



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB 7/24/03

Item #1

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Charles R. Loehr, Director

**FROM:** Housing Montgomery Team

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**SUBJECT:** Housing Montgomery: Mid-Summer "Lite" Status Report

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: DISCUSSION**

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### I. OVERVIEW

This Status Report identifies those tasks assigned to the Park & Planning Department in the County Council's *Action Plan for Affordable Housing*. In addition, it highlights departmental progress to increase the amount of housing for County families and our workforce. Some future actions and directions are also suggested to maintain the momentum of this important endeavor.

The County Council, County Executive, and Planning Board have continued to identify affordable housing as a key priority for the County. As such, Executive, Legislative and Park & Planning Department staff have been working together to implement the Action Plan.

This Status Report has been prepared as a follow-up to: (a) the County Council's Housing Roundtable held in October 2002, (b) support of the County Executive, (c) completion of the Planning Board's Housing Montgomery initiative and "menu of options," (d) subsequent Council member recommendations, and (e) the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED) *Action Plan for Affordable Housing*, approved in June, 2003.

## **II. COUNTY COUNCIL ACTION PLAN INITIATIVES**

The current status of the Action Plan is summarized in a memorandum prepared by Councilmember Silverman dated June 17, 2003. (**Attachment #1**) The summary accurately reflects the initiatives tasked to the Department.

The Department remains fully committed to the provision of affordable housing through the Master Planning program, regulatory planning efforts, and the rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance. These efforts are part of the continuing approach to building desirable communities in Montgomery County. A Work Program chart is included as **Attachment #2** that depicts tasks and timelines needed to deliver the multi-faceted housing program.

**Attachment #3** summarizes several ongoing efforts throughout the Work Program that preview our potential direction and future recommendations.

*Most importantly, staff will return to the Planning Board in early fall to discuss more fully the Work Program and resource allocation. At that time, the next round of completed tasks will be presented, along with a more deliberate discussion of the regulatory and master planning work programs. This effort will help the Department with preparation of the upcoming Bi-Annual Report and the FY05 Operating Budget so that this priority effort can continue to be supported adequately.*

## **III. MID-SUMMER HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS**

### **A. County Owned Surplus Sites Study**

Staff from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Park & Planning worked together to identify seven publicly owned properties that have potential for development with affordable and/or special needs housing. The County owns four of these sites, the other three are owned by the Board of Education. In addition, staff from DHCA, Housing and Human Services (HHS), and Park & Planning is working to identify specific housing needs for which these properties might be used.

Community-Based Planning staff provided review assistance on the publicly owned sites nominated by the Executive staff. After the Planning Board and County Council discussed these sites, Community-Based Planning staff provided additional information regarding Master Plan and zoning issues. **(Attachment #4)**

DHCA is developing mechanisms to make these properties available for development, including a request for transfer of the Board of Education property to the County. **Attachment #5** highlights the disposition processes and the next steps, as envisioned by the Executive staff.

Simultaneously, the Community-Based Planning staff is identifying additional publicly owned sites that may be suitable for affordable housing as part of on-going master plan efforts. These sites include opportunities for joint development near Metro stations and affordable housing opportunities for underused areas.

To support this effort, the Strategic Planning Division completed a survey of how other jurisdictions identify and dispose of publicly owned lands suitable for affordable housing **(Attachment #6)**. Of particular interest is the centralized method used by San Francisco to find sites for affordable housing. Executive and Park & Planning staff recommends that this concept, and others, be examined further to determine if it will help us meet our affordable housing needs.

## **B. Proposed Park House Policy Revisions**

Park staff has developed a Work Program, signaling short- and long-term deliverables, which will be presented to the Planning Board in September. An outline of the proposed Work Program and timetable has already been completed and is included as **Attachment #7**.

Revisions to current park policy directives are warranted, regarding the expanded use of park housing for low and moderate-income housing. In addition, an inventory of park housing is recommended to explore site opportunities for the provision of both affordable and special needs housing.

## **C. Accessory Apartment Zoning Text Amendment**

The DHCA has taken the lead role in drafting a zoning text amendment to allow accessory apartments as permitted use, rather than as special exception use in residential zones. **(Attachment #8, does not exist!)**

Park & Planning staff recognizes the need for refinement and has reviewed the current special exception process with DHCA to determine opportunities

to optimize production of accessory apartments and address community compatibility concerns.

A chart from DHCA, as annotated by Park & Planning staff, identifies the key administrative elements of the current and proposed special exception approval process for accessory apartments is included as **Attachment #9**.

A worksession with the PHED Committee is scheduled for July 21.

#### **D. Housing Progress and Delivery Report**

In order to better monitor the success of the County and the private sector in implementing our housing objectives, the Action Plan recognizes the need to expand the countywide housing database.

Our ability to report more comprehensively on the supply of housing will be significantly enhanced by tracking housing throughout adopted master plans, regulatory approvals, and documented completions of both market and non-market rate units. This information will be reported by planning area, housing type, and ownership pattern. **Attachment #10** illustrates a sample format.

The Research and the Development Review divisions have made significant progress on evaluating the database and the technical requirements needed to provide more comprehensive data for the proposed *Housing Progress and Delivery Report* that will accompany future Bi-Annual Reports.

Staff will closely coordinate with all other agencies that are currently maintaining much of the data needed for this report. A core group of persons in state and county agencies use and disseminate this housing data; staff will rely on this "data tracking workgroup" to monitor and encourage progress.

#### **E. Special Needs Housing Report**

Subsequent to the completion of the 2001 *Housing Policy Report*, the County Council requested an assessment of special needs housing. Earlier this year, a working group was formed including representatives from HHS, DHCA, the Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC), and the Research Division.

The final report will be completed in the fall of 2003 and presented to the Planning Board and County Council. It will be composed of three elements:

- *Inventory Report:* To identify the existing and future special needs housing.
- *Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Layer:* Park & Planning is assisting HHS in the conversion of the list of special needs housing properties into a GIS layer.
- *Housing Option Priorities:* The working group will identify a “short list” of housing options priorities (projects) to jump-start the development of special needs housing.

#### **F. Workforce Housing Information Packet and Proposed Public Information Campaign**

The Action Plan calls for the development of an Information Packet; the Packet will be completed in early fall.

The purpose of the Information Packet is to build an informed citizenry, including civic and business constituencies, so that Montgomery County becomes a community in which neighbors see sound development as adding value to their neighborhood.

The Information Packet will target affordable housing issues of most concern—including information that portrays and personalizes workforce housing need and issues of concern to neighborhoods (property values, safety, traffic, public services, schools, environment, concentration, and park usage). Expanded understanding by the public of current and future housing affordability need will lead to greater acceptability.

To date, the Strategic Planning Division has completed one element of the Information Packet—a PowerPoint slide show that personalizes and explains the workforce housing problem. The PowerPoint is generic and can be used by Departmental staff as well as other government and private sector groups (**Attachment #11**). This PowerPoint is part of a new effort to develop a library of PowerPoint housing slides that can be used by all departmental staff as well as other county staff.

In addition, a nationwide survey of successful affordable housing information “campaigns” shows that many jurisdictions are using well-orchestrated public information campaigns to broaden awareness with civic groups, employers, and the general population (**Attachment #12**).

The purpose of these housing campaigns is to educate, expand acceptability of affordable housing, and encourage employer involvement in finding solutions. The Strategic Planning Division will report back to the

Planning Board in the fall to discuss the possibility of using such an approach here in Montgomery County.

Another public information initiative is ongoing in the Research Division. A diversity Web page is under development, depicting countywide housing and demographic information by ethnicity. This initiative responds to many citizen and employer requests for a county housing information Website to be developed to help answer questions raised by their respective constituencies.

By early spring, a Spanish prototype, with housing and demographic information and links to other related Web sources, is anticipated to be completed. Other language text will be developed as a second phase.

### **G. Affordable Housing Impact Statements**

During PHED Committee deliberations regarding *Housing Montgomery*, County Council members expressed interest in exploring the notion of Housing Affordability Impact Statements in order to monitor the implications of policy, planning, and regulatory decisions on the supply and affordability of housing.

Impact Statements serve to inform and better ensure that incremental government process and actions to not undermine the overall goal of expanding the supply and affordability of housing.

Most notably, Austin, Texas and San Diego, California successfully use the impact statements to accompany new policy proposals, master plans, zoning cases, and other regulatory actions.

Councilmember Floreen requested more information regarding jurisdictions that have successfully applied such statements. In response, a letter was transmitted to the County Council providing Chairman Berlage's general observations regarding possible application. The letter was accompanied by a jurisdictional survey and evaluation prepared by the Strategic Planning Division, as included in **Attachment #13**.

It appears that these impact statements can be prepared in a very concise and time efficient manner. As such, the Community-Based Planning staff will develop a prototype to be applied to mandatory referrals, zoning cases, and mandatory referrals this fall.

## **H. Countywide Land Supply Study**

During the Department's *Housing Montgomery* presentation to the County Council in April 2003, Councilmember Praisner requested a scope of work and methodology being used in the Land Supply Study. The Study parameters are included as **Attachment #14**. Subsequent to the Planning Board's review of the attached parameters, it will be forwarded to Councilmember Praisner.

The Study is well underway in the Research Division. It will quantify countywide development and redevelopment opportunities for housing. The Study is designed to help the County better estimate the yield of housing based on current zoning and master plan guidance. The Study results will be available in early 2004.

Delivered in the same timeframe as the Land Supply Study will be an interjurisdictional examination of housing affordability focusing on the Maryland suburbs and the I-95 Corridor.

**YOU CAN CALL HIM A HERO,  
BUT YOU CAN'T CALL HIM A NEIGHBOR.**

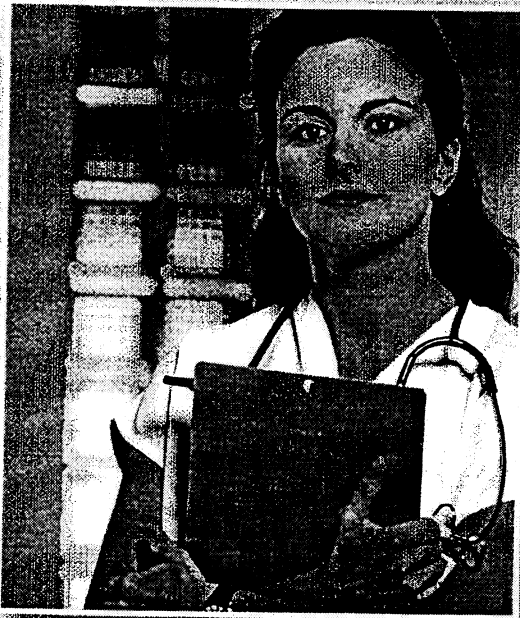


## **FRESH IDEAS**

**SHE CAN TEACH YOUR KIDS CALCULUS,  
BUT SHE CAN'T BE YOUR NEIGHBOR.**



**SHE CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE,  
BUT SHE CAN'T BE YOUR NEIGHBOR.**



*from the State of  
Maine's Affordable  
Housing Campaign*