

Greater Washington Housing Leaders Group

Addressing Housing Affordability for Economic Growth and Quality of Life

June 2015

Since June 2014, the Greater Washington Housing Leaders Group – a collection of more than a dozen public and private sector leaders concerned about housing affordability – has been meeting to examine: 1) the nature of the affordable housing shortage in the greater Washington area; 2) the relationship of housing affordability to economic growth; and 3) strategies to increase affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households in the region.

The Need

In July 2014, The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region released new research, “Housing Security in the Washington Region,” prepared by The Urban Institute and The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments based on 2011 data, the most recent available. A key finding of the study concludes that, currently, there is a shortage of 150,000 housing units for low- and moderate-income families in the Washington region.

The full extent of the affordable housing shortage required an analysis of future economic growth and accompanying populations. Research from the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis shows that future growth industries for our region will be in the retail, hospitality, healthcare, and construction sectors – jobs which pay lower wages. Thousands of critical jobs in today’s workforce also fall in the low-income range (below \$85,000), including teachers, health care professionals, entry level office workers, and local government employees. In 2015, the Center developed affordable housing need projections based on their latest regional economic outlook projections showing a need for the region to provide housing for 149,000 new low income housing units between 2011 and 2023.to accommodate projected job growth in the region.

The Work

The shortage of affordable rental and homeowner opportunities is a serious challenge to the region’s economic vitality and quality of life. The high cost of housing is also a deterrent for businesses to locate or grow within the region.

The Greater Washington Housing Leaders Group supports systems change to address the critical housing crisis in our region. The Group envisions broadening support among public, nonprofit and private sector leaders in the region to collaborate in new ways to overcome this serious challenge to our region. In its first year, members of the GWHLG have collaborated on the development and sharing of baseline housing needs data by respected institutions so affordable housing stakeholders will have a common understanding of the scope of the housing shortage. The paper included in this publication was developed to elevate the visibility of the housing crisis and to stimulate creative thinking and strategies to increase affordable

housing preservation and production across the Greater Washington region, and within its state and local jurisdictions. The Greater Washington Housing Leaders Group will explore how it can facilitate regional collaboration and welcomes additional ideas for addressing the regional housing shortage.

Participating Organizations

The Greater Washington Housing Leaders Group was convened by the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers (WRAG), Enterprise Community Partners (Enterprise), Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (Community Foundation), and Citi Community Development (Citi).

Participating organizations include:

- 2030 Group
- Bernstein Management Corporation
- Citi Community Development
- Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development
- Community Development Network of Maryland
- The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region
- Enterprise Community Partners
- George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis
- Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers
- Metro Bankers Group
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance
- United Way of the National Capital Area
- Urban Land Institute
- Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers