

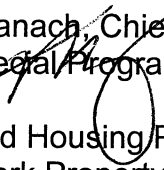


June 11, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Charles R. Loehr, Director 

FROM: Melissa Cuñha Banach, Chief, Strategic Planning (301.495.4509) 
Terry Brooks, Special Program Coordinator (301.495.4726) 

SUBJECT: Employer-Assisted Housing Program (EAH): Workforce Housing Opportunity on Park Property

RECOMMENDATIONS: Approve the establishment of the proposed EAH Program for the Department of Park and Planning. Request Fannie Mae to assist the Department with EAH Program development. Transmit report to the County Council.

The Planning Board requested the Department of Park and Planning to identify housing opportunity on park property in support of the County Council's priority workforce housing efforts.

While mindful of the primary park mission of stewardship, the Department has clearly responded to the critical need for affordable workforce housing by proposing an innovative Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) Program for the Department's workforce and exploring the possibility of workforce housing opportunity on Commission-owned property already developed with non-park uses.

These housing opportunities will directly contribute to the countywide goal of expanding housing supply, mix, and affordability, while enhancing the Commission's stewardship mission.

With the establishment of a model EAH Program, the Department is committing its staff resources and experience to promote the development of employer-assisted housing programs with other public and private employers throughout Montgomery County. The Department proposes to engage the expertise of the Fannie Mae Corporation to assist the Department with EAH Program development.

The Department proposes to refocus the existing 28-year-old Park House Program (Practice 6-50, attached) to support the housing needs of income-eligible Department employees through a formalized EAH Program. In this way, the benefit of the park house program can be maximized.

In addition, the Department is exploring opportunities to increase workforce housing on Commission-owned property that: (a) is already developed with non-park uses, and (b) was acquired by the Commission through unusual land swaps or land conveyances.

Once analyzed, the possible adaptive reuse of these properties may well be appropriate. The Department proposes that creative design and funding proposals be solicited from private and non-profit housing providers by way of a Request for Proposal (RFP), possibly developed in conjunction with the Housing Opportunities Commission. The RFP must be sensitive to design guidelines and community and park master plan recommendations, as well as environmental constraints.