

From: John Scott III [jms3rd@gmail.com](mailto:jms3rd@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 2, 2023 2:03 PM

To: PlanComm [PlanComm@alexandriava.gov](mailto:PlanComm@alexandriava.gov)

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Zoning for Housing

I support the current plan, don't add an increase in height I live in 22301 and am an Alexandria business owner

Via phone

John Scott

Ion Channel

240.401.6574

Ionchannel.io

From: Jordan Swift [jordan.a.swift@gmail.com](mailto:jordan.a.swift@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 2, 2023 2:31 PM

To: PlanComm [PlanComm@alexandriava.gov](mailto:PlanComm@alexandriava.gov)

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support Bold Action on Zoning for Housing

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jordan, I live in Del Ray on East Custis Avenue and I am writing in support of Zoning for Housing.

I love my neighborhood and the amenities it offers, and clearly recognize that those restaurants and businesses will only be successful if there is the neighborhood density and affordability to patronize them. My household income is nearly 200% of the AMI, and homeownership is not within reach for us in this neighborhood.

I would like for the staff's recommendations to be more impactful. 3 story apartment buildings should be legal city-wide. AUDs must be easier to construct and townhomes must be encouraged in favor of mansions that fill lots. Parking mandates should be removed in areas with access to transit, and those areas should have fewer restrictions on the number of homes that can be built nearby.

Regards,

Jordan Swift

(203) 231-4886

From: Scott Talan [scott.talan@gmail.com](mailto:scott.talan@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 2, 2023 4:00 PM

To: PlanComm [PlanComm@alexandriava.gov](mailto:PlanComm@alexandriava.gov)

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support on Zoning for Housing

Legalize small 3-story apartment buildings citywide, both where they already exist in neighborhoods like Del Ray and Rosemont, and in all residential zones.

Scott R. Talan

From: Liana Ascolese [lianapatricia94@gmail.com](mailto:lianapatricia94@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 2, 2023 4:29 PM

To: PlanComm [PlanComm@alexandriava.gov](mailto:PlanComm@alexandriava.gov)

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support Bold Action on Zoning for Housing

Hello Planning Committee,

My name is Liana Ascolese and I live at 1724 Osage St in Alexandria. My fiancé and I are first-time homeowners, and I am writing to support the proposed zoning changes with some improvements:

- Allowing 3 story apartment buildings citywide
- Reform parking minimums to ensure housing is easier to build
- Encourage even more transit oriented development throughout the city

I moved to the DMV 4 years ago from Boston, where the housing crisis is at a breaking point. One of the reasons I left was because the lack of safe and affordable housing was a serious threat to both my mental and physical health. So much of my paycheck was going towards rent that I worked 6 days per week from 9am-9:30pm to cover bills, and I was still unable to pay my heating bill during some of the coldest days in the winter. I stayed in dangerous and unsanitary housing conditions because I had no choice.

I've seen firsthand how the failure to create enough housing to meet demand, as well as blocking construction of anything other than single family homes, is detrimental to the community. In Boston, I could have never imagined living in a quality apartment that I could keep at a habitable temperature, nevermind owning my own home. The condo we own now is in a wonderful multi-family development and I want to ensure others either living in or moving to Alexandria have the same opportunities that I did when I came here.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Liana Ascolese

(she/her)

From: Anderson Vereyken [amciv12@gmail.com](mailto:amciv12@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 2, 2023 9:48 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support for Zoning for Housing

Dear Planning Commission,

In light of the upcoming ZFH work session, I am writing to express my support for the city's proposed zoning changes that would allow for the construction of more housing. It is heartening to see local government addressing the crucial issue of housing shortages in our community.

I also want to encourage Alexandria to take bolder action than has thus far been considered. In particular, I note that the "Z4H Fact Sheets" document on the city's website indicates that bonus height proposals were shelved "because other provisions of the zoning ordinance (limits on overall square footage, requirements for setbacks and open space, etc.) would nearly always prevent a

developer's ability to use this provision." Rather than discard the bonus height proposal altogether, I hope the city considers revisiting these other zoning restrictions and adjusting them to make bonus height more viable in areas with lower height maximums. This is especially so given 7-700's ability to generate new affordable units in neighborhoods that are currently inaccessible for working-class people.

Several individuals and parties in Alexandria have voiced strong opposition to the city's zoning proposals. I would encourage the Planning Commission to understand these concerns as originating from a disproportionately vocal segment of the community, and not as representing community sentiment as a whole. Everyone is feeling the pinch of rising housing costs; and while jobs or other demands may keep ordinary citizens from attending every in-person meeting, I strongly believe that the weight of support is behind reform.

Thank you for the work you do to make our city a just, responsive, and equitable place.

Best,

Anderson Vereyken

From: Phoebe Coy [phoebeacoy@gmail.com](mailto:phoebeacoy@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 2, 2023 8:52 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]I support Zoning for Housing!

Good morning Alexandria Planning Commission,

I learned from my organization, YIMBYs of Northern Virginia, that you are having a work session on Zoning for Housing tomorrow. I want to express my support for the existing plans and my hope that you will do even more to allow property owners to build housing in Alexandria. I want to share a letter to the editor I recently sent to the Alexandria Times:

As an Alexandria homeowner, I fully support Alexandria's proposed modifications to its zoning laws, known as Zoning for Housing. These commonsense changes make important progress in loosening unnecessary regulations which infringe on the rights of property owners to choose what is best to build on their property. Should property owners take advantage of these changes, current and prospective Alexandrians will have more potential homes to choose from than they do currently. This will strengthen our region's economic growth and allow more people to enjoy the benefits of a shorter commute, supporting the return to in-person work that our region needs. Some of these changes, such as commonsense changes to townhouse zoning, will reduce the amount of taxpayer-funded time that city staff currently spend reviewing requests for exceptions to regulations that are not aligned with reality. While the Zoning for Housing proposals are an important step forward, I hope that Alexandria continues to roll back excessive regulations, such as Floor Area Ratio requirements, in order to support the rights of property owners to build the additional housing our region needs.

In addition to what I stated in this letter, I would love to see parking minimums lifted near transit. It should be up to the property owner, not the government, to decide how much parking is needed on the property. In addition, I would love to see garden apartments and townhouses be legalized throughout the city, as well as efforts to allow lots of housing near underutilized transit hubs such as Van Dorn Station.

Thanks so much for all the work you do for the City of Alexandria,

Phoebe Coy

From: Rebecca Loesberg [rebecca.loesberg@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.loesberg@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 3, 2023 9:57 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support Bold Action on Zoning for Housing

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing as you consider the different facets of the Zoning For Housing/Housing for All Initiative. I grew up in a pretty monocultural environment in the Midwest. What attracted me to Alexandria was its diversity of neighborhoods and people. In the short four years that I've lived here, I've already seen changes happen in who can afford to live in our city and what my neighborhood looks like. These changes put Alexandria on track to continue to restrict who can live in our city, limit our diversity, and seem to ultimately lead us to a place where only people with extravagant incomes can even consider living here. The Office of Housing has already outlined that those with incomes of 50,000 or less are cost-burdened, and that figure has been trending upward. That is not the type of place that I envisioned raising my family in.

From those opposed to these efforts, I keep hearing about preservation of structures and preservation of "character". What seems to be missing is the preservation of the actual people that make our city wonderful. By this, I mean we need policies and practices that stabilize working-class neighborhoods that are threatened by gentrification.

When you envision this initiative, I am asking you to envision a dream for Alexandria where housing is affordable across a spectrum of incomes, including working-class housing. We are requesting these shifts to continue to preserve our diverse neighborhoods and our neighbors who live there. I support the current Zoning for Housing/Housing for All Initiatives. I don't think that our efforts to strive for continued equity should stop at these recommendations.

I request that the Planning Commission considers the following additions to the staff plan:

- Legalize small 3 story apartment buildings city-wide, both where they already exist and in all residential zones.
- Encourage transit oriented development by loosening restrictions on how many homes can be built near high capacity transit corridors
- Accelerate and expand parking reform to remove government parking mandates from all housing within enhanced transit areas
- Increased development and funding for sub-60% AMI ("working class") developments

Thank you for the attention to this issue as we strive to create an Alexandria that is accessible and affordable to all who live and work here.

Warmly,

Rebecca Loesberg

Grassroots Alexandria



From: James Miceli [jammic@gmail.com](mailto:jammic@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 3, 2023 10:57 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support Bold Action on Zoning for Housing

Planning Commission Members,

I would like to briefly encourage you to push for maximum housing in Alexandria. The Zoning for Housing proposals are a good start, but more is necessary to meet the moment.

The 2 bedroom duplex next to me recently sold for 905k. If prices that high are not indicative of a housing crisis, I don't know what else could be.

I'd like to strongly encourage you to allow neighborhoods to develop like Del Ray across the city, require no parking in transit rich area (including buses), and maximize apartment development near metro stations.

Thank you for your consideration.

-James Miceli

102A E Cliff St

(Responding in my capacity as a private citizen, comments not associated with my civic association)

From: The Rev. Jo Belser [priest@welcometoresurrection.org](mailto:priest@welcometoresurrection.org)

Sent: Tuesday October 3, 2023 1:18 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support Bold Action on Zoning for Housing

As Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in the City's West End, I am writing to ask that you improve the excellent zoning reforms proposed by the Zoning for Housing initiative. Too many of our neighbors in the West End have housing cost-burdened and have to rely on our food pantry to help make ends meet. The average number of food clients is up and rising, from 23 families each week pre-COVID to 70 since COVID began and 82 since the SNAP augment ended.

With VOICE (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement) and YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard), I have attended the public meetings and studied the proposals. Please add my voice to those who urge the City staff's recommendations to be more impactful, by:

- o Moving some of the best ideas in phase two of the plan into phase one.
- o Legalizing small three-story apartment buildings citywide, not just in neighborhoods where they already exist (Del Ray and Rosemont), but in all residential zones. This would help make the proposed reforms more broadly available within the whole city, rather than just, seemingly, in the "poorer" areas.
- o Accelerating and expanding parking reform to remove government parking mandates from all housing within enhanced transit areas.
- o Encouraging transit-oriented development by loosening restrictions on how many homes can be built near high-capacity transit.
- o Increasing the funding for deeply affordable housing so that a larger percentage of the new units generated by the zoning changes will be both affordable as well as deeply affordable.
- o As with the AlexWest draft housing proposal, encourage implementation of development in such a way that current residents in market-affordable units are not displaced (such as by developing on existing aged surface parking lots).

- - - - -

The Rev. Jo J. Belser, Rector

The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection

2800 Hope Way, Alexandria VA 22311-2220

[welcometoresurrection.org](http://welcometoresurrection.org)

W 703-998-0888 • C 703-244-2566

From: Kursten Andrea Phelps [kursten.phelps@gmail.com](mailto:kursten.phelps@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 3, 2023 3:42 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support Bold Action on Zoning for Housing

Dear Planning Commission,

I am a City of Alexandria resident in the Wakefield-Tarleton neighborhood, and I'm writing to share my strong support of the Zoning for Housing proposed recommendations, and also ask you to improve upon the reforms recommended by city staff.

My husband, a local small business owner, and I, a civil servant working in the nonprofit sector at the time, were extremely lucky to barely manage to buy a duplex in 2015. Without diverse housing options like duplexes (and triplexes and fourplexes, among others), our family of 3 at the time would not have been able to stay in Alexandria as we grew to a family of four. Yet today, I would not be able to afford our own home at the prices similar duplexes in our neighborhood are selling for, despite our household income nearly doubling since 2015. That is related to lack of supply, and even if we could afford to pay a little more, there aren't enough options available in the city to move to a new house, even if we wanted to.

I see this problem all around me. I see it in my elderly neighbor who can't afford to downsize to a more accessible apartment despite not being able to access two of three floors in his home without the help of his home health care aide (who herself, must commute from outside the city because she cannot find available or affordable housing). I see it in a local business owner I know who is living uncomfortably with an ex more than 2 years after ending their relationship because neither can find available or affordable housing to move out. I see it in a friend who is trying to stay close to his child to foster a positive co-parenting relationship but cannot find available housing he can afford. These situations tear at the fabric of our community, and I urge you to improve upon the city staff recommendations. Specifically, I urge you to:

- **Legalize small 3-story apartment buildings** citywide, both where they already exist in neighborhoods like Del Ray and Rosemont, and in all residential zones.
- **Accelerate and expand parking reform** to remove government parking mandates from all housing within enhanced transit areas.
- **Encourage transit-oriented development** by loosening restrictions on how many homes can be built near high-capacity transit

Thank you for your service to the city and for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Kursten Phelps

From: Luca Gattoni-Celli [potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com](mailto:potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com)

Sent: Thursday October 5, 2023 1:55 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]YIMBYs of NoVA statement of priorities for Zoning for Housing

Dear Planning Commission members,

Please find linked below our grassroots members' priorities for Zoning for Housing, outlined in detail. As we have previously discussed with many of you, we strongly support legalizing garden-style apartments and townhouses by right across Alexandria, as a reasonable compromise that would enable the dense, equitable, sustainable housing our community needs and desires. We also support legalizing fourplexes throughout our city.

<https://www.yimbysofnova.org/events-advocacy/alexandria/improving-zoning-for-housing>

We are working to augment our proposals with technical details to aid their implementation in Alexandria's zoning code.

Thank you for your service to our community,

Luca Gattoni-Celli

Chief Executive & Founder, YIMBYs of Northern Virginia

[YIMBYsOfNoVA.org](http://YIMBYsOfNoVA.org) | [Media](#) | [Facebook Group](#)

[Cornerstone](#)—blog about urbanism & building YIMBYs of NoVA

843-793-7106 (Mobile/Signal) [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Medium](#)

Emergent Ventures Grantee (21st Cohort)

From: Matthew Larson [mdl Larson45@gmail.com](mailto:mdl Larson45@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 16, 2023 11:13 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Z4H Community Meeting

Good morning,

I attended last week's Z4H Community Meeting and was very impressed by the city staff's presentation and how they managed input from attendees. I raised a question about the proposed parking changes and my desire to see requirements eliminated city-wide. In my question I referenced similar reforms implemented by nearby cities such as Richmond and asked if we could go further than what was proposed and eliminate the minimum parking requirement altogether. I believe these decisions are best made by property owners and are a major cost driver for any new development or remodel. This is a once in a generation opportunity to make a sizable dent in onerous over-regulation and I would like to see the city lead in this area. Please push staff to eliminate parking minimums city-wide as part of the Z4H reform package.

Warmly,

Matt Larson

Alexandria, VA

From: Beth Jones [bethcj@comcast.net](mailto:bethcj@comcast.net)

Sent: Sunday October 22, 2023 12:01 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Below are my comments on this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

At issue here is how the City of Alexandria's proposed changes to the zoning for housing policies are going to positively impact its diverse community. I question the notion that allowing all kinds of development to occur in various neighborhoods will mean more affordable housing for all. Is it really the residents of our great city who benefit, or the developers here? Isn't this really about how to line the pockets of developers at the cost of real, affordable housing for the people? Instead of allowing development to occur willy nilly, with no thought to parking, road infrastructure, school overcrowding, green spaces, and traffic patterns, why not thoughtfully plan out affordable housing tied to transit areas?

But wait, don't we already have an enormous amount of apartment units recently built (and more on the way) along the Potomac Yards Route One corridor? Not far from the newly opened Potomac Yards Metro stop? Answer this: Did the city attempt to make any affordable housing deals with these developers? For example, if a developer wants to build units along Route One, 25 percent of the units have to be set aside as affordable housing and green spaces must also be included. What would developers get in exchange? How about tax abatement or partial waivers for planning, permitting or impact fees?

If providing affordable housing in the City of Alexandria is truly the goal, why aren't we more creative in how we find our solutions? Why are we giving the developers all the power? Just building more units and increasing population density, whether along Route One or in the North Ridge neighborhood is not the answer. Are we aiming to be another Hong Kong or New York City, which have high population densities, but also have some of the most expensive real estate in the world?

I am not saying I have the answers. But, we must more carefully and cleverly address the lack of affordable housing problem in this city; with full transparency from our governing body and full support from our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Beth Craig Jones, Alexandria City Resident

From: Jamie Biondi [jamie.biondi@gmail.com](mailto:jamie.biondi@gmail.com)

Sent: Sunday October 22, 2023 4:11 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov. 1 docket - I support Zoning for Housing

Dear Alexandria Planning Commission members,

I am a City resident, and I support the Zoning for Housing proposals, including the options proposed by staff that would lead to more housing units and fewer excessive and costly parking requirements. More housing opportunities for city residents and workers is important for community equity, livability and sustainability.

My children attend The Butterfly House at Virginia Theological Seminary, and many of their teachers live far away (especially in Maryland) as a result of expensive housing in this neighborhood, so any little progress we can make on this would matter in a personal way to us. We are also committed environmentalists, so are eager to see priorities move away from parking/car culture and towards accessible public transportation options!

Jamie Biondi

1200 N Quaker Ln, Alexandria VA 22302

From: Lilly Wilcox [lwilcox1290@gmail.com](mailto:lwilcox1290@gmail.com)

Sent: October 24, 2023 4:52 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov. 1 docket - I support Zoning for Housing

Dear Alexandria Planning Commission members,

I am a City resident, and I support the Zoning for Housing proposals, including the options proposed by staff that would lead to more housing units and fewer excessive and costly parking requirements. More housing opportunities for city residents and workers are important for community equity, livability, and sustainability.

Lilly Wilcox

1200 N Quaker Lane,

Alexandria, Va. 22302





Oct. 26, 2023

Mayor Justin Wilson and Members of the City Council  
Chairman Nate Macek and Members of the Planning Commission  
Karl W. Moritz, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning  
City of Alexandria  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Zoning for Housing / Housing for All Proposed Initiatives

Dear Members of the City Council, Planning Commission and Mr. Moritz,

At the October 23, 2023 membership meeting, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA) voted on the staff recommendations of the following Zoning for Housing / Housing for All initiatives as follows:

**Bonus Height Text Amendment (BHTA)**

Summary of Proposal / Staff Recommendations: Not recommended for further consideration.

**Position:**

**The DRCA supports P & Z's position that the BHTA is not a viable proposal and should be tabled / no longer considered.**

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**Residential Multi-Family (RMF) Zone Analysis**

Staff Recommendations:

1. Amend the RMF Zone in the Zoning Ordinance to expand the number of uses allowed on the ground floor of RMF buildings.
2. Amend the Housing Master Plan to establish general intent for RMF rezonings. Position:

**Position:**

**The DRCA supports the RMF Zone proposals as written.**





### **Industrial Zone Analysis**

Staff recommendations:

1. Owners in the Industrial Zone may already apply for Residential Multi-family zoning.
2. Provide guidelines that would make any further industrial uses development more compatible with future mixed use development.

**Position:**

**The DRCA supports the Industrial Zone Proposal as written.**

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### **Coordinated Development Districts (CDD) and Affordable Housing**

Staff Recommendations:

1. Establish a City Council policy, possibly memorialized in the Housing Master Plan, affirming that the City should continue its practice of including condition language for future new and amended CDD requests that would require 1/3 of bonus density (above what is recommended in an SAP) to be committed to affordable units.

**Position:**

**The DRCA supports establishing the CDD and Affordable Housing policy within the Housing Master Plan.**

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### **Expansion of Transit Oriented Development**

Staff Recommendations:

The city identified the following areas as to be included in the study:

1. As part of the upcoming Duke Street corridor plan, evaluate undeveloped or underdeveloped land adjacent to the King Street Metrorail station, both public and private.
2. Review the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan's requirements for non-residential development immediately adjacent to the Braddock Road Metrorail Station.
3. As part of the Alexandria West Small Area Plan (SAP) and upcoming Duke Street corridor plan, promote transit-oriented levels of development to support affordable housing.
4. Conduct a future study on removing parking requirements for affordable housing within ½ mile of a Metrorail Station.

**Position:**

**The DRCA looks forward to reviewing the results of the study.**

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## **Office to Residential Conversions to provide more affordable housing**

### Staff Recommendations:

1. Continue to work with the development community to support conversions in Class B and C office buildings that can be approved under the current Zoning Ordinance. Examples: 5001 Eisenhower (Victory Center), Tidlock (Transpotomac Plaza).
2. Continue with the City's current policy to generally encourage conversions of older, obsolete or non-competitive buildings and discourage cases where the building remains competitive (because of condition, location, on-site or nearby amenities, transit access, etc).
3. Establish a City Council policy, possibly memorialized in the Housing Master Plan, affirming that conversions should use Section 7-700 to increase the residential density on the site, in exchange for affordable housing.
  - o Sec. 7-700 - Allowance for increases in floor area ratio, density and height and reductions in required off-street parking as incentive for provision of low- and moderate-income housing.
4. Work with the Office of Climate Action and the City Attorney to develop conversion standards for Green Building.
5. Review the City's voluntary affordable housing contribution policy for conversions during the Housing Master Plan Update to ensure the contribution is aligned with the City's residential affordable housing contribution policy and reflects the value of the change in use, and pursue legislative authority to enable the City to make all voluntary affordable housing contributions mandatory.
6. Continue to monitor conversion activity for ongoing challenges; when identified, consider whether regulatory or financial tools are needed. Future reviews will focus on whether building or fire code issues are creating challenges.

### **Position:**

**The DRCA supports the Office to Residential Conversions and the proposed policy within the Housing Master Plan to encourage more affordable housing through Section 7-700**

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**The above five initiatives were voted on as one block which passed with 91% yes vote.**





## **Townhouse Zoning Analysis**

### Staff Recommendations for Phase I Text Amendments for November 2023

1. Apply RM zone townhouse lot, bulk, and open space requirements to all properties within Old Town in zones that allow townhouses.
2. Apply RM lot, bulk, and open space requirements to single and two-unit dwellings on narrow lots where townhouse dwellings are currently permitted in Old Town.
3. Establish contextual front setback requirements for townhouse zones and for residential development in commercial zones City-wide.
4. Eliminate side yard setback requirements for lots 25 feet in width or less.
5. Establish 35 percent open space requirement across all townhouse zones and for residential uses in commercial zones.
6. City currently requires two parking spaces for new SFH. Eliminate off-street parking requirements for single-unit, two-unit or townhouse dwellings within the Enhanced Transit District and require one space per dwelling unit for dwellings outside the Enhanced Transit District.

### **Position on Phase I Text Amendments (passed with 91% yes vote):**

- 1. The DRCA supports applying RM zone townhouse lot, bulk, and open space requirements to all properties within Old Town in zones that allow townhouses (or takes no position as it does not affect Del Ray).**
- 2. The DRCA supports applying RM lot, bulk, and open space requirements to single and two-unit dwellings on narrow lots where townhouse dwellings are currently permitted in Old Town specifically.**
- 3. The DRCA supports establishing contextual front setback requirements for townhouse zones and for residential development in commercial zones City-wide.**
- 4. The DRCA does not support elimination of side yard setback requirements for lots 25 feet in width or less.**
- 5. The DRCA supports establishing 35 percent open space requirement across all townhouse zones and for residential uses in commercial zones.**
- 6. The DRCA supports one space per unit for 1-2 unit and townhouse construction in all areas of the City regardless of location within or outside of the enhanced transit area.**





## **Phase II Text Amendments (for future study):**

Staff Recommendations:

1. Replace open space requirement with a maximum lot coverage requirement
2. Eliminate lot size minimums

## **Position:**

**The DRCA will review Phase II Text Amendments at the time they are made publicly available.**

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## **Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single Family Zones**

Staff Recommendations:

1. Add the opportunity to construct two-unit and three to four-unit dwellings in the R20, R12, R8, R5, and R2-5 zones. An estimated 66 new residential buildings would be developed over a 10-year period containing an estimated 178 units.
2. Remove “family” from the zoning ordinance:  
The current definition of “family” in the zoning code mentions relation by blood or marriage, with not more than two “roomers” or “boarders” and no more than four unrelated persons or two unrelated adults and their children. Remove “family” from the zoning ordinance and basing occupancy solely on capacity as determined by the statewide building code.
3. Revise parking requirements for new single, two-unit and townhouse units  
Currently, two parking spaces are required by the zoning ordinance for all new single family/ unit, two unit and townhouse buildings. Staff recommends option 3 for any new construction in residential zones. The enhanced transit area is within a ½-mile walk of existing and anticipated mass transit stations and entryways:

### Option 3:

- a. No minimum parking requirements for dwellings with up to four units within the enhanced transit area.
- b. Minimum 0.5 parking spaces per unit for dwellings up to four units beyond the enhanced transit area.

### Option 4:

- a. Minimum 0.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit for dwellings with up to four units within the enhanced transit area.
- b. Minimum 1.0 parking spaces per dwelling unit for dwellings with up to four units beyond the enhanced transit area.





4. Amend the following sentences in the City's Master Plan wherever it occurs (citywide chapters and Small Area Plans):
  - a. "Areas of the city currently zoned residential should remain zoned for residential use at no higher than their current density." The proposed amendment is to delete the phrase "...at no higher than their current density."
  - b. Incorporate the following note in all Master Plan Chapters: "References to low density will continue to refer to development configuration that limits overall building height and lot coverage compatible with the existing neighborhood"
  - c. Incorporate the following note in all Master Plan chapters: "Ensure race and social equity is "incorporated and centered in all planning" per City Council's Resolution 2974 including, but not limited to, all references to preserving and protecting neighborhoods and character"
5. Amend the Housing Master Plan, Zoning Tools Section on Page 107 to include the *purpose of Residential Multi-Family Zone*

**Position (passed with 66% yes vote):**

1. **The DRCA OPPOSES this proposal and furthermore urges no increase to the allowable building envelope beyond what is currently allowed in each zone.**

**DRCA also believes the prediction that only 66 homes across the City would be redeveloped is conservative based on recent statements from developers regarding Arlington's Missing Middle lawsuit. Given the number of small homes being torn down in Del Ray and replaced with larger single-family homes, we are concerned that this proposal will accelerate the change in the historic development pattern of Del Ray.**

2. **The DRCA supports removing the word/definition of "family" from the zoning code.**
3. **The DRCA OPPOSES any reduction in parking requirements regardless of location within or outside of an enhanced transit area**
4. **The DRCA OPPOSES the revised language as proposed to the City's Housing Master Plan. This change would signal a shift in how future zoning changes and land use decisions are viewed and risks altering the character and scale of Del Ray.**





## **Historic Development Patterns**

### Phase I Staff Recommendations:

1. Remove dwelling units per acre limitations in multifamily zones to allow smaller unit sizes within the same development envelope. Removing the dwelling units per acre limits as well as the average unit size in some zones, this could increase unit production by an estimated 1.5 to 2.5 units in some projects.
2. Remove zone transition setback requirements, which require additional setbacks when commercial building is adjacent to residential zones. This requirement is inconsistent with historic building patterns which typically feature a mix of uses in close proximity

### Position (passed with 96% yes vote):

1. **The DRCA has no objection to the removal of the dwelling units per acre limitation in MF zones.**

**The DRCA requests staff formulate regulations that provide a mix of options for one, two and three bedroom units to promote creating “housing for all” that is inclusive of families or people wishing to live with roommates.**

**The DRCA requests staff to formulate regulations that maintain multi-unit development within the Del Ray neighborhood zones that follows the garden apartment style of development and is 3-4 stories tall and has generous setbacks that allow for ample green space at street level.**

2. **The DRCA opposes the removal of zone transition setback requirements between commercial and 1-4 unit residential uses as this could negatively impact the residents of Del Ray due to the multiple instances of Commercial to Residential zone transitions. The existing zone transition setback of 25’ or the height of the commercial building could be altered to allow small scale commercial adjacent to residential uses without completely eliminating the requirement for a setback. If the commercial building is of the same scale as the residential building it should be required to have similar setbacks, larger commercial buildings should maintain a larger setback.**

### Phase II Staff Recommendations for future study:

1. Allow smaller lot sizes, a mix of uses, and a mix of residential typologies in all zones.
2. Simplify the number of zones – i.e., consolidate some residential zones, some mixed-use zones, and some commercial zones.





3. Current zoning restrictions that do not consider the existing built environment or historically-acceptable lot sizes include:
  - Regulating density through units per acre and floor-area ratio in addition to height, setback and floor area.
  - The widespread use of different floor area limits for different uses in the same zone
4. Limited allowance of compatible commercial uses in residential zones.
5. Create Design Guidelines for Traditional Neighborhood Development.
6. Evaluate the potential of selective use of the Neighborhood Conservation District tool to preserve existing examples of historic development, especially small-scale multifamily buildings and other housing types not currently being constructed.

#### **Position for Phase II:**

**The DRCA will review Phase II Text Amendments at the time they are made publicly available. While we generally support the idea of a mix of residential typologies in all zones as is currently evident within the Del Ray neighborhood, we have concerns regarding new development of all typologies being built to the maximum limit of the bulk envelope. We feel that removal of the FAR requirement in exchange for a maximum lot coverage %, maximum impervious surface %, fixed dimensional side and rear setbacks (not ratio based) and clearly defined height limitations could better control the scale of proposed development. We are also interested to learn more regarding the Neighborhood Conservation District tool to ensure that existing market affordable housing as well as contributing structures to the Historic Town of Potomac are not made more vulnerable under these proposals.**

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#### **Analysis and Commentary:**

The "Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single Family Zones" proposal will affect Del Ray by potentially making it more dense and having more 1-4 unit dwellings on lots that were previously single family homes. There are already some dwellings within the neighborhood that were developed with multiple units to look like single family homes, so it is possible to develop utilizing these guidelines and not change the character of the neighborhood, however we are concerned that new development will replace existing appropriately scaled one and two unit houses and convert them into new homes that are out of scale with the existing neighborhood. This is already happening in Del Ray by large single family homes being built to the maximum size allowed by zoning codes. If market forces are going to drive existing single family homes to be torn down, replacing them with new development that can house more people in multiple units seems like a more desirable option than







building McMansions. However, we are concerned that this proposal could drive up the number of tear downs of existing homes that give Del Ray charm and provide the unique character that allows it to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The astute reader will note the DRCA position for parking in the Expanded Housing Opportunities Initiative is opposite of the position for parking in the Townhouse Zoning Analysis Initiative. During the course of the membership meeting, the Townhouse Zoning Analysis was voted on first by the membership and the motion as put forth by the Land Use Committee passed with 91% yes vote. When it was time to vote on the Expanded Housing Opportunities, amendments to each motion significantly altering the Land Use Committee's original position were submitted and voted on separately. Amendment #1 (opposing increases to number of units that can be built in residential zones) passed with 63% yes vote; Amendment #3 (opposing reduction in parking requirements) passed with 54% yes vote and amendment #4 (opposing revised language in the city Master Plan) passed with 67% yes vote (motion #2 regarding the word "family" was not amended). Collectively, the amended motion was passed with 66% yes vote.

Parking is a hot button topic in Del Ray. During our membership vote on this initiative, it was almost split down the middle 50/50 between people who thought the on site parking requirements should remain as is and those who were okay reducing to 1 on-site space or potentially further. Many residents still rely heavily on car travel. However, the availability of mass transportation, ride share programs, e-bikes and connected sidewalk and trail systems is making it easier to function with less than one car per person of driving age. Parking requirements for restaurants in Alexandria have already been significantly reduced or removed making demand for on street parking along Mt. Vernon Ave and the adjacent side streets even more prevalent. There are still people who must have a vehicle by nature of their job, mobility issues or lack of infrastructure to function wholly without. Construction of garages in the R-2-5 zone is discouraged and not possible on many lots in Del Ray leaving the only option for onsite parking being in a driveway. Driveways take away from potential green space, but do lessen the stress of not being sure if you will be able to find a parking space close to home. We believe that we are in a transition phase regarding the way people view the necessity of owning a car, and how many cars each family needs. Surveys of our membership at large have shown that members who have lived in the neighborhood for less than 10 years are less concerned about residential parking than the neighbors who have lived here longer term and have seen Del Ray transition into a popular destination for dining and recreation. More families are making it work with 1 car, although that may be a necessity in order to be able to afford the cost of living in Alexandria. That being said, our membership has voted that Del Ray is not ready to give up on required parking minimums yet. As the meeting had already run over its allotted time, the first motion was not revisited to reconcile the difference between the two initiatives regarding the parking.





In the “Historical Development Patterns” proposal, portions of Del Ray zoned RA would be impacted by the removal of the units per acre limitations. The RA zone includes Warwick village and many of the existing garden style buildings along Commonwealth and Glendale Avenues. These more affordable locations have given many different people access into our neighborhood. The change in zoning would remove the maximum limit of 27 units per acre, and could allow for smaller unit sizes in new developments. Smaller units could create more affordable options and a larger quantity of available units. However, market driven new development is often focused on efficiency and 1 bedroom units which could cause a reduction in 2 and 3 bedroom units available in Del Ray. There is also the possibility that redevelopment of existing sites zoned RA could cause the loss of existing market affordable housing if existing older buildings are demolished to build new development.

The zone transition setback requirement creates an added buffer between residentially zoned buildings and any new commercial or industrial buildings. In Del Ray we have many instances of small scale residences adjacent to the commercial zone. The LUC has reviewed and tried to mediate many cases of restaurants or other businesses especially along Mt. Vernon Ave that are adjacent to residences and the inherent challenges of noise, odors and other disturbances stemming from the close proximity. The proposal to completely eliminate this additional setback at a zone transition raises concern throughout our neighborhood. At a minimum requiring the same setbacks on a commercial property as the adjacent residential property seems beneficial. The existing zone transition setback requirements of 25'+ may be excessive when a commercial building is a similar scale to adjacent residential units, and we would be willing to review a text amendment that takes this into account. While a mix of uses in close proximity is emblematic of what we have in Del Ray, we feel that complete removal of the zone transition setback requirement would encourage development that is out of scale with the current size of the neighborhood and potentially create new development that is looming over its neighbor.

In conducting our analysis on the Initiatives and presenting the findings to our membership, it has proven to be confusing and challenging to comprehend the potential impacts to quality of life and neighborhood characteristics. Given that the Enhanced Housing Options and the Historic Development Patterns proposals were intensely debated among the membership, they warrant being given a closer look and voted on separately from the entire package.

Sincerely,

Kristine Hesse, DRCA LUC Co-Chair  
Lisa Lettieri, DRCA LUC Co-Chair

Katie Waynick  
DRCA President



From: BARBARA BEACH [bpbeach@aol.com](mailto:bpbeach@aol.com)

Sent: Thursday October 26, 2023 4:15 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Re: Nov 1, 2023 meeting Docket item # 2

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

I write to ask you to oppose the passage of docket item # 2 know as “Zoning for Housing”.

I commend staff for their hard work but no matter how good our staff are, you can’t make good ordinances out of a bad idea.

There are numerous reasons I do not support these zoning changes. Let me start with a legal issue.

Front and center to my legal objection is our infamous Dillon’s Rule. I do not find the legal authority to pass the Zoning for Housing ordinances.

Our zoning powers flow from the Charter provision (9.09). That provision contains a list of considerations on zoning actions and demand consideration of numerous criteria. The criteria are not either/or and all must be considered.

9.09 reads: “council shall have the power to adopt by ordinance a comprehensive zoning plan **designed to lessen congestion in streets**, secure safety from fire, panic and other danger, promote health, sanitation and general welfare, provide adequate light and air, **prevent the overcrowding of land, avoid undue concentration of population, facilitate public and private transportation** and the supplying of public utility services and sewage disposal, preserve existing and facilitate the provision of new housing that is affordable to all segments of the community, and facilitate provision for schools, parks, playgrounds and other public improvements and requirements.”

The proposed ordinances have been billed to facilitate the provision of new housing but the problem is that these ordinances foster new housing at the expense of traffic congestion, sewer congestion, overcrowding or congestion of population, private transportation and an all around lowering of the quality of life with pollution, sewer overflow and the inability to drive in a time of crisis because of traffic congestion.

I do not oppose density per se. If the infrastructure exists, I understand that others, like me, would find it desirable to live in an urban setting. However our infrastructure structure cannot support these ordinance-projected- numbers because our infrastructure doesn't even support today's numbers.

My neighbors have their homes flooded every single time it rains heavily. I sit through 5 red light cycles to turn left on Patrick St from Gibbon St at 2:30 in the afternoon. 4 red light cycles to turn from Quaker La left onto Duke St an hour later. I never see a police patrol officer in my neighborhood and I read with horror the crime report. As of Oct 16, for this partial month of October there are 500 reported crimes on the City maintained crime database. We are already the densest locality in Virginia and we are not handling it well now.

I came to this City in 1981 for employment as an assistant City Attorney. Over the past 42 years I bought homes here, ran a law office here, worshiped here, utilized restaurants and businesses here, and served on numerous non profit boards here.

My civic involvement is no better or worse than most citizens and we believe that our right to be heard should mean something.

I have witnessed the dedication of many Planning Commissions and Councils - in the beginning as their legal advisor and subsequently representing clients before them. In those 42 years I watched as the City went from viewing citizens as knowledgeable and caring to today when elected and appointed officials view citizen concerns as tiresome.

Please hear us on our valid concerns over these ordinances. If you do, you will see that this is not the time to further burden our infrastructure and it is not the time to lower our quality of life.

Please vote against passage of these ordinances .

Thank you. Barbara

Barbara P. Beach

614 S Royal St

Alexandria, VA 22314

From: Jackie Rhodes [jmarietab@gmail.com](mailto:jmarietab@gmail.com)

Sent: Thursday October 26, 2023 9:33 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Hi,

I have a question regarding the parking requirements being reduced for new builds. In a recent panel discussion, it was shared that car ownership is down in Alexandria. I live in a neighborhood where we have a lot of people who don't live in the neighborhood parking here. They have out of state tags but parking enforcement has indicated they can't ticket them because they have paid the parking permit. Does Alexandria count the out of state cars in their car ownership calculation?

Thank you,

Jackie

From: HARRY MAHON [513harry@comcast.net](mailto:513harry@comcast.net)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023 9:51 AM

To: [antoine.pierce@alexandriava.gov](mailto:antoine.pierce@alexandriava.gov)

Subject: Planning Commission Special Public Hearing on 11/1/2023 - Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Hello Planning Committee – We are generally informed as to Alexandria city developments. However, the initiative titled Zoning for Housing/Housing for All is quite confusing. The staff report for the November 1, 2023, alone is 142 pages. As a citizen it is very difficult to assess the changes and impacts of this initiative.

Overall, if understood correctly, the concept is to enable the creation of 3,000 additional housing units over the 10-year period (2020-2030) with 75 percent (2,250) recommended to be affordable for households of low-to moderate-incomes and located near activity and transit centers. This increase is over the 8,000 units projected in this time under existing conditions.

If the City now has 80,000 households the 3,000 additional units allocated through the Regional Housing Initiative would be approximately a 3% increase in total households, or .3% per year for the 10-year period.

Some of the questions are:

- Why does the City of Alexandria need to “broaden its toolbox” to the extent of a 142-page Master Plan/Zoning Text Amendment (2023-00005 and 2023-00007) to accommodate a .3% annual increase beyond the expected organic growth of housing in the City? And why is it not focused on “activity and transit centers?”
- Why did the City not share the extent of the expected Zoning changes (and associated costs) with the citizens before agreeing to the Regional Housing Initiative?
- Why hasn’t the City provided a full, understandable explanation of these changes to the citizens of Alexandria? What does it mean to citizens/residents in various parts of the City?
- Is there a clear explanation of the impacts to existing infrastructure (sewers, roads, schools – plus City services).
  - o As we are all aware, the existing infrastructure of the City is in dire need of repair/replacement. On our block alone, the sewer is outdated and was slated for replacement in 2024 (is that still on track?). Other infrastructure initiatives have been cancelled over the years, such as the undergrounding of wire utilities.

The list could go on, but the message is that this initiative does not seem fully thought out. It seems to be using the Regional Housing Initiative as a red herring to allow the City to eliminate many zoning elements for the benefit of increased density and developer's wish lists.

If the .3% increase in housing is the true goal, please develop a simple plan for accommodating this growth under existing zoning as well as within manageable infrastructure accommodations.

Thanks

Best regards,

Harry

Harry E. Mahon

513 South Lee Street

513harry@comcast.net

From: John Scott [jms3rd@gmail.com](mailto:jms3rd@gmail.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023 12:08 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

I'm don't support increased height requirements and lessening parking requirements.

Allot of the information the zoning folks isn't supported by the data

We need more study on this issue

-----

John Scott

240.401.6574

<[jms3rd@gmail.com](mailto:jms3rd@gmail.com)>



From: [alek.becker91@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:alek.becker91@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023 12:47 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and ½ mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Alek Becker

1201 Braddock Pl Apt 1008 Alexandria, VA 22314-1674 [alek.becker91@gmail.com](mailto:alek.becker91@gmail.com)

(386) 366-0235

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Planning Commission, City Council, Mayor Justin Wilson  
**FROM:** Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee  
**DATE:** October 27, 2023

**RE:** Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee Comments on Zoning for Housing/Housing for All Recommendations

Dear Planning Commissioners, Mayor Wilson, and members of City Council:

The Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC) is writing to share our thoughts about the recommendations from the Department of Planning and Zoning on the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiatives. Given the housing challenges the City and the region find themselves in, we commend City staff and leaders for the significant time and attention that has been paid to this very important subject.

While we support the recommendations for Zoning for Housing/Housing for All, we believe this should be the start not the end of this conversation. We look forward to the updated Housing Master Plan as a foundation for Phase 2 of these recommendations, which should include a harder look at the intersections among bonus height, setback and open space requirements and limits on overall square footage. We endorse continued refinement to enhance how these initial proposals could yield more units. The preliminary estimates of the number of units each strategy might produce was disappointing. Specifically, we'd like to see more exploration of the following:

**More Flexibility for Residential Development:** While not listed as a recommendation, we include this as something that follows the intent of the townhouse strategy to streamline and provide consistency for townhouse development. A recent application before AHAAC to demolish an office building to develop housing was seeking a rezoning of up to 2.5 FAR. While the existing zoning on the site allowed 2.5 FAR for commercial uses, multifamily residential use was capped at 1.25 FAR. Why not make commercial and residential uses both eligible for the 2.5 FAR, eliminating the time, expense, and risk of a rezoning and allow that density with affordability requirements through a Special Use Permit (SUP)?

**Residential Multifamily (RMF) Zone:** We support the recommendation for expanded opportunities for the RMF zone. As noted in the recommendations, a significant amount of public sector dollars (state, local and federal) is required to develop the deeply affordable units in RMF zones. Currently, there are more than 1,000 committed affordable units in need of local subsidy funding in the pipeline. Addressing this financial shortfall is key to the future success of implementing the Housing For All strategies as RMF zones have the potential to provide the largest number of units.

**Single-Family Zones:** This strategy, though modest in scope, moves the City in the right direction toward zoning reform. While the projections are for a small number of housing units, this strategy begins the conversation about how to return our neighborhoods to our historic development patterns by expanding housing choice and tenure for more Alexandria residents.

**Parking:** We support implementing reforms related to parking minimums for affordable housing near all high-capacity transit without undo delay for study. Some members, however, believe that consideration must be given to affordable housing residents who rely on vehicles for their jobs (including rideshare drivers) or use trucks and vans for their work.

**Bonus Height:** This recommendation studied the provision of bonus height for affordable units in zones with height maximums between 45-50 feet. The analysis indicated that “this proposal has very limited potential for use, primarily because other provisions of the zoning ordinance (limits on overall square footage, requirements for setbacks and open space, etc.) would nearly always prevent a developer’s ability to use these provisions.” Might some of these requirements for setbacks and open space - like those being considered in the Historic Development Patterns - be relaxed to reexamine whether this strategy provides more opportunity? Also, while this tool may have limited value in private market-rate development, adding even a handful more units in affordable housing development could be very valuable to expanding supply and should be considered as an exception, potentially in the upcoming Housing Master Plan Update.

AHAAC will continue to participate in the community conversations about Housing for All as well as the budgeting process. The “lowest hanging fruit” for expanding housing, especially affordable housing, is to fund the existing projects that already have zoning approval and are awaiting funding. We would ask that the City consider using its bond capacity to fund these projects and to evaluate tax abatement for committed affordable projects to “unstick” these projects.

We look forward to working with City Council to realize our shared vision of more housing for residents at all ages and stages of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Faga". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Betsy Faga, Chair  
Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC)

From: Christina Plerhoples Stacy [tinaplerhoples@yahoo.com](mailto:tinaplerhoples@yahoo.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

Hello,

I would like to voice my support for Zoning for Housing which would expand housing production and affordability in the city. A long history of intentionally racist policymaking and planning in the US has meant that white people have had much greater access to homeownership and single family zoned areas. It is incumbent upon us to right this wrong and make our community more inclusive of people with low incomes and renters who are disproportionately people of color. As such, I strongly support this reform and any other reforms that allow for more streamlined processes and increased density allowances (particularly near transit) that will make our community more equitable and whole. And, while this is one step towards that end, we also need zoning reforms that allow for more high density apartment buildings since those will allow for more affordable housing to be built through the low income housing tax credit. Finally, while allowing for missing middle housing is a step in the right direction, additional reforms such as increase FAR allowances and reduced setbacks are needed to make conversions more affordable for developers to ensure that this type of housing actually gets built, since we have seen in other cities and states like Minneapolis that just allowing for plexes without these additional reforms has led to very few being built. Finally, increasing housing supply and affordability isn't just good for people with low and moderate incomes and people of color -- it is good for our city as a whole. Increased affordability will allow more teachers, firemen, and police officers to live and work in our city, and it will allow businesses to have a greater supply of employees and less turnover. In sum, Zoning for Housing is good for everyone in our city, and I support it wholeheartedly.

Christina Stacy

From: Jim Durham [jimdurham48@outlook.com](mailto:jimdurham48@outlook.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

Planning Commission members,

Thanks for your service on the Planning Commission. I urge you to recommend that Council approve staff's proposed text amendments that implement Zoning for Housing initiatives. Please strongly endorse measures that more significantly increase housing diversity and availability in Alexandria.

Specifically, I ask that you

- Adopt the more flexible Option 2 allowing up to four units in single-family zones, and without additional or new minimum parking requirements
- Remove parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn); and
- Study additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit.

Alexandria is in a housing supply crisis that exacerbates housing affordability for teachers, firefighters, police officers and others to live in Alexandria. The average home price in Alexandria in September 2023 was 9.6% higher than a year earlier per this market report:

<https://www.nvar.com/realtors/news/market-statistics/market-statistics-september-2023> Please act without delay to approve the modest changes proposed and recommend follow-on efforts, particularly additional parking reforms, that can further increase housing supply in Alexandria.

Thanks so much,

Jim

Jim Durham, 703-508-0762

622 Fort Williams Pkwy

Alexandria, VA 22304



From: [mdakita@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:mdakita@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023

To: PlanComm

Subject: I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Marlene Dakita

200 N Pickett St Apt 1410 Alexandria, VA 22304-2130 [mdakita@comcast.net](mailto:mdakita@comcast.net)

From: [lrcrothers@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:lrcrothers@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Saturday October 28, 2023

To: PlanComm

Subject: I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
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In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expeditiously updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Laura Crothers

208 E Taylor Run Pkwy Alexandria, VA 22314-4945 [lrcrothers@gmail.com](mailto:lrcrothers@gmail.com)

From: Laura Crothers [lrcrothers@gmail.com](mailto:lrcrothers@gmail.com)

Sent: Saturday October 28, 2023

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please expand and pass Zoning for Housing

As an Alexandria resident who wants to make the city more livable, equitable and vibrant, I'm writing in support of the Zoning for Housing recommendations made by city staff. But I also implore the city to strengthen those recommendations by:

- Allowing more homes in enhanced transit areas, to create dense, walkable transit-oriented neighborhoods.
- Repealing parking mandates near transit.
- Legalizing small, garden-style apartments and townhouses citywide.

Alexandria is in the midst of a housing crisis, which demands bold action. Alexandrians present and future deserve these robust reforms.

Thank you,

Laura Crothers



From: Luca Gattoni-Celli [potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com](mailto:potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com)

Sent: Saturday October 28, 2023

To: PlanComm

Subject: YIMBYs of NoVA Founder Statement on Zoning

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Luca Gattoni-Celli. I am a proud Alexandria resident, addressing you as the founder of YIMBYs of Northern Virginia. Our grassroots, all-volunteer, pro-housing organization includes hundreds of YIMBYs in Alexandria who enthusiastically support Zoning for Housing. Please produce and approve the most robust possible version of this policy.

My father immigrated from Italy. He has always impressed upon me our nation's unique blessings of strong institutions and abundant opportunity.

He supports my advocacy for three reasons: My dad grew up in walkable cities. He believes a healthy society requires a strong middle class that can afford a good home. And he understands that Alexandria cannot function well with less than half of ACPS employees, and only 13 Alexandria firefighters, living within city limits. Some firefighters live in Pennsylvania.

Commissioners, you know the draft Zoning for Housing framework does not do enough, even if this is only phase one of a multi-stage zoning modernization. Some individuals will be upset with any change to the status quo. However, the decisions you make have the potential to go beyond symbolic gestures and begin the process of systemic reform that will fix our housing shortage and affordability crisis. We, the people who say yes, urge you to use your best judgment to make the best policy you can.

You should draw from our city's rich cultural heritage. We do not need to save Del Rey, but we should legalize it, not only where it stands today, but also across our city. Del Ray, Old Town, Cameron Station--we should emulate these great neighborhoods everywhere, by permitting townhouses and three-story garden apartments, by right, throughout Alexandria.

My own neighborhood, Alexandria West, is another model. My family lives in a townhouse abutting the Southern Towers highrise apartments. Living near thousands of other human beings is nothing but a blessing for me and my family. We walk to grocery stores and the library. My neighborhood is safe and pleasant, with hardly any traffic. Alexandria should embrace transit-oriented development so more residents can live this way.

And as Alexandrians, we must embrace each other. The question hanging over this conversation is whether we as human beings and citizens can tolerate each other's existence. I believe we can. Letting Alexandria grow will make it a better place to live.

Zoning for Housing is a modest, reasonable compromise, the first step toward an Alexandria where anyone can build a good life.

Thank you.

Luca Gattoni-Celli

Chief Executive & Founder, YIMBYs of Northern Virginia

[YIMBYsOfNoVA.org](http://YIMBYsOfNoVA.org) | [Media](#) | [Facebook Group](#)

[Cornerstone](#)—blog about urbanism & building YIMBYs of NoVA

843-793-7106 (Mobile/Signal) [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Medium](#)

Emergent Ventures Grantee (21st Cohort)

From: ninette reis [nreis690@gmail.com](mailto:nreis690@gmail.com)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 3:21 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Subject: Re: Nov 1, 2023 meeting Eliminating Single Family Zoning

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

There are many docket items I am concerned about but the one that concerns me the most is the proposal to do away with single family zoning.

One of the most attractive aspects of living in Alexandria is the well-established neighborhoods of single family homes. Each neighborhood has its own character and attributes. The single family home unit in Alexandria is the lowest percentage in the nation; by doing away with single family zoning the stock of single family homes will be further diminished making it even harder to own a single family home in Alexandria.

It is the continuity of each neighborhood that makes it so attractive. If single family housing is done away with and duplexes and fourplexes are allowed to be built interspersed with existing single family units the neighborhoods will lose their appeal and the home prices of the single family homes will decrease lowering the value for the current owner. Ruining the existing character of a neighborhood will make it a much less desirable place to live.

It is not clear if these duplexes and fourplexes will be required to be occupied by the owners or if these will be additional rental units.

There is no way to ensure that these different types of units will be affordable for the target population for which this initiative claims to be reaching. I have not seen where owners, developers or individuals, will be required to build units to meet this nebulous "affordable" designation.

I have not seen a study of the various infrastructure systems in these single family neighborhoods to be assured that the current systems would be able to accommodate higher density in these areas without having to increase the current facilities. Costing the city and the taxpayers additional taxes.

This is an extreme redistricting proposal that is moving too fast and is not giving concerned citizens adequate opportunity to have major questions addressed.

This entire proposal should be further investigated and slowed down. It should be put on the 2024 ballot along with the vote for new city council members. Allowing it to be voted on by the citizens of Alexandria since it will have an impact on every citizen living in Alexandria.

Respectfully,

Ninette Reis

Citizen of Alexandria

From: [ntc4162@comcast.net](mailto:ntc4162@comcast.net)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 3:36 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Delay the Zoning for All vote for proper community engagement

Dear All,

On September 5, 2023, city staff introduced proposed Zoning for Housing/Housing for All draft. Mayor Justin Wilson says the initiative is the “most ambitious housing effort in the city’s history.” So why is the city council rushing to vote on November 28, 2023?

The city's history of racism is being exploited to justify changes that may do little to rectify it. Upzoning is a heated housing topic. Many cities across the U.S. are struggling with the implementation of upzoning and how to effectively expand housing supply, particularly in unaffordable and low-supply markets. Just look to our DMV neighbor Arlington County.

The public loses when the city sets an expedited timeline to change the zoning rules for owning, renting, building, renovating, and subdividing all city housing. The mayor and council need to engage the community so we can understand how these changes will impact living in Alexandria. No city official has explained why voting on this by the end of November is so important or what will happen if they add more time for residents to fully understand and digest the proposals.

It is not clear that the city has performed studies to uncover what might otherwise be unintended consequences for residents. Is the city’s rush to vote a tactic that has been developed to avoid another Taylor Run mistake? As written in ALXnow, October 12, 2023:

“I note that as we think about how we design public processes in the future, as we think about how we approach engagement, that these things have a cost,” Wilson said. “In this case, they had a very significant cost to our taxpayers. This is in addition to grants that we returned and other things. There is a significant opportunity cost.”

Is the mayor suggesting public engagement is a problem? Community engagement is essential regardless how politicians feel.

What happens when the mayor and city council skip honest community engagement? The result is an angry public with possible financial and legal challenges. So why rush to vote on the most ambitious housing effort in the City’s history?

Delay the vote to allow sufficient time for community input.

Respectfully,

Nancy Crowley

From: [ivyeliz@comcast.net](mailto:ivyeliz@comcast.net)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 3:59 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov 1, 2023 meeting Docket item # 2

RE: Opposition to the Zoning For Housing Current Initiative.

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission

I have lived in Old Town for 41 years, so I have seen many changes. Some changes have added to the community, some not so much. I strongly feel the current initiative for Zoning for Housing will forever negatively change the quality of life, the sense of community, and the uniqueness of an historic town. The rush to pass this initiative is not what I expect from city leaders!

I attended the October 23, 2023, meeting of Agenda Alexandria to learn more about the Zoning for Housing initiative. I was dismayed to hear Mr. Karl Moritz, Alexandria's Planning Director, comment that 'this is a crisis.' One that they saw coming in 2019 but due to the pandemic decided to put this initiative on hold and that is why there is a rush now to get this thru Planning Commission and City Council.

As I heard this I had to wonder, how can that be? There has been extensive development and projects proposed in Old Town on both the north and south ends and the waterfront over the past few years: everything from the Heritage, to the Samuel Madden project, to the building by the Carpenter Shelter, to the one that now lays dormant by the Braddock Metro ..... I'm sure there are more not including the ones where developers are 'underwater.' And that doesn't even include the massive commercial to residential transition already approved or underway.

So how can this be an urgent crisis? If we do not know how these projects will impact our neighborhoods within Alexandria why would we rush into further development without understanding the consequences of what is already 'on the books'? As a layman I can only imagine infrastructure, facilities, services and - for my neighborhood and many others - parking will all be impacted and the failure to address those first will not provide for a reasonable progression.

I also asked myself sitting in that presentation of Agenda Alexandria, why does all the development have to be multi-family? Doesn't that by default imply that you are appealing to a demographic that will, in all likelihood, be transient, not having a family here and making Alexandria their permanent home. Then I realized, it is all about getting more tax dollars per inch. There has to be a higher purpose for such a radical shift in zoning policy and it is worth slowing down to see if there is one.

In closing, I believe strongly that historic preservation is what makes Alexandria one of the most wonderful places to live. I serve as the Chair of Alexandria Archaeological Commission and am a member of the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, so I work with countless devoted colleagues to honor and preserve what we have here and what we had years ago. I request that the Planning

Commission evaluate this Zoning For Housing proposal thru the lens of preserving what is essential Alexandria and not quickly try to create a place of towering buildings.

Sincerely,

Ivy Whitlatch

1117 Prince Street

From: sandra levy [sslevy@yahoo.com](mailto:sslevy@yahoo.com)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 6:32 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning Reform

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Planning Commission,

In looking at the proposals for zoning reform, I am reminded that this an old and complex problem in Alexandria, and one that deserves time for reflection, piece by piece. We should not be surprised by what these reforms bring, and the rush to a vote next month suggests unpleasant surprises.

I am a long-time resident of Alexandria, first moving in 1972 from Arlington to Parkfairfax, and in 1978 to Rosemont. Parkfairfax was affordable for a young family, but not only affordable. It had open space for residents to enjoy, and my late husband, Richard Levy, and many other Parkfairfax residents fought successfully in the 1970's to prevent its destruction when Arlen Realty planned to tear it down and build high-rises. Fortunately Mayor Charles Beatley and Council listened to our concerns and now, thankfully, Parkfairfax is an historic district on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. What would be its fate today?

My office is just north of the Heritage Apartments, where I have witnessed the displacement of tenants there and where I will watch the construction of its gigantic replacement. I see history repeating itself, but this time with an unhappy ending, so I get nervous when I see a rush to judgment.

I believe I would benefit financially from the proposed reforms, because single family housing would comprise an even smaller percentage of the total and I expect that my house, and especially my land, would rise in value even faster than they would otherwise. I'm not wealthy and that could come in handy. Moreover I am old and will be unlikely to have to deal for long with the inevitable problems that will arise with increased density. I do, however, care about future families, whose children will suffer in schools that are much too large and in parks that are much too small, and who will have to pay higher taxes to support the needed infrastructure and increased services.

There is much to consider before voting. Please slow down.

Yours truly,

Sandra Levy

106 W Walnut St

From: Jacqueline Coleburn [JCEnderby@hotmail.com](mailto:JCEnderby@hotmail.com)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 7:14 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning changes

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

The City is moving much too fast to vote on the zoning change proposals. It is a complex bundle of proposals and you have not given Alexandria citizens enough time or information to consider how the changes will affect their neighborhoods and the city.

The mayor himself calls this issue “the most ambitious housing reform in our history.” It deserves careful consideration.

I spent this morning at one of our Alexandria farmer’s markets, distributing flyers and yard signs for the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria. To my surprise, nine out of ten people I spoke with had no idea that the changes were on the table, much less being decided upon in less than one month. This suggests that the city’s outreach on this topic needs time and attention.

Please postpone your vote for several months at the very least. We need time for honest, in-person discussions about the proposed changes.

Thank you for your attention,

Jackie Coleburn

Enderby Drive



From: [gregorlib@aol.com](mailto:gregorlib@aol.com)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 8:42 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Regarding Nov. 1, 2023 Meeting Docket Item #2

Greetings Mr. Chairman and members of the Alexandria City Planning Commission,

Given the complexity, the unaddressed issues, and the potential unintended consequences involved in the RMF rezoning initiative, we feel strongly that a final vote by the City Council is premature. Further assessment is required to clarify the actual impact rezoning could have on various Alexandria neighborhoods, as per below:

The RMF zoning initiative website states that it "will allow new housing typologies in neighborhoods where they do not now exist..." Does this mean that two and four unit buildings can be constructed in R zones 2-5, 5, 8, 12, and 20, currently zoned for single family homes? Or does it mean that the RMF zoning applies to higher density areas of the City, not the predominately single-family neighborhoods of the City?

What guidelines does the City have, other than the existing setback, tree canopy, lot size and such that will ensure that two and four unit structures meet the "neighborhood compatibility" standard? Does the City have any design guidelines that would apply to new two and four unit structures that could be built in the above referenced R zones? What is the minimum lot size in square feet that would be required for a four unit building to be constructed?

Given the economic incentives built into the RMF zoning initiative, those incentives would reduce the number of single family homes available, raise the prices of the remaining ones, and force potential homeowners to compete against much deeper pocketed builders and their investors for the housing stock that comes up for sale. As houses go into multiple listing, builders will likely successfully win all bidding competitions. Therefore, all the lots that City zoning permits for multi-unit construction will end up with two or four unit buildings.

Additionally, the RMF will further increase the population density, parking issues, traffic on already narrow crowded streets, and infrastructure stress making Alexandria a less desirable city to live. Let's take a breath and proceed with caution on RMF rezoning.

Greg and Libby Diercks

From: Barbara Cousens [barbaracousensvg@gmail.com](mailto:barbaracousensvg@gmail.com)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 9:28 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: I SAY NO TO ZONING CHANGES

Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission

Please see attached for: the Nov 1, 2023 Meeting. Docket Item #2

For many reasons I say NO to the City Council's Proposed Zoning changes.

I have experience of buying and selling properties and can recognize just what this will do to the delicate balance that makes this City such a desirable choice for so many buyers.

Density is not desirable in a City of this size and infrastructural inadequacy is unfortunately a predictable outcome.

Please read my letter with as much concern as I have in writing it.

**[ATTACHMENT]**

I SAY NO to ZONING CHANGES

Purchasing a property is probably the single, the most important and often the largest investment most people make in a lifetime.

What never occurs to buyers is that this investment could be threatened. By the stealthy action of a City Council hell bent on instituting a political ideology to change the zoning laws in a way that affects everyone.

The stated goal of the City of Alexandria's upzoning proposal, "Housing for All", is that it will, over time, provide enough capacity to affordably house an additional 80,000 residents (a conservative estimate and at least half as much again as Alexandria's existing population of around 160,000).

To put it in perspective:

City of Alexandria currently has 10,689 people per square mile.

Gaza, Israel has 21,000 people per sq mile (which is as dense as London or Tel Aviv).

If Alexandria's population increases to 240,000 (as envisaged by this Council) Alexandria will have a density of 15,635 people per sq mile, making it 76% as dense as Gaza.

This initiative—which may be finalized when many are otherwise celebrating Thanksgiving-- begs the question as to whether or not any City Council is rightfully able to change zoning laws without adequate prerequisites such as impact assessment studies and the acceptance of its residents.

Eighty thousand more people, after all, need more infrastructure which is NOT YET PLANNED FOR, such as: roads & transport, water lines, sewer & storm water drains, electricity, schools, hospitals, fire stations, parks, churches and the like. In a City already beset by an onslaught of concrete high rises in its major corridors, and even its Old Town, one can rightfully challenge them to earmark the location for all this anticipated infrastructural development while maintaining the delicate balance that makes residents want to live there. Let alone the cost.

The stealth and hurried rush of City Council to re-legislate zoning laws has caught most residents by surprise.

Alexandria, which is already a diverse City, is disproportionately taking on the burden of a regional/State affordable housing problem. The City Council is proffering a proposal which, leading experts agree, will not solve the affordable housing problem but WILL in fact enrich developers.

I say NO to:

- the proposed zoning changes until impact assessments are carried out, shared and overwhelmingly approved by City residents.
- the breaking up of single family homes and land which provides the green lung so beneficial in suburban living.
- the adding of density to the already most dense and diverse city in Virginia.
- the dismantling of thriving communities for an indeterminate outcome that, by general consensus, is very likely to have unintended consequences.

I say YES to:

- putting this project on hold until an alternate solution can be found to realistically solve the affordability problem such as additional Metro/Bus/Road links and development in land-rich adjoining Counties or States.
- avoiding a return to "Urban Renewal 2.0" and finding something more acceptable and viable for the whole community and indeed the region.

· ensuring that we maintain our stated goal of having approximately 7.0 acres of open space for each resident of the City of Alexandria.

Barbara P von Geusau, Alexandria

From: Barbara Cousens [barbaracousensvg@gmail.com](mailto:barbaracousensvg@gmail.com)

Sent: Sunday October 29, 2023 9:29 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Fwd: Nov 1, 2023 Meeting Docket Item #2

Dear Mr Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission

### Affordability Myth

I have taken the liberty of entitling my letter the Affordability Myth and I am urging the City Council to rethink its ill-conceived and hurried plans to re zone/spot zone properties in Alexandria City.

To date, zoning restrictions have made Alexandria, especially Old Town, one of the most attractive cities in the US. Its low rise architecture, green spaces and sky views are now all up for grabs by the drastic legislation that the City proposes for a November 28 vote.

The City's intention, over time, to increase the present population of Alexandria (which now tops 160,000) by adding another 80,000 residents - on the pretext of making it more affordable, is a myth. Attracting newcomers who desire affordable housing close to their places of work in the name of equity, diversity and inclusion will not make life more affordable for them or anyone else. In fact, the opposite is true, as developers seize the opportunity to enrich themselves with high density developments such as four units on each single family lot.

Normally this sort of undertaking would take months to study and time would be given for qualified, specialized, and objective assessment, debate and reporting on the anticipated outcomes of such legislation before voting. City officials profess to be going through a thorough process of holding meeting after meeting and superficially handling objection after objection but concerned citizens do not get the slightest indication that their concerns are being heard or met.

This move by the City also begs the question as to whether it has the understanding or competence to deal with the dangers and outcomes of the drastic measures it is proposing. After its Oct 1 meeting there were, apparently, 40 amendments (or more, depending on how you count) proffered by the City within 3 days, and even some of that was later revised. This is apparently typical of its hastily drawn up plan and knee-jerk responses. It is an impossible task for even the most competent of urban planners to research and come to a conclusion about this volume of information in 3 days. However, I understand that there will still be an up and down vote on this issue on November 18.

CLA (Coalition for a Livable Alexandria), a non-profit body, is asking the City for time to undertake project studies to determine the outcome of these radical plans. It presents a convincing counter to the City's present unscientific proposals and refutes point by point the City's proffered nine-point plan with more qualified arguments addressing anticipated outcomes resulting from increases in population, urban

make up, land use and diminution of open space. It is not against making housing more affordable but feels that more time is needed to come to a mutually agreeable and workable solution.

It is unfair to expect that residents of Alexandria City including Old Town, individually deduce the outcome of these complex zoning changes and their impact on the community. I am strongly urging the City to support this initiative and give CLA and the residents of Alexandria, who have a vested interest in the outcome, more time to study the impact of its proposals. Visit: <https://livablealexandria.org>

Barbara P von Geusau, Alexandria

From: Danny [seatti@yahoo.com](mailto:seatti@yahoo.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 7:05 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: November 1, 2023 Meeting - Docket Item #2

To: Alexandria Planning Commissioner Chair Nathan Macek, Vice Chair Melissa McMahon, Commissioner David Brown, Commissioner Melinda Lyle, Commissioner Stephen Koenig, Commissioner Vivian Ramirez, Commissioner Jody Manor:

I am writing to you to express my opposition to the expedient timetable of the City of Alexandria's current Zoning for Housing/Housing for All proposal.

As a native of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area, and resident of the City of Alexandria for 19 years, I am one of many Alexandrians who is genuinely concerned about matters such as local congestion, public safety and health, sanitation, the environment, transportation, education, and housing that affect our lives.

I am aware that City of Alexandria, VA Charter, Section 9.09, entitled Zoning Powers, states, "...the council shall have the power to adopt by ordinance a comprehensive zoning plan designed to lessen congestion in streets, secure safety from fire, panic and other danger, promote health, sanitation and general welfare, provide adequate light and air, prevent the overcrowding of land, avoid undue concentration of population, facilitate public and private transportation and the supplying of public utility services and sewage disposal, preserve existing and facilitate the provision of new housing that is affordable to all segments of the community, and facilitate provision for schools, parks, playgrounds and other public improvements and requirements."

It is reasonable to suggest that the Charter includes each of those powers in one section to underscore that the council should not exercise any single provision at the expense of the other provisions. To me, that also makes it clear that the council, as elected officials, must be responsive to residents' concerns about the wide range of intended and possible unintended consequences of any major zoning proposal.

I understand that the City has combined numerous ambitious changes within its current zoning proposal for review by the public in two months. Unfortunately, that very brief timetable is not sufficient for robust civic consideration and engagement about the proposal.

In the September 1, 2022 issue of "The Council Connection" newsletter, Alexandria Mayor Justin M. Wilson wrote, "The power that collectively the 7 members of Alexandria's City Council wield can impact where people live, the wealth they can obtain, the education available to them, who their neighbors are, the stability of their family, how they get around their community, where they can work, the success of business ventures, and beyond." I am sure that you agree that the City of Alexandria Planning Commission shares degrees of that power. Therefore, I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to table the City's current zoning proposal and return it to staff for further study, and to allow for numerous

incremental opportunities for public comment, to achieve a comprehensive plan that addresses the concerns of all of Alexandria's residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Daniel Ciatti

Alexandria, VA



From: HARRY MAHON [513harry@comcast.net](mailto:513harry@comcast.net)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023 9:51 AM

To: [antoine.pierce@alexandriava.gov](mailto:antoine.pierce@alexandriava.gov)

Subject: Planning Commission Special Public Hearing on 11/1/2023 - Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Hello Planning Committee – We are generally informed as to Alexandria city developments. However, the initiative titled Zoning for Housing/Housing for All is quite confusing. The staff report for the November 1, 2023, alone is 142 pages. As a citizen it is very difficult to assess the changes and impacts of this initiative.

Overall, if understood correctly, the concept is to enable the creation of 3,000 additional housing units over the 10-year period (2020-2030) with 75 percent (2,250) recommended to be affordable for households of low-to moderate-incomes and located near activity and transit centers. This increase is over the 8,000 units projected in this time under existing conditions.

If the City now has 80,000 households the 3,000 additional units allocated through the Regional Housing Initiative would be approximately a 3% increase in total households, or .3% per year for the 10-year period.

Some of the questions are:

- Why does the City of Alexandria need to “broaden its toolbox” to the extent of a 142-page Master Plan/Zoning Text Amendment (2023-00005 and 2023-00007) to accommodate a .3% annual increase beyond the expected organic growth of housing in the City? And why is it not focused on “activity and transit centers?”
- Why did the City not share the extent of the expected Zoning changes (and associated costs) with the citizens before agreeing to the Regional Housing Initiative?
- Why hasn’t the City provided a full, understandable explanation of these changes to the citizens of Alexandria? What does it mean to citizens/residents in various parts of the City?
- Is there a clear explanation of the impacts to existing infrastructure (sewers, roads, schools – plus City services).
  - o As we are all aware, the existing infrastructure of the City is in dire need of repair/replacement. On our block alone, the sewer is outdated and was slated for replacement in 2024 (is that still on track?). Other infrastructure initiatives have been cancelled over the years, such as the undergrounding of wire utilities.

The list could go on, but the message is that this initiative does not seem fully thought out. It seems to be using the Regional Housing Initiative as a red herring to allow the City to eliminate many zoning elements for the benefit of increased density and developer's wish lists.

If the .3% increase in housing is the true goal, please develop a simple plan for accommodating this growth under existing zoning as well as within manageable infrastructure accommodations.

Thanks

Best regards,

Harry

Harry E. Mahon

513 South Lee Street

513harry@comcast.net

From: John Scott [jms3rd@gmail.com](mailto:jms3rd@gmail.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023 12:08 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

I'm don't support increased height requirements and lessening parking requirements.

Allot of the information the zoning folks isn't supported by the data

We need more study on this issue

-----

John Scott

240.401.6574

<[jms3rd@gmail.com](mailto:jms3rd@gmail.com)>

From: [alek.becker91@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:alek.becker91@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Friday October 27, 2023 12:47 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and ½ mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Alek Becker

1201 Braddock Pl Apt 1008 Alexandria, VA 22314-1674 [alek.becker91@gmail.com](mailto:alek.becker91@gmail.com)

(386) 366-0235

From: Tom VanAntwerp [tom@tomvanantwerp.com](mailto:tom@tomvanantwerp.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 11:10 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support for Zoning for Housing

Planning Commission,

In advance of your upcoming meeting about Zoning for Housing, I wanted to email you to voice my support for the new policies. I'm a resident of Del Ray, and I love my neighborhood. But I don't pretend that the current zoning rules somehow protect our neighborhood character—quite the opposite!

I worked very hard for many years to afford my Del Ray home. It is a modest 1944 townhome, and I bought it for almost \$700,000. I love it, but that is an absurd price for the age and quality of the building. I'm very lucky to be able to manage even this—none of my friends or family can afford to live here. Not in a single family house, not a townhome, not even a one bedroom apartment. Alexandria is just too expensive, and our restrictive zoning bears a lot of the blame.

When Z4H was proposed, I got curious about the zoning where I live in Del Ray. So I read through the zoning code for my street, and then checked it against measurements in the city's public maps data. I discovered that over 90% of the homes on my block do not conform to today's zoning code! My house, and the houses of most of my neighbors, could not legally be built again!

Alexandria shouldn't be a government-backed gated neighborhood. This city should be affordable to many more people than it currently is, and ought to allow a more diverse housing stock with fewer arbitrary restrictions.

I support the Zoning for Housing proposals. In fact, I wish they went much further than they do to ease the restrictions on development.

Thank you for taking my feedback, and I look forward to hearing what the Planning Commission has to say.

Best,

Tom VanAntwerp

Del Ray, Alexandria

From: Patrick McNabb [patrick.mcnabb@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.mcnabb@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 11:22 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Re: Nov 1, 2023 meeting Docket item #2

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

After attending Zoning For Housing (ZFH) meetings this year and reviewing the plans released on September 5, 2023, I am deeply concerned about the ZFH initiative. It appears to be founded on a premise that overlooks the essential needs of our community and the realities of our economic environment. The initiative implies that by passing this collection of zoning proposals, institutional barriers to equitable access to housing will be eliminated. However, I believe this narrative is misleading and fails to address equity in housing, as well as the pressing community concerns related to infrastructure, school safety, overcrowding, climate challenges, lack of space, and more.

What's more, the city has taken an aggressive and rushed approach to pass this initiative in less than a month, offering limited time for citizens to provide input on the planning process. If adopted, this initiative would effectively curtail citizen input and cede planning decisions to large developers whose primary focus is maximizing profitability, without adequately addressing the city's future needs. There are significant gaps in the rationale for passing the Zoning for All initiative, particularly in two key areas:

1. Job Loss: The city and its surrounding areas are grappling with empty commercial office buildings, and major employers like the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) are downsizing their office leases. Furthermore, the development of Amazon's second headquarters, HQ2, in Virginia has been halted. Given the current economic climate, there is no compelling reason to approve the construction of large rental buildings.
2. Education: Alexandria's schools are already overcrowded and underperforming. The projected increase in population by 100,000 residents over the next decade will necessitate the establishment of several new schools to educate these additional students. However, with the Alexandria City Public Schools facing issues of overcrowding, violence, and falling short of Virginia's educational standards, it is unjustifiable to double the city's population without first addressing these educational challenges.

I urge you to pause the passing of this initiative and allow more time to develop comprehensive, long-term plans that truly meet the needs of our city.

Sincerely,

Patrick McNabb

2507 DeWitt Avenue Alexandria, Virginia 22301

From: [snouts-falls0e@icloud.com](mailto:snouts-falls0e@icloud.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 11:22 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Comment on “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” initiative

Dear Commissioners,

At the heart of this “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” initiative is an attempt at increasing the availability of affordable housing – even if it is not being overtly addressed at this time (if it were not for affordability, then there would not be much point in increasing density).

I would like us to examine the basis for the housing price point in terms of Supply and Demand.

Let’s start with Supply.

The stated goal of this initiative, as I understand it, is to increase the housing stock to enable a population increase of something like 80,000 additional residents. The rationale behind increasing stock is the basic lesson that many of us learned in “Econ 101:” All other things being equal, an increase in supply will reduce the “Equilibrium Price” (the natural price of goods at services — the crossover point between the supply curve and the demand curve) which, in this case, would make housing more affordable.

That sounds simple enough: Create more housing and the crossover point appears at a lower price, so the cost of housing will drop. Simple, right?

Perhaps a bit too simple when you consider that Alexandria is a very desirable place to live. It is desirable for two reasons: Location and quality of life. And that desirability has driven demand such that even though there has been a tremendous amount of additional housing stock added in the last decade (or more), housing prices continue to be really, really high.

So, it is VERY hard to put any faith in the notion that adding more housing stock will reduce housing prices. It hasn’t worked before (here and nearly every other city), so there is no reason to think it will in the future..

Now let’s look at Demand.

Alexandria is a very desirable place to live, and that desirability is clearly driving demand. And, as I mentioned before, that desirability is due to location and quality of life.

So, what would happen to demand when the population of Alexandria is something like 50% higher?

We know that means more traffic. We know that density is directly related to crime rate – so we will see increases in crime (over and above where things stand now). We know that more families mean increased burden on the school system. We know that a big increase in population will mean additional investment in public safety infrastructure. And the City government will have to expand (which naturally

decreases efficiency). There will be more pollution. Grocery store lines will get worse. Lines at the DMV will get worse. Available parking will become more scarce. And so on.

Cramming an additional 80,000 people into our 15 square miles will certainly lead to a measurable decrease in the quality of life for the citizens of the City. Decrease in quality of life will make Alexandria less desirable, and a less desirable city will result in decrease demand.

So, it seems to me that the whole point of this density increase is to undermine the quality of life we enjoy in order to decrease the desirability of Alexandria as a place to live, driving demand down, which will lower housing costs.

More people → density → reduced quality of life → reduced desirability → reduced demand → lower prices

Is that really the plan?

I cannot imagine that the citizens of the City of Alexandria really want to undermine our quality of life. Do you?

Until we have a real handle on the impact of increased density on this city, I implore you to put on the brakes so we can be sure that we aren't entering into a Faustian bargain in the name of reducing housing costs (or simply following a plan that was created many years ago).

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Davidson



From: Matthew Charpentier [matthew.charpentier@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.charpentier@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 12:25 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov. 1 docket Zoning for Housing comment

Good afternoon,

Please see attached for comments in support of Zoning for Housing proposals from the Alexandria hub of Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. Thank you so much for your work on this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Matthew Charpentier

Co-Coordinator, FACS Alexandria Hub



October 30, 2023

Mayor Wilson, City Council, and Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria, Virginia

**Re: Please support proposed Zoning for Housing/Housing for All reforms**

Dear Mayor Wilson, City Council members, and Planning Commissioners:

I'm writing to express the support of the Alexandria Hub of Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions for the proposed Zoning for Housing/Housing for All reforms currently proposed by City staff. We are people of faith from Alexandria neighborhoods and congregations focused on equitable local solutions to the climate crisis. Our hub includes members from over 15 congregations and nonaffiliated city residents.

**1. The City's Energy & Climate Change Action Plan recommends Zoning for Housing**

The connection between zoning reform and climate policy is clear and outlined in Alexandria's own Energy and Climate Action Plan, which states that the city's climate goals can "be supported through land use change policies, allowing for more dense housing infrastructure, encouraging the development of mixed-used neighborhoods, supporting transit-oriented development efforts, and/or reducing or eliminating parking minimums in specific areas." By creating walkable neighborhoods, building density near transit and helping people afford housing closer to their places of work, we can help reduce Alexandria's greenhouse gas emissions.

**2. Zoning for Housing is a climate solution with significant equity and health benefits**

This is also a climate solution that has significant co-benefits for equity. The city's Energy and Climate Action Plan specifically looks for "actions that support social and other quality-of-life benefits (e.g., reduced traffic congestion, increased opportunities for socioeconomic mobility)" including asking "Does an action reduce the housing burden across communities?" To the extent that denser housing, housing closer to jobs and walkable neighborhoods all reduce transportation-related air pollution, there will be a significant health benefit for Alexandrians and our neighbors. There will be fewer new cases of asthma in children and fewer heart attacks and strokes in adults.

**3. Continue and boost the work to create dedicated and deeply affordable homes**

We believe that more work is needed in addition to the proposed reforms to preserve market-rate affordable housing, add more dedicated affordable units and address housing equity in the city, but these modest zoning reform proposals will help create more homes and a greater diversity of housing types for Alexandria residents and workers.

**4. Adopt the more effective Single-Family Zone options #2 and #3 developed by staff**

For the Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, FACS Alexandria Hub supports the more effective options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 (allowing 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones)
- Parking Option 3, which removes costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements near transit.

The staff proposals overall are incremental and protect the character of the city and its neighborhoods. We believe that more will need to be done, but the plan to pass this modest reform and revisit the strategies in two years is a sound strategy. We strongly support the passage of the Zoning for Housing proposals.

Thank you,

Matthew Charpentier  
401 E Alexandria Ave. Apt. 302, Alexandria, VA 22301  
FACS Alexandria Hub Co-Coordinator

Cc: Ryan Freed, Climate Action Officer, City of Alexandria

From: Susan McGrath [samcg@comcast.net](mailto:samcg@comcast.net)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 1:10 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov 1, 2023 Meeting Docket Item #2

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

I have been a resident of Alexandria for forty-six years and have witnessed numerous changes in our city over that time period. Through it all, Alexandria has managed to maintain its identity as an individual city with a unique identity as opposed to just one more sprawling community outside Washington, D. C. However, that integrity is threatened now by the bundle of nine zoning proposals through 41 text amendments your commission is recommending.

These are to be reviewed by the public in just eight weeks, including the Thanksgiving holiday week and two federal holidays. This does not allow adequate time for citizens to study and comment on these extremely important proposals. For instance, it is difficult to imagine what the addition of 80,000 residents and their vehicles would do to an already crowded city in which traffic and parking have been critical problems for years.

It is not clear that the City has performed thorough studies to uncover what might be unintended consequences for residents. It is quite possible that the result could be damage to our community that could completely destroy the character of Alexandria changing it into just one more crowded, unhealthy, unattractive suburb.

In the past the city wisely spent a great deal of time reviewing and studying the effects of consequential zoning changes. What is the hurry now? There does not seem to be a valid reason for rushing into a vote by the end of November especially since so many residents are now learning about the enormous changes that the Commission only very recently announced.

These changes could mean enormous damage to the environment, economy, quality of life, and infrastructure of Alexandria. The residents deserve assurance that adequate study has been done by the Commission allowing for a through discussion of the pros and cons of the changes. As residents and taxpayers, they deserve more time for careful consideration of how these substantial issues will affect them and their neighborhoods. There is an unfortunate sense that these changes are being rushed through to avoid public comment.

Yours truly,

Susan A. McGrath

507 South Royal Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Sylvia Alimena  
6017 Jewell Court  
Alexandria, VA 22312  
[sylalimena@aol.com](mailto:sylalimena@aol.com)  
October 30, 2023

Members of the Planning Commission

Chairman Macek, Ms. McMahon, Mr. Brown, Ms. Lyle, Mr. Koenig, Ms. Ramirez  
Ms. Manor;

As a 38-year resident of Alexandria, I would like to voice my strong opposition to the proposed zoning changes for single family zones. The statistics used by the Planning Committee to justify these changes are from pre-pandemic data. The world has changed since then. More people are working from home and some who “work” here don’t even live here.

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission shows that between 2010-2020 the population in Northern Virginia actually dropped by 5000 people. Alexandria City records its own population at 158,309, a drop of more than 1000 people since the 2020 Census (159,467.) That doesn’t sound like a crisis to me, but here’s a crisis scenario. With an unemployment rate of 2.3%, can you see the impending disaster of building too much, crowding people into our city at your planned rate and then not having enough jobs? Amazon HQ2 is a long way off, and I wouldn’t count on them saving the day.

The tearing down of a single family home only to be replaced by multiplexes of 2,4 or 6 units will change our neighborhoods forever. It will encourage rentals and AirB&Bs rather than home ownership. The stock of single family homes to own will obviously go down, which is at odds with the Council’s previously stated goals.

Many of our single family homes are not near metro stations or within walking distance of bus lines which will take them to their place of work. We’ll have more cars not only in the neighborhood but as commuters in an already traffic congested area.

The Planning Committee’s claim that zoning changes will somehow make housing more affordable and more diverse is a false narrative. Not only has construction in the past decade or more not been more affordable to our policemen, teachers and service industry workers, it has caused even further segregation in our City. The single family zones in Alexandria are the definition of diversity at 51% white, while more newly constructed Potomac Yards; 70% white; Eisenhower East 70% white; King Street-Metro Eisenhower: 83% white. Once again at odds with the City Council’s stated goals.

I do not believe that upsetting these long established neighborhoods with promises of affordable housing will alleviate the housing needs of those who need affordable housing for their income range. Only committed affordable housing or rent controlled housing will do that, and yet the city is not committed to solving the problem this way, even though it was a stated goal in the 2014 Master Plan. Based on information provided regarding the City’s small area plans in the coming decades, we will lose much more committed affordable housing than we will gain.

I frankly never thought I would see the day when the goals of our city leaders would become so incompatible with the principals and spirit of the Alexandria City Charter which, over many

decades, sought to preserve the quality of life for all Alexandrians by restricting overcrowding, restricting building heights, set backs and preserving single family zones. Why must this Planning Committee, which is basing its decisions on ancient data, in one fell swoop seek to destroy all that makes Alexandria a livable city.

Sincerely,  
Sylvia Alimena

From: Gabriel Morey [gtmorey1@gmail.com](mailto:gtmorey1@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 2:47 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: In Support of the Zoning for Housing Plan

Dear Mayor Wilson, Members of City Council, and Alexandria Planning Commission:

I am writing to express my support for the Zoning for Housing / Housing for All plan. I have lived in Alexandria since I graduated undergrad in 2016—first as a renter in the Cameron Court apartments on Eisenhower Avenue, and now as the owner of a townhouse with my wife on Kenwood Avenue (number 2716).

Unfortunately, my wife and I oddities among our age group, as most of our cohort are unable to afford to purchase homes in Alexandria. I can count on one hand the number of friends my age who own a house. We almost missed our chance – we bought two weeks before Amazon’s HQ2 announcement supercharged housing prices. Additionally, since we bought, three townhouses on our block have been turned into rentals: one as an airBNB, and two more as long-term rentals. We could not afford our house today. I count myself lucky to own a home, and I want to ensure that all people have the same chances I did. That is why I support zoning reforms that make all types housing more plentiful and affordable.

Overall, I think the plan laid out by the city is reasonable. One thing it does well is support multiple types of housing – apartments, duplexes, townhouses, and single-family. Since the proposals are so broad, I will not attempt to cover all. However, I do want to note my support for some areas that I know are contentious.

- Single Family Zone Adjustments: Alexandria is only 15 square miles, but a cursory glance at single family residential zoning on the City’s storymap shows roughly 40-50% of our buildable land is dedicated to single family homes. No policy to increase housing availability is going to work unless it opens up this land for gentle density.

Either option presented by the City would help, but my recommendation is to go with Option 1, but with a tweak: shift the allowance of three of four-unit buildings to include R8 zoning. The R8 zones are almost all adjacent to high-frequency bus transit, making them easier to densify than truly car-dependent R20 zones.

For example, the large swath of R8 along King Street between the Masonic Temple and Bradlee Center is adjacent to the 15-minute DASH Line 31. Similarly, the R8 segment between Janney’s Lane and Duke is within the walkshed of the 10-15 minute DASH 30, and the sections near Cameron Ridge Road are near the existing 15-minute 36A/B, and commuter routes 103 and 104. This proximity to transit would allow the new density to make a minimal impact on congestion.

Finally, I know that certain, loud, and monied voices in the City will cry that any change to single family zoning will “destroy the character” of their neighborhoods, cause “traffic problems”, or “ruin Alexandria”.

I do not want to dismiss their concerns – change is hard, especially when it's near one's home. However, change is also inevitable. People will continue to move to Alexandria, and unless we want the City to become a playground only for the affluent we must build more housing. Already too many of our DASH bus drivers, ACPS teachers, firefighters, and police officers cannot afford to live in the City they serve. We must ensure we are affordable, or else will price ourselves out of basic services.

- Parking: Maintaining minimum parking requirements are one the best tools the city has to ensure that housing remains unaffordable and that our streets remain clogged with cars. For these two reasons, I am pleased to see the City proposing to reduce minimum parking requirements. I advocate for the City to go with Option 3, which would zero-out all parking requirements in the enhanced transit zones and reduce them outside of it.

My only complaint about the proposed parking changes is that they don't appear to address existing oversupplies of parking near high-frequency transit. When I was finishing graduate school in 2022, I did a geospatial analysis of all off-street surface parking in Alexandria within a quarter-mile of high-frequency bus service, defined as at least every 15 minutes in the midday period. Excluding single-family home driveways, I found that Alexandria has nearly a square mile of off-street, surface parking within a 5-minute walk of a frequent bus route. Again, that's a square mile of car storage in a city that is only 15 square miles. We can—and should—repurpose these seas of asphalt to build homes, gardens, parks, schools, and other needed uses besides storage of private vehicles.

- Townhome changes: Townhomes are one the best ways to get missing middle housing into an urban area. Our townhouse is a rarity in Alexandria – built on spec in 1987, it does have a driveway but cars do not dominate the street. It is modern, spacious but compact, and does not come with an overbearing HOA. We enjoy a small front and back yard, but live in a dense enough community that we can still walk to the store, catch a bus to Old Town, and get to know our neighbors. Standardizing design requirements like setbacks, lot sizes, FARs, and more as the city is proposing will help ensure more communities like ours are built.

In addition to these three specific areas, I do also support the proposed support for additional residential-to-office conversions, the tweaking of industrial land use to support growth, the expansion and refinement of Transit Oriented Development, the commitment to more direct affordable housing, and the amending of the Housing Master Plan to add Multifamily zoning to all medium and high-density places.

Finally, I would like to thank the City's staff for putting these recommendations together, and to the Mayor, Members of Council, and the Planning Commission for reading community comments such as this (long winded) one.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Morey



From: Moira BUZBY [thebuzbys@comcast.net](mailto:thebuzbys@comcast.net)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 3:13 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov. 1, 2023 Meeting/Docket Item #2

To Whom it May Concern,

I have attached a letter addressed to the Chairman and Committee Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission for the Nov. 1, 2023 meeting (Docket Item #2).

I included copies of the letter in two different formats. Please confirm receipt of this letter. I am happy to try another format if you are unable to access either of these.

Thank you,

Moira Buzby

October 30, 2023

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission,

I am writing to register my strong opposition to the “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” initiative to eliminate single family zones in the city of Alexandria.

Single family homes are significantly underrepresented in our city’s housing stock. Of the 84,000 housing units in the city, only about 9,000 are single family homes. Alexandria has a lower proportion of single family homes than most big cities in the US, including Washington, DC. Currently, single family homes are already being torn down (such as the Upland Park and the Wythe at Braddock Metro projects) to make room for townhouses and multi-family units. Further reductions to this supply will raise prices as families compete for a smaller inventory of these homes or force them to relocate outside the city in search of this housing option.

Single family homes occupy a small percentage of Alexandria’s land. Only about 30% of Alexandria is zoned for single family housing. This land is also used by churches, schools, cemeteries, parks, and large private institutions. Therefore, the actual proportion of single family zones populated by a single family house is much smaller. The city should preserve these communities and shield them from zealous redevelopment and homogenization. The city should protect the unique character of diverse neighborhoods throughout the city – including single family neighborhoods – in order to attract and retain residents who value a variety of housing options and neighborhoods.

Eliminating single family zoning will not achieve affordability. Conversely, it will make single family homes more expensive as the supply dwindles and homeowners factor in the prospect of redevelopment into their sales price. It will also demolish modest single family homes as they are purchased by developers for duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes. A study published in the *Journal of American Planning Association* found that the 2018 Minneapolis law eliminating single family zoning resulted in a 5% increase in the price of housing units in the following year.

Eliminating single family zoning will not broaden access to single family neighborhoods. It is clear that this particular zoning initiative is not designed to be a genuine solution to a housing problem. The 15-17 estimated new units each year, which would be available at market rate, do nothing to make single family neighborhoods more accessible. The plan is simply a land-grab for lawmakers to hand over to developers under the guise of equity. In fact, developers are likely to profit even more in the future as existing safeguards (like lot size, setbacks, open space, floor area ratio and tree canopies) are sacrificed for even further density.

Alexandria already has tools to construct housing without dismantling existing single family zoning. In the past ten years, 11,600 housing units were built within the city boundaries and thousands more are in the pipeline under current zoning rules. *Alexandria Living’s* recent article titled, “Alexandria Under Construction” details 36 construction projects underway totaling more than \$1 billion. At least 30 of these projects include new multi-family residences. In 2021, the city approved an accessory dwelling unit policy effectively allowing for two homes on each property in single family neighborhoods. Further changes are not needed to construct housing units.

The single family zoning initiative in the “Housing for Zoning/Zoning for All” plan is misguided and unwarranted. I urge you to remove this initiative from the package of zoning changes for the good of existing residents, constituents and taxpayers who make their home in Alexandria single family neighborhoods. Their interests deserve the protection and support of their local government over that of developers, special interest groups and those who live outside our city limits.

Sincerely,

Moira Buzby  
308 Mansion Drive  
Alexandria, VA. 22302

cc: Alexandria City Council Members

From: LYN GUBSER [lgubser@comcast.net](mailto:lgubser@comcast.net)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 3:50 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Re: Nov 1, 2023 meeting Docket item # 2

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

Since 1978 my wife, Diane, and I have lived at 603 Beverley Drive in North Ridge. We have reared our two children here, both of whom have become contributing citizens: John, as a teacher in ACPS, Kimberly as an integrative medicine specialist working with area health providers. Our family has a major stake in this community, but a stake that is being directly threatened by multiple factors. By illustration, let me describe but three:

**Delay in restoring the City's vital tree canopy.** By 2018 the City's urban forest had been reduced to 32 percent canopy coverage as a result of development and disease. To begin restoration of this essential resource for combating dramatically rising urban temperatures, the City set a goal of 40 percent coverage by 2035, which would require adding the equivalent of 750 acres of trees. Yet proposed zoning changes leading to increased densification and spreading impermeable ground cover would directly threaten the City's canopy restoration initiative. To what degree? No one can say because, astonishingly, there have been no studies nor even credible guesstimates to assess the level of threat.

**Additional stress on City's groundwater drainage system.** As a member of the City's Groundwater Task Force, I became sensitized to the major, unwavering challenge we face in channeling storm runoff and flooding to prevent loss of life and property, especially as global warming brings weather events of unprecedented magnitude and frequency. Yet in all of the plans for increasing by a third the size of the City's population and consequent increase in land area under roofs, parking lots, and other impervious covers, there is little discussion and no instructive assessments of how a gigantic leap in groundwater challenges will be accommodated by our notoriously fragile storm drainage system. How can that be?

**Increased pressure on our public schools.** While school populations tend to ebb and flow from year to year, there can be little question that adding an additional 40 to 50 percent of citizens to our City will have a major impact on the number of students to be accommodated by our public schools, some of which are already overtaxed. But if the goal is to build a New Alexandria that will house a younger population of working people, the number of children per capita can only increase. The question has already been asked (and ignored) as to where we shall put the 40 percent of new schools buildings this dramatic population growth will demand? We can also ask whether we can assume the children of this new population of workers will receive the same level of special services as does the present school population? Depending on the population, there may be a dramatic increase in special needs youngsters, whether in language support or other legally (PL94-142) mandated special services. Providing the special needs teachers and additional facilities that may be required could further dramatically impact the cost of accommodating a huge increase in population. The point is: we don't know. The issue has not been studied.

In raising these issues my objective has been but one: to make you aware that there are a myriad of issues that need to be addressed before blindly rushing to commit to the uprooting of measures and procedures that for years have made Alexandria a vibrant, livable city. It would be a shame to tarnish this City's heritage because our leaders didn't take time to do their homework.

From: Alex Goyette [alexmgoyette@gmail.com](mailto:alexmgoyette@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 4:33 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]YIMBYs of Northern Virginia Comment on Zoning for Housing, for Planning Commission Hearing 11/1/23

Good afternoon,

Attached please find public comment from YIMBYs of Northern Virginia's Alexandria chapter re: Zoning for Housing, submitted for the Planning Commission's hearing on 11/1/23.

Thank you,

Alex

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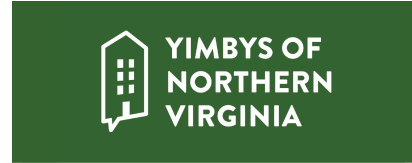
Alex Goyette

Alexandria Lead

YIMBYs of Northern Virginia

AlexMGoyette@gmail.com

1 November, 2023  
To: Planning Commission  
From: YIMBYs of Northern Virginia, Alexandria Chapter  
Re: Zoning for Housing



Chair Macek, Vice Chair McMahon, and members of the Planning Commission,

The Alexandria Chapter of YIMBYs of Northern Virginia writes in strong support of staff’s recommended reforms in Zoning for Housing. **We ask the Planning Commission to pass the most expansive recommendations, and to go even further.**

Our region faces a housing crisis rooted in a simple fact: as the DC region grew in population and added thousands of high-paying jobs over the past several decades, we failed to build enough housing to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for homes near these jobs. This has driven housing costs higher and higher, to the point that stable housing is out of reach for many Alexandrians today. Alexandrians deserve a City that meets crises with bold action.

The impacts of this housing crisis are clear and devastating. Families struggle to cover rent or mortgages. Many cannot keep up with rising housing costs and are forced to relocate, either through eviction or “voluntary” displacement when they can no longer afford a home in their own community. As residents are pushed to the suburban and then exurban fringe they face marathon commutes, clogging our highways and arterials, pouring greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, sending harmful particulate matter into the air as they pass through Alexandria.

Staff’s recommendations for Zoning for Housing offer a modest step in the right direction. By legalizing more efficient land use in Alexandria, these policies can help to slow the tide of rising housing costs and the displacement those costs cause. They should be passed, and be paired with increased funding for dedicated affordable homes and improved legal protections for Alexandrians who rent their homes.

When faced with a crisis, however, such measured responses are insufficient. **We ask Planning Commission to consider the following additions to staff’s recommendations:**

1. **Legalize small, “garden-style” apartments and townhouses in all residential zones;**
2. **Repeal parking mandates for all housing within 0.75 miles of high capacity transit stops; and**
3. **Allow more homes near all high-capacity transit.**

**Legalize small, “garden-style” apartments and townhouses in all residential zones**

Small multi-unit buildings up to 3 stories tall and townhouses are quintessential to Alexandria's urban fabric. Old Town's townhouses are iconic, and three-story garden apartments mix seamlessly into neighborhoods across the city. Together they provide relatively affordable options even when built at market prices - these are the types of buildings that house many of Alexandria's teachers, federal workers, and first responders. Legalizing the by-right construction of these typologies across all residential zones will ensure all of Alexandria's neighborhoods are accessible to people at most points on the income ladder.

To ensure small apartment buildings are not only legal, but buildable under current economic conditions, the City should:

- Allow multi-unit buildings and townhouses as a by-right use in all residential zones;
- Ease the process for splitting lots;
- Allow parcels in residential zones to be analyzed together as a tract for purpose of density and open space requirements; and
- Adjust FAR, height, and lot restrictions as needed in all zones. On this point we advise:
  - Modern townhouses likely require 45 feet of height, so this height should be permitted for the use. This already exists in the City's RB zone, so has precedent in Alexandria.
  - To permit buildable modern townhouses, the existing RM zone (as adjusted by staff's recommendations) makes a good baseline if the maximum height is also adjusted to allow for 45 feet.
  - For small multiunit buildings ("garden apartments"), a floor-area ratio of 3.0 would allow for maximum buildability. Slightly lower FARs would likely still produce some units, and may line up with other restrictions on lot setbacks, etc.
  - Reducing open space requirements to 25%, as exists in the CRMU-X Zone, would allow multi-unit projects to pencil much more easily.

### **Repeal parking mandates for all housing within 0.75 miles of high capacity transit stops**

Requiring all new housing to include off-street parking forces all residents to pay for car storage, even if they have no car! Mandated parking drives up construction costs, which gets passed on to us as higher rents and mortgage payments. There are car-free households in Alexandria; it should be legal to build homes for them, especially near transit. We face a climate crisis, and one of Alexandria's primary sources of greenhouse gas emissions are private vehicle trips; the least we can do is stop forcing all residents to subsidize the storage of private vehicles.

Staff recommended a study in phase 2, looking at the possibility of removing parking mandates for affordable housing within 0.5 miles of Metrorail stops. Cities across the country have already been far more bold, repealing parking minimums for all projects citywide. The latest to do so was our own state capital of Richmond, which doesn't even have a rail system equivalent to Metro. Homebuilders are capable of determining how much parking a project needs to be sold or rented; citywide mandates only serve to force them to build more than is needed.

The City should:

- Remove parking mandates now (not just study it in phase 2)
- for all housing (not just affordable housing)
- within 0.75 miles (not just 0.5 miles)
- of all high-capacity transit including bus rapid transit (not just rail).

### **Allow more homes near high capacity transit**

Despite our dual housing and climate crises, and even as WMATA faces a fiscal cliff, Alexandria still places strict limits on how many people the City will allow to live near transit. Walksheds around many of our Metro stations and current & future transitways are still zoned for low density or industrial uses instead of the dense, vibrant, transit-supporting neighborhoods they could be if we simply allowed them to grow.

The impacts of these restrictions are visibly obvious: anyone standing at Braddock Road Station, for example, can face east and see a City growing up around the station, resembling much of the region's best transit-oriented communities. Turn around and face west, however, and you see what looks like a sleepy suburb. In too many places we've approached transit with a split mentality, imposing strict caps on the growth of some neighborhoods while allowing abundant housing on "the other side of the tracks." These restrictions inflate housing costs in some of our most desirable neighborhoods, forcing people who'd love to pay fares on Metro or ride Alexandria's wonderful free DASH buses to instead live in car-dependent areas further out.

The City should:

- Adjust the restrictions in our zoning code and small area plans to allow dense, walkable neighborhoods to grow up all around all of our high capacity transit stops. These neighborhoods shouldn't be limited to one side of the tracks - or to tracks at all! Bus rapid transit is capable of supporting many more people than we currently allow to live along our transitways. This includes reforms to make it easier to build housing in all residential, commercial, and industrial zones near transit.

In passing staff's recommendations in addition to these enhancements, Alexandria could make a real dent in our housing crisis. These reforms must be the first of many steps toward housing abundance, and should be paired with increased funding for affordable housing as well as improved legal protections for the roughly half of Alexandrians who rent their home.

**About Organization:** YIMBYs (yes in my backyard) of Northern Virginia is a grassroots, all-volunteer organization working to make housing affordable to all by enabling the construction of more homes for more people. Attainable homes close to the amenities of daily life hold the promise of communities that are more affordable, socially connected, economically productive, and sustainable.

[www.yimbysofnova.org](http://www.yimbysofnova.org)



From: Lisa sch [lisaschoechle25@msn.com](mailto:lisaschoechle25@msn.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 6:09 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: No Zoning Changes

I live at 3145 N. Rosser St. and I am opposed to the NEW Zone changes that have been proposed. From what I see, the crime will go up, the massive density will cause horrid traffic and our historic city will be overwhelmed with not enough jobs to support the current residents. Our quiet neighborhoods will be destroyed and the flora/fauna will suffer.

Please, no new zone changes to our "single family homes" and beautiful community in Dowden Terrace.

Respectfully,

Lisa C. Schoechle

From: Meghan Noury [mnoury@udel.edu](mailto:mnoury@udel.edu)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 6:43 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

Hello,

My name is Meghan Goyette and I am a resident of S Jordan Street in Alexandria. I'd like you to be aware that I support Zoning for Housing but can't make the hearing because I am busy working a night shift at Inova Children's Hospital. This is a very important issue for me and my family, especially me toddler and baby on the way.

Thank you,

Meghan Goyette

From: Ingris Moran [imoran@tenantsandworkers.org](mailto:imoran@tenantsandworkers.org)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 7:06 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: TWU Letter Re: Zoning For All / Housing For All

Good Evening Planning Commissioners,

Tenants and Workers United has attached a letter regarding Zoning For All / Housing for All . May you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Tenants and Workers United

--

Lead Organizer, Tenants and Workers United

3801 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Alexandria, VA 22305



**Tenants and  
Workers United**

October 3, 2023

Dear Chair Macek, Vice Chair McMahon, and members of the Planning Commission,

Tenants and Workers United is a community grassroots organization who has been in the City of Alexandria for over 35 years. Our members, working class people of color in Alexandria, are deeply housing cost burdened, often spending more than half their income on housing. In Alexandria, the rising cost of housing disproportionately impacts people of color. Many of our neighbors, friends, and family members have been forced to leave Alexandria because they cannot afford to live here. It is the City's responsibility to plan its housing and land use to meet the needs of all of its residents, especially people who are historically denied housing opportunities. Alexandria has not done this, instead creating a housing system that has further marginalized its low-income communities and people of color. Now, before more of us are forced to leave, the City must right this wrong.

We agree that the Zoning for Housing and Housing for All plan should increase the accessibility, affordability, and availability of housing to the Alexandrians who most need housing. The only way to do this is to dismantle discriminatory barriers to housing access and opportunity. We applaud the City's significant efforts to study and recommend policies to achieve this. Yet, when we read the final report and recommendations, we feel that the recommendations do not do enough.

This is why we urge your leadership as the Planning Commission and to City Council Members to do more to protect the most vulnerable Alexandrians. First, the City should further increase housing supply in historically exclusionary neighborhoods, where it will have less impact on low-income families. If the City seeks to increase housing as one tool for housing equity, the City as a whole must take responsibility for the policy shift. Right now, the City continues to place the burden of increased development on marginalized communities at risk of displacement. Second, wherever possible, the City should increase the requirements for deeply affordable housing as part of any development. Third, Alexandria should prevent further displacement in neighborhoods where people of color and low-income residents are at risk. This means that before allowing further development, the City should put in place comprehensive neighborhood stabilization protections. Finally, the recommendations make clear that increased deeply affordable housing requires significant funding. For these changes to have any equitable impact, the City must pair them with a commitment to substantial financial resources to meet our critical housing needs.

We feel that the current recommendations do not do enough to meet our needs and prevent our displacement. Changing our housing system to guarantee housing for all will take bold action at every step of the process. We know you will make a decision this Wednesday evening for Zoning For All/Housing for all and we reiterate as an organization that there needs to be more proactive solutions to protect and preserve the existing families that already live in the City of Alexandria.

Sincerely,

*Ingris Moran*

Ingris Moran  
Lead Organizer

Tenants and Workers United ♦ Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos

3801 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305 phone 703.684.5697 fax 703.684.5714 [www.tenantsandworkers.org](http://www.tenantsandworkers.org)

From: Charles Yang [charlesxyang@gmail.com](mailto:charlesxyang@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 7:47 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: 11/1 hearing for docket item #2: Zoning for Housing

Hi,

I am writing to submit a letter of support for Alexandria's Zoning for Housing initiative on behalf of RVA YIMBY. Please find the letter attached below.

Thanks,

Charles Yang



November 1, 2023  
To: Planning Commission  
From: RVA YIMBY  
Re: Zoning for Housing

Chair Macek, Vice Chair McMahon, and members of the Planning Commission,

RVA YIMBY is writing to share Richmond city's recent experience in zoning reform.

This past summer, **Richmond City Council took bold action to abolish parking minimums across the entire city**. Planning staff analysis showed that the majority of developments in Richmond exceeded the parking minimum and as a result, the existence of parking minimums did not significantly affect the real estate market or the supply of parking. Further, planning staff highlighted the environmental harm parking lots cause (in increasing surface runoff and urban heat island effect) as well as increasing the cost of housing development. Parking minimums also did not take into consideration neighborhood- or block-level dynamics e.g. strip malls or mixed-use developments that may already have sufficient parking. As Richmond develops non-car based forms of transportation, including bike lanes and the Greater Richmond Transit Corporation (GRTC), abolishing parking minimums allows developers to flexibly plan their developments, rather than being forced to follow arbitrary codes that are not updated or situational.

Richmond Planning commission, and subsequently, Richmond city council both passed the measure unanimously.

In the months since Richmond abolished parking minimums city-wide, developers have continued to build record amounts of housing in Richmond and invest in our city. There have been no mile-long lines outside of parking lots nor has traffic noticeably changed.

We encourage Alexandria to take heart from Richmond city's example and prioritize housing for people, not housing for cars.

Your neighbors,  
Charles Yang, Andrew Bryant, and Will Wilson  
RVA YIMBY Co-Leads

From: [christine.coker20@gmail.com](mailto:christine.coker20@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 8:14 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please say NO to zoning for housing

West End already overcrowded w/ apt and Brac developments, and Seminary Rd betw. George Mason and 395 can NOT handle any more traffic! ... please help keep our single family detached neighborhood properties safe (already with cut thru traffic problems). Seminary West (Dowden Terrace). Thank you.

Christine Riccardi Coker

3156 N. Rosser Street Alexandria, VA 22311

(h) 703-820-2956 (c) 703-489-9273 christine.coker20@gmail.com

From: Bill Kehoe [kehoefd@aol.com](mailto:kehoefd@aol.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 8:39 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Housing Zoning

I definitely want you to vote NO on the new proposed zoning proposals coming before you. Keep single family housing zoning.

Bill Kehoe

kehoefd@aol.com

30 October 2023

Fire is Everyone's Fight



From: Tom Goslin [tdgoslin@gmail.com](mailto:tdgoslin@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 10:40 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission,

As residents of Alexandria for the past 16 years, we write today to express our general opposition to the City's Zoning for Housing proposal, and specific concern regarding the proposal to eliminate zoning for single-family housing. Beyond the substance of those proposals, we also are concerned with the proposed timeline to vote on nine complex zoning proposals by the end of November, each of which merits additional study and debate. Urgently pushing forward with changes that likely will meaningfully and irreversibly reshape one of the "Best Places to Live For Families" risks forever altering the character of the City in a way that seems more focused on the needs of potential future residents and developers at the cost of those of us who already call Alexandria home.

While there is no doubt that the cost to live in Alexandria is high, the same is true for nearly every city, county, town and neighborhood in the vicinity of the Nation's Capital. Alexandria cannot, on its own, impact the cost of housing in the entire metro area. Proponents of the zoning changes claim that adding thousands of new units will make the City more affordable, but the facts show otherwise: Alexandria added about 11,000 rental units between 2012 to 2022 and housing prices have only increased, as did public school enrollment and overcrowding, traffic and stress on local infrastructure. In other words, adding more housing resulted almost exclusively in a worse quality of life for existing Alexandria residents. Nothing in the nine zoning proposals suggests that adding even more housing will produce different results. The City already is among the densest in the nation and there simply is not enough suitable land available to build sufficient new housing to meaningfully satisfy demand to live close to Washington, D.C. Thus, the only parties likely to benefit are the developers.

Of particular concern to us is the change to eliminate zoning for single-family homes, which make up less than 12% of all housing in the City. If the goal is to reduce the cost of housing, this proposal seems entirely inconsistent with such aims. According to Redfin, the average price of a single-family home sold in Alexandria in September 2023 was \$870,000. That is an eye-popping sum; however, if every single-family home for sale in Alexandria is now an opportunity for a well-capitalized developer to acquire a site for new luxury condos or apartments, that price will skyrocket to the point where only the developers will be able to afford homes in the City. We understand that the City analysis of the proposal to eliminate single-family zoning would result in only 178 new units over the next 10 years, absent other changes to building restrictions. If this analysis is accurate, the City risks forever transforming neighborhoods for what would be a relatively miniscule addition to the housing stock. Again, the only

obvious beneficiary would be the developers, who we suspect would soon be agitating for additional zoning changes that would allow for profitable redevelopment of many additional homesites, further eroding the character of some of the City's most established neighborhoods.

In short, the proposed changes to the City's zoning regulations appear to offer almost no benefits to current City residents, yet risk permanently transforming the character of a small city that many people recognize (including those of us who already live here) as one of the best in the nation. We strongly encourage the Planning Commission to undertake a much more thorough analysis of the impacts that these proposals can have on the City and to oppose the elimination of single-family zoning.

Sincerely,

Tom and Elizabeth Goslin

802 Grand View Drive

Alexandria, Virginia 22305

From: Tom Klancer [tklancer@gmail.com](mailto:tklancer@gmail.com)

Sent: Monday October 30, 2023 11:25 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Zoning for Housing support and a request for improvement

Hi, my name is Tom Klancer, and I support the proposed Zoning for Housing changes -- actually I'd like them to go further. My wife and I moved to Del Ray eight years ago and we love our neighborhood. Before we moved here we weren't sure where we wanted to live but it needed to be walkable (my wife doesn't drive), and we decided that we'd try the neighborhood for a while by living in an apartment. After several years, we started house hunting. After being told that there was no way we'd be able to afford a single-family house despite having two healthy incomes and no kids, we were fortunate enough to find a fantastic duplex in the neighborhood.

We love being in a neighborhood that's walkable, close to great restaurants, a grocery store, and has good transit connections. The new Metro station is awesome, by the way. We have friendly neighbors and we get to live in a way few Americans do -- I grew up in the suburbs where it's normal to get into your car to do pretty much anything, and without actually living it myself I never would have realized how much nicer it is to live someplace where you can actually walk or bike or take transit to things.

Most of all I love that there are a mix of different people with different incomes, different backgrounds, and at different stages of life living in the same neighborhood, which is enabled by having a variety of housing types. That diversity is a huge strength of the neighborhood and our surrounding neighborhoods.

The problem is that over time I've seen the neighborhood get more and more out of reach for most people. As I said, it was pretty challenging when we were buying and that's only gotten worse. We see lots of construction when we walk around the neighborhood, but it's almost exclusively for smaller single family homes becoming bigger single family homes. In one notable case, it appears to be two lots being turned into one extra-large SFH. And hey, if I could afford to do that maybe I would too -- as I said, it's a great neighborhood, so I don't blame people for wanting to live here. The problem is that it's all one-sided, and Del Ray is becoming an enclave exclusively by and for the wealthy.

More people should be able to live in walkable neighborhoods like mine, and the current Zoning for Housing proposal is a good start to address these problems. By making it legal to build a variety of housing stock at different price points -- from duplexes like mine all the way up to garden-style apartments -- we can welcome more neighbors and build stronger communities. One specific improvement for Z4H is to repeal parking mandates for places close to transit or even citywide. Lots of people who live near transit don't want or need a car, and we should enable that without wasting limited space and resources on parking for non-existent cars.

Neighborhoods -- and cities -- are ever changing. Del Ray in the age of the interurban was different from what it was 30 years ago, which is different from what it is today, and that will be different from the Del Ray of tomorrow. Del Ray and Alexandria are constantly changing. The only question is what kind of change will we have? Will we encase the city in amber, a dusty relic on the shelf, an enclave for a static number of wealthy residents? Will we instead enable it to continue to thrive and grow, improving on its strengths and addressing its weaknesses, enabling more neighbors to move here and get the benefits of wonderful, transit-accessible, walkable neighborhoods? Will we actually try to live up to the admirable ideal behind our ubiquitous "all are welcome here" signs? We have a choice about which future we want and I hope we'll choose the one that helps us grow into the future rather than trying to fight it.

Thanks for listening,

-Tom

From: John Good [molarmanj@aol.com](mailto:molarmanj@aol.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 12:20 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov. 1, 2023 meeting docket item #2

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

I have lived in the City of Alexandria for over 40 years and in that time I have never seen a proposal of the magnitude of Zoning for Housing/Housing for All considered by the city with such little time, eight weeks, for input from the citizens.

This proposal is so comprehensive and complex that it should be presented over a period of many months with even more time for citizen input. There are only two people on my block that have heard of zoning for housing and they have no idea what it's about.

There should be an abundance of studies on how this proposal will affect the already strained infrastructures of our city. Alexandria is the most densely populated jurisdiction in the state of Virginia. Adding another 50,000 to 100,000 people to our city will most assuredly increase the quality of life in our city!

John Good

Alabama Ave

From: Theresa Pugh [pughtexas@gmail.com](mailto:pughtexas@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 5:25 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Changes in zoning

This is my third communication in the last year regarding proposed zoning changes. I also participated in the survey.

The proposed zoning changes to allow developers to purchase single family homes and replace with 2,3 and four family units in Alexandria is a terrible idea.

Many tens of thousands of Alexandria residents bought homes in tranquil locations with limited population density, nature and limitations on cars to avoid higher density, traffic and noise.

We also bought homes as investments. We modernized and renovated to maintain safety and aesthetics. Now we run the risk that lots surrounding us will replace other single family zone homes with multiple owners or renters with 2-4 times the number of cars and noise.

This is a take. Alexandria will take value of my investment away with little opportunity to oppose and no compensation. My neighbors will have the same dilemma.

As a taxpayer the city has not contemplated all the city services needed to serve the dramatic increase in population while mesmerized with possible property tax revenues. The city will face increased demand for city water, sewage and street maintenance along with more schools, police, EMT, fire and other services. We can barely retain police and other employees now because we don't pay high enough salaries to compete with neighboring communities. The city council has failed to plan for expansions of all the services with these changes. Nor has the city contemplated needs to raise money through bonds.

I intend to pursue litigation with a large number of Alexandria homeowners since the city is taking the value from a home that I purchased for \$360k twenty two years ago and invested another \$300k because I knew the value of the home was increasing because of its lot size, proximity to both DC and parks and quiet atmosphere. These changes will destroy the limited density of people and cars. Doubling the number of people will permanently alter the Dowden Terrace atmosphere.

Expect litigation. Expect to face precedents established in Supreme Court case decisions that have addressed personal property rights and takings. You have a highly motivated, well educated, and determined community that believes the city council, mayor and developers do not have the best interests of the residential homeowners at stake. We will fight you in court and in upcoming elections.

Nor is there any certainty that zoning changes will reduce the new property costs. Do you honestly believe developers will build \$400k homes in a market where most homes are in a \$600-900k market? You are naively wishing this change will help middle income people seeking a home that wont be dramatically less expensive in a neighborhood that will decline in value.

Bad idea. Stop the implementation of this plan. Consider possible options to encourage developers to build condos and homes on land available by aging or torn out malls and strip centers. At least those new homeowners will buy with a clear sense of density, traffic and proximity to roads etc. And the city must upgrade city services accordingly to address any population increases.

Thank you.

Theresa Pugh

2313 North Tracy Street

Alexandria 22311

703-507-6843

From: SshoffnerR [SshoffnerR@sisna.com](mailto:SshoffnerR@sisna.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 8:38 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Save Seminary West

Save Seminary West - say NO to Zoning for Housing

Sharon Shoffner

2693 Centennial Ct

Alexandria



From: William Buschur [william.buschur@gmail.com](mailto:william.buschur@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 11:13 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing Comment

Hello,

I am writing to voice my support for expanding the Zoning For Housing initiative that's on the docket for review tonight. I can't get away to speak in person, but I want to voice my support for expanding the initiative to provide as much housing as possible for Alexandria. The housing crisis requires monumental action, but I'm sure that an expanded ZFH plan will help address it.

Thank you,

William Buschur

2181 Jamieson Ave #701

Alexandria, VA

From: Owen Curtis [opctiger72@aol.com](mailto:opctiger72@aol.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 11:36 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Comments for Special Public Hearing on Zoning for Housing

Members of the Planning Commission:

I write you not only as a 46 year resident by choice of this City, but also as the President of the Seminary West Civic Association, whose 200 dues-paying members reside in the 600 single family detached and townhouse homes between N Beauregard St. and the City line, north of Holmes Run. Our community is diverse racially, economically, and culturally, but we all have one thing in common --- we chose this neighborhood for its attributes of quality of life, access to transit, parks, schools, offices, and retail, its trees and open space, and its low density in one of the densest US cities.

Now we are faced with the City's rush to drastically change the Zoning Code with 41 changes in 6 weeks. Our review of the proposed changes leads us to conclude there is little or nothing of value to the City or to our neighborhood in the proposed changes, and we urge your rejection of them. Alternatively, if there is some hidden value in some of the changes, then please slow down the process, deal with each of the nine major themes independently, and involve all the citizens of the City in a thoughtful, fair, and honest discussion of why these are worthwhile, and what their impacts will be.

Here are our basic concerns:

- While ZFH/HFA was started as a means to achieve more affordable housing in the City (a laudable goal), it is clear that there is nothing in these changes which will create affordable housing. Affordable housing relates to the age of the housing, its conditions and features, and its location (like near a sewage plant). Nothing in these proposals will create old housing stock with out-of-date features in poor condition. ALL new housing in this City will continue to not meet the standards of affordability unless they are subsidized. So, please, let's stop kidding ourselves that ZFH will magically create affordable housing. The data from the few other cities which have tried elimination of SF zoning have found that housing costs have actually increased.
- With 40,000 housing units already permitted yet not constructed in the City (including the Upland Park development in our neighborhood), what do you think is happening? The developers are not building the units because they cannot get the rate of return on the cost of construction that they need. So ZFH will somehow lower the cost of development and open the housing economy up to induce developers to build more housing. Hmmm. This whole topic truly needs some intense public airing so that we all get the truth from staff, you, and Council on what this is really all about. To the citizens you represent, and who count on you to protect our housing investments, this all smells of a give-away to the development community.
- What these proposals will do is create a much higher density city, which is NOT what the residents of this City want. We did not buy into the types of neighborhoods which thrive in Alexandria

with the hope that our housing stock would be bought up by developers, torn down, and turned into high-density urban housing. And we have seen what happens when the City permits that to be built -- take a look at the ugly, urban Blake Apartments at Beauregard/Seminary. They block light and air from their Seminary Park/Seminary Heights/SWCA neighbors, and EVERY tree on that parcel -- over 200 mature ones -- were destroyed to build that building far too close to the adjacent roadways, adversely impacting the boulevard environment of N Beauregard St. We do not want OUR city turned into the next Crystal City or Rosslyn or Skyline, yet we are seeing that density creep towards us from the development at King/Beauregard. All that ZFH will do is hasten this process, and target our neighborhood as the developers' location of choice, since here (and in Seminary Valley) are the homes with some of the lowest prices and larger lots which would be ideal for a developer to tear down and create an urban ugly-fest.

- The Transit-Oriented Development zone from the ill-conceived West End Transitway on Beauregard covers 100% of our area. So in addition to no more SF zoning in our area, the developers will not need to build parking. Do you somehow think that folks who live within 0.5 miles of a bus line really will not need cars? We have lived with excellent transit service on Seminary and Beauregard for 46 years, and it connects us to just about anywhere. Yet despite the excellent transit ridership from our neighborhood, just take a look around, and you will see that virtually everyone has a car, often 2 or more per household, as they are and will continue to be essential for all our mobility and accessibility needs. The only beneficiaries of the no parking requirements will be the developers who will save a lot of money.

I could go on, as there are many more details which trouble the citizenry -- especially the potential impacts on our public services, on our ability to move about the city by any mode once we have another 40,000 - 50,000 residents by 2050. But you get the point.

We are relying on you to do the right thing and put a halt on ZFH, either a permanent one, or a temporary one which will let each separate change be discussed and resolved independently.

Thank you.

Owen P. Curtis

President

Seminary West Civic Association

5465 Fillmore Ave.

Alexandria, VA 22311

From: Elena Hutchison [ecaudle@gmail.com](mailto:ecaudle@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 11:56 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support Zoning for Housing

I live in Del Ray and I consider myself incredibly fortunate to live in a neighborhood where I can walk most of my errands and and run into neighbors I know while I do it.

While I know some of my neighbors believe Zoning for Housing puts this neighborhood in danger somehow, my understanding is that the the proposals simply codify that the types of buildings that are already here (like the 4-plex built in the footprint of a Single Family Home that backs up to my fence) can once again be built here legally, and with lessened restrictions like 2-car parking minimums (which we know from research among our DRCA members are less and less of a concern with families moving into the neighborhood today).

So in a way, we can understand the Zoning for Housing initiative as a proposal to Make Del Ray legal again, legal in more places in the city, and more affordable to build and buy. Yes please!

(with one caveat - zone transitions between commercial and residential uses are important in areas like this, we see it over and over in matters before the DRCA. I hope you will consider keeping those - they can always be removed through the SUP process as appropriate for any one project, but in general they are a key component to allowing business and residential uses side-by-side which are such a critical part of what makes this neighborhood function so well).

Thanks for your work on this, and the new neighbors it will bring.

From: Corey Faherty [csfaherty@gmail.com](mailto:csfaherty@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 12:35 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning Reform

Hello, I've lived in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria for just over 17 years and I am writing in support of the zoning reforms being considered by the Planning Commission. Offering different types of housing is critical to a vibrant, diverse community and I encourage you to recommend these relatively modest reforms to city council.

Thank you,

Corey Faherty

From: Lindsey Bachman [lindsey.bachman@gmail.com](mailto:lindsey.bachman@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 12:38 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: zoning for housing support

Members of the Planning Commission -

I'm writing to express my support for the zoning changes contained in the Zoning for Housing proposal.

I've lived in Alexandria for 18 years and have watched most of my friends have children and move away in search of cheaper homes to raise their families. I wish housing was more affordable in this city.

I love living in Alexandria because of its density. I love having a choice of how to get around - I can walk, bike, bus, train or drive to get around the city.

Alexandria is a great place to live and I hope you will approve these changes to help make it easier for others to live in this city.

Lindsey Bachman

Alexandria, 22305

From: James Miceli [jammic@gmail.com](mailto:jammic@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 12:53 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please support the Zoning for Housing proposals

Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing as an active member of the Del Ray Citizens Association Board, but I want to be very clear that this letter reflects my personal views and should not be taken as reflecting the views of the association in any way. You have recently received a letter from the DRCA expressing the opinions of membership following our special meeting to discuss the Zoning for Housing proposals. First, I want to align myself to the statements made by my friends and neighbors, Elena Hutchison and Tim Laderach, about the thoughtful process of the DRCA Land Use Committee. Through thorough analysis we landed on a compromise position that moved the LUC solidly in the direction of the DRCA supporting more housing and less parking, and it's unfortunate that our association letter does not reflect that compromise. Thus, as a citizen of Alexandria, a member of the YIMBYs of Northern Virginia, and a person affected by the region's high housing costs, I want to encourage three main points as this proposal comes to the planning commission and city council: 1) Maximize small apartments and townhouses across Alexandria – we're calling this "legalize Del Ray," and I'd specifically point to my street, Cliff St. as an example of what we would like to encourage. I live in a 2 bedroom duplex, next to a mansion on one side and a bungalow on the other, across from the Del Ray Gardens apartments. We have a row of townhouses down the street. It's fantastic – you can be a part of the neighborhood at many price points. 2) Reduce or repeal parking mandates to the greatest extent possible – my family is a one car family and we regularly take transit or our e-bike. For our sustainable future, reducing parking mandates will directly lower the costs required to develop any housing type. 3) Allow more housing in enhanced transit areas – this one is self-explanatory, so my only note here is that my house is in fact not in an enhanced transit area, but I can make it from my door to the platform of Braddock Road metro in 7 minutes using Capitol Bikeshare. I'm a frequent metro commuter and seated in my office in downtown DC in under half an hour. That's some great transit and I encourage more homes in this area so that we don't have to cut down as many trees in Prince William and Spotsylvania to house DC's workers. Last, I'd encourage this to go forward as one up or down vote so as not to water down any of the proposal. Alexandria is a vibrant and growing city, and Zoning for Housing will cement the city's strengths for years to come. I look forward to seeing the final proposal and supporting Zoning for Housing through the Planning Commission and Council processes. Sincerely, James Miceli 102A E Cliff St

From: Markoski, Joseph P. [joseph.markoski@squirepb.com](mailto:joseph.markoski@squirepb.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 12:55 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Hearing on Zoning for Housing

Please include the following email exchange in the record of the Planning Commission's meeting of November 1, 2023. Please let me know if you have any questions or if there are any difficulties in opening this email.

Thanks,

Joe Markoski

[Joseph.Markoski@comcast.net](mailto:Joseph.Markoski@comcast.net)

From: Joseph Markoski <joseph.markoski@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 4:18 PM

To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]23-00040984 - Open - COU-Contact Mayor, Vice Mayor and/or City Council -

Dear Mayor Wilson,

Thank you for taking the time to review and respond to my email.

Let me share a few thoughts for your consideration.

As concerns your first point regarding schedule, I am confident that a reviewing court would find the relevant date for the start of public review and comment to be the date on which the specific proposals now being considered were published, i.e., October 2, 2023. I note (again anecdotally) that no one I spoke to this past Sunday at the Carpenter's Shelter fundraiser at the Birchmere was aware of the City's proposed zoning changes.



As concerns your second point regarding diversity, you appear to make two assumptions: first, that newly constructed multi-unit dwellings would be priced at levels that would increase economic diversity; and, second, that these dwellings would only/largely be attractive/sought out by persons who would increase certain neighborhoods' racial and ethnic diversity. The marketplace suggests that these units will not be priced at anything approaching affordable housing levels. As to who would be interested in these units, I think it is safe to say that we cannot predict such interest with any certainty.

As concerns your point about multi-unit dwellings now existing side by side with single family homes, I cannot speak to prior zoning decisions (or, more likely, the lack of zoning). I can say, however, having been a resident of Alexandria for more than forty years, I am not aware of any multi-unit dwellings having been constructed on any single family zoned lots.

As concerns your comment about intrusive City involvement in who can live together, I take your point. I question whether this has ever been a real issue and whether the staff's recommendation is a solution in search of a problem. If it has been an issue, allowing landlords to rent rooms by the day, week or month in the manner of a boarding house is not the only way to address this concern. There are other ways of addressing this issue, such as defining a family as a community of interest for zoning purposes.

Thanks,

Joe Markoski

On 10/26/2023 8:24 PM EDT Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)> wrote:

Mr. Markoski,

Thanks for the note and sharing your thoughts.

A few thoughts in reply:

This effort is certainly not being rushed. This has been a multi-year effort, including a concentrated effort to engage with the community on these proposals throughout the year. Here's some background from my October newsletter: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/October-2023-Council-Connection.html?soid=1109043704255&aid=y46ptziGDkw>

1. I would never vote to support legislation that would harm the "social, emotional and economic fabric" of our City. It is important to note that our EXISTING policies have had that effect, as our City has grown more segregated and the socioeconomic diversity of our community is quickly changing. That has dramatic impacts on our local economy, particularly for the ability our local employers to attract and retain talent.

2. Your message suggests that we would be "introducing" multi-family housing to our predominantly single-family neighborhoods. Multi-family housing has been existing along-side single-family homes in Alexandria for a century. They have happily coexisted in some of the most valuable property on the planet. In fact, it can be suggested that single-family ONLY neighborhoods are a more recent and curious anomaly for our community.

3. Our City's current zoning code not only defines the family relations that can live in a home, it specifies how those families should live. Enforcing these provisions would require the City to administer a blood test. I believe that puts the City government in a place that is far beyond what is appropriate in the restriction of a private property owner's right to use their property.

Thanks for sharing your thoughts. I'll keep you updated as we continue this discussion.

Have a good week.

Justin M. Wilson, Mayor

Alexandria City Council

Office: 703.746.4500

Home: 703.299.1576

[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)

From: noreply@salesforce.com <noreply@salesforce.com> on behalf of Alex311 <alex311@alexandriava.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 3:17 PM

Subject: [EXTERNAL]23-00040984 - Open - COU-Contact Mayor, Vice Mayor and/or City Council –

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council: I am writing to express my concerns about the recently proposed changes to the City's Zoning Ordinances, particularly as they relate to single family zoning. As an initial matter, I am concerned about the apparent rush to judgment on the part of the Council to vote on these changes. The official staff recommendations were not made public until September 5, 2023 and

the actual amendments were not published until October 2, 2023. As I understand it, the Council plans to vote on these recommendations on November 28, 2023. I urge the Council take a more deliberate and measured approach to the dramatic changes that are being proposed, and to give your fellow citizens more time to digest, ask questions about, and respond to the proposed voluminous and, to a lay person, complex amendments. There is nothing magic about November 28th. In this regard, I note (anecdotally) that at last week's Del Ray farmers market more than a few people were surprised to learn of the changes under consideration by the City Council. Given that the proposed zoning changes will have a dramatic, irrevocable and, in my view, negative impact on the social, economic and cultural fabric of Alexandria (as discussed below), I urge the City Council to place these changes before the electorate in the next (or special) election. Four people (a majority of the Council) should not take it upon themselves to make such changes without the support of Alexandria's citizens. The City Council was elected to be a prudent steward of our City, not to fundamentally alter the quality of life which Alexandrians currently enjoy. The issue of single family zoning was certainly not an issue in the last City Council election. The people of Alexandria deserve to be heard. Turning to the substance of the proposed amendments, I urge the City Council to reject the changes proposed by staff that would eliminate and/or restrict single family zoning. To date, I have not heard any societally positive benefit to be derived from taking such action. During one of the public sessions held at the Beatley Library earlier this year, a City representative unambiguously stated that he did not expect -- and could not point to any evidence -- that the elimination of single family zoning would increase the stock of affordable housing. That being the case, which I believe is borne out by the marketplace, what is the intended purpose of eliminating single family zoning, other than some ephemeral hope that people who cannot currently afford a single family home will magically be able to afford a slightly less expensive condominium or rental property? In the absence of a more concrete discernible goal, the City Council should not embark upon a course that will negatively impact the fabric of our single family neighborhoods. Among the negative consequences of eliminating single family zoning are the following: First and foremost, eliminating single family zoning would betray the expectations of our citizens who purchased single family homes. The simple fact is that they did so with the expectation that their neighborhoods would remain neighborhoods of single family homes. Introducing apartment buildings and the negative impact such buildings will have on the quality of life in these neighborhoods is simply not right, morally or economically, particularly in the absence of some otherwise discernible public good (of which there is none). In addition, as anyone who has driven in Del Ray, Jefferson Park, Beverly Hills, and other older neighborhoods knows, the roads in these neighborhoods were designed for a different time. On-street street parking is the norm (and given that most households have two or more cars) often difficult to find. Equally important, these streets are difficult to navigate when cars approach from opposite directions or a truck is making a delivery. Allowing multi-family units in these neighborhoods will only exacerbate these problems. The staff's decision not to require adequate off-street parking for each multi-family unit ignores reality and is, frankly, delusional. It is likely that every unit in a multi-family building will have at least one and likely two cars which should be accommodated with off-street parking. The problem, of course, with requiring off-street parking is that it will result in more impervious land on each lot, thus contributing to flooding from which many of our older neighborhoods suffer. (My daughter's family has repeatedly experienced flooding in Del Ray.) Another problem with requiring more off-street parking is that it will reduce the tree canopy to which the City is otherwise committed and indeed provides tax incentives. Increasing the density of our single family neighborhoods will further degrade our roads. I note the Mayor's recent newsletter in which he states that we are paving more road miles than ever. While undoubtedly true

and, again, as anyone who drives through Alexandria knows, the City's roads are not in good shape. Adding more cars and traffic to single family neighborhoods will only exacerbate this problem and tax the City's road budget. Another of the staff's recommendations appears intended to allow any current single family home to be converted into a boarding house by deleting the definition of "family" from the zoning ordinance. I am not sure that is the intent, but the proposal would appear to allow that to happen. Boarding houses have a historic negative connotation, but whatever the case, they will fundamentally alter the nature of our neighborhoods. In addition, boarding houses will add at least one vehicle for every room, further exacerbating the parking and traffic situation noted above. If boarding houses are to be expressly permitted, the City should, at a minimum, create a regulatory structure governing boarding houses before they are authorized. In closing, I note a comment made by the City staff at the meeting held at the Beatley library that everyone should be able to live in a "nice neighborhood." I don't disagree. But the answer is to make our less "nice" neighborhoods more "nice" by devoting the City's resources to improving our infrastructure, tree canopy, schools and quality of life. Destroying our "nice" neighborhoods serves no one's interests. Thank you for your consideration. Joe Markoski

From: Nicole Radshaw [nicole.radshaw@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.radshaw@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 1:44 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: [EXTERNAL]I support Zoning for Housing!!

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for your time and dedication to your service on the Planning Commission board! I am in support of Alexandria's Zoning for Housing policies and I ask that you also support staff's recommendations.

My husband and I moved to Alexandria in 2004. We rented in Del Ray and were fortunate enough to afford to buy a home in Brookville/Seminary Valley. As our kids reach college age, we are planning our future and thinking of theirs. We would like to have the option to downsize to a garden apartment or duplex or even a high rises apartment in a walkable and bikeable neighborhood in Alexandria. And we would like for them to have the choice to be able to afford to rent (let alone even buy) a small apartment here. Neither of those futures are possible right now, because it is not even possible in the present. Current new families, school teachers, and other public servants like fire fighters don't have homes or houses to buy here.

Here are some ways that you can improve upon the recommendations:

1. Eliminate parking minimums especially near transit. If you live near a metro, you don't need a car. Mandating parking drives up construction costs, which makes rents and prices higher.
2. Build more housing in enhanced transit areas, like in Del Ray, near the Braddock and King Street metro. In my one-car house, I would love to ride the metro more, but housing was too expensive on the east end of town. We are forced to drive our car more than we like.
3. Legalize garden apartments and duplexes. My neighborhood has all three, except they are strictly divided into sections. Instead of a mansion being built on a SFH plot, they could have mixed in a duplex or quadplex.

Thank you again!! Vote yes for zoning for housing!

Nicole Radshaw

5340 Thayer Avenue

Alexandria, VA 22304

From: Trip (James) Hook [jchhook3@gmail.com](mailto:jchhook3@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 1:44 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing

Greetings,

We are writing to express our emphatic support for the proposals included in the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All package. As a young family, we were very lucky to be able to afford a place in Alexandria, even with relatively high incomes. We purchased a duplex in Del Ray back in 2017, and would not be able to afford the same house today.

A standalone, single-family home in Alexandria was never in our budget and never will be. The availability of multi-family and attached units is the only conceivable way we could live in this community, and even that type of housing is skyrocketing in price, because there is simply not enough of it. We do not feel that Del Ray or Old Town are blighted by the presence of many different types of housing, nor do we feel that any of Alexandria's other neighborhoods would be.

Furthermore, the reason we were drawn to this community is because it was one of the few where we could go "car-lite" - in other words, we have only a single car for our family, and rarely use it. We feel that parking minimums, especially in neighborhoods served by transit, diminish neighborhoods by encouraging more driving and making new housing more prohibitive to construct.

The reforms in ZFH/H4A are a good start, but so much more needs to be done. We support these proposals and look forward to hearing more about future phases.

Thanks,

Trip and Virginia Hook

100A East Braddock Road

From: Adam Bibler [adam.bibler@gmail.com](mailto:adam.bibler@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 2:17 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support Zoning for Housing

Dear Planning Commission Members:

Please support Zoning for Housing. Affordable housing is a critically important issue for our community and increasing the supply of housing is one of the best ways of addressing this issue.

Best regards,

Adam Bibler

315-1/2 Hume Ave, Alexandria, VA 22301

From: Karen Caine [kcaine@comcast.net](mailto:kcaine@comcast.net)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 2:27 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov 1 comments

In reviewing the number and variety of projects that the City has started, there is a tremendous amount of building that is currently happening. Why is there a need to radically change some of the zoning laws when it's not holding anyone back from building? The big projects include MFU, TH, apartments, senior, affordable, plus deeply affordable. Several of the projects are in congested areas and are large enough to significantly impact the community, citizens and infra-structure: parking, traffic, crime, schools, and the sewer system. Some of the large projects: Landmark- 51 acres, Overlook-350 MFU, 36 TH and a hotel, 675 apts , 130 TH, 474 affordable apts, 180 MFU, 530-Samuel Madden Housing, The Heritage-598, Eisenhower-800 unit residential, of which none of these are completed so that we can truly understand and mitigate their impact on the infra-structure. Promise us citizens that this will not be another BRAC incident of blindsiding the citizens and "putting the cart before the horse".

Like many things that COA has done (BRAC, PTO, River Renew, the schools) we are barreling ahead after spending 2 decades of doing very little and doing it without being prudent, tempered, measured and with due diligences. We need and deserve more time to digest the magnitude and scope of all the projects.

We pay a lot of taxes in the COA! What you are proposing is going to drive up our taxes! What is the expectation and responsibility of the COA towards the homeowners with their already heavy tax burden? We need a larger commercial tax base. What is being done here? Do you expect us to pay more and in addition provide more for others? Instead of pushing this extreme zoning issue the City should work on building our commercial tax base. This will be the only way homeowners/taxpayers will see some kind of relief from the heavy tax burden we already face.

We have lived in COA for 26 years, I am against the City taking away our SFH neighborhoods. I am also strongly against the City using racism, the needy, and the poor, to systematically turn them into a source of revenue and a justification for raising my taxes even higher, decreasing our quality of life and taking away our SFH neighborhoods. This benefits the City and the builders who are absolutely thrilled. The cost to build is high, the cost to buy is high and the cost to be a good homeowner is high. They say you have to live in your home 15 years before you see equity built up now adays. That is a significant amount of time for an area that is so transient. Real Page, a global provider of data analytics for the Real Estate industry found that 66% of MF renters are satisfied with renting, preferring financial freedom and being able to rent more cheaply than buying. Gen Z and Gen X renters prefer renting to buying due to the financial responsibilities of home ownership and property taxes. For all generations of renters, a quiet environment, safety and parking or a garage were by far the most important amenities.

It is easier to not factor in parking because it allows the projects to move faster however, parking is a need, want and a demand. Not adequately factoring in parking is irresponsible and serves the builders and parking garage owners. Renters will have to pay hefty fees to have parking.



It seems that the HUD-PRO funding is significantly connected to the re-Zoning and Housing for All plan. And that significant tax breaks will be given to those homeowners who have built an ADU. I am against a tax break for this group. Only people with money can build an ADU on their property. How many of these units are being rented for the most noble- teachers, firefighters and police officers? Whatever funds the City will acquire from the HUD-PRO, will pale in comparison to the impact on taxpayers wallet.

These are just a few of my concerns.

Thank you,

Karen Caine

From: Ian Smith [gm.smithir@gmail.com](mailto:gm.smithir@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 2:33 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please+Expand+and+Pass+Zoning+for+Housing

Hello,

I am an Alexandria resident. Attached is my submitted comment for the planning commission in support of Z4H. I plan to share this during my allotted time as well. Thank you

[ATTACHMENT]

Good evening,

I would like to speak on behalf of the younger citizens of Alexandria. My name is Ian, I am 24, and I have been living in Alexandria for 3 years now. I live here, I work here, I pay taxes here, I spend my money here, and I am very much a part of this community. Like many of you, I love this city. I love Old Town, I love the Mt. Vernon trail, I love the dog parks, and I love the kind people I have met here.

As mentioned in the other community meetings, young adults in their early 20s (just like me) are one of the least common demographics in Alexandria. I consider myself fortunate, but even I would not be here if it weren't for denser housing options like the small duplex I share. Many others are not so lucky. Even when we get college degrees and work hard for our competitive jobs in the DMV area, basic aspirations like owning a home and starting our own families seem completely out of reach due to the cost of living. Worse still, there are thousands of less fortunate, hardworking families in this city living paycheck to paycheck who are increasingly feeling the squeeze of rent increases. Every day, the American dream is drifting further away. This does not need to happen.

The economics of this housing crisis are clear; This is not natural, nor is it the workings of the free market. For decades, cities have used the government to enact overly strict zoning and codes specifically aimed to create sprawl and exclude others from our communities. Ironically, some of Alexandria's most beloved areas like Old Town wouldn't even be allowed to be built today due to our zoning and land use restrictions. These policies are a failure and have culminated in one of the worst affordability and sustainability catastrophes we have seen in a long time.

It is time that we move past these terrible policies and allow our housing market to recover. We desperately need housing, and this initiative is a great first step. Study after study shows that increased housing supply and upzoning policies increase housing affordability. Other American cities like Minneapolis are seeing great results in increasing affordability and curbing the effects of inflation as a result of their upzoning policies. Our neighbors in Arlington successfully fought for housing last year, and it is time that did our part as well.

Alexandria is a growing city in a major metropolitan area, not a museum frozen in time. All homeowners have a right to their own property, but it is not right to use the government to bully neighbors out of their homes in order to preserve an arbitrary neighborhood "character". Many of those in opposition to

this initiative shouldn't forget that they too are likely living in homes that were also once scrutinized for their development.

I personally believe that this initiative does not go far enough in addressing our housing needs, but we cannot let perfection get in the way of good progress. Moving forward with this would be a great step and a major win for Alexandria residents who are in desperate need of new opportunities.

Thank you.

From: Taylor Cranwell [tgcranwell84@gmail.com](mailto:tgcranwell84@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 3:24 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Greetings, as an individual who was born and raised in Alexandria, I wanted comment on the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiative and make it clear that more discussion needs to happen.

Specifically, I want to highlight the mischaracterization of it as an affordable housing initiative, as well as leaning into the belief that it will provide individuals and families who lack resources an opportunity to invest in their future.

In the decades leading up to 1980s, Del Ray and the north and west portions of Old Town very were affordable. However with the introduction of the metro they became very desirable neighborhoods to call home. As such, developers and individuals with resources began purchasing properties throughout these areas and renovated or rebuilt them, substantially increasing the property values. In doing so, these areas slowly “gentrified” and people with less resources had to relocate.

This same pattern is still happening across Alexandria, with developers purchasing properties, flipping them, or building larger buildings in their stead. This is pushing the value of home prices and unfortunately real estate taxes up. And to be clear, there is no question that housing prices are rising in the city.

But to promote the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiative as a way to bring down housing prices is ridiculous. Developers will not be deterred from making a profit. Throughout Del Ray, Rosemont and other areas of Alexandria, developers are tearing down structures to build 2 million dollar houses (5 bed/5 bath). If they have the option to purchase a property and build a duplex/4plex/6plex, they will surely adjust the price to profit even more. Duplexes will sell for 1.2 million and a 2 bedroom unit in a 4plex will sell for \$600,000 or \$700,000. Is this affordable? Will people without resources be able to purchase them? Absolutely not. It will only increase property values.

The city and Mayor Wilson argue that more housing means lowering of housing prices (a simple economic concept of supply and demand concept). However, living in Alexandria with its numerous awards and all that comes with them, makes it is an extremely desirable city to call home. The demand is only increasing and the value of any property, unless controlled by the city, is going to rise. Developers are not going to build affordable housing. They will always seek the highest profit. This is what happened in Old Town and Del Ray in the 80s, 90s, and 2000s, and this is what will continue to happen.

Please consider representing the initiative for what it is; a basic initiative to build more luxurious housing units, whether a duplex or 4plex, and by extension raising taxes.

We do want affordable housing, but more discussion needs to happen on how best to do it.

Thank you,

Taylor Cranwell

P.S. I also find it amazing that the planning commission itself does not understand all the text amendments and code within the initiative. That is crazy! How are local citizens (or the City Council) supposed to understand it?

From: Dan & Mary [d-mt-dose@comcast.net](mailto:d-mt-dose@comcast.net)  
Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 4:04 PM  
To: PlanComm  
Subject: FYI

To: 10/31/2023

Hon. Mayor and Members of the Alexandria City Council

Chairman and Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission

Subject: Zoning for Housing proposal.

We do not agree with the Zoning for Housing Proposal.

Alexandria is too densely populated now. Doing away with any controls portends to an Alexandria that will approach the limits of habitability - unlivable - too much is not good for mental health - need breathing room.

Do you really want this to happen. You really need to think ahead!! Future costs, density, more city support - schools, fire and police etc. It's not needed!! You should read the Coalition for a livable Alexandria event dated Oct 5, 2023. It's frightening!!

We live in the Alexandria West area and have seen the development of the Blake apartments at Seminary Road and Beauregard Ave. The residents of the Seminary Heights Condominium and Seminary Park Townhouses were against its development; i.e., Maximum use of space - more profit for the developer! The same may be seen in the Upland park area (Foster & Fairbanks Aves.) potential development. Again, maximum use of space for maximum profit. There are too many development proposals in this area.

You need to listen to the residents for once!!

Trash the Zoning for Housing Proposal!!

Thanks, Dan & Mary Dose'  
5673 Rayburn Ave.  
Alexandria, VA 22311

From: Crowley, Nancy [NCrowley@wiley.law](mailto:NCrowley@wiley.law)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 3:59 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Question concerning rezoning

What is the objective for eliminating single family zoning? Rental units or subdivided land with private structures for owning? ADUs cannot be sold separately, but can be rented...

Is the city requiring street frontage for a subdivided unit? For example, can a duplex be stacked (first floor unit one, second floor unit two) and sold separately? Or would the additional unit be only rentable in this scenario?

Can a single structure just be rented out like a boarding house?

Thank you,

Nancy Crowley

From: Sarah Husain [sarah.s.husain@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.s.husain@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 5:47 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

Dear Members of the City of Alexandria Planning Commission,

My name is Sarah Husain and I am an Alexandria resident who calls Del Ray home. I'm writing to voice my strong support for Zoning for Housing and to encourage the City of Alexandria to take even bolder steps in expanding this initiative.

My family and I have lived in our Del Ray townhouse for six years. The walkable scale of our neighborhood has allowed my family to drop down to one car. I bike to work in Old Town most days; other days I take DASH. My daughter walks to Mount Vernon Community School and walks home from the City's afterschool program at the rec center. We love patronizing restaurants on the Avenue. We are lucky to live in such a vibrant community where we know our neighbors.

We also cannot ignore the link between land use (or housing) and transportation. How often do we hear that people wished they could take public transit but cannot due to the length of the trip, the frequency of service, or the need to chain their trips to pick up kids and run errands, not simply commute back and forth to work? This type of carefree use of public transit is only possible when there is enough land use density to support it. We are so close to it in many places in Alexandria. Zoning for Housing could play an important role to help get us there.

I'm excited about the idea of legalizing small apartment buildings all over Alexandria and ending the requirement for expensive parking spaces, especially for residents near transit hubs or those without cars. While these reforms may not be the ultimate solution to our housing crisis, they certainly represent a step in the right direction. They align with our shared values of environmental sustainability, diversity, affordability, equity, economic growth, walkability, and vibrant, inclusive communities. By embracing Zoning for Housing, we can look forward to welcoming more neighbors, reducing housing costs, boosting local businesses, expanding access to public transportation, and improving our city.

By taking these steps, the City of Alexandria can make progress in addressing the housing crisis and ensuring a brighter future for all its residents. I look forward to seeing our city become the inclusive, welcoming place we all want it to be.

Thank you for your dedication to our community and for considering my input on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah Husain

14 Ansell Street

Alexandria, VA 22305



From: Joe Fray [joseph.fray@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.fray@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 9:20 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support for Zoning for Hearing

I live in Rosemont and have been an Alexandria resident for ten years. I support Zoning for Housing and would like the City to go even further than the recommendations currently proposed by the Planning Department. The proposed reforms are incredibly modest but would go some way toward increasing the availability of affordable housing. These reforms do only a little to unwind the effects of the rezoning that occurred in the 1990s with the intent of freezing the city and preventing growth. This was and is a mistake, and I'm glad to see the City embracing the opportunity for growth. I am excited for new neighbors to move in, for old neighbors to be able to stay, and for our city to grow in ways that will enhance current residents' lives. We live in a popular, desirable city in a major metropolitan area, and we should embrace that we are an in-demand destination for people to move. I once again urge the City to adopt all of the proposed elements of Zoning for Housing and go further.

Joe Fray

From: Ken Notis [civ2kn@gmail.com](mailto:civ2kn@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 9:31 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning4Housing

I support the proposed zoning changes, and think more aggressive changes to encourage more housing are needed.

Ken Notis

3001 Park Center Dr, Alexandria, VA 22302

From: Luca Gattoni-Celli [potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com](mailto:potentiaeromanorum@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 9:43 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Re: YIMBYs of NoVA Founder Statement on Zoning for Housing

My name is Luca Gattoni-Celli. I am a proud Alexandria resident, addressing you as the founder of YIMBYs of Northern Virginia. Our grassroots, all-volunteer, pro-housing organization includes hundreds of YIMBYs in Alexandria who support Zoning for Housing. Please produce and approve the most robust possible version of this policy.

Alexandria must reject fatalism. We can solve our housing crisis, and we should not fear the solutions. We can create the housing we need.

Change is inevitable. Will Alexandria become completely unaffordable? Or will we find a way to grow? Will we find a way to tolerate each other's existence, welcoming new neighbors rather than resenting the idea of more people living here? I believe we can, and must, view each other as a blessing. We can build a city where young families can thrive, older residents have options to downsize, and first responders and teachers can live in the community they serve. Letting Alexandria grow will make it a better place to live.

We don't need to save Del Rey, but we should legalize it, not only where it stands today, but also across our city. Del Rey, Old Town, Cameron Station--emulating these great neighborhoods is the solution to our housing crisis. You should permit Alexandria's iconic townhomes and three-story garden apartments, by right, everywhere.

My own neighborhood, Alexandria West, is another model. My family lives in a townhouse abutting the Southern Towers highrise apartments. Living near thousands of other human beings is nothing but a blessing for me and my family. We walk to grocery stores and the library. My neighborhood is safe and pleasant, with hardly any traffic. Alexandria should allow more residents to live this way. More than anything else, my neighborhood is proof that thousands of people living close together is nothing to be afraid of. Actually, it's wonderful.

Commissioners, you know the draft Zoning for Housing framework does not do enough, even if this is only phase one of a multi-stage zoning modernization. Your decisions have the potential to begin the process of systemic reform that will fix our housing shortage and affordability crisis. We, the people who say yes, urge you to use your best judgment to make the best policy you can.

From: Amy Vander Vliet [abvandervliet@gmail.com](mailto:abvandervliet@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 9:51 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

My name is Amy, and I live in a townhouse in Del Ray. I support staff's recommendations on Zoning for Housing and want the city to go further.

I rented for many years while living in a garden-style apartment complex in Old Town. My spouse and I were able to save up money and eventually buy our current home. Unfortunately, our housing shortage puts this path to homeownership out of reach for others looking to extend their roots in the city. Rents are high, which makes it hard to save for a down payment. Homes are even more scarce now than when we purchased a home five years ago, making the process more competitive and expensive.

The people who serve our community should be able to live here. We can move in that direction by passing Zoning for Housing and by going further. Small apartment buildings like the one I lived in for a decade should be legal everywhere in Alexandria. We should stop forcing everyone to pay for expensive parking spaces, especially if they live near transit or don't own a car. I have chosen to live in - and purchase a home in - Alexandria precisely because of the wealth of multimodal transportation options, and I want to see those as strongly supported as our vehicle road network. I support policies that encourage greater density near rail and bus rapid transit stations so that more Alexandrians feel able to make that kind of choice.

These reforms might not solve our housing crisis, but they're a step in the right direction. All we can do is keep moving until Alexandria is the inclusive, welcoming city we all want it to be.

Best,

Amy Vander Vliet

From: [abvandervliet@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:abvandervliet@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 10:28 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and ½ mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Amy Vander Vliet

535 Duncan Ave Alexandria, VA 22301-1255

[abvandervliet@gmail.com](mailto:abvandervliet@gmail.com)

From: Judy Miller [rltrmiller@aol.com](mailto:rltrmiller@aol.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 11:21 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: November 1, 2023 meeting docket item #2

Dear Chairman and members of the Planning Commission,

Welcome to Stealth City, U.S.A.

1. The city is searching for a land grab. They have no open space left. They can innocently(?) take it from us as landowners.
2. Arlington did the same. They are facing a lawsuit from homeowners like us. This should not occur here. It is too expensive and time-consuming.
3. We do not want to become the innocents who allow our land rights to be given to a city which has not provided its citizens with the pure enjoyment of open space in parks and trees to protect us from heat. The compact of more density creates more stress, more need for police, schools, teachers, traffic calming measures, etc.
4. I ask that the city exclude single family zoning from the Master Plan in order to give this 11% minority of land ownership the ability to determine with foresight and knowledge the future of this fair city.
5. Your current plan allows for a quick increase of monetary value to me, my children, and my home on its large lot. How many other homes are targeted with this gift which creates instant value? You cannot buy me off. But as time goes by I cannot guarantee that others will feel the same, or that my children feel as I do. I prefer that a true heritage be one of long-lasting value to the concomitant environs of what had been a fair city.
6. Your plan offers me little guarantee that the quality of life will have been enhanced by allowing more density in side and/or back yards. Quite the opposite. How many others can and will profit from your largess of a zoning give-away.

(If time allows, the remainder will be presented:)

As a past president of the Rosemont Civic Association my view represents the vision held by those of us who tried long ago to bring forth a more livable city with open spaces that did not include rooftop terraces where children dare not toss a ball, to permit soccer fields to give our youth pleasurable exercise, new school yards, possibly another fire station, and sidewalks wide enough for more than two

persons side by side. This happened during the late 1990's when the city was gifted with the most undeveloped land east of the Mississippi near a major metropolitan area.

Obviously we were not successful. Do not allow the failures of yesterday to continue and be exacerbated today.

Sincerely,

Judy Miller

From: Travis A. Niles [travisandrewniles@gmail.com](mailto:travisandrewniles@gmail.com)

Sent: Tuesday October 31, 2023 11:44 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Writing in support of Zoning For Housing

Hello,

I am a 9-year resident of Alexandria. I love this city, and want more people to be able to live here and love it as I do.

I am writing to voice my support for the zoning for housing proposals, especially the following provisions:

Including the opportunity to construct two-unit and three to four-unit dwellings in the R20, R12, R8, R5, and R2-5 zones

Delete the definition of “family” from the Zoning Ordinance

Eliminating parking requirements

Allow RMF zone to be located in areas planned and/or zoned for medium or higher density development

Allow for simplified rules for the construction of townhomes

I've been frustrated by the lack of housing stock here, particularly housing stock that I can afford. I have no illusions that the proposed zoning for housing rules will magically fix this problem, but I think it is the best shot that we have.

I hope that the planning committee and the city council will ignore the naysayers who wish to reject the pragmatism of zoning for housing, while offering no new ideas of their own. The topic of zoning changes may not be particularly popular, but the vision of Alexandria that has more options for more people is absolutely popular.

Travis A. Niles

202 • 643 • 1751



From: Victoria Marcos Waskowicz [victoria.waskowicz@gmail.com](mailto:victoria.waskowicz@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 7:25 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support of Zoning For Housing

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

From: Matt Mihalik [matt.mihalik@gmail.com](mailto:matt.mihalik@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 7:53 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing Comment

Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Zoning for Housing proposals that are under discussion. I hope that the commission will support these zoning changes and will work with the City to support further changes that go beyond what is currently proposed.

Respectfully,

Matthew Mihalik

702 Braxton Pl, Alexandria, VA 22301

--

Matt

From: Brandon Mansur [chivalryrules@gmail.com](mailto:chivalryrules@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 8:50 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Support the ZFH Initiative

Dear Alexandria City Planning Commission,

Hope you are doing well. Just writing a quick note, as an Alexandria Resident living in the Arlandria neighborhood, to please support the initiatives in the Zoning for Housing plan. Further recommend and support your efforts in considering additional options, either now or during the forthcoming Housing Master Plan review next year, to identify ways through zoning reform to encourage more housing options and hopefully reduce the economic burden of home ownership and living in the City of Alexandria.

Thank you in advance and happy to elaborate if necessary,

Brandon Mansur

181 E Reed Avenue

Preston Condominium

From: [kevinmohalloran@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:kevinmohalloran@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 9:27 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Kevin O'Halloran

800 New Jersey Ave SE Apt 1107 Washington, DC 20003-4084 [kevinmohalloran@gmail.com](mailto:kevinmohalloran@gmail.com)

From: Sunny Yoder <sunnyyoder@icloud.com>  
Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 9:38 AM  
To: PlannComm  
Subject: Please add my written statement to the record for tonight's Planning Commission meeting

Sunny Yoder Statement  
Planning Commission Hearing  
November 1, 2023  
Zoning For Housing/Housing For All Initiatives

Good evening Chair Macek, Commissioners. I am Sunny Yoder, a community member who has owned a home in the North Ridge section of Alexandria since 1984. I want to make two main points.

**First**, I urge the Commission to reject the proposal to allow multi-unit residences in single family zones.

-I believe the increased density will harm the environment. It will mean more roofs and paved surfaces and less permeable land. It will hinder the preservation and restoration of the tree canopy that I very much value.

-The City's Master Plan already calls for adding 50,000 more units in the next few decades to the stock of about 80,000 units. Surely this is more than enough growth for a city that is the most densely populated jurisdiction in Virginia.

-A population increase of this magnitude surely will exceed the capacity of streets and the sewer and stormwater systems. It will put additional stress on the public schools.

-While significantly impacting the quality of life for current residents, the city's own estimates show that allowing more housing units in single family zones will neither alleviate the housing shortage nor mitigate the rapid rise in housing costs to any meaningful degree.

Why enact change that negatively affects the quality of life for so many without achieving its stated goals?

**Second**, I urge the Commission to recommend that the City Council delay passage. Moving ahead to enact multiple, complex zoning changes that constitute "the most ambitious housing reform in our history" while allowing only 57 days between publishing the text of those changes and a

final Council vote is the very opposite of the city's policy as stated in its Handbook for Civic Engagement.

The Handbook commits policymakers to "Ensure that prior to the adoption of public policies which will significantly impact the quality of life of members of the community, the nature of the proposed policy or action has been fully disclosed, and the public has had reasonable opportunity to be informed, consulted, involved, or to collaborate on the proposed action....."

While engagement sessions have been held over the past year, the sessions have focused on general issues and goals, not the specific proposals. Full disclosure came only 30 days ago, hardly the 'reasonable opportunity' promised. Delay is required.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

From: Sean Meiller [s.meiller12@gmail.com](mailto:s.meiller12@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 10:19 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for housing

I want to send an email in support of expanding and passing the zoning for housing. Specifically in removing all parking requirements citywide and allowing mixed use development across all areas. Thank you for this extremely important bill

From: [hannahfoll@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:hannahfoll@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 10:22 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expeditiously updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Hannah Follweiler

701 Swann Ave Alexandria, VA 22301-3116 [hannahfoll@me.com](mailto:hannahfoll@me.com)

(772) 214-8761



From: Kelsey Wright [kelsey.k.wright@gmail.com](mailto:kelsey.k.wright@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 10:43 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

To the members of the Planning Commission:

I fully support the Zoning for Housing initiative. I am a native Alexandrian who has chosen to return to Alexandria after college to serve my community, and it was incredibly challenging to find housing that I could afford within the city I call home. I am a public servant working for the state government and I do not expect to ever be able to own a home in Alexandria, and I would love for that to change. Alexandria is an incredible community and young people, teachers, nurses, social workers, etc. should all be able to live here in quality housing with an opportunity for home ownership.

Thank you,

Kelsey Wright

From: martha raymond [m.raymond2006@yahoo.com](mailto:m.raymond2006@yahoo.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 10:51 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Comments for Planning Commission re: Zoning for Housing

Hello. I am one of the many residents of Alexandria concerned about the extent of the zoning changes being proposed by the City. I have attended listening sessions in person and by zoom and I have contributed questions and comments via the city's on-line comment form. Many aspects of the proposals have concerned me, but I was especially alarmed when a Planning Commission member stated (at a recent Agenda Alexandria forum) that he did not understand all the proposals yet he had all the information he needed to make a decision. How widespread is such a lack of knowledge on the part of our key decision makers?

I think that some of the proposed changes make sense (deleting the bonus height provision, simplifying the town house codes, adding affordable housing to coordinated development projects such as the Landmark redevelopment, simplifying office-to-housing conversions). However, am very concerned about the proposed changes that will incentivize demolitions, such as the proposed changes to single-family zoning. Alexandria is supposed to be an "Eco-City" yet the proposals will encourage wasteful demolition of existing buildings. Alexandria's neighborhoods are not just real estate or numbers on a chart - they are people's homes. The proposed increase in "by right" development will increase the rights of developers and reduce the rights of residents.

I am very concerned with the proposed increase in population density since Alexandria is already pushing the limits of reasonable density. I agree with the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria's request to slow down the timeline, address each proposed zoning change separately, listen to residents and act in their best interest.

Thank you.

Martha Raymond

914/393-1387

From: Jordan Schneider [mcnadroj@gmail.com](mailto:mcnadroj@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 11:11 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning

I'm writing to express my support for zoning changes that will increase housing in the City of Alexandria. The best way to improve the availability of affordable housing is to increase the supply. I'm a social worker constantly trying to help people in Alexandria find housing. Unfortunately, too often my best advice is to move out of Alexandria because there is very little affordable housing available for the people with whom I am working. These are often elderly or disabled clients living off of Social Security or Disability payments as their only forms of income. The lack of available housing for them means they must either leave the area, or end up on the streets. So, please do all you can to ensure that more housing, and preferably affordable housing, can be created in Alexandria.

Sincerely,

Jordan Schneider

From: Danny [seatti@yahoo.com](mailto:seatti@yahoo.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 11:38 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Re: November 1, 2023 Meeting - Docket Item #2

Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission,

This is follow up to my letter, dated October 30, 2023 (attached above).

Earlier today, I discovered by reading the Zoning for Housing Community Comments & Questions posted on the City of Alexandria website that City staff states that the [ZFH] "recommendations will not solve the housing affordability issue" (see feedback items 6 and 16). City staff also states, "The Office of Housing will be undertaking an update to the Housing Master Plan in 2024-2025 and is committed to continuing to study what tools, incentives, best practices, programs and policies can help expand housing opportunity and affordability for Alexandria's residents and workers" (see feedback line 16).

Once again, with reference to City of Alexandria, VA Charter, Section 9.09, entitled Zoning Powers, "...the council shall have the power to adopt by ordinance a comprehensive zoning plan designed to...facilitate the provision of new housing that is affordable to all segments of the community." However, as referenced above, City staff acknowledges that ZFH will not accomplish this provision, and that ZFH's current state requires continued study that is deferred until 2024-2025. Thus, City staff makes the point that directly supports the the action that so many Alexandrian's and I strongly encourage you to take up at the Planning Commission special public hearing tonight: The Planning Commission should table the City's current ZFH proposal and return it to staff for further study, and to allow for numerous incremental opportunities for public comment, to achieve a comprehensive plan that addresses the concerns of all of Alexandria's residents.

Once again, I thank you for your consideration.

Daniel Ciatti

Alexandria, VA

From: joyce dexter [joycedexter47@gmail.com](mailto:joycedexter47@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 11:38 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing

As a resident of Seminary West, a community in the West End of Alexandria, I want to register my strong opposition to the proposed changes to the Zoning Code that threatens our quality of life.

I manage an email distribution list for more than 300 people who live in the 600 single-family and townhomes comprising Seminary West. Our civic association, which I serve as a board member, has done its best to keep our residents informed of what these changes will mean to them and their families — including the City's positions and reasons for advocating the proposals — and I know of not a single person who agrees they are necessary, desirable or advisable. Not one.

It is bad enough that the occasional McMansion has sprung up between traditional older homes built in the 1950s. But the prospect of multifamily dwellings squeezed into lots sized for single-family houses is both disheartening and unthinkable. The City's zoning plan does not even address where cars will be parked. Please don't buy officials' assurances that multiplex residents won't need cars. Although all of us appreciate the convenience and availability of good public transportation, even families who use it need and have at least one car.

If you need more reasons to reject the Zoning for Housing proposals:

- Just look at what has happened to other communities around the country that have discovered — the hard way — this hard truth: Despite presumably good intentions, increased density does NOT result in affordable housing. On the contrary, promised affordable housing in our own area did not materialize with recently constructed developments. Those condominium properties are selling for more than \$700,000 and only a small proportion of rental units in the hideous Blake Apartments are earmarked as affordable but still beyond the reach of many families.
- Moreover, nearby communities such as Arlington are appalled at what is happening there because of Zoning for Housing. Developers will glean as much profit as they can despite their assurances, even as they continue to destroy the character of the communities they transform by cutting down hundreds of mature trees to accommodate construction.

Instead of ramming ZFH through your panel and the Alexandria City Council, we urge you to slow down this process and take a good hard look at what the citizens of Alexandria and our community actually want. So far, apart from paying lip service to “engagement,” the City has ignored calls to respect our desire to preserve our livable, attractive neighborhoods.

Once the City Council rubber-stamps ZFH, there will be no turning back — only regrets that it was not given the thoughtful consideration it deserves. It is up to you. The Planning Commission can and should put a stop to this measure before it’s too late and irreparable harm is done.

Sincerely,

Joyce Dexter

1816 N. Chambliss St.

Alexandria, VA 22311-1602

From: Kursten Andrea Phelps [kursten.phelps@gmail.com](mailto:kursten.phelps@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 11:50 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support for Zoning for Housing

Dear members of the Planning Commission,

My name is Kursten Phelps. I'm an Alexandria resident and homeowner. I write to share my enthusiastic support for the Zoning for Housing proposals and to urge the City to further expand the use of tools to address the serious problem of housing availability and affordability in Alexandria.

I've worked my entire career in public service - at nonprofits and as a civil servant. My husband is a small business owner in Alexandria. We have two children in ACPS schools. We got very lucky 8 years ago to find a duplex that we could just barely afford. Had we not, we would have had to move out of this city due to rising rents, take our kid out of the school she knew and loved, increase our commutes, and Alexandria would have lost a small business. We were very, very lucky. But I see my neighbors, friends, and teachers at my kids' schools are not having the same luck.

My elderly neighbor cannot access the second floor of his home, where the only bathroom is located. But he can't find suitable and affordable housing to downsize. His home health aide would like to live in Alexandria and have a shorter commute, but this essential worker drives in from out of town because she can't find housing here. Many friends are being squeezed out of Alexandria because their rents are rising and there are no available homes in their budgets. A friend who wants to stay close to co-parent his child keeps having to find Air BnBs in the region because he can't find housing in Alexandria. As a PTA officer, I see our school's teachers struggle with long days and long commutes because they can't find housing they can afford in the city whose children they teach.

The crisis is real and it's here now. Without action, it will only get worse. The housing crisis hurts businesses, schools, and families. It tears at the fabric of our community that we all love.

The proposals before you are a start to meaningfully address this critical problem. It will help with environmental sustainability, affordability, diversity, equity, and economic growth. Additional steps, like legalizing garden apartments throughout the city, further reducing parking minimums, increasing funding for dedicated affordable housing, and improving legal protections for renters are needed, too.

I urge you to pass and then improve upon the Zoning for Housing package of proposed amendments before you.

Sincerely,

Kursten Phelps

Kursten A. Phelps (she/her/ella)

From: Bryan Williams [bryanwilliams1025@gmail.com](mailto:bryanwilliams1025@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 11:53 AM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing Support - Nov 1 2023 Hearing

Hi Planning Commission,

My name is Bryan Williams and I live at 903 Russell Road. I grew up in Alexandria and moved back to the area about a year and a half ago. I strongly support the proposed Zoning for Housing reforms and encourage the city to go even further, and I say that as a single family home owner.

I really enjoy living in Rosemont because of the diversity of housing stock, walkability, and access to transit, and I think it's pretty silly that much of Del Ray and Rosemont could not be built today under current zoning laws. Through its reforms, Zoning for Housing allows many of the great features of these neighborhoods to be replicated city-wide. Moreover, we simply need to increase the housing supply to address the housing shortage and prevent even more Alexandria households from becoming housing cost burdened. These proposals are a great step towards addressing the housing crisis and ensuring Alexandria is playing its part in the larger regional response to the shortage.

I encourage the city to expand and improve Zoning for Housing, particularly around transit oriented development. Building more housing near transit allows for lower carbon footprints, healthier and more walkable lifestyles, and a stronger sense of community. More specifically, eliminating parking mandates near transit would help us fully realize the potential of enhanced transit areas.

Again, I enthusiastically support the reforms and encourage the city to expand them, both now and in future phases. I'd like to thank the City staff for all the hard work on these proposals, and I can't wait to see them adopted.

Bryan Williams

903 Russell Road

Alexandria, VA 22301



From: Kim Painter [kimberly.painter@gmail.com](mailto:kimberly.painter@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 12:07 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Please Pass Zoning for Housing

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my strong support of the Zoning for Housing proposal to expand our city's tools to provide more affordable housing and promote inclusion in the city.

As a homeowner in Del Ray I have no reservations about moving forward with this changes.

Kim Painter

From: Trey Harris [trey197@gmail.com](mailto:trey197@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 12:09 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Support for Zoning Changes to Increase Density and Affordable Housing Options

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed zoning changes that aim to increase density and expand affordable housing options in our community. I believe that these changes are essential to address the pressing housing challenges we face and to create a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable environment for all residents.

Our community is currently grappling with a shortage of affordable housing options, which has led to rising housing costs, displacement of vulnerable populations, and increased economic disparities. As a concerned member of this community, I believe that it is our collective responsibility to find solutions to this pressing issue. The proposed zoning changes offer a promising path forward.

Increasing housing density is an effective way to make better use of our existing infrastructure and resources. By allowing for the construction of multi-unit buildings, mixed-use developments, and higher-density residential areas, we can accommodate more residents within the same footprint. This will help to alleviate the demand for housing and provide opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to live in our community.

Furthermore, I am particularly supportive of the inclusion of affordable housing options in the proposed changes. Affordable housing is not only a matter of social justice but also an economic necessity. It ensures that our community remains vibrant and diverse, benefiting from a range of talents and perspectives. The availability of affordable housing options can alleviate financial burdens on families, reduce homelessness, and improve overall community well-being.

These zoning changes, if implemented thoughtfully, can foster more sustainable urban development. They can encourage the use of public transportation, reduce urban sprawl, and minimize the impact on our natural environment. By concentrating development in designated areas and encouraging walkability, we can create a more vibrant and environmentally friendly community.

I am aware that there may be concerns about potential impacts on existing infrastructure, traffic, and the character of our neighborhoods. However, I believe that with proper planning and community input, these challenges can be addressed in a way that preserves the unique identity of our community while allowing for necessary growth.

I urge the Planning Commission to move forward with the proposed zoning changes and to work closely with community stakeholders, developers, and affordable housing advocates to ensure that these changes are implemented successfully. This is a crucial step toward a more equitable and prosperous future for our community.

Thank you for your dedication to enhancing our community's quality of life. I trust that you will make decisions that consider the long-term well-being of all residents and the preservation of our community's values.

Sincerely,

Trey Harris, 2913 Landover St.

From: Marsha Rhea [mlrhea@outlook.com](mailto:mlrhea@outlook.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: VOICE Statement of Support for Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

Please find attached VOICE's statement in support of Zoning for Housing/Housing for All. While I am not our designated speaker for this evening's public hearing, I am happy to answer any questions you may have as I and other VOICE volunteers will be in attendance.

Faithfully,

Marsha Rhea

Marsha Rhea

[mlrhea@outlook.com](mailto:mlrhea@outlook.com)

703-731-8811

November 1, 2023

Dear Chair Macek, Vice Chair McMahon, and members of the Planning Commission,

VOICE urges City Council to Pass Bolder Version of the Zoning for Housing Recommendations.

VOICE is a nonpartisan coalition of over 40 faith communities and civic organizations in Northern Virginia, including five congregations in Alexandria, working together to build power in middle and low-income communities. We organize in Prince William, Fairfax, and Arlington counties as well as the City of Alexandria uniting people across lines of race, class, religion, political party and geography to take action on key issues in our community.

Our values of justice and compassion lead us to support the city's current efforts to unwind zoning policies developed in racially and economically discriminatory ways throughout the history of Alexandria. Our faith calls us to truth telling, repentance, and healing from harms. The creation of, participation in, and support for Alexandria's racially and economically discriminatory covenants and laws continue to impact housing. We celebrate new paths to diverse, whole communities.

We support the city's *Zoning for Housing (Z4H)* and *Housing for All* initiatives, which seek to address the lack of safe and affordable housing due to limited supply and institutional barriers. We applaud the city staff and leaders who have put time and intentionality into engaging the community and explaining not only the "what" but also the "why" of these plans.

We believe the proposed plan is too modest and does not significantly increase supply nor address the needs of Alexandria's most economically vulnerable populations - those making 30-50% AMI. The amount and type of housing this plan generates will not protect Alexandria's most vulnerable inhabitants and workers from displacement or the inability to live where they work. The plan itself could go further and it also must be complemented by significant tenant protections and investment in committed affordable housing. We will be sharing these priorities with the City Council in their upcoming hearing.

Increased funding for deeply affordable housing is the most important step the city can take to ensure all Alexandrians have access to housing and do not have added economic hardship due to displacement, poor living conditions, and lack of safety.

VOICE calls on the city to pair passage of the Zoning for Housing recommendations with a commitment to funding the development of affordable housing for the most vulnerable by committing to fund all projects that have already gained approval in the existing affordable housing pipeline.

For now, we urge the Planning Commission to vote yes on the Zoning for Housing Recommendations and to be bold in supporting inclusive housing in this city.

Sincerely,

Marsha Rhea, VOICE Alexandria Housing Team Co-Lead

From: Kyle King [kbking23@yahoo.com](mailto:kbking23@yahoo.com)  
Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 12:42 PM  
To: PlanComm  
Subject: Say NO to residential Zoning Changes

Dear Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission,

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposed zoning changes that would allow multi-family units in single family zoned areas of the city.

I am already seeing the negative consequences of your decision to increase density by allowing Auxiliary Dwelling Units in single family areas. Down the street from me a former garage converted into a rental unit has a perpetual "for rent" sign out front.

Parking in our neighborhood is already an issue among neighbors. We don't need or want more density and we don't want higher and higher buildings with multiple units.

Home ownership and the stewardship it brings to our neighborhoods is the reason that drew us to single family zoned areas in the first place. Please stop this relentless drive to increase the population of the city, which will only place more demands on city services and bring higher taxes.

Say NO to residential zoning changes.

Kyle King  
2500 Central Ave  
Alexandria, VA 22302

From: Bill Pugh [bill@smartergrowth.net](mailto:bill@smartergrowth.net)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 1:31 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Nov. 1 docket - comment in support of Zoning for Housing

Dear Chair Macek and Planning Commissioners,

Please find attached comment by the Coalition for Smarter Growth in support of the proposed Zoning for Housing actions.

Bill Pugh, AICP CTP | Senior Policy Fellow

Coalition for Smarter Growth

[www.smartergrowth.net](http://www.smartergrowth.net) | [@betterDCregion](https://twitter.com/betterDCregion)

[bill@smartergrowth.net](mailto:bill@smartergrowth.net)

(202) 821-3226

November 1, 2023,

Mr. Nate Macek  
Chair, Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria, Virginia

**Re: Adopt all eight Zoning for Housing proposals with further parking reform**

Chair Macek and Planning Commissioners:

The Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG) enthusiastically supports timely adoption of all eight Zoning for Housing proposals. We applaud the City of Alexandria for this critical initiative and are glad to see that future phases will revisit the reforms.

**Adopt all 8 strategies, including the more effective Single-Family Options 2 and 3**

CSG supports the proposed zoning text amendments, housing master plan updates, and city policy updates for the eight initiatives. For Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family zones we support the more flexible and effective options proposed by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

**Pursue more parking reforms and support for transit-oriented development plans**

CSG also requests the following additional steps be taken now:

- Remove parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Study additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently update transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

**Recognize the significant community benefits and support of Alexandria policies**

Alexandria's proposed expansion of housing options supports adopted City goals and policies. It will make the city more inclusive by dismantling exclusionary zoning and offering opportunities for more housing types at lower price points in a community with great schools, jobs, needed services and amenities.

The City's Planning Department and outside housing experts invited to present to the community have covered well the housing and economic benefits of zoning reforms that expand options and supply in communities like Alexandria. Below we cover two additional areas that have received less attention, Transportation and Climate benefits.



*Transportation benefits:*

- Households able to live in Alexandria **spend one-third less on transportation costs** compared to those in Fairfax, Prince William and Prince George’s counties. This saves about \$5,000 per year while giving families and workers more time for other needs.<sup>1</sup>
- The regional Transportation Planning Board estimates that achieving the COG regional housing targets, coupled with continued transit investment and supportive land use planning, would **reduce traffic congestion in the region by 20%** compared to forecast conditions under previously adopted plans.<sup>2</sup>

*Climate Change benefits:*

- The City of Alexandria *Energy and Climate Change Action Plan* (ECCAP) includes the Zoning for Housing initiative as a **recommended implementation step**.<sup>3</sup>
  - Housing policies that reduce trip distances can play an important role in reducing transportation emissions and can be implemented through “...land use change policies, allowing for more dense housing infrastructure, encouraging the development of mixed-used neighborhoods, supporting TOD efforts, and/or reducing or eliminating parking minimums in specific areas.”
  - The plan’s equity indicators encourage actions that help city social goals, such as reducing the housing burden across communities and encouraging closer housing-work proximity to reduce the transportation cost burden.
- The average Alexandria household drives significantly less and produces about **half the greenhouse gas emissions from transportation** as households in Fairfax and Prince William counties due to shorter trip distances and more travel options beyond driving.<sup>4</sup>
- Housing units in compact communities with a mix of housing types like Alexandria consume about **20% less in building energy** than homes in sprawling areas due to efficiencies of shared walls and layouts (e.g., greater share of duplexes, townhomes, multi-family units).<sup>5</sup>
- Infill housing strategies can **significantly reduce regional land and open space consumption**, with potential for 50 to 80% savings versus sprawl.<sup>6</sup>

Thank you for supporting Alexandria’s policies for equitable housing and sustainability.

Bill Pugh, AICP  
Senior Policy Fellow

Sonya Breehey  
NoVA Advocacy Manager

Cc: Mayor and City Council, City of Alexandria

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Neighborhood. [Housing+Transportation Index](#).

<sup>2</sup> MWCOG. (2019). [Future of Housing in Greater Washington](#).

<sup>3</sup> City of Alexandria (2023). [Energy and Climate Change Action Plan](#), See pp. 11, 46-47, 50.

<sup>4</sup> Center for Neighborhood. [Housing+Transportation Index](#).

<sup>5</sup> Ewing, Reid, and Fang Rong. (2008). [The Impact of Urban Form on U.S. Residential Energy Use](#).

<sup>6</sup> RMI. (2023). [Urban Land Use Reform](#).

From: [alek.becker91@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:alek.becker91@everyactioncustom.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 1:35 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: I support a strong Zoning for Housing package

Dear Planning Commissioner,

I support timely adoption of the eight proposed Zoning for Housing strategies and corresponding zoning text amendments and policies. While more work will be needed, these modest reforms to allow more homes and housing types for Alexandria residents and workers is a necessary start.

Specifically, for Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single-Family Zones, I support the more effective and flexible options prepared by staff:

- Option 2 to allow 3- to 4-unit developments in more zones; and
- Parking Option 3 to remove costly and unnecessary minimum parking requirements for homes near transit.

In addition, I encourage the Planning Commission and Council to take additional action now, including:

- Removing minimum parking requirements within 3/4 mile of Metro stations and 1/2 mile of bus rapid transit stations (Route 1, Duke Street, Beauregard/Van Dorn);
- Studying additional parking reforms that can foster more affordable, walkable neighborhoods, especially near transit; and
- Expediently updating transit-oriented community plans for Metro stations and bus rapid transit corridors to provide more housing.

Thank you for conducting this important initiative to make Alexandria a more inclusive and affordable place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Alek Becker

1201 Braddock Pl Apt 1008 Alexandria, VA 22314-1674 [alek.becker91@gmail.com](mailto:alek.becker91@gmail.com)

(386) 366-0235

From: Jamie Conrad [jamie\\_conrad11@comcast.net](mailto:jamie_conrad11@comcast.net)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 2:15 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

I'm sorry I missed the deadline last night for input into tonight's hearing, but I wanted to pass along my overall support for the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiative. The main reason there is such a shortage of affordable housing in cities like Alexandria is that we make it so difficult to build it, primarily via our zoning laws. Here's a representative sample of articles making that point:

Opinion | America's Cities Are Unlivable. Blame Wealthy Liberals. (Gift Article)

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/01/homelessness-affordable-housing-crisis-democrats-causes/672224/>

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/05/business/single-family-zoning-laws/index.html>

<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/06/27/california-affordable-housing-zoning-00103703>

It's always disappointing to see, for example, the lot on Linden Street with the big magnolia tree get developed. But we have two ways of accommodating our growing population: infill or sprawl. Nobody likes either one, but the former can make use of existing public transportation, etc., and avoid turning everything from here to Front Royal into an endless Chantilly. Yes in my backyard!

My only objection is to including Mt. Vernon Avenue in the bonus height proposal. Del Ray generally, and Mt. Vernon Ave. in particular, are treasures of Alexandria and we should not be doing anything that might kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Mt. Vernon Ave. has a pleasant, open feel that would be adversely affected if the heights of buildings along the avenue were to increase.

Thank you,

Jamie Conrad

107 W. Maple St.

Alexandria, VA 22301

[jamie\\_conrad11@comcast.net](mailto:jamie_conrad11@comcast.net)

703-405-1660

From: Rebecca Turner [rebeccadianeturner@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccadianeturner@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 3:40 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing

Dear Planning Commission Members,

Please support Zoning for Housing. As a resident of Del Ray, I have been disheartened by the number of neighbors I've seen in outspoken opposition to new neighbors and new housing opportunities. I love living here, and I would love it even more if being a millionaire weren't quickly becoming a prerequisite for residence and homeownership. I wish that were hyperbole. I have seen too many people move away because they simply could not afford to live here anymore. On a personal note, I have ageing parents who would like to move to be closer to us, and finding housing they can afford near my home has been impossible. The lack of affordable housing is a critical issue in this community, and increasing supply is a key way to address it.

Thank you for the work you do,

Rebecca Turner

From: Jeanne Snapp <jeanne.moss.snapp@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 4:09 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Letter re: Zoning Proposal

Mr. Patrick Silva,

I am submitting this letter - my thoughts on the Zoning for Housing proposal - to the members of the Planning Commission. Thank you for distributing it, hopefully before tonight's meeting.

Jeanne Snapp

517 North Overlook Drive

### **Why the need for more time in deciding on the City's proposed zoning changes?**

At the October meeting of Agenda Alexandria, panelist Stephen Koenig, Alexandria Planning Commissioner, stated that he needs no additional time – no more information - to cast his vote on the Zoning for Housing proposals. He, his fellow Planning Commission members, the Mayor, and City Council members may not need more time because they've been aware of the planning and designing of zoning changes by City staff for a matter of years. Citizens, however, have only had access for a matter of months to information about zoning proposals that could change the face of Alexandria. The proposal to change Single Family Residential zoning was publicized as late as September 5<sup>th</sup>! If the devil is in the details, citizens need to know and discuss them with each other and City leaders about how these zoning change proposals would play out in actuality.

Just one example of “the devil is in the details” that needs further public discussion is how the proposals will affect identified environmental values that Alexandria prides itself on and has embraced through the years. We call ourselves “Eco-City Alexandria,” created an Open Space Master Plan (2002), adopted an Eco-City Charter (2008), developed an Open Space Policy Plan (2020), established an Office of Climate Action (2022), and profess a commitment to sustainable development. How will proposed density and zoning changes affect our tree canopy, open space, and climate change efforts?

### **Real Community Engagement...**

Ideally, citizens are part of any change process early on. An example of this was the redevelopment of Beverley Park a few years ago. A City parks staff person reached out to neighbors and users of the park to create a new vision for the park. The combination of staff and residents working together resulted in very positive acclaim from neighbors and users.

The City's community engagement efforts around these zoning change proposals seem to check a box, but not really engage the community. In actuality, efforts by the City around this issue have garnered negative reactions and pushback by residents and organizations. Citizens giving input during hearings and other city outreach sessions don't seem to make a difference. “You're letting us talk, but not listening.” Several neighbors say that these sessions are more a public relations process – selling the proposals – than a true engagement process.

Agenda Alexandria panelist Susan Cunningham, newly elected Arlington County Board member familiar with Arlington's similar zoning change process that resulted in a law suit, suggested taking time to have the community come together about a path forward regarding these big zoning changes. She also proposed a pilot project to examine whether aspects of proposed zoning changes work and adjusting it where challenging details have been revealed.

I urge the Planning Commission to recommend delaying passage of the Zoning for Housing package of proposals, creating the opportunity for real engagement and community support for solutions to the problems the zoning proposals are attempting to solve

Jeanne Snapp, 517 North Overlook Drive

November 1, 2023

From: S Matts [rbs93td007@gmail.com](mailto:rbs93td007@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 4:10 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Planning Commission

Please see attached file. Thank you.

Good Day Chairman Nate Macek, Vice Chair Melissa McMahon and Commissioners David Brown, Stephen Koenig, Melinda Lyle, Jody Manor and Vivian Ramirez --

RE: 'Zoning for Housing/Housing for All'

DATE: 1 November 2023 --

I understand that the public hearing tonight is the last opportunity Alexandria City citizens have to express their concerns regarding the 'Zoning for Housing/Housing for All' initiative. Mine include but are not limited to:

- Why is city government seemingly incapable of generating a robust plan for economic development with concomitant tax revenue? This would largely eliminate the need for re-zoning initiatives affecting residential properties such as the one discussed here.
- Why specifically was a massive re-zoning initiative decision forced into a timeframe of 6 months when 3-4 years for such a large project is the norm for Alexandria and neighboring municipalities?
- Given that the Dillon Rule, passed in 1896, which makes local control of developer appetite almost impossible; why would city officials eliminate the miniscule amount of control the city now has with current zoning practice?
- Why did city officials at a recent Agenda: Alexandria public forum addressing ZFH/HFA make no effort whatsoever to correct a statement that not a single affordable house would likely come from ZFH/HFA? At that same forum, city officials appeared to exhibit no intention to consider any information generated at the forum.
- Why the secrecy on the part of city officials on so many specific practicalities?
- Why are the desires of national and regional groups who are not members of the Alexandria community seemingly of more importance than Alexandria's citizens?
- How is it in the best interest of the city to generate so much animosity and mistrust (over this and several recent massive projects) that doesn't seem necessary for success?
- Is the city concerned with Arlington's difficulties regarding its similar re-zoning plan including:
  - A forced change in the name of its policy from 'Missing Middle' to 'Expanded Housing Option' once it was discovered that no affordable housing would come of the re-zoning.
  - A lawsuit initiated by Neighbors for Neighborhoods LLC to declare EHO zoning void. The lawsuit is based on the grounds of EHO zoning being approved too quickly without proper vetting and a lack of addressing infrastructure and other costs and concerns. These are the identical concerns raised by citizens of Alexandria. The lawsuit has been given legal permission to proceed in the courts.
  - Developers have dramatically reduced the number of EHO permit applications in Arlington giving substance to the lawsuit.



It would be in the positive interest of all who I'm sure have raised similar concerns to be disavowed of my/their impression that the needs of Alexandria's citizens did not play a role in the design of 'Zoning for Housing/Housing for All'. As I read the volume of material associated with the initiative, it seems that **the real goal of the initiative is simply rampant and unfettered gentrification**, a policy anathema to those who have lived and who now live in Alexandria Virginia.

Most sincerely and with a hope that this note is read by someone with actual decision-making power on the Planning Commission,

Susan C. Matts Ph.D.  
311 E. Windsor Aveue  
Alexandria VA 22301

From: Luisa Lancetti [luisalancetti@gmail.com](mailto:luisalancetti@gmail.com)

Sent: Wednesday November 1, 2023 4:17 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Zoning for Housing/Zoning for All Proposals

Please respond to the questions below. I note that if responsive information is in the public record, I have not seen it. (The matrix is hard to follow.)

I urge the City Council to delay a final vote on the zoning proposals until additional information is provided and further community input is received. The changes proposed are significant and additional time should be given for community input on these proposals — which will clearly affect the City and its inhabitants in many ways.

Thank you for your consideration.

Luisa Lancetti

2426 Davis Avenue

Questions:

1. When the staff opines that amending the Single-Family Zones to expand the number of units permitted will have “extremely minor” impacts on the “transportation network, water and sewer systems, open space network and public school system” in the City, how was that determined? Has the methodology and quantitative data been made public? Where can it be reviewed?
2. Have the environmental impacts of increasing density/units in the Single-Family Zones been considered? If so, what conclusions were reached? Again, what was the methodology used and has the data to support this been made public? Where can it be reviewed?
3. Why isn't the City considering imposing conditions on developers to set aside affordable units? And particularly, is the City planning to impose such conditions in office-to-residential conversion projects?
4. What data supports the conclusion that the additional density estimated to be added to current Single-Family Zones by virtue of this proposal will increase the affordability of the new units made available?