

## **Advisory Committee Meeting**

**September 28, 2015**

**In Attendance:** Dick Knapp (Folger-Pratt), Matt Greene (DHCA), Clarence Snuggs (DHCA), Jay Greene (DHCA), Robert Goldman (MHP), Chris Perry (Renters Alliance), Matt Losak (Renters Alliance), Leila Finucane (Capitol One), Nadim Khan (SNH/DHHS), Uma Ahluwalia (MCDHHS), Stacey Spann (HOC), Zorayda Moreira-Smith (CASA), Nicola Whiteman (AOBO), Elizabeth Davison (Montgomery Planning), Gwen Wright (Montgomery Planning), Linda McMillan (County Council), Robert Hickey (Center for Housing Policy)

### **Agenda:**

- Project Context Discussion
- Overview of Study
- Boundary Discussion
- Discussion of Policy Documents
- Next Steps

### **Overview of Study:**

RKG went over the division of responsibilities between the DHCA, RKG, and the Planning Department. There are three phases of the study: Analysis of Existing Conditions, Refinement of Strategies, and Recommendations.

### **Rental Market Study Areas:**

The purpose of dividing the county into rental market study areas was explained by RKG. Policies that would work in one area would be inappropriate for another area of the county due to market and demographic differences, or to land use and housing policy considerations. The county's Agricultural Reserve will not be a focal area in this study but is included so that the smaller communities such as Poolesville will be analyzed as well.

The committee had several questions regarding specific communities such as Rockville and Gaithersburg and the inclusion of the Purple Line Stations in the analysis. The inclusion of Long Branch in area #3 or #4 will be revisited by RKG after concerns from committee member because it will be a Purple Line station area.

RKG explained how these areas were identified as distinct from other areas. Boundaries are along Census Tract boundaries, which limits flexibility in study area definition. The rental housing survey will not be a stand-alone document but will influence future master plans. There were also questions about how this study would tie in with health disparities and the provision of social services and schools.

### **Parameters of the Study:**

The parameters of the study were brought up by several committee members who had concerns about the scope of the study. This led to a discussion of what is and is not being analyzed in the study. The rental housing study focuses on the physical provision of rental housing and the demand for rental housing. Questions and suggestions were made that several things be looked at, including

overcrowding, the needs of larger families, how to achieve mixed income housing complexes, and looking at why complexes dubbed as “at risk” affordable are at risk. Issues that have to do with the people who occupy the rental housing are largely outside the scope of the study. Landlord-tenant issues, code enforcement, and property management were highlighted by RKG as elements not addressed by the study.

### **Definition of ‘Affordable’ for the purposes of the study:**

The commonly accepted standard of affordability used by HUD is that no more than 30% of a household’s gross income go towards housing on an annual basis, or that figure divided by 12 as the basis of monthly housing cost. This will be used to define affordable housing for this study. The Area Median Income (AMI), which covers the metropolitan region, for a 2-person household nearly matches the County’s median income for such households. Several advisory committee members recommended other measures such as the self-sufficiency standard income threshold. Concerns were also raised about whether very low income household (<30% AMI) will be studied. Households with very low income will be included in this study although the focus is on low to moderate income households.

The study will not focus on affordability for any one type of household but uses a 2-person household as a baseline measure and for purposes of comparison. The average number of residents per rental household is close to 2.

A question from the advisory committee began a discussion on why this study is necessary and how it is different from other studies. This rental housing study will take into account the best practices that have been tested in other jurisdictions to fill the need for a more regional or national perspective.

Members of the advisory committee also pointed to the strain on the rental housing market since the housing market crash, which caused owners of foreclosed properties to move into the rental housing market.

### **Next steps:**

- Schedule a bus-tour for the end of October
- Send survey for feedback of most important visions and objectives from policy documents
- Meeting in November - 3 weeks before release of market analysis
- Early December release of market analysis by RKG