

HOWARD COUNTY HOUSING AFFORDABILITY COALITION

Howard County Council Public Hearing

January 21, 2025

Testimony in Support of Council Bill 3-2025

On behalf of the Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition, I appreciate the opportunity to convey strong support of Council Bill 3 approving the Administration's request for approval of the Section 108 Loan Guarantee that will enable the Ranleigh Place and Waverly Winds redevelopment housing projects to proceed.

With so little affordable housing stock in the County, the loss of any units whether due to deterioration or conversion to market rate has a significant adverse and generational impact on our community. Preservation and redevelopment of our limited number of affordable homes is just as imperative as the construction of new affordable housing.

For over 50 years, these "Community Homes" properties have provided a significant number of affordable homes to low-income county residents. Preservation of these properties is consistent with both the Housing Opportunities Master Plan and the newly adopted General Plan that states, "the scarcity of rental housing affordable to households that make less than 60% of the AMI highlights the importance of policies" –and I would add policy actions– "that call for affordable housing preservation."

The Coalition supports the County's financial assistance for the redevelopment of Ranleigh Court and Waverly Winds, which will replace 103 functionally obsolete housing units with 205 new, accessible, up-to-date apartments close to services, transportation, and medical institutions. The redevelopment will preserve federal rental subsidies ensuring our lowest income residents continue to be able to call these communities home while creating larger, inclusive communities for people with a range of incomes and abilities. All units will be visitable and 13 will meet uniform federal accessibility standards (UFAS) with another 4 units at Waverly Winds being reserved for people with disabilities. The Coalition is pleased that 107 of the units will serve those with incomes 60% or less of the Baltimore area median income (AMI), or \$58,680 for a 2-person household. Fifty-six units will have no income or rent restrictions.

The Coalition continues to support shifting affordable housing to mixed-income communities. Without market rents, the affordable units would once again be at risk of deterioration due to a lack of sufficient operating and capital funds. The integration of market rate and affordable units supports amenities such as a homework/after-school program room, meeting rooms, business center and playground. Importantly, these mixed income properties will contribute to deconcentrating poverty in Columbia—an HCBD goal that we know is shared by Council members and community social justice advocates, including the Coalition.

The Coalition supports CB 3 and the County's proactive financial assistance for these inclusive communities close to amenities for people of varying incomes and abilities. Thank you for this opportunity to testify as well as to express appreciation to Enterprise Community Development for its commitment to this Howard County neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Eng

Jackie Eng, Coalition Coordinator

The Coalition is composed of 40 organizations and over 900 individual members and allies. Our goal is to achieve community understanding, policy making and regulatory decisions that will lead to an increase in—and equitable access to—Howard County affordable housing. We seek to contribute to a community-wide recognition that Howard County's economic vitality is dependent upon access to jobs, housing that individuals and families can afford, a quality educational system, and resident mobility.