

BALTIMORE HOUSING ROUNDTABLE STRUCTURE

I. WHO WE ARE

The Baltimore Housing Roundtable (BHR) is a collaborative of member organizations and individuals in the Baltimore region who believe that all Baltimore residents have a human right to quality housing. We share the following values and vision, and commit to working collaboratively to make them a reality for all Baltimore citizens.

Values

We believe that because of our inherent dignity as human persons, everyone has the right to housing that is affordable, habitable, secure and accessible, and the right to economic and community development that produces this. We believe that human rights integrate racial equity, gender equity, economic equity, along with addressing other forms of oppression such as immigration status, etc. We believe that a human rights approach to housing and development must include racial equity analysis and action, or it will fail to achieve our vision of a human right to housing.

We believe that the system that delivers housing and the development that produce housing follow these principles:

- Universality--All are housed with dignity.
- Equity--Public policies must enable equality of opportunity and outcome with regard to meeting human needs, and must prioritize populations and communities that have the greatest need and historically have faced racism and the most oppression.
- Participation--Decisions about housing and development are made through the active participation of all persons
- Transparent-- Information about housing and development is easily accessible and understandable to all persons.
- Accountable--Equity focused benchmarks or indicators for housing and development must be created and a mechanism developed for redress when relevant public and private actors fail to meet them.

Vision

The idea of Housing as a commodity sold for profit will always fall short of meeting our values because housing persons with no- or low-incomes promises few profits, if any. To date, this private profit approach to housing has produced, in Baltimore City, thousands of persons who are homeless and thousands who are at risk of eviction and foreclosure annually. In addition, the housing market and racially-fueled public policy has fed the rise of suburbanization and white flight, leaving behind poor, communities of color, and over 40,000 vacant houses.

While many City children are losing safe places to play, homes are boarded up, families and individuals are on the streets, and residents are in need of good jobs, Baltimore City has funnelled public resources for development toward an elite few and to neighborhoods attractive to investors, with claims it will trickle down to those most in need. This has not occurred. The City also has reduced its commitment to public housing.

The people of Baltimore have not had a real say in any of these public policy decisions. Development, however, is a process in which all citizens should participate and through which all should benefit. This must now occur, particularly for those who have been excluded historically.

We envision a new model of housing and community development, where private real estate markets and speculators are not in control, but one where a vibrant non-speculative, permanently affordable, housing sector exists that consists of

- public housing
- non-profit housing
- shared-equity housing
- limited-equity housing

controlled by its residents and the communities in which they reside.

Participatory forms of non-speculative housing include Community Land Trusts, a tested model that can facilitate permanently affordable housing governed by a community boards reflecting social and racial diversity, and that acts in a transparent, accountable manner to use resources within and outside the community for development.

We recognize the primary role of land in housing and development, and believe that land ownership should never be used to deprive others of their fundamental right to housing.

As such, we envision areas in the City where communities own and control land, and put it to productive use for housing, recreation, agriculture, sustainable industry, or aesthetics.

We envision a City government that develops, through participation and transparency, a city housing and development plan that

- 1) Assesses the housing needs of City residents
- 2) Sets forth a plan to meet them, prioritizing those most in need
- 3) Commits public funds in accord with the plan

We envision all persons taking responsibility and action to achieve equity and universality in housing, and in creating community-controlled, permanently affordable housing and other sustainable development.

We envision government officials and private developers joining us in producing affordable housing that

- avoids displacement of families within the community where new housing is developed; and

- creates and maintains housing opportunities and for a diverse array of incomes, races, and family types within the community, and acts affirmatively to make this happen.

We envision city, state, and federal governments enabling and facilitating the formation and maintenance of non-speculative housing, particularly community land trusts, under the principles stated here, by the fair use of governmental powers to plan, zone, tax, spend, and finance housing and community development;

We envision development and housing policy that is sustainable, affordable and observes human rights principles including, but not limited to, inclusionary housing and fair housing enforcement.

II. MISSION

BHR's mission is to coordinate and integrate the work of BHR members into a unified movement that will promote, facilitate, and cause the social change necessary to realize these values and vision for the Baltimore region. BHR members understand that individual members cannot create this kind of social change on their own. BHR members further recognize that the relentless competition among various non-profits over increasingly limited government and foundation resources has significantly contributed to a fragmented and patchwork system that does not meet housing need in the Baltimore region, particularly among those with lowest incomes. Together, however, as a collaborative, BHR members can pool resources and advocate together to significantly enlarge the resource "pie" and implement an agenda of systemic change to realize BHR's shared values and vision.

III. MEMBERSHIP

There shall be two class of BHR membership: Individual and Organizational. Endorsers are organizations or individuals that want to support the BHR but cannot commit to participate as members. Responsibilities for each as follows.

A. ENDORSERS

Responsibilities:

- Endorsers shall fill out an application (See Appendix C) that asks them to:
 - Sign on to the BHR statement of values and vision;
 - Describe their work related to housing and development;
 - Describe how they want to be involved;
- Endorsers are listed on the BHR website and in BHR materials if they chose and receive the BHR e-newsletter, or other established forms for periodic communication. They are encouraged to participate in actions and events.
- Endorsers sign BHR statements and letters on a case-by-case basis.
- Endorsers expand BHR's support base and build solidarity.

B. MEMBERS

- There shall be individual members and organizational members. Each shall have identical responsibilities, but only organizational members can serve on the
- Coordinating Committee. All members shall have voting rights.

Responsibilities

- Members shall fill out applications (See Appendix A, B) that ask them to
 - Sign on to the BHR statement of values and vision and plan for action;
 - Describe their work related to housing and development;
 - Commit to the basic requirements of membership:
- Sign the BHR Principles of Unity (See Appendix D)
- Participate in at least six BHR meetings or calls during any 12 month period.
- Attend the Annual BHR membership meeting.
- Self identify as either an individual or organization member. Organizations shall further identify as an advocate, educator, organizing/base-building, or “other” group. Organizations having difficulty determining which type to identify are invited to consult with the Anchor Organization staff and the Coordinating committee for assistance or guidance.
- Organizations and individuals are listed in materials as BHR members.
- Members may exit the BHR by submitting a written notice that explains the member’s reasons for leaving the BHR. Members that cancel membership are welcome to reapply for membership at a later date.

If any BHR member believes that another BHR member is not abiding by these commitments, the BHR member should bring the issue first to the attention of the other, alleged non-compliant member. If this does not resolve the issue, the BHR member should bring the alleged non-compliance to the Coordinating Committee. The Committee will provide the alleged non-compliant member notice of a Committee meeting at which the alleged non-compliance will be discussed and an opportunity to be heard provided. At this meeting, any Committee member may make a motion to terminate, suspend, or modify the membership of the non-compliant member if non-compliance is supported by clear and convincing evidence. If such a motion is approved by a consensus of members present at the Committee at the time, the action prevails. If a consensus cannot be reached, gradient voting (as defined at the end of this document) shall be used, followed by a two-thirds majority vote if gradient voting does not achieve consensus.

IV. COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Coordinating Committee shall have seven members, five of which are organizational members. Two Coordinating Committee members will be individuals who are or have been directly impacted by the lack of equity and universality in the housing market. If such individuals are not interesting in serving on the Committee, any other individual member who can be expected to raise up such impacts may serve in lieu thereof.

- Members will be elected/selected by the general membership according to the following stakeholder breakdown:
 - Individuals who are ‘directly impacted’ by the lack of equity and universality in the housing market may include persons who have experienced homelessness, eviction, foreclosure, displacement, unaffordable housing, and the like.

- At least one of the Coordinating Committee members must be a base-building/organizing group
 - At least one Coordinating Committee member shall be a group whose membership or constituency consists primarily of persons who own homes;
 - At least Coordinating Committee member shall be a group whose membership or constituency consists primarily of persons without housing or persons formerly without housing;
 - At least Coordinating Committee member shall be a group whose membership or constituency consists primarily of persons who are tenants;
 - One member shall be elected by the general membership as the Anchor Organization.
- Terms:
 - Coordinating Committee members will serve two-year terms, with staggered turnover to ensure continuity in leadership and stability throughout transitions.
 - The Anchor Organization serves one-year terms, subject to annual evaluation and approval by the Coordinating Committee.
- Organizations or individuals seeking a seat on the Coordinating committee shall fill out an application in which they self-identify as to applicable stakeholder category. Organizational applications shall be signed by an organization's Director, leadership council, or the equivalent. [See Appendix E.]
 - Selection of BHR Representatives to the Coordinating Committee. Each organizational member with a seat on the Coordinating Committee shall use its own internal process to determine which individual or individuals will serve as its representative.
 - An Organizational member's seat on the Coordinating Committee is for the organization as a whole, not the individual representative(s) who serves in the seat. Organizational Representatives serving on the Coordinating Committee (CC) must report back and be accountable to their organizations. They are not serving as individuals.
 - Each CC member shall commit themselves to at least one year of service on the CC to ensure continuity. In cases where an organizational representative cannot continue serving in the seat, the organizational member will use its own internal process to assign a new representative(s) within a month. Where an individual CC member cannot continue, the full membership will elect another individual member.
 - It is preferred, but not necessary, that CC members have an emerging level of organizational development, fundraising/finance, and/or management experience. This will enable the CC to contribute to a coalition that seeks to function with levels of transparency, participation and accountability with multiple constituencies.
 - Organizational representatives must individually sign the Principles of Unity (See Appendix D).

Responsibilities

The CC

- Makes all Internal Decisions (BHR-related staffing, finances, etc.), EXCEPT electing new CC members and approving changes to membership and decision-making policy, which are made by full membership vote.
- Forms hiring committees to hire new BHR-related staff. These committees will include representatives from the CC and the Anchor Organization, and at least two other members not serving on the CC.
- Makes External Decisions that are time sensitive after gathering as much input as possible from Working Committees and BHR members; and
- Votes on External Decisions that are not relevant to a specific Working Committees.

The CC shall propose to membership a participatory process that shall determine the ultimate decision as to whether to sign onto letters, recommendations, or documents originating outside the BHR.

Major External Campaign decisions made through a membership vote move forward on their own, regardless of the support of the CC; the CC does not have veto power. However, in cases where the CC believes a vote is not line with CHR principles or priorities, it can share its concerns with membership and present an alternative proposal for members to consider.

Decision-Making

The CC shall follow the consensus, gradient voting, and two-thirds voting process set forth in the section entitled “Decision-Making” process (See Section VII), tailored to the CC structure.

V. ANCHOR ORGANIZATION

The anchor organization of BHR will:

- Be elected by the full membership;
- Serve one year terms subject to annual evaluation and approval by the Coordinating Committee;
- Sit as a member of the Coordinating Committee;
- Provide fundraising and financial oversight of the BHR and any BHR campaign;
- Facilitate monthly meetings/calls of BHR members as well as the Annual Meeting;
- Set the agenda for monthly meetings/calls, with input from members; and
- Monitor the progress of working committees;

The Anchor Organization is accountable to the Coordinating Committee, and shall not participate in Coordinating Committee decisions related to the Anchor Organization or where there is a conflict of interest. The Coordinating Committee will evaluate the relationship to and performance of the Anchor Organization on an annual basis.

VI. WORKING COMMITTEES

The CC shall establish Working Committees for the BHR, which are open to participation by BHR individual and organizational members, and as such include their voices in the work. Members can propose new permanent or ad hoc Working Committees to be approved by the Coordinating Committee. The CC shall modify or abolish Working Committees, subject to member approval.

Members develop recommendations in Working Committees that are presented to the Coordinating Committee for full membership for approval. Leadership roles in Working Committees, terms, participation, creation of sub-committees, and process for adoption of recommendations are decided upon and defined by the Working Committee.

Working Committees (WC) have the authority to invite and solicit participation of members and non-members. Regular participants of WCs who are not yet BHR members are encouraged to become members.

WCs may at times generate work a work product (research, report, campaign platforms or statements, collective actions, etc.). WCs shall follow the consensus, gradient voting, and two-thirds voting process set forth in the section below entitled “Decision-Making” process, tailored to the WC structure.

There are four working committees of the Roundtable:

Public Policy Committee, which shall undertake objectives and tasks relating to housing and development that enter into and influence the enactment, execution and interpretation of legislation related to the BHR or BHR campaigns.

Technical Assistance Committee, which shall undertake objectives and tasks relating to advice, assistance and training relative to Community Land Trusts, other shared-equity arrangements, and matters incidental thereto.

Organizing and Education Committee, which shall undertake objectives and tasks relating to leadership development, community education, and political mobilization related to the BHR or BHR campaigns.

Communications Committee, which shall undertake objectives and tasks relating to the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, and information relating to the BHR or BHR campaigns.

VII. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

To further its mission and achieve its goals, BHR must sometimes speak with one voice and also make decisions on substantive proposals, strategy, procedure, and other matters.

To further that process, BHR will observe the following decision-making principles:

- Endorsers do not shape or make decisions.
- Members shape BHR decisions by voting on major decisions and through consistent input and feedback in Working Committees, monthly membership

meetings and calls, and email/text surveys that go into recommendations for approval by the Coordinating Committee.

- BHR may use annual gatherings, polling and surveys to build and refine campaign strategies
- Full membership votes are required to
 - Elect new Coordinating Committee members;
 - Designate an organizational member as the BHR anchor organization, responsible for daily oversight of a BHR campaign;
 - Change membership policy
 - Make major campaign decisions such as:
 - Campaign demands
 - Campaign priorities and strategy
 - Positions on legislation
 - Commitment to major events or actions
- Members shall be notified of meetings/calls at which membership votes occur and members not able to attend such meetings/calls, shall submit their votes by online survey, email, phone or text, if possible.
- All decisions will, to the extent possible, be the result of democratic deliberation. BRH Members will have equal and adequate opportunities to speak, listen and meaningfully participate in discussion, plans and actions.
- Decisions will be reached by consensus to the extent possible. The goal of consensus is a decision to which all members agree. A consensus is defined as all members present at the meeting (physically or via telephonic or electronic linkage) being in agreement to support the decision. If a consensus cannot be reached, gradient voting (as defined below) shall be used. Gradient voting does not require everyone must be completely satisfied with the final outcome. The decision must be acceptable enough, however, that all will agree to support the group in choosing it.
- If a consensus cannot be reached, BHR will undertake a formal voting process. To carry, any action proposal must have a 2/3 majority vote. Only members who are in good standing (meet membership requirements) are eligible to cast votes.

BHR will not take any action or distribute any communication that is contrary to the laws and regulations governing the conduct of a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.

Gradient Voting Defined:

During the consensus process, any member may suggest the use of gradient voting to help reach consensus or to resolve a lack of consensus. Gradient voting shall require members to express opinion by gradients:

1. Agree (i.e. “I like it.”)
2. Agree with Minor Point of Contention (i.e., “Basically, I like it, but...”)

3. Agree with Reservations (i.e., “I can live with it, but I am concerned about...”)
4. Neutral (i.e., “I have no opinion”)
5. Disagree with Reservations (i.e., “I don’t like this, but I don’t want to hold up the group.”)
6. Disagree and Block. (i.e., “I strongly believe that this does not serve the well-being of the group”).

After such voting has been conducted, the Chair or facilitator of the vote shall commence a discussion about reservations expressed, to determine if minds can be changed.

VIII. Changes to Roundtable Structure

Amendment of this structure shall be only by vote of the full general membership.

Appendix A

**Baltimore Housing Roundtable (BHR) Membership Application --
Organization**

Questions

1. How does your organization's current and past work indicate its alignment with BHR's mission and values?
2. How does your organization's current and past work related to housing and community/economic development?
3. What is your organization's connection to communities affected by structural racism, economic inequities, and/or human rights abuse?

Organization Info Name:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Facebook Page: _____

Twitter: _____

Type of Organization (please select one)*: Base-building Educator Policy or Advocacy

Designated BHR Contact Person Info

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Cell: _____

Name of Executive Director or Equivalent Leader: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The signature above indicates agreement with the values and vision of the Baltimore Housing Roundtable and commitment to its Structure and Processes as set forth in the document entitled, *Baltimore Housing Roundtable Structure [6.22.15]*.

Appendix B

Baltimore Housing Roundtable (BHR) Membership Application -- Individual

Questions

1. Are you in agreement with BHR's mission and values?
2. What are you doing now or what have you done in the past related to housing and community/economic development?
3. What is your connection to communities affected by structural racism, economic inequities, and/or human rights abuse?

Personal Info

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Facebook Page: _____

Twitter: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The signature above indicates agreement with the values and vision of the Baltimore Housing Roundtable and commitment to its Structure and Processes as set forth in the document entitled, *Baltimore Housing Roundtable Structure [6.22.15]*.

Appendix C

Baltimore Housing Roundtable (BHR) Endorser Application

BHR Endorsers are organizations or individuals that want to support the BHR but cannot commit to participate as members.

Questions

- 1. Are you endorsing BHR as an individual or as an organization? Ind. Org.
- 2. Do you agree with the BHR's values and vision? Yes
- 3. Do you agree to be listed as an endorser in BHR materials and on the BHR website?
 Yes No
- 4. Do you agree to be added to the BHR list serv and receive our e-newsletter?
 Yes No
- 5. Would you like to donate to the BHR? Yes No
- 6. How else would you like to participate in the BHR?
 Hold an event that supports the BHR or its campaign
 Contribute to the BHR blog
 Attend an event by a BHR member group
 Sign-on to BHR position statements and letters on a case by case basis
 Other:

7. (Optional) Please describe your current and past work related to housing and community/economic development.

Organization/Personal Info Name (Organization/Individual):

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website:

Facebook Page: _____

Twitter:

Signature Name (Executive Director or Equivalent Leader/Individual):

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Housing Roundtable Principles of Unity

As BHR members, we make our best efforts to apply the following Principles of Unity to our work together:

1. We challenge the systemic problem of structural racism and economic inequity in our national, state, and local public policies relative to housing and development, and promote local, state, and national alternatives to a political, economic, social, and cultural paradigm that treats housing as a means to private profit, and as a way to maintain existing economic and social boundaries.
2. We advocate for the human rights of all people to quality housing, to be treated with dignity, to be free from discrimination and to participate in decision-making on issues that affect their communities, the land that exists therein, development, and housing.
3. Our coalition is made up of multiple stakeholder groups—persons who are homeless, renters, homeowners, African-American, Hispanic, White, youth and adult, organizers, educators, and advocates—and we strive to be led by people most affected by the structural racism and economic inequities of the housing system. We work with each other to expand our knowledge base and shift power to those most affected.
4. We make sure that our members, and especially those most affected, own and make decisions about their stories, their analysis, their solutions, and their victories.
5. We are building a strong, clear, and explicit analysis in our work at all levels, intentionally examining issues such as race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability, religion, language and age. We regularly self reflect and evaluate our practices as we seek to challenge injustice, be it in ourselves, our organizations, our communities, or our movement.
6. We value put movement identity, in accordance with mission of the Roundtable. We are building a common set of political goals and strategies appropriate to building the leadership, participation, and influence of those most affected.
7. Leadership development occurs at all times. We are not led by individual, charismatic leaders, but we have an accountable model of power sharing, power conscious, and collective leadership ethic.
8. We support our work together by sharing information, knowledge, skills, relationships, funding strategies and opportunities, visibility, access, and political wisdom.

Definitions:

Structural Racism: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or

institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.

Economic Inequity: Equity refers to the principle of *fairness* or justice. Economic Inequity describes educational, employment, housing, health, food, and income security systems, structures, and arrangements that distinguish persons, whether intentionally or not, by property, race, or other characteristic, and cause and contribute to a lack of equality in outcomes relating to these basic human needs.

Human rights apply to every person equally no matter where they come from simply because they are human beings. The U.S. civil rights movement is part of a human rights movement to fight for civil rights to equality and freedom from discrimination, as well as economic and social rights to education, work, health and housing. Human rights intend to integrate racial equity, gender equity, economic equity, along with addressing other forms of oppression such as immigration status, etc.

Leadership Development is the process that enables the people most affected by problems in their communities and society at large to lead the way in resolving them. Experience indicates that this process works best through systematic attention and practices that help develop political activity, education, responsibility, and collectivity.

A **social movement** is a mobilization and self-organization of people to gain or secure their rights or realize common values through collective identity, action, or impact. It is generally composed of formal and informal networks of information and support, and often utilizes a host of communication and advocacy tools tailored to influence existing political, economic, social and/or cultural power structures. It often exceeds the expectations of formal leadership and existing organizations.

I agree to make a good faith effort to apply the above Principles of Unity to our BHR work:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature Name _____

Appendix E

Baltimore Housing Roundtable (BHR) Coordination Committee Member-- Self Nomination Form

Your responses to the questions below should total no more than one page. BHR will use your responses to announce your candidacy for a seat on the Coordinating Committee.

Organization/Individual Name:

Contact Person (if organization):

Contact method (email, phone, other) :

Have you or your organization submitted a BHR membership application?

YES [] NO []

(Only those who have applied for membership can serve on Coordinating Committee.)

Your responses below will be shared with the BHR Membership.

1. Please describe yourself or your organization and its work or interest in Housing, Development, and the BHR (250 word maximum). If you are applying as an individual, please indicate your direct experience of the lack of equity and universality in the housing market.

2. Why do you or your organization want to serve on the Coordinating Committee and what will your organization contribute by serving in this role? (250 word maximum)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name : _____