



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0871, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 31, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Arlandria-Chirilagua Planning Process Update and Discussion of Draft Housing Affordability Recommendations.

ISSUE: What housing affordability recommendations should be included in the Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan?

RECOMMENDATION: That Council receive this planning process update and provide feedback to staff on the Draft Housing Affordability Recommendations for the Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan.

BACKGROUND: In Fall 2019, the City launched a community planning process in Arlandria-Chirilagua and Del Ray to update the 2005 Mount Vernon Avenue Business Plan and the 2003 Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood.

In early 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic, staff shared with Planning Commission and City Council progress and momentum gained during the Fall 2019 Arlandria-Chirilagua and Del Ray community listening sessions. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City recommended two separate planning processes to ensure appropriate community engagement. The first phase has focused on Arlandria-Chirilagua, prioritizing housing affordability as the first topic.

DISCUSSION: Beginning in Summer 2020, City Staff conducted in-person and virtual outreach in English and Spanish in the community to solicit input on housing affordability issues and needs. Staff categorized the feedback into the following broad themes:

- 1) Expand the number of deeply affordable housing units.
- 2) Preserve and invest in existing housing.
- 3) Empower and protect residents.

These themes were shared back with the community and became the basis of the draft housing affordability policy recommendations below.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Expand the Number of Deeply Affordable Housing Units

City

- Support partnerships to leverage resources and maximize production of deeply affordable housing

- Encourage using public land and co-location for affordable housing
- Create options to buy down rents where feasible
- Permit additional density and height in exchange for expanded housing affordability (Section 7-700)

Developers

- 10% of new development (above 2003 SAP) will be committed affordable
- 1/2 at 40% AMI (= annual salary of \$35,000-\$50,000 for 1-4 person household)
- 1/2 at 50% AMI (= annual salary of \$44,000-\$63,000 for 1-4 person household)
- Base development is subject to City affordable housing contribution policy
- Consider flexibility for parking requirements in order to maximize affordability

Preserve and Invest in Existing Housing

- Provide technical assistance and leverage partnerships and resources to preserve and improve market-affordable and mixed-income housing
- Develop financial incentives and non-financial tools to address necessary renovations in existing residential properties in exchange for expanded affordability and right-of-first refusal if the properties are sold
- Provide capacity building and support to Chirilagua Cooperative

Empower and Protect Residents

- Work with community partners to cultivate tenant empowerment through training
- Provide enhanced landlord-tenant mediation and support, including eviction prevention services
- Ensure eligible residents receive enhanced tenant protections, relocation support, and other assistance if residential properties redevelop
- Prioritize residents currently living in Arlandria for new deeply affordable housing units and help community members be "ready to rent"
- Expand Spanish language homeownership training and counseling
- Explore ways to create new affordable homeownership (for example through community land trusts)
- Work with partners to offer a range of housing types to meet housing demand and to accommodate different household sizes, compositions, ages, and abilities
- Encourage co-location of affordable housing with potential future City uses, such as flex space for city services, where feasible
- Explore opportunities to enhance access to community resources, including medical care, healthy food, job and language training, and wireless internet service, as well as programs to engage youth and build self-sufficiency and wellbeing

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These draft housing affordability recommendations (including this memorandum and attached presentation which will be translated into Spanish) will be shared with the community in late March and early April via virtual meetings in Spanish and English, as well as through specific outreach to community organizations, including Tenants and Workers United, Casa Chirilagua, Churches, Hume Springs Civic, Cora Kelly PTA, Mount Vernon Community School PTA, and Padres Activos. These meetings were held subsequent to the submission of this docket item, so any feedback received will be shared with City Council as part of the docket presentation on April 6.

NEXT STEPS: Staff will incorporate guidance provided by members of the community, community organizations, AHAAC, Landlord Tenant Relations Board, stakeholders, Planning Commission and City Council, and provide revised draft recommendations for consideration at the May public hearings. The approved draft recommendations will undergo some refinements over the summer and then will ultimately be integrated into the full draft Plan when complete.

Beginning in May, Staff will re-engage the community on the remaining elements of the Plan, including land use, open space, mobility, infrastructure, etc. Discussion will build upon input received on these topics early in the planning process. A full draft Plan incorporating all chapters, including affordable housing, will be released over the summer for final community review. Public hearings on the Plan are anticipated for October 2021.

ATTACHMENT: Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan Draft Housing Recommendations

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