

Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition

Howard County Council Public Hearing
April 22, 2019

Testimony: Council Bill 17

Howard County has long been committed to the goal of a diverse and inclusive community where all people, whatever their income, can live in safety and civility. As the county's critical shortage of affordable housing threatens our ability to achieve this goal, it is vitally important that the housing affordability crisis be addressed constructively across disciplines and interests. Consequently, any legislative action including CB 17-2019 that would make it more difficult to increase affordable housing options should not move forward for the following reasons.

It is our understanding that the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) Task Force discussed a combined maximum wait for allocations of seven (7) years, but not a longer wait time as proposed—perhaps up to 10 years—for a closed school or region to reopen. Any delays will not only further limit development of affordable housing, but also drive up the cost of existing housing thereby putting affordable housing further out of reach for low and middle income County residents.

This proposed legislation also presents the potential unintended consequence of curtailing development of Moderate Income Housing Units (MIHUs). This program is the primary vehicle for ensuring equitable distribution of affordable units throughout the county. MIHU development could potentially be limited as the program is not eligible for the affordable housing exemption process provided in the newly amended APFO law.

The Administration has committed to developing an Affordable Housing Master Plan in FY 2020. We recommend that any changes in the APFO law, including those that would be required by this proposed legislation, can and should be considered within the development of that Master Plan. Consideration within the broader context of the Master Plan will also enable opportunity for public review of the recently completed APFO economic impact study, which could result in additional recommended changes to the Ordinance for consideration as a total package, rather than as piecemeal alterations.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer these comments. Coalition members welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns about housing affordability and CB 17-2019.

Respectfully,

Members, Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition
(Listed on back)

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Members

Association of Community Services	JustLiving Advocacy, Inc.
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David Bazell	Jean West Lewis
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Joshua Bombino	Kelly McLaughlin
Bridges to Housing Stability	Phyllis Madachy
Paul Casey	Tim May
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CCCSMD	Oxford Planning Group LLC
Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation	PATH
Community Action Council	Paul Revelle
Jacqueline Eng	Bill Salganik
Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center	Laura Salganik
Rev. Sue Lowcock Harris	Jean Sedlacko
Heritage Housing Partners Corporation	Pat Sylvester
HopeWorks of Howard County	The Arc of Howard County
Howard County Autism Society	TheCaseMade, Incorporated
Howard County Housing Commission	Town Center Community Association
Humanim, Inc.	Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia
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