

DHCD Presentation to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Council Subcommittee **Affordable Housing Commission**

FEBRUARY 7, 2019

RAY SKINNER | CHAIR | AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

ESTELLA ALEXANDER | ACTING DIRECTOR | DHCD

Department of Housing and Community Development

Prince George's County was tasked with establishing an Affordable Housing Commission (Commission), in accordance with ***Maryland House Bill 236***, to examine the state of affordable housing in the County. Specifically, the Commission was asked to produce a report, which examines:

- The need for preservation and production of rental housing, special needs housing, transitional housing, and shelters for the homeless
- Homeownership opportunities
- Possible barriers to the creation of affordable housing including economic factors, local government regulations and procedures, and community perceptions
- Successful State and national housing initiatives
- Challenges facing healthy, at-risk, distressed, and blighted communities
- The impact of housing choice vouchers and other forms of housing assistance

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In accordance with the enacting Legislation, the Commissioners are as follows:

- Raymond Skinner, Skinner Consulting Services, Chair
- The Honorable Joanne Benson, Maryland State Senator
- Jesse Buggs, City of Bowie
- Warren Burris, Prince George's County Council Administration
- Boyd Campbell, Maryland Realtors Association
- Donna Grigsby, TD Bank
- Kathy J. Guillaume, Glenarden Housing Authority
- The Honorable Marvin Holmes, Maryland State Delegate
- Dwayne Mingo, Prince George's County Association of Realtors
- Paul Rowe, Housing Authority of Prince George's County
- James Simpson, College Park Housing Authority
- Kenneth A. Sonner, Old Line Bank
- Timothy E. Taylor, Borger Management
- Marvin Turner, U.S. Dept. of HUD, D.C. Field Office

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Commission's Procedures

The Commission convened for the first time in October 2018, with a deadline to produce a report by January 1, 2019. Due to the short turnaround time, the Commission lacked the opportunity to complete its own first-hand research. Therefore, the Commission relied heavily on the data and research contained in the County's Comprehensive Housing Strategy.

In addition to the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, the Commission relied on other selected reports, such as:

- Plan Prince George's 2035: Approved General Plan
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)
- The U.S. Census Bureau
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

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Commission's Procedures, continued.

Definition of Affordable Housing:

The enabling legislation did not define what is meant by affordable housing. However, affordability remains a problem for many households and families at various income levels within the County.

- For purposes of this Report, "Affordable Housing" is defined as: housing that is affordable to persons or households earning up to sixty percent (60%) of the Area Median Income (AMI), assuming that each household is spending no more than thirty percent (30%) of their income on housing costs
- This definition is consistent with the income eligibility requirement for federal housing programs

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Commission's Findings

As identified in the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, the need for more affordable housing remains an issue within the County. Research shows that incomes of County residents have not kept pace with increases in the County's rents and home values. As a result, many residents are paying a large share of their income toward housing costs; thereby, resulting in the household being cost-burdened.

Research shows that:

- Forty-one percent of all households in the county are paying more than thirty percent (30%) of their income or more on housing costs, including utilities, each month
- For every 100 extremely low-income renters in the county, only 37 affordable units exist, and only 22 units are both affordable and available (i.e. not occupied by a higher income household)
- Most rental units in the County's urban areas are affordable to households earning 50 to 80 percent of the area median income
- 43 percent of households live in inadequate housing, defined by one or more housing unit problems

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Preliminary Recommendations

The Commission supports most of the recommendations identified in the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, including the following:

- Increase the County's Housing Investment Trust Fund (HITF)
- Create a Land Bank to support Redevelopment of Abandoned Residential Properties
- Support proposed zoning changes that expand smaller scale housing products (e.g., duplexes, live/work units, one-level homes, etc.) and encourage diverse types of housing that increases density
- Support accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as a permitted use in designated zones
- Collaborate with the State to identify additional resources to support County's housing initiatives
- Support County legislation to prohibit housing discrimination based on Source of Income

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Preliminary Recommendations, continued.

In addition, the Commission recommends changes to State policies and programs, as follows:

- Increase funding for the State of Maryland Rental Housing Works and Rental Housing Production programs
- Increased State funding for the Rental Assistance Program
- Provision of a set-aside from Project CORE for Prince George's County to be used for infrastructure or the acquisition of land for affordable housing units
- Expansion of the State's Down Payment Assistance Program to support homeownership for low –to- moderate income families
- Review and strengthen, if necessary, the State's Right of First Refusal law



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

Questions?
