

The Housing Stats

Since 2018 County has given away a total of \$131 Million in tax incentives and public land sales for a total of 991 “Affordable” Units. (Slated to be 1,105 pending approval of the Brooklyn Village development)

So far only 36 of these units are guaranteed to meet the greatest need for affordable housing (below 30% of the Area Median Income).

According to the 2020 UNCC Urban Institute’s State of Housing Instability and Homelessness (SoHIH) report there is a shortage of over 23,000 affordable units for extremely low-income households that are at or below 30% Area Median Income.

The share of units renting below \$800 per month has dropped from 51% of inventory in 2010 to 25% in 2018.

44% of all Mecklenburg renter households were cost burdened in 2018, paying more than 30% of their monthly household income towards housing-related expenses.

In 2019, the annual homeless population in Mecklenburg County was 4,420. 62% of those experiencing homelessness were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

As of June 2020, the number of people actively experiencing homelessness was already 3,111.

From the 2020 SoHIH report: “The Annual Count indicates there continues to be a steady inflow of people entering into homelessness...This underscores the connection between housing instability and homelessness.”

Policy Paper Forthcoming

For more updates (and sources):

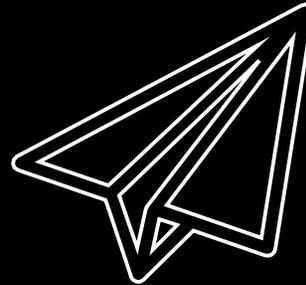
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The Charlotte Housing Justice Coalition is an organization dedicated to the belief, policy, and practice of Housing as a Human Right. This commitment to housing as a fundamental right for all people informs our research, activism, advocacy, and organizing. This is the first in a series of factsheets about how big money makes local government pursue policies that cause housing insecurity and displacement.

Brought to you by the Political Education and Policy Committees of the Charlotte Housing Justice Coalition.



Pimping Out the Public for Private Interests: Mecklenburg County Commissioners’ Role in Promoting Housing Instability and Displacement

The County Giving Away Public Money for Little or Nothing

THE WHO: Since 2018 the Board of County Commissioners has taken an active role in housing by leveraging tax incentives and County-owned public land to spur “affordable housing.” Despite the County’s stated intentions, their actions have **DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED** to the unaffordability of the Charlotte housing Market by giving public money away for luxury housing developments.

THE WHY: Digging a little bit deeper, the problem can be traced to campaign contributions from real estate interests as well as a lack of political opposition to the Board of County Commissioners.

THE HOW: Four out of nine incumbent County Commissioners are running unopposed in the 2020 general election: Commissioners Vilma Leake (District 2), Mark Jerrell (District 4), Pat Cotham (At-Large) and Ella Scarborough (At-Large). The Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, George Dunlap (District 3), is running against a long-shot candidate that makes the position virtually unopposed.

THE RESULT: A situation wherein real-estate interests are incredibly influential. Groups that benefit from gentrification are bankrolling many of the County Commissioners running unopposed. The interests of the public are consistently outweighed or downright ignored in favor of these real-estate interests. The end result is widening gaps and increases in rental prices which lead to housing instability, gentrification, displacement, and ultimately, homelessness.

Tax Incentives and Public Land for Private Interests

There are four key projects that the County has engaged in where the County voted to sell public land valued over \$106 million and voted on tax incentives valued at \$25 million for a *potential* total of 1,105 affordable apartments. The projects and how our unopposed County Commissioners have voted are as follows:

Brooklyn Village – The County entered into an agreement in 2016 to sell Marshall Park for \$50.18 million to BK Partners, a development group led by Don Peebles. The development would cost BK Partners \$683 million and only include 114 affordable units out of 1,200 housing units. **George Dunlap and Vilma Leake** voted in favor. **Pat Cotham and Ella Scarborough** voted against. The project is currently in limbo due to county commissioners such as **Mark Jerrell** questioning the project. The land sale has not been finalized.

Ballantyne Reimagined – The County voted unanimously in 2020 to give \$25 million in tax incentives to Northwood Development for a \$1 billion project that would only include 260 units of affordable housing – none of those units would be available to a family of four making under \$39,500 – the affordable units most needed in Mecklenburg County.

7th and Tryon – The County entered into a multi-partner deal with Bank of America, Inlivan (formerly Charlotte Housing Authority) and Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to sell parcels of land for \$21.5 million to developer, BP-Metropolitan. The proceeds from the sale would place 110 affordable units in uptown close to transit, jobs while 581 will be placed elsewhere in the County. **Only Pat Cotham** voted against the overall plan.

4th and Graham – With the exception of **Pat Cotham**, the County Commissioners voted in 2018 to sell parcels valued at over \$5 million to the City of Charlotte to redevelop the area known as Gateway Station. The County only stipulated 40 units or 15% of housing units to be sold under 80% AMI.

Campaign Contributions from Real-Estate Interests

In Charlotte, we have seen real estate interests take an outsized role in decision making. This is evident in the widening gaps between luxury apartments and substandard living. For example, a recent SoHIH indicates that the share of units renting below \$800 month dropped from 51% of all inventory in 2010 to just 25% in 2018. It seems that despite millions of dollars spent to produce affordable units we’ve gotten little in return. If we follow the money, we can see why:

George Dunlap (District 3 and Chair of BOCC) Since 2018, George Dunlap has received over \$5,000 from real estate interests alone. His two biggest and notable donors are Don Peebles of BK Partners (Brooklyn Village redevelopment) and Charles Shook of Shook Kelley (working with County currently on Brookhill Redevelopment).

Mark Jerrell (District 4) – Since 2018, Mark Jerrell has received over \$4,000 in campaign donations from real estate interests alone. Two contributors of \$1,000 are REBIC and NC Home Builders Association, both are groups that are pro-development and pro-gentrification throughout the city and state.

Pat Cotham (At-Large) - Since 2018, Pat Cotham has received over \$8,000 in campaign donations from real estate interests. The biggest contributors were pro-development, pro-gentrification NC Realtors PAC (\$5,250 in 2018) and NC Home Builders Association (\$1,500 in 2018, \$500 in 2020).

***Vilma Leake and Ella Scarborough had no campaign committees reported since 2018.**