

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?

A: Clustering of low-income housing is not consistent with Jim Rouse's dream. As Howard County ages, county government must invest in older neighborhoods and provide incentives for home ownership in these areas, as well as provide opportunities for redevelopment, which contribute to increasing vibrancy and investment. As County Executive, I will continue to work with Oakland Mills as I have demonstrated this year, when I brought county department heads together for a meeting with the village board. By having everyone around the table, all areas of county government now have the same understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced in Oakland Mills. Moving forward, I will make sure that working with Oakland Mills is a priority of mine, and of all departments in county government. I commit to meeting with Oakland Mills residents about our first step forward within the first 30 days of my administration.

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?

A: Fee in lieu should not be used to increase clusters of subsidized housing and I am committed to a housing policy in the county that promotes placing affordable housing in areas that have none, and ensuring that we provide a variety of housing types in all areas of the county.

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 blight on the surrounding properties. cWhat would you do to hold banks accountable for proper property maintenance once they start the foreclosure process?

A: As County Executive I will develop a strike team for properties such as these. It will include a Constituent Services specialist, the Fire Dept., the Inspections Dept. and the Howard County Office of Law. I have had success using this model in my Council district in helping neighbors deal with homes that have been abandoned by owners and banks. This team will work with the community in tracking down absentee owners and work to ensure that properties are maintained and safe.

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 revitalize Oakland Mills to make it consistent with the dream of Jim Rouse?

A: I am committed to revitalization and redevelopment of older areas in Howard County and excited about moving forward immediately in Oakland Mills. I believe a critical component is the Rt. 29 Bridge and upgrading the bridge to provide a connection between the village and downtown Columbia. I also am committed to implementing the new loan fund that the County Council approved this year. A \$20 million loan fund from a bank to provide loans to home buyers of distressed properties while also providing loan funding for the renovation of the property will go a long way to bringing in new investment in older neighborhoods - and help families become homeowners. I believe that by working together with all residents of Oakland Mills, we can honor the uniqueness of the village and build upon its values of inclusion and opportunity for everyone.