

**From:** K Rowley <kjrowley@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 3:36 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Comments on "Zoning for Housing" plan

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Dear City Council Members,

Like many residents of this city, I recently learned about the proposed re-zoning plan and how all-encompassing it is – far more so than the housing proposal approved in Arlington, which was only limited to single family zones.

I'm concerned that it, as well as the little-publicized Phase 2 plan in the works, will exacerbate the growing problem of increased light pollution, congestion, density, crime, and rooftop playgrounds instead of open space. From reading various comments and survey responses, it is apparent that both professional and grassroots lobbyists are getting their "voices" heard, distorting the prevailing sentiment of residents in this community. The proponent's [playbook](#) is being followed to a "T" – and this includes claims that those **opposed** to the rezoning are the **vocal minority** --- when actually it's quite the reverse. Even the nonprofits advocating for increased density are [sponsored](#) by builders, banks, and the real estate industry, and if you look at their websites, they dismiss or don't even acknowledge the existence of options for improving affordability that don't involve building more housing.

The issue of affordable housing needs to be considered separately from merely increasing density. Without the zoning changes, development is still happening at a rapid pace. I don't see development NOT happening.

In terms of affordability, Alexandria should provide meaningful affordable housing assistance directly to residents instead of putting ALL the assistance money in one basket (developers' baskets). This would benefit far more lower income people than the developer incentives and could happen much faster and in an eco-friendlier way to help achieve "housing for all." We need a program with less red tape than federal housing vouchers, which have long waiting lists and landlord reluctance. I applaud the fact there is a meeting scheduled for December on potential program for long-term rental assistance subsidies, but am disappointed that nothing is even being proposed at this time, and that it is not a part of the "Housing for Zoning" plan.

I encourage you to vote AGAINST approving this Housing for Zoning plan so that each of the proposed zoning amendments can be considered separately or grouped logically, allowing for changes to be incorporated that address residents' suggestions and concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,  
Katie Rowley

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## MEMO

TO: the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Alexandria VA;

FROM: Allan R. Winn

DATE: November 15, 2023

I write to express my strong disagreement with the major proposed changes to the City's zoning laws as set out in the "Zoning for Housing for All" section of the City's web page.

The stated goals of these changes are to:

- (i) increase housing production and affordability and
- (ii) "address past and current barriers to equitable housing access".

With respect to housing production, the proposed changes obviously have the potential to significantly increase the number of housing units which could be built in the City but there is no meaningful argument presented as to whether the new units in at least the the single family zoned areas would be "affordable". There is no discussion of whether the proposed action is consistent with existing zoning requirements. There is no explanation of what "equitable housing access" means.

The Zoning ordinance for the City provides in Article I that it is "enacted in order to promote the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the City..." and is designed to:

- (A) "Guide and regulate the orderly growth and development of the City of Alexandria in accordance with a well considered plan and with long term objectives, principles and standards deemed beneficial to the interests of the people;
- (B) Protect the established character of existing residential neighborhoods and commercial and business areas and the social and economic wellbeing of the residents."

I am finding it impossible to reconcile these fundamental principles with the proposed changes. The City apparently already has about 50,000 zoned but unbuilt housing units. The changes to single family zoning would theoretically allow thousands more as a matter of right. The City population could easily double with all the resulting challenges to infrastructure, schools, traffic, tree cover, impermeable surfaces, policing etc etc. Our population per square mile is 10,677.4 according to the 2020 US Census up from 9,314.3 ten years earlier. If this kind of population growth continues, at some point relatively soon we will no longer be the city that we love and enjoy.

I suggest that the proposed zoning changes be put on hold and that we need to have a thoughtful discussion about our "long term objectives, principles and standards" and whether our priority on accommodating population growth at the expense of already clearly stated goals is a wise and coherent policy. There obviously is a case to be made that our zoning should emphasize preserving the value , character and environmental health of our neighborhoods. There has been no meaningful explanation of how those fundamental zoning considerations are being supported by the proposed changes. .

I should note that I am in no way adverse to creating more affordable housing for low and moderate income families. I spent almost my entire career as a lawyer – over 40 years – assisting developers and lenders in connection with housing projects of that sort. My practice involved essentially all of the

housing programs of HUD, Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. It involved hundreds of such projects in almost every state.

According to the US Census our median household income is \$105,450 in Alexandria as compared to \$134,115 in Fairfax county and \$128,145 in Arlington. We already welcome, house and school families with incomes below the average of surrounding jurisdictions and that is a good thing. But affordability is a national problem. As extensively reported by many experts, it is due to fundamental economic changes on a national scale – interest rates, inflation of building costs, reversal of quantitative easing, among other factors. This has resulted in the lack of both new and resale houses in the marketplace. Alexandria cannot solve affordability on its own because it cannot affect the causes on its own. This is not to say the city should ignore the issue, particularly as it affects low income families. Simply building more housing in a city which is a very small part of a large metropolitan area is not going to change the underlying issues. It will just add more residents.

In fixing our priorities, for example, shouldn't we be giving some priority to attracting the best and the brightest teachers to our school system rather than increasing the student load on that system. Shouldn't we be giving priority to protection of our tree cover and the amount of permeable surface area in our City, much of which is in detached single family home areas. Adding more housing in those areas will have the opposite effect. The City argues that these adverse effects would be minimal because only 66 properties would be affected by the proposed zoning changes but no evidence has been presented to support that conclusion. We are a city which has 900 acres of parkland as compared to 23,632 acres of parkland in Fairfax County. In a small City with no room to grow, I believe our focus on increasing our population per square mile, which is already dense and getting more so is misplaced. Abandonment of all single family zoning and a focus on bringing more residents to our City has real world adverse consequences to ALL of the citizens who live here now.

Richard Rothstein's book, *The Color of Money*, seems to be the intellectual underpinning for the proposed single family zoning changes. Rothstein, in my opinion, carries his historical analysis to absurd real world conclusions. I completely agree that "segregation by race or ethnicity" would be terrible social policy and I abhor the fact that racism still exists in our society. But Rothstein's discussion of "Fixes" in chapter 12 of his book is both unrealistic and itself discriminatory. He would ask any community to make sure a "fair share" of low and moderate income housing is located in apparently all areas of the community. He defines a "fair share" as "One that is close to the share of low and moderate income families in the suburban metropolitan area or as a constitutional remedy, the share of African Americans in the metropolitan area". But he offers no definition for the geographic area to which this vision would apply. In practice would it apply to a whole town or city, a particular subdivision, each street? He would basically ban single family zoning. He admits that there are middle class African American communities that are attractive to African Americans but asks that those communities be better integrated by attracting more whites.. To the extent changes to current zoning may exact a financial price on the people living there by reducing the value of their homes, Rothstein argues that is just the price of citizenship. It strikes me as being more in the nature of selective adverse possession or condemnation with no proven record of achieving a socially beneficial result.

We have been offered no substantive analysis as to whether the proposed elimination of single family zoning and the changes to parking space requirements in those zones will not have an economic detrimental effect on the value of properties in those zones, or a detrimental effect on the environment,

tree cover, storm water, growth of the school population etc. All such substantive concerns are summarily dismissed by an unsupported and unexplained conclusion that only 66 unidentified properties will be affected over a ten year period. There is no analysis or assurance that these changes will produce any changes whatsoever in the racial or economic makeup of our neighborhoods or the cost of housing in those neighborhoods. There is no discussion of whether the proposed changes might affect the value of adjoining or nearby properties. There is no discussion of the problems with financing and operating extremely small rental projects (four units or less). HUD and the GSE's have loan programs for small rental projects so data about such projects must exist. In my experience Lenders do not like such projects because the risk of loan default is relatively high. A failure to pay rent by any one tenant could lead to a loan default unless the borrower was financially strong. The typical financially strong apartment project owner/developer, in my experience, dislikes small projects because such "scattered site projects" do not take advantage of economies of scale and therefore are more expensive to build and more expensive to operate. .

I would hope the City would take a real look at our neighborhoods. It seems to me that Alexandria is a poster case for successful racial integration and urban development. In 1980 we had 109,217 people and in 2020 159,461. In the last ten years alone we have added about 19,000 people but the percentages of white/black citizens have remained stable at about 51% white and 22 % black.. Our single family detached home communities, at least in my experience, include citizens who are black , white, Hispanic or other race or background. The houses in those communities typically have a wide range of values, sizes and ages and those communities frequently adjoin lower income communities Children in those neighborhoods go to the same schools as children from lower income communities. Many of our existing single family homes, particularly those built in the 50s and 60s are quite modest and many have been occupied by the same family for many years. We and virtually all of our neighbors and friends are not "children of privilege". In purchasing homes in our single family neighborhoods we were simply purchasing what we considered to be the best houses that met our needs at a price we could afford. Yet the City, with its clumsy effort to involve "equity" and its apparent reliance on the Rothstein book for justification, seems to be presenting the zoning changes as rich vs poor and black vs white. That is unfair, inaccurate, deceptive and government at its worst.

The City should honor its commitment to all its citizens and not change the rules which underlay their decisions to purchase homes in our City. We can and should make a real effort to house our lower income citizens but the proposed changes to our zoning code are the wrong way to do so justified by flawed reasoning. I suggest that these proposed changes be put on hold and be reconsidered with more time for meaningful input from the citizens.

I would be happy to discuss these matters with officials of the City at any mutually convenient time.

Allan R. Winn

807 Marshall Lane, Alexandria VA 22302.

## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Robert Youree <ryouree@phoenixinvadv.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 4:38 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Gloria Sitton  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]City of Alexandria, Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

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Dear Mayor Wilson and Council Members:

I would like to register my strenuous opposition to the proposed zoning laws in their current form, particularly the elimination of single-family zoning, and I agree with the Alexandria Times editorial ([fyi: https://alextimes.com/2023/11/possible-benefits-versus-certain-costs/](https://alextimes.com/2023/11/possible-benefits-versus-certain-costs/)).

Sincerely,


Robert Youree  
15 W. Rosemont Ave.  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
(703) 298-1676

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**From:** Barbra Byington <babyington@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 4:51 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Justin Wilson; Amy Jackson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Alyia Gaskins; Sarah Bagley; Kirk McPike  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Zoning For Housing Comments

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Hello All

I wanted to share the comments I provided at Tuesday night's City Council meeting as I know I was nervous and spoke rather quickly.

My name is Barbra Byington and I have been a resident of the City of Alexandria for over 30 years and a property owner for the last 25 years. I agree with the positions outlined by the Del Ray Citizens Association in their letter dated October 26th and I oppose certain portions of the proposed Zoning for Housing Text amendments. I ask that Council members take Commissioner Brown's comments to heart and refrain from passing a hugely significant package without allowing the appropriate amount of time to consider the impacts on existing residents and neighborhoods. Please examine each Text Amendment individually and table those that need more time to study their potentially irrevocable negative impacts: especially ending single family zoning, reducing or eliminating parking minimums (and/or amend what is considered an Enhanced Transit Zone) and removing zone transition setback requirements from commercial to residential (Historic Development Patterns).

I have seen a lot of changes in my 30+ years in the City that have accelerated over recent years. I first moved to an apartment in South Old Town, then bought a rowhouse in Parker Gray in 1998 and subsequently moved to a detached house in Del Ray in 2009. Parker Gray changed quite a bit while I lived there - it became less diverse and more gentrified, not due to any type of historic zoning practices, but because of the demand to live in a charming convenient neighborhood, whose character has been mostly maintained due to zoning and building constraints. Del Ray is now changing at an ever increasing rate as more and more moderately priced bungalows are bought by developers, torn down and replaced by McMansions, with no protections - and this would only get worse. Some single family homes are already being replaced by duplexes and townhouses, but this has led to higher - not lower - prices, as they are being replaced with luxury \$1 to \$2+ million homes that maximize the FAR. Developers are NOT building moderately priced housing. (I'd also like to add that there is substantial waste involved when these older homes are basically dumped into landfills).

Eliminating parking requirements and allowing new two to fourplexes to be built in lots currently zoned for single family houses would harm existing tax paying residents. For example, my street (a mile from the Metro is in an Enhanced Transit Zone) does not have parking restrictions, and most houses have driveways, but it is narrow with parking allowed on only one side and is full to capacity on a daily basis. It is delusional to think that people who buy or rent luxury apartments or townhomes will not own cars and that they will take the bus. The BRT should not be included as part of the Enhanced Transit Zone definition. Even if people do take the Metro, the vast majority still own cars. This type of policy is also arguably ageist and ableist as many people can't take public transportation or ride a bike.

After growing up nearby in Annandale, I moved to Alexandria over Arlington because I appreciated the historic charm and character of the City, which is being eradicated by overdevelopment. Construction has been booming in several neighborhoods - including Potomac Yards, Braddock Road, Old Town North etc. - offering primarily new "luxury" apartments that are nowhere near the definition of "affordable." All of this new construction takes away open green space, increases flooding\* and worsens light and air quality - important considerations in the rationale behind zoning codes in the first place. Housing prices are an issue nationally - Alexandria doesn't need to (and can't) be all things to all people. We are already a small very dense City and it is unwise to allow zoning changes to destroy that.

\*City staff claimed in their introduction that there would be no increase in stormwater problems since the building envelope had to remain the same size if a SFH were torn down and replaced by a two or fourplex. This is disingenuous since smaller houses are currently being torn down and being replaced by larger single family homes, some duplexes and townhouses - and have caused flooding and other issues. The problem is with smaller buildings being replaced by buildings that max out the allowance (doesn't matter whether it is a SFH or a fourplex if open space is being reduced) and many developers ask for (and receive) variances from open space requirements for their larger projects. Counting terraces and rooftops as open space does not help, IMHO.

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I hope that Council members really listen to residents and don't vote to approve the entire package - there is no good reason that all of these amendments need to be packaged together, especially when there remain many unresolved issues that will be part of Phase II.

thanks

Barbra Byington

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Norman Sharp <[normanfsharp@gmail.com](mailto:normanfsharp@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 4:55 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** Fwd: Comments re: Zoning for Housing for All

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

From: **Norman Sharp** <[normanfsharp@gmail.com](mailto:normanfsharp@gmail.com)>  
Date: Fri, Nov 17, 2023 at 4:50 PM  
Subject: Comments re: Zoning for Housing for All  
To: <[CouncilComments@alexandriava.gov](mailto:CouncilComments@alexandriava.gov)>

November 17, 2023

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of the Alexandria City Council,

My wife and I have been citizens of Alexandria for 50 years, having resided in our current home on Key Drive for 31 years after having lived in Beverly Hills for 17 years. While we were aware that the subject of affordable housing has been an issue for years, we were not aware of the specifics of any proposal until just recently when nine zoning proposals were bundled through 41 text amendments in the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All -- which the public was given less than two months to review.

We are writing specifically in opposition to the provisions dealing with changes in single family zoning in the proposal. We do not consider ourselves to be experts on zoning or housing issues. However, while we believe that the proposal as it impacts our single family home neighborhood may result in the availability of more housing, we question how affordable those new units would be.

We understand the city added about 11,000 rental units between 2012 to 2022 without improvement in affordability. In fact, the results in that case included disproportionate increases in school enrollment, violent crime, emergency police and medical calls for service, more water main breaks, flooding, traffic congestion and a dramatic increase in the city's debt. City planners have rejected arguments that the city is already overdeveloped and have concluded that the city's infrastructure will keep pace with the addition of thousands of housing units. That is news to our neighborhood considering how the ever-increasing volume of traffic on Quaker Lane today makes it quite difficult to get onto or off of Key Drive. Having more housing units with more cars in our neighborhood will only increase that difficulty.

In promoting the construction of multi-unit buildings in neighborhoods now comprising only single-family homes, the city suggests that the plan will help achieve more economic and racial diversity. Regarding the former, the analysis contracted by the city shows that any new units will continue to mirror the high costs of existing single-family homes. This would likely be beyond the financial means of city employees now commuting to their jobs. One gets the impression that the only ones who would stand to gain would be the developers. And as to the latter, we understand the city apparently acknowledges that the elimination of single-family zoning will not increase racial diversity in the affected neighborhoods. A major purpose of single-family zoning when first introduced by the city in the early 20th Century was in fact to promote segregation. But the structural barriers preserving that practice have been removed more than 50 years ago. Today anyone who can afford the prevailing cost of housing in most of the city's residential areas has long been able to own or rent a home in any of those areas. This will continue to be the case without the proposed changes. City planners have recommended that developers be allowed, without further approval, to build multi-unit structures (with up to 4 units apiece) on property now zoned only for single-family construction. The city claims that the impact on neighborhoods will be minor, but the city has neglected to detail the impact its proposal would have on existing homeowners. The elimination of single-family zoning is part of a comprehensive plan encouraging further development and increased density in all areas of the city with the goals of providing additional housing for current and future residents, additional affordable housing for residents and city employees: and promoting racial and economic diversity.

The city has not provided enough information to justify or even allow reasonable consideration of the benefits, if any, of the proposed zoning change – or the drawbacks. The city estimates that less than 70 multi-unit structures (containing no more than a total of about 175 units) will be built in neighborhoods now zoned for single-family residences. The city describes the impact of the change as “minor” without discussing the reasoning behind its conclusion. The city's planners failed to answer questions such as **a)** How did they arrive at their estimate for the total number of multi-unit structures and units to be constructed by eliminating single-family zoning, **b)** why they believe the impact of the multi-unit structures will only be “minor,” **c)** how do they anticipate the number of multi-unit structures to be built by particular neighborhood, **d)** why is the city implementing its plan without discussing how development in particular neighborhoods will be affected by deed covenants prohibiting construction of other than a single family house? **e)** how will these new structures affect the overall valuation of single-family homes in the neighborhood, **f)** how will the construction of a multi-unit structure affect the valuation of an adjacent single-family homeowner's property after the former's construction, and **g)** should the city compensate the adjacent homeowner for any loss in value to its property – and how. With this information, the public and the City Council would be in a better position to assess and approve/or disapprove the proposal to eliminate single-family zoning.

Ironically, while Alexandria has one of the lowest percentages of single-family units in the nation at nearly 12%, the city's policies will reduce that number, allowing houses to be replaced with “fourplex” rental apartments. That will eliminate single-family zoning – in turn making owning a home even less attainable than today. And despite having one of

the highest percentages of rental units in the nation, the city will add tens of thousands more. We understand the city has planned more than 40,000 more units in transit-oriented areas and 2,800 affordable units elsewhere. This would suggest up to 100,000 new city residents. One can only imagine the impact this would have on the school system, infrastructure including roads, and on our tax burden.

We recommend that this particular provision dealing with single family homes be tabled for further study.

Respectfully,

Norman and Carolann Sharp

**From:** Jim Rowley <jimrowley@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 5:02 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Proposed Zoning Changes

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Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, and Members of the City Council,

I am writing today in opposition to the proposed zoning changes. Alexandria City is unique in its mix of neighborhoods and areas from Del Rey to Southern Towers to Seminary Hills to Old Town. This rush to change our city's zoning laws that is bankrolled by Developers, Bankers, and the Real Estate Industry would irreparably change the fabric of the town we all care so much about.

While I have many issues with this rush to ram through these changes that even some on the planning commission admit that they haven't fully read and with similar zoning changes inflicted on Arlington now under the shadow of lawsuits I will limit my comments to two in this correspondence.

First, my two boys attended John Adams, Frances Hammond, and Alexandria High School. Each one of these schools was overcrowded when they attended with some ELS students having to have their pullout sessions in hallways and some kindergarten classes being held in windowless interior rooms. This rush to add tens of thousands of people to Alexandria's population without addressing basic infrastructure issues like schools would be a reckless disregard for the welfare of our city's children and their education.

Second, if passed, these drastic changes will artificially drive-up land values which will be a stealth tax increase on every homeowner. This massive tax increase will fall harshly on retirees and those who achieved the dream of owning their own home but are just getting by in a difficult economy.

In conclusion, I love Alexandria City and its uniqueness. There are other options to address housing affordability issues in Alexandria before bowing to pressure from fat-cat Developers, Bankers, and the Real Estate Industry. Please think of our city's children and the people who currently live in Alexandria, stand up to big monied lobbyists and please vote no to changing our city's zoning laws.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jim Rowley

1812 N. Howard Street

Alexandria

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Emily Larson <erlarson20@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 8:24 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Alyia Gaskins; Amy Jackson; Canek Aguirre; John Chapman; Justin Wilson; Kirk McPike; Sarah Bagley  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Zoning for Housing - please expand and pass!

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Hello -

My name is Emily Larson and I live in northern Alexandria with my husband and our almost 8-month-old baby. I support the Zoning for Housing initiative, and I would like you to know I support your passing the option 2 and 3 recommendations.

My family and I live in a small, post-WWII garden-style community (Parkfairfax), and it is frustrating and sad to me that our home style is illegal in many single family home zoned areas of Alexandria. I love our liveable space (I'm a working mom, and I can actually clean and take care of our little home while still taking care of my baby!) with neighbors and friends close by. Please expand zoning for up to 4 homes on single family lots, so that other young professionals like myself and my husband can experience home ownership in vibrant communities that would be impossible otherwise. My brother lives five minutes from us and rents his home, and regularly expresses to us his unhappiness that he can't afford to purchase in his single-family-home neighborhood in any near to mid-term future, if ever. Changing these zoning requirements would open so many opportunities for young professionals that would make Alexandria that much more able to attract the best talent, raise taxes for use by our local government, and raise home values overall.

In addition, I advocate for option 3 recommendations that remove unnecessary and expansive parking mandates; in fact, I would support parking mandates being removed entirely. These mandates place an undue burden on communities that are not demanded by the market. Just like zoning issues, they box out and prevent new homeowners from participating in the housing market. If we want our communities to survive and thrive, we have to adapt in ways that benefit everyone.

Thank you so much for being open to input and comments. I'm so appreciative of the input process, and I feel engaged and heard.

Emily

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## Memorandum

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council of Alexandria, VA

From: Carol Mitchell

Date: November 17, 2023

Re: Strenuous Objection to Proposed Zoning Change to Remove Single Family Home Restrictions

I am writing to express my objection to the proposed zoning change that would remove single family home restrictions, as described in the “Zoning for Housing for All” section of the City’s web page. The Council has not performed sufficient study, nor have they provided sufficient information, to Alexandria residents so as to permit an informed decision on a move that will seriously change the nature and character of Alexandria neighborhoods.

As I understand it, the impetus behind the proposed change is to promote more affordable housing. There is an underlying presumption, unsubstantiated by data, that the proposed change would accomplish this objective. To be clear, I support the objective, but need an explanation of how the zoning change will meet the goal. For example, it is a simplistic assumption that four-unit dwellings in any neighborhood would automatically be “affordable.” Rather, it is just as likely that luxury units be located in “desirable” neighborhoods, which would still be out of reach for lower income families. And while the City has not demonstrated how the zoning change will actually relieve the stress on low income families, they have also not demonstrated how the increased density in neighborhoods not built for that will not result in increased parking problems, more road congestion, increased demands on an already inadequate water and sewage system, and a loss of tree canopy and open space, not to mention a loss of the nature and character of the residential neighborhoods from one of homeowners to renters. The Council owes it to the residents most likely to adversely impacted – the current owners of single-family homes – to demonstrate how it can assert that the removal of the restriction automatically equates to affordable housing. Rather than resulting in lower cost housing for current residents, it is just if not more likely to produce more highly priced units, and attract more residents to the City.

The zoning laws of the City are meant for all residents; an important goal is to safeguard and protect the established character of existing residential neighborhoods. It is also to protect the economic wellbeing of the residents. Although I am not unsympathetic to some of the younger residents who are daunted by the cost of home ownership, I was not able to buy a home until I was 40. When making what was, as it is for most of us, the most significant financial investment of my life, I purchased my very modest, unimproved 1952 home based, in large part, on the neighborhood, which was one of single-family homes. The City’s proposal will have a significant negative effect on my home’s value, and amounts to something akin to a taking under some misguided theory of eminent domain.

There has been no showing that the rents these new units will be able to command will be “affordable,” no quantification of the amount of impact this will have on our housing shortage (I suspect not much), no attempt to estimate the potential devaluation of the homes that will be adjacent to or near the units, no study to demonstrate the size of the impact the buildings will have on parking, water supply, schools, and other public services, nor any coherent attempt for the Council to demonstrate to the City’s residents how and why this will “work.” This seems to be based on some misguided theory of “build it and they will come.” The problem is the City has not demonstrated that the intended goal – increasing the supply of affordable houses - will be accomplished in such any significant way to justify the devaluation of existing family homes, and of altering significantly the nature and character of the City’s neighborhoods.

I will point out that Arlington’s “Missing Middle” initiative, which also sought to remove similar restrictions, is currently in litigation because the city had not performed adequate studies to explore the impact the change would have on city resources. The Council would best serve all citizens of Alexandria by putting this project on hold, undertaking the appropriate studies that should have already been done, and better explaining to residents exactly how this change will accomplish the stated goal. The only group that will be seriously impacted by a pause is the developers, as they are the only group I can see that benefits from this.

Something as important as affordable housing should not be reduced to political “candy.” It is part of a nationwide problem, and to adequately address the issue the City can’t go to a quick, “feel good” step that really won’t provide more affordable housing, but will make the Council members feel like they have done something positive.

Thank you,  
Carol Mitchell  
1212 Key Drive

**From:** Jenny Hansen Ware <warejh@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 9:01 PM  
**To:** Gloria Sitton; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]November 18, 2023 City Council Public Hearing Meeting

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November 17, 2023

Dear City Council Members,

For the second time, I am writing in opposition to the Zoning for Housing proposal. I have lived in Alexandria all 47 years of my life. I love Alexandria and increasingly feel like there is no respect for and concern about the quality of life in our city.

Since my first letter, there have been many op-eds and listserv posts. One particular post from Jack Sullivan troubled me deeply. In case you missed it:

“This past week at a symposium on housing in Alexandria, Mayor Justin Wilson characterized the city’s zoning codes as ‘a poisoned tree.’ In the late 1990s I was appointed as a member of a citizen task force to review those same codes. They had been challenged on the grounds of fairness by landowners. For me that fairness term included most particularly finding any racial bias that might be embedded in the codes. It was an era when redlining by real estate interests to exclude Blacks from certain neighborhoods had been uncovered in many cities. Our group was headed by Bill Hurd, then the chair of the Alexandria Planning Commission. Over several months our task force examined the zoning code meticulously.

**In the end we found no racial bias or other substantive instances of unfairness to any group of Alexandria residents in the ordinances themselves.** The task force recommended only tweaks to the codes, in the form of two or three minor amendments. **Unfortunately, the task force report has gone missing. My request to the Office of Planning and Zoning recently brought back the response that while the existence of the task force is acknowledged, our report cannot be found archived anywhere in city files.** My own copy long since has been lost. I am hopeful that renewed efforts will find the report somewhere.

In the meantime, Wilson is alleging that this same code is a ‘poisoned tree’ bearing ‘poisoned fruit’ but he does not, and perhaps cannot, point out specific offending ordinances. It is just a blanket condemnation. Alexandria homeowners need proof not just invective.”

It is very troubling to me that the report is missing. Meanwhile, our mayor is repeatedly saying current zoning laws need to be changed due to racism.

Section 9.09 of Alexandria's charter 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 proposal in front of Council will:

- Increase congestion
- Increase sanitation issues (Alexandria has not finished the massive separation of our sewer and water systems. More people using the systems and more water runoff due to larger housing units will make this worse.)
- Decrease adequate light and air (The new multiunit buildings will likely maximize profit for developers and minimize large, open units with many windows and outdoor space.)
- Increase the overcrowding of land
- Increase the need for public transportation, but does nothing to address that issue
- Decrease existing housing that is affordable (Small single family homes will be torn down by developers and real estate agents and replaced with mega, expensive multiunit buildings.)

**You all are being asked to vote for policies that will do the exact opposite of Alexandria's charter.**

Look at New York City, San Francisco and other heavily populated cities – housing costs have not gone down as bigger buildings have gone up. Housing costs have continued to rise. The argument that housing costs in Alexandria will go down is deeply flawed.

No additional parking is required in "enhanced transit districts." But 45% of existing Alexandria housing is in those districts, including much of Old Town. I don't think you can find an Old Town homeowner without a driveway who thinks it is easy to park in Old Town. Now double the amount of homeowners with cars and no driveways in Old Town and see what happens!

Del Ray could see boarding houses with 13 individuals per unit and no additional parking.

Please do not throw our city into an expensive and time-consuming lawsuit.

Please break up this proposal and vote on smaller pieces. It is okay to say that you have concerns with parts of the proposal. It is okay to ask for more research.

Thank you,  
Jenny Ware  
Argyle Drive

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** margie fehrenbach.biz <margie@fehrenbach.biz>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 9:15 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]11/18/23 Hearing; Docket #8

**Importance:** High

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11/18/23 Hearing; Docket #8

To the Mayor and City Council:

I have been a resident of the City of Alexandria for over 40 years. I am deeply troubled and frankly angry about the unwarranted and destructive policies being proposed by the City to radically alter our city's landscape. It is appalling to hear the unresponsive answers by the mayor to questions posed by citizens who want to understand why these changes are needed, the rationale for them, and who really supports these Initiatives. The rush to push these faulty initiatives through disrespects the citizens of Alexandria who are rightfully demanding answers to these questions. If, as the mayor has stated, these changes are not going to make a big difference, then why do we need them? Who really benefits from them? Developers? Corporations? Politicians serving them?

Virtually every citizen I speak to is not completely understanding what is happening. However, when given a brief summary of how the changes could dramatically alter the beauty, safety and hometown feeling of our city, everyone is horrified that the very people who are supposed to look out for our best interests are actually ignoring us.

Alexandria is the "densest" jurisdiction in Virginia. Why would anyone want to make it worse? For example, we know from history that dense, high-rise low-income housing has a very poor track record and much of it was demolished in the 1990s and 2000s due to its unlivable and dangerous condition. The City seems intent on repeating these past mistakes.

In summary, the City has failed to disclose how these sweeping changes will pose risks to residents and how it will affect the overall quality of life. Numerous claims are being made by the mayor that appear unsupported and without merit. Public comments at odds with any parts of the initiative are not seriously addressed and are mostly ignored or dismissed. The supposed urgency to pass these initiatives this year is arbitrary and appears politically driven.

As a tax-paying citizen in the City of Alexandria, I add my voice to those asking the City to slow down, review each proposal one by one and, importantly, listen to the residents of our City and act in their best interest.

Marjorie Fehrenbach

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** D F <fattmad@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2023 9:58 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]DISAPPROVAL - Zoning For Housing/Housing For All Initiatives

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To City Council -

I am writing to express my strongest **disapproval** for this housing proposal. I am a current homeowner and tax payer that is extremely disappointed in this proposal and means by which it is being handled.

Don  
900 S. Patrick Street

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Karen Kemper <karenkemper27@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 4:24 AM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Please do not eliminate single family zoning

You don't often get email from karenkemper27@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mr. Mayor and City Council Members,

Everyone wants affordable and safe housing for every person who needs it..

I was born in the City of Alexandria and have spent the vast majority of my life here.

I have a Masters Degree in City Planning and Community Development and have worked 30 years analyzing federal public policy decisions and presenting recommendations for their improvement to the U.S. Congress.

Good public policy requires a clearly defined problem which can generate alternative solutions with accompanying costs and benefits. Once a solution has been selected it needs to have measurable goals to determine success. If you have generated these, they have not been communicated to the public.

Are you trying to provide affordable housing? To whom? What is considered affordable? Are you considering both rental and owned housing? What, if any, efforts are currently underway? What population will benefit?

How does eliminating zoning that protects Single Family Housing contribute to the solution? Doesn't the costs far outweigh any benefit ?

Did you consider a requirement for all developers of new multi-family housing units to set aside a certain percentage as "affordable"? They won't do this on their own.

Please do NOT let greedy developers destroy our beautiful well established neighborhoods.

Karen Kemper, 3309 Alabama Ave. Alexandria, VA 22305 703-379-9530

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Jane Delvecchio <ladyj552@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 7:43 AM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Zoning for housing/Housing for all



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Dear Mayor Wilson and Council Members:

I would like to register my strenuous opposition to the proposed zoning laws in their current form, particularly the elimination of single-family zoning, and I agree with the Alexandria Times editorial (fyi: <https://alextimes.com/2023/11/possible-benefits-versus-certain-costs/>).

Jane Delvecchio  
1200 Braddock Place #707  
Alexandria, VA 22314

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**From:** Lisa Senay <lisasenay@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 8:22 AM  
**To:** PlanComm; CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Justin Wilson  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Housing for All - Comment for the Record

Dear Mayor Wilson and Honorable Members of the City Council:

I am a homeowner in Alexandria where I live with my family in what I had hoped would be our forever home...but that dream is threatened by the hasty push for the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All plan ("the plan").

On November 28, 2023, immediately following the distraction of the Thanksgiving holiday, City Council is scheduled to consider and vote on the plan that was recently approved by Alexandria's Planning Commission. **I urge you to vote against the plan or, in the alternative, to delay the vote pending further study.** The City's proposal came out in early September, just over two months ago, and the specific text changes to the various ordinances were revealed just last month. There is much information for your constituents to digest about this overly broad plan that risks destroying the small amount of single-family housing in Alexandria. I find the given rationales for the plan to be unlikely to accomplish the stated goals, and without proper mitigation measures to ensure continued livability in what is already an overcrowded city. Ultimately, it feels like the plan will benefit real estate developers and not residents, who will be faced with decreased home value and all the negative aspects of increased density, such as crowded schools and roads, loss of tree canopy, parking shortage, and flooding in our neighborhood.

Please do not to rush to failure on this issue. **Please either delay the vote for further study, or vote against the plan when it comes before City Council.**

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Senay

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City Council Meeting  
Alexandria, VA  
November 18, 2023

Mr. Mayor, Members of Council,

My name is Lea Fowlie. I have lived in apartments for 62 of my 74 years. It's a lifestyle choice for some.

**According to Rent Café, last updated in July 2023, the rental market trends in Alexandria show that “the average rent for a 860 s. ft. apartment is \$2069.” It also shows that “42,367 or 57% of the households in Alexandria, VA are renter-occupied while 31,857 or 43% are owner-occupied.”**

<https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/va/alexandria/>

In addition to the base rent, many also pay required fees for gas, water, pest control, trash pickup, amenities even if not used, and parking. Rental insurance is required with most rental properties now. One still has to pay for clothing, medical care, transportation, leisure activities, personal schooling and child-related expenses when applicable, and, of course, food.

**Paraphrasing an ALEXnow article from November 16, 2023 by James Cullum, states that according to Alexandria’s Department of Community and Human Services that “Despite Alexandria’s reputation as an affluent community, there are many households in Alexandria struggling with food security. Recently, the Capital Area Food Bank’s 2022 Hunger Report estimated the prevalence of food insecurity in Alexandria as high as 31%. This rate was measured with a six-item short form of the USDA survey module conducted February-March 2022 with 3,769 adults aged 18 and older in the DC Metro Area. While this survey does not have the same breadth as the USDA survey or Map the Meal Gap, it [also] makes clear that many households that may not be officially labeled as food insecure by government measures are still struggling to afford adequate food.”** <https://www.alxnow.com/2023/11/16/with-31-of-alexandrians-food-insecure-city-wants-feedback-on-free-food-availability/>

We also need to consider the **seniors** who cannot afford to live in retirement and/or continuing care communities and who may want to age-in-place. Prices need to be affordable, new units need to be ADA compliant and all on one level, and elevators should be available in all buildings over one floor in height.

And while I understand the reluctance from single family home owners regarding the City’s housing plans, and agree that the colonial character of the City has been and will be further altered, we need more affordable rental units, with parking included, if we want Alexandria residents to be able to pay rent, eat, and get to work in a timely fashion.

I leave you with a quote from American Economist Thomas Sewell “In summary, a policy intended to make housing more affordable for the poor has resulted in resources being redirected to the construction of houses that are only affordable for the rich or wealthy, since generally, luxury homes are not subject to rent control, and neither are office buildings and other commercial properties. This illustrates, among other things, the crucial importance of making a distinction between intentions and consequences.” <https://quotefancy.com/quote/3155029/Thomas-Sowell-In-summary-a-policy-intended-to-make-housing-more-affordable-for-the-poor>

Thank you. Lea Fowlie

## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Tom Kopko <tkopko@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 9:20 AM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Opposed to Zoning For Housing/Zoning For All - Comment for City Council

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

Good day Councilmen.

My name is Tom Kopko. I am a home owner in the Cameron Station neighborhood.

I oppose the Zoning For Housing initiative because the cure is far more damaging than the disease.

More accurately, Zoning For Housing is a radical and experimental Progressive prescription which will hurt all Alexandrians in order to address a factually false "housing crisis".

Zoning For Housing is essentially group punishment of home owners, for buying a single family home next to other single family homes.

So, listen up, Beverly Hills and Del Ray!

Listen up, Brookville, Seminary Hill, and Alexandria West!

Zoning For Housing says that you will now live next to multiple families in that little house next door.

And, all those additional families' additional cars will be parking on your street and lots of other places.

And, as the Mayor explains, Alexandria is no longer able or willing to determine what a family is. He explained at my HOA meeting that blood tests would be necessary and no other method like birth or marriage records would do. So, complete strangers won't even have to claim they're a family to crowd into that little house next door. Think about how this will hurt single family neighborhoods when 20%, then 50%, then more little house have 3x or 4x more people and cars.

I have a question: Is Fairfax County converting all the homes right next door to us in Fort Hunt to multi-family? If not, why is the most dense city in Virginia, Alexandria, doing this to itself? All those folks will sit and watch Alexandria kill itself.

Is there actually a housing crisis?

NO. WE DO NOT HAVE A HOUSING CRISIS.

What we have is a City Council that has a Progressive political agenda in mind, and Staff and this Planning Commission have created false narratives to accomplish it.

False narratives #1: Alexandria must accept all perceived density demands.

- Reality: Alexandria is ALREADY planned to massively increase density by 62%! We have 80K homes now with 50K more already approved. ZFH makes this even worse. Frankly, it is outrageous.
- It's as if everyone has forgotten about dense Potomac Yards. It's not even close to being done yet. The whole aim of the West End small area redevelopment plan is increasing density. Is it reasonable to add even more density with ZFH? I think not.

False narratives #2: Alexandria is an island in the NoVA housing market.

- Reality: Alexandria is a part of a fluid housing market that makes political boundaries irrelevant.
- Therefore, it is false that Alexandria should or even can take on a disproportionate share of density of ZFH.
- Besides, Alexandria is already the most dense city in Virginia. Higher density than Arlington!

False narratives #3: Alexandria has racist zoning.

- There is no evidence, except to the contrary.
- Does anyone know Vola Lawson anymore? She's the famous local Alexandria Civil Rights Advocate from 1971 through the 1980s and then City Manager. She said, "Jim Moran and I ended redlining in Alexandria in the early '70s." She means redlining ended 50 years ago.
- 40 years ago, all the way back in 1983, this was in the Washington Post: "The black population is so scattered because housing opportunities are pretty open [in Alexandria]." Who said that? Was it someone apologizing for redlining? No. It was the NAACP-Alexandria President, Mr. Ulysses Calhoun.

False narratives #4. Density pays for itself, when it does not pay for itself.

- While density has been rising every year forever, the City's Capital Improvement budget has doubled since 2013 and per-capita debt has increased 34% since 2011 — the 62% density increase will only make this worse.
- This new density is a net drain on taxes. Meaning, home owners will have to pay more property tax to pay for this overcrowding. More schools, more roads, more police, more fire.
- And, more crime which is already at record levels. Density always brings more crime.

The result? DENSITY WILL MAKE ALEXANDRIA EVEN MORE EXPENSIVE, for everyone, and especially to those funding Alexandria: Home Owners.

LASTLY, HASTE MAKES WASTE, and this applies directly to ZFH. This is being rushed before election season next year.

City Staff has not presented opposing views; the public presentations have been decidedly one-sided which is inappropriate. So, City Staff is unanimous. The Planning Commission is unanimously. Is City Council also going to be unanimous, too? The Progressive steam roller...rolls on. It's embarrassing and tyrannical.

THEREFORE: I urge every Councilman to end this rushed, expensive and counter-productive ZFH, and be satisfied with the 62% density increase that is already coming.

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**Alexandria Housing for All**  
**Public Hearing November 2023**

**Mary Ellen Bayer**

**401 Holland Lane #1025**

**Alexandria, VA 22301**

**I have been a citizen of Alexandria for 49 years. For 30 years I lived in a small Sears Rowbuck bungalow on W. Myrtle Street. That is the experience that I evaluated the proposed zoning changes. Now I am in a high-rise apartment in Carlye.**

**I have worked as an affordable housing developer for 19 years in Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax and Maryland. I have supervised the acquisition, financing, renovation, and new construction of over 250 affordable housing units. I have evaluated hundreds of sites to create affordable housing that were not feasible!**

**The Housing for all Proposal does not explain how affordable housing units would be created as a result of adopting the zoning to increase density in single family zones from one to four housing units.**

**To create permanent affordable housing there needs to be an initial subsidy to offset the acquisition and construction costs such as a grant and/or or below rate financing. In addition, there needs to be a mechanism to subsidize the rents over time, such as tax credits.**

**The plan proposes that because the “envelope of the multi-unit buildings would meet the FAR for the existing single-family homes, the density of the neighborhood would feel the same. In fact, many existing single-family homes are not built to the density permitted under the FAR. You can see this demonstrated around the city where a new single family “McMansion” is built on a street with smaller, older homes.**


**I am opposed to the omission of off-street parking in the Enhanced Transit District. While these units are planned for occupants that will walk to work and shops, the residents will not be prohibited from owning a car. They may be employed outside of Alexandria. The addition of one or more 4-plex units on a street could create a parking crisis in the neighborhood. I recommend that there be a requirement of 0.5 off street parking spaces in the Enhanced Transit District.**

**There will probably be unforeseen adverse consequences if the proposed zoning changes are adopted as proposed. I suggest postponing the permanent approval of proposed zoning changes. Rather than rezoning by right, I suggest that proposals for projects to develop 2 to 4 units on single family lots be reviewed on a case-by-case basis under an application for a Special Use Permit/Zoning Waiver. This will allow a thorough plan review by city administrators and neighbors. After several of these projects are built, if the projects are well received, the City could once again propose permanent changes to the single family zoning plan.**

## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Michael Loesch <mloesch24@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 9:57 AM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Comments in Opposition to Zoning Proposal (Docket #8, ZFH) - November 18, 2023 Council Meeting  
**Attachments:** Opposition to Zoning Proposal - MLL.pdf; zoning.pdf

 You don't often get email from mloesch24@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Alexandria City Clerk,

Please find attached comments in opposition to the zoning proposal (Docket #8, ZFH) under consideration by the City Council at its meeting today.

Regards,

Michael Loesch  
802 Marshall Lane

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**To: Mayor and City Council Members, City of Alexandria Virginia**

**From: Michael Loesch, 802 Marshall Lane**

**Date: November 18, 2023**

**Re: Proposed Changes to City Zoning Laws**

I write to express my opposition to the proposed changes to the City of Alexandria's zoning laws, referred to as the "Zoning for Housing for All," that is under consideration by the City Council at its November 18, 2023 meeting (docket #8).

As a longtime resident and Alexandria homeowner, I oppose the current plan for zoning changes for the reasons set forth in the attached November 15, 2023 letter to the City Council from Alexandria resident and homeowner Mr. Allan Winn. I hereby associate myself with these remarks and urge the Council to reconsider its zoning proposal and vote NO on the current zoning plan overreach.

Michael L. Loesch

802 Marshall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22302

**From:** Gary W. Bohigian <gawibo@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 3:53 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Gary W. Bohigian  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]For Alexandria City Clerk Gloria Sitton, Nov. 18 meeting - Urgent - Text of Gary W. Bohigian statement for Nov. 18 City Council Meeting on Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiatives  
**Attachments:** Gary W Bohigian Statement for November 18 2023 City Council meeting - 2 -.docx  
**Importance:** High

You don't often get email from gawibo@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Gloria, Unfortunately, I was unable to come for in-person participation this morning. I regret not being able this time to deliver my own remarks and hear directly the statements of other folks and meet you, too, especially given your gracious assistance to me yesterday afternoon over the telephone.

I would be grateful if you could post my contribution (below copied and pasted, above an attached copy) so that not only Mayor Wilson and the Council can read it, but also all people participating in today's meeting and others wishing to follow the debate. If you could send me a confirmatory note, that would be wonderful. I hope to speak to you soon to repeat my thanks. Gary W. Bohigian

**Gary W. Bohigian Statement for November 18, 2023 Alexandria City Council meeting on “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” initiatives - There’s Need to Postpone, Reconsider!**

1. The City Council needs to visit the Dowden Terrace neighborhood and environs adjacent to the Seminary Road-Beauregard Street district to see what the Council’s Initiative threatens to destroy in an area already occupied by a beautiful multi-racial, multi-ethnic population that is squarely middle class and happy to be living on affordable ½-acre and ¼-acre lots. The strength of this community with deep roots within Alexandria City is unusually clear for all to see. The neighborhood

extends beyond its roughly 3-block by 6-block dimensions quite naturally and organically into the likewise racially and culturally varied neighborhood directly north of it in Fairfax County. This is no segregated community here. This is not 1955. It deserves to be preserved. It's wrong to regard it as a cow for milking to fund a noble-sounding but I think mislabeled "housing for all" project. This part of Alexandria is *already* "for all" and it got that way without any guiding hand from government.

2. Council and public consideration of the Initiative need at least another year for review and - - this time - - genuine back-and-forth, face-to-face dialogue between City Council members and citizens so that negative material and social costs of the Initiative can be identified and removed.

3. An example of just one such negative would be the Initiative's allowing Single Family lots to be overbuilt by developers without ensuring that each lot provides residents with off-street parking as currently the case. To do otherwise would steal from the neighborhood the spacious, uncluttered orderliness it now offers to owners and renters. Many owners have over the years won city code-enforced regulations from the Council to protect neighborhood narrow streets from numerous outside auto owners looking for free street parking so they can avoid paying for space near their home residences some distance away.

4. Another astonishing provision of the Initiative is its so-called "neighborhood-serving commercial uses" language. Initiative authors should know that Nobody wants an auto repair shop or a night club in his neighborhood!

5. An additional year's review of the Initiative would also help keep what are mostly external factors from worsening problems that would ensue from adoption of the Initiative. City representatives and leaders need to lobby as a group and in conjunction with their municipal counterparts across the nation both Congress and the Executive Branch to end abandonment of our borders that allow millions of illegal entrants whose

presence weakens U.S. families' access to jobs, wage levels at or approaching a just wage, and moderate taxes that otherwise only grow to support stressed social welfare systems (including the now-debated Housing for All Initiative and what may be called Alexandria's "experimental" Universal Basic Income project floated recently using as seed money questionably "assigned and forgotten" federal Covid relief funds). Our officials should also campaign at the federal level to legislatively pressure U.S. corporations that have exported jobs to return them from overseas; corporations' quest for ever-greater profits cannot be left as an absolute right – the impact is deleterious at national, regional, and, at least indirectly, local levels just about everywhere, including here.

(Gary W. Bohigian, email: [gawibo@comcast.net](mailto:gawibo@comcast.net) - Alexandria, VA)

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**Gary W. Bohigian Statement for November 18, 2023 Alexandria City Council meeting on  
“Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” initiatives - There’s Need to Postpone, Reconsider!**

1. The City Council needs to visit the Dowden Terrace neighborhood and environs adjacent to the Seminary Road-Beauregard Street district to see what the Council’s Initiative threatens to destroy in an area already occupied by a beautiful multi-racial, multi-ethnic population that is squarely middle class and happy to be living on affordable ½-acre and ¼-acre lots. The strength of this community with deep roots within Alexandria City is unusually clear for all to see. The neighborhood extends beyond its roughly 3-block by 6-block dimensions quite naturally and organically into the likewise racially and culturally varied neighborhood directly north of it in Fairfax County. This is no segregated community here. This is not 1955. I deserves to be preserved. It’s wrong to regard it as a cow for milking to fund a noble-sounding but I think mislabeled “housing for all” project. This part of Alexandria is *already* “for all” and it got that way without any guiding hand from government.
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(Gary W. Bohigian, email: [gawibo@comcast.net](mailto:gawibo@comcast.net) -- Alexandria, VA)

## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Stevan Mitchell <stevan@smitchell.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 5:56 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Signaling opposition to Zoning for Housing/Housing for All amendments

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

Hi, I am a 30+ year resident of the City of Alexandria and was not able to attend today, but did want to signal views in connection with today's City Council Public Hearing Meeting — specifically with respect to the proposed Zoning for Housing/Housing for All Master Plan, Zoning and Housing Policy amendments.

I believe these changes would be profoundly misguided and would bring greater long term harm than good. Making such an irrevocable commitment without actionable performance data would amount to subscribing to a fad based more on hope than fact, but would result in permanent disfigurement of some of Alexandria's most hallowed and valued neighborhoods resulting in net devaluation of neighborhood property and loss of status for Alexandria as a premier community in which to reside. It would serve as an investment risk for incoming homeowners, who are likely to be inclined to gravitate to other Northern Virginia communities that are not inclined to entertain such significant risks to their homeowners' valued investments. It would also introduce considerable legal risk and expense for the City, as many similar such initiatives are currently being challenged on a variety of grounds in challenges that may succeed, at least in part. It seems far more responsible, prudent and budget minded to at least await results from litigation of analogous cases before inviting similar legal exposure.

It is likely that the City Council will be hearing similar perspectives from many city homeowners — a core and influential group of taxpayers and voters that it would not make very much sense to alienate.

Sincerely,

Stevan Mitchell  
1212 Key Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22302

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Emilie Neulen <emineulen@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 7:49 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; Justin Wilson; Amy Jackson; John Chapman; Canek Aguirre; Alyia Gaskins; Sarah Bagley; Kirk McPike  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Please Expand and Pass Zoning for Housing

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

Dear city council and mayor,

My name is Emilie. I am a resident of Alexandria and I support Zoning for Housing. The home we rent in Del Rey is a small duplex home. It is an affordable in an area where businesses and restaurants are a walkable distance from us. I would not be able to afford a single family home. I believe it is important for this city to have a variety of home types, with homes that are affordable, and to decrease our reliance on cars by increasing density and reliability of public transportation.

Thank you for the outreach and for listening to the opinions of our community members.

Best,  
Emilie Neulen

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Carrie S <carrianneschwartz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 19, 2023 8:52 AM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Zoning for Housing public comment

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

Dear Council,

My name is Carrie Schwartz, and I'm a home owner and resident of the Wakefield-Tarleton neighborhood in Alexandria. I support Zoning for Housing and want the city to recommend Option 2 and 3 for single family zones. The city should also go further to ensure Alexandria has truly affordable housing for people who want to live and work here. When I first moved to northern Virginia in 2018, I could barely afford the cost of rent, child care, student loan payments, and groceries. It was only when student loan interest was frozen and child care centers closed during the pandemic that I could save enough to afford to buy a duplex townhouse unit in Alexandria. I feel incredibly lucky to be able to live in a culturally and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood close to public transportation, shops and businesses, and nature. People who work in our community and in the capital should be able to afford to live in Alexandria. Please take steps to lower housing costs, through re-zoning initiatives like this one and increased funding for affordable housing and public services (schools, etc.). Thank you for considering my views.

Warm regards,  
Carrie

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## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

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**From:** Jamie Conrad <jamie\_conrad11@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 19, 2023 2:06 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]30+ year homeowner in Alexandria who supports Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

You don't often get email from jamie\_conrad11@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

I sent the following to the Planning Commission; I'm forwarding it to Council in case it didn't get supplied directly to you, too.

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jamie Conrad <jamie\_conrad11@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** re: Zoning for Housing/Housing for All  
**Date:** November 1, 2023 at 2:14:05 PM EDT  
**To:** [PlanComm@alexandriava.gov](mailto:PlanComm@alexandriava.gov)

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

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