



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

## Memorandum

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

Via: Richard DeBose, Chief, Research and Technology Center 

From: Khalid Afzal, Acting Research Manager, R & T Center <sup>KA</sup>  
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Re: Housing Element of the General Plan – Work Session #2

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### Staff Recommendation:

Approval to transmit the Planning Board Draft of the Housing Element of the General Plan (attached) to the County Council.

### Background

This is the second and final worksession of the Housing Element of the General Plan. The goal of this worksession is to get the Board's approval of the Planning Board Draft of the Housing Element report for transmittal to the County Council by July 31, 2009.

At the first worksession on June 18, the Planning Board and staff discussed the context and background of the housing element report, and addressed some of the commissioners' questions about how the facts and numbers used in the report were developed. During the first worksession, staff presented a summary of the issues raised at the public hearing and the staff's responses.

This memorandum summarizes the proposed modifications to the Public Hearing Draft, including changes to the introduction, goals, objectives, and implementation based upon the comments received during and after the May 21 public hearing, and during the Board's first worksession. Some new policies have been added, while some of the existing ones have been modified or moved to another part of the draft to align more clearly with the revised goals. The proposed changes area as follows:

### Changes to the draft of the Housing Element draft report

- I. The introduction of the draft has been modified to better reflect the public hearing testimony, written comments submitted after the public hearing, and the Board's comments and suggestions.

Working from the appendices, staff has included more historical information about the affordable and workforce housing programs put into place over the years in Montgomery County, and about growth trends for the population, including special needs housing. The revised text illustrates the need for an updated Housing Element for the County that better reflects the housing needs of the next generation for homes and communities that are balanced, convenient, and sustainable. It emphasizes that:

- A combination of forces—a shrinking supply of developable land, higher land costs, rising prices for energy, shifts in the County’s demographic profile, and environmental constraints—makes it necessary to recommend housing policies that can meet the challenge of providing adequate housing for the future population of the County.
- Keeping jobs in the County is desirable, which drives the need for more housing to accommodate workers who otherwise would live outside the County and drive in to jobs, exacerbating the traffic problems.
- Small units may be naturally more affordable, but they may be too small for many households.
- We have to strike the right balance between encouraging new investment in older communities and preservation of existing affordable and workforce housing.
- Trends for seniors to age in place means that the County’s zoning needs to be flexible enough to allow for various activities to support and serve aging population.

**2. The revised draft includes three goals instead of one.**

The proposed Planning Board Draft has three goals, instead of one. The goals are based on several suggestions received during the public comment process. They are:

1. Conservation of the stable neighborhoods containing the existing housing stock.
2. Concentrate new housing in mixed-use, transit-oriented areas.
3. Close the housing affordability gap.

**3. A new section, “A strategic Framework,” followed by four objectives, provides an overall set of guiding principles and strategies to meet the housing needs of the County.**

1. ***Master plans*** must address existing and future housing needs with particular attention to protecting and enhancing neighborhoods that contain a substantial stock of affordable and workforce units and to increasing opportunities for a high jobs-housing ratio including affordable and workforce housing in areas served by public transportation.

2. **Development regulations** should be revised to support, and where necessary, require provision of housing near transit, jobs, and services; to provide incentives for producing a wide range of affordable unit types and sizes; and to reduce regulatory procedures that discourage production of affordable and workforce housing units..
3. **New revenue sources** are needed to maintain the Housing Initiative Fund, and to provide for rental assistance programs.
4. **Appropriately located surplus public land** should be made available to public and nonprofit agencies for assisted or below market housing.
5. **Public agencies** to support nonprofit entities through technical assistance and funding to provide for the production and preservation of affordable and workforce housing.

#### **4. Changes to the Objectives and Policies section of the draft report**

Numerous changes and edits have been made to the Objectives and policies sections of the draft to address the comments received during the review period (see Attachment 1 for a detailed listing of these changes).

#### **5. Plan Implementation-How the goals and objectives of the Housing Element will be achieved**

The implementation section of the draft document has been revised to address the comments about how the goals and objectives of the housing element will be achieved. It clarifies that the recommendations of the Housing Element will be implemented through various mechanisms and processes by a number of different entities. These recommendations may become a formal part of a master plan or sector plan, and subsequently become the subject of a Federal or State program or grant. The improvements may be funded by a mix of local, state, and federal funds, as well as donations/investments from the private sector. The development community may be involved in any or all stages of design and construction.

Residential infill, for example, can take place in existing residential communities, suburban office parks, older commercial strip shopping centers, and through residential conversion of non-residential buildings. The County, M-NCPPC, HOC, the development community (profit and not-for-profit developers), State and Federal agencies, and utilities will have varying degrees of involvement and responsibility in achieving infill developments.

The implementation/coordination chart in the Housing Element Draft has been modified to reflect the changes in the draft document. It identifies only the entities with lead responsibility for each recommendation even though all entities in the chart would have some level of involvement and role in achieving these recommendations.

**Attachment 1: Comparison of Goals, Objectives, and Policies**  
 (Underscores denote changes.)

Public Hearing Draft (May 21, 2009)	Planning Board Draft (July 23, 2009)
Our housing vision Montgomery County has attractive and sustainable housing choices in a variety of life cycle communities.	<u>Replaced by a strategic framework</u>
goal Increase the supply and diversity of housing by adding 72,000 strategically located housing units by the year 2030.	<u>1. Conservation of stable neighborhoods containing the existing housing stock.</u>  <u>2. Concentrate new housing in mixed-use, transit-oriented areas.</u>  <u>3. Close the housing affordability gap.</u>
<b>Objective 1. Housing and Neighborhood Connectivity</b>	No change
Concentrate housing in appropriate locations and provide easy, multimodal connections to jobs, schools, shopping, recreation, and other leisure activities.	Concentrate most <u>new housing near public transportation</u> and provide easy, multimodal connections to jobs, schools, shopping, recreation, and other leisure activities.
1.1 Build the majority of new housing in transit-oriented locations.	1.1 Build <u>most</u> new housing in transit-oriented mixed-used locations.
1.2 Review master plans and zoning for infill housing opportunities in suburban office parks, shopping centers, and other underused properties.	1.2 <u>Increase</u> infill housing opportunities in suburban office parks, shopping centers, and other underused properties.
1.3 Coordinate infrastructure investment to create a high level of mobility that connects people to where they live, work, and shop.	1.3 Coordinate infrastructure investment <u>in existing and new neighborhoods</u> to create a high level of mobility <u>options</u> that <u>connect</u> people to where they live, work, shop, <u>and play</u> .
1.4 Increase connectivity through flex cars, vanpools, and shuttles, particularly where transit is lacking.	<u>Deleted.</u>
1.5 Explore providing housing for County employees at their job sites such as schools, large parks, and other County facilities to reduce housing costs for employees as well as vehicle miles traveled.	<u>1.4 Provide</u> housing for County employees at or near their job sites, such as at schools, large parks, and other County facilities to reduce housing costs for employees as well as vehicle miles traveled.

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1.6 Emphasize non-vehicular connectivity, through the most direct pedestrian and bike routes among homes, jobs, retail, recreation, schools, and public services	<u>1.5</u> <u>As older strip commercial areas and surface parking lots are redeveloped, include housing and improve non-vehicular connectivity, making pedestrian and bike routes the most direct connections between homes, jobs, retail, recreation, schools, and public services.</u>
<b>Objective 2. Diverse Housing and Neighborhoods</b>	No change.
Create diversity in the type and size of units, neighborhoods, facilities, and programs for current and future residents.	Create diversity in the type and size of units, neighborhoods, facilities, and programs <u>to accommodate</u> current and future residents
	<u>2.1</u> <u>Strengthen the stability of established neighborhoods through targeted programs that improve schools, parks, and safety and new or up-graded pedestrian and bicycling facilities.</u> <u>2.2</u> <u>Make affordable and workforce housing a priority in all parts of the County.</u>
2.1 Encourage neighborhood diversity through a range of unit sizes, types, and occupancy (including rental and ownership options).	<u>2.3</u> No change other than renumbering.
2.2 Consider allowing accessory apartments in residential zones by-right with appropriate design controls.	<u>2.4</u> Allow accessory apartments in residential zones by right under appropriate design <u>standards and conditions.</u>
2.3 Create mixed-use neighborhoods with local small retail businesses and basic services within walking distance of housing.	<u>2.5</u> No change other than renumbering.
2.4 Encourage shared parking facilities in mixed-use developments to reduce parking and environmental costs in new housing construction.	<u>2.6</u> Encourage shared parking facilities in mixed-use developments to reduce parking and environmental costs in new housing construction. <u>Allow parking to be provided as a separately priced and purchased amenity.</u>
2.5 Encourage child and adult day care facilities in mixed-use developments; allow them by-right in appropriate high-density locations.	<u>2.7</u> No change other than renumbering.

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2.6 Pursue an initiative to provide tax relief for income-eligible seniors so they can afford to stay in their neighborhoods as long as they desire.	<u>2.8 Provide tax relief for income-eligible seniors above and beyond the homeowner’s property tax credit program,</u> so they can afford to stay in their neighborhoods as long as they desire.
2.7 Explore opportunities to acquire vacated properties for affordable housing, including land donations from banks, grant programs, and other charitable organizations.	<u>2.9 Montgomery County and the Housing Opportunities Commission should acquire vacated properties for affordable and workforce housing,</u> including land donations from banks, grant programs, and other charitable organizations.
2.8 Encourage housing cooperatives, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood housing groups to purchase land and buildings for the production and preservation of affordable housing.	2.10 Encourage housing cooperatives, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood housing groups to <u>use their existing property or</u> to purchase land and buildings for the production and preservation of affordable <u>and workforce housing.</u>
	2.11 <u>Amend housing policies to encourage housing projects that mix condominiums and rental units, allowing income restricted units to avoid high condominium fees.</u>
	2.12 <u>Promote full inclusion of all ages, stages of life, and physical abilities by using standard accessibility features in all new or renovated housing.</u>
	2.13 <u>Develop programs to help small households and seniors find and occupy housing that is right-sized for their needs, so that oversized homes do not become a burden and so existing housing stock is available for appropriately sized households.</u>
<b>Objective 3. Housing and the Environment</b> <b>Provide sustainable housing and neighborhoods.</b>	No change
Provide sustainable housing and neighborhoods.	Provide <u>economically and environmentally sustainable housing and neighborhoods.</u>
3.1 Encourage green and energy efficient design and materials to reduce operating and maintenance costs for residents and to create more sustainable housing.	3.1 <u>Require green and energy efficient design and materials to reduce operating and maintenance costs for residents and to create more sustainable housing by increasing the number of buildings and units built or</u>

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	<u>retrofitted for energy efficiency, onsite energy production, and water conservation and reuse.</u>
3.2 Pursue regulatory reform to reduce parking requirements for residential units near transit (within parking lot districts) to decrease impervious surfaces and carbon emissions.	3.2 <u>Reduce</u> parking requirements for residential units near transit <u>and</u> within parking lot districts to decrease impervious surfaces and carbon emissions.
3.3 Consider credits for pervious pavers and other materials that reduce stormwater runoff through the DPS permitting process.	3.3 <u>Provide stormwater management</u> credits for pervious pavers and other materials and strategies that reduce <u>stormwater</u> runoff. <u>These techniques should mitigate the impact of allowable impervious surface rather than increase the footprint of development above that which is currently permitted.</u>
3.4 Encourage smaller housing units that can serve changing households and reduce energy costs.	No change
3.5 Encourage rehabilitation of older housing units so that they are energy-efficient and healthy.	3.5 <u>Provide tax credits for</u> rehabilitation of older housing units so that they are energy-efficient and healthy.
3.6 Encourage innovative solutions for stormwater management and grey water strategies, including green roofs and filtering combined with underground storage tanks for controlled release as well as reuse.	3.6 <u>Require best practices in</u> stormwater management and grey water strategies, including green roofs, <u>swales</u> , and filtering combined with underground storage tanks for controlled release as well as reuse.
3.7 Encourage the use of sustainable native landscaping.	3.7 <u>Require sustainable site design, including native plants and conservation landscaping techniques, and preservation of the tree canopy.</u>
	3.8 <u>Invest in public infrastructure including transit, water and sewer, and stormwater management to keep neighborhoods stable.</u>
<b>Objective 4. Housing and Neighborhood Design</b> <b>Create more attractive and walkable neighborhoods through regulatory reform of private developments and leadership in design of public projects</b>	<b>Objective 4. Housing and Neighborhood Design</b> Create more <u>balanced</u> , attractive, and walkable neighborhoods through regulatory reform of private developments and leadership in design of public projects.
	4.1 <u>Plan for transit-oriented neighborhoods that provide a full range of housing opportunities, including the workforce employed in the transit corridor.</u>

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4.1 Encourage production of attractive housing and neighborhoods with innovative design of the public realm and architecture, including creative building techniques, materials, and mix of unit types.	<u>4.2</u> <u>Facilitate</u> the production of attractive housing and neighborhoods with innovative design of the public realm and architecture, including creative building techniques, materials, and mix of unit types.
4.2 Create design guidelines to help define quality public spaces and walkable communities.	<u>4.3</u> No change other than renumbering.
4.3 Create pedestrian-oriented public spaces to support the needs of a diverse population.	<u>4.4</u> No change other than renumbering.
4.4 Consider including housing in suitable public building projects in appropriate locations.	<u>4.5</u> <u>Include affordable and workforce</u> housing in all suitable public building projects in appropriate locations <u>throughout the County.</u>
4.5 Consider underused and strategically located public properties for housing, using best design practices to set higher standards and achieve design excellence.	<u>4.6</u> <u>Provide</u> underused and strategically located surplus public properties for housing, using best design practices to set higher standards and achieve design excellence.
4.6 Encourage new and innovative construction techniques and products, such as green technologies and modular components.	<u>4.7</u> Encourage new and innovative construction techniques and products, such as green technologies and modular components
4.7 Consider affordable housing all neighborhoods in the County.	<u>Moved to Policy 2.2 and reworded.</u>