

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Ashley Mihalik <acmmihalik@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 6:57 AM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Comment on docket item #20 for 11/28 Legislative meeting

SPICARD/VA You don't often get email from acmmihalik@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear members of City Council,

I write in support of docket item #20, Zoning for Housing, and expanding the availability of housing in Alexandria. When I first moved to Alexandria I did so because of its charm, including the historic aspect and also the combination of both an urban and suburban feel. I was attracted to its access to public transportation options and ultimately was able to become a first-time homeowner in this city through the purchase of a condominium. I valued the location, including being "close in" and not feeling like I was required to have to rely on a car to get to work or around the city.

I note some of the examples of non single-family housing that do not at all detract from the value of single-family homes, and are an inherent part of the community, including duplexes and multi-family housing off Commonwealth Ave and my own condominium located off W Taylor Run. I embraced the community I was in - which was not a single-family homeowner community - and have made friends with others who live in my community and that I met while riding the DASH bus.

I have children who attend an ACPS public elementary school and am pleased with the infrastructure and ways that the City of Alexandria serves its residents, and I recognize that being able to grow the community and attract and provide housing where additional residents can live will help, not harm us. I believe that many of the principles that are incorporated in the zoning for housing proposal, including the parking requirements and encouragement of use of walking and public transit, are important features that reduce traffic and that we should be encouraging in our city.

I thank City staff for the time and analysis they have put towards this proposal and engagement with the public and appreciate all Council members' consideration of public input and views. I agree with some of the sentiments expressed at previous meetings that the proposal could have gone further in terms of the number of units that it will potentially add as our nation is facing a critical time in terms of the affordability of housing and local governments can play a role in changing that.

Thank you,
Ashley Mihalik

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Kristen Noble <kristen.r.noble@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 8:36 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Expression of non-support for proposed zoning changes

You don't often get email from kristen.r.noble@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am a resident of the North Ridge section of Alexandria. I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the proposed residential zoning changes. I think it is a fool's errand to believe that increasing the density of housing in this area would lead to a larger inventory of affordable housing. What it will do is lead to a boom in the construction of small, high-priced homes, and add to our current issues of overcrowded roadways and tight parking. While the zoning changes would likely lead to more inventory in the city, this inventory would continue to be available to only those able to afford the high costs of Alexandria's real estate. To me, this sounds like an attempt at trickle-down economics, which has been proven time and again not to be a viable plan to help lower-income individuals. If the city is really committed to providing affordable housing, then the city needs to direct funding towards projects specifically built as affordable housing.

There are several changes that I do not agree with, but I am most opposed to recommended initiatives to expand housing opportunities in single-family zones. To start, I am firmly opposed to zoning changes that would allow the construction of multi-family dwellings in lots currently zoned for single-family dwellings. This zoning change would open the door to developers to use this as an opportunity to line their pockets. Developers are likely to begin purchasing single-family homes, and tearing them down in favor of building townhomes and/or condo-style dwellings. Much like the vast majority of the housing in Alexandria, would be sold for top-dollar, based on real-estate comps, and with no regard to affordability.

Another zoning recommendation which I strongly oppose, is the change to the definition of "family". This zoning ordinance is one of the few ordinances that allow residents to park in front of their own homes. I live across the street from the Lloyd Park apartments. When I moved to my home, there was ample parking on my street, and those adjacent to the apartment building. In the 13 years that I've lived here, the streets adjacent to Lloyd Park (Cameron Mills Rd, Pulman Pl, Moore Pl, and Tennessee Ave) have become overflow parking for the residents of the apartment building. For reasons I fail to understand, parking at the apartment has now become so scarce that residents are now forced to park on adjacent streets, more than a block away from their homes. I'm not sure what led to the increased demand for parking at the apartment complex, but changing this ordinance opens the door to multiple, unrelated families to live in a single dwelling, and will exacerbate the parking situation all over the city. Tight parking can be seen throughout Alexandria, even in those neighborhoods where there are few multi-dwelling buildings.

In addition to increased demand for parking, how does the city intend to address overcrowding and understaffing in our public schools? I recently read an article that the City of Alexandria has vastly overestimated the number of parents sending children to private school, which has led to overcrowding situations in the public schools. How does the city propose to expand the space in our public schools when more children move into neighborhoods originally zoned for single-family residences? Using Charles Barret Elementary as an example, I read that core classroom space in the school fails to meet appropriate size requirements for the student body. According to a draft planning study, only three of the twenty-four classrooms, or thirteen percent, meet the recommended size requirement.

<https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/planning/info/lrefp/compileddraftsections.pdf>

In short, the City's dreams of creating affordable housing by hoping that density will translate into affordability, doesn't seem to follow past market trends in our region. If you want affordable housing, then the city must allocate more funds to these projects. Instead of creating density, why not provide subsidies to help people rent, or purchase homes? To me it seems like the city seeks to increase tax revenue by seeking

money from developers, and creating opportunities to grow the number of tax dollars generated by city residents.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Noble

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Rebecca Turner <rebeccadianeturner@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 8:34 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Justin Wilson; Amy Jackson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Alyia Gaskins; Sarah Bagley; Kirk McPike
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Thank you!

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rebeccadianeturner@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)
I just wanted to send a quick note to say that in this season of giving thanks, I am thankful to you all and your staff for your thoughtful leadership on important issues facing our city.

While I haven't been able to attend any hearings in person (yet), I have been so encouraged watching the livestreams of the hearings, especially those around zoning for housing. It is clear that there has been a ton of research, work, and thought put into these proposals, and I've been so impressed by the level of engagement and (sometimes quite lively) conversation between Council/staff and the public.

As a relative newcomer to the city, I have really appreciated how everyone's voice is welcomed and valued in the process. My husband and I bought our home in Warwick Village in 2021, and feel incredibly lucky to have been able to do so, and to live in such a wonderful neighborhood. The mix of housing stock that exists in Del Ray (that wouldn't be able to be built today) is a huge strength of the neighborhood, and I love that we have neighbors and friends who live in townhouses, duplexes, SFHs, large and small apartment buildings, etc. We love that we very rarely need a car, since we have such easy access to metro, buses, and can walk to any number of local businesses.

At the same time, I also see the neighborhood (and the city at large) growing more and more out of reach for most people. The proposed changes are a positive step in the right direction to create more housing options and supply and help keep the city livable for more people, as well as address some historic inequities exacerbated by current zoning policy. As someone who highly values the walkability of Del Ray and the easy access to metro, I also want to highlight the proposal's potential to allow more people to have easier access to transit options and bring us closer to environmental sustainability goals. I urge you to adopt the proposals legalizing up to 4 homes per lot and removing parking mandates near transit, and to continue exploring ways we can make the city more accessible and sustainable for everyone.

Thank you again for all your work on these important issues,

Rebecca Turner

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Sunny Yoder <sunnyyoder@icloud.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 5:44 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Zoning for Housing: Single Family Zoning Changes--VOTE NO

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Dear Mayor and City Council:

The single family zoning initiative in the "Housing for Zoning/Zoning for All" plan is misguided, unwarranted, and unjust.

It is misguided as a means to increase the supply of affordable housing and redress past racial inequities. It will do neither. The housing that would be added in single family zones would not be affordable. City residents can just look around and see the many properties where small, affordable homes are being torn down and replaced by larger, much more expensive homes. Too, nothing in the zoning code can offer racial redress. Racial discrimination in zoning has long since been repealed by the City or rendered illegal by Federal law. Other means are needed, e.g. changes in lending practices.

It is unwarranted because the City already is adding housing at a rapid pace without slowing the rise in housing costs. According to the U.S. Census, between 2010 and 2020 Alexandria added just over 8,100 housing units. According to Alexandria Living, 30 multi-unit residential projects currently are approved or already being constructed. Yet both purchase and rental housing prices continue to escalate.

It is unjust because residents of single family zones have chosen them for their special qualities that will be taken away—if not now, then in the next, even more radical phase of Zoning for Housing. With a Council vote scheduled when families are just completing their Thanksgiving holiday celebrations—many out of town—thereby dampening the noise of significant opposition, this has every appearance of 'putting one over' on me and my neighbors. Besides being bad policy, it hardly is the way to maintain public trust in the City government.

First, do no harm. Vote No on changes in single family zoning.

Sunny Yoder
Farm Road

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Farm Road

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: john fehrenbach.biz <john@fehrenbach.biz>
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 10:58 AM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Nov. 28, 2023 Hearing – Docket #20, Item #24-1528)
Attachments: Comments 11 26 23.pdf; Comments.pdf to COG.pdf

You don't often get email from john@fehrenbach.biz. [Learn why this is important](#)

Please see the attached comments on City of Alexandria Master Plan Amendment #2023-00005, Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00007 2020-2021, Housing Policy Amendments Zoning For Housing/Housing For All Initiatives:

- Nov. 14, 2023 Hearing - Docket # **18**, Item #**24-1539**;
- Nov. 18, 2023 Hearing - Docket #**8**, Item #**24-1588**); and
- Nov. 28, 2023 Hearing – Docket #**20**, Item #**24-1528**).

Best regards,
John Fehrenbach
Valley Drive
Alexandria

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Re: City of Alexandria Master Plan Amendment #2023-00005, Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00007 2020-2021, Housing Policy Amendments Zoning For Housing/Housing For All Initiatives—Nov. 14, 2023 Hearing - Docket # 18, Item #24-1539; Nov. 18, 2023 Hearing - Docket #8, Item #24-1588); and Nov. 28, 2023 Hearing – Docket #20, Item #24-1528).

I am submitting these comments as a concerned citizen, taxpayer, former renter, and for the past 33 years a homeowner in a single-family neighborhood in the Oakcrest neighborhood in Alexandria.

I have not had sufficient time to review all of the proposed sweeping changes to our zoning laws. At a minimum, I have comments on and objections to the proposed elimination to SFZ.

For many decades, the zoning laws have effectively been a trust – a covenant -- between homeowners and the City as to what neighborhoods would look like and how development would occur in those neighborhoods. On that basis, we chose the neighborhood we wanted to invest and live in. That trust has been broken. To paraphrase a line in a movie, you are basically saying to us, “*You screwed up – you trusted us.*” Well, that trust is gone.

For those of us who purchased, maintained, improved, and raised families in homes in single family neighborhoods, we expected at a very minimum that the City would not radically - with the stroke of a pen and against the interests of most citizens -- transform our single family neighborhoods into a hodge-podge of single-family homes, multiplexes, and boarding houses -- and God knows what else you are planning to impose in Phase 2.

Not all the proposals are necessarily bad, but each must be considered on its own merits. Packaging them into a single take-it-or-leave it proposal demonstrates that each cannot be justified on its own merits.

These are many serious flaws in the proposals. For example, the City initiatives are premised in large part on a COG report (and associated housing plan) that is biased, factually unsupported, and grossly deficient, as well as inappropriately offensive to Alexandria homeowners and residents. Not surprisingly, only 8 of the COG’s 24 local government members are participating in that COG exercise; only Alexandria is promoting it.

Further, at the May 10, 2023 public meeting, City staff indicated that all Alexandrians’ comments on the COG report would be responded to before these initiatives are proposed. The City has failed to do so. I submitted comments on that document (copy attached), but they are not addressed in the final package. The City needs to respond to all of those comments before further considering the ZFH/HFA initiatives.

At public meetings, the City staff also ignored questions and comments that did not align with the City’s views. Personally, several of my questions and comments were read by City staff but not handed over to speakers, even when there was adequate time. This amounts to censorship.

Also, public statements by City officials have sought to deflect – rather than respond to – legitimate concerns of residents. For example, the Mayor has touted that the proposals would not “take away your single-family home.” To some, that might be a nice sound bite, but it is deceiving and irrelevant to the concerns of many homeowners. Most people are worried about the reduction in value of their home and quality of life because of what happens to the house next door and in the neighborhood. Common sense tells us that a boarding house next door reduces the value of one’s home and the attractiveness of continuing to live there.

Let me share a secret: whatever the reasoning for creating SFZ a half century or more ago, today -- here and now -- people like them. People of all races, creeds, colors, and persuasions want to and do live there. They want to move into these neighborhoods, live in them, invest in them, mow their lawns, rake their leaves, plant native species, and enjoy some peace and quiet in this crazy world of ours. Why do you want to stab them in the back and take it away from them?

Also, I want to correct the record. One witness in favor of the City initiatives incorrectly stated that renters are not eligible for membership in any citizens associations. As an example, renters are eligible for membership in North Ridge Citizens’ Association.

I’ll leave you with words of wisdom by a great American philosopher, who said, *“In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.”* This serves as a profound reminder of the inherent complexities and limitations of human perception. It underscores the importance of actively engaging in practical experiences to learn from those experiences and truly understand the world around us. Applied here, it means we should not jump whole hog into all of these proposals. For example, the City could implement one or maybe two non-controversial proposal(s) and place a sunset (time limit) of, say, one year and see how they work out or not.

Finally, I support and incorporate by reference the comments submitted by the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria.

Attachment

March 31, 2023

Comments on (1) Metropolitan Washington Regional Fair Housing Plan - Draft Executive Summary, (2) Community Engagement Summary, and (3) Draft Metropolitan Washington Regional Fair Housing Plan—City of Alexandria

There are many problems in all three documents, too numerous to address in the limited time allowed. Nonetheless, I have the following initial comments. For convenience, the quoted portions from each document are set forth in bold, and are followed by my comments not in bold.

1. Draft Executive Summary:

Prepared by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Urban Institute, and Ochoa Urban Collaborative in partnership with COG member governments

- Fundamentally biased authorship group that failed to accurately describe the full history of Alexandria through the present, mischaracterized the relevance, if any, of alleged barriers, made erroneous assumptions, etc.
- Authors appear to be agenda-driven and predisposed in favor of eliminating single-family zoned (“SFZ”) neighborhoods, without bothering to ask citizens that would be negatively impacted for their opinions or concerns.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Regionally-focused organizations which work with residents directly impacted by fair housing choice provided guidance to the local governments. The organizations included: Action in the Community Through Service (ACTS); CASA; Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Washington and Catholic Charities of Arlington; ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia; Equal Rights Center; Friendship Place; Greater Washington Urban League; House of Ruth; Legal Services of Northern Virginia; NAACP Chapters of Arlington County, Fairfax County, Montgomery County, and Prince William County; Offender Aid Restoration; Pathways Homes; and Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless.

- Biased input, which was limited to the views of special interest groups self-interested in the outcome of the study, rather than asking the right questions and providing correct answers.
- No representation by, or input from, Alexandria citizens' associations, representatives of SFZ neighborhoods, or private sector businesses outside the real estate and building industries.
 - Virginia law requires the City of Alexandria to adopt a “comprehensive plan” for the “purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development” of the City (VA Code Section 15.2-2-223 (A)).
 - Historically, as referenced in the City Zoning Code, the City has looked to its civic associations as a principal resource for ensuring public notice, as well as feedback pursuant to approvals for special uses. For example, Section 11-513 (A)(2) (“Administrative Special Use Permit”) mandates that “notice of a pending administrative permit application shall be made in a newspaper of general circulation in the city, posted on the subject property, given to nearby civic and

business associations by email, by eNews or equivalent electronic notice, and prominently posted on the department web page in a list of pending administrative applications for review by the public.”

- Further, Section 11-513, Article XI (“Administrative Special Use Permit – Development Approvals and Procedures”) notes that “Any person or civic or business association affected by a decision of the director issued pursuant to Section 11-513 (A)(5) may appeal the decision to the Planning Commission, by filing a notice of appeal, in writing, stating the grounds on which the person is affected and the ground of appeal...”
- The City’s established requirements related to zoning matters and civic associations are tested, tried, and true. Some civic associations in Alexandria have incorporated this legally recognized authority within their organizational Bylaws. Therefore, Alexandria’s civic associations may be significantly and adversely impacted by any potential changes to existing requirements, or any attempts to amend aspects of the current process as it pertains to established governance structures (e.g., Master Plan, Small Area Plans, etc.).
- COG’s utter failure to consult with citizens’ associations is another reason why the results of its study and report are skewed, biased, and fatally deficient.
- The Committee appears to be a who’s-who list of organizations with vested self-interests that reflect the views of a narrow section of citizens, neighborhoods, and housing types.
- The effect was to avoid a diversity of opinions and perspectives.

Fair housing challenges

People choose to live in this region for many reasons – healthy neighborhoods, good schools, and access to jobs, to name a few. But many aren’t treated equally when it comes to housing and other opportunities. This is especially true for residents of color, those with low incomes, and people with disabilities.

- Study fundamentally and mistakenly equates equal treatment and equal opportunity under the law with equal results
- Study fundamentally and mistakenly equates different economic and social outcomes with unequal treatment under the law and unequal opportunity
- The study is in part an advocacy piece, not an objective study
- People of all races have chosen to live in SFZ neighborhoods, and have paid extra for that. Taking that away from them without compensation is an illegal “taking” and a stab in the back

Areas with higher numbers of residents who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) often have higher poverty rates and less access to good schools, healthy neighborhoods, transportation, and job opportunities.

- Alexandria students are already being bused around the City in patterns directed by ACPS

- The report claims that BIPOC are denied access to “good” schools, but misses the point that the report shows that all students in Alexandria are denied access to “good” public schools. And, SFZ neighborhoods are not responsible. The City and ACPS are responsible.
- Increased density leads to less healthy neighborhoods, more congestion, more parking stress, noise complaints, less green space, etc.

Many local governments in our region have taken major steps to improve access to safe and affordable housing. They’ve: ...

• Made zoning changes

- Minneapolis is an example of what doesn’t work
- Density does not improve safety of a neighborhood
- Affordable housing is best near reliable, frequent public transit, shopping, etc.

At the same time, however, the region continues to attract investment in new commercial development that fuels displacement concerns due to increases in local housing prices and rents.

- A solution is to limit new commercial development in what is already the most densely populated jurisdiction in the entire Commonwealth

Additionally, the high cost to acquire land for development and build in the metropolitan Washington region means that most new housing produced is unaffordable for many residents.

- Trying to cram more people into what is already the most densely populated jurisdiction in the entire Commonwealth is a problem imposed by the City
- The City’s “pack’em and stack’em” approach is the problem
- Cutting real estate tax rates across the board in Alexandria would reduce unaffordability

These market forces are often compounded by community pushback, or a Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) sentiment from residents in response to attempts to develop more affordable housing or allow for increased density, all of which presents a challenge for the region.

- The referenced “residents” are mythical.
- If it is a regional issue, why are so few COG members participating in this process?
- Who is driving Alexandria’s role? Elected officials wanting to hone their progressive bona fides? Developers? Speculators? Other monied interests? Progressive zealots? Narrowly focused special interest groups? Out of town special interest groups and developers? Or all of the above?
- Objecting to increased density is a reasonable and sensible position to take, especially considering that Alexandria is already the most densely populated jurisdiction in the entire Commonwealth.
- Opposing the City’s war on SFZ is a reasonable and sensible position, especially considering that Alexandria is already the most densely populated jurisdiction in the entire Commonwealth.
- Residents’ legitimate concerns are not a “problem” and an “opposition” that needs to be dismantle[d].” COG’s language is offensive and should be stricken.

- Preserving and enhancing Alexandria's mature tree canopy and other green spaces are a reasonable and sensible goal and position to take, especially considering that Alexandria is already the most densely populated jurisdiction in the entire Commonwealth.
- What are the current impediments to living in a neighborhood? Not race. Not color of skin.
- There is equal opportunity. Race-based restrictive covenants were relatively rare in the City, and have been unenforceable as a matter of law for many, many years. They have been for many, many years irrelevant to who can now move into a neighborhood. And any redlining ended nearly a half century ago, and well before most residents in SFZ areas purchased their home.
- Even if there were instances where SFZ might have had the effect of making a neighborhood more of one race than another a half century or more ago, those who then moved into those neighborhoods are very likely dead or long gone. In contrast, subsequent and current residents have paid a premium price, and have been paying disproportionately higher taxes, for the benefit of living in a SFZ neighborhood. To now deny them those benefits would be a betrayal of public trust, illegal, and an unconscionable taking without full and fair compensation.
- Aim appears to be to *harm/reduce* SFZ housing values to make some houses cheaper for developers and newcomers.
- Aim appears to be redistribution of wealth to achieve equal results, not equal opportunity, masquerading as an affordable housing policy.

Segregation

Segregation is on the rise in our region. The "Dissimilarity Index" measures segregation in housing. In other words, it shows how unevenly distributed two different groups are within a city or metropolitan area. The higher the index, the more separate the two groups are...

The "Isolation Index" measures how much those in a certain group live close only to others in the same group [] ...

The "Exposure Index" measures how much people live in communities with people from different racial and ethnic groups.[] When we measure residential segregation in our region, this index gives the same results as the Dissimilarity and Isolation indices. For example, White residents have relatively low exposure rates compared to all minority groups. This means they're less likely to live in communities with people of different races or ethnicities.

- Segregation is not on the rise in SFZ neighborhoods in Alexandria.
- Unless unconstitutional quotas / mandates that each neighborhood have the same proportions of every race or ethnic group were enforced, then of course some group of residents would be less likely to live in communities with other races or ethnic groups, especially where some races or ethnic groups (such as from El Salvador) have voluntarily chosen to live in areas where other members of the same race or group already live.

Where one lives has a major effect on mental and physical health, education, exposure to crime and economic opportunity.

- If that were the case, then reigning in densification and urbanization would help reduce negative effects on mental and physical health, education, exposure to crime and economic opportunity.
- The report has cause and effect reversed. For example, at a recent (March 21, 2023) City summit on housing, a reasonable question was posed to the City panel (specifically Karl Moritz) asking specifically how moving an individual from a less affluent area to a SFZ neighborhood would be “determinative” (Mr. Moritz’s words) of that person’s life expectancy, health, and economic opportunity. The question was ignored and not answered. The answer is that it would not be determinative.

Residents who live in urban areas that are more segregated by race and income have fewer chances to move up economically.

- This conclusion is unsupported.
- People of all races are moving into SFZ neighborhoods for the obvious reason that they want to live in SFZ neighborhoods—such neighborhoods are desirable.

Many research studies have found that racial inequality is made worse by residential segregation.

- There is no known credible study demonstrating that in Alexandria.
- There is no known credible study demonstrating that eliminating SFZ will achieve greater equal opportunity in Alexandria.
- The summary misconstrues and misuses housing “segregation.” With regard to residential housing, Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines segregation as “the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by **enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area...**”
- In Alexandria, there is no enforced segregation, and it is spurious to claim otherwise. Redlining ended nearly a half century ago, and well before most residents in SFZ areas purchased their home.

Higher poverty rates in an area may also lead to higher crime rates and worse health outcomes.

- Increasing urbanization is the problem created by City officials and their supporters.

Opportunities

Schools

Access to good schools also depends on where you live in our region: ...

– Low performing schools are more likely to be in urban areas with larger numbers of Black and Hispanic residents. They include the District of Columbia and urban areas in Alexandria and Arlington.

- Solution is to improve schools in Alexandria, not eliminate SFZ.

Healthy environments (areas with less pollution)

• The more suburban and rural areas of Loudoun and Prince William counties are the healthiest places to live in the region....

- This supports a finding that SFZ neighborhoods are healthier and contradicts most of the assumptions and conclusions in the report.

• **The District, Arlington and Alexandria have the lowest access.**

- Increasing density and congestion in Alexandria will negatively affect health and quality of life.

• **Access to healthy environments has improved dramatically for all residents since 2019. The reason is likely less pollution from the drop in commuters during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- Ignores other likely factors, such as less time spent in denser, more urbanized areas such as downtown DC and other congested, dense area such as Rosslyn and Crystal City.
- Increasing density in SFZ neighborhoods, particularly those without frequent, reliable mass transit, jobs, shopping, etc. will increase pollution in those areas

...

Access to Opportunities by Race and Ethnicity

Groups with the most access are listed first after each opportunity. Those with the least access are listed last.

Schools: White, Asian, Native American, Hispanic, Black.

- Solution is to improve public schools in Alexandria, not eliminate SFZ.

...

Access to jobs: Asian, White, Hispanic, Native American, Black.

- Affordable housing should be located near frequent and reliable mass transit, jobs for their residents, and shopping.

Transit index: (how frequent and friendly, distance between stops, connections): Hispanic, Asian, Black, Native American, White.

- Affordable housing should be located near frequent and reliable mass transit, jobs for their residents, and shopping.

...

Environment (pollution level): White, Native American, Asian, Hispanic, Black.

- This supports a finding that SFZ neighborhoods are healthier and contradicts most of the assumptions and conclusions in the report.

Housing

Common problems

Of the region's more than two million households, one-third have one or more of these HUD-designated housing problems:

- 1. Incomplete kitchen facilities**
- 2. Incomplete plumbing facilities**
- 3. Overcrowding**
- 4. High cost (paying 30% or more of income on housing costs).**

- Eliminating SFZ will not solve these perceived problems
- Increasing density will not solve these perceived problems, but will increase problems

Households of color -- and particularly Hispanic and Black households, are more likely to have housing problems. This is also true for nonfamily households (people living together who are not related) and families of five or more. See Table 1c for more information. Regionally, 25% of White households and one of every three households of color have housing problems.

This trend continues for households facing severe housing problems. See Table 1c. The problems include no kitchen or plumbing. More than one person per room or housing costs of 50% or more of the household's income also are considered severe problems.

- Cramming more people into SFZ areas will not appreciably solve these perceived problems, but will increase such problems in SFZ neighborhoods
- The City's "pack'em and stack'em" mentality will create a less desirable City overall

...

• Renters in Alexandria, Arlington, and Loudoun Counties are least likely to experience severe housing problems

- This contradicts the assumptions and rationales for eliminating SFZ and massively changing zoning laws in Alexandria

The goals and strategies

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing for families earning at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the region – especially where there hasn't been any.

- It is a national issue
- Alexandria is doing far better in this regard than neighboring jurisdictions, as the report shows

There are several ways to achieve this goal:

...

• Provide low-interest loans to homeowners who want to build affordable ADUs (Accessible Dwelling Units) on their property. (Example: an apartment over a garage).

- Short-term rentals, incredibly small (3-foot) setbacks, and lack of prior notice to neighbors of ADUs have and will increasingly lead to disputes, noise, and other negative attributes of density

2. Change zoning and land use policies to expand access to fair housing. Increase the development, geographic distribution, and supply of affordable housing.

Zoning for single-family homes in the region makes it hard to develop affordable housing. To change this, local leaders can:

• Revise zoning regulations to allow as-of-right Accessory Dwelling Units

- Short-term rentals, incredibly small (3-foot) setbacks, and lack of prior notice to neighbors of ADUs have and will increasingly lead to disputes, noise, parking problems, and other negative attributes of density

• Increase inclusionary zoning incentives for more affordable housing units to be created in a new mixed income building or increase fees for developers to pay for someone else to build affordable housing in a different location sometime in the future

- So-called non-profits and their for-profit partners / backers already are making a lot of money from the City's generous housing and land use programs.
- **Adopt zoning changes to make it easier to develop affordable housing**
 - Wouldn't such changes involve illegal quotas for neighborhoods?
 - Eliminating SFZ will not make it easier to develop housing in any significant number; instead, eliminating SFZ neighborhoods will reduce the diversity of types of neighborhoods available in the City.
 - Affordable housing should be located near frequent and reliable mass transit, jobs for their residents, and shopping.
- **Include a fair housing equity analysis when reviewing significant rezoning proposals and specific plans**
 - The City would first need to perform an analysis of the equities for current owners and residents in the impacted neighborhoods before embarking on these massive zoning changes.

3. Implement policies to preserve affordable housing and prevent displacement of residents. Keep the same number of existing affordable rental units in our region.

We've lost affordable housing during the past decade.

- Not true for Alexandria

One of our priorities must be to have a net zero change. In other words, we need to offset the loss by building new or preserving existing units. To do this, we must:

• Track and support existing affordable housing

- Already the case in Alexandria

...

Increase the number of homeowners in the region and reduce the unequal treatment and discriminatory practices that keep members of protected classes from buying a home.

- Already the case in Alexandria

We can increase opportunities for low- and moderate-income buyers to buy homes:

• Through cooperative homeownership models and community land trusts

• By allowing and encouraging higher density, smaller/accessory dwelling units and duplexes

- Short-term rentals, incredibly small (3-foot) setbacks, and lack of prior notice to neighbors of ADUs have and will increasingly lead to disputes, noise, and other negative attributes of density.
- Increasing density in SFZ will lead to crowding, increased traffic and parking problems, noise, loss of mature tree canopy and green space, etc.

BOX 6

Fair Housing Goals and Strategies

...

City of Alexandria

☐ Prioritize public land for affordable housing.

- Co-location of housing of any type at school sites is illegal in Virginia, as well as posing serious safety concerns.

☐ Provide partial tax abatements for homeowners who rent their ADUs to low-and moderate-income tenants.

- Short-term rentals, incredibly small (3-foot) setbacks, and lack of prior notice to neighbors of ADUs have and will increasingly lead to disputes, noise, and other negative attributes of density.

☐ In accordance with Virginia Code § 15.2-2304. Affordable dwelling unit ordinances in certain localities, adopt an ordinance to institute mandatory inclusionary zoning city-wide and provide an array of incentives, such as density bonuses, special financing, expedited approval, fee waivers, and tax incentives.

- The cited code section does not authorize mandatory inclusionary zoning city-wide or incentives, such as special financing, expedited approval, fee waivers, and tax incentives.

☐ Reduce the 20,000 square foot minimum lot size in the R-20 zone or permit duplexes in this zone.

- Allowing duplexes in any SFZ will lead to crowding, increased traffic and parking problems, noise, loss of mature tree canopy and green space, etc.

* * *

2. Community Engagement Summary

The summary shows that COG engaged special interest groups and officials, many from outside the City, but not Alexandria citizens' associations or any representatives of SFZ neighborhoods, negating the usefulness of that engagement and skewing the results.

The report claimed that Alexandria's City Council held a public hearing to take input on the COG report on April 17, 2021. I know of no public discussion by Council on that date relating to the COG report.

* * *

3. Draft Metropolitan Washington Regional Fair Housing Plan–City of Alexandria

The project team took seriously its role in ensuring that community voices inform the plan. These voices are important to help confirm data findings, identify gaps in information, or reshape biases or uninformed viewpoints. (p. 5)

- This statement is incorrect. The outreach was biased, focused on the views of special interest groups self-interested in the outcome of the study, rather than asking the right questions and providing correct answers.
- No representation by, or input from, Alexandria citizens' associations, representatives of SFZ neighborhoods, etc., who most likely would be negatively affected by the proposals/goals.

To that end, the project team wanted to engage with residents from across the region to share barriers to affordable housing and talk about equity and discrimination in housing. The project team partnered with Challenging Racism, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, with a mission to “educate people about the prevalence and inequities of institutional and systemic racism, giving them knowledge and tools they need to challenge racism where they encounter it.” (p. 7)

- This statement is incorrect. The outreach was biased, limited to the views of special interest groups self-interested in the outcome of the study, rather than asking the right questions and providing correct answers.
 - No representation by, or input from, Alexandria citizens’ associations, representatives of SFZ neighborhoods, etc.
- **Safe, affordable housing in acceptable condition is difficult to find, according to 83.6 percent of respondents. The top three reasons given were that the respondent didn’t earn enough money (58.9 percent), ... and the respondent was not able to save for a security deposit or down payment (29.9 percent). Other reasons included that the respondent had too much debt, mortgage interest or fees were too expensive, and the homebuying process was too confusing or complicated. (p. 8)**

- This statement totally contradicts the assumptions and conclusions in the report. It acknowledges that money and personal choice are by far the reasons people can’t live wherever they want, not illegal discrimination, and not single-family zoning.
- **The top three reasons reported for discrimination were income level, race or ethnicity, or source of income. (p. 8)**
- This statement totally contradicts the assumptions and conclusions in the report. It acknowledges that money is by far the reason people can’t live wherever they want, not illegal discrimination, and not single-family zoning.

The NVivo study found the following problems to be the top 10 barriers to fair housing in the region, in rank order: ...

10. planning and zoning regulations (p. 10)

- This finding contradicts the assumptions and conclusions in the report. Money and personal choice are by far the reasons people can’t live wherever they want, not illegal discrimination, and not zoning, which was dead last in the list of 10 “barriers.”

Table 12: Isolation Index Values by Race and Ethnicity (p. 25)

- The table shows that the Isolation Index for Whites and Blacks in Alexandria have dramatically improved (gone down). This finding contradicts the report’s assumptions of significant discrimination, alleged legacy effects of past discrimination, and claimed need for zoning changes.

iii. Disparities in Access to Opportunity

a. Disparities in Access to Opportunity—Education

i. Describe any disparities in access to proficient schools in the jurisdiction and region.

Table 16: School Proficiency Index for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area (p. 50)

- The numbers for Alexandria are substantially worse for Alexandria compared to the Region for all races. The City and ACPS should focus much more on improving schools and education for students already in the system and far less on increasing the population and especially student population.

i. Describe any disparities in access to jobs and labor markets by protected class groups in the jurisdiction and region.

Table 17: Labor Market and Jobs Proximity Indexes (p. 59)

- The numbers for Alexandria overall are substantially better compared to the Region for all races. The City and ACPS should focus much more on improving schools and education for students already in the system and far less on increasing the population and especially student population. This finding contradicts the claimed need for zoning changes.

All racial and ethnic groups measured by the Labor Market Index have high levels of employment engagement in Alexandria, ranging from 85 to 94, but there is a slight racial disparity between the groups ... (p. 65)

- Elimination of SFZ neighborhoods would not appreciably improve the already high levels of employment engagement.

When economic status is accounted for, [the Job Proximity figures] vary little for most groups, suggesting that class does not strongly impact job proximity. (p. 65-66)

- Elimination of SFZ neighborhoods very likely would not improve the already high levels of employment engagement.
- Affordable housing should be located near frequent and reliable mass transit, jobs for their residents, and shopping.
- This finding contradicts the assumptions and conclusions in the report. Money and personal choice are by far the reasons people can't live wherever they want, not illegal discrimination, and not zoning, which was dead last in the list of 10 "barriers."

Transportation index values are relatively high in Alexandria, with minimal disparities based on race, ethnicity, or poverty status. (p. 80)

- Elimination of SFZ neighborhoods very likely would not improve the already high levels of transportation index values.
- Affordable housing should be located near frequent and reliable mass transit, jobs for their residents, and shopping.
- This finding contradicts the assumptions and conclusions in the report. Money and personal choice are by far the reasons people can't live wherever they want, not illegal discrimination, and not zoning.

Discrepancies in transit access in Alexandria vary negligibly based on race and ethnicity. (p. 87)

- Elimination of SFZ neighborhoods very likely would not improve the already high levels of transit access.
- Affordable housing should be located near frequent and reliable mass transit, jobs for their residents, and shopping.
- This finding contradicts the assumptions and conclusions in the report. Money and personal choice are by far the reasons people can't live wherever they want, not illegal discrimination, not access to transit, and not zoning.

e. Disparities in Access to Opportunity – Access to Environmentally Healthy Neighborhoods

i. Describe any disparities in access to environmentally healthy neighborhoods in the jurisdiction and region. ...

Generally, urban areas tend to have lower air quality as these areas have more emission sources and thus more exposure to hazards... Generally, urban areas tend to have lower air quality as these areas have more emission sources and thus more exposure to hazards. (p. 99)

- The Environmental Health Index for Alexandrians is strikingly worse than the region as a whole. This confirms the obvious—the most urbanized and densely populated jurisdiction (Alexandria) has the highest “exposure to toxins.”
- This supports a finding that SFZ and other less densely populated neighborhoods are healthier and contradicts many of the assumptions and conclusions in the report.
- Increasing density and congestion in SFZ neighborhoods will negatively affect health and quality of life.

iv. Disproportionate Housing Needs

1.a. ...

The four HUD-designated housing problems include (1) lacking complete kitchen facilities, (2) lacking complete plumbing facilities, (3) overcrowding, and (4) experiencing housing cost burden. (p. 107)

- Elimination of SFZ neighborhoods would do nothing to address these stated problems.

Overcrowding ...

Alexandria

In Alexandria, Hispanic households have a disproportionate share of households living in overcrowded housing, 9.2 percent. This rate is much higher than the rate of overcrowding for White households, which is 0.7 percent. Black and Asian households also have a disproportionate, though lesser, share of overcrowding than White households do. (p.112)

- This statement ignores the fact that Table 26 shows, for four of the five groups, the percentage of overcrowding in Alexandria is less than for the Region.

B. Alexandria Goals

1. Increase the Supply of Housing That Is Affordable to Low- and Moderate-Income Families through the Following Strategies:

- a. Prioritize public land for affordable housing. (p. 159)**

- Co-location of housing of any type at school sites is illegal in Virginia, as well as posing serious safety concerns.
- The City Office of Housing has denied that City staff or officials submitted this “goal” to COG.
- Accordingly, this “goal” should be stricken from the report.

b. Provide partial tax abatements for homeowners who rent their accessory dwelling units to low- and moderate-income tenants. (p. 159)

- Short-term rentals, incredibly small (3-foot) setbacks, and lack of prior notice to neighbors of ADUs have and will increasingly lead to disputes, noise, and other negative attributes of density.
- This would be unfair to those owners who forgo cramming ADUs into their lot.

2. Reform Zoning and Land Use Policies to Expand Access to Fair Housing Choice by Increasing the Development, Geographic Distribution, and Supply of Affordable Housing.

a. In accordance with Virginia Code § 15.2-2304 on affordable dwelling unit ordinances in certain localities, adopt an ordinance to institute mandatory inclusionary zoning citywide, and provide an array of incentives such as density bonuses, special financing, expedited approval, fee waivers, and tax incentives. (p. 159)

- This purported goal (e.g., “Mandatory inclusionary zoning citywide”) is vague and potentially misleading and overbroad.
- The cited code section does not authorize mandatory inclusionary zoning city-wide or incentives, such as special financing, expedited approval, fee waivers, and tax incentives.
- Short-term rentals, incredibly small (3-foot) setbacks, and lack of prior notice to neighbors of ADUs have and will increasingly lead to disputes, noise, and other negative attributes of density.
- The City’s “pack’em and stack’em” approach is the problem, not the solution.
- The goals would eviscerate Small Area Plans in the City.

b. Reduce the 20,000 square-foot minimum lot size in the R-20 zone, or permit duplexes in this zone. (p. 159)

- Allowing duplexes in any SFZ neighborhood will lead to crowding, increased traffic and parking problems, noise, loss of mature tree canopy and green space, etc.
- The City’s “pack’em and stack’em” approach is the problem, not the solution.
- The goals would eviscerate Small Area Plans in the City.

The City of Alexandria has a large amount of single-family housing.²⁷⁷ The high number of historic areas in the city make it difficult to build multifamily housing.²⁷⁸ As a result, affordable housing is only viable on the edges of the municipality.²⁷⁹ The Alexandria City Council approved accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in 2021.²⁸⁰ (p. 186)

- This statement is incorrect for several reasons.
- The statement that “Alexandria has a large amount of single-family homes” incorrectly cite as its source the City’s ADU webpage, which says nothing about the amount of single family homes.

- In fact, the Census Bureau found that only 15% of Alexandria’s housing units are detached, single-family homes. This is lower than virtually every other locality in the United States—the national level is 63%, and 51% of Alexandria’s overall housing units are found in multi-family buildings of 10 or more apartments, far greater than the national level of 14%.
- Detached single-family housing is the only type of housing that has not increased in Alexandria since 2010.
- And compared to the Region, open space in Alexandria is miniscule. The amount of green space is even less. Densification would only make this worse.
- COG, City government and officials, and monied interests cannot have it both ways. They cannot accurately claim that eliminating SFZ (e.g., cramming in ADUs, conversions to duplexes, etc.) is necessary to appreciably increase the City’s affordable housing stock on the one hand, while knowing that SFZ neighborhoods account for only a very small percentage of City dwelling units.
- Similarly, COG, City government and officials, and monied interests cannot accurately claim that eliminating SFZ (e.g., cramming in ADUs, allowing duplexes, etc.) could appreciably increase the City’s affordable housing stock on the one hand, while claiming that the densification of SFZ neighborhoods would not be significant.
- The City’s “pack’em and stack’em” approach is the problem, not the solution.
- The goals would eviscerate Small Area Plans in the City.
- Overall, Alexandria is already the most densely populated jurisdiction in Virginia. To cram more into the City people would financially benefit monied interests, but it would make our City a less desirable place to live.

Respectfully submitted

John Fehrenbach
Alexandria, VA Resident

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Kevin Brady <krbrady1919@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 25, 2023 3:31 PM
To: Justin Wilson; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Please vote YES on Z4Housing (from a longtime Alexandria homeowner)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from krbrady1919@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello all,

This is a brief note urging you to vote YES on Zoning for Housing this coming Tuesday. The NIMBY voices can be very loud (I'm sure y'all are hearing from them in multiple venues), but there are tens of thousands of us, like myself as a homeowner, who appreciate the changes you're pursuing and want you to get this thing over the finish line on the 28th. Keep on keeping on, and my wife and I, and most of our neighbors, will have your backs when primary season comes next year. Go Council!!


Kevin Brady

Alexandria resident since 2010, and homeowner since 2016
Proud parent of an ACPS kindergartener at Mt Vernon Community School

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Victoria Marcos Waskowicz <victoria.waskowicz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 24, 2023 5:58 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; PlanComm
Subject: Re: Support of Zoning For Housing

 Some people who received this message don't often get email from victoria.waskowicz@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

In advance of a counter-rally happening tomorrow, I am writing again to reiterate my support for the City's zoning change proposals.

Thanks,
Victoria Waskowicz
Echols Ave, Alexandria

El El mié, nov 1, 2023 a la(s) 07:25, Victoria Marcos Waskowicz <victoria.waskowicz@gmail.com> escribió:
Hello,

I'm writing to express my personal support for Zoning For Housing.

I am especially struck by two lots on the 5200 block of Seminary Road that I understand were denied applications for rezoning (and remain zoned for SFHs). These would have been great candidates, on a busy road and in sight of both Skyline and Southern Towers.

I think this is a great and necessary policy change, and that the perfect should not be the enemy of the good.

Thanks,
Victoria Waskowicz

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Luca Gattoni-Celli <potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 24, 2023 8:00 AM
To: Justin Wilson; Amy Jackson; John Chapman; Alyia Gaskins; Sarah Bagley; Kirk McPike; Canek Aguirre
Cc: NoVA YIMBYs; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; PlanComm
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Do not reward intimidation tactics

Dear Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, and honorable council members,

I was not planning to write you again about Zoning for Housing, which remains a popular, prudent policy. My family welcomed a new baby November 14th, so I have been on a mostly successful hiatus. Unfortunately, I must address certain recent events.

As you likely know, the publisher of Alexandria Times authored a piece accusing me and YIMBYs of Northern Virginia of doing what I am doing here: communicating with you as a housing advocate and private citizen. All of our communications and interactions have been ordinary and appropriate. This is local politics. There is no news.

As a former journalist myself, I must observe how unprofessional the article is. No attempt was made to contact me or my associates for comment. The author did not identify her source in any way. And the reference to my putting my children to bed was totally unnecessary. I do not claim injury, but I nevertheless believe family is off limits.

The real problem is that this article is clearly an attempt to intimidate housing supporters in Alexandria. I realized that on Thanksgiving, so evidently I was not intimidated, but I understand why other citizens might hesitate to contact you. We all should be able to disagree without trying to delegitimize each other. Such vitriol is corrosive to a free society.

The Alexandria Times previously advocated for the city manager to illegally preclude you, our duly elected representatives, from acting on Zoning for Housing. That basic sentiment is regrettably common among housing opponents.

I am tired of mincing words. This is goonish behavior. You have an obligation to yourselves, to the voters, and I would argue to our institutions, an obligation not to accommodate or appease intimidation. The only thing you will gain is more goonish behavior.

The recent public comment sessions were revealing. You should not reward the man who screamed profanities at a police officer or the woman who said that you deserve to be spanked.

My mother thinks I am special, my wife thinks I am interesting, but I am not a special interest, any more than the other supporters of Zoning for Housing. I will say once again, you were elected to lead this city into a more prosperous, equitable future. That project will require multiple rounds of reform like this one. It will require you to have strong stomachs.

As my infant daughter sleeps in the next room, all I have left to add is what I always tell public officials: Please use your best judgment to make the best policy you can. Please do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Luca Gattoni-Celli
Chief Executive & Founder

YIMBYs of Northern Virginia

yimbysofnova.org

843-793-7106 (Mobile/Signal)

Follow my blog Cornerstone: lucagattonicelli.substack.com

Sent from mobile device. Please pardon typos.

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Matthew Marcy <matthewsmarcy@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 10:34 AM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]NO to changes to Housing Zoning!



You don't often get email from matthewsmarcy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mayor and City Council -

We oppose any change to the current housing zoning in the City. It is an earned right through hard work sacrifice to afford the privilege of owning a single family home in our quiet, bucolic environment so close to Washington and Old Town. We do not want to see any changes to the current zoning that could in any way remotely jeopardize this.

Regards,
Matthew Marcy
23-year resident

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Keia Waters

From: Adele And John S <hon162@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 9:42 AM
To: City Council
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to Zoning Changes

Some people who received this message don't often get email from hon162@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

This is to state our opposition to the City Council's Zoning for Housing (ZFH) proposal. The unseemly and completely unnecessary haste of ZFH supporters to pass a radical change in Alexandria's zoning laws, combined with serious and legitimate doubts about the effectiveness of the measures to achieve the purported goals of the proposal, require significantly more careful review and debate. While the Council may have good intentions, the proposal as written, is largely a gift to developers with little benefit to the those the proposal is intended to help. As it is currently proposed, the ZFH measure must be rejected.

John Siegmund

Adele Siegmund

(2 votes against ZFH proposal)

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John Siegmund

Adele Siegmund

(2 votes against ZFH proposal)

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: nhurley1710@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 12:08 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Nancy Williams
Subject: re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Some people who received this message don't often get email from nhurley1710@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am an Alexandria resident and am writing to voice my opposition to the zoning for housing for all plan without further study and justification of the impact on single family residences. As a taxpayer for a single family residence for over 40 years, I am dismayed by the "rush to approve" change for single family residential zones. Currently, our neighbor jurisdiction Arlington is reviewing their city council approval of "In the Middle" which was pushed through this summer. Currently, there is a lawsuit pending to review and advance modifications to that Plan before implementation.

There are real questions Alexandria residents have about impact to our currently single family residential zones. Impacts of projected utility, traffic, congestion, sewer, watershed changes with increased land use. These considerations have not been explained to the public. In a recent Gazette edition, a poll showed 71% of respondents did not understand the Zoning Change Plan and did not have enough information on it. This is not something to be rushed through between holidays, without further information and dialogue by impacted residents (taxpayers).

It is especially disconcerting that Alexandria is not heeding the situation in Arlington with the pending lawsuit on "In the Middle Plan." In both jurisdictions, the advance claim is how these zoning changes are going to provide more moderate priced housing. Yet, what studies have proved this???? It is always easy to claim something. Yet, time and again when low income housing is made part of developers' plans, that percentage earmarked for low income housing is time and again reduced (40% gets lowered to 15%, to 10%) and the world goes on just as always. I firmly believe the Council owes it to Alexandria residents how the "Housing for All" Plan actually provides moderate income housing. It won't if \$600,000 plus townhouses or \$400,000 condos are the aim of replacing single family homes. In fairness to current Alexandria property owners, the City Council needs to justify exactly how this is going to meet the stated AIM of more moderate housing, making Alexandria more welcoming and habitable to moderate family incomes.

Single family home purchasers have moved to Alexandria for its community and historic ties along with proximity to DC. There are important reasons for the City Council to offer its residents a full picture, a full plan of what the gains are for increased moderate income housing. And, there is no lack of development increase already in the City. Near Del Ray, behind St. Rita's school and Church, a current lot is being bulldozed to build up 370 new housing units already. When the units go up for sale will they be in the affordable housing range or is this just a hype?

Faith in how the City Council now proceeds when almost 3/4th of residents polled, don't understand the Housing for All Plan (per Gazette poll) is going to be at an all time low. City Council members are suppose to represent their constituents. How is that happening when so many folks, know so little other than they are going to be zoned in a take it or leave it manner.

Alexandria residents deserve better treatment and more information on impact to existing neighborhoods is vital and necessary before a vote. Residents need information and transparency. There is not enough of that as you city council members move forward to the Nov. 29th vote. Credibility is at stake for City Council zoning actions of this magnitude.

I stand in opposition to this premature Nov. 29, 2023 vote.
Sincerely,

Nancy Hurley
Crestwood Drive, Alexandria, Va 22302

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Kyle King <kbking23@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 12:12 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: carla Schneier; Sunny Yoder
Subject: [EXTERNAL]NO to changes in single family zoning

You don't often get email from kbking23@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I am writing to express strong opposition to proposed changes to Alexandria single family zoning. I am also angered at the method that has been employed by you to push this misguided proposal through in one fell swoop with little opportunity for the homeowners in the city to slow or stop it. Homeowners are against this.

I believe the plan will only help developers buy up smaller single family homes and construct cookie cutter multi family units that will likely cost per unit as much as the original property, but there will be 2 or 4 of them, resulting in overcrowding, increased need for policing and schools, and infrastructure like sewers. Not to mention parking, which is already an issue in my neighborhood.

Please abandon this misguided path and focus on quality of life issues you have in front of you, crime, environmental degradation and the conversion of business properties to residential use. Don't be swayed by self serving developers money or false arguments that this will help economically disadvantaged people, it will not.

Kyle King
Central Avenue, Braddock Heights

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: Travis A. Niles <travisandrewniles@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 4:08 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Writing In Support Of Zoning For Housing

You don't often get email from travisandrewniles@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I'm writing to *express my support* for the current Zoning For Housing proposals before the city council. I urge you to vote for these changes.

These modest but essential changes represent the freedom individual landholders should enjoy while carrying sufficient protections for the character of our community.

I've lived in the city of Alexandria since October of 2014. As a renter, I've been a resident of the West End, Parker Gray, and most recently Del Ray. I've remained a renter because of a lack of housing that I can afford to own. So many of my friends rent or own outside of the neighborhood not because they want to, but because they must. There is no more space for them, nor homes they can afford.

I harbor no delusions that these zoning changes will immediately address this problem. But those who wish to use their land to create more units should enjoy the freedom to do so, within our established limits.

Thank you for your attention.

Travis A. Niles
202-643-1751

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Keia Waters

From: arthur impastato <aimpastato239@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 4:52 PM
To: Keia Waters; brandi.galloway@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Gloria Sitton
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: Sash Impastato Submission For the Record on Zoning For Housing November 28, 2023 Legislative Meeting
Attachments: 11-17-23 Bellwether Research Survey.pdf

Some people who received this message don't often get email from aimpastato239@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Keia and Brandi:

I am forwarding my submission to City Council for their November 28, 2023 legislative meeting for whatever the docket number will be on Zoning For Housing so that my comments can be part of the record for that item of the hearing. The reason I am forwarding the submission to you is that I got an out of the office message from Gloria Sittin stating she would not be in the office until Monday, November 27, which I surmise may be too late to get my submission to be in the formal record.

Thank you very much for your assistance on this matter and I send you and your family my best wishes for a safe and relaxing Thanksgiving Holiday.

Arthur "Sash" Impastato
239 Medlock Lane
Alexandria, VA

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: arthur impastato <aimpastato239@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 4:34 PM
Subject: Sash Impastato Submission For the Record on Zoning For Housing November 28, 2023 Legislative Meeting
To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>, <amy.jackson@alexandriava.gov>, <canek.aguirre@alexandriava.gov>, Sarah Bagley <sarah.bagley@alexandriava.gov>, <john.chapman@alexandriava.gov>, <alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov>, Kirk McPike <kirk.mcpike@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>, <amy.eggert@alexandriava.gov>, <regina.benavides@alexandriava.gov>, <suzanne.derr@alexandriava.gov>, <reese.glassman@alexandriava.gov>, <christine.macey@alexandriava.gov>, <karl.bach@alexandriava.gov>, <Karl.Moritz@alexandriava.gov>, <Nancy.Williams@alexandriava.gov>, <Gloria.Sitton@alexandriava.gov>

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor & Members of City Council:

Set forth below are my personal comments as an Alexandria homeowner for the upcoming November 28, 2023 City Council legislative meeting on the current proposal for Zoning For Housing. I respectfully request

that these comments be made part of the record for the November 28 meeting for the docket item relating to Zoning For Housing.

At the outset, I want to thank City staff for the enormous amount of work and effort that they have put into trying to deal with the issue of affordable housing. Creating more affordable housing in a sensible and effective way and without causing harmful unintended consequences is certainly no easy task. In spite of City staff's efforts, more needs to be done to increase public awareness and the approach used to disseminate information needs to change and be much more balanced.

I have participated in almost every meeting relating to Zoning For Housing and its predecessor the Bonus Height Density proposal and I am very troubled by the fact that the City intends to proceed with a vote on this matter notwithstanding the fact there remain numerous compelling reasons for a postponement of the vote. A number of these reasons listed below have repeatedly been aired in public testimony and in written comments, but none, to my knowledge, have been adequately addressed.

For your convenience, set forth below are a number of compelling reasons for a delay on the vote which I hope that you will address and carefully consider:

1. Adding as part of the proposals how the success and impact of this initiative will be measured and at what intervals is critical. There is very little of this that has been proposed. In stark contrast, the City's Energy & Climate Change Action Plan May 2023 has the Office of Climate Action tracking progress of its goals, strategies, and actions. Why would the City not want to have specific, measurable, time-bound steps to track progress of the goals, strategies and actions of Zoning For Housing which is the most ambitious zoning change since those done in 1992? I would hope that the City would want to annually or bi-annually know not just the number of affordable housing units created, but much more importantly get data on whether or not the Zoning For Housing proposals are (1) creating more accessibility to housing in varying locations across the City, (2) creating more availability of housing typologies at varying price points, (3) mitigating potential negative impacts of development and redevelopment projects on existing residents, (4) creating more work force housing for people who work in Alexandria, particularly teachers, police and firefighters, (5) impacting traffic congestion, (6) impacting greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., is pollution getting better or worse within the City limits as density increases), (7) impacting school enrollment, (8) impacting road repairs, (9) impacting the reliability of the electric grid, (10) impacting response times for police and firefighter intervention, (11) impacting real estate taxes, (12) impacting housing prices for rentals and home ownership, (13) impacting flooding events, (14) displacing persons currently in affordable housing, (15) impacting stormwater runoff, and (16) impacting other goals and objectives of Zoning For Housing.
2. Citizens at various public meetings on Zoning For Housing have said that more public outreach is needed through a mass mailing and through email server lists since few folks know about the Zoning For Housing proposals. This is confirmed by the attached Bellwether Research dated November 17, 2023 ("November 17 Survey") which found that 48% of Alexandrians have "Heard Nothing at all" with 33% "Heard a little" about this initiative. The November 17 Survey also notes that only 12% of Alexandria residents said that they received information from the City about Zoning For Housing with 70% stating that they had not received such information. Why would any elected official want to take a vote on Zoning For Housing when only a very small minority of our citizens know the details of what is going on? Can the City not do a mass mailing? What can possibly be the downside of having a robust democratic process with adequate and full participation?
3. Citizens at various public meetings on Zoning For Housing have said that the City should slow down and give residents more time to understand how these zoning changes will impact their respective communities. This is confirmed by the November 17 Survey which shows that 80% of Alexandrians do not want the City to vote on November 28 and rather defer Zoning For Housing.

4. Based on the November 17 Survey, 58% of Alexandrians oppose Zoning For Housing and only 26% support it. Why wouldn't the City want more time to engage the public about this initiative rather than quickly pass something that is very unpopular and create even more distrust of elected officials?
5. Based on the November 17 Survey, 57% of Alexandrians are not satisfied that City Council listens to residents' input and concerns and takes them into consideration when making decisions. Why wouldn't the City want to take more time to address the concerns of those opposed to Zoning For Housing rather than exacerbate and perpetuate discord?
6. The Phase 2 proposals currently in the proposal were issued merely a few days before the November 1 Planning Commission vote. Shouldn't there be ample public comment on what will be studied for Phase 2 rather than what we have now which is a dictate to staff on what they must study? Why should citizens on both sides of Zoning For Housing not be given the opportunity to participate in setting forth what should be studied for Phase 2 now rather than have to comment on what has been dictated to City staff later? It is also worth noting that the action docket for the November 18 meeting and the docket and accompanying materials for the November 28 meeting have not been posted as of submission of these comments late afternoon on November 21, 2023. I would hope that each of you would want more than a Holiday week plus one day to try and get though what will be, based on the materials posted for the November 18 Council meeting alone, at least 561 pages of materials (comprised of a City staff report, a City staff presentation and comments filed for the record) before you vote on such a far reaching initiative. Each of you should ask yourselves how, without reading all of these materials, can you possibly make an informed decision or that you care about Alexandrian's opinions on Zoning For Housing?
7. Having City staff analyze the level of use of existing off street parking as Commissioners Brown, McMahon and Lyle noted at the Planning Commission November 1 meeting.
8. Having City staff evaluate a sample of deed covenants to see how they would interact with the proposals as Commissioner Lyle noted at the Planning Commission November 1 meeting.
9. Having City staff evaluate commercial to residential conversions to determine what building types are being converted and better understand the challenges with each case as Commissioner Lyle noted at the Planning Commission November 1 meeting.
10. Having City staff evaluate the impact to residents living in affordable housing of having no parking minimums in areas not near metros.
11. Having City staff provide greater specificity on precisely where in Alexandria the RMF proposal would apply given the very broad terms used in the current Zoning For Housing proposal which state that it would be applied "in areas planned and/or zoned for medium or higher density development. **This does not preclude other sites that may be appropriate for the RMF Zone and are consistent with city housing goals and land use and urban design best practices.**" (Emphasis added)

Based on the foregoing, I would recommend a postponement of the vote until 2024 when all of the issues set forth above can be fully addressed. Addressing these issues would be in the interest of all Alexandria residents whether or not they are opposed or supportive of the current Zoning For Housing proposals, and they should also be of great interest to City staff and to each of you personally.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I do hope that each of you will give thoughtful and careful consideration to the many compelling reasons for a deferral of Zoning For Housing. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions, and I send you and your families my best wishes for a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Arthur "Sash" Impastato

239 Medlock Lane
Alexandria, VA 22304

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Alexandria City VA Survey

Toplines

November 17, 2023

Bellwether Research

Methodology

Bellwether Research conducted a survey to gauge public opinion in Alexandria City, VA. The study involved 1,059 registered voters and was conducted via text-to-web from November 16 to 17, 2023. A simple random sample (non-blocked design) of N=30,000 registered voters that reside in Alexandria City VA was generated from the full voter file of N=~115,000 that have cell phone numbers on file.

To ensure the sample accurately reflected the diversity of registered voters in Alexandria City, the full sample was balanced based on the voter file and Census demographics. The balancing process involved weighting the data according to key demographic factors, including age, gender, race, educational attainment, and Hispanic ethnicity. Age and gender weighting proportions were derived from the i360 voter file, while proportions for race, education, and Hispanic ethnicity were derived from the ACS (American Community Survey). We employed iterative proportional fitting (raking) to calculate weights, ensuring a close approximation of marginal distributions.

It's important to note that, due to rounding and weighting procedures, percentages in the results may or may not add up to exactly 100%. For a detailed breakdown of demographic proportions, including both unweighted and weighted samples, please refer to the end of this document.

Additionally, measures were implemented to ensure data security and quality standards that may arise from the sampling methodology (texting). Each survey participant was assigned a unique identifier, which was carefully linked to their voter record. This precautionary step was taken to prevent both the forwarding of the survey and the submission of multiple responses by the same participant (such as using different devices or incognito modes). Individuals had the opportunity to opt out of further communication by replying 'STOP'.

The margin of sampling error for this poll is +/- 3%.

About Bellwether Research & Consulting

Bellwether Research is a national public opinion research firm based in Alexandria, VA. We are known for designing and deploying innovative research methodologies - including our Women's Advantage panel - to uncover the views of women voters. For more than two decades we have delivered public opinion insights that have been used to inform the strategies of campaigns, advocacy groups, foundations and not-for-profits.

Q1 - The Alexandria City Council has an initiative called Zoning for Housing that would make changes to Alexandria's current zoning laws. How much, if anything, have you heard about the details of the Zoning for Housing initiative?

Answer Options	Percent
Heard a lot	19%
Heard a little	33%
Heard nothing at all	48%

Q2 - The Zoning for Housing legislation would make substantial changes to Alexandria's current zoning laws, including the elimination of single-family home zoning, as part of the city's plan to create more housing units in the city. Do you support or oppose this legislation?

Answer Options	Percent
Strongly support	14%
Somewhat support	12%
Somewhat oppose	16%
Strongly oppose	42%
I don't know/unsure	17%
Marginals	
Total Support	26%
Total Oppose	58%

Q3 - The Zoning for Housing legislation would remove the current single housing unit limit in single-family neighborhoods in Alexandria to allow as many as four housing units per lot and it would allow as many as eight unrelated adults living in a four-bedroom unit on a single lot. Do you support or oppose this legislation?

Answer Options	Percent
Strongly support	14%
Somewhat support	14%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	48%
I don't know/unsure	11%
Marginals	
Total Support	28%
Total Oppose	61%

Q4_1 - More people will be able to afford to buy a home in Alexandria -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	75%
Selected	25%

Q4_2 - Developers will likely build expensive homes, but not many affordable ones -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	44%
Selected	56%

Q4_3 - Infrastructure will be inadequate to sustain this new development -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	45%
Selected	55%

Q4_4 - Increased population will make it more difficult to live in Alexandria -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	42%
Selected	58%

Q4_5 - There will be more equitable access to housing for Black residents -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	81%
Selected	19%

Q4_6 - It will be a positive development for the city -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	81%
Selected	19%

Q4_7 - It will be a negative development for the city -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	57%
Selected	43%

Q4_8 - Traffic will worsen -If passed, the city expects that the Zoning for Housing legislation will add nearly 3,000 net new housing units in Alexandria over the next 10 years. Which of the following things do you think will occur if this happens? Select as many as you think apply. (Scroll down for all options).

Answer Options	Percent
Not Selected	28%
Selected	72%

Q5 - Some people say that Alexandria city officials should slow down and give residents more time to understand how these zoning changes will impact our community and to consider more data about the impact of eliminating zoning for single family housing before rushing into it. Other people say that Alexandria city officials have made the details available and given residents many opportunities to voice their opinion and that the city should not delay and should act now to increase housing availability here. Which one reflects your opinion?

Answer Options	Percent
Alexandria city officials have made the details available and given residents many opportunities to voice their opinion and that the city should not delay and should act now to increase housing availability here.	20%
Alexandria city officials should slow down and give residents more time to understand how these zoning changes will impact our community and to consider more data about the impact of eliminating zoning for single family housing before rushing into it.	80%

Q6 - How satisfied are you that the Alexandria City Council listens to residents' input and concerns and takes them into consideration when making decisions?

Answer Options	Percent
Very satisfied	12%
Somewhat satisfied	31%
Not too satisfied	29%
Not at all satisfied	28%
Marginals	
Total Satisfied	43%
Total Not Satisfied	57%

Q7 - Did you receive information from the city about the Zoning for Housing legislation they have proposed?

Answer Options	Percent
Yes	12%
No	70%
Unsure	19%

residence - Which best describes your current residence?

Answer Options	Percent
A condominium	18%
A detached single-family home	29%
A duplex (two attached homes)	4%
A townhouse	27%
An apartment building	21%
Other	1%

ownrent - Do you own or rent your current residence?


Answer Options	Percent
Own	63%
Rent	37%

Sample Proportions: Weighted and Unweighted Demographics of The Full Sample

Demo	Weighted	Unweighted
Age		
age: 18-34	27%	8%
age: 35-44	21%	17%
age: 45-54	16%	20%
age: 55-64	16%	23%
age: 65+	20%	32%
Gender		
gender: man	46%	46%
gender: some other way	1%	1%
gender: woman	52%	53%
Race		
race: black	19%	9%
race: other	7%	10%
race: white	74%	81%
Education		
edu: bachelors+	70%	87%
edu: non-college	30%	13%
Hispanic Ethnicity		
hispanic: no	89%	90%
hispanic: yes	11%	10%
Home Ownership Status		
Own	63%	79%
Rent	37%	21%

CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: KEVIN LAST_NAME <kheanue@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 10:03 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

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4800 Fillmore Avenue, Apt 1352
Alexandria, VA 22311

November 21, 2023

Dear Mayor and Council,

I write as a resident of the City of Alexandria for 61 years. Do not repeat the mistake your predecessors made about 60 years ago when, in an attempt to encourage development, they greatly increased allowable densities in most zoning categories. Every Council since then has struggled to overcome the problems caused by this mistake.

The political result of their action was a citizen revolt led by Chuck Beatley that led to a new citizen-focused Council that had to pick up the pieces. Fortunately, the real estate market crashed and the city was able to use all the tools in its land use and zoning authority to negotiate with developers and hold them to more reasonable development proposals.

The problem was that anything permitted by any Council establishes a "right" and has to be bought back. It cannot be rescinded without enormous financial consequences. In one vote, you seem ready to make every owner in the city a potential developer. Over time, owners will fundamentally change the character of the city. If ever there was a policy that deserved a limited pilot, this is it.

I have also, from personal experience in trying to serve our homeless, observed that slumlords with no motivation other than personal gain will exploit every opportunity that city policies allow to facilitate their profitmaking.

Please slow down.

Sincerely,

Kevin Heanue

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CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

From: amykjenkins@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 10:48 PM
To: CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov
Cc: Chris Brown
Subject: re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

[You don't often get email from amykjenkins@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Hello,

I am providing the below comment in advance of the upcoming City Council meeting.

I live in the R2-5 area of Rosemont and have significant concerns about the proposal to increase the density of the neighborhood by allowing construction of up to 4 unit dwellings without parking. Watching the pace of development here over the past 10+ years, I believe this will lead to substantial changes in the character of the neighborhood and will drive further inflation of housing prices, as developers have more incentive to snatch up small affordable starter homes, tear them down, and rebuild them in a style out of character and scale for the neighborhood—with a huge markup in price. This has happened with single-family properties in the neighborhood that were divided and sold as high-end townhouses. Every small house that has been torn down has been put back on the market for over \$1 million—and in the past year many have sold for \$1.8 million! It stretches the imagination that this proposal will do anything to create more “affordable” housing in any sense, and I expect all that is going to happen is that we are going to continue to lose lovely existing structures to redevelopment. The neighborhood already has a great mix of single family, duplexes, and apartment/condos—we don’t need more. With this zoning change, you’re going to destroy what makes Alexandria wonderful—our beautiful neighborhoods full of small historic homes.

Amy Jenkins