



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

HOUSING



Draft: December 2022

Intent

Housing is a key component to achieve the County's vision of being a community of choice for all residents. This chapter addresses affordability concerns and ensures that the implicit connections with mobility, environment, health, and equity are addressed to support the building of healthy equitable communities.

The region is facing an unprecedented demand for new housing which significantly impacts our County. Understanding the diverse needs of the community and the ongoing demographic drivers provides guidance for the development of new residential communities. The vision to include a diversity of housing styles and price points to promote equitable sustainable communities for residents during all phases of their life and across all income bands is the priority, and attainable housing which is housing that is meant to be affordable to households earning within the Area Median Income ("AMI").

As such the guiding principles of the chapter include:

- Quality, price-appropriate housing - housing that costs 30% of the household's annual gross income or less, that meets the needs of all current and future residents.
- Implicit in this idea of attainability is the idea that a range of housing options (type, size, tenure, cost) should exist in the local market for a range of household income bands and preferences to support existing and new residents regardless of income.
- Housing is directly tied to public policy priorities such as economic development, education, transportation, environment, and health.

To achieve this vision, seven guiding policies are included in the chapter:

- Preserve and enhance existing neighborhood communities.
- Establish new diverse mixed income housing communities that address the demand for additional housing, the demand for a variety of housing, and the demand for affordable housing.
- Develop implementation tools for both residents and the development community to provide for the construction and financing of affordable dwelling units to reduce housing disparities in the County.
- Enhance mobility strategies that address the intrinsic relationship between housing and mobility in order to reduce transportation costs in terms of both time and money and encourage multi-modal options that enhance the environment resulting in a greater quality of life for residents.
- Promote sustainable neighborhoods that support County-wide environmental goals, including reducing energy costs for residents and property owners.
- Ensure that developments result in equitable healthy communities that provide all neighborhoods the same services, amenities, open space, and recreational components in a quality setting.
- Identify regulatory changes needed to support the implementation of these housing policies including universal design and accessibility enhancements.

The importance of preserving and improving our existing neighborhood communities is key to supporting County residents. By identifying where infrastructure improvements are needed in aging communities and promoting thoughtful, context sensitive infill developments the County will ensure that our established neighborhoods are not only maintained but thrive. Many of these stabilized communities provide for naturally occurring affordable housing opportunities. The first policy promotes safe, secure, and accessible communities that provide the opportunity for residents to safely age in place, offers options for upward mobility and homeownership opportunities for those seeking to remain in their community and protects residents from gentrification and involuntary displacement.

Housing costs that exceed the recommended 30% of gross income result in a cost burdened lifestyle for individuals and/or families resulting in limited resources for other household necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Severe cost burdened is generally defined as households paying more than 50% of their gross income on housing costs. To reduce the number of people living a cost burdened lifestyle is an on-going goal. The greatest need for affordable housing in the County is clustered in the 30% AMI level and below. In addition, the County currently has a lack of housing priced to meet the needs of households making above 100% AMI. It is a goal, of the Housing Chapter, to ensure quality housing stock is available across all income bands to provide viable alternatives and opportunities, including upward mobility, for all segments of the County's population.

Another focus area addressed is often referred to as the "missing middle housing" which describes housing styles that fall between detached single-family and large multifamily buildings, such as live/work units, bungalows, duplexes, triplexes, and small-scale multifamily buildings. These types of infill opportunities add variety to the housing supply, support walkable places, and blend in with single-family neighborhoods.

One tool for implementing the Housing Chapter vision is the adoption of an Affordable Dwelling Unit ("ADU") Ordinance designed to holistically meet the needs of the County for mixed income communities with housing opportunities across all cost bands. The development of an ADU ordinance is included as an action strategy in this chapter. An adopted ADU Ordinance would provide developers, during a rezoning process or through the site plan process opportunities, under the specified guidelines, to voluntarily provide affordable housing.

An ADU ordinance and other funding programs are typically implemented using the AMI thresholds for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area ("MSA") adjusted for household size, which is determined periodically by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"). The AMI thresholds are utilized as a tool for identifying affordability and as a parameter for housing programs and funding requirements. The income bands typically fall into the following categories:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Below 30% AMI | Extremely Low Income |
| • Below 50% AMI | Very Low Income |
| • Below 80% AMI | Low Income |
| • 80%-100% AMI | Moderate Income |
| • 100% - 120% AMI | Above Median Income |

- Above 120% AMI High Income

Appendix A of this chapter provides policy guidance for the voluntary development of affordable housing options that could be utilized as part of the rezoning process.

The mobility policy further supports the affordability and quality of life goals by ensuring that the housing policies address the intersection of residents' mobility needs with their housing needs. It is generally recommended that the combined cost of housing and commuting should not exceed 42% of a households' gross income. On average, transportation is the second largest household expenditure after housing, and transportation costs are directly impacted by the location of housing, specifically proximity to employment, schools, and other essential service destinations. The importance of encouraging transit-oriented communities that will bring jobs and housing together – walkable multimodal communities with easy access to desired services is a key to developing vital healthy communities. Residents benefit by incentivizing the creation of connected communities where affordable housing is co-located with affordable transportation. While mobility policies are primarily addressed in the mobility chapter of this Comprehensive Plan the policies contained in this chapter are specifically related to the intrinsic relationship between housing and mobility.

The mobility policy aims to equitably improve access to transportation options and reduce transportation costs in terms of time, money, and the impact on the environment. The County recognizes the significant environmental, economic, and quality of life benefits gained by bringing housing near transit options. Focusing growth in transit-oriented communities allow the County to be intentional about weaving equity into all planning decisions and to strive to make transit-oriented communities more affordable and accessible to everyone. This policy lays the groundwork for more housing near transit at affordable prices.

Additionally, understanding the regional focus on transit-oriented communities and equity will help achieve multiple, interconnected goals by expanding housing opportunities, maximizing the County's investment in transit, supporting greener travel options that contribute to the County's climate goals, and addressing inequities in access to housing, transportation, education, and job opportunities.

Establishing sustainable environmental growth practices, as related to the housing initiative, aligns directly to the goals of the Adopted 2021-2024 Strategic Plan for the County which identifies quality sustainable developments practices as a Countywide priority. The focus on sustainable values for all housing communities enhances the environment, reduces greenhouse emissions, results in lower utility costs for residents, boosts property values, and encourages open space recreational opportunities improving the quality of life for residents on many levels.

Further, addressing the important relationship between quality housing and health provides the incentive to prioritize the importance of building healthy communities in an equitable manner. Stable quality housing, that people can afford, is at the core of ensuring access to economic, social, and educational opportunities. National research bears out the correlation – having quality healthy homes that are affordable correlates to better mental health, less stress on our children, and greater economic mobility. Bringing together quality housing and health goals provide a strong catalyst for change. A goal that resonates with the residents of the County.

The final policy in the housing chapter identifies the regulatory changes needed to successfully implement the Housing Chapter policies. Housing is a foundational element of economic resilience and competitiveness in local communities, it improves the local tax base, stabilizes family units, and communities benefit from the associated public investments helping to ensure that equitable opportunities are available for individuals and families of all income levels. Price appropriate housing is more than assistance, it is a valuable economic resource that benefits the entire community.

Housing Policy 1: Existing Neighborhood Policy

Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods, with a focus on enhancing the character of the neighborhood through redevelopment and revitalization.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H1.1:** Encourage context sensitive residential infill projects that both maintain the character of the neighborhood and support the goal to increase the overall housing supply in the County.
- H1.2:** Identify and quantify aging housing stock, to support the conservation of stabilization of neighborhoods and encourage rehabilitation and other initiatives that will spur new investment, revitalize, and promote the preservation of these communities. These initiatives facilitate the preservation of “naturally-occurring” or unsubsidized affordable housing and discourages gentrification which would result in the involuntary relocation of residents.
- H1.3:** Create connected communities that strive to ensure a mix of uses including employment, services, recreational, and diverse housing types, across all Area Medium Income (“AMI”) income bands to accommodate the needs of all residents.
- H1.4:** Preserve and expand existing accessible and age in place housing including affordable multifamily, older homes, income restricted properties, and transit-accessible housing to help keep housing costs low and stabilize residents at-risk of displacement.
- H1.5:** Support housing (Permanent Supportive Housing) for individuals with special needs and/or low-income elderly by encouraging small-scale community residences within residential neighborhoods.
- H1.6:** Support the construction of accessory dwelling units to increase the County’s housing options, including affordable housing, within existing communities. Update the Zoning Ordinance and the Design and Construction Standards Manual (“DCSM”), as required, to address the desired outcome for viable accessory units that are context sensitive and address off-site parking needs. An accessory dwelling unit generally takes three forms:
- Re-purposed space: (e.g., above a garage or in a basement).
 - Stand-alone unit: separate from the primary home.
 - Attached: addition to the primary home.
- H1.7:** Continue to incentivize the utilization of programmatic housing programs to enhance neighborhoods and residents’ homes such as:
- Continue a County-administered community housing rehabilitation program in the form of loans and grants that targets qualified low-income owner-occupants, providing rehabilitation assistance to bring

eligible properties up to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") Housing Quality Standards.

- Create, identify, and/or seek public and private funding sources to assist the County in upgrading housing to meet current safety standards, including "visitable" units which allow for barrier-free access into the first floor and first floor restroom.
- Promote more widely Prince William County's rehabilitation tax incentive program and expand the program to be used for more housing types to decrease reliance on multi-family housing and increase greater variety of housing.
- Increase the acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable units using the Housing Preservation and Development Fund to supplement or leverage HUD and other existing funds.
- Utilize the Virginia Housing tax credits and promote more widely the Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program ("NHRP") to support low- and moderate-income owner-occupied households to include the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and projects proposed for rehabilitation which are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- Maintain the Federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing ("VASH") and Non-Elderly Disabled ("NED") Vouchers programs that will assist veterans and/or individuals with disabilities in finding affordable and accessible housing.

H1.8: Age restricted multi-family developments should include affordable dwelling units with accessibility options for older individuals or individuals with disabilities.

H1.9: Continue the operation and improve the effectiveness of the County's neighborhood initiatives for providing on-going assistance and encouragement to maintain clean, safe neighborhoods in compliance with County codes. Identify geographic areas of special concern having characteristics such as Zoning Ordinance and Building Code violations, traffic safety issues, and aged or deteriorating infrastructure – areas in need of new or repaired sidewalks, curbs, gutters, street pavement, or other infrastructure and supporting facilities and services in order to provide equitable improvements. Consider initiating a repair, and replacement program for these areas through appropriate private or public means or identifying as a capital improvement project or create a budget line item for ongoing maintenance programs. One mechanism is to utilize the existing Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program (NHRP) which is funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from HUD to preserve and improve owner occupied properties and to bring properties up to applicable building codes, standards, preserve and improve owner occupied properties and to bring properties up to applicable Building Code and standards,

make accessibility modifications; correct health and safety violations; improve weatherization and energy conservation; and correct lead-based paint violations.

- H1.10:** Continue the voluntary joint program between representatives of property owners' associations and other community organizations in the County and appropriate code enforcement personnel to increase communication and coordination of these entities in matters pertaining to neighborhood preservation, enhancement, local public health opportunities, and human-service programs to support residents as needed. The County should continue to maintain a voluntary online database of homeowners associations ("HOA") and volunteer groups with current contact information.
- H1.11:** Continue to promote the formation and use of neighborhood watch and other crime prevention programs as well as close neighborhood liaisons with local law enforcement agencies and other neighborhood initiatives.
- H1.12:** Preserve and conserve historically significant residential buildings and related structures, in accordance with the Cultural Resources Plan, to honor both their historical significance and the value added to providing a variety of housing opportunities. Consider adaptive reuse options and opportunities.
- H1.13:** Retain existing below market rental housing through acquisition, rehabilitation assistance, and other subsidies.
- H1.14:** Facilitate the retention and enhancement/revitalization of existing mobile home parks which are identified in the Comprehensive Plan as appropriate for mobile home use.

Housing Policy 2: Creating New Diverse Housing Communities

Promote diverse mixed income housing communities throughout the County that address the demand for additional housing, the demand for a variety of housing, and the demand for affordable housing to meet the needs of residents at all income levels throughout all stages of life.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H2.1:** Foster a healthy balance of high quality and attractive housing types to serve an increasingly diverse population and diverse workforce. Encourage developments that provide affordable, new market rate mixed income renter and owner-occupied housing.
- H2.2:** To increase housing supply, support housing at transit supported densities, particularly in activity centers, redevelopment corridors, and small area plans, and support opportunities to create vertical mixed-use centers with a distinct sense of place. The highest planned density should be encouraged for mixed-use centers unless other elements of the project (e.g., transportation limitations in the immediate vicinity) can only be resolved through reduction in density.
- H2.3:** Encourage developments designed to meet the needs adequately and appropriately for independent living and assisted living communities. Encourage residential developments, including single level living units with smaller minimum lot requirements in more residential zones, to support affordability, size, location, service, and accessibility needs.
- H2.4:** Encourage developers of multifamily projects to provide affordable, efficiency apartments, that also incorporate accessible design components, to accommodate single individuals, older individuals, and populations with special needs.
- H2.5:** Encourage developers to provide 10% universal design housing choices in all projects, including “visitable” units which allow for barrier-free access into the first floor and first floor restroom. Promote the development and funding of housing units within new development with universal design to increase housing options accessible for special need populations and for older adults to safely age in place.
- H2.6:** Encourage geographic dispersion of affordable housing throughout the County, particularly in areas where existing supply is low.
- H2.7:** Explore the concept of expanded rural communities based on the design concept of hamlets and villages as an alternative to large-lot residential zoning and permit clustered housing developments to both increase housing options and preserve open space.

- H2.8:** Encourage both public and private partnerships and the participation of for-profit and non-profit organizations in the housing delivery process.
- H2.9:** Continue to implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (“CPTED”) strategies with new and redeveloped projects that include unobstructed pedestrian friendly sidewalks, well-lit parking areas, building entrances, and yards, and well-maintained landscaping and common areas.
- H2.10:** Consider innovative alternative housing forms in the Zoning Ordinance for applicable infill utilization within the County such as the incorporation of multiplex, quadplex, triplex, duplex, and accessory dwelling units in new and/or infill development projects.
- H2.11:** Research the feasibility of incorporating innovative new housing design options in the Zoning Ordinance to address the needs and desires of specific populations (e.g., modular design units, tiny houses, mobile homes, shipping containers, and other similar options) along with lifestyle preferences, costs, and environmental benefits. (S2A Factory Build Homes. <https://www.s2amodular.com/> website illustrates examples of factory-built homes).
- H2.12:** Identify and address the need for specific housing forms to meet the need for temporary and transitional housing. Establish parameters to address a variety of options to fill the void of transitional, temporary, and similar special need circumstances for residents within the community. Evaluate the housing needs and associated Zoning Ordinance changes to successfully address transitional and temporary housing. To support residents in transitioning forward to a stable living environment consideration should be given to the following:
- Transitional Housing
- Temporary emergency shelters (for people experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, veterans, recent fires, extreme house damage, or people surviving abuse/neglect);
 - Single room occupancy residences;
 - Group housing or affordable supportive housing options;
 - Recovery homes; and
 - Temporary family health care structures.
- Temporary Housing
- Hotels/motels;
 - Adaptive re-use of buildings, religious institutions, or public facilities;
 - Long-term stay residences;

- Temporary transitional housing for individuals who have survived abuse and/or neglect;
- Housing for young adults who have aged out of foster care (i.e., the Fostering Futures program until age 22);
- Lodging homes, and bed and breakfasts; and
- Home sharing.

- H2.13:** Take maximum advantage of Federal and state funding for assisting income-eligible County renters in achieving home ownership utilizing programs like the First Time Homebuyer Program.
- H2.14:** With the cooperation and involvement of the private sector, provide relocation assistance and/or other protective measures as may be appropriate to residents of dwelling units that are proposed to be demolished, converted to non-residential uses, or converted from rental to fee ownership. At the time of rezoning, the applicant should consider identifying measures that assist occupants in finding suitable housing before demolition or conversion occurs, and other protective and ownership sharing opportunities and incentives for the displaced.
- H2.15:** Permit and encourage higher-intensity multifamily living in activity centers, redevelopment corridors and small area plans as part of both stand-alone and mixed-use developments to create mixed income developments with affordable and workforce units.
- H2.16:** Consider Zoning Ordinance updates to permit for quality infill projects that support the “missing middle housing” needs. The “missing middle housing” describes housing styles that fall between detached single-family and large multifamily buildings, such as live/work units, bungalows, duplexes, triplexes, and small-scale multifamily buildings. These house-scale building types can fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods and support walkability, locally serving retail, and public transportation options. They provide solutions along a spectrum of affordability to address the available housing stock crisis, shifting demographics, and a growing demand for walkability. They add variety to the housing supply and can blend in with single-family neighborhoods.

Housing Policy 3: Affordable Dwelling Units

Develop implementation tools for both residents and the development community to provide for the construction and financing of affordable dwelling units to reduce housing disparities in the County. Ensure the construction and financing of affordable and workforce housing to meet the projected demands of 33% affordable and 42% workforce housing as shown in the table below:

	Housing Units in 1000s			
	2025	2030	2035	2040
Affordable Dwelling Units (80% AMI or less)	58.6	63.4	66.5	69.0
Workforce Dwelling Units (81% to 120% AMI)	74.6	80.7	84.6	87.8

The AMI for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (“MSA”) adjusted for household size, is determined periodically by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”).

The income bands typically fall into the following categories:

- Below 30% AMI Extremely Low Income
- Below 50% AMI Very Low Income
- Below 80% AMI Low Income
- 80%-100% AMI Moderate Income
- 100% - 120% AMI Above Median Income
- Above 120% AMI High Income

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H3.1:** Research, develop, adopt, and implement an Affordable Dwelling Unit (“ADU”) ordinance to provide incentives for the development community to voluntarily support the affordable housing needs of the County.
- H3.2:** Encourage residential developments to incorporate affordable housing units especially in communities with proximity to transit facilities, services, and employment centers.
- H3.3:** Prevent and reduce homelessness housing insecurity by:
- Considering the establishment of homeless navigation centers in eastern and western Prince William County.
 - Supporting permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness.

- Supporting community partnership efforts to increase the range of diverse, affordable housing options.

H3.4: Consider creating a source of public subsidies (Federal, state, or County) in order to develop new affordable housing or to preserve existing housing at rents or prices that are affordable to the community's low-income and moderate-income residents. Consider subsidy options where appropriate and consistent with applicable law, such as:

- Low-interest loan, grant, or tax credit,
- Subsidy in the form of reduced land costs,
- Support landlords by incentivizing them to rent to people experiencing homelessness and/or people with disabilities,
- Permit increase in the allowable density, and
- Subsidy to offset infrastructure costs.

H3.5: Identify affordability strategies, programs, and best practices options to support the private marketplace in their work to produce the majority of the affordable housing supply in a manner that enables capital providers to meet their risk/return objectives.

H3.6: Research options to encourage the preservation of naturally-occurring affordable housing (i.e., programs that allow tenants or non-profit organizations to purchase these homes using a subsidy and, in exchange, regulate the rents to make them permanently affordable to lower-income residents).

H3.7: Consider rezoning existing non-conforming mobile home parks to the RMH, Residential Mobile Home zoning district to eliminate the burden of maintaining non-conforming lot status for the property owner and to encourage preservation of mobile home parks.

Housing Policy 4: Intersection of Mobility and Housing

Strategically locate diverse housing types near transportation, services, and employment centers to build equitable comprehensive multimodal communities and reduce associated transportation expenses for cost burdened residents. Provide 75% of new housing in Activity Centers.

Action Strategies:

- H4.1:** Increase internal transit options to provide additional bus stops and bus routes within the County to address the commuting needs of residents between places of employment and housing. Consider the feasibility of autonomous bus routes for increased flexibility and increase response to demand needs. Research subsidized fare options for low-income residents.
- H4.2:** Support future housing growth and infill development in designated Activity Centers, Redevelopment Corridors and Small Area Plans by encouraging the highest planned density at sites, with a variety of housing types to meet regional housing targets, to reduce traffic congestion and reduce commuting costs for residents, especially for residents when housing costs result in a cost burdened lifestyle.
- H4.3:** Promote mixed-use development targeting new residential construction with commercial revitalization to facilitate the connectivity of housing and services for residents of the County. Promote mixed-use, well connected, and walkable resilient neighborhoods where affordable housing is co-located with affordable transportation that result in minimal carbon emissions.
- H4.4:** Reduce auto-dependent development patterns by creating compact connected communities that increase walkability and multimodal options resulting in a reduction in transportation and environmental impacts.
- H4.5:** Prioritize connectivity infrastructure investments to provide more multimodal choices for all neighborhoods and communities to provide greater opportunities for residents to reach places of employment.
- H4.6:** Track the number of dwelling units built annually within Activity Centers, Redevelopment Corridors and Small Area Plans to measure progress toward the goal of providing 75% of new housing with multimodal access.
- H4.7:** Assign a high priority to those improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts of or reduce the volume of unsafe traffic in neighborhoods in state or County capital improvement programs, management plans, and budgets.
- H4.8:** Increase the availability of vehicle electric charging stations in residential communities and specifically ADA accessible spaces.

- H4.9:** Enhance and implement the County streetscape program in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, the Virginia Department of Forestry, the National Arbor Day Foundation, the Virginia Department of Transportation, development applications, and local property owner associations to improve quality of life for residents, encourage walkability, and encourage private investment. Strive to add six linear street miles into the street tree program annually. Maintenance of trees to ensure proper lighting and avoid sight line reduction is essential.
- H4.10:** New residential development within a mile of existing or proposed school sites should implement safe routes to school connectivity. The County should consider prioritizing sidewalk and other pedestrian gaps in existing neighborhoods that are within a mile of existing or proposed school sites.
- H4.11:** Residential developments should provide inter- and intra-development pedestrian multi-use/shared use paths to link adjoining subdivisions, to form cohesive and connected residential communities, to support alternatives for more efficient transportation networks and to enhance recreational opportunities.
- H4.12:** Where appropriate, discourage dead end streets and cul-de-sacs to facilitate neighborhood connectivity, encourage short block lengths for improved walkability, allow on-street parking, and locate parking lots behind buildings to improve aesthetics and walkability.
- H4.13:** Seek Federal, state, and private funding for the provision of infrastructure to encourage telework options in the County for all residents. Encourage the construction of live/work units that incorporate separate outside entrances into the unit. Live/work housing units provide an alternative to traditional employment commuting needs and allow greater flexibility in location.
- H4.14:** Provide density bonuses for infill and redevelopment projects in Activity Centers and for those that provide or contribute to affordable units.
- H4.15:** Research methodologies for benchmarking equity and measuring outcomes for residential projects to ensure the incorporation of equity criteria into the project rating scores. This process would support looking at the Equity Emphasis Areas ("EEA") to identify, through a scoring metric, the communities that may have historically been segregated and where economic opportunities have been limited.

Housing Policy 5: Sustainability/Environmental Growth Policy

Foster environmentally sustainable housing communities with a variety of housing types, densities, locations, and affordability to promote a safe and livable environment for all residents.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H5.1:** Ensure that all elements of the built environment including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreating, with a high quality of life.
- H5.2:** Promote mixed-use, well connected, and walkable neighborhoods that are resilient communities with lower carbon emissions. Consider enhanced Design and Construction Standards Manual (“DCSM”) requirements to mitigate impacts from the construction and infrastructure projects, especially on water quality.
- Encourage compact growth to improve the environmental performance of site and building development.
 - Redevelopment of existing sites allows for the adoption of modern stormwater controls, especially on sites characterized by a high proportion of impervious surface cover.
 - A compact form of infill development or redevelopment can reduce stormwater runoff and heat island effect by using green infrastructure, green roofs, and other green cover, as well as building design and orientation to reduce urban temperatures.
 - During the entitlement process, encourage densities at the highest planned density in the Long-Range Land Use category where consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- H5.3:** Promote construction design options to build sustainable, green neighborhoods. Explore funding opportunities, design implications, and practical solutions to reduce residents’ energy cost burden and encourage the housing industry to build environmentally sustainable housing.
- H5.4:** Research energy-conserving building design standards and incentivize implementation of any adopted standards. Energy-efficient affordable housing focused on sustainability and the reduction of utility costs benefits renters and homeowners. To avoid rising rents, consider energy saving cost reduction measures to support both property owners in fixed rent situations and homeowners by considering the following:
- Design projects using the Earth Craft Gold certification or comparable program for resource and energy efficiency;
 - Research the green building standard called Passive House, which relies on building materials and methods, like insulation and thicker windows,

to maintain fixed temperatures inside a living area while using very little energy-despite outside conditions;

- Incorporate high-efficiency toilets, showerheads, and faucets in bathrooms including accessible units;
- Utilize a photovoltaic solar array to reduce building energy load and a solar thermal hot water heater to preheat water and stabilize utility bills;
- Install Energy-efficient LED lighting;
- Incorporate Energy Star style appliances, HVAC, and water heating systems;
- Enhance insulation and air sealing to eliminate transfer of air between residential units and the outside environment;
- Utilize native and draught-tolerant plantings in the landscaping;
- Reduce impervious areas; and
- Utilize reflective roofing that creates a cooler environment around the building; require high-albedo (reflective) surfaces on rooftops and in paved areas where appropriate and encourage green roofs to reduce the urban heat island effect.

H5.5: Encourage state-of-the-practice sustainability features such as net-zero/carbon-positive buildings, biophilic design, and on-site energy generation. Focus on affordable housing to create opportunities where the building produces as much energy as the residents consume to reduce utility costs. Utilize multiple energy efficient designs including solar energy panels.

H5.6: Streamline County approval of solar panels installed at private homes and businesses.

H5.7: Support coordination between County and state departments and agencies and utility companies to improve outreach and access to funding that supports home/improvement and maintenance, including energy efficient audits, upgrades and retrofits, weatherization assistance, solar panel installation, and age in place maintenance and construction.

H5.8: Encourage the utilization of modular building designs, where appropriate, that when constructed in factory settings incorporate strict specifications which reduce construction time, reduce carbon emissions, and generate less waste resulting in less impact on the environment fostering more energy efficient construction as compared to traditional construction.

H5.9: Increase percentage of renewable energy utilized by the County to support reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Implement Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments ("MWCOG") targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sources within the County to 50% of 2005 level by 2030, and to be carbon-neutral by 2050.

H5.10: Reduce auto-centric development patterns to reduce transportation costs and

environmental impacts. Support future housing growth at transit supportive densities, with a variety of housing types, especially in designated activity centers and corridors. Track the number of new dwelling units proposed and/or built inside and outside of activity centers as a measure of sustainability growth and to enhance funding opportunities.

- H5.11:** Identify areas of environmental concern to reduce negative impacts to underserved communities. To promote equitable developments, prioritize underserved communities for both open space acquisition and tree saving/replanting efforts.
- H5.12:** Support cultural and civic facilities (libraries, firehouses, museums, state and County parks, landmarks, and County facilities) as disaster preparedness and relief centers that provide emergency social services in times of distress (cooling station, food distribution, widespread power outage, or hurricane/tornado relief shelter).
- H5.13:** Incorporate adaptive reuse to provide viable housing alternatives to solve the housing deficit. Cost-effective infill and adaptive reuse design strategies should be utilized to retrofit single-use commercial sites such as retail strips, malls, and office parks into mixed use developments in a sustainable and resilient manner.
- H5.14:** Incentivize the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and existing structures to accommodate the evolution of communities, maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring affordable space, and retain the embodied energy of structures.
- H5.15:** Conduct an economic analysis study to determine “exchange rate” for density for green building and/or affordable housing in order to establish a cost/benefit analysis with these programs and to understand both the short- and long-term benefits of sustainable initiatives to the community.

Housing Policy 6: Building Healthy Equitable Communities

Design a community's-built environment in a manner that positively influences the physical and mental health of its residents based on the guiding principles of equity, quality, stability, accessibility, affordability, and location. Equity, with respect to building healthy neighborhoods, refers to providing all residents the same on-site quality amenities with access to housing, services, food, transportation, employment, and on-site open space/recreational opportunities.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H6.1:** Develop strategies for equitable development, that strive to increase affordable housing supply especially for marginalized individuals and families that spend more than 30% of their income on housing, across all income bands, which reduces the share of their budget available for food, medical care, and other necessities.
- H6.2:** Encourage and incentivize a diverse range of housing options that are affordable, accessible, and safe to meet the needs of residents during all phases of life, specifically addressing housing insecurities in the community and the needs of special populations.
- H6.3:** Support community partnership efforts to increase the range of diverse, affordable inclusive housing options. Inclusive housing necessitates a variety of housing to match the needs and income levels of a varied workforce, resulting in lower foreclosures rates and reducing the circumstance of being cost burdened.
- H6.4:** Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through intentional design of safe, healthy communities that provide access to services including healthcare and healthy foods, physical activity, and recreational opportunities and that focus on environmental justice.
- H6.5:** Open homeless navigation centers in eastern and western Prince William County to increase the County's ability to respond to emergent needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- H6.6:** Promote age-friendly communities where affordable and diverse housing options are available for older adults and multi-generational families with an emphasis on quality-of-life goals like:
- Transportation networks that serve populations that may not yet or no longer hold a valid driver's license, and
 - Mixed use developments that increase access to a robust network of community services, including childcare, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities, and access to local employment opportunities.
- H6.7:** Encourage design choices and options (i.e., universal design elements and increased accessibility options) in new developments and in redevelopment

projects to achieve permanent supportive housing for persons with special needs. Encourage incorporating design elements in housing developments that can readily be modified for use by persons with special needs.

- H6.8:** Encourage housing developments to incorporate outside entrance features to reduce excessively long hallways and provide for greater air circulation, especially in multifamily projects, and in transitional and temporary housing options.
- H6.9:** Recognizing the direct positive link between health and recreational opportunities, neighborhood communities should have equitable access to on-site recreational amenities including parks, trails, and open spaces. Consider prioritizing open space acquisition and development to meet the needs of the communities with limited recreational spaces and facilities. Consider retrofitting existing neighborhoods that have limited access to parks and trails.
- H6.10:** Prioritize the development of new on-site community-oriented accessible public facilities to incentivize the development of high-quality walkable communities to serve residents equitably.
- H6.11:** Develop local/regional policy initiatives that highlight the benefits of the collaboration of housing and health. Partner with community health systems on affordable housing investments. Encourage greater collaboration/expanded dialogue between the healthcare sector and affordable housing programs.
- H6.12:** Develop stronger transportation connectivity throughout the County to reduce geographical barriers to access needed treatment and support services.
- H6.13:** To help reduce food insecurity and support healthy eating, encourage applicants of development projects to demonstrate accessibility to food and food assistance programs based on the County completed Food Security Study to reduce establishing new housing communities in areas with limited access to food sources.
- H6.14:** Encourage and seek Federal, state, and private funding to increase broadband options, especially in affordable and elderly housing communities, to increase service options like medical telehealth. Ensure that technology needs are incorporated in the design process to focus on improving equity in the areas of technology, employment, and education.
- H6.15:** Analyze the need for programs like Richmond's Lead Safe Program - HOMES (a lead base paint remediation program) through partnership with the Federal American Recovery Act to continue to monitor and eradicate unsafe conditions.
- H6.16:** Establish plans for enhanced emergency management preparation strategies and solutions to address public health and other emergencies specifically regarding potential impact on the housing needs of the community during unforeseen emergencies.

- H6.17:** Research life expectancy data based on where a resident lives to ascertain recommendations and changes needed to support equitable and healthy communities. Living close to community assets, such as high-performing schools, transit, open or green spaces, and healthy food retailers, encourages interaction with these health-promoting resources which reinforces health benefits and supports equitable communities.
- H6.18:** Encourage the development of multi-family and price-appropriate housing appropriately, equitably, and proportionately throughout all parts of the County.
- H6.19:** Encourage the development of equitable mixed income projects, with a variety of housing choices that serve the needs of all residents throughout the County.
- H6.20:** Encourage developments that result in equitable healthy communities that provide all neighborhoods the same services, amenities, open space, and recreational components in a quality setting.

Housing Policy 7: Regulatory Changes for Housing

Identify regulatory changes that are innovative and streamline processes to support the implementation of housing policies including affordability, universal design, and accessibility enhancements.

ACTION STRATEGIES

- H7.1:** Modify the Zoning Ordinance, as needed, to encourage housing variety, affordability, and diversity.
- H7.2:** Consider creating a source of public (Federal, state, or County) funds to incentivize affordable housing development, redevelopment, and preservation. Example programs, in part, include:
- Federal Programs
 - Housing Choice Voucher - Rental Assistance
 - Community Development Block Grant ("CBDG") which funds the Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program ("NHRP")
 - Home Investment Partnership ("HOME") which funds the First Time Home Buyer Program and Community Housing Development Organization ("CHDO"), and/or
 - Emergency Solutions Grant ("ESG").

State Programs

- Community Housing Development Initiatives ("CHIDI"),
- State Rental Assistance Program ("SRAP"), and/or
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program ("LIHTC").

Additionally, research, promote, and utilize community impact grants from sources like Virginia Housing to address housing affordability from a diverse approach; example of funding opportunities include:

- Below-Market Predevelopment Loans (i.e., REACH Virginia),
- Sponsoring Partnerships and Revitalizing Communities (i.e., SPARK),
- Event Sponsorship Grants (for housing fairs, educational events, fundraising activities of charitable organizations and housing non-profits),
- Capacity Building Grants,
- Housing Counseling & Education Grants,
- Rental Unit Accessibility Modification Grants,
- Down Payment Assistance Grants, and/or
- Closing Cost Assistance Grants.

- H7.3:** Develop programs and options to support affordable housing goals. To develop new housing or to preserve existing housing at rents or prices that are affordable to low-and moderate-income residents and workers, it may be necessary to consider some type of subsidy or incentive such as a no-interest loan, low-interest loan, grant, or tax credit, a subsidy in the form of reduced land costs, an increase in the allowable density, or a reduction in development approval requirements or a combination of the above.
- H7.4:** Research creating an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (“AHT”) that could provide loans or grants. Consider different sources to capitalize the AHT (developer contributions pursuant to an ADU ordinance) real estate transfer taxes, taxes or fees on short-term rentals, proceeds from the sale of County-owned property, or even a dedicated revenue source from an annual budget appropriation). Examples of potential utilization options include:
- Emergency rental assistance and security deposits,
 - Gap financing for new construction of affordable homes/units,
 - Repairs/rehabilitation of older affordable homes/units,
 - Weatherization program to lower utility costs,
 - Down payment and closing assistance,
 - Foreclosure prevention, and/or
 - Lead abatement programs.
- H7.5:** Research and apply for grants (i.e., COG’s Housing Affordability Planning Sequencer (“HAPP”)), which provides grants to local governments and non-profit developers engaged in the planning, approval, or development of housing around transit stations to support the mobility action strategies.
- H7.6:** Develop and maintain a housing affordability tracker to provide a snapshot of progress with respect to diversity, equity, affordability, and variety. Research establishing a Housing Innovation Lab. (i.e., track committed affordable units built by affordability level within the County, number of units constructed under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (“LIHTC”), and number of committed affordable units in the pipeline but not yet constructed).
- H7.7:** Explore the Board of County Supervisors’ options to rezone low density areas, where housing supply is low, to provide alternatives to accommodate future population growth at densities that permit economically viable development of attainable housing.
- H7.8:** Consider new development policies in low-density areas to allow different tiers and types of development to occur in rural villages or hamlets to cluster future growth. Evaluate and assess the development feasibility and environmental impacts of rezonings in low density areas to accommodate future housing and population growth.

- H7.9:** Consider the creation of accessory dwelling units, where appropriate and impacts are sufficiently mitigated, as a means of increasing the supply and distribution of affordable housing.
- H7.10:** Research feasibility of extending Homestead and other Tax Relief programs for Elderly, Military Veterans, and Disabled Persons.
- H7.11:** Utilize the National Housing Trust Fund ("HTF") an affordable housing production program that complements existing Federal, state, and County efforts to increase and preserve the supply of decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing for extremely low-income and very low-income households, including homeless families.
- H7.12:** Maximize the use of Federal and state housing assistance programs.
- H7.13:** Research appropriate viable options for home sharing opportunities and the associated regulatory changes that may be required.
- H7.14:** Promote the First-Time Homebuyer Program ("FTHB"), which provides loans for down payment and closing cost assistance to First-Time Homebuyers who are low and moderate-income (Income may not exceed 80% of Area Median Income) residents or persons working in the Prince William Area (Prince William County, the City of Manassas or City of Manassas Park) through the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) federal funding.

Appendix A: Affordable Housing Supplement

Background

It is the goal of the Board of County Supervisors of Prince William County that affordable housing opportunities be available to all who live or work in Prince William County to purchase or rent safe, quality, affordable housing within their means. An Affordable Dwelling Unit (“ADU”) Ordinance serves as a guide for the development of ADUs. This supplement is intended to provide guidance on creating affordable housing through the residential and mixed-use rezoning application process. These policies provide greater flexibility that encourages and incentivizes the voluntary creation of affordable housing and helps the development community align their project with county values and address the site and financing constraints. This supplement is intended to assist in the development of affordable dwelling units across all cost bands to meet the need of County residents including the needs of the work force community and our most vulnerable populations.

In general, affordable housing means, as a guideline, housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housings costs, including utilities.” See generally Section 15.2-2201 VA Code.

The Area Median Income (“AMI”) for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (“MSA”) adjusted for household size, is determined periodically by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”). The income bands typically fall into the following categories:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Below 30% AMI | Extremely Low Income (Affordable) |
| • Below 50% AMI | Very Low Income (Affordable) |
| • Below 80% AMI | Low Income (Affordable) |
| • 80% -100% AMI | Moderate Income (Workforce) |
| • 100% - 120% AMI | Above Median Income (Workforce) |
| • Above 120% AMI | High Income |

Workforce housing typically refers to providing homes for middle-income service workers, such as police officers, firefighters/EMTs, teachers, and nurses, in close proximity to their jobs, who may not qualify for some housing subsidies. Workforce housing (sometimes referred to as middle-income or moderate-income housing) is housing for individuals and families typically earning between 80% and 120% AMI.

From a broader perspective affordable means housing options should exist, for all income levels, to provide residents the opportunity to find housing that does not cost more that 30 percent of their gross income. Providing options for residents to choose where they live supports the goal to provide housing options at a variety of price points and to have flexibility to “upscale and downsize” as needed throughout their life cycle – ideally within their own community if they so desire. The policy recommendations of this supplement will support advocating for economically integrated communities.

Submission Requirements for Residential Projects Proposing Affordable Housing

Residential rezoning applications seeking a density bonus or other incentive help address the affordable housing needs of the County, should include the following information:

- Number and types of proposed housing units,
- Transect designation as provided in Long-Range Land use Map to identify proposed density,
- Identification of multi-modal transportation options and opportunities,
- Identification of available community services, including retail services like grocery stores,
- Proposed unit pricing defined in terms of current AMI bands to identify how the project integrates into the context of the surrounding community,
- Description of viable access to recreational amenities onsite and offsite,
- Identify design provisions proposed to support accessibility needs,
- Identify design efforts to support environmentally and sustainable communities, and
- Identify how the project is designed to provide a variety of housing units to provide a mixed-income community.

Location

While affordable housing is desirable in every residential and mixed-use project, it is particularly important that projects in Activity Centers, Redevelopment Corridors, and Small Area Plans include an affordable housing component. Affordable housing would be a vital element in high density and mixed-use development projects, especially if located in close proximity to community services and transit.

Guidance for Increased Density

The following provides a voluntary flexible framework to support the viability of providing affordable housing in residential rezoning applications. Each project will need to be assessed contextually within the parameters of the applicant's goals and the context of the surrounding community. The analysis should consider supporting a variety of housing options throughout the County.

Affordable Share – Every residential development project should be encouraged to incorporate 10% affordable and/or workforce housing. Consider pursuing financial support through other affordable housing tools such as low-interest loans, grants and/or tax credits to achieve a higher percentage up to 20% affordable and/or workforce housing in individual projects.

Incentives – The following incentives will be considered for providing affordable/workforce housing but is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- Reduce or eliminate voluntary monetary contributions for mitigation of offsite development impacts for affordable units.
- Density increases above the top of the density range recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan proportionate to twice the number of affordable/workforce units provided.
- Flexibility in the types of units allowed in the zoning district.
- Modifications of development standards such as height, setback, and/or lot coverage.

- Modifications of Design and Construction Standards Manual (“DCSM”) should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for affordable projects, and design flexibility may be appropriate to meet the project goals and maintain an attractive and healthy living environment for future residents.

Income Level – New development that is providing affordable and/or workforce housing onsite is encouraged to provide a mix of affordable and workforce units with 50% of the proffered units available at or below 80% of AMI and 50% of the proffered units available up to 120% AMI with the understanding that projects will provide the AMI level that enables capital providers to meet their risk/return objectives.

Affordability Term – When affordable housing is proposed, a project should include an affordability term to maintain and increase the inventory of affordable housing, provide opportunities for residents to create generational wealth, and provide viable development options for the development community. Flexibility to address the needs of the property owners, the purchasers, and the long-term goals of the County can be realized through an analysis of the project and flexibility should exist during the rezoning process to assess the proposed term. Financing options provide some restrictions that must be factored into the proposal in terms of the affordability term. While one critical goal is to create affordable rental options for residents; the ability to build generational wealth, through home ownership, is also significant to residents and the establishment of affordability terms significantly impacts both of these goals.

Replacement Housing – Where existing, naturally-occurring, affordable housing is proposed to be removed to make way for new development, encourage development proposals to incorporate similar levels of affordable housing opportunities for current or new residents by allowing increased density to incorporate attainable housing opportunities.