

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Fairfax County Housing Activities May 2021

FY2022 Budget Addresses Housing. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted an FY2022 budget that provides the following revenues for housing: retains the value of a 1/2 penny of the real estate tax (\$13.25 million) for preservation goals, and provides \$10 million for the **Affordable Housing Investment and Development Fund** (former the Penny for Affordable Housing Fund). Additional budget guidance directs County Executive Bryan Hill to “set aside the equivalent of at least one-half cent on the real estate tax rate (in addition to the current half-penny) for the next two fiscal years to address preservation and development goals for affordable housing. County staff will return to the BOS in the Fall of 2021 with plans to address funding recommendations by the **Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force** to ensure “No Net Loss” of the County’s existing portfolio of approximately 9,000 market-affordable and subsidized housing.

[Penn Daw Fire Station, Homeless Shelter and Affordable Housing](#) Fairfax County seeks to co-locate a fire station with a homeless shelter facility and additional affordable housing units at the site of the former Hybla Valley Nursery on Beacon Hill Road near Route 1. The existing fire station, built in 1967, has reached the end of its useful life; the existing Eleanor Kennedy shelter, located in a 100 year-old building, is obsolete and no longer meets the needs of a modern shelter. The former nursery site is well-situated near transit and large enough to accommodate both facilities as well as provide critically needed permanent supportive housing. A bond referendum approved in 2016 provided the resources for a new shelter, but a location has not been identified until now. The County has created the [Penn Daw Fire and Supportive Housing Advisory Committee](#), and is holding a series of community meetings which have generated considerable resident interest - both in favor of and opposed to the proposed plan. The schedule of upcoming meetings can be found [here](#). We commend Fairfax County for following a proven best practice of co-locating housing with public facilities on county-owned land. For other examples of co-location with a fire station, read the history of [The Station at Potomac Yard](#) in the City of Alexandria. We encourage advocates to continue to voice their support for this proposal, which also provides permanent supportive housing for those earning less than 30% of the area median income (AMI).

Preservation of Market Affordable Housing near Fort Belvoir. AHC Inc. has partnered with Fairfax County and **Virginia Housing** to acquire 292 market-affordable homes near Fort Belvoir in southern Fairfax County. This ensures the preservation of 292 apartments, providing homes

for residents earning between 50% and 80% of AMI (\$63,000 and \$79,600 for a family of four). As units turn over, affordability for these income levels will be implemented. Learn more about this acquisition and plans for preservation [here](#).

Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force Update On Tuesday, April 13, the Board of Supervisors moved to adopt and take the necessary actions to advance the [recommendations](#) presented by the Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force to the Board's Housing Committee on April 6. Supervisors voted to include resource recommendations in FY 2023 budgetary guidance; authorize an amendment to the Housing and Land Use Elements of the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the recommendations made; and authorize the establishment of a standing interagency task force to address the issues surrounding manufactured home communities. The [Affordable Housing Advisory Committee](#) has been charged with monitoring and implementing the recommendations of the Task Force.

Broadband Subsidy Beginning May 12, 2021, eligible households will be able to enroll in the [Federal Communications Commission program](#) to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider. Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting [Broadband Subsidy](#) for income eligible families. We continue to advocate for broadband that is affordable and accessible for all.

Demographics Report 2020 Fairfax County has released its annual [Demographics Report for 2020](#).

Reimagining Aging Malls As we examine new strategies to increase the region's housing supply, multiple opportunities present themselves in the [redevelopment of aging retail strip centers and malls](#). These large centers could provide new energy-efficient housing to accommodate the needs of a variety of households in walkable, transit-oriented communities. One such opportunity in Fairfax County is **Fairfax Oaks Mall**, which is making its way through a [Comprehensive Plan amendment process](#). While the proposed redevelopment incorporates major transit improvements, walking and biking trails, green building practices and energy conservation, water conservation, and stormwater management measures in new buildings per county policy, the policies that govern affordable housing don't maximize this opportunity to meet and exceed the affordable housing goals (a minimum of 5,000 units in 15 years). According to a [staff report](#), "it is anticipated that residential uses will comprise a large percentage of redevelopment [as much as 35 to 45 percent of total site development] and residential will become the primary use on the site."

Early draft proposals for Fair Oaks envision the development of 1,000 rental units. Currently, residential redevelopment for the mall would be governed by the newly revised **Workforce Dwelling Unit** policies which would provide 80 workforce dwelling units for households between 60 and 80 percent AMI. Given this opportunity to create more housing - and the potential for other aging strip centers to redevelop in the future - the county must do better. We recommend the creation of a working group of county staff, commercial property owners, developers and policy experts to focus on this issue. Work group activities could include creating an inventory of aging commercial sites in the county; identifying and prioritizing characteristics that make them attractive candidates for redevelopment; and developing a list of incentives to

increase affordable housing supply beyond the current policy guidance. Redevelopment of Fair Oaks mall is years away, but it's not too soon for Fairfax County to convene this effort and be a pioneer in best practices for maximizing affordable housing opportunities in these repurposed locations.

Loudoun County NOFA Many Fairfax County affordable housing developers also work in other jurisdictions. As our mission is to advance affordable housing supply throughout Northern Virginia, we are sharing [this announcement of Notice of Funding Availability](#) (NOFA) for the development of affordable multifamily rental housing in neighboring Loudoun County. Applications are due October 1, 2021, and interested applicants need to schedule a pre-application meeting on August 20. Details and registration can be found in the link.

From Our Partners at the Corporation for Supportive Housing. [CSH invites you to join them in urging Congress and President Biden to fund capacity-building investments that will improve Medicaid Home and Community Services. \[Read the letter and sign here!\]\(#\)](#)