



October 2020 Newsletter



MHC Wants to Hear From You!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020MHCSurvey>

Dear Members and Friends,

As the new Executive Director of the Metropolitan Housing Coalition, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. First and foremost, I want you to know that the pursuit of safe, fair and affordable housing for *all* citizens is my passion, a goal that I have been pursuing for over 20 years. I am a Sociologist by training and have focused my education, research and advocacy work on building strong, healthy and prosperous communities in which every citizen has a safe and affordable place to call home. I believe to my core that quality housing is the bedrock of community wellness and I am committed to working to ensure that Louisville becomes a place where decent housing is available, affordable and accessible in all areas of the city.

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve as the next Executive Director of MHC. For over 30 years, the Metropolitan Housing Coalition has worked tirelessly on behalf of fair, decent and affordable housing in the Louisville metropolitan region. With over 300 individual and organizational members, the Coalition is a strong force for justice and I am honored to continue and expand on this work in the weeks, months and years to come. As the pandemic and protests against systemic racism have certainly taught us, there is still much work to be done. For our part, MHC is strengthening our resolve to redefine issues of fair and affordable housing to reflect a new community awareness and commitment to equity. As part of that effort, we have elevated Anthony P. Curtis to the position of Development and Communications Director, a move which reflects our renewed commitment to outreach and engagement in all sectors of the community. While we face unprecedented challenges, we recognize that the time is now to build on the momentum for change that we are seeing in Louisville. The Metropolitan Housing Coalition will continue to be a leader in this work on the local, state and national levels.

I extend my sincere thanks to my predecessor, Cathy Hinko, for the decades of service that she has given to MHC and the Louisville region. Like so many

others, I have been captivated by Cathy's energy, intelligence, dedication and compassion and I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to get to know her. We will miss working with her on a day-to-day basis, but we are comforted by knowing that she will still be actively involved in the advocacy work that is so needed and important in Greater Louisville. The community is not losing her voice or spirit! All of us at MHC wish her the absolute best in her well deserved retirement.

I hope to have the opportunity to get to know you - our supporters and partners - over the coming weeks. While the pandemic makes in-person meetings challenging, please stay tuned for information about an online "Open House" in which you will have the opportunity to meet our staff and board and learn more about our work and plans for the future. I hope to see you there!

With sincere thanks and appreciation,

Cathy Kuhn, PhD
Executive Director
Metropolitan Housing Coalition

SAVE THE DATE! **'It's Cathy Day' Celebration**

Tuesday, January 12th
11:30AM
Via WebEx

Join the Metropolitan Housing Coalition to celebrate Cathy Hinko's retirement and to support MHC's work for fair, accessible, and affordable housing. Unfortunately we cannot meet in-person to celebrate Cathy due to the pandemic, so we will be celebrating Cathy virtually via WebEx.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION!

The Metropolitan Housing Coalition and the University of Louisville Oral History Center Partner to Launch *Unfair Housing in Louisville: A Legacy Project*

Louisville, KY (October 22, 2020) – The Metropolitan Housing Coalition (MHC) and the University of Louisville Oral History Center have partnered on *Unfair Housing In Louisville: A Legacy Project*, an oral history project focused on documenting, understanding, and preserving the history of housing discrimination in Louisville. By preserving this history, we can help people to better understand the injustice perpetrated on Black families and the resulting inequities of homeownership, wealth, and opportunities in our society that live on today.

"Following the release of the 2019 State of Metropolitan Housing Report focused on addressing racial gaps in homeownership and wealth, MHC intensified our advocacy and education work to address the inequalities in our community," said Tony Curtis, MHC's Director of Development and Communications. "In our conversations with community members and

policymakers, we heard the personal stories of individuals and families who have faced housing discrimination for generations and how that discrimination has affected each succeeding generation in building intergenerational wealth. These conversations drove MHC's decision to launch an oral history project that will document and preserve these family histories, as they are critical both in understanding Louisville's history and informing the path forward."

Louisville has a past filled with racial discrimination in homeownership. While we look at the Redlining Project, and even intellectually understand that current maps of segregation that mirror the 1937 Redlining maps, we fail to absorb the legacy of generation after generation being denied access to the wealth building subsidized for White households. The data shows the legacy in Louisville- 36% of Black households own while 70% of White households own. Or that 50% of the Black households that own live in just 22 of 198 census tracts in Louisville.

But, the data alone does not capture the collective understanding of discrimination in our city. The voices of the people directly impacted by this discrimination is vitally important. A collective understanding that emerges in family histories passed down; a collective understanding that is shared by more Black families in Louisville than White Louisville really understands. That collective understanding permeates our whole city but is only now, in this current movement for equity, becoming defined for all of Louisville. This project seeks to ensure that the collective understanding becomes historically preserved. We do this through family histories of discrimination as handed down across generations and the family assessment of how those acts of discrimination have shaped family histories. This history will be archived in the University of Louisville Oral History Center and available to scholars and to the public.

The impact of a shared inter-generational family history of exclusion is a legacy that Louisville must understand—and must be preserved in the archives for future generations—if we are to ever move forward.

The Metropolitan Housing Coalition and the University of Louisville Oral History Center received a grant from the Kentucky Oral History Commission to conduct 21 oral history interviews for this project. The project will be led by Tony Curtis at the Metropolitan Housing Coalition and Heather Fox at the University of Louisville Oral History Center, where the oral history interviews will be housed in the archives. Louisville journalist and historian Michael Jones will be conducting the interviews for the *Unfair Housing in Louisville* oral history project. If you are interested in participating as an interviewee in this project, please contact Tony Curtis at tony@metropolitanhousing.org.

To learn more about the Metropolitan Housing Coalition: www.metropolitanhousing.org

To learn more about the University of Louisville Oral History Center: <https://ohc.library.louisville.edu/>

To learn more about the Kentucky Oral History Commission: <https://history.ky.gov/resources/kentucky-oral-history-commission/>

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to become a member and strengthen the voice of MHC in the community!



Proposed Ordinance Will Increase Fair Access to Housing

A fair housing ordinance first proposed in November is expected to be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the Community Affairs, Health and Education Committee. Sponsored by Council Members Jessica Green, David James, Bill Hollander and Barbara Sexton Smith, the ordinance proposes to reduce housing discrimination by widening the umbrella of populations covered under the city's housing discrimination ordinance. Louisville's current ordinances bar housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, disability, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. If approved, the new ordinance would prevent any person, owner, financial institution, real estate broker or real estate salesperson from denying access to housing based on criminal background, homeless status, source of income or military service record.

Source of income laws, one key aspect of the ordinance, are thought to increase housing choice and accessibility for lower income renters and make it easier for people with Section 8 vouchers to access rental housing outside of areas where subsidized housing options are often concentrated. Widespread negative stereotypes associated with the Section 8 Program impact a renter's ability to find landlords who will participate in the program and in some cases can jeopardize their success in utilizing the resource. Studies show that these laws can increase the extent to which people are able to successfully utilize their Section 8 voucher. Similarly, an unwillingness to rent to a tenant due to a criminal background, a history of homeless or veteran's status often overlaps and intersects with other types of prohibited discrimination and disproportionately affects people of color, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence and people who identify as LGBTQ.

MHC strongly supports this ordinance and encourages Metro Council to adopt this ordinance as just one strategy of many that can help increase choice and opportunities for low income and minority renters. Other strategies that the council should explore include inclusionary housing which requires developers to include a certain percentage of units as affordable in a housing project and

thus has the potential to disperse more affordable units across the city. You can find more information about the history and status of this legislation here:

[File #: O-395-19](#)

Much Needed Reform the Land Development Code The Time is Now to Have Your Voice Heard for a More Equitable Louisville

In July 2020, Louisville Metro Government announced that it will undertake a complete review of the Land Development Code (LDC) to identify and address land use regulations and policies that have inequitable impacts on Louisville residents. The Land Development Code is a set of rules that regulates development and what can be done with private property. The Code has a powerful impact on the types of housing and other amenities that can be developed across the city. The city has recognized that the LDC continues to incorporate discriminatory policies that have had extremely inequitable impacts on residents. In an effort to identify and correct these regulations, the Office of Planning and Design Services developed a four step process which includes:

- Phase 1. Identifying the issues and barriers in the LDC that need to be addressed
- Phase 2. Developing recommendations
- Phase 3. Drafting recommendations
- Phase 4. Adopting recommendations

The Planning Commission will serve as the oversight committee for the entire process and there are opportunities for the public to engage throughout the process. In an initial effort to solicit input from the community, especially community members who have been adversely impacted by development practices and land use policies, the The Office of Planning and Design Services is holding three community meetings in late October on: Saturday, October 24th @ 10:00am; Monday, October 26th @ 10:00am; and Tuesday, October 27th @ 6:00pm. Citizens can watch and submit comments or questions via Facebook Live on the Develop Louisville page, or via WebEx online or by phone. Details on how to attend the different meetings can be found here: <https://louisvilleky.gov/ldcreform>. Anyone who is not able to attend the meetings, but would like to submit questions or comments, can also do so by emailing LDCreform@louisvilleky.gov or by calling the LDC reform hotline at (502) 574-4737.

Additional ability to engage in the process will be available when the Planning Commission presents their recommendations to Metro Council. Members of the public can attend any Commission meeting and speak during the public hearing(s). More information about those meetings will be available at: www.louisvilleky.gov/ldcreform.

In advance of the LDC review, staff at Planning and Design Services worked with Opticos Design on a Land Development Code Diagnosis with a focus on housing. This diagnosis identified numerous barriers in the current LDC to the production of fair and affordable housing in all areas of the city, some of which include density requirements that are too low, lot size requirements that are

too high and parking minimums that are too high. To learn more about the recommendations to the LDC that were identified in this review of the code, go to: [Louisville LDC Diagnosis: Findings + Recommendations](#)

The Land Development Code is a critical document that drives the future development of our city. MHC will be an active participant in these conversations and we urge our members and supporters to share your experiences and desires as we work to develop equitable land use practices.

Mark Your Calendars:

On Monday, October 26th at 4 pm, the Metropolitan Housing Coalition is hosting an event led by the League of Women Voters to learn more about the problems with the current LDC as well as the process for reform. The guest speaker will be Emily Liu from the Louisville Metro Office of Planning and Design Services. All are invited to join and learn more about this critical issue.

To join by video click here: meet.google.com/gfm-ihyf-shq

To join by phone: (US) +1 574-404-7039 PIN: 538 699 559#

Changes to Group Housing Regulations in Louisville

Acting upon complaints from citizens across the city regarding the condition of some group homes and recognizing that group housing may not be adequately regulated and enforced, Louisville Metro Council has recently asked Planning and Design Services to carry out a review of local ordinances concerning group housing. Despite this recent interest, however, concerns about this type of housing are not new. Years ago, MHC was a part of a lengthy and careful process to address different forms of housing serving people experiencing homelessness and other barriers to housing stability. Under the leadership of MHC's former Director, Cathy Hinko, MHC participated in the discussions around changes to boarding house zoning, as well as discussions on establishing clear definitions, requirements and oversight of specialized housing for people in recovery from substance use disorders, known as Recovery Housing. At that time, the Planning and Design staff were not active in these discussions, which contributed to a failure to develop needed regulations for these types of housing programs. MHC welcomes the city's renewed interest in this issue and we invite all of our partners to become engaged in these important conversations to ensure that any new regulations on group housing meet our collective standards for both quality and equity.

Given the lack of affordable housing in Louisville, group living environments are important sources of housing for those with low incomes and other barriers to housing stability. However, it is paramount that the city also establish regulations to ensure that these group housing facilities are both safe and consistent with the maximum occupancy requirements that align with city zoning. With regard to Recovery Housing Programs in particular, it is critical that these programs are consistently defined and monitored to ensure that they are successful in meeting the need for safe, stable, substance free housing for those in the early stages of recovery from substance use disorders. Research has shown that high quality Recovery Housing Programs are successful in providing those recovering from substance use disorders with greater chance of long term recovery than those who do not live in recovery oriented

environments. Yet to achieve this success, these programs must operate within the standards outlined in local and national best practices. And the good news is that we do not have to reinvent the wheel. The National Association for Recovery Residences (NARR) has developed a national standard for the operation of recovery residences and the Kentucky Recovery Housing Network (KRHN) serves as the state's NARR affiliate. We urge the city to consider these standards when developing regulations for recovery housing programs in Louisville.

Finally and most importantly, in the interest of ensuring fair and accessible housing across the city, it is imperative that all of these forms of housing be "by right" in all areas. We know that there are people in recovery from all areas of Louisville. We know that there are veterans who are homeless from all areas of Louisville. And we know that there are people with disabilities from all areas of Louisville. Group living environments such as boarding houses and Recovery Housing Programs are a critical source of housing for all of these populations, among many others. Thus, these forms of housing should not face zoning impediments. Instead, the Louisville government should assist in the creation of this type of housing, in conjunction with appropriate, non discriminatory regulations, in *all* areas of our city.

There are a number of opportunities to have your voice heard in these discussions. In addition to a public meeting before the Planning Commission, Planning and Design staff are holding virtual public meetings to get input and ideas from citizens. Go to <https://louisvilleky.gov/grouphousingchanges> to learn more about how you can get involved. For our part, MHC looks forward to contributing to these conversations and remains committed to ensuring fair, accessible housing for all Louisville citizens.

Community Calendar

Due to COVID-19, meetings are being held virtually. Virtual meeting links will be sent out monthly to each groups email list.

Fair Housing Coalition

meets at 2:00 P.M.

on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at New Directions,
1615 Maple St.

Louisville Vacant Property Campaign

meets at 5:30 P.M.

on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the
Western Library
604 South Tenth Street

Do you have an event for the Community Calendar?

Email Tony Curtis at

tony@metropolitanhousing.org



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- (3) Search "Metropolitan Housing Coalition" and click "Select" to support.



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