17 (3:00-5:00 PM)