



**Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance  
Council Bills 1-2018 and 2-2018**

January 16, 2018

Testimony

Good evening Council Chair Sigaty and Council members. The Association of Community Services respectfully requests Council consideration of what we understand will be a negative impact of Council Bills 1-2018 and 2-2018 on the development and redevelopment of affordable housing across the County. We believe strongly that we are a community of leaders in government, education, service, development and in our families that can creatively ensure both quality education for the County's 57,000 public school students and affordable housing for the County's 24,000 families that have incomes of less than \$60,000.

There is a nexus between education and housing that should be acknowledged in policy considerations and actions that have the potential to affect both sectors. The proposed Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), however, would create a disconnect in that nexus as it would stop creation of the very housing that the school system's 500 homeless students need to help them overcome one of the most visible barriers to raising their academic performance--the same goal to which our school system is committed.

Certainly the availability of new and/or redeveloped housing could bring new families into already crowded school districts. We would argue however that much of the new and/or redeveloped housing could have a neutral impact on capacity. With new affordable housing units, there is opportunity to shift students out of the living arrangements—which have them categorized by the school system as homeless—into their own stable and sustainable homes while keeping them in their current schools and communities.

We know that we have lost 40 family units of affordable housing as one developer, responding to the anticipated APFO affordable housing curtailment, has made the decision to shift those units to senior housing. We know that Enterprise Homes is poised to renovate 300 former Community Homes affordable housing units. Under this APFO proposal will Enterprise be able to proceed with adding market rate homes to subsidize the affordable units? If the new housing market is stagnant and increased rents result, will Heritage Housing Partners continue to be able to provide low rents to their current disabled and elderly residents? Where will Coordinated System of Homeless Services' nonprofits find housing for the 400 households currently receiving or waiting for services primarily because they are now over rent burdened? How will this legislation impact Downtown Columbia development? the County's MIHU program? Housing Commission projects?

And how can our County be closing a door on the development of affordable housing just as in the next round of applications for State Low Income Housing Tax Credits many areas in Howard County will be classified as "areas of opportunity" thereby affording our community a significant advantage in access to the major financing source for affordable housing?

Rather than simply shutting down new housing opportunities to control school capacity, should our community not be thinking more broadly to find short and long-term solutions to the overcrowding in

our schools that would also enable some level of housing development? To ameliorate over capacity can we not pursue options such as school expansions, limited redistricting, developer incentives to partner in increasing school capacities?

There is an immense, well-documented gap in the need for and availability of affordable housing for this County's low and moderate income working families. Can we afford to shut down any opportunities that would help close that gap of 6600 rental housing units? Can we not work together to avoid further exacerbating one critical community social issue (affordable housing *undercapacity*) as we attempt to resolve another (school *overcapacity*)?

ACS supports an affordable housing exemption from the proposed APFO legislation and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council, HCPSS School Board and Superintendent and County Administration to find common ground in a mutually acceptable exemption that avoids shutting down affordable housing development across the county.

Respectfully,

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Executive Director

Cc: County Executive Allan Kittleman  
HCPSS School Board President Vaillancourt  
HCPSS Superintendent Martirano  
ACS Board of Directors