

**Amendment 77 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023**

**BY: Deb Jung**

**Legislative Day 11**

**Date: 10/02/2023**

**Amendment No. 77**

*(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Chapter 6:*

*Chapter 6: Dynamic Neighborhoods - Amends the “Equity in Action” subsection of “What We Heard” by adding a bullet point “Increase MIHU requirements by 5% for all new apartment developments”.)*

1 In the *HoCo By Design* General Plan, attached to this Act as Exhibit A, amend the following  
2 pages as indicated in this Amendment:

- 3 • Chapter 6: Dynamic Neighborhoods, page 6.

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5 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this  
6 amendment.

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# What We heard

Throughout the engagement process, the character of housing and neighborhoods were prominent themes communicated by participants. Community members cited concerns regarding the impact of new housing on county infrastructure (including schools and roads), yet also acknowledged that there is both a high demand to live in the County and a growing need for more financially attainable quality housing.

Community members also grappled with the lack of developable land in the County and were interested in redevelopment opportunities to offer a variety of housing choices, from high-density housing to moderate-density options like missing middle housing (defined later in this chapter). They also considered strategies that would allow detached accessory dwelling units on existing residential lots and opportunities for missing middle housing through residential infill development. Many said that if housing were integrated in the redevelopment of activity centers, design should recognize the uniqueness of each community and the scale should fit the context of the existing built environment. This recognition of context included the Rural West, where there was mixed feedback about whether any additional housing should be constructed. Most agreed new housing in the West should respect the rural nature of the area and not infringe upon, but compliment, agricultural uses by offering housing affordable to workers of local agribusinesses and farms.

Some community members expressed concerns about adding housing in the County given the existing school capacity challenges, while others shared concerns with new housing types. Many suggested that missing middle housing and accessory dwelling units should be compatible with existing housing and contribute to a cohesive neighborhood design. Furthermore, many supported developing appropriate guidelines for the design of housing, with an emphasis on ensuring guideline compliance. It was also emphasized that any new housing should be sensitive to the natural environment and sustainable building practices.

There was general agreement that new housing should be attainable for a diversity of income levels. Some mentioned challenges with the existing Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) program and suggested it be reevaluated to ensure it is meeting its intended objectives.


Housing was viewed as a part of a holistic community. Many remarked that the County should be intentional about the location of future development so it is well connected to amenities, planned improvements to public facilities, and employment centers—all assets that make Howard County’s neighborhoods so desirable.



## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus Groups Findings

- Housing in Howard County is not financially attainable for many people—need greater variety of housing types at various price points (for both rental and homeownership).
- Need more housing units that serve persons of all age and ability levels, especially the older adult population
- Housing is connected to concerns regarding school overcrowding and redistricting.
- Need for common/open space to be integrated into all neighborhoods

## Equity in Action

The following are equity best practices. Housing is inextricably linked with equity in Howard County, so many of the policies and associated implementing actions in this chapter have been identified as equity best practices. Each policy or implementing action that directly advances equitable outcomes will be noted with a “” symbol.

- Remove barriers to affordable housing in zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Provide a range of housing types.
- Preserve affordability of existing homes and neighborhoods for rental and homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households.
- Increase connected multi-modal infrastructure that provides access to jobs and amenities, particularly for low-income and transit-dependent community members.
- Identify housing needs for the entire community, as well as specific populations, including low-income, older adults, disabled, and homeless families and individuals.
- [Increase MIHU requirements by 5% for all new apartment developments.](#)

## Strategic aDVisory Group Input

Since housing affordability was identified as one of the most critical challenges currently facing the County, a Housing and Neighborhoods Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was formed to discuss how to diversify housing options throughout the County. The SAG focused on housing typologies referred to as missing middle and discussed several factors: what missing middle housing could look like, where it should be located, and what zoning changes need to occur to make it possible. The group recognized that missing middle housing has the potential to foster racial and socioeconomic diversity, provide more entry-level housing options, help address the downsizing needs of the older adult community, and contribute additional housing for persons with disabilities. There was consensus that to support a diversity of housing types and strong neighborhoods in the County, there must be policies that ensure affordable and attainable units are created, zoning tools that support diverse housing development, and infill development/redevelopment opportunities for missing middle housing that respect the character and integrity of a neighborhood—all while recognizing that limited land is available for new development. The work of the SAG informed many of the policies in the Dynamic Neighborhoods chapter and complemented recommendations found in the Howard County Housing Opportunities Master Plan (HOMP).