

# NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

## ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

### Arlington County Housing Activities February 2021

**Housing Arlington** is the County's ongoing program that takes a proactive, expanded approach to address pressures on the local and regional housing markets that have caused shortfalls in housing supply, fewer housing choices, and rising housing costs. Activities include analysis of planning and implementation tools, housing policy, financial resources, and innovative local and regional public-private partnerships. Currently the County is engaged in the following studies and reviews:

- [Affordable Housing Building Height](#) an amendment to the zoning regulation which would enable the County Board to approve increased building height in certain zoning districts for affordable housing projects. The new regulations would be applicable to the three primary multifamily zoning districts in Arlington - RA14-26, RA8-18 and RA6-15. If adopted by the County Board, the new regulations would enable a development applicant to request up to an additional 60 feet of building height beyond the maximum already permitted by zoning, so long as the development's dwelling units all serve low- and moderate-income earning residents. You can view more information on this study [here](#) (under "Studies in Progress", click on 'Affordable Housing Building Height'). Staff's memo outlining this proposal, as well as the draft text, can be reviewed [here](#).

The County Board is scheduled to review a Request to Advertise (RTA) resolution at their March 2021 meeting, which, if adopted, would authorize public hearings for the adoption of this proposal in April 2021. Staff will continue to collect feedback and comment on an ongoing basis for this study. Members of the public also have the option of attending the [Housing Commission](#) and [Planning Commission](#) meetings tentatively scheduled for April 2021 to provide testimony.

- [Affordable Housing Master Plan Review](#) The County is conducting a five-year review of the [Affordable Housing Master Plan \(AHMP\)](#), which is a policy framework and vision to meet affordable housing needs through 2040. AHMP provides policy guidance for a broad range of housing efforts, ranging from "bricks and mortar" projects, to services to prevent and end homelessness, to affirmatively furthering fair housing. Its three overarching goals are:

- Arlington County shall have an adequate **supply** of housing available to meet community needs;
- Arlington County shall ensure that all segments of the community have **access** to housing;
- Arlington County shall ensure that its housing efforts contribute to a **sustainable** community.

The County's website offers a [detailed timeline](#) for the review process, with links to presentations that took place in January. Check the website for online engagement opportunities scheduled for February.

- [Missing Middle Housing Study](#) The County is compiling comments from the four virtual neighborhood Listening Tours on Missing Middle Housing held through January and early February. A new resource on this subject, [Missing Middle Housing For An Arlington We Can Call Home](#), launched recently. This site is a collaboration between the **Alliance for Housing Solutions** and the **Lee Highway Alliance**.

**Crystal House and The Washington Housing Conservancy** Kimberly Driggins, Executive Director of the [Washington Housing Conservancy](#) (WHC) met with **NVAHA's Leadership Council** in January to discuss the mission of the Conservancy and their goals to preserve affordable and workforce housing in neighborhoods of opportunities in the DMV. This presentation took place just a few days after the Crystal House announcement - their first acquisition made possible through a substantial investment by the Amazon Housing Equity Fund. [Watch the video](#) for more details about the acquisition, future plans for the property, and WHC's commitment to preserve affordability at Crystal House for 99 years

**Northern Virginia Apartment Association** will hold an **interactive panel discussion March 4, 1-3 PM** on rent relief programs in Northern Virginia. Representatives from Arlington will join panelists from neighboring jurisdictions and representatives from **Virginia Housing** and the **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** to share the latest changes to rent and utility assistance programs based on new federal requirements and recently passed state legislation. **Legal Services of Northern Virginia** will also be a participant. Early bird [registration](#) ends February 25. Who should attend? Landlords, local government agencies, human service organizations assisting tenants, and housing advocates. NVAHA is pleased to be the moderator for this panel discussion.

**VA General Assembly Delegate Alfonso Lopez** has introduced a Budget Amendment to add \$9.3 million in the first year and \$15.0 million in the second year to the state Housing Trust Fund. [SB1197](#), the Virginia Housing Opportunity Tax Credit has passed the Senate, however a companion bill was defeated in the House. This bill would provide a state credit equal to the amount of the federal low-income housing tax credit allocated by the Virginia Housing Development Authority, expanding the sources of

equity for low-income affordable housing buildings that are eligible for the federal credit. We will monitor this legislation in the Special Session.

[Fiscal Year 2022 Budget](#) The County Manager will present his proposed FY2022 budget to the County Board at a meeting in February.