

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Fairfax County Housing Activities March 2021

FY2022 Budget County Executive Bryan Hill presented a draft county budget to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) at their February 23 meeting. The [Advertised Budget Plan](#) decreases the real estate tax rate by 1 cent to \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value; includes a small increase for schools; provides no pay raise for county employees; recommends a \$20 million reserve fund for Economic Recovery; and makes modest investments in public safety, diversion first, opioid use prevention efforts and environmental initiatives (slide 23). The budget proposal also includes baseline funding for previously approved initiatives of body-worn cameras and health department positions. The presentation provided additional information about progress on the long awaited Countywide Strategic Plan which was put on hold in 2020 due to the pandemic. (The consensus among the BOS was that approving a budget and a countywide strategic plan at the same time was too much to expect, so the plan approval process will resume after budget approval).

The Department of Housing and Community Development received funding for 2 new staff positions (slide 26), but no funding to support the county's goal of 5,000 new units in 15 years for households earning 60% AMI (\$74,000 for a 4-person household). Last year's pre-pandemic budget proposed that one penny of the real estate tax would be dedicated to the Housing Trust Fund to support the 5,000 homes in 15 years goal. Important to note: no additional stimulus funds are assumed in this proposal, but staff is monitoring the progress of the Economic Recovery Act (which was approved by the House of Representatives late Friday night). There are multiple resources to provide budget information, including the [budget timeline](#), and a listing of the [budget town hall meetings](#) held in each magisterial district. You can also log into the [Budget Q&A](#) to follow the questions posed by BOS and School Board members and the staff response.

Interested in participating in our Zoom Budget Strategy Session March 16, 6 - 6:45 PM? Register with Nora Daly noradaly@nvaha.org to help build budget recommendations during the public hearings that prioritize people and invest in safe, healthy, affordable communities for all who live in Fairfax County.

The Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity This Task Force was convened in the summer of 2020 by Chairman McKay against the backdrop of national unrest regarding the violence and death of black men at the hands of police. Led by Karla Bruce, the County's Equity

Officer, the task force made a [presentation](#) to the BOS that provided an overview of their five months of work and specific recommendations that address the following areas: Cradle to Career Success; Community Health and Wellness; Community Safety and Justice; and Equitable Communities. We encourage you to read the entire presentation, but housing and community development advocates, we believe that recommendations for health, wellness, safety and opportunity can only be realized when a family or individual has quality, stable housing that is affordable. Specific recommendations for housing listed in the Equitable Communities section touch on important strategies related to lifting the voice of underserved communities; being comfortable with sharing or even ceding power to these new voices; and being bold in imagining new resources to invest in communities that provide affordable housing, access to affordable healthcare and nutritional food, recreational opportunities and reliable, affordable transit. This also means honoring the aspirations of households who value their neighborhoods and want investment rather than displacement.

Eviction Prevention Information and Data Tools [County residents and landlords will no longer apply to the state for federal rent relief](#). A [portal for landlords](#) seeking assistance for their tenants has been created. Residents seeking rental or other emergency assistance for yourself or your family should call Coordinated Services Planning at 703-222-0880, TTY 711, Monday through Friday, 8 am – 4:30 pm. You can find more information about the [timeline of COVID-19 related aid programs and funding streams](#) (hover your cursor over the dots on the timeline), as well as federal and state activity on eviction prevention in our [Eviction Prevention and Neighborhood Stability Toolkit](#).

Fairfax County COVID-19 Vulnerability Index Through the County's [Vulnerable Index](#) that maps COVID 'hot spots' or concentrations of infection in specific census tracts, you see patterns that take shape. These tracts include demographic characteristics such as a concentration of minority households, higher levels of poverty, and a greater incidence of high rents and overcrowded housing. We can see where communities are uninsured, or have households diagnosed with asthma, diabetes or reported to be obese. (We would like to see the county map broadband access as well to gain a better understanding of appropriate devices and digital literacy for online learning and telehealth). This wealth of data should be used by boards, authorities and commissions as they advise the BOS on key policy considerations. We encourage you to bookmark this page.

[2020 Tysons Annual Report](#) It's been 10 years since the BOS approved a long-range redevelopment plan for the area known as Tysons Corner. This report is comprehensive in scope - looking at both the actual and projected development. Page 16 provides information on the progress in creating affordable and workforce housing as well as the status of the Tysons Housing Trust Fund, with a balance of \$5,222,000.

BOS Committee Meetings of Note [Health and Human Services Committee meeting](#) March 2; [Land Use Committee meeting](#) March 16; [Housing Committee meeting](#) April 6

Workforce Dwelling Unit Policy Plan Amendment The BOS [approved the amendments to the WDU policies](#) at their February 23 meeting. As a result, more workforce units for households at

lower income levels will be developed at TOD and activity centers through density bonus incentives provided to market-rate developers.

2021 Virginia General Assembly The approved budget includes \$70.7 million for FY21 and \$55 million for FY22 for the state **Housing Trust Fund**. Kudos to our statewide partner **Virginia Housing Alliance** for leading this successful advocacy campaign! This is a quantum leap from just a few years ago when the state fund was funded at \$12 million and proves that advocacy works!! The budget also provides \$20 million in FY21 and \$34 million in FY22 for permanent supportive housing programs. The **Virginia Poverty Law Center** has been tracking important legislative protections addressing eviction prevention during this GA Session. Check their [website](#) for the latest updates.