



## Howard County Council Public Hearing: Council Resolution 97-2019

July 8, 2019

### Testimony

Good afternoon Council Chair Rigby, Co-Chair Jones and Council members. As Executive Director of the Association of Community Services and representative of our 168 nonprofit member organizations and community advocates, it is my privilege to, once again, offer comments in support of Council Resolution 97-2019.

The 2019 Rental Housing Survey revealed that Howard County continues to have a shortage of over 5,000-units of housing that are affordable for people who work in our health care, public service (including County government and nonprofits), retail and other industries. Far too many of our young people, our seniors and our neighbors with disabilities are burdened with rents that are disproportionate to their incomes, restricting their ability to afford other necessities like medications, transportation, and health care.

While the Robinson Overlook project won't dramatically decrease the vast need for low-income housing in our County, 43 more units represents a contribution to the supply and a recognition to those Howard County residents most in need, that their voices are heard. These units will serve households with incomes from \$20,000 to \$61,000; and some of these units will be specifically designated for persons with disabilities who may have even lower incomes.

CR 97 also represents a concrete step toward de-centralizing the location of middle and low-income housing. There are so few options to placing mixed income housing throughout our County; we should enthusiastically embrace these opportunities when they are presented.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit projects are highly competitive, and Howard County is very fortunate to have been granted these credits for this project. While recent, limited redistricting appears to have pushed Pointers Run Elementary School over capacity, it appears that there is capacity in neighboring elementary schools to absorb the 25 or so new students that could become Robinson Overlook residents.

Robinson Overlook is precisely the kind of project that merits the Council's approval as a Special Affordable Housing Opportunity. We sincerely hope that there can be a collaborative approach that will enable this project to move forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to convey our support for the Robinson Overlook project.

Respectfully submitted,

*Joan Driessen*

Executive Director