

# 2024 Boone County Housing Summit

## Themed Housing Summit Questions:

### About

A full-day summit was held on October 24, 2024 with an abbreviated session held in the evening. The summit brought the community together to learn about local housing-related plans and determine next steps to address affordable housing. Questions asked at the summit were compiled and grouped into themes. Dr. David Boston, Ph.D., AICP, owner of Amarach Planning Services, LLC, provided the responses to the questions from the summit.

### 1. Affordable Housing Development & Policy

#### *Housing Supply & Affordability*

1. How do we encourage housing choice and mobility as opposed to putting all our density into the same two blocks of central Columbia?

Response: This is a great question, and I think it's worth pointing out that even assuming we **could** fit all the required density within two blocks of central Columbia is drastically underestimating the local housing shortage. Accommodating pent up housing demand that has built up over the last 20 years, in addition to a relatively conservative estimate of incremental annual population growth, will require building 1,316 homes per year that can reasonably be absorbed over the next decade. To accommodate all of that demand downtown, a building over three times taller than The Rise on 9<sup>th</sup> with small apartments and its own dedicated structured parking would need to be built on an entire downtown block (both sides of the alley) every single year. This is not realistic.

To accommodate all this housing demand in a realistic way, we need to consider the variety of housing that is in demand in Boone County. There is a large deficit of small, single-family homes with modest yards. These can't be built in the downtown Columbia core, but they can be built in many other infill environments: most particularly the small towns and the inner-ring suburbs of Columbia. The feedback that I heard from folks is that Boone County residents want to conserve their rural and natural areas for future generations to enjoy. To do that, it's going to be important to add density to already developed areas.

Remember, in 30 years, 60 years, 90 years, our kids, grandkids, and great grandkids are going to be having the same conversations we're having about where do we put the housing? If we take the easy path of putting subdivisions on all the farms and all the state parks, what's going to be left? Let's not push the hard decisions to future generations, let's tackle them now.

To answer the question of how: most of the recommendations in the housing study are geared towards that question, and I'd certainly look at the development target tables for each area in the study. Those provide a guide as to how development could be distributed across Boone County by housing type in a way that will most effectively accommodate housing needs and preferences in the County with realistic annual absorption targets. The next big thing I would focus on is creating a predictable and streamlined review process for housing development in Columbia, Boone County, and each of the smaller municipalities to ensure that the types of infill housing development that are needed can be done by small, local developers without taking huge financial risks on an unpredictable discretionary review process. Highly quality development standards in black-and-white that can be approved administratively will provide greater peace of mind for elected officials and nearby residents, allow utility and infrastructure planners to be much more proactive, and greatly reduce the risk for small-scale, local developers.

2. Is there an opportunity to create our own form of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) without a lot of the impossible regulations? A simpler structure?

Response: There could be an opportunity to create a scaled-down local version of LIHTC, but when thinking about what the difference in tax base, investment capacity, and staff capacity (compared to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) would look like at the County level, I don't think it'd be worthwhile. The County would end up spending more administering the program than they would generate in investment. I think relatively more direct funding by creating and generating revenue for a local housing trust fund, or setting up a linkage fee, would both be much more worthwhile and impactful ways to subsidize affordable housing development at the local level.

I would also point out that LIHTC regulations are far from impossible. You just need local folks who are experienced in navigating the process, which Columbia and Boone County are fortunate enough to have.

3. Would developers who build student housing to have "set asides" or subsidize a set number of housing units alleviate the inflated rental rates?

Response: It would likely just alleviate the inflated rental rates for those units specifically. Other market rate rents would not likely be influenced by the introduction of an additional form of subsidized rental rates, as landlords would only look at other market rate rents when estimating how they should set their own rents for market rate units. The standard market rate will be affected by macroeconomic forces and local supply and demand for housing.

4. We run a homeless shelter for Veterans, and we have been operating in Columbia for more than 30 years. Would you recommend we develop our own housing or collaborate with other developers and community partners to increase affordable housing stock?

Response: This is a great question and thank you so much for your service to our veterans and to your community. Usually capacity (in terms of staff, time, expertise, and capital) limits folks from developing housing on their own without partnering. Even if your organization has the capacity to find and understand the limits of the property, do the pro forma, win grant funds and other assistance, acquire pre-development financing, hire subs, oversee the design, work through the approval process, acquire construction financing, and ultimately manage the property---I would **still** recommend a collaborative partnership in almost all cases.

To address our housing problems in a meaningful way, we need to break out of our silos and work together. In almost all cases, this results in a more thoughtful and targeted development plan, and the development is designed and constructed in a more cost-effective way. Local, community-oriented partners are usually better to work with than large national firms, because generally speaking, they're more likely to know the community needs, understand the barriers, their overhead costs are potentially lower, and they're more likely to be invested in the community's well-being.

5. Based on your studies, what approximate dollar amount do you believe the "linkage fees" should be?

Response: I do not know. This would require a nexus study that really dives into local commercial and industrial development trends in a way that we didn't do for this study. It would likely land somewhere between \$2 and \$10 per square foot of new commercial or industrial construction, but it can be higher in some places (usually larger, expensive metro areas).

6. Should there be a sequel to the housing study – a housing plan – that pulls the recommendations together?

Response: I certainly love the idea of having an opportunity to come back to Boone County for another project, and this might be a good idea, but I would wait for a few months and see how well the lead agencies are able to coordinate and prioritize implementation items based on the recommendations of this study first. You don't want to wait so long that you lose this great local momentum around solving the community's housing problems, but if the lead agencies are able to prioritize and assign action items through their own collaboration, then you may be able to "skip" the housing plan stage, move onto more targeted projects, and possibly hire consultants for those. This could include a linkage fee nexus study or rewriting zoning and subdivision ordinances to facilitate a predictable and streamlined housing development process.

If the planning stage is taking too much time and energy, then yes, I would recommend hiring a consultant to get a housing plan done quickly before you lose this great momentum. And in any case, I would also recommend that the City and County coordinate around applying for the PRO Housing Grant in Round 3 (recommendation 1.9 in the study) to fund any and all of these projects.

7. Of all of your recommendations, which should be prioritized?

Response: I think bringing in additional outside funds like recommendations 1.9 (the PRO Housing Grant) and 2.4 (the MHDC HeRO Program), the momentum and coalition building activities like recommendation 4.5 to leverage public-private partnerships, and the difficult, but potentially most impactful, recommendations like recommendation 1.1 to create a predictable and streamlined housing development review process should be the top priorities early on.

In a very close second would be setting up permanent funding sources for local housing trust funds.

8. What do you perceive as the low hanging fruit that we can do now?

Response: Engage in more coalition building and start to develop a plan for implementing the recommendations in this study, along with any other locally-generated action items to improve housing conditions. Decide amongst yourselves in an open and collaborative way what you're going to prioritize. No matter what recommendations from the study you prioritize, you should be doing this right now.

I'd also recommend you apply for the PRO Housing Grant in Round 3, because that's definitely a low-hanging fruit compared to many of the other recommendations.

9. Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) is the source of a lot of your data. What is Esri?

Response: Esri is a company that provides really accurate and detailed geographic information system (GIS) data related to demographics, economic indicators, market preferences, and housing. To retrieve data for a custom study area boundary, like a small city or town, this study uses Esri's weighted centroid geographic retrieval methodology to aggregate Census block data that fall within the custom boundary. I'm providing some information from my appendices below to explain some of the differences between Census data and Esri data, and the reason that we utilized Esri data whenever possible for this study.

One of the major challenges in estimating population and demographic changes for small and rural areas is the U.S. Census Bureau's newly implemented differential privacy method of disclosure avoidance to prevent reidentification of respondents. For past Censuses, the Bureau used table suppression, data swapping, and similar techniques to protect the identity of respondents. This new method of differential privacy infuses "noise" into the results to enhance privacy, which can make data available in smaller or less populated areas unreliable. According to a Census 2020 brief released by the Census Bureau in March 2023, data for very small demographic groups and geographic areas, such as census blocks, may be too noisy for a particular use and should be aggregated into larger geographic areas before use. Another Census Bureau brief states that the new method may result in some implausible or impossible results, but that the risk of implausible results is eliminated at the county level and above.

These implausible or impossible results are reported to occur in at least 8.5 percent of all census blocks, and errors short of implausible or impossible are likely prevalent in more. Examples of 14 people being reported to live in a bend of the Chicago River, or a block with no homes being reported to include one home with 86 people living in it were published in an article of the New York Times that explained the new differential privacy techniques.

In an article published by the American Economic Association, researchers from the University of Minnesota and Bethel University express concerns about the reliability and usability of data produced through differential privacy modeling. The article argues that there has never been a documented case of anyone outside of the Census Bureau identifying a person using Census data, and differential privacy goes too far to ensure privacy at the expense of data quality.

The ongoing debate regarding the use of differential privacy methods has highlighted two areas where the goals of confidentiality and high-quality data are most at odds. One is the production and consumption of public use microdata and other forms of cross-tabulated record-based Census data. The other is the production and consumption of data for very low-population areas, which affects rural areas, most Native reservations, and research or policy making that requires a high degree of granularity in the data.

Researchers and statisticians at Esri have developed a method for estimating population that avoids the pitfalls of the differential privacy techniques of the Census Bureau by using a time series of county-to-county migration data from the Internal Revenue Service, building permits and housing starts, housing demolitions data from the American Housing Survey (AHS), and residential postal delivery counts from the U.S. Postal Service using Esri's proprietary Address Based Allocation method. This method allows for accurate population estimates despite the Census Bureau's differential privacy methods and also allows for the allocation of population and demographic data unbounded by standard Census geographies.

Considering the advantages of Esri data over Census data by incorporating more administrative records to estimate the count, similar to the Census Bureau's demographic analysis stage of post-enumeration testing, Esri data is utilized in this study in place of Census data when such data exist.

### *Zoning & Regulations*

#### 10. What are the most critical areas for city/county alignment?

Response: The most critical areas for alignment are at the high-level decision-making levels in terms of overall housing goals, priority action items, and coordinating large-scale capital projects, programs, and funding sources. These are areas where the City and County should never be out of sync, or both will have much greater difficulty meeting their goals.

In terms of development standards, we should seek as much uniformity as possible, but I would recommend prioritizing process and dimensional standards. The development review process in terms of both discretionary and administrative approvals should follow the same process and procedures no matter where you are in the County. After that, achieving uniformity in dimensional standards, especially for residential lots, would be a close second. That doesn't mean you allow the same level of density everywhere in the County. There might be some high-density zones that are common in Columbia and very rare in unincorporated Boone County or the

smaller cities, but uniform lot standards should be associated with a uniform residential zoning hierarchy applicable to all of Boone County.

11. Specifically, which parts of our review process and zoning codes need to be streamlined?

Response: I do not know. Like the nexus study, this requires a dedicated project going into a much more detailed review and analysis of the zoning and subdivision codes than we conducted for this study. What is clear as a result of this study is that there is an over-reliance on discretionary review processes, and that more standards typically extracted during a discretionary review should be moved to the zoning code and approved administratively to more effectively ensure high-quality development while also reducing the risk associated with housing development.

12. Do you think assessing the true value of vacant land within city limits instead of agriculture land worth a fraction of the true value would provide an incentive for development?

Response: Yes, I do. I think it should be done in a way that's fair and reasonable, and should exempt legitimate longstanding agricultural uses, but we certainly don't want to assess the taxable value so inappropriately low or give away phony ag exemptions in a way that incentivizes folks to sit on prime developable land until they can flip it to another buyer. We have homes to build.

### *Innovative Housing Models*

13. Are there any examples of a rent-to-own program in other communities? How would a lender and builder make that successful?

Response: Yes, although a rent-to-own model does not necessarily need to be implemented through a government program, there are examples to look at. Washington DC passed a law in 1980 giving renters the opportunity to purchase their home if they are at risk of eviction. Ten years after the law was passed, DC created the Housing Production Trust Fund and used it in part to help fund renter assistance made available through this law. A report by DC Fiscal Policy Institute in 2013 showed that the program helped preserve nearly 1,400 affordable homes over the previous 10 years. Similar programs have been adopted in Massachusetts, New York, and California. Here are recommendations from the study about how a lender and builder could structure a rent-to-own development model without a government program or mandate:

Establishing a rent-to-own program makes financing slightly more complicated than a development of strictly for-sale homes or rental homes, but it can create an opportunity for many households to eventually graduate into homeownership who would otherwise be unable to do so.

To work, new housing developments will need to be platted to be sold as fee simple lots or developed as condominiums to allow the homes to be sold over time. Rent-to-own programs should be designed to allow residents the option of paying the property owner above the per unit capital and operating costs (the cost-driven as opposed to market-driven rental rate) into an equity fund. If the resident moves away, then they take the money in the equity fund with them, minus a small fee for withdrawing the money early. At the point that the equity fund reaches a certain point determined by a partnering mortgage lender, the equity fund can be converted to a down payment for a mortgage, and the household “graduates” from the rent-to-own program into a traditional mortgage for a pre-determined sale price.

In the case of non-payment, the equity fund is used to pay any unpaid rent before eviction processes are started. After which, eviction procedures begin as they would under a standard rental agreement. Prior to using the equity fund or eviction, the property manager should have a meeting with the tenant to discuss the reasons for nonpayment and see if both parties can agree to a payment plan that resolves the issue.

This kind of rent-to-own program requires flexibility in the pro forma and development financing to allow for rental income from homes to periodically be replaced with lump sum payments from sales. If successful, this kind of arrangement will eventually result in a management entity managing a small number of rental homes, below the number that would normally be feasible from a property management standpoint. For this reason, it’s beneficial to establish a community association for the development to ensure that basic operating costs are covered by association fees even after homes are sold. The community association should maintain open spaces and coordinate and pay for basic services for the community’s residents as well.

For-profit housing developers could establish a rent-to-own program by incorporating profit into the rental costs and for-sale prices. However, to ensure affordability for program residents and a successful conversion rate from renters to homeowners, this model may work best when utilized by not-for-profit housing developers like Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA) or the Columbia Community Land Trust (CCLT) and mission-driven mortgage lenders.

14. What are your thoughts on tenant unions?

Response: Tenant unions can be very valuable in bringing everybody to the table. There should always be open communication between tenants, managers, and owners about rents and building conditions. Without a tenant union, a lot of tenants feel a fear of being evicted or getting hit with a rent increase if they bring up issues with the cost or condition of the home. Having a union facilitates conversation and levels the power dynamics a little.

15. Rental criteria is also a barrier that prohibits families from moving into a unit. How can that be fixed?

Response: Unreasonable rental criteria and fees can be a serious barrier for many folks. Legislative changes could crack down on some of the worst practices and the Fair Housing Act prohibits outright discrimination based on federal protected classes. Back in April of this year (2024), HUD released guidance, titled Guidance on Application of the Fair Housing Act (FHA) to the Screening of Applicants for Rental Housing. That guidance focuses on three components of tenant screening reports: credit scores, criminal records, and eviction filings. The guidance emphasizes the disparate impact of tenant screening practices on protected classes, thereby laying some groundwork for private litigation bringing disparate impact instead of disparate treatment claims against landlords and tenant screening agencies for violations of the FHA. If case law is established that these tenant screening procedures do have disparate impacts on protected classes that violate the FHA, the practice will likely be phased out over time.

Another way that this can be fixed is by addressing the housing shortage. If there wasn't such an extreme housing shortage, landlords who make unreasonable demands are going to have more trouble leasing their units. Once it starts cutting into those landlords' bottom line, they will fix their own bad practices.

16. Can tiny homes be a part of the situation?

Response: Yes, absolutely. Tiny homes have been used in a variety of ways. They do not typically approach the density levels of an apartment building. However, if apartments are not feasible, depending on the method of construction and materials used, tiny homes can be a good way of providing higher-density homes at a lower price point. These have been used for transitional housing projects for folks experiencing homelessness with some success if it is managed well and there are wrap-around services provided. Built in a cottage court configuration, tiny house

courts can fit in infill locations that might not be feasible for other types of development.

## 2. Community & Stakeholder Engagement

### *Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY)ism & Public Perception*

17. Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) is a very negative term. What do people in urban neighborhoods value about their lives and homes? Fear of losing?

Response: Yes, it's a very negative term for a very negative trend. Remember that this is a slogan that was first used to protest the construction of nuclear power plants, and now it's used to protest the construction of affordable homes. The homes of potential neighbors and friends, just like the rest of us.

What people value and what people fear is unique to each person. Their life experiences, the stories they hear and believe, their perceptions of the world and people around them are all shaped differently over their lifetime. As such, I cannot answer that question. I can tell you that I have been a party to many community meetings and public hearings about development proposals, and I've heard legitimate excitement and fears based on the facts of the development proposal, the infrastructure capacity, the design and layout of the buildings. And I've also heard nonsense with no basis in reality.

18. What are the most effective ways to combat NIMBY? What coding changes would you prioritize in Boone County?

Response: I think combatting the nonsense comes down to good communication with all affected stakeholders, elected and appointed officials who understand the development proposals and are able to separate fact from fiction during a discretionary hearing without folding under pressure, and reducing the overreliance on site-specific discretionary hearings by codifying standards and approving more housing development administratively.

### *Collaboration & Partnerships*

19. What are the most important things that residents and private funders can focus on?

Response: Stay involved in coalition meetings and other affordable housing meetings organized by the City and County! Once they've prioritized action items and begin implementing some of the recommendations from this study, or other action items that they decide to focus on, it will be important for residents to step up and support affordable housing development projects in public hearings, attend

strategic planning and coordination meetings for policy development, and other important engagement events. Private funders should be on the lookout for development projects to support, and for opportunities to support local, small-scale developers who are interested in building affordable housing.

20. Would you recommend everyone in this room to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing?

Response: Absolutely! What a great experience!

21. Public and private development partnerships: What are 2-4 examples that come to mind?

Response: When looking at affordable housing development, I think it's easier to find examples of projects that were completed through public-private partnerships than it is to find projects that were not. Check out organizations like the Housing Partnership Network or the Urban Land Institute. Both organizations focus on building collaboration between the public, nonprofit, and private sectors for development projects.

When looking at affordable housing project announcements, look at who the partners are. A large employer and a housing authority partnering to address their workforce needs. A private developer building affordable homes in coordination with the public housing finance authority using bond financing and LIHTC. A not-for-profit developer partnering with a church that owned the land, using a mix of private financing and a donation from a private foundation. These are common examples of the ways that public-private partnerships can be structured. To make them happen requires coordination and collaboration. It requires keeping folks engaged, making introductions, networking, and finding common ground.

22. How do we determine who isn't at the table for these decisions? Do we need to create an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to which we all sign in, indicating our commitment to these efforts?

Response: Try to keep good records of who is attending so you can take a step back and determine who's missing. Instead of a pledge, keep people **wanting** to come back. Formalize the group, meet frequently and don't mandate attendance, acknowledge folks for stepping up and volunteering, provide food, have a variety of events at different venues to keep it interesting and accessible to everyone, come up with goals and achieve them, even if they're small, and make it fun! This is how you get people coming back. You don't just cross to-do items off an agenda. You

build community around this coalition and you always welcome new folks. They become family and friends. That's how you get things done.

23. The city has utilized Request for Proposals (RFP) for small affordable projects. Does it make sense to kick start larger projects to do a city/county RFP?

Response: It depends. An RFP with some incentives offered is usually more necessary for small projects, because it's more difficult to make them work financially without a subsidy of some sort, so the property would probably be overlooked. For a larger piece of property, it might make more sense to simply sell it as surplus land if you know the market will support housing. But if it's on an important piece of property, ideal for affordable housing, or there's some reason you may want to guide or partner with a developer to influence how it is developed in a more proactive way, then an RFP may make sense. It will likely raise the cost of the development if done in that way, so I would recommend limiting this option to cases where it's necessary.

#### *Community Needs & Special Populations*

24. What insights were made as far as folks on disability and retirement obtaining affordable housing during this study?

Response: There is a high amount of unmet demand for small, accessible homes utilizing universal design features. Accessible housing for people with disabilities is lacking, particularly outside Columbia.

By incorporating more accessible design features into new homes, the housing stock is much more flexible to accommodate people of different ages and abilities, and it allows for people to age in place much more easily. It's always going to be easier to incorporate accessible design features when the home is built than to try incorporating those features later through major renovations.

25. The University plays a large role in the development and growth in Columbia. What role, if any, can they play in improving affordable housing options in the community?

Response: The University could play a more direct role in providing affordable student housing and partnering with the city on consolidating the various transit services moving people to and from campus. The University should be involved in direct construction of student housing, managing relationships and setting up leasing procedures with private housing providers who market to students to ensure that students are being paired with other students and living environments are

suitable for students, and by providing a dedicated funding source for affordable housing development in the surrounding community.

26. When evaluating severely cost-burdened individuals, were any unhoused individuals included in the data?

Response: Yes, to a degree. Five of the 740 survey respondents were experiencing homelessness. Continuum of Care (CoC) reports and other Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) reports reviewed are focused on homelessness data. Interviews, focus group discussions, and community meetings included conversations about homelessness in Boone County as well to add context to the numbers.

27. What recommendations would most effectively promote development and growth in actual or perceived high crime areas?

Response: Based on the feedback received in this study, crime was perceived to be highest in northern Columbia. Based on Esri total crime index mapping of FBI Uniform Crime Reporting data reported by local law enforcement agencies, crime in Boone County was highest in central and southern Columbia. Though still relatively high in northern Columbia compared to other parts of the County, crime decreases significantly north of I-70. There are many recommendations included in this study to build housing in Columbia, and for good reason---that's where the services are, that's where the jobs are, and that's where the infrastructure can support high-density housing.

By creating vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods in the heart of the County, you can attract a diverse population of residents, businesses, and visitors. This increased foot traffic naturally deters crime and fosters a sense of community. New housing developments can also spur economic growth, create jobs and generate tax revenue that can be invested in public safety initiatives and social services.

While some studies have purported to link high-density housing to crime, these kinds of studies typically only go so far as to control for total population and are therefore measuring correlation without any true claim to have found causation. They do not control for socioeconomic factors like the poverty rate or the male unemployment rate, which have been more substantively linked to crime rates than high-density housing. Who do you think is more likely to try to steal a Playstation? An unemployed guy living in poverty in a house or the person with a well-paying job living in an apartment? Apartments do not motivate people to commit crime---poverty does.

Building high-density affordable housing is itself a crime prevention strategy. By building more housing, and affordable housing specifically, we are addressing economic needs in the community by alleviating the critical housing shortage. By building more housing, supply and demand for housing will eventually reach an equilibrium and housing prices will not be as inflated as they are today. Affordable housing specifically gives folks an opportunity to spend less than 30% of their income on housing, which greatly reduces the pressure on people to resort to crime. Housing development addresses a root cause of crime.

The other thing to consider is that it's not just about how much housing you build, it's about how that housing is designed. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach for reducing crime and fear of crime. Many of your local law enforcement professionals and urban planners are probably already familiar with CPTED principals. I recommend talking with your local professionals about how design can deter crime, and to check out this primer from the International CPTED Association (ICA): <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>. Below is an excerpt from the primer:

*CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas to reduce crime opportunities. CPTED uses architecture, urban planning, and facility management and it is sometimes termed Design out Crime (DOC), Defensible Space or Crime Prevention Through Urban Development (CPT-UD). It also addresses the social environment by building a sense of community in areas thereby reducing the motivations for crime. This distinction between crime opportunity and crime motive is where CPTED divides into First and Second Generation (that history is described below). Although First Generation CPTED did not originally provide specific strategies to build social cohesion, well-seasoned practitioners will recognize that the physical environment cannot be divorced from the social environment in which it operates.*

CPTED principles tie into the “eyes on the street” theory that more people using and watching a space makes it safer, and the “broken windows” theory that a broken window or other signs of neglect encourage more crime, because it creates the perception that the space is abandoned. Some strategies to prevent crime using CPTED principles include:

- Streets, sidewalks, playgrounds, and other common spaces in the public realm should be highly visible from nearby homes and gathering areas.

- Walkways and public spaces should be well lit with downward facing shielded streetlights designed to prevent glare and blind spots.
- Schedule activities in common areas to increase proper use and demonstrate that the areas are controlled.
- Repair broken windows, signage, lights, fences, play equipment, and any other public or private property that is visible from the public realm immediately to display ownership of the space and discourage crime.
- Use motion sensor lights and cameras at all home, building, and community entry points to discourage break-ins instead of gates or fences. A physical barrier does not prevent crime (unless the crime is a deer eating your tomatoes). The feeling that you're being watched in a well-regulated area prevents crime.

28. How do you perceive the mismatch between perceived need and oversupply in gentle density? Why is gentle density not in demand?

Response: This is a great question as well. For anyone wondering what “gentle density” means in the context of the question this person asked, in the context of this study, I refer to townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes as “gentle density” homes.

There is demand for these kinds of homes from folks who want to live close to walkable services and amenities, but who don't necessarily want to live in a multifamily building, and these homes are great to build in those small transitional areas between high-intensity commercial or mixed-use areas and low-density neighborhoods of single-family homes. In Boone County, there is currently an oversupply of gentle density homes, but they aren't built in these kinds of development contexts. Instead, they're typically built in the same kind of subdivision layout as single-family homes. So, you have an oversupply of gentle density homes, and at the same time, there's unmet demand for traditional gentle density development.

This study designates no annual absorption development target over the next 10 years for townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes---that “gentle density” category. That's because from a market demand standpoint, this kind of home is currently oversupplied in Boone County in its current development context. There's more of this kind of housing than people are looking for when it's built in the same kind of subdivision layout that single-family homes are typically built within. That doesn't mean that if you build duplexes, that people won't move into them, it just

means that you're not satisfying a gap in the market with that kind of home right now. So, if three large-scale well-designed and well-priced developments come online at the same time and one of them has a lot of duplexes or triplexes, those homes will probably be the slowest to fill up.

If, on the other hand, you address the unmet demand for well-designed gentle density homes in those small, walkable transitional areas between high-intensity commercial or mixed-use areas and low-density neighborhoods of single-family homes, you're much more likely to see higher absorption rates as long as the homes are well-marketed.

29. In regard to the slide about cost burdened individuals, does this account for people on vouchers? Does this account for students being supported by family or aid?

Response: Both of those groups are included in the numbers. People using housing vouchers will, by virtue of the housing voucher, never be in the cost-burdened category, because a housing voucher ensures that the household pays no more than 30% of their income on rent. Everything in excess of that 30% threshold, up to the maximum Fair Market Rent for the home, is paid for by the housing voucher. Students on the other hand, may fall into the cost-burdened category if the family aid is not accounted for, which is estimated to be a relatively frequent issue. However, it's important to not universally discount student households. While some students have significant amounts of family assistance, this is certainly not the case for many others. The cost-burdened households in this study includes a mix of students and non-student households.

### 3. Housing Quality, Sustainability, & Accessibility

#### *Building Quality & Safety*

30. Can you address housing foundation problems: soil structure, mold, poisonous land, global warming?

Response: These are all serious issues that certainly influence the housing development and rehabilitation process. The importance of sustainable building and renovation practices in terms of both architectural design and construction cannot be understated. For a deep dive into any of these issues, I would defer to recognized experts in those fields.

31. What security does a renter have with rent to own?

Response: I included some more detail in the study and in question #13 above regarding a recommended process for a builder and lender to set up a rent-to-own model for a housing development. Assuming that kind of model is in place, the use of an equity fund that can be returned to the renter if they move out is key to offering the renter financial security.

That being said, rent-to-own models are an excellent tool that are unfortunately being misappropriated by predatory property owners and lenders that make money off of “downpayments” and fees that are not returned when the renter does not exercise their option to buy the home. Campaigns and classes to educate the public about the differences between beneficial and predatory rent-to-own models are necessary. Unfortunately, state and/or federal legislation to crack down on those predatory rent-to-own models will likely be necessary to eliminate the practice.

32. In regard to 2.2 recommendation, how many city inspectors would be needed to ensure code enforcement for our current housing?

Response: This is a better question for City officials who are intimately familiar with their current staff’s responsibilities, limitations, and capacity. However, I would say that more meaningful communication with housing staff and intermittent windshield surveys of the city housing stock can likely be achieved with minimal increases in the workforce.

### *Proximity & Accessibility*

33. How do we ensure or improve proximity with walking/biking distances of housing and grocery stores?

Response: Focusing on infill development and building more high-density homes within close walking or biking distance to grocery stores and other forms of employment, services, and amenities is certainly a key part of the strategy. Another piece of this strategy is working with the development layout you already have and finding opportunities to implement road diets, protected bike lanes, and certainly building out missing segments of the sidewalk network. The last key piece of this strategy is to drastically improve the bus system. If you only have to walk 5 minutes or less to a bus stop, then spend 10-15 minutes on your phone while the bus takes you to the grocery store, that makes walking to the grocery store a much more realistic option for folks. The bus system is not currently equipped to do this for the vast majority of residents. A major overhaul of the system, consolidation of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, increased pay for drivers (using FTA funds),

route realignment, and a drastic reduction of the headways from 90 to 30 minutes is necessary.

34. Columbia has an extensive park and rec system throughout the city. Would you recommend some of that land be used to build Project-Based Housing?

Response: No. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. That parks system is something that City residents can cherish for generations to come, especially as the area becomes inevitably more developed over time, whether it be through increased density or through a loss of rural and natural areas. I would focus on increasing density, prioritizing infill development and redevelopment, consolidating parking and improving transit, and other strategies to put more homes on the land you've already built on.

35. Would it be useful in developing priorities to classify public transportation as a utility?

Response: Yes, thinking of public transportation as a utility, or as a form of infrastructure can be a useful way to think about transit that emphasizes its foundational importance to the functioning of the city.

### *Long-Term Sustainability*

36. What are strategies to motivate out-of-town investors of rental properties to improve preservation, especially of aging Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties?

Response: It depends on the property owners and investors. Everyone is different and has different motivations. When you're talking about aging LIHTC properties, you're talking about a handful of property owners, so I think the first step is for someone like a representative of the Housing Authority or another interested agency to reach out to them and get to know them. This is another instance that highlights the value of coordination and partnerships. Instead of taking a best practice and casting it out like a wide net to see if any of these property owners swim into it, simply talk with them about the future of their building.

Do any of their investors or the general partner have an interest in taking over ownership after the 15-year period expires and the restriction is still in place? Does an equity partner have an interest? What are their long-term plans and goals? Would they be interested in the Housing Authority applying for LIHTC to purchase and renovate the property? These are all questions to ask and conversations to have,

because at that point, you'll know enough to develop an effective strategy together to keep the homes affordable and in good shape.

37. Do you consider any of your recommendations lynchpin to the changes or required for the rest to be successful?

Response: Yes, I think recommendation 1.1 to create a predictable and streamlined review process is one of the most important recommendations, and if that is not implemented, then a lot of these other recommendations are not as likely to be accomplished, especially the development targets referenced both in recommendation 1.8 and in more detail in the development targets section of the study.

Recommendation 1.2 to create local housing trust funds and recommendation 1.3 to establish a permanent revenue source for the trust fund through a linkage fee program (or a different revenue source) are also necessary to give the City and County the leverage and resources necessary to accomplish many of the other recommendations.

I would also say that recommendation 4.5 to leverage public-private partnerships and to generally maintain the positive momentum and collaboration between many stakeholders in Boone County is necessary to address the housing needs in your community and to accomplish most of the other recommendations. The only way to maintain real progress is together.

38. Any particular success stories from other communities you can share?

Response: Yes, I'm including some of the best practices that came to mind while working on this study below. These are also included in the policy analysis section of the study, and they're all related in some way to the findings and recommendations in this study.

**Pinellas County, FL** allows developers and builders to apply for Affordable Housing Development (AHD) certification prior to starting their permitting process through a conceptual level review. Once certified, the development goes through an expedited permitting process and is assigned to a Development Review Administrator. The Administrator serves as a single point of contact for the applicant to simplify the approval process and acts as an ombudsman to resolve issues that come up during code review for the site plan and building permits.

The development is also given flexibility in terms of density, lot size, and setbacks through an administrative review process if the applicant meets certain

development standards and can demonstrate that the development is not at odds with the character of the neighborhood.

Learn more at <https://pinellas.gov/affordablehousing-incentives>.

The **San Diego** Affordable, In-Fill Housing and Sustainable Buildings Expedite Program offers faster permitting for qualifying projects. To qualify, projects must include affordable housing, sustainable features, or be located in specific zones.

The program reduces permit processing by roughly 50% (from a 20-day review period to a target 10-day review period) for subsequent reviews following the initial staff review. The expedited review policy also allows for relaxed regulations by allowing deviations from the municipal code through an administrative process. Expedited review fees apply but are waived for the development of 100% affordable housing. The process involves a mandatory initial review followed by clear and consistent communication with a staff person to guide the applicant through the process.

Learn more at <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/formspublications/information-bulletins/538>.

**Montgomery County, MD** established the first successfully implemented inclusionary zoning policy and program in the country 50 years ago in 1974, called the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. This is a mandatory inclusionary zoning program, and developers must sign an agreement with the County called an MPDU Agreement to Build. Staff work with the developer to ensure that affordability requirements are met, that the affordable homes are not clustered together or placed in the least desirable locations of a development, and that for affordable homes are high-quality and comparable to the market rate layouts.

Rental rates for MPDUs do not exceed 25% of a qualified household's income, and homeowners of MPDUs are required to take homeownership classes beforehand. Last year in 2023, there were 325 new MPDUs built and there were 807 new MPDUs approved.

Learn more at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/MPDU/mpdu-program.html>.

In 2017, **Kansas City** voters approved the 1/8 percent Central City Economic Development (CCED) sales tax which generates approximately \$10 million annually. Since the program began, CCED has invested more than \$53 million toward 35 projects in the Central City.

The fund is used to support affordable housing development and other important projects, and helps the City navigate the challenges of increased construction labor and material costs.

Learn more here: <https://www.kcmo.gov/Home/Components/News/News/2155/1746>.

**Tempe, AZ:** In 2021, the Tempe City Council established the Hometown for All Initiative to facilitate growth of affordable housing options through innovative funding strategies.

The Initiative brings the city, private developers, and a nonprofit partner together. The City contributes 50 percent of permit fees into a fund, provides an avenue for private developers to make donations to the fund, and partners with a nonprofit organization to collect and manage the donations. The fund is then used to acquire permanently affordable properties, secure land for development, and revitalize city-owned properties.

Learn more here: <https://hometownforalltempegov.hub.arcgis.com/>.

## 4. Economic Factors & Market Dynamics

### *Cost of Housing & Wages*

39. You mentioned that the cost of housing keeps people from migrating here, is immigration not a big factor in housing costs then?

Response: Like many places in the country, there is a shortage of homes in Boone County relative to demand. So, there are people who would like to migrate to Boone County to be closer to work, family, amenities, and other local draws if a suitable home in terms of housing type, price, size, location, etc. existed and was available. Most of the migration into Boone County is coming from Cole County, St. Louis County (not City), Callaway County, Audrain County, Randolph County, Jackson County, St. Charles County, and Cooper County, in order of the number of migrants. These are all the places with an annual number of migrating households over 100, and they are all other counties in Missouri. The average household income of these households is around \$48,000, which reinforces the need for small, affordable homes.

In order of the number of migrating households moving to Boone County, the first place outside of Missouri is Cook County, Illinois. In the latest published IRS migration tables, 94 households moved from Cook County, Illinois to Boone County,

and those households had an average household income of close to \$91,000, so those are folks looking for larger homes than the families moving here from other places in Missouri. The number of foreign households migrating to Boone County was suppressed for privacy reasons due to being under 20.

The largest group of migrants into Boone County are coming from other places in Missouri, and they are lower-income households. There are a lot of folks who work in Boone County, go to school in Boone County, or who are retired and have family in Boone County, and those folks are choosing to live somewhere else due to the cost of housing in Boone County. Without any immigration into Boone County, you might see housing prices eventually come down, but the economy will crash with it as businesses become unable to maintain a workforce or achieve the revenue necessary to stay open. As challenging as growth may be to manage, trying to tackle housing prices by reducing demand is, at best, naïve and ineffective, and at worst, economically harmful by triggering population decline! Just ask folks in the Rust Belt.

40. How do we raise the hourly wage necessary to afford the 2024 fair market rent?

Response: The hourly wage necessary to afford the 2024 Fair Market Rent (FMR) rises as the FMR rises. FMRs are an estimate of the amount of money that would cover gross rents (rent and utility expenses) on 40 percent of the rental housing units in an area. HUD is required by law to set fair market rents every year, which go into effect on October 1<sup>st</sup>, and they are used in several HUD programs, including determining the maximum amount a Housing Choice Voucher will cover. As home prices go up, it's good for Fair Market Rents to be adjusted to accurately reflect that increase, because that makes it easier for voucher recipients to find a place to live. While the overall goal is for housing prices to come down, FMRs should always accurately reflect housing prices in the area.

### *Housing Market Trends*

41. How does Boone County compare to other areas you have studied?

Response: That's hard to answer, because every place has its own challenges and opportunities for improvement. Comparing two housing markets is not really comparing apples to apples. I will say though, I enjoyed each of my visits!

42. How do you see short-term rentals (Airbnb) affecting Boone County or Columbia?

Response: Short-term rentals were predictably a relatively small drop in the bucket compared to the overall housing shortage in Boone County. When you're far away

from major tourist or business travel destinations, as you are in Boone County, a lot of the short-term rentals are seasonal or intermittently occupied homes owned by folks who don't want to sell and they don't want a long-term tenant, so they put it up on Airbnb or a similar site to make a little extra revenue. A lot of these are homes that would be sitting empty if they were not used as a short-term rental. If you go to a place like Orlando, or neighborhoods close to theme parks, tourist destinations, and major convention centers, short-term rentals are going to have a much more significant impact on the housing stock than they do in Boone County. It's probably not worth the time to focus on short-term rentals as a barrier to affordable housing.

43. If we limit student housing (off-campus) to students, what rental options will be developed to replace that option for non-student age folks?

Response: This is the easiest question so far. Build both!

## 5. Miscellaneous

44. How can we follow up/interact with you during implementation stages of these policy recommendations?

Response: Please do contact me any time. I'm invested and I will be happy to help with implementation efforts! My email address is [dboston@amarachps.com](mailto:dboston@amarachps.com) and my phone number is (313) 403-6024. You can also connect with me on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/davidboston88/>.

45. What is the recommendation for suburban development infill and what have other cities done to be successful at that?

Response: There is a large deficit of small, single-family homes with modest yards. These can't be built in the downtown Columbia core, but they can be built in many suburban infill environments: most particularly the small towns and the inner-ring suburbs of Columbia.

The most important recommendations to focus on to achieve that kind of infill development are creating a streamlined and predictable development review process, establishing and funding local housing trust funds, and revising zoning and subdivision standards to allow for context-sensitive small lot development.

46. How many of the 740 responses were from homeless individuals? Why are there no recommendations to address no/low income needs right now?

Response: Five of the 740 survey respondents were experiencing homelessness.

The recommendations in this study are geared towards meeting the housing needs in Boone County and the City of Columbia with a focus on the need for affordable housing. When there are not enough homes to meet the demand, prices inevitably rise, evictions rise, and our most vulnerable individuals and families are pushed into homelessness. As Gregg Colburn and many others before him have pointed out time and time again, homelessness is a housing problem. By increasing the supply of affordable housing, we can alleviate this pressure, stabilize rents, and create pathways out of homelessness.

While I'm sure the local CoC folks don't need to be told this, I would strongly recommend a Housing First approach that prioritizes rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing for those who need wrap-around services. This then prompts the tougher question: where are those homes going to come from? My hope is that the recommendations from this study help you answer that question.