

**Attainable Housing Strategies:  
Tools to Find Montgomery’s Missing Housing  
Montgomery Planning  
March 5, 2021**

**About**

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Attainable Housing Strategies (AHS) is an initiative that the Planning Department will oversee through a planning process that will evaluate and potentially refine various proposals to spur the development of Attainable Housing options in Montgomery County. Through this process, the Planning Department will provide additional opportunity for public input and return to the County Council a series of recommendations on how to proceed with creating more opportunities for Attainable Housing. Recommendations will potentially include zoning text amendments, guidance on how to incorporate Attainable Housing into master plans, and proposed incentives to build Attainable Housing.

**Background**

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Montgomery County faces an ongoing housing shortage, with limited options available for middle-income households—and we expect our population to increase by 200,000 in the next 25 years. Right now, 80-plus percent of existing homes in the county are either single-family structures or large apartment complexes. Without more varied housing types, current and future residents will be (and already are) driven out of the county.

We’ve spent the last few years determining how to fill this housing gap, especially for would-be homeowners, focusing primarily on, “Missing Middle”. Now it’s time to implement policy and start building. Providing more duplexes, courtyard cottages, and smaller apartment buildings will bridge that gap and offer Attainable Housing opportunities for more and more diverse residents—while beginning to remedy past injustices in housing choice to enable a more equitable future.

The Planning Department and Planning Board have demonstrated a collective commitment to pursuing Attainable Housing, as evidenced through the [2018 Missing Middle Housing Study](#), [2020 Montgomery County Housing Needs Assessment](#), [Thrive Montgomery 2050](#), [Silver Spring Downtown & Adjacent Communities](#) plan and the creation of a [Missing Middle Housing webpage](#). **Staff will execute a clearly articulated, coordinated and comprehensive strategy that merges these efforts to define the desired residential uses and pursue the appropriate combination of policies, zoning text amendments, and other recommendations that will help ensure the creation of Attainable Housing in desired areas.**

## Internal Roles

<b>Jason Sartori</b> <i>Chief</i>	As chief and supervisor of the project, Jason will oversee the project and handle coordination with the County Council.
<b>Lisa Govoni</b> <i>Project Lead/Analysis Lead</i>	As project lead, Lisa will handle most of the day-to-day activities related to the project. Lisa will work with other staff to ensure coordination between the various Attainable Housing initiatives. Lisa will also handle most of the analysis and data support for the project.
<b>Ben Berbert</b> <i>Project Co-lead/Zoning Lead</i>	Ben will co-lead the project and handle the zoning aspects of AHS.
<b>Todd Fawley-King</b> <i>Market Feasibility</i>	As Montgomery Planning's expert on real estate, Todd will help answer market feasibility of building Attainable Housing.
<b>Zubin Adrianvala</b> <i>Incentives</i>	Zubin will lead the research and write recommendations related to incentives for AHS.
<b>Bridget Broullire</b> <i>Outreach / Engagement</i>	Bridget and her communications team will develop an Attainable Housing communications plan to help guide messaging and inform engagement needs.
<b>Silver Spring Downtown &amp; Adjacent Communities Internal Steering Committee</b>	As part of the Silver Spring Downtown & Adjacent Communities Plan, an inter-divisional steering committee was established to ensure department staff are kept in the loop and speaking with one voice on the topic of Attainable Housing. The steering committee will be a sounding board for the development of recommendations for the AHS. For the duration of the project, staff is requesting the steering committee group meet twice a month. Members include Lisa Govoni, Atara Margolies, Leslye Howerton, Rebeccah Ballo, Paul Mortenson, Luis Estrada, John Marcolin, Roberto Duke, Elza Hisel-McCoy, Robert Kronenberg, Carrie Sanders, Patrick Butler, Christina Sorrento, Melissa Williams, Lauren Stamm, Chris Peifer and Bridget Broullire.

## Engagement

Staff is proposing several tools with the aim at reaching the largest audience possible with special attention paid to coordinating with other ongoing initiatives to remove redundancy and to create coordinated, comprehensive messaging about Attainable Housing. Engagement tactics include:

- **Project Webpage:** A project website will be created to provide transparency, accessibility and information to users wanting to engage with content on AHS. The webpage will include easy ways to contact staff, submit feedback and request meetings.
- **Housing Equity Advisory Team (HEAT):** as part of the AHS, an external stakeholder group (Housing Equity Advisory Team) will be convened three times to assess various aspects of the AHS. Potential members include small builders, realtors, and community members. Draft agendas include the development of a shared understanding of the definition of Attainable Housing, an assessment of tools that are available currently to build Attainable Housing, potential locational criteria for Attainable Housing, and an examination of what conditions are

required to make each type of Attainable Housing feasible in the desired locations. All meetings will be held on Microsoft Teams, and recordings will be posted on the AHS website the day after.

- **Public Meetings:** Planning staff will host three virtual public meetings held over Microsoft Teams to share the project scope, completed project milestones and answer questions from community members. Through these meetings, planning staff also hopes to understand the community's vision for incorporating more Attainable Housing throughout the county. These meetings will take place in March, April and May 2021 and will be recorded and posted on the project's website.
- **Office Hours:** Staff will have a recurring virtual meeting or scheduled hours for community question and answer sessions.
- **Housing eLetter:** The project leads will work with Communications staff to disseminate information with each project milestone in an eLetter form.
- **Social media campaign:** Similar to the "Housing Day" hosted last year on Twitter for Thrive Montgomery 2050, there will be a planned social campaign related to the initiative to raise awareness and garner feedback on specific questions.
- **The Third Place blog posts:** There will be a series of blog posts on The Third Place blog that will tackle topics related to Attainable Housing and will be promoted on social media and pitched to local media.

## Project Deliverables

Phase	Deliverable	Outcome
Project Definition	<p>Develop preliminary priorities for the AHS to guide the existing conditions analysis and recommendation development. These key considerations will focus on developing a shared definition of Attainable Housing, while also creating a framework for evaluating future recommendation impacts.</p>	<p>The project definition will create a framework to guide existing conditions analysis and recommendation development. The project definition will be based on an understanding of community and stakeholder priorities, including equity, design, affordability, neighborhood compatibility, economics, locational criteria, environmental concerns, and parking impacts. The project definition framework will also include a shared definition of Attainable Housing, including its variation in different parts of the county.</p>
Existing Conditions Analysis	<p>Planning staff will develop a focused existing conditions analysis that will help inform the AHS recommendations. This deliverable will include existing conditions research related to zoning, locational criteria, and market feasibility. This will largely pull from existing resources supplemented with additional research and analysis as needed.</p>	<p>A shared understanding of Montgomery County's housing shortfall and Attainable Housing gap, issues associated with this housing gap, market feasibility, and community priorities to address through Attainable Housing.</p>
Attainable Housing Strategies Recommendations	<p>Recommendations will potentially include zoning text amendments, guidance on how to incorporate middle housing into master plans, and proposed incentives.</p>	<p>AHS recommendations will create the ability for new housing type alternatives to be built that meet the agreed upon definition of Attainable Housing.</p>

## Schedule

Month	Milestone
March	Project kickoff with Planning Director/Deputy Directors
	Project kickoff with Internal Attainable Housing Steering Committee: project definition
	Begin Existing Conditions Analysis
	Website development
	Develop educational materials
	eLetter release: project kickoff and upcoming community/stakeholder meeting
	Housing Equity Advisory Team: Meeting #1
	Project check-in with Planning Director/Deputy Directors
	Community Meeting #1: scope and existing conditions
	eLetter release: recap of community/stakeholder meeting
	Blog Post #1: Existing Conditions
April	eLetter release: second community/stakeholder meeting, office hours
	Office Hours
	Housing Equity Advisory Team: Meeting #2
	Project check-in with Planning Director/Deputy Directors
	Internal Attainable Housing Steering Committee: interim project feedback
	Community/stakeholders Meeting #2: interim project feedback
	eLetter release: recap of second community/stakeholder meeting
	Office Hours
eLetter release: third community/stakeholder meeting	
May	Social Media Day/Housing Day
	Housing Equity Advisory Team: Meeting #3/draft recommendations
	Internal Attainable Housing Steering Committee: draft recommendations
	Project check-in with Planning Director/Deputy Director: draft recommendations
	Community/stakeholders Meeting #3: draft recommendations
	Blog Post #2: draft recommendations
	Office Hours
	Staff Report posted
June	Planning Board worksession #1
	Planning worksession #2 (if needed)
	Transmit to County Council