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## **GROUNDBREAKING “ROADMAP” REPORT IDENTIFIES NEEDS, SOLUTIONS TO PROTECT PURPLE LINE RESIDENTS AT RISK IN DISTRESSED PROPERTIES**

Prince George’s County, MD – Today a cross-sector working group of regional leaders and housing experts convened by the Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) published a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of tenants and communities living in rental housing described as “distressed properties.”

The “[Two Year Roadmap](#)” offers a pathway to safe, healthy, and affordable housing options for tenants currently living in distressed and aging properties along the Purple Line corridor in Prince George’s County. It includes an analysis of conditions, multiple funding alternatives, and action-oriented recommendations for public and private sector collaboration, intervention, and resource investment for any distressed property.

“Conditions in distressed properties have been growing; this is a completely unacceptable problem for our tenants, neighbors, and communities,” said Prince George’s County Councilmember Deni Taveras (District 2). “It’s time for everyone to step up and implement solutions that go further than just talking about the issues.”

Detailed recommendations span four main subject areas: financial tools; county regulations and capacity; expanding the work of the county’s Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement; and cross-sector collaboration with tenants and property owners. Among the Roadmap’s 14 recommendations, the report calls for the county to perform annual inspections of aging properties; to exercise its power of receivership should an owner be unresponsive to code violation notices; and to enact stronger consumer protection laws to protect residents.

In addition, the report recommends that the county create an Emergency Repair Fund for existing owners who lack the resources to make necessary repairs, allocate an additional \$8 million in American Recovery Funds towards the rehabilitation of aging and distressed properties, and petition the state of Maryland for additional financial resources to address distressed properties.

The report also identifies affordable housing financing tools that can be used regardless of tenant citizenship status and identifies the legal boundaries and authority of the county to hold landlords accountable.

The Two-Year Roadmap was inspired by the [well-publicized conditions](#) at the Bedford and Victoria Station rental housing projects, examples of several large multifamily properties located in Langley

Park, Maryland, a vibrant and largely immigrant neighborhood with dense multifamily housing. The neighborhood has been a popular destination for immigrants from Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa for over 30 years.

“The tenants at Bedford and Victoria Station, and in other complexes that have been neglected for many years, should not have to choose between living in safe, healthy homes, and what they can afford,” added Ashanti Martinez, a research and policy analyst at CASA, a regional grassroots Latino advocacy coalition. “They need immediate support from government, landlords, and other partners to benefit equitably from other public investment in the Purple Line.”

The Roadmap is the result of collaboration between Purple Line Corridor Coalition members with expertise in housing affordability and tenant protections, land use policy, and development. Lead authors include Michael Bodaken, CEO emeritus of the National Housing Trust, the National Housing Trust, University of Maryland National Center on Smart Growth, Housing Initiative Partnership, and Kairos Development, LLC. Councilmember Taveras, Enterprise Community Partners, and Kaiser Permanente contributed to the Roadmap through a joint working group.

“Our goals here are to highlight what is possible to truly meet the needs of vulnerable tenants in neglected buildings along the Purple Line corridor, while we still have time to act,” said Maryann Dillon, executive director of Housing Initiative Partnership, a regional affordable housing developer and counseling agency. “The recommendations in the report could apply equally well to many other locations, both in Prince George’s County and across the metro region.”

PLCC’s Housing Development Consultant Vonnette Harris added, “These problems did not develop overnight. Now is the time for all of us – the private sector, government, property owners, and communities – to ensure we are doing everything within our power to help residents achieve meaningful change without displacement.”

The Roadmap was developed through a PLCC Distressed Properties working group. The PLCC’s Housing Accelerator Action Team (HAAT), which reviews and engages in housing policy, production, preservation, rehabilitation, and budget and legislative matters affecting housing affordability in the transit corridor, convened the working group in 2021.

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) is a public-private-community collaboration working to leverage Maryland’s largest transit investment in the 21st century to create a place of opportunity for all who live, work and invest in the corridor. With its administrative home at the University of Maryland’s National Center for Smart Growth, PLCC’s equity agenda prioritizes housing stability, economic vitality, and neighborhood livability. For more information about the PLCC, visit <https://PurpleLineCorridor.org>

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