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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Housing Committee, Tuesday, October 6, 2026

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[00:00:05] Welcome, everybody, to the post-lunch haze. But we've got a lot of really exciting topics this afternoon, so thank you for joining us. Our next committee we'll call to order is the Housing Committee Meeting, and we have two robust items on the agenda today. We'll start with one at a time. The two items is first talking about utilizing our tax authority to help maximize the efficiency of our affordable housing dollars, and then the second is going to talk about establishing a new strategic plan for our community's efforts to meet the challenge of homelessness.

[00:00:33] So we'll take one at a time. we'll start talking about the tax authority. Just a little background. In the last General Assembly session, House Bill 854 was enacted to provide localities with new authority to utilize tax exemptions for affordable housing development and preservation. And so as we prepare to talk about this, I want to note a few things. First, we continue to lead on the development of new affordable homes. Our progress was 10,000 units. We recognize that we need housing for all in our county and affordable houses is an important component of that as well. So I'm really glad to see us on track for that goal.

[00:01:06] Just a little point of privilege, just last week, the new Fairfax Crest right here in Braddock received its certificates of occupancy, and new neighbors are already moving in, so yay to that, and yay to

my predecessor, Supervisor Walkinshaw, now Congressman and Chairman McKay, and all of you for the work on that.

[00:01:24] But our progress depends on continued investment, capital, land, and innovative ideas, so I'm really excited to discuss staff's recommendation for the initial use and thoughts of this new authority relative to local property tax exemptions for affordable housing and i'm really excited about it in light of the recent task force report from may as well as which is a product of chairman mckay's critically important september 25 board matter on housing initiatives so something just to put out that we should be proud of here in the last fiscal year fairfax county budgeted 38 per capita in affordable housing development and preservation The Commonwealth of Virginia invested less than \$10 per capital in the same period.

[00:02:04] So we really are leading on this issue, and we should be proud of that work. But it's not the only step. As we recognize, housing for all is really important throughout the county at all levels, and affordable housing is a strong component of that. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Anna Shapiro, the Deputy Director for Real Estate Finance and Development with the Department of Housing and Community Development, to talk about this new tax exemption authority.

[00:02:27] Thank you very much, Supervisor Heiser. Again, my name is Anna Shapiro, Deputy Director at the Department of Housing and Community Development over our real estate development and finance functions. So I'm here to talk today about a new tool for, sorry about that, okay, a new tool for the county that was provided through the state legislature.

[00:02:56] I'd also like to introduce, actually while I'm here, Associate Director of Real Estate Finance, Rachel Waldman, who was instrumental in getting this together as well, And also call out that we've been working through a working group across the county with OCA, DTA, and DMV to really talk through how this can roll out.

[00:03:14] And so this is really a coordinated effort that, while we're representing, took a lot of people to really get together and really make this idea into what it is now. And we look forward to the board's feedback on it. The state legislation allowed for the expansion of tax exemptions by local jurisdictions, and this is a permissive authority that local jurisdictions can take advantage of by doing an ordinance to implement.

[00:03:43] So right now, or so now, the ability under the statute is that now nonprofits that can be part of a tax credit partnership and own real property and have property ownership in that, sorry, have an ownership interest in that property can now be tax exempt as long as they are doing, doing, sorry, as long as they're developing that property for charitable or benevolent use.

[00:04:07] And affordable housing is one of those. And that is also defined in the state code. We are first pursuing this authority under a designation ordinance. And I'm going to talk a little bit about how we got to that point, what this will do, and then how we anticipate rolling it out to start and then potential for future of this tool.

[00:04:30] So what we wanted to start to talk about was how a tax exemption works and how that creates a better financing opportunity for the project. So what a tax exemption does is it decreases the amount of operating expenses for a property.

[00:04:47] And so any property you have, even your own home, you might be paying taxes on it. then that goes into how much you can get out for a mortgage, right? It's how much you can afford to take out. So once you reduce those operating expenses, and that don't have to affect the actual operations of a property, but just the taxes, you're also able to increase your NOI, so your net operating income that you get off the property, thereby allowing you to take out a larger senior loan and reducing the need for other debt sources. So you've seen a lot in some of our capital stacks for our projects, where the FCRHA comes in as a subordinate lender.

[00:05:24] So we have typically tax credit equity. We often have a senior mortgage, which take up the majority of those construction costs and those long-term financing needs. We also come in as a subordinate lender, and then there's other sources in the project, like state loans or charitable loans or other sources of financing. When you see the increase of that senior mortgage, that actually allows us to reduce the amount of subordinate debt that the FCRHA can put in. So we can tie the tax exemption directly to the amount of debt we need to put into a project to make it happen.

[00:06:01] So as we think about starting this tax exemption authority on projects, we're really focusing in on a small subset. And you'll see a few of these in the ordinance that will come to you, and I'll describe that a little bit more. We're going to be starting with obviously those entities that comply under the statute. So currently, that is a non-profit entity or a non-profit controlling member of a tax credit partnership. We are actually starting with land owned by the FCRHA. We want to make sure that we start with a narrow universe so we can kind of have control over the underwriting, make sure we're tying it directly to the debt that we'd be putting in, and then thinking about expanding in the future. But right now, this is really the,

[00:06:41] we know we have a lot of opportunities with our pipeline. And then the term of the tax exemption will need to be a pretty long term because it will need to go past the length of the senior debt. So when you think about a senior mortgage, that's often 30, 40 years. It does need to go past that for that senior lender to be able to lend on that reduction of operating expenses.

[00:07:04] So if that makes sense, that means that basically that timeline, we're looking at 50 years for the first couple of projects to ensure that whatever debt they do get, we're doing a longer time longer time period than that debt. And the first two projects we're looking at are the Dulles Green Project in the Drainsville District and then the East County Project in Mason District.

[00:07:27] These are properties that went through a PPA process and they're gearing up for the March round of the low-income housing tax credit process. The reason we're coming to you first with this tax exemption for these two properties is because it's really critical that we understand whether that those properties, what they will be responsible for in terms of their taxes in order to properly underwrite them. So as we go, and after this is considered, our next step will be to fully underwrite and then come in with the subordinate debt request that will be commensurate with the amount of tax exemption that is provided. So we're requesting a full tax exemption, and then that

[00:08:05] debt will look a certain way. And then that'll enable us to get to that March timeframe to submit for low-income housing tax credits, and simultaneously those projects are going through the entitlement process as well. So in terms of timeline, the authorization for public hearing, we're drafting that item now, and we propose that to be on November 11th, and then the public hearing and the board action would take place on December 8th. The FSRHA approval for the blueprint investment would closely follow, so we

would be basically drafting the items and doing the underwriting at the same time. So assuming that tax exemption is approved, we would be considering it in the

[00:08:44] underwriting and then going to the RHA and then the Board of Supervisors with that subordinate debt request for both of those projects in order to get them into the 9% tax credit round in March. A couple of additional considerations. At a previous legislative committee meeting, I believe in September, there was a presentation about a new authority or sort of slightly clarification to the statute that was amended last year to really focus also on PHA's public housing authorities and in place of a nonprofit because we are

[00:09:19] not a nonprofit but we do act and create housing for affordable housing and in that benevolent use charitable use that's under the statute so that that amendment we're hoping will be picked up this next legislative session and will allow us a more streamlined approach to using this authority on RHA properties. And then as we think about the future of a potential tax tool, a lot of jurisdictions also apply this type of tool for looking at preservation opportunities. So we'd like to look at that. We obviously wanted to take a little bit more time in working with our colleagues and then thinking about how that

[00:09:53] would impact the budget. When you have a property that is today tax exempt, like an RHA property, you sort of envision that you could, you know, that tax exemption doesn't affect your current budget, but if you're looking at preservation opportunities, that would have an impact on our budget. So we want to carefully consider that and then make sure we're rolling it out if we can in a really tactical way to ensure that we're really focusing in on the types of projects that could benefit from it. So that is the presentation. Very simple, but

[00:10:25] very happy to open for questions. Thank you. And I will just say I think this is a really exciting possibility, and I think there's a lot of space in between what's being allowed from the permissible authority from the state and how we can sort of shape it ourselves as well between November and December. You know, really looking, digging more into what's the revenue on blueprint savings, what's the affordability and compliance conditions on this exemption, what a non-profit definition. I think it's really great that we have such local authority

[00:11:01] to kind of shape what this looks like as well before we get into December. So I'll just pause it there. I'm sure there's lots of questions from the chairman and my colleagues, so I have lots of things to say, but I'll leave it here. I think I'm very excited for this. I appreciate the presentation. I'll turn it over to the chairman. Yeah, I agree. I think this is a great thing to look at, especially the potential that it has for reducing our blueprint contributions to make some of these happen and spread our resources further. I guess the question that I have, and it's not clear to me in the presentation, but does

[00:11:34] the legislation allow for a property tax exemption on the land and the improvements, and can we envision any opportunities where it may be one without the other? That's a great question. The legislation does allow for both, so it would be the land and improvements. I can get back to you and speak to OC a little bit more on that question of whether they can be separated.

[00:12:01] Yeah, I think it's an important one because when I look at, for example, on page 7 where you have potential ordinance, new construction not currently improved is there, but I can think of some circumstances working with non-profits where we're trying to rehab and improve facilities where this might be a useful tool to get one of those rehab projects going, where, you know, if you were looking at a

property tax exemption on the improved value in a circumstance like that, that might be useful. Or in cases where a nonprofit might have

[00:12:38] a lease on land, but the land is owned by someone else and they're looking to build affordable there and would like at least the tax exemption on the improvements that they're making to that property if in a certain circumstance they don't have total control of the land. And so I think we need to think about that and whether that's necessarily a good opportunity or not. It wasn't clear to me that the legislation allowed or didn't allow that flexibility because we just talked generically about property tax exemptions, but we know property tax valuations are made up of land

[00:13:13] and improvement value. And so I would appreciate, as we look at this, looking at that particular nuance and if there's an opportunity there in some circumstances where it might make sense to do that. Thank you. Thank you. I think those are really important questions that we should sort of dig into a little bit more before we get through the November and December, especially with a pretty robust time frame on that. I'm going to start just down this row, and we'll go. I see your hand up, Supervisor Beerman. I know, Supervisor Alcorn, you had one. Did you have anything?

[00:13:46] Okay, we'll get back to you. Supervisor Herity? Okay, I'll come back to you, Supervisor Alcorn. Okay, thank you. So one way to think about this, it's basically we would be paying in the form of avoided taxes over time as opposed to up front as part of uh or at least modifying at least how much we would need to pay up front is that is that generally the idea that we're talking about yes it would be that they would not be subject to taxes from construction on through 50 years

[00:14:16] so so my my question would be i guess um at what point um do we pencil this out in a way i mean i'm just imagining a scenario, maybe we would have to put \$10 million in debt financing for a project or just put it in. It's just putting it in. And as opposed to over what period of time would we look at that \$10 million in avoided taxes, would we be looking at an analysis like that to guide the program, or tell me how that might work.

[00:14:56] Sure. The statute actually requires that we provide kind of an analysis of the cost, the impacts of the tax exemption. So you'll see that for each project. And we can make a note to make sure that's shown in that way, if that's of interest to the board.

[00:15:12] So meaning, just to make sure I have that right, that showing what today's investment would be in debt versus how taxes are forgiven over time and over that 50-year period. And would we have the ability to dial that on a project-specific basis, or is it all or nothing on the tax exemption?

[00:15:30] I mean, with the exception, I guess, of the land versus building. I think there is an opportunity for partial tax exemption. I do want to get back to you on that answer. I mean, I don't know if we would ever have this situation, but, I mean, you know, we would probably need to think carefully if we were looking at a \$5 million upfront investment, But then it penciled out to being \$20 million in current dollars over time in the tax abatement.

[00:15:56] I don't know if we would ever have that situation, considering that we're typically just one of a number of contributors, you know, making these projects feasible financially. But, yeah, thank you for looking into that. My other question is, we're talking about this just in terms of reducing the amount of upfront financing.

[00:16:21] Could this also be used to reduce the AMIs and the eligibility? You could use it in various ways. I mean, it all really comes down to how much it takes to build the project and making sure that project is sustainable with the debt that you put on it and all the other sources.

[00:16:39] So making sure that it can just continue to pay its bills for that long term. So you can use it in lots of different ways. All right. I think I'm not saying that would be a way we would want to use it, maybe not in every time, but knowing that that would be an ability because I know getting the AMIs down is a really, really big hurdle.

[00:17:02] So that might be something on a project-specific basis we might want to look at. And then finally, just to confirm, we're not talking about any retroactive application. We're just talking about new construction going forward. Is that correct? Correct. And the way we're starting with the rollout is a designation ordinance, so it really would be limited to that entity that's under the ordinance as well as the piece of land that's referred to in the ordinance.

[00:17:29] So it's very limited in its application. Wonderful. All right, thank you. Just a follow-up on that, just because I thought Supervisor Alcorn was going here too, but is there an envisioned sunset on the exemption that's built into the program that you're proposing and is there a verification process that the units are in fact still maintaining their affordability?

[00:17:52] On the sunset it would be that 50 years and it would be by ordinance. So there's no sunset to the statute and the change in the statute but the ordinance would specify the timeline for that exemption. Would give us up to 50 years or has to be 50 years? It would be up to 50 years because if it gets sold to an entity that no longer complies under the statute, if it no longer complies with the affordability, which also has layers of oversight and monitoring to it, typically the tax credits are ground leases and other ways that we're monitoring it.

[00:18:26] So we would add this to sort of that monitoring bucket. So if any of those things change, then they would no longer be subject, no longer be allowed to take this tax exemption. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Kaiser Beerman, and then come back to Herity.

[00:18:44] I think my question was more or less answered. When you bring us one of these things, you provide us with an entire financial analysis. I mean, if you look at slide six, the whole point is that without the exemption, we end up spending more money up front.

[00:19:02] With the exemption, we end up spending less money up front. But, of course, with an exemption, we are taking in less money over time. So I just want to make sure that when these are brought to us, there's an actual analysis that tells us what the total cost is.

[00:19:18] And then we have to decide whether or not we end up coming out on top in the end or whether or not if we don't come out on top, it's still worth us doing it because there's another interest there, which is more housing in the short term. I would love, you know, you don't have to do it now, but I would love an example with numbers on, you know, what this looks like on this type of project that costs this much with these many units, 50-year time horizon, you name it, may be sent to us in a nip before we get to the first example of us having one for consideration.

[00:19:57] Thank you. I agree. So thank you for that. I'm going to go to Supervisor Herod and Supervisor Lusk. Yeah, a couple of things. We looked at providing a lot of our nonprofit groups, and the Brain

Foundation comes to mind because they regularly talk to me about getting, and you and a few others, they do some really good things, and they could do so many more things if they had the real estate tax exempt.

[00:20:30] But as we've always said around this dais, and I'm going to echo the chairman's words here, tax credit for one means a tax credit for everyone. So I'm having a real hard time, surprise, surprise, with this one.

[00:20:47] There are other ways to lower the senior debt. One of them is reduce the cost per unit. And I know the process drives the cost per unit up. But have we looked at ways that we can drive down the cost per unit on these things?

[00:21:04] Yes. And we continually push our developers to value engineer and to evaluate their properties. I will also say that through the Housing Task Force, we've created a conversation with the planning office as well to look at the requirements for affordable housing and where there could be flexibility in the expectations.

[00:21:23] And so we're going to continue to have those conversations as projects come up. Because to me, that's the key. I mean, we've got to drive down the cost of these things. And the cost per unit most of the time doesn't include the value of the land we contribute, the value of the demo 500K for Franconia.

[00:21:41] That's all on us. That's not factored into the cost per unit, and they're still through the roof compared to private sector units. This is another \$75,000 to \$100,000 cost per unit to us, I believe. Is that approximately what it's going to work out to be, or have you done that calculation?

[00:22:00] No, but we can get back to you with that full analysis that other board members have requested. So Supervisor Alcorn asked a question a minute ago about reducing the AMI.

[00:22:16] And to me, the big problem with these rents is the AMI is at 60, but you still have to pay a 30% rent rate for that, which knocks most people out of it. They can't afford it if they're at 60% AMI.

[00:22:32] They can't afford the 60%. Could we use this as a tool to reduce the rental rate even lower? Sure. And similar to the question that Supervisor Alcorn asked, it can be used for, so if we wanted to hold the gap steady or figure out what we needed for the gap this could be also used as a tool to reduce the amis so which also just goes to the amis impact the income you know so that reduced income would just need to be somehow offset so you know and we're our taxpayers are

[00:23:05] paying for this in a number of ways the land the work that we do in advance etc etc they also with Pay for it with housing vouchers have we figured out how many of these 10,000 unit or the 3,000 units have housing vouchers as well Supervisor Herity, thank you for your question Tom Fleetwood with the Department of Housing and Community Development We are responding to that through the budget Q&A process which should be out very shortly But the short answer is that yes, we we do have that there is it's important to note that there's a substantial difference between

[00:23:44] project-based voucher that we put on up on a property versus a tenant based voucher and the response that we're that we're providing will have all of that information but we do have that I appreciate it that and I'll leave you a thought I've been having a lot of conversations with our developers and as we all know there's we have tens of thousands of units and I think you quoted 40,000. Yeah, at least 40,000 countywide that aren't being built. They're market rate units that aren't being built because they can't afford to be built. And in talking to those

[00:24:23] individuals, there's a couple of levers that would get them in the market. And one is a deferral of a deferral of taxes until they're actually occupied. And if we're considering stuff that's going to impact the affordability of housing, I think we should be looking at not just government subsidized units. We should be looking at, because you don't get the tax until they're built.

[00:24:50] So phasing in those while they're being built might make a lot of sense and is another good way to attack the affordability of housing for all, the attainability of housing for all. Because we need all kinds of units. That's how you drive down the cost of units. So I would encourage you, So, you know, if they can drop the rent, maybe these become a little more practical.

[00:25:16] We can actually find people to go in them. But otherwise, I'm going to have a hard time with it. But thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Lust and Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I'll say I fully support the new Tax Exemption Authority and also appreciate the idea of having a tax exemption option in the future as well.

[00:25:43] And I think that this is going to help. I see the positivity of it as it relates to the operating costs, lowering them, and hopefully allowing these projects to be completed and then delivering more affordable housing, which at the end of the day is something that we definitely, definitely need.

[00:26:00] So I appreciate the staff for bringing this forward and just acknowledge the value that it will create. The one question I wanted to ask is I think you mentioned that the FCHRA is going to be Apprized of this and they're going to be a part of the I guess weighing in on it. Is that the same for a hack that we have?

[00:26:21] opportunity for a hack to be Included in this discussion and aware of this project as well when this idea Supervisor Lusk, thank you for the question. We have advised a hack That this was going to be on the agenda for this committee meeting let them know generally what the idea was With respect to the FCRAJ the FCRAJ would play a direct role in the implementation of this as it's currently presented Because the FCRAJ would be both the ground owner and the second trust lender of record Yeah, I apologize the only reason why I'm asking the questions when I looked at the slide slide 8

[00:27:00] It just wasn't as clear in that list of actions that were gonna take place. So it was a clarifying question And so thank you for that response. Thank you, Madam Chair. Great. Thank you very much. Supervisor Pelczyk, Supervisor Smith, and we'll go back for additional comments. Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

[00:27:17] And I, too, very much appreciate the work. I also appreciate, and I'm looking at your penultimate slide, eight, nine, that this is very much a first look at this issue. While we were given wider authority, I appreciate that we're being strategic and trying it first and we'll be able to have feedback on these two projects.

[00:27:39] I also look forward to the full analysis, obviously keeping in mind some of it is future expenses. We'll have to sort of guesstimate on that or use your economic ability to do that. But I do think this is just talking about nonprofits and housing.

[00:27:54] I know you're looking for the future for all land owned by our housing authority because we have a few private developers that also build land. I assume that's part of what you want to understand, if they can be eligible one day. That's right. That's part of the legislative program to see if, as long as the RHA

owns it and it's still for that benevolent use, whether the nonprofit or for-profit can be that entity that we partner with.

[00:28:19] We're hoping to open it up because we do partner with both and just to the same end. Okay. And then the second one says naturally occurring market affordable housing. So I assume our designation of, I know we're currently tracking where there's market rate affordable housing, is to be able to find incentives to retain that as affordable housing?

[00:28:40] Yes, potentially. And I think we, you know, we kind of put those bullets there in priority order as well, because we do see, you know, we are tracking also those expiring subsidies and expiring tax credits. So we really see kind of a need in the market to look at those closely. We know that at the state level, there's even a lot more than we have. And so we're working with the state on that conversation and also just thinking about it internally as well for our county okay no i appreciate that we need all the tools and you know to me this is about um housing right if we're gonna i'm not opposed to the conversation that was brought up about looking

[00:29:14] at other potential ways to support um our economic development but i think that has to be looked at mostly separately i do think we need to figure out where there are maybe like here a couple of projects we can try with some authorities we haven't tried to help ensure that projects can better pencil out, right? Whether it's multifamily, mixed use, et cetera. I see that as a little bit differently and hope we review that with Jen Miller's work and the economic side of it. But I think this is really important that we have a very strategic look and understand the consequences

[00:29:51] before opening it further. So thank you for your work. Thank you very much. I'm Siveth Smith. I appreciate my colleagues' questions about the financing because I think that's important for us to understand and probably a little different than Supervisor Alcorn because I think we need to look at higher AMIs.

[00:30:08] Thank you. Supervisor Herdy? Yeah, just a quick follow-up question, and this I think would be helpful. If we could look at the cost per unit under this model compared to a cost per unit, if we were to give Homestretch and some of our nonprofits it's the opportunity to take part in this, because I think what we'd find is that homestretch could come to the table with a lot lower cost per unit and a lot more units than this approach

[00:30:43] in terms of our affordable housing needs. So if we could look at that, that would be, or at least consider looking at that as an option. I just, I hate to see us go to the most expensive, the most expensive form of affordable units that we can go to which are these units thank you and i'll just have a couple i think comments that we do need to dig into i appreciate all my colleagues comments i think there's some questions to be answered really around compliance and oversight

[00:31:20] in terms and definitions affordability non-profit what are we looking at as well as some of the financing options and how does this pencil out in terms of the exemption i also wonder If we're looking, if FCHRH land is generally untaxed, if we're looking at improvements on those exemptions, what happens when the exemptions expire, and what is the plan for when they expire, especially in terms of preservation of, you know, with expiring credits and naturally occurring affordable housing, how does that look, and sort of the accountability structure as well, as we're looking at non-profits outside of our own internal, what's the accountability for non-profits look like,

[00:31:57] and then what affordability tiers and compliance reporting will be required. some of it. I think there's a lot to dig into here. I'm very excited to have this additional authority, and I think it's important to have it, and I think, you know, we need to address our affordability crisis in housing. We need to look at other AMI levels as well, I agree with my colleagues here, but I think we want to make sure we know what we're getting into, so I appreciate the pilot-esque aspect of picking two projects, but it would be good before we have our non-profits partners say, hey, this isn't just you guys, it's non-profits, to have some of these questions answered as well um thank you supervisor heismore um i'm i'm supervisor heismore size more sorry

[00:32:34] wow what's the name of our fantasy yeah i know it's fantasy football i was thinking about that i'm sorry about that but when we look at our comparative analysis we have to make sure we're doing apples to apples and not apples to oranges so i'm going to ask tom and his team to ensure that if we are going to look at comparatives or comparisons that we outline what are the same and then have a second stage which are different so we can see how we can modulate what's a better process. Because what I'm listening to, you asked us to do something new. This is something new

[00:33:08] that's going to be different. And I don't know how you compare that to the past when we know the past isn't working. I shouldn't say it's not working, but we need to make changes. So to Supervisor Herity's point, when we look at this comparative model, we're going to make sure it's apples, and then the other things that are outside of those apples to see if we can pencil to that to help make the point or the argument that this is a better process than what we have used in the past or another process for our toolkit. Thanks. Thank you. And if I just may add to that for a minute, I think one of the things I really am excited about is when we're getting expanded authority and we're kind of a, we're a leader in this affordable housing, as you can see from the

[00:33:47] numbers, we want to make sure with new authority that we're getting it right or doing the best to get it right. So that way we're setting up for success to be a model for everybody else. And very excited about that possibility. So I think this is great, but let's get some of the questions answered and some of the building blocks put around it. So we've got some structures that I think will be helpful for everybody. I'm going to look one more time at my colleagues if we had any other questions. If not, we'll move on. This is a great initial conversation about this. We'll move on to the second part. If staff doesn't want to add anything else, we'll move on to the second part of our meeting today, which is really shifting towards looking at something equally as important.

[00:34:22] a, and I'll give a minute for staff to change seats, and then we'll introduce the next topic.

[00:34:36] And I appreciate the conversation by my colleagues. Thank you, everybody. And as we're starting, I wanted to take a point of privilege to introduce former Fairfax City Mayor David Myers, who's now working with us on our homeless refugee plan. So welcome. Welcome, Mayor Meyer. Actually, that

[00:35:13] sounds really cool. So just as a brief introduction, we are now continuing, switching to our continuing care board and our office to prevent and end homelessness on the briefing for a five-year plan, strategic plan around addressing homelessness. There are several goals at the set. If people may recall, this actually goes all the way back to Chairman Connolly when he was chair of the Fairfax board on looking at efforts to really address our issues around homelessness. And so I'm going to turn it over to our staff to present a presentation around the strategic plan and ideas, and we'll

[00:35:45] have a conversation, but thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Tom Barnett. I'm Deputy Director at the Office for the Office to Prevent and Homelessness at the Department of Housing and Community Development. I'd like to make a note that Anne McCready, our speaker from OREX Solutions, who was our consultant on creating this plan, is not able to make it due to unexpected circumstances, but we're grateful for a subject matter expert with Shannon O'Gale today. So first off, before we dive into the details of the strategic plan, I'd like to share some context. First up is the

[00:36:25] trends that we've seen here in Fairfax County specifically around the number of people experiencing homelessness. As you all know, there is an annual point in time count conducted in late January, sometimes early February nationwide, where you try to identify anyone on that single Knight who's experiencing homelessness. In Fairfax County, in the most recent count this year, there were 1,365 people experiencing literal homelessness. That is a 3% increase over the last year. And as you'll see in this chart, there has been an increase, most especially during the

[00:37:02] COVID years, where over the since 2017, it has increased 42% with 401 more people experiencing homelessness since that year the current landscape around homelessness this is something that we're seeing not just in fairfax county nationally homelessness is at historically high levels and while fairfax county has increased the number of shelter beds the number of housing units for people experiencing homelessness and funding for services service providers and staff capacity is

[00:37:39] still stretched to meet the demand for services. In addition, we are facing the looming impact of changes with other federal programs that are not directly funding homelessness or homeless services but will have certainly an impact, most notably Medicaid and SNAP aka food stamps. Ultimately, affordable housing production is essential to reducing homelessness and so reaching the goal that the board's established is very important in reversing this trend that we've seen not just in

[00:38:10] the county, but really nationally. With that, I'll turn it over to David Meyer. I want to first thank the chair and the board for the opportunity to revitalize the Continuum of Care Board.

[00:38:26] The individuals that you have appointed to the board, as well as the members of service providers who represent service providers and volunteer residents across the county have worked collaboratively and creatively to address the dynamic environment that attends homeless challenges.

[00:38:46] And this is truly an opportunity to change lives and help to reduce and prevent homelessness. So it's a privilege to work with these individuals. I also want to thank the chair and board and county executive for the funding that enabled us to do this COC strategic plan.

[00:39:05] This is the first plan in 17 years. And it was based on in-depth analysis with a significant amount of public engagement. Homelessness has certain basic elements that never change.

[00:39:23] And they carry over from year to year. However, much has changed, not just within the community of homeless persons, but also among elected leaders and policymakers, volunteers, and service providers who now, I believe, have a greater awareness and an understanding of the homeless challenges.

[00:39:45] The Continuum of Care Board and staff developed this plan through a year-long inclusive community engagement and strategic planning process. It also included individuals who had lived experience.

[00:40:00] The plan focuses on the fundamentals of homeless services, improving our community's response with innovative and underutilized approaches. And the last bullet on this is probably the most profound one. Meanwhile, federal policies and funding priorities are shifting quickly, creating a lot of uncertainties.

[00:40:21] And we have tried our best to take some cathedral thinking and looking beyond the immediate changes that we face this year and possibly next year with the hope that in the future there'll be a little bit more stability in the years beyond 28 where there'll be some continuity of enable us to do better program planning and forecasting.

[00:40:47] So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Shenandoah Gale from ORIC Solutions, who is going to walk us through the details of this plan. Good afternoon.

[00:41:06] Great. I'm here to walk us through the plan. Over the past year, the Continuum of Care, or the COC board and staff, have led a broad community engagement and strategic planning process.

[00:41:22] The COC is the local network that coordinates the community's response to homelessness. The planning work happened in two phases. Phase one ran from November 2025 through January 2026. The goal was to understand both the community's priorities and how the current system is working.

[00:41:44] We held listening sessions and surveys in all four of the county's human services regions with both in-person and virtual options. We heard from three groups, people who have experienced homelessness, frontline staff and service providers, and members of the public.

[00:42:02] Across those groups, several priorities came through clearly. Rental assistance, eviction prevention, and help with past due rent and utilities. People with lived experience also emphasized coordinated case care management, health care, transportation, employment support, and legal assistance.

[00:42:23] Those findings are summarized in the Phase 1 report, which is Appendix 1 of the plan. We also paid attention to what did not rise to the top. The need for more affordable and supportive housing came through clearly, but additional shelter capacity did not emerge as a priority in the listening session surveys or the committee discussions.

[00:42:45] However, this may be an issue that simply wasn't surfaced in the process. People with lived experience did, however, tell us that shelter time limits are too short. Phase two ran from February through September 2026. That is when we turned to what we heard into a strategic plan.

[00:43:05] We translated the community's priorities into draft goals, strategies, and measurable actions with targets for year one, three, and five. We also looked at proven and promising practices from other communities. Work Solutions commissioned BCT partners to analyze more than 10 years of data from HMIS, the Homelessness Management Information System, used to track services and housing outcomes.

[00:43:31] They used precision causal modeling, or PCM, an innovative analytical method that looks for combinations of services associated with better long-term outcomes. The analysis identified those patterns across six groups of people and also examined whether access and outcomes differed across demographic groups. HMIS does not include the full breadth of prevention services, so we filled that gap in other ways. We held structured conversations with non-profit and government prevention leaders. We also brought key partners together to review the data findings

[00:44:08] and discuss resource priorities. From there, we developed a framework for evaluating services and future investments. And we released the draft plan for public comment. That resulted in a plan organized around four goals. Goal one, improved outcomes for people currently experiencing homelessness. Goal two, strengthen prevention and early intervention services. Goal three,

[00:44:44] reduce persistent unsheltered homelessness. And goal four, increase community understanding and support for evidence-based strategies to prevent and end homelessness. A lot of the people who participated in this process work in the system every day, so much of what we heard confirmed what they already know. There is not one new program that Fairfax simply has not tried yet that will end homelessness on its own. What this process adds is more specific guidance in two areas. First,

[00:45:19] the data helps us see what works best for different groups of people so we can do more of what is effective. That is the heart of goal one. Second, we identified approaches from other communities that would be new for Fairfax, along with a structured way to test them here. That is goal two. So we're going to walk through each of the goals here. Goal one focuses on improving outcomes for people who are already experiencing homelessness rather than people who are at risk of

[00:45:55] losing their housing. To shape this goal, BCT partners analyzed more than 10 years of HMIS data covering about 29,882 people and 18,117 episodes of homelessness. The analysis identified six distinct groups. For each group, it looked at the combination of services most strongly associated with moving into housing and not returning to homelessness for at least 12 months. In the plan,

[00:46:30] we call that combination of services each group's get-what-works service mix. Three lessons stand out. First, no single approach works for everyone. Success rates vary widely across the six groups.

[00:46:47] Second, people tend to do better when they receive the service mix associated with stronger outcomes for their group. And third, group six represents the largest share of episodes and has by far the lowest success rate.

[00:47:04] That tells us this group needs a different approach. Goal one strategies follow directly from those lessons. They call for matching services more closely to each group, closing gaps in access to the services linked with better outcomes, watching for disparities in who receives services and who succeeds, improving the quality of assessment data, especially for groups 4 and 6, and using

[00:47:34] HMIS data to support day-to-day decisions. Here's a closer look at the six groups identified in the analysis. Group 1 is largely made up of working two-parent households experiencing homelessness for the first time. They have the highest success rate at 60 percent. Group two is mostly working families who have returned to homelessness. Their success rate is 44 percent. Group three is almost

[00:48:07] entirely older single adults with high needs who are engaged with services. Their success rate is 31 percent. And group four is families whose records contain limited information. Their success rate is 24%. Group five is mostly single adults with high levels of disability who are not yet responding to services. Their success rate is 9%. And group six is people experiencing persistent street homelessness who have had very limited assessment. Their success rate is just 2% and

[00:48:42] they account for about 55% of all episodes in the data. The plan includes a fuller description of each group. It also identifies the activities and supports most associated with success along with warning signs that can alert staff when a case may need more attention. For example, a household may be approaching a point where the number of services it has received or the amount of time it has spent in

rapid rehousing suggests that current approach should be reassessed. Rapid rehousing is a short to medium-term rental assistance paired with services to help people move quickly into permanent

[00:49:20] housing. This chart helps shows why matching services to each group matters. The blue bars show each group's current success rate. The gray line shows the success rate. The model estimates could be possible if everyone in that group received the full got-what-works service mix.

[00:49:44] The remaining space between the gray line and the 100% reflex factors the model does not explain. Current success rates range from 60% all the way down to 2%. That is a strong reminder that one service approach will not work equally well for everyone.

[00:50:03] The clearest near-term opportunity is to close the gap between people who receive the service mix linked with better outcomes for their group and those who do not. That level of detail is new for Fairfax COC. It gives us a much clearer sense of where to focus our efforts. Families in Groups 1 and 2 appear to have the greatest near-term opportunity for improvement. If more of those families receive their recommended mix of services, the model suggests success rates could rise to roughly 70 to 78 percent. There is also meaningful room for

[00:50:41] improvements in Groups 3 through 5. Their current rates are lower, but the model shows substantially better outcomes when people received a service mix associated with success. Group three could rise from 31% to 51%, group four from 24% to 49%, and group five from 9% to 24%.

[00:51:03] Group six is different. Even if everyone in this group received everything we currently know is associated with better outcomes, the estimated success rate would rise only to about 6%. that tells us we cannot simply do more of the same. We need to test new approaches, and I'll come back to that under goal three. Goal one has six objectives. Objective 1.1 is to

[00:51:40] approach, is to use approaches tailored to different population groups identified through the PCM or precision causal modeling analysis. Objective, go fast, okay. I will actually, Given time considerations, I will not go through each objective, and we are allowing time at the end for Q&A.

[00:52:04] Thank you, Tom. I'll move to goal two. Goal two is about prevention and early intervention. It focuses on households that are in imminent risk of homelessness but have not yet entered the homeless services system.

[00:52:23] Staff, clients, and community members all placed a high priority on prevention during phase one of the strategic plan development process. In fact, people with lived experience have often prioritized prevention, even over services that would help them directly.

[00:52:42] Their message was essentially, I do not want the people coming behind me to have to go through what I went through. And that's a powerful message. We also heard that timing matters. Prevention is most effective before an eviction judgment is entered or a crisis gets worse. Some households mainly need help buying time. Others need support to regain financial stability. The challenge is that prevention data is stored in several different systems. Because of that, prevention could not be included in the PCM analysis,

[00:53:17] and we do not yet have the same clear picture of which prevention practices are producing the strongest results. So the first part of goal two is about building that information. During the first two years, the plan calls for the office to prevent and end homelessness, coordinated services planning, and other

providers to agree on a small set of prevention information that can track voluntarily and to put data sharing agreements in place by the end of year two. Once enough consistent data is available, the COC could analyze prevention outcomes in years four and five.

[00:53:55] That would give the next strategic planning cycle much better information about which prevention dollars have the greatest impact. In the meantime, we recommend training staff to use housing problem-solving access across shelters, coordinated entry, and outreach.

[00:54:13] Housing problem-solving is a structured conversation that helps a household identify safe alternatives, resources, or supports that may prevent homelessness or shortness shelter stay. Coordinated entry is the process the COC uses to access people and connect them with available housing and services. Used well, these approaches can help some people avoid entering homeless services system and preserve limited housing resources for people who have no other safe

[00:54:42] options. Moving on to goal three. The summary for goal three, you'll remember, the goal three is to reduce persistent unhoused, unsheltered homelessness. Here we focus on group six that I had mentioned earlier. Today, this group has 2% success rate, even if everyone received the full mix. We currently associate with better outcomes. The model suggests the rate would rise only to about 6%. So we need to test different interventions. We also know that many group six

[00:55:19] records do not contain enough assessment information to tell us what supports a person may need. Within group six, there are really two different challenges. Some people are not fully connected to the system, so the immediate need is for stronger outreach, relationship building, and assessment. Others are already engaged but still not moving into housing. For that second

[00:55:44] group, the COC needs to test new housing options and supports. And I'll move on to goal four. Goal four is to increase community understanding and support for evidence-based strategies to prevented in homelessness. Even effective programs are harder to sustain without public understanding and support. Our engagement showed broad support for addressing homelessness, but it also showed

[00:56:18] that people want more information. Many residents believe homelessness can be prevented and ended. Others are less certain. They told us they want clear information about who experiences homelessness, why people lose housing, how the system responds, and which approaches are actually working.

[00:56:37] The plan recommends using free resources from the Housing Narrative Lab to develop clear and consistent messaging. The Fairfax County Public Information Office could then share those messages through existing channels and through trusted community messengers. Rather than creating a separate campaign, this approach builds on communication networks that already exist and include the voices of people with lived experience. So what does success of this strategic

[00:57:10] plan look like. The executive summary says it well. Success will not mean completing a list of activities. It will mean showing that more people avoid homelessness, move into permanent housing, and remain stably housed. To keep the plan on track, the COC and its partners will review implementation and outcomes at least quarterly. Once a year, there will be a broader review of whether progress is on track and whether outcomes are equitable across groups, and each goal has

[00:57:45] measurable targets to check at years one, three, and five. It also is important to be clear about what the plan is and what it is not. It is an important milestone, but it is not a finished product. A strategic

plan, like a budget, starts becoming outdated as soon as conditions change.

[00:58:04] The plan gives the community a strong foundation and is designed to evolve as we learn what works and the environment changes. Thank you, Shannon Doe. And with that, we welcome your questions. Thank you very much. And thank you for this very detailed information and presentation and very important topic.

[00:58:22] I know this was started by Chairman Connolly and very strongly supported by our current chair and our board as well. I just have a couple of thoughts, then I'll turn it over to my colleagues. I know we don't have a ton of time, but I love the thought. I mean, I'm so grateful to create a strategic plan.

[00:58:37] I know it's been, you know, quite a few years, I think almost 20 years. Since we've had one, 17 was the number I believe I heard. I think I appreciate the comment of things have changed since COVID, because that is what I've seen as well. Just even as I started my term going to hypothermia shelters, the number of faith organizations that used to host them and lost that institutional knowledge during COVID and haven't brought them back.

[00:59:01] So I think as you're looking to how this should implement, I would love to see some sort of metrics. I appreciate that the success looks like not the program itself, but the reduction in homelessness amongst the different groups. And what you show shows need for a multi-pronged approach because each group has different needs. But I think some metrics as to what are we looking for, and then maybe some thoughts around how are we going to incorporate partnerships and bringing back some of that knowledge and institutional knowledge to our faith partners, our nonprofit partners, and our own agency partners that touch upon this issue, CSB, our first responders. I think

[00:59:39] a multi-agency approach that takes into account the needs of the different populations would be helpful. And then obviously, we need to understand what the metrics look like and how we're going to get there. Or the two, really, how do you create a continuum of care model that's flexible enough to meet the needs of the different populations that we can measure success, that we can bring in the different components, would be my sort of big picture thought. But I'll turn over to the chairman and then to my colleagues yeah thank you thank you very much um and and mayor meyer thank you for your your work on this um especially over the course of the last year um i think this is a

[01:00:18] huge uh step forward and and as you know the chair acknowledged it's been a while since we've looked at this we've we've had a goal to prevent and end homelessness but frankly uh we haven't gone back and tried to look at what's working well what's not working well and try to come up with a plan to take us to the next step, and, you know, COVID is unpredictable as it was, you know, back to the chairman's comments. I mean, if you look at that chart on page two, it's obvious that there's a cliff there, and we went from a little over 1,000 to 1,222 right about the time a lot of

[01:00:54] the post-COVID benefits and other things were drying up, and we never really have recovered from that we've never really despite all the good things that are done in this in this presentation adding beds doing all the things we just still haven't uh even gotten gotten back to our pre covid numbers despite that investment and so um i think the the piece of this a big takeaway for me is there's no one program or one thing uh that's going to address this because we've done a lot of things we've made a lot of progress and yet it's i think it's frustrating to everyone in this room that we're not seeing better improvements in those numbers.

[01:01:30] And so then you start to break apart and start looking at what I'm looking on on slide nine, which is really what is within the realm of achievable in each of these categories. And I think that's a huge starting point in measuring our success and pivoting from the existing programs and opportunities we have into others that help us get candidly at least up there to that gray line.

[01:01:55] I mean, I think that's what we're seeking. you know, at this point. And while those numbers are still not great in some of those categories, they do reflect a marked improvement over where we are today. And I guess, you know, one of the questions that I have on that slide, page nine, because to me, this is the most visual one when we can see possible successes to something to measure. I'm a little bit unclear in the analysis what clearly would be necessary to get us to the gray line.

[01:02:29] And, you know, obviously when we look at the page before and we look at the number of people involved in each of these categories, one might say, why not invest a lot of time and research into six, the chronic street homelessness one, knowing that's the biggest number?

[01:02:48] And that would be what someone who doesn't do this work would say. What the people with lived experience and others are saying is the way you reduce that number is getting people earlier in the process, people who are more engaged, putting your investment in those things, and you can move the numbers more significantly in categories one through five before you get to category six.

[01:03:09] And so I guess that's a long way of saying it is a little bit unclear to me what it's going to take to get from the observed success rate to the possible success rate, and is that what we're going to get next, this kind of review of these are the strategies, this is what it would take in those, these are what the partners would look like, this is what the sustained investment that would be necessary collectively, because this is not just the county solving this problem, but collectively, this is what that shared investment would bring you.

[01:03:41] Is that a fair summation of what we're going to get next, or is that off? Thank you, Chairman McKay. I think the chart on slide nine is specifically based on the lessons learned from the precision causal modeling about where interventions need to happen and when and what more do we need to do, really, based on what we currently have.

[01:04:08] Additional resources can help us reach those goals. But we understand how to close that gap. It's the group six, especially, but others, really, where we need to try more innovative approaches. In the interest of time, we did skip a lot of the metrics, but they are there in the plan.

[01:04:28] But there's also, for goal number three, about some recommendations from other communities around underutilized innovative approaches that we could try that are actually low-cost ways of pairing people with housing and roommate situations, peer navigation, et cetera.

[01:04:48] So just based on that, is it unfair to say our new goal is what that possible success line is? I think for goal number one, that is exactly what we're trying to achieve, using the lessons from the analysis to close that gap.

[01:05:05] Okay. So the reason why I bring this up is because the high-level goal before was to prevent end homelessness. And I think many people felt, myself included, that we could get to or close to that level. And I guess, you know, what we're hearing now, and I don't think it's unreasonable, I think it's actually on target, which is, you know, let's get some real numbers that can achieve success, measure what we're doing against those numbers to make incremental moves towards better performance.

[01:05:40] And what we have now is a goal to prevent an end, but we're watching the numbers go up. And so the hope in the future is a more realistic goal that can be tracked and more easily evaluated, that that, in fact, might be more powerful in taking those numbers down as we move forward.

[01:05:57] Is that fair? Yes. I mean, the vision of preventing an end of homelessness is really operationalized in this data analysis about moving people to housing that they stay in and remain stable housed. I mean, I'm excited by the possibilities of these.

[01:06:14] I think this is a critical, needed look at where we are today based on reality, based on what we know can work, based on what is achievable and can move these needles, because I don't think any of us are going to continue to be satisfied with, you know, the first chart that has, you know, 1,365 people sleeping in the woods and that not even recognizing the magnitude of this problem.

[01:06:39] But I think the fair conclusion is we're doing a lot of great things, but we're barely keeping pace with the growth in the homelessness population through the people that we're treating and helping.

[01:06:52] And so I do think, you know, this realistic look and real metrics here are a really important step forward and, frankly, give us an opportunity, as this points out, and I think those are the right intervals, tracking this at one, three, and five years to see how we're doing, recognizing that a lot has changed in the homelessness population, and probably a lot will continue to change, which might need us to tweak those based on that data that we now will be tracking.

[01:07:20] So thank you. Yeah, I don't want anyone to think that what we've done or what we're doing now and what we've done in the past was not effective. I mean, these numbers would be much higher, and we all know that. That's right. And so I don't want to, but I also don't want to be Pollyannish about it.

[01:07:37] We have in real numbers increases, and there's a lot of variables that are making those numbers go up. And this plan takes that data and tries to be laser-focused in key areas, and we're going to monitor that quarterly to see whether or not we get better returns and better outcomes.

[01:08:06] You know, it's very interesting when you think about one big, big factor is our local economy. And the stronger that local economy, and you can correlate that to the years prior to 2018 and 19. When federal employees, let's just use that as one example, lose their jobs, they're not going to become homeless.

[01:08:29] But they're going to start mowing their own grass. They're not going to take their clothes to the dry cleaner. They're going to do it at home. They're going to iron their shirts at home. And so the second and third level reductions in economic activity affect at the lowest levels.

[01:08:49] Those are the individuals who could wind up becoming homeless when the economy turns. It's not the only thing. I think it's a really important point, David, because we don't control everything, and that's what you're saying. HR1 will have an effect on all the good things that we're doing.

[01:09:04] As you have acknowledged this morning, we had a conversation about frustration that in our senior population, the number of people getting scammed is higher than it was despite this county's tremendous efforts to stem that the reality is the scammers have gotten a lot better as we've gotten better and so beyond our control they've gotten more inventive they've gotten more aggressive and in this case there are things here that are beyond our control but i think the point that is made as well which is we've

been doing a lot of good things but there's a lot of things happening to people that we're trying to serve that are even outside of the county's control

[01:09:42] that we have to acknowledge. And I think as far as jurisdictions in the region, including Maryland and D.C., this approach is really kind of a cutting-edge approach that's based on detailed analysis and causal correlations, and we're going to try to maximize the investment of resources to get the greatest return by category.

[01:10:10] Thank you. And I know we've got 15 minutes left before we turn over to our General Assembly reception. So I'm going to go down my list. Obviously, it was Alcorn, then Palczyk. Thank you. I'll go quickly. You know, when we first adopted as a county the housing blueprint in 2010, I believe over the next decade, how much were the point in time counts down?

[01:10:35] Over the course of the 10-year plan And from when it was first adopted 2008 to 2017, it dropped about 46%. Okay. And it was in 2017, it was the lowest point. Okay. Well, right. So almost half. We almost have reduction.

[01:10:52] I'm having a hard time reconciling that with the numbers under group six. How do we reduce homelessness by almost half whenever basically there's only a 2% success rate? Sure. I mean, there's a lot of things behind this data that we really don't have time to explain.

[01:11:12] But I think what's most important for the chronic street homelessness, we're often serving them with a night at a hypothermia shelter. They may be engaged by a street outreach worker. The level of engagement, the ability to move them off the street is very limited. And they will cycle in and out of homelessness repeatedly, chronically.

[01:11:31] And so the point in time is one night. But over the course of a year, as you saw, there were, I think, 29,000 people identified over 10 years of data. So a point in time is not a perfect measure, but that is the one that we really focused on with the 10-year plan.

[01:11:49] Yeah, I still can't reconcile if 55% of the episodes are Group 6 and 34% of the individuals. I mean, is Group 6 different today than it was 15 years ago? I think it sounds like, yeah, the repeated homelessness, chronic homelessness, it is a very different type of population.

[01:12:13] I don't think they're different from what they were back then. Where we saw a lot of the great success is reducing primarily family homelessness during those early years. It's this population that often has very complex behavioral health needs that's been the most challenging.

[01:12:29] Okay. I would underscore, and Tom, I think you said this, we need a new model. Frankly, I'm not sure this model is accurate that we're doing, that the analysis is being done with, because I still can't reconcile 2% success rates and the success we had, you know, over the last previous decade. But clearly we need to innovate and we need to try new things. I don't want to give up on group six. I don't want to do it. And I'll tell you one of the big reasons. Groups one through five are private crises. They're generally private crises. Group

[01:13:06] six is a community crisis. And I think it gives us an extra obligation to find new ways to bring that success rate up. Because if we just look at it bureaucratically and say, well, we're never going to get above six, we're never going to get above six. I guarantee that's the outcome. And we really need to think

strongly and carefully about setting goals, even goals that we don't think we can reach because we don't know how to reach them. We're doing the same thing with climate.

[01:13:38] You know, there is such thing as a North Star as a stretch goal. That's what we did 16, 17 years ago. And that's what I hope we continue to work into this. And I just have one other question, which is on slide 20, and this really makes this hard even more, which is the difference between folks who show up uh in fairfax county as homeless versus were in fairfax county and become homeless they lose their do we have do we know the the split how many how many people are homeless in

[01:14:15] our counts that are actually from fairfax county i know it's ridiculously hard to count uh versus but frankly you know in my part of the county i'm hearing service providers saying they're seeing more people from other states, from other countries even. And do we, are we measuring that somehow? We have periodically through the point in time counts measured people that became homeless outside of Fairfax County. And that has ranged anywhere between 10 and 20% that first experienced homelessness outside of Fairfax County. I think we somehow have to figure this

[01:14:52] into our measurement process as well, because certainly on the prevention side, you know, we're talking about preventing people that are housed in Fairfax County from becoming homelessness. But if we're getting a lot of folks coming in from other states that are unhoused here, we somehow have to make sure we're measuring that appropriately.

[01:15:12] Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Palachuk, then Supervisor Lusk. Thank you. First of all, I very much appreciate. I think this analysis is excellent, detailed, and gives us a starting point to think about the future.

[01:15:29] I would go back to slide three, the current landscape, before we even start with the analysis. Affordable housing is essential to reducing homelessness. And what I am wondering, I think kind of related to these questions, is in these innovative and underutilized approaches that I think we all agree we need to try, right, part of that is going to be the regional analysis.

[01:16:01] know when we're saying people right are moving across boundaries i'm glad the city's former mayor is here because we have quite a bit of that between the city and the county um but i think those boundaries seem to have become larger right regionally or or farther so um number one it seems that let's not break the pieces that are working but as we look at innovative approaches is it you know not just tracking but i don't think this has exactly the how right is it the way we will incentivize this work? Is it the way we will value success? I assume that will come a bit later of

[01:16:40] how we're going to tackle some of these challenges to close that possible success rate gap, or has that already started? The data did teach us that having interventions, engagement frequently up front, and certain red flags, as Shannon Doe explained, these were things that are going to guide the services to help improve the outcomes.

[01:17:04] So that is essential for goal one, to provide, to reach better outcomes for people that we know what works. And I assume that's based on best practices from other jurisdictions in the area or beyond. Is that a correct assumption?

[01:17:21] Please go ahead. Yes, yes, and a more and an innovative look at the data 10 years back from this particular COC. An example of that, speaking to the previous question as well, just to highlight that goal three is dedicated to understanding group six more clearly, right? So we're not saying in this model we

understand something that we don't understand. So I wanted to highlight that, but then also it is best practices from other COCs, but it's a 10-year look back on what is actually happening

[01:18:01] here, and that it's not a matter of doing necessarily more, but it's taking that, what is the service mix, right? And so what are we doing here that's already helping and providing a more agile ability to create that mix for these six populations, these six groups?

[01:18:25] And then what we weren't, because of time, weren't able to go into is like a look at what are three examples of those other practices and other CFCs? Okay. I appreciate that because once I get, you say 10 years back, my next question was going to be about longitudinal studies or really understanding these are point in time, right?

[01:18:44] So are we looking beyond that at some of the, I don't know if we have that in our own data, but maybe moving forward, some more longitudinal analysis? This really is an analysis going back years. In addition, we are every year providing what's literally called a longitudinal systems analysis, providing this data to be part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Developments collection and reporting.

[01:19:11] Does that follow people, or does that follow trends? It does follow people. Okay. Mayor Meyer, I think you were going to. No, no. No, okay. I think it does both. I mean, it analyzes the numbers, but it also looks for anomalies or new emerging trends, and then we try to find out what's behind that.

[01:19:40] But I do think, back to Supervisor Alcorn's very cogent comment, that I don't want to give up on Group 6 either. None of us does. But what we're beginning to really understand is that the mental health challenges group six are fundamentally different, both in quantity and in the nuances of their problems and challenges are different from the other groups. And even if you were to say we're going

[01:20:16] to provide retail on the street engagement with mental health professionals, if you have 10 individuals that you're serving, they're going to have 10 different kinds of mental health challenges. And so, in a way, it has to be hand-cultivated. That's labor-intensive, and it requires a lot of commitment. And in the small efforts that have been done so far, it is showing that there's some results there. So, in fact, the Lamb Center is considering

[01:20:52] investing in a full-time staff person to do exactly that. So, we've got two more colleagues, Supervisor Lusk and Supervisor Herity. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I'll say I appreciate the report and thank you, former Mayor Meyer for your work on this effort. It's very important and necessary. I will agree with my colleague from the 100 Mill District Supervisor Alcorn, the numbers are disconcerting from 2017 to now.

[01:21:25] I mean, the growth is a significant issue, and certainly we have to do something. So I appreciate that we're putting together a plan, and we're trying to come up with some actionable steps to correct that. And I also agree with Supervisor Alcorn on the Group 6.

[01:21:42] I mean, that is imperative that we do everything we can to help those folks. And I know we've got a number of those folks, obviously, in my district and other districts here as well. I wanted to maybe pivot to slide 13 and objective goal 2.4 is one that's resonating with me a little because I did something at the end of last week.

[01:22:09] I went over to the self-help legal resource center in the courts and I got to witness something that they've just started, which is just amazing. and that is they have pro bono attorneys who are now

providing services to individuals who have cases before the court or pending cases before the court.

[01:22:31] And what I got to see was about 40 people in the lobby there, and I think there were about five or six attorneys that were providing some critical services. I then went up and got to go into one of the district cases for an eviction.

[01:22:46] And I got to tell you, I got really nervous after I started to hear some of the kind of the facts that were being presented by the landlord and their legal representative, and then to hear the tenant, the client, not being represented and trying to make arguments for why she shouldn't be evicted, noting that she had three kids in the courtroom and three that were not in the courtroom.

[01:23:16] But I'll say it did not look good, and I was worried, but the judge did something extraordinary, which was she continued the case for an additional month. This person, as I understand it, I found out later, has a housing voucher, so hopefully she'll be able to move and be able to get to a different housing situation.

[01:23:37] But this goal, if we're not effective at this goal, we're going to have even more people losing housing. They currently have housing, and they're going to lose housing. So, to me, this one is like the low-hanging fruit. Keep the people in housing who have it. Do everything we can to make sure they're getting the support and the help they need for that to happen.

[01:24:01] And the fact that we have services that are being provided, we have to make sure that people know about those services and are able to avail themselves to them. Because it could make a huge difference in the event that they're getting before a judge and the opposite side has representation in counsel and say the judge doesn't do what this judge did.

[01:24:21] And to me, that is a huge risk. And I feel that this is one that we can do more on and make a difference in keeping people in housing. So with that, I'll conclude. Thank you. Supervisor Herity. Yes, and I'll try to be quick.

[01:24:38] I know the time. So slide seven. So for the 10 years of HMIS data, are those people just being served by our county programs? Would they include groups like Come Stretch, Habitat for Humanity and them?

[01:24:55] Supervisor Herity, it includes nearly 100% of the programs serving people experiencing literal homelessness. And did our analysis actually look at the success rate of the individual nonprofits providing the services?

[01:25:13] Were we able to kind of, you know, I'm going to go back to what the chairman said because I think he's right. We've got to do what works, more of what works and less of what doesn't work. And I think it's looking at the programs themselves and the providers of those programs and invest with what works.

[01:25:32] I don't know, was any of that a part of this? The analysis was not specifically on specific providers or programs. It was really about the indicators of success and moving people towards these outcomes. So I know where I invest my dollars, which is in a group called Homestretch, because they don't receive county funding, last I checked, or state or federal, because they don't buy into the Housing First model.

[01:25:59] Their success rate after one, two, three years is beyond anything I've seen anywhere else. So I would encourage you to look at that. I know HUD's going away from Housing First, and that may give us an

opportunity to help an organization like that and others similar grow that don't rely on Housing First, Habitat for Humanity being another one.

[01:26:25] So, again, encouragement to look at what works. We're investing a lot of money. We need to put it where it works. Page 17, happy to see home sharing in there. Especially with our new potential accessory living unit coming up.

[01:26:43] I mean, I think that's an opportunity for us to get some housing growth without additional units. It was in the 50-plus community action plan, but we haven't been able to find the funds, I guess, to fund it. I don't know. I'm not sure why.

[01:27:02] And kind of a final thought, and Mr. Mayor, City Jobs, great program, Stream Shield. Some of those things that aren't necessarily housing are part of the answers here, I think, as well. And you're very familiar with what City Jobs did and does, and I think Stream Shield is doing the same.

[01:27:24] We got an opportunity there potentially with the Park Authority and their maintenance issues. That's what City Jobs was about. So I'd encourage us looking at an expansion that potentially in a partnership with the Park Authority as a way to kind of give people dignity of work and that helps solve some of those problems.

[01:27:44] So that's all I've got for now. Thank you. And just the interest of time, I want to wrap up. I think we could talk a lot about this conversation. It's very important. And I love the strategic plan, the work you're doing. I will just end with this sort of overarching comment.

[01:28:00] I agree that group six is vitally important. We can't forget about group six. I would argue that all groups are vitally important and some of it's just not as obvious. right but it's just as urgent in terms of those who are couch surfing or one rental payment away so I think we need to focus on those and I'll just say I'll speak for myself that I'm actually proud of being a county where people move here because we have strong schools which I consider a service or excellent parks or services for adults I think it's great that we have that I think the rest of the country should be like that as well so I think the numbers are important of

[01:28:36] who is experiencing this but for me and I found this when I was on the school board where people say well we have military families moving here for certain services I'm like great we're serving the military and I just think I love being that county and I think we should be proud of it I think we should proud of the work that you're doing with the street you plan to take those we're experiencing homelessness to help them with housing and hopefully employment child care is a big part of that and then they're a part of our community and our neighbors and so I love this work. I want to thank you for this, for this work you're doing. With that, this meeting is adjourned.

