

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: AUGUST 19, 2019

TO: CHAIRMAN NATE MACEK AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: HELEN McILVAINE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HOUSING
KARL MORITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL ITEM: A DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL HOUSING INITIATIVES AND THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO INCREASING THE PRODUCTION OF ALL HOUSING, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

Summary

The staff of the Office of Housing and the Department of Planning and Zoning will brief the Planning Commissioners on the City's participation in a regional initiative to increase housing production, with proposed goals for both market rate and affordable housing over the next decade.

Background

In the decade since the 2008 housing-led recession, housing production in the Washington Metropolitan Area has only reached about 2/3 of its pre-recession levels. A year ago, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors, composed of elected officials in the region, recognized that forecast housing production for the next several decades is insufficient to provide enough housing for workers for forecast job growth, potentially placing even greater pressure on housing cost and availability and limiting the region's economic competitiveness. The COG Board of Directors directed the region's Housing Directors and Planning Directors to investigate the issue and make recommendations. Overall, if job forecasts are met, there would need to be 75,000 additional housing units produced by 2030 (over current forecasts) to supply sufficient workers for those jobs.

Over the course of the past year, staff from the Office of Housing and the Department of Planning and Zoning have been collaborating with our counterparts across the region to explore both the barriers to, and the opportunities for, increased housing production in the region over the next decade or more. The Planning Directors determined that the region's comprehensive plans, master plans and small area plans already allow additional housing above the current

forecast, but that a number of barriers remain to seeing those planned housing units constructed. The Housing Directors determined that a significant share of new units must be affordable to a range of incomes to match job growth and the anticipated incomes of existing and future worker households.

Through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Housing and Planning Directors developed a methodology for setting goals for individual jurisdictions to meet the region's goal of 75,000 additional units over the decade and goals for the levels of affordability of new units. In Alexandria's case, the production goal would be to increase the pace of residential growth from about 8,400 housing units now forecast over the next decade to about 11,500. The housing affordability goal is that 75% of the additional (net new) units be committed as affordable to incomes ranging from very low to workforce levels.

Housing and Planning staff are currently preparing the presentation on this topic and will share it with the Planning Commission and the public at least several days prior to the Commission meeting on September 3rd. The presentation will also be shared with the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC) and with City Council later in September.