

Allan Kittleman Responses to Housing Questionnaire

1. As you know, Jim Rouse developed Columbia to be a City in which all would live in harmony. He envisioned that there would be an economic and racial mix that would lead the way in showing that all can live together harmoniously. In recent years, reports have shown that there has been a clustering by income levels in certain parts of Columbia. One example of this clustering is shown by the fact that approximately 62% of the children attending Stevens Forest Elementary School receive assistance under the FARM program. Do you think such clustering is consistent with Rouse's dream? Is it appropriate in your view? If not, what would you do to correct it?

I believe the concern you discuss regarding socioeconomic clustering is inconsistent with Rouse's dream for Columbia. In my view this clustering has occurred due in large part to the county leadership's failure to listen and act on the concerns expressed by Oakland Mills residents. During this campaign, I have held 6 town hall meetings throughout Howard County. One such meeting was held in East Columbia. It is crucial that we have leaders who will come to the residents instead of waiting for them to come to Ellicott City. As your County Executive, I will never forget that I work for you. I will continue to hold town hall in your community after the election to learn how I can best serve you.

One way to correct this problem is to ensure we do not continue to build low-income units where there is already a high concentration of them. This can be accomplished by not allowing developers to shift their moderate income housing unit (MIHU) requirements to areas that do not have an adequate need for affordable housing.

As you noted, one example of this clustering is the large amount of students receiving assistance under the FARM program. It is important that we not only address the clustering but ensure that every child within Oakland Mills currently has the ability to succeed. We have a persistent Achievement Gap that has averaged between 20 and 30 percent over the last decade in Howard County despite having one of the best school systems in the country. This is unacceptable. As County Executive, I will be committed to using the resources of our entire county to ensure all Howard County students succeed in our public schools, regardless of where they reside. Oakland Mills residents will benefit from my 24/7 education plan because it places an emphasis on implementing community supports this village needs to ensure families can provide a safe and stable learning environment at home. By strengthening Oakland Mills through our education system, the community will be a more desirable place for families to raise their children. With the residents' help, we can build the appropriate community services Oakland Mills families need to make sure their children thrive.

2. The "Fee In Lieu" policy which allows funds to be paid for the development of subsidized housing in areas other than the immediate area under development, and the "Alternative Compliance" policy which allows the subsidized housing requirement to be fulfilled off site allow for the clustering of subsidized housing in certain areas of the county such as Oakland Mills. Do you support these policies? Do you feel these are consistent with the dream of Jim Rouse? If not, what would you do to change it.

We must look at how the Housing Commission and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) are administering the federal and state level affordable housing programs within Howard County. The main concern I have is that housing throughout the county is not diversified. MIHU attempts to deal with this issue but the 'fee-in-lieu' provision has made achieving

more diversification difficult. It is wise to consider prohibiting ‘fee-in-lieu’ in certain parts of the county where the construction of new affordable housing units is both needed and practical. Conversely, we should consider excusing certain development projects from meeting the MIHU standard in areas with an already high concentration of low-income and affordable housing like Oakland Mills.

3. Many houses in Columbia, particularly in Oakland Mills, are in foreclosure. Not only is this very unfortunate for the affected homebuyers, but it also affects the neighborhood in which these properties are located. The problem is exacerbated by “zombie foreclosures” where the banks are unable or unwilling to take ownership of the properties and then resell them. Thus, they stay unoccupied and unmaintained and serve as a blight on the surrounding properties. What would you do to hold banks accountable for proper property maintenance once they start the foreclosure process?

As a State Senator, I served on the Finance Committee where I developed strong relationships with the state’s banking industry. I will use these relationships to advocate for Howard County citizens. It is important that the citizens be respected, and I will help them navigate the foreclosure and resettlement process. This will serve the communities’ interest as well as the residents’ because it will prevent communities from becoming blighted due to neglect.

4. In part due to the impact of the policies and issues mentioned above, Oakland Mills has one of the highest amounts of subsidized and low rent housing in the county. Not only is this absolutely inconsistent with the dream of Jim Rouse, it also tears at the very fabric of Columbia since it creates the same type of socio/economic segregation that Columbia was designed to eliminate. What specifically would you do to change this pattern? What would you do to revitalize Oakland Mills to make it consistent with the dream of Jim Rouse?

One way to lessen the concentration of low-income and affordable housing in Oakland Mills would be to fix the bridge across Route 29 that connects Oakland Mills to Town Center. This will improve access to Downtown Columbia and make Oakland Mills a more inviting place for visitors, business tenants, and prospective dwellers. With the Downtown Columbia redevelopment project underway, greater access to Downtown by way of the bridge will make Oakland Mills a more attractive housing option for the people who will fill newly created jobs. In addition, I will work with the Columbia Association, the Oakland Mills Village Board, and other stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive review of Oakland Mills including the Village Center and the surrounding communities. I will also ensure the Howard County Housing Commission provides more notice and information to the community before purchasing properties for redevelopment so that residents can give their input. The county has certainly put the interests of some communities ahead of others, and certain special interests ahead of residents. I constantly hear from residents their concerns over not having information about proposed developments and changes in zoning.