

Advisory Committee (Meeting #2)
June 26, 2015
Conference Room 303, Montgomery County Planning Department

In Attendance: Dick Knapp (Foulger-Pratt), Matt Greene (DHCA), Zorayda Moreira (CASA alternate), Leila Finucane (Capital One), Monica Warren-Jones (Enterprise Community Partners alternate), Uma Ahluwalia (HHS), Gwen Wright (Planning), Linda McMillan (County Council), Richard Hanks (HOC alternate), Nadim Khan (HHS alternate), Ilana Branda (MHP alternate), Clarence Snuggs (DHCA), Kyle Talente (RKG), Jesse Wiles (by phone) (ADP), Matt Losak (guest, Montgomery County Renters Alliance), Chris Perry (guest, Montgomery County Renters Alliance)

Agenda:

1. Staff Changes
2. Corrections to Summary of Last Month's Meeting
3. Presentation of Submarket Boundaries
4. Neighborhood Analysis Introduction
5. Contacts/Stakeholder Discussion

Staff Changes

Elizabeth Davison will become Acting Chief of Research and Special Projects, as of July 6th. She served as Director of Montgomery County DHCA for 10 years and Director of the County Executive's Office of Planning Implementation for 5 years before retiring from the County. She has also worked for private sector real estate consulting firms. Early in her career, she worked as a researcher in the Planning Department. She replaces Val Lazdins, who left to become Director of the Howard County Planning Department.

Andrew Aurand is leaving the Planning Department on July 3rd for a position with the National Low-Income Housing Coalition. Elizabeth will be the new contact person for the Rental Housing Study.

Corrections to Summary of Last Month's Meeting

Additional Issues:

What is the definition of affordable housing? We have to define it early in the study. Will income categories be based on HUD income limits or County income levels? Another

participant mentioned that what we really need to talk about is “price appropriate” housing for the range of households who live in the County.

There is a County self-sufficiency standard, which is the amount of income a family needs to meet basic needs in Montgomery County without assistance. This includes affordable housing. The standard is up for renewal. It can be found on HHS’s website.

Transportation costs should be included in our discussion. What is really the housing cost burden when we include transportation costs?

Given the recent Supreme Court decision on the disparate-impact of housing policies as a form of discrimination, we should be aware of the location of LIHTC units.

Correction:

The summary from the last meeting includes “The zoning code is a compelling tool when used to provide more affordable housing.” This statement should be revised to “The intent of the zoning code is to be a compelling tool to provide more affordable housing.”

A correction was made to clarify that Accessory Dwelling Units are no longer a Special Exemption and are now a permitted use in many residential zones as long as they meet certain requirements.

Presentation of County Submarket Boundaries

The purpose of the County submarkets was explained by RKG (see Powerpoint). Submarkets often have different price points and development patterns from one another. The study will look at market imbalance by submarket. It will look at the supply and demand for housing by submarket, as well as provide a cost-benefit assessment by submarket.

One caution about this type of analysis is that it has never been County policy to concentrate affordable housing where it is most financially efficient (less expensive) to produce. The policy has been to disperse affordable housing throughout the County.

We should lay down the proposed Purple Line, CCT, and BRT on the map and consider them in our identification of submarkets.

HHS has data by zip code regarding requests for eviction-prevention and utility payment assistance and matched it to other indicators of distress, such as poverty and mental health. If the data are readily available, it would be interesting to overlay these data on our current submarkets to see how they match. We could use the data to identify submarkets in which households are more likely to be financially distressed. It would be interesting to add student test scores to the overlay.

Neighborhood Analysis Introduction

RKG introduced their future step of identifying four different types of neighborhoods (see Powerpoint). They will then develop models for each type. Each type has different challenges with regard to rental housing and may require different strategies.

The committee had a number of questions and thoughts regarding the way in which the types of neighborhoods will be identified and defined.

Specific examples for each neighborhood type will be helpful at the next meeting.

The neighborhood types have to be clearly and carefully defined. We need to use unambiguous language. For example, the term “traditional values” is not clear and neither is “upwardly mobile.” Significant discussion ensued regarding their meaning.

Rental housing is more than multifamily housing. The county has residential pockets of single-family homes that provide rental housing for moderate income renters.

It might be best to look at the neighborhood types as stages in the neighborhood lifecycle.

How many communities or neighborhoods are in one Master Plan? For example, is the Bethesda CBD one community or more than one?

RKG, in consultation with the Technical Review Committee, needs to:

- Identify the initial criteria to be used to determine neighborhood types
- Clearly define the types
- Decide on the boundaries to be used for neighborhoods (ie, census tracts or block groups or some other boundary)
- Identify specific examples for each neighborhood type to present at the next meeting

How does this analysis help us arrive at strategies for the County to consider?

It is important that this rental housing study helps us get our heads around and understand what is happening in Montgomery County and to identify strategies and policies that can help us.

Contacts/Stakeholder Discussion

Members of the Advisory Committee were asked to submit contact information for individuals and organizations they felt were important to include in our focus groups and interviews that will be held in the Fall.