

# Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition

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## Report

June 24, 2021, FINAL



**LEXINGTON**  
*Urban County Council*

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# **Introduction**

Task Force Membership  
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Lexington’s 2018 Comprehensive Plan emphasizes infill and redevelopment as a primary strategy for achieving the goals and objectives contained in the plan. Because of historic patterns of settlement and disinvestment, many opportunities for implementing that strategy exist in older neighborhoods close to downtown that have a large proportion of minority and low-income residents. This raised a concern about the unintended negative consequences of infill and redevelopment, and how local government can protect vulnerable residents and neighborhoods as the larger community experienced growth. Individual stories and examples had indicated that displacement in low-income neighborhoods was already occurring.

At the urging of 1<sup>st</sup> District Councilmember James Brown, Vice Mayor Steve Kay established the Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition in May 2018 to address this concern. Its purpose — to identify ways to protect vulnerable residents from the consequences of neighborhood redevelopment and transformation especially displacement, with an emphasis on preserving the history and the culture of communities. The purpose was redefined at the first meeting to include “displacement,” an important consequence of development and transformation. The discussions focused on the complicated topics of infill and redevelopment, preservation, race, gentrification, and a variety of factors associated with neighborhoods in transition. The Task Force met monthly, with regularly scheduled meetings at the Bluegrass Community and Technical College on Newtown Pike and at LexTran Headquarters on Loudon Avenue on Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, with a few additional meetings at the Community Ventures Corporation Headquarters on North Broadway on Thursdays at noon.

## **Task Force Membership**

The original group of Task Force members comprised of Urban County Council Members, city and private planning professionals, affordable housing developers,

historians, residents and other community members, and stakeholders. Over time some members rolled off the Task Force and new members affiliated with the respective organizations were added. [See **Appendix E** for a full list of Task Force members and their bios describing their expertise.]

Councilmember James Brown, 1st District – Chair

Vice Mayor Steve Kay, At-Large

Councilmember Bill Farmer, Jr., 5th District

Councilmember Preston Worley, 7th District

Andrea C. Brown, LFUCG Division of Law, Attorney

Glenda George, LFUCG Division of Law, Managing Attorney

Denise Brown, Downtown/East End Resident / Local Artist

Rachel Childress, Lexington Habitat for Humanity, CEO

Jimmy Emmons, LFUCG Division of Planning, Senior Transportation Planner

Arthur Crosby, Lexington Fair Housing Council, Executive Director

Chris Ford, LFUCG Department of Social Services, Commissioner

Rufus M. Friday, Lexington Herald-Leader / Rufus Friday Consulting LLC, CEO

Artie Greene, Downtown Resident, Government Services Specialist & Strategist

Stan Harvey, Lord Aeck Sargent, Principal / Infill & Redevelopment Steering Committee Member

Robert Hodge, Jr., Hodge Properties, Owner

Ed Holmes, EHI Consultants, President

Miguel Lucero, LFUCG 11th District Council Office, Legislative Aide

Shayla Lynch, Lexington Fair Housing Council, Assistant Director / Ampersand, Executive Director

Dr. Sam Matheny, Northside Neighborhood Association, President

Jeff Moore, Mt. Melrose and M & M Investments, Founder and President

Barbara Navin, Lexington Community Land Trust, Director

Russ Barclay, Lexington Community Land Trust, Director

Josh Fain, Lexington Community Land Trust, Director

Kris Nonn, North Limestone Community Development Corporation, Executive Director

David O'Neill, Fayette County Property Valuation Administrator

Derek Paulsen, LFUCG Department of Planning, Preservation, and Development, Commissioner

P.G. Peeples, Urban League, President/CEO

Miranda Scully, Fayette County Public Schools, Family & Community Engagement District Coordinator

Raymond Sexton, Lexington Human Rights Commission, Executive Director

Rev. Dr. Gerald Smith, University of Kentucky, History Professor / Pilgrim Baptist Church, Pastor

Darryl Thompson, Fayette County Public Schools, Equity Officer

Knox van Nagell Pfister, Fayette Alliance, Board of Directors

Brittany Roethemeier, Fayette Alliance, Executive Director

Bill Wilson, LFUCG Planning Commission Member

## Background & Context

The Task Force was created out of concern about neighborhood change when that change includes:

- Properties turning over at an accelerated rate;
- Most new owners being more affluent and differing from the traditional residents in terms of race or ethnicity.

Neighborhood change of this nature is most commonly referred to as gentrification. During the first meeting of the Task Force, members discussed the purpose and scope of work, which led to a healthy debate about why “gentrification” was not in the name of the Task Force. Some people advocated for including “gentrification” in the name, stating that not doing so was an attempt to avoid the real conversation around race, class, and displacement. There were concerns that the word “gentrification” had the potential to lead to misunderstanding and divisiveness, especially given the strong feelings of residents in neighborhoods that are being impacted. Other comments centered on the role and responsibility of developers to provide affordable housing to prevent displacement. Ultimately the discussion honed in on what gentrification and neighborhoods in transition mean to the growth of the city, and that to address the issues that impact the most vulnerable residents, all stakeholders are needed at the table.

The outcome of these discussions led to keeping the original name while encouraging members to use whichever term they prefer. The group also decided to emphasize involuntary displacement, which is the underlying issue of those concerned with the negative aspects of gentrification.

## Involuntary Displacement

The most negative impact on neighborhoods in transition is that traditional residents and businesses are vulnerable to involuntary displacement, either through rising rent, rising property taxes, or the inability to make needed repairs mandated by the Division of Code Enforcement. The people most negatively impacted by this kind of neighborhood change are disproportionately low-income or disproportionately people of color, or both.

Market forces — often taking advantage of historic patterns of disinvestment, harmful government policies, and private sector discrimination — drive this kind of change. Private developers and individual homebuyers look for the best opportunities when they consider purchasing a property. Areas where there has been disinvestment historically offer some of these opportunities. Early investors believe that the rewards from increased property values outweigh the risks that disinvestment will continue. Rising property values attract additional investment. Entire neighborhoods then become areas of opportunity for private developers, individual homebuyers, and retail businesses.

In considering how to lessen the negative impact of market forces when they occur, we recognize the following barriers:

- Market forces do not take into account the value of diversity and stability, and in vulnerable neighborhoods often work against these values;
- Market forces determine retail amenities available to neighborhoods, such as grocery stores as one example, which require density and income mix;
- There are legal limitations to the government's ability to regulate the sale of private property;
- Since Code Enforcement is complaint-driven, complaints can be used as a tool to intimidate property owners and encourage them to sell their properties.

We also recognize that government policies, including funding when applicable, can be designed to combat the impact of market forces that are likely to harm vulnerable neighborhoods and their residents, and they can be designed to aid and support diversity and neighborhood stability.

## Approach

The Task Force adopted a scope of work that narrowed its focus. At the first meeting, through discussion of gentrification and the necessary work of the group, the scope of work was amended. This mainly encompassed the addition of a reference to the comprehensive plan and a new process, and the addition of the word “empower” to better engage the community.

### Scope of Work:

- Identify existing resources;
- Provide information/education to residents about homeownership/renting and the comprehensive plan/new process (rural/urban/suburban);
- Foster relations with residents and developers;
- Identify ways to protect and empower residents to learn about the history of a community;
- Identify characteristics of vulnerable neighborhoods;
- Develop policies/programs that support and empower residents and neighborhoods.

To determine practical steps and strategies to prevent or lessen individual and neighborhood vulnerability, the Task Force worked to identify factors that make a neighborhood vulnerable to involuntary displacement and where those factors are most prevalent in Lexington. We designated these neighborhoods as priority areas — geographic areas to focus the Task Force’s recommendations and where resources should be prioritized. [See **Appendix C** for the Map Report: *Maps of Vulnerabilities to Displacement* to understand which neighborhoods are at risk and for what reasons.]

The recommendations aim to help stabilize neighborhoods that market forces place at risk of neighborhood change, including involuntary displacement. The Task Force concluded that the best way to achieve stability, without preventing positive neighborhood improvements, is to help provide necessary support—through programs, policies, and funding—that will enable residents and business owners to stay in their traditional neighborhoods, when doing so is their preference.

With that goal in mind, the recommendations include:

- Modification of existing programs, policies, and procedures to lessen pressures on vulnerable neighborhoods;
- Implementation of new programs, policies, and procedures to lessen pressures on vulnerable neighborhoods;
- Increase in resources for the assistance and support of residents of neighborhoods vulnerable to involuntary displacement;
- Support the recommendations made by the Commission of Racial Justice and Equality, Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee;
- Identification of priority areas to better focus resources dedicated to addressing involuntary displacement.

These recommendations are consistent with basic values that the Task Force believes are necessary to enhance the quality of life throughout the community:

- Diversity and inclusion;
- Strong neighborhoods;
- Support for vulnerable populations;
- Affordable housing.

# **Recommendations**

- A. Modification of Existing Programs, Policies & Procedures
  - Planning
  - Community & Resident Services
  - Code Enforcement
  - Affordable Housing
- B. New Programs, Policies & Procedures
  - Education/Outreach
- C. Increase Resources
- D. Support of Recommendations made by the Mayor’s Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee
- E. Identification of Priority Areas to Focus Resources
  - Priority Areas Maps

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The Task Force recommends that resources be dedicated to addressing involuntary displacement. The Task Force has identified four attributes that contribute to a neighborhood’s vulnerability to involuntary displacement: median income at less than 30 percent of area median income; high minority population (non-white); low mean home sale price; and low owner-occupancy rate. Focusing resources in these priority areas will positively contribute to the stability of neighborhoods without preventing positive neighborhood improvements.

## A. Modification of Existing Programs, Policies & Procedures

### Planning

- 1) The Division of Planning should use the identified priority areas to direct surveys, studies, and/or small area plans that summarize a neighborhood's history, character, and urban fabric.
- 2) Require developers to have community meetings with notice and attendance requirements for zone change requests in priority areas before Planning Commission public hearings.
- 3) Planning should conduct small area plans, surveys, or studies for neighborhoods in priority areas that will experience a direct impact from major local investment by LFUCG for projects of \$5 million and above. These studies should address displacement, social impact, and include an assessment of neighborhoods' history, character, and urban fabric.

### Community & Resident Services (formally Adult & Tenant Services)

- 4) Division of Community & Resident Services should dedicate someone to work alongside Code Enforcement to review cases, with a focus in priority areas, to determine if the property owner requires additional resources to address compliance issues, based upon the individual's financial circumstances. Establish a small advisory committee that includes Code Enforcement, the Citizens' Advocate, and the Division of Grants and Special Programs to improve services to assist with this review.

### Code Enforcement

- 5) Code Enforcement should create a case closed letter to be mailed to the property owner once Code Enforcement has closed their case. (implemented)
- 6) Create an online portal where tenants/the public can review Code Enforcement citations. (implemented)
- 7) Petition a change in KRS 65.8825 to provide the opportunity for local governments to lengthen the window of time for individuals to appeal notices of violation from Code Enforcement (the amendment could propose "at least seven days").

## Affordable Housing

- 8) Affordable housing projects using the Affordable Housing Fund in priority areas should strive to maintain an affordability rate at 60 percent area median income (HUD FY2019: household income of one is \$31,313; household income of four is \$44,700) to encourage housing costs to more closely align with the respective neighborhood's AMI.
- 9) Charge the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee with monitoring housing affordability and displacement on both a city-wide and neighborhood level.
- 10) Encourage the Lexington Community Land Trust to provide resources for existing homeowners while ensuring long-term housing affordability.
- 11) Identify opportunities to reduce or waive filing and other fees required by LFUCG for affordable housing projects and utilize those opportunities to incentivize affordable housing developments.

## **B. New Programs, Policies, and Procedures**

- 1) Chief Development Officer should work with the city's Economic Development Partners and coordinate with the Division of Purchasing and the Minority Business Liaison to engage Community Development Organizations (CDOs) to focus on resources and opportunities for small businesses in priority areas and build capacity for people and businesses who can participate and apply for government contracts.
- 2) Community Development Organizations should establish and execute Community Benefit Agreements to detail a project's contribution to the community with investors and businesses located in priority areas.
- 3) Create a program/agency that identifies and assists individuals at risk to have their property tax liens sold to third parties. Prioritize low income individuals who live in priority areas.
- 4) Draft a statement that landlords could proactively choose to include in their residential rental agreements (i.e. leases) that says the owner will alert long-term renters (such as five years or more) when they take action to sell the property.
- 5) Support 2018 Comprehensive Plan, Theme A, Equity Policy #5 – *Protect affordable housing tenants through improved Code Enforcement policies* and create a rental registration program that includes inspections.

- 6) Incentivize private developers to set aside portions of developments for quality, affordable housing by advocating for state low-income tax credits, local low-income tax credits, or inclusionary zoning (or equivalent from a positive approach).

### Education/Outreach

- 7) Create a resource guide for neighborhoods to conduct their own assessment of their neighborhood's character, urban fabric, and history.
- 8) Planning should create a pamphlet that briefly describes Lexington's growth strategy, place builder, and the zone change process; something that could accompany the zone change notification letters.
- 9) Grants & Special Programs should improve outreach about the Housing Rehab Program and the Emergency Home Repair Program, including how to access the funding and what the process entails.
- 10) Community & Resident Services should create an overall awareness campaign about all of the services they provide. (in process)
- 11) Encourage local banks to invest and intentionally communicate with residents and businesses about resources that are available in their community (via Community Reinvestment ACT).
- 12) The proposed Department of Housing Advocacy and Community Development should develop a resource guide or navigator for housing issues that outlines all housing-related services LFUCG provides (i.e. foreclosures, code violations, zoning, property taxes, liens, etc.) and work with the Fayette County Neighborhood Council to make available to the community.

## C. Increase Resources

- 1) Division of Grants and Special Program should increase funding for the Housing Rehab Program to allow for more low-income families to participate in the program and shorten the wait time. (additional funds were budgeted FY2021)
- 2) Amend Ordinance 103-2014 by increasing the amount of funding to be designated each fiscal year to the Affordable Housing Fund from \$2 million to \$3 million in FY2022 and identify a dedicated funding source for the Affordable Housing Fund that can grow with the needs of the community.

- 3) Designate a new position in the proposed Department of Housing Advocacy and Community Development that reports directly to the commissioner and is responsible for:
  - a. Staffing an on-going advisory committee for housing (composed of members from the Task Force and from the Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee)
  - b. Implementing and/or monitoring and reporting on progress related to the recommendations from the Task Force and from the Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee;
  - c. Analyzing and updating priority areas in partnership with LFUCG’s GIS office and specifically executing recommendations in Section E – Identification of Priority Areas to Focus Resources.

**D. Support of Recommendations made by the Mayor’s Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee**

In recognition of support for the recommendations made by the Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee, the Task Force approved the following statement in December 2020. [See **Appendix G** for the recommendations made by the Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee.]

*“The Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition expresses its appreciation for the hard work of the Housing and Gentrification subcommittee of the Mayor’s Commission for Racial Justice and Equality. We are in support of both the intentions and the broad potential impact of the recommendations included in the report of the subcommittee. We will be considering ways to incorporate relevant elements of their recommendations as we continue to work on the narrative and recommendation in our report.”*

## **E. Identification of Priority Areas to Focus Resources**

- 1) Resources dedicated to addressing involuntary displacement and the Task Force's recommendations should focus on those most at risk of displacement within the priority areas. Resources are not restricted to these areas and should not be provided solely on the basis of membership of a protected class. However, prioritization allows resources to better reach some of the most vulnerable parts of the community to involuntary displacement.
- 2) Identify priority areas on an annual basis using data and maps of several attributes that the Task Force has determined as contributing factors to a neighborhood's vulnerability to involuntary displacement.
  - a. Essential attributes to measure vulnerability to involuntary displacement:
    - Median Income at less than 30 percent of area median income
    - High minority population (non-white)
    - Low mean home sale price
    - Low owner-occupancy rate
  - b. Other attributes to take into consideration are 60 and 80 percent AMI, senior population, educational attainment (less than a high school diploma), and foreclosures. To the extent possible, future efforts should also look for areas seeing disproportionate real estate property transfers.
- 3) Monitor, analyze, and develop trends based on data related to attributes identified in recommendation E1 but not limited to, to enhance the identification of priority areas and support neighborhoods before individuals experience involuntary displacement.
- 4) The following maps identify the initial establishment of the priority areas in Lexington and are to be used to focus any initial resources dedicated to addressing involuntary displacement, with acknowledgment they are to be updated annually. These maps were created with 2017 American Community Survey Census data and 2019 PVA data.

### **Map 1. Median Income at Less Than 30% of AMI**

- Identifies the percentage of households per census tract block group that are 30 percent of the area median income or less.

- Areas colored in burgundy (i.e. the darkest shade of red) are designated a priority area because they are the areas with the most households that are less than 30 percent of AMI.

### **Map 2. High Minority Population (Non-White)**

- Identifies the percentage of individuals who are non-white, or minorities, per census tract block group.
- Areas colored in burgundy (i.e. the darkest shade of red) are designated a priority area because they are the areas with the highest minority population.

### **Map 3. Low Mean Home Sale Price**

- Identifies the mean sale price of single-family residential properties per census tract block group.
- Areas colored in burgundy (i.e. the darkest shade of red) are designated a priority area because they are the areas with the lowest mean home sale price.

### **Map 4. Low Owner-Occupancy Rate**

- Identifies the percentage of single-family residential properties that are owner-occupied per census tract block group.
- Areas colored in burgundy (i.e. the darkest shade of red) are designated a priority area because they are the areas with the lowest owner-occupancy rate of single-family residential properties.

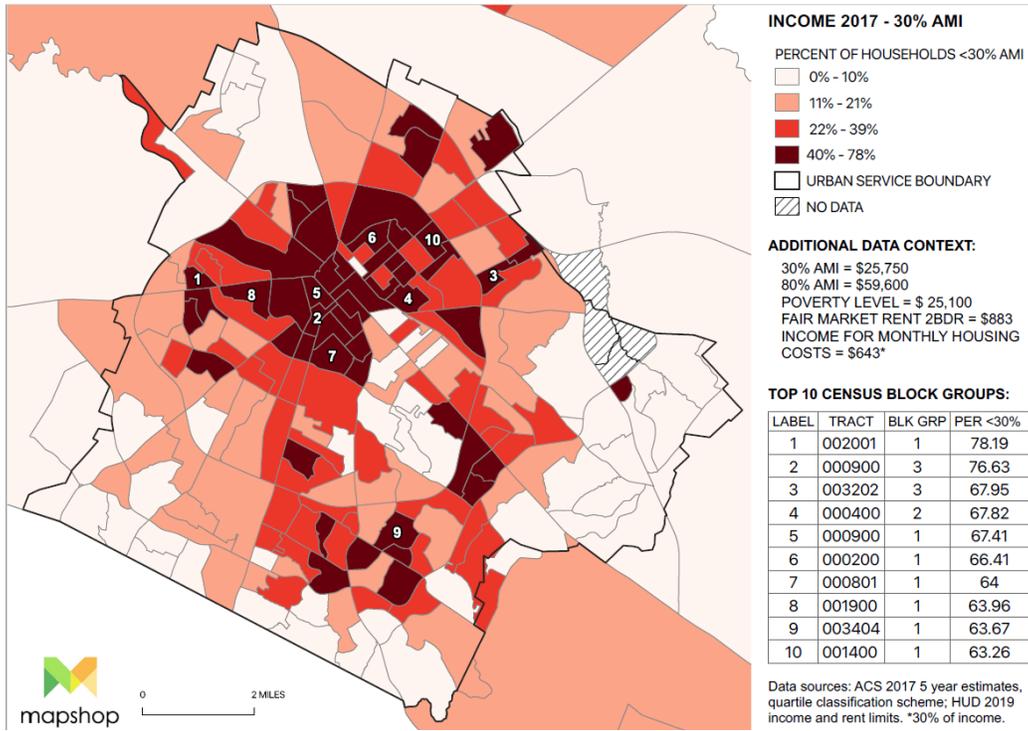
### **Map 5. Intersection of the Top 10 Block Groups of 4 Priority Area Vulnerability Maps**

- Consolidates the top 10 block groups of each attribute: 30 percent AMI, minority population, mean sale price, and owner-occupancy rate into one map. The top 10 block groups are the most extreme measure of the data the attribute map is evaluating.
- This map identifies the top 10 block groups from each attribute and shows the areas that intersect with more than one attributes' top 10 block groups.

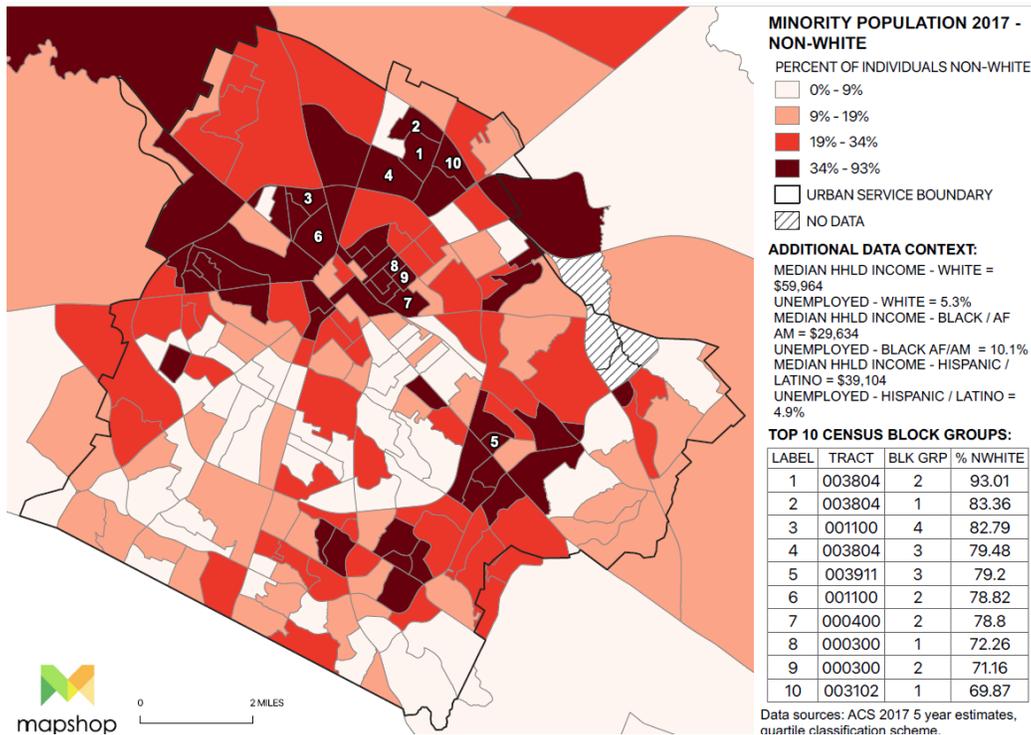
[See **Appendix C** for the Map Report: *Maps of Vulnerabilities to Displacement*.]

Priority Area Maps:

Map 1. Median Income at Less Than 30% of Area Median Income

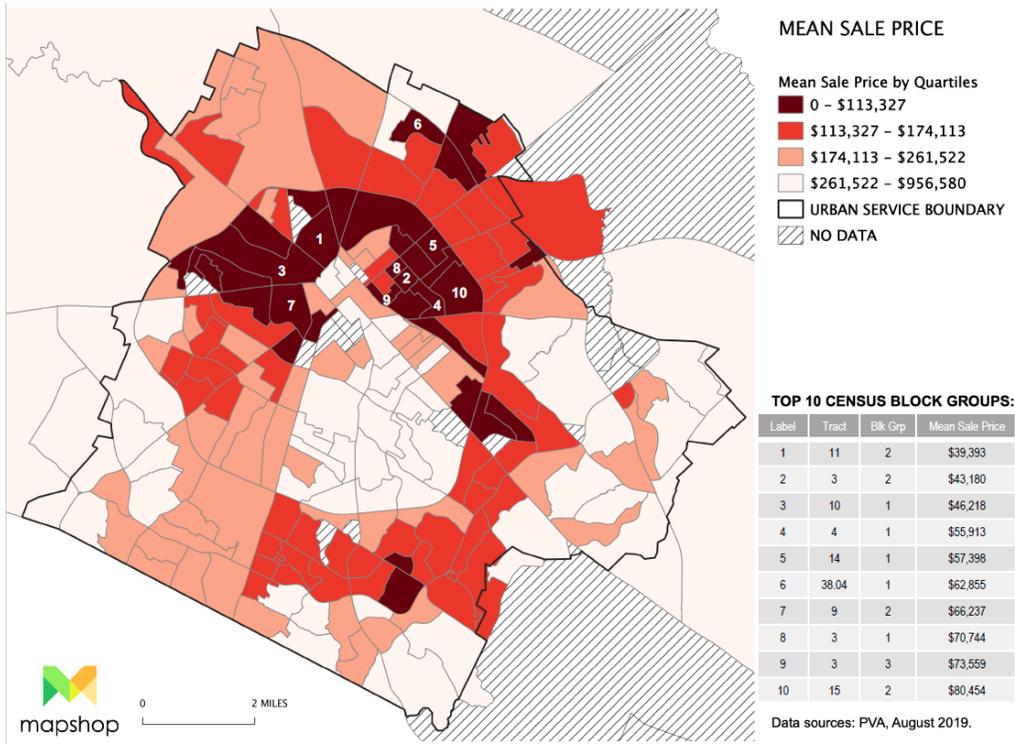


Map 2. High Minority Population (Non-White)

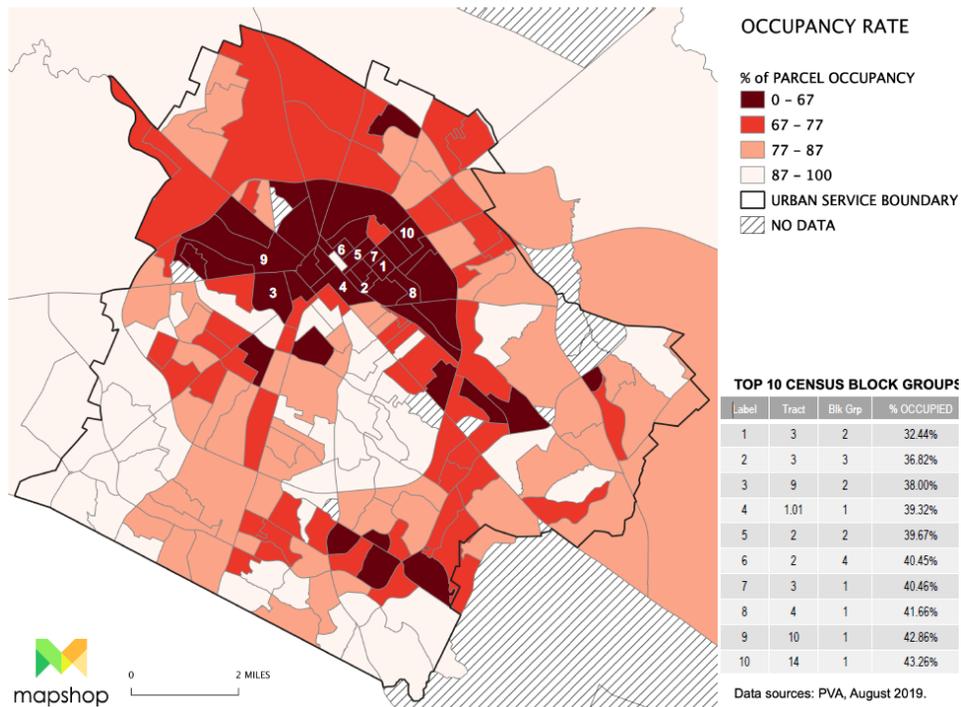


Priority Area Maps:

Map 3. Low Mean Home Sale Price

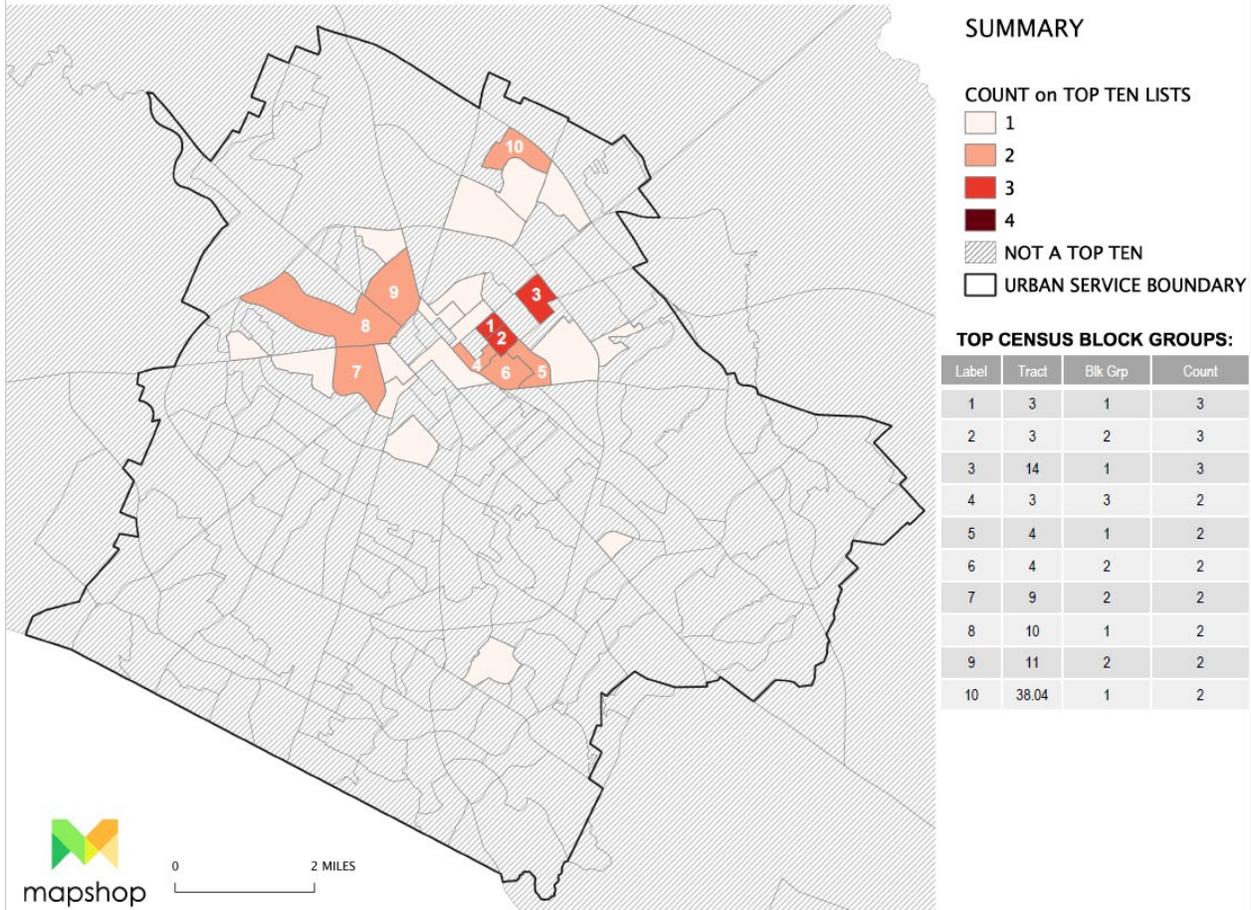


Map 4. Low Owner-Occupancy Rate



Priority Area Maps:

**Map 5. Intersection of the Top 10 Block Groups of 4 Priority Area Vulnerability Maps**



# **Timeline: Task Force Process**

**May 2018**

**2019**

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May 24, 2018 – Members appointed to the Task Force

July 10, 2018 – First Task Force meeting

August 2018

- Presentation: *Gentrification Background and Brief*

September 2018

- Presentation: *Timeline of Construction in Lexington*
- Presentation: *Possible Neighborhoods at Risk of Transition*

October 2018

- Community Forum 1 at Lexington Traditional Middle School

**2019**

**2020**

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January 2019

- Task Force Retreat and Unconscious Bias Training
- Public google folder for Task Force materials and resources launched

March 2019

- Presentation: *Understanding Transitions in Lexington and Overview of Mapshop*
- Update on LFUCG's Infill and Redevelopment Steering Committee

April 2019

- Dot analysis activity of attributes of transition

May 2019

- Task Force increased their meeting frequency to twice a month

June 2019

- Interactive mapping activity with Mapshop
- Presentation: *2018 Lexington Comprehensive Plan*

August 2019

- Maps featuring nine attributes and a composite map presented for review
- Community Forum 2 at the Lexington Senior Center

September 2019

- Presentation: *Lexington-Fayette Urban County Land Bank Authority*
- Introduction of proposed recommendations

October – November 2019

- Presentation: *Code Enforcement Policy*
- Two workshops held to review, revise and request information on 25 draft recommendations
- Revised Map Report: *Maps of Vulnerabilities to Displacement*, distributed

**2020**

**2021**

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February 2020

- Presentation: *Purchase of Development Rights & Rural Land Management Board*
- Presentation: *Affordable Housing Fund Report*

March 2020

- Presentation: *Community & Resident Services*

April – October 2020

- No Task Force meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic

June 2020

- Task Force shared recommendations and resources with the Commission on Racial Justice and Equality

November – December 2020

- Reconvened meetings – virtually
- Task Force supported recommendations made by the Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee

**2021**

**2021**

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February – June 2021

- Review draft report and maps report
- Issued a public input survey to collect feedback on the reports

June 22, 2021 – Last Task Force meeting

- Reviewed survey results and approved the *Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition Report* and the Map Report: *Maps of Vulnerabilities to Displacement*

# Process

## Community Engagement & Public Input

- Resources & Website
- Public Meetings & Public Comment
- Community Forums
- Public Input Survey & Spanish Translation

## Presentations, Discussions & Activities

## Mapping

## Recommendations

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## Community Engagement & Public Input

### Resources & Website

From its inception, the Task Force welcomed both its members and the public to submit articles, research studies, and other resources relating to neighborhood transition and development. Each resource was added to a Google Drive spreadsheet and added to the Task Force webpage on the City's website. Almost 50 resources were added and are open to the public to read at any time. The webpage also includes a list of members and their bios, archived meeting packets, summaries of meetings, and other materials. [See **Appendix F** to access the resources shared with the Task Force.]

### Public Meetings & Public Comment

The Task Force held 22 meetings, usually in the evening on the first Tuesday of every month. During 2019 the group held a few additional meetings during the afternoon to speed up productivity. All meetings were open to the public, and the public was given the opportunity to give public comment at every meeting, sometimes allowing comments or questions while business was conducted. The average attendance for the public was 10-20 people, with an average of 5 people signing up to speak at the end of each meeting.

In January 2019, the Task Force held a retreat at the Lexington Senior Center to encourage Task Force members to get to know one another and become more comfortable speaking freely on sensitive subjects such as race, culture, and classism. The retreat included an interactive spectrum activity led by Vice Mayor Steve Kay, unconscious bias training led by Marietta Watts, University of Kentucky's Executive Diversity Liaison, and breakout sessions on various topics. While the retreat was originally planned for Task Force members only, the meeting was open to the public. The attendees from the public were able to participate in all the activities, including the breakout discussions.

## Community Forums

**Community Forum 1:** To identify traits and symptoms of neighborhood transition, with the help of CivicLex, the Task Force hosted a community forum on October 2, 2018, downtown at Lexington Traditional Magnet School. The event brought out over 80 residents from various neighborhoods in Lexington. Residents were asked to participate in breakout table discussions and identify changes they are witnessing in their neighborhoods.

Residents in attendance represented 14 neighborhoods:

- Brucetown
- Burley/American
- Cardinal Valley
- East End
- Gainesway
- Gardenside
- Georgetown Street
- Joyland
- Kenwick
- Martin Luther King
- Melrose/Oakpark
- North Limestone
- Smithtown
- Winburn

Each table discussion was led by a member of the Task Force. Residents were encouraged to speak freely about the topic of neighborhoods in transition. Three questions were provided to get the conversations started:

1. What changes are you seeing in your neighborhood?  
(171 comments were recorded under this question)
2. What do you feel needs to be done to either encourage or discourage these changes from occurring?  
(125 comments were recorded under this question)

3. What role can you play in addressing this change in your neighborhood?  
(55 comments were recorded under this question)

Some examples of the comments received included concerns regarding housing and government regulations such as Code Enforcement citations and dilapidated vacant properties, infill and redevelopment concerns in residential areas, racial and cultural changes, a lack of neighborhood engagement, public safety issues, and rental versus owner-occupied properties.

The changes and comments shared by residents at the forum were compiled and categorized into 11 categories. At a subsequent meeting, the Task Force discussed the outcomes, and table leaders shared concerns and issues raised by participating neighbors.

**Community Forum 2:** The Task Force hosted its second community forum on August 22, 2019, at the Lexington Senior Center, asking residents to offer solutions or recommendations. The forum was moderated by Dr. Roger Cleveland, formerly with Kentucky State University, and garnered an even larger community turnout, with over 250 citizens attending. As with the first forum, the public was given an opportunity to discuss changes they are witnessing in their neighborhoods, but this time three discussion topics were provided:

- Neighborhood changes & redevelopment;
- Safe & affordable housing;
- Code Enforcement & policing.

During the first half of the forum, residents discussed these topics in small groups and then reported a summary to the entire room. The second half of the forum consisted of a more open dialogue with all participants. Residents were able to not only describe what they are witnessing but were encouraged to give criticism and recommendations for the Task Force to consider moving forward. Two overwhelming recommendations from the public included:

- Conduct an assessment and make improvements to the Division of Code Enforcement;
- Allocate additional funding to the city's Affordable Housing Fund.

Additional recommendations included more community education for homeownership, having the city become more active in obtaining vacant or tax-delinquent properties and give them to affordable housing organizations, removing “gentrification” from the Comprehensive Plan, removing developers from city boards and commissions, and less policing in minority neighborhoods, which creates a negative perception.

## Public Input Survey & Spanish Translation

The Task Force issued a survey to collect feedback on two final reports concluding its work. The survey was issued in both English and Spanish, with the English version opening on April, 22, 2021 and the Spanish version opening on May 24, 2021. The surveys closed on June 4, 2021. A total of 125 surveys were submitted, though only 54 surveys provided feedback on the reports (71 surveys essentially only responded to the first question noting where they live in Lexington. Of the 54 surveys with feedback, 53 were submitted in English and one in Spanish.

Overall the feedback varied. About 33 percent of respondents were satisfied or strongly satisfied with the recommendations in Sections A through D; about 33 percent were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied. Respondents were more favorable to the recommendations in Section E with almost 43 percent satisfied or strongly satisfied; about 15 percent were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied. About 59 percent of respondents said the maps were helpful or very helpful to their understanding of areas of the city that are vulnerable to displacement; 15 percent said they were unhelpful or very unhelpful.

[See **Appendix D** to access a summary of the survey results as well as the full details of all survey responses.]

**Spanish Translation:** Draft 3 of the Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition Report was translated entirely in Spanish to allow for more input from more of the community. The survey was translated in Spanish, providing a more comprehensive opportunity for public input. The final *Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition Report* will be available in Spanish.

## Presentations, Discussions & Activities

[See **Appendix A** for Task Force meeting materials and presentations; see **Appendix B** for summaries of the meetings.]

**Presentation on *Gentrification Background and Brief*, by Susie Smith:** Smith, a senior at the University of Kentucky as well as an intern in the Mayor's Office, presented her academic research brief, sharing the history of the term gentrification. She discussed cultural displacement, reasons for development, the local urban services boundary, and listed some possible policy recommendations.

**Presentation on the *Timeline of Construction in Lexington*, by Derek Paulsen:** The commissioner of LFUCG's Department of Planning, Preservation, and Development presented a look at construction in Lexington in 20-year increments. Development in the 1960s and 1970s focused on Winchester Road and Tates Creek Road; in the 1980s and 1990s development grew along New Circle Road and to the Jessamine County line. An emphasis was placed on the role major roads play in development. The presentation provided examples of how race and poverty have driven development in Lexington, as people moved into new homes while others moved into older homes to renovate them as investment properties.

**Presentation on *Possible Neighborhoods at Risk for Transition*, by David O'Neill, Property Valuation Administrator:** The PVA reviewed possible factors of neighborhoods at risk of transition. A composite map that combined five attributes was shared with the Task Force to provide an example of how maps could be used to look at multiple risk factors at one time. This presentation focused on owner-occupancy rate and rate changes, median sale price, median property value, minority population, and median household income.

**Discussion through several meetings on Community Forum 1 feedback:** The community forum held in October 2018 garnered 369 comments and notes from more than 80 participants representing 14 neighborhoods. The comments were separated into 11 categories, which fell under five topics. These categories and topics are listed below in order with the issues that received the most feedback first and the issues that received the least feedback last.

11 Categories

- Housing & Government Regulations
- Owner Occupied vs. Rental (residential property)
- Infill & Redevelopment (residential)
- Neighborhood Changes
- Services
- Affordable Housing
- Neighborhood Engagement
- Public Safety
- Businesses
- Other/Miscellaneous
- Schools

5 Topics

- Neighborhood Changes, Infill & Redevelopment
- Neighborhood & Community Engagement
- Housing & Government Regulations
- Residential Property & Residents
- Affordable Housing

Task Force members participated in a retreat shortly after, which included a break-out session to discuss the topics derived from the October 2018 forum (five topics were divided into three breakout groups). Groups talked about neighborhood investment and improvement relative to gentrification, poverty, and low-hanging fruit (i.e. ideas and solutions). This work led to the identification of attributes, or vulnerabilities, of neighborhoods in transition.

**Presentation on *Understanding Transitions in Lexington and an Overview of Mapshop*, by Dr. Matt Wilson and Emily Barrett:** The presentation reviewed transitions of properties from 1780 to present day, through urban infill, post-civil war development of African-American communities, Jim Crow segregation, red-lining, and white flight. They reviewed four maps produced by Mapshop (a program at the University of Kentucky, Department of Geography and part of the New Mapping Collaboratory), which featured the frequency of residential property sales, Code Enforcement (violations by population), Affordable Housing Fund (number of units, costs, and location), and area median income for the city and census tract.

**Dot analysis activity of attributes of transition:** The activity included both Task Force members and the public, allowing each person to distribute an equal amount of dots to the attributes they believed to have the greatest role in neighborhoods in transition. The list of attributes was created from the notes and comments recorded at the October 2018 public forum and discussions at Task Force meetings, all of which were identified as possible factors of transition. Following the activity, the group discussed the results, labeling attributes as vulnerabilities, predictors, and symptoms, which later helped the Task Force hone in on the role of public and

private investment that can drive change. The attributes listed below received the most dots during the activity.

Top Six Attributes:

- Household income and poverty level;
- Decrease in owner-occupancy rate;
- Property value and sale value;
- (Negative) perception of neighborhood;
- Low performing schools;
- (Displacement of) concentration of non-white population.

\*each of these attributes received more than 20 dots during the activity

**Presentation on the 2018 Lexington Comprehensive Plan, by Chris Woodall and Hal Ballie:** Planners within LFUCG’s Division of Planning presented the goals and objectives, in addition to other components, of the city’s comprehensive plan. They reviewed the new process being developed to address growth and development, as well as public engagement efforts related to the new process.

**Interactive mapping activity:** The Task Force partnered with Dr. Matt Wilson and the Mapshop team, to conduct an interactive mapping exercise using Esri (geographic information system software) to map various attributes that the Task Force identified as factors of transition, specifically focusing on area median income, owner-occupancy housing units, and age over 65.

**Presentation on Code Enforcement Policy, by Alex “Cash” Olszowy:** The director of LFUCG’s Division of Code Enforcement shared the policies that govern housing and nuisance violations and enforcement. The presentation outlined processes for complaints, notices, enforcement, and appeals.

**Presentation on the Lexington Fayette Urban County Land Bank Authority, by Russ Barclay:** The executive director of the Lexington Community Land Trust explained the creation of the Land Bank Authority and the cooperation between the city, state, and federal governments. The presentation touched on the function, funding, and public policy goals of land bank authorities.

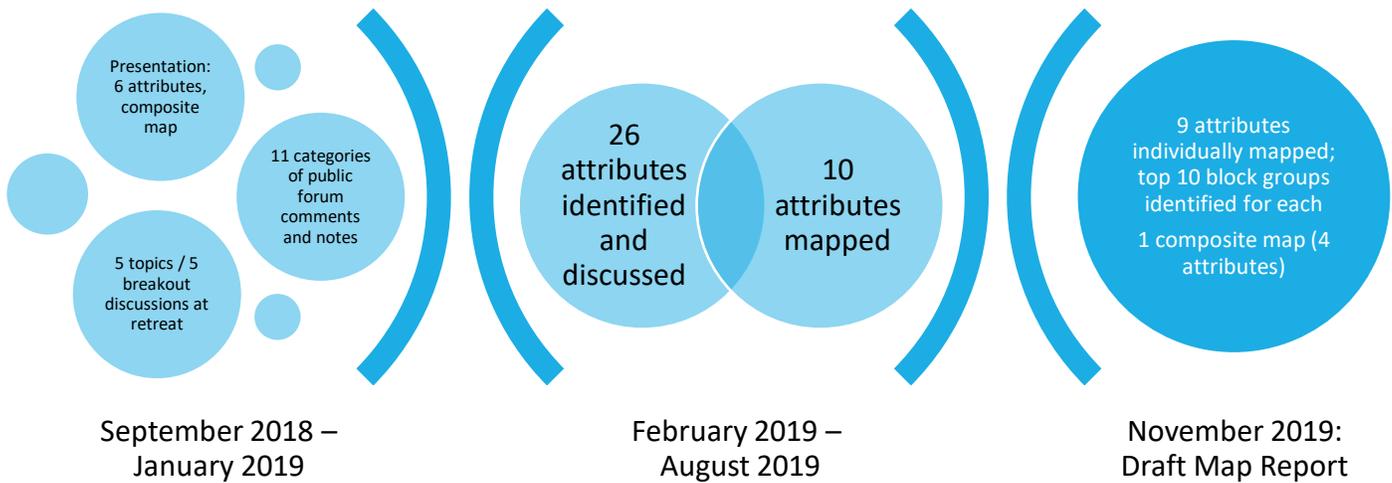
**Presentation on the *Purchase Development Rights Program & Rural Land Management Board*, by Beth Overman and Gloria Martin:** PDR program director and RLMB chair, respectively, shared the benefits of Fayette County’s agricultural economy and why the federal government prioritizes farmland preservation. They explained the local PDR program and the role of the Rural Land Management Board.

**Presentation on the *Affordable Housing Fund Report*, by Rick McQuady:** The director of LFUCG’s Office of Affordable Housing provided an overview of the purpose of the local Affordable Housing Fund, the application process and evaluation criteria, and the funding history of the program.

**Presentation on *Community & Resident Services (formerly Adult & Tenant Services)*, by Chris Ford:** The commissioner of LFUCG’s Department of Social Services provided an overview of the structure of Community & Resident Services. The presentation reviewed services and resources dedicated to residents. Opportunities for improvement were also identified.

## Mapping

**Transition from public input to maps:** Over the course of about one year, the Task Force worked to digest and transform public input, community familiarity, and expertise into maps that would identify priority areas where resources should be focused to prevent involuntary displacement. The role of public perception, factors that are voluntary or involuntary, root cause, and overlapping attributes, were all discussed. The Task Force learned about the data that is available under the identified attributes, its limitations, and what was possible to apply to maps. This process identified specific attributes that helped the Task Force to understand areas of Lexington that may be more vulnerable to transition and involuntary displacement.



Maps produced by Mapshop and the PVA were presented to the Task Force, featuring 30, 60, and 80 percent area median income, senior population over 65, minority population (non-white), educational attainment less than a high school diploma, foreclosures, investor ownership, median sale price, owner-occupancy versus rental of residential property, and a composite map. The composite map included median sale price, owner-occupancy rate, percent of non-white residents, and household income. The Task Force determined the maps should not weigh any attribute more heavily than another attribute. The *Map Report: Vulnerabilities to Displacement* was drafted in November 2019 to collect and summarize the maps and work of the Task Force to that point.

The final draft of the Map Report: *Maps of Vulnerabilities to Displacement* was approved on June 21, 2021. [See **Appendix C** for the map report.]

## Recommendations

The Task Force drafted and revised recommendations between October 2019 and March 2020. The initial list of recommendations was drafted by Councilmember James Brown, based on and derived from two years of Task Force meetings; meetings that included listening to public input, presentations, discussions, and understanding data. Over six months, multiple drafts of recommendations were reviewed and revised.

# Appendices

Materials relevant to the work and conclusion of the Task Force on Neighborhoods in Transition

Below are links to information that can be found on the [Task Force's google folder](#) in the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council's public google drive. This folder can be accessed through the city's website, on [lexingtonky.gov/task-force-neighborhoods-transition](http://lexingtonky.gov/task-force-neighborhoods-transition).

**Appendix A:** [Meeting Agendas, Materials, and Presentations](#)

This folder contains all meeting agendas, many of which are accompanied by supporting information and/or presentations as part of the packet of materials for that meeting. Some presentations are saved separately from the agenda.

**Appendix B:** [Summaries of Task Force Meetings](#)

Detailed summaries capturing the discussion of each meeting can be found in this folder.

**Appendix C:** [Map Report: Maps of Vulnerabilities to Displacement](#)

The final draft of the map report was approved on June 22, 2021.

**Appendix D:** [Public Input Survey June 2021](#)

This folder has a summary of the survey results as well as all survey responses.

**Appendix E:** [Full list of Task Force Members and Bios](#)

This document shares a headshot and bio of each Task Force member

**Appendix F:** [Resources](#)

Any resources shared by Task Force members and the public were collected in this folder. A master list (spreadsheet) was created to collect the resources in one place. The subfolder titled *resources documents* has additional resources, particularly for items that were originally shared as a hard copy only.

**Appendix G:** [Recommendations by the Mayor's Commission on Racial Justice and Equality – Housing and Gentrification Subcommittee](#)