



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

June 17, 2019

### Testimony

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

Our community continues to have a 5,000-unit undersupply of housing that is affordable for people who work in our health care, public service (including County government and nonprofits), retail and other industries. Too many of our young people, our seniors and our neighbors with disabilities are paying rents that are out of line with their incomes.

The Robinson Overlook project won't dramatically decrease the vast need for low-income housing in our County, but even 43 more units (of the 48 to be built) is a major contribution to the supply. 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.

In addition to increasing housing opportunity, approval of CR 97 would be 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 be open to taking advantages of opportunities when they are presented.

We understand that implementation of this project was well underway, when only a few months ago the Housing Commission and its development partner learned that a redistricting decision would close the elementary school area to this project. We further understand 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 as well as ensure the academic success of current and any new students.

Thank you for this opportunity to convey our support for the Robinson Overlook project. As always we are available to respond to Council members' questions.

Respectfully submitted,

*Joan Driessen*

Executive Director