

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Fairfax County and VA General Assembly Special Session Housing October 2020

The Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force has been charged with providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for a countywide preservation plan, and their first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Oct 1 at 2 PM. The Dept of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has [created a webpage](#) for this initiative that identifies the objectives, guiding principles, task force members, and a wealth of research to better understand the challenges and opportunities in developing successful preservation strategies. These work sessions will be open to the public, and we will share the online meeting information when it becomes available. As a reminder, developing comprehensive strategies to preserve affordable housing was identified in Phase I of the [countywide housing preservation plan](#) adopted in 2018.

Two Housing-Related Proposals to Amend the Comp Plan in South County Move Forward

Two housing related nominations have moved forward in the South County SSPA process. In Mason District, [a nomination from First Christian Church of Falls Church](#) to partner with Wesley Housing to provide up to 113 affordable senior housing units and a community serving medical facility was approved. In the second nomination, which generated considerable discussion and required a [clarification from the landowner](#), and generated strong [community input](#), the [nomination for Engelside Trailer Park/Ray's Mobile Home Colony](#) in the Mount Vernon District moved forward. The approval was contingent upon specific conditions of parcel consolidation and 1:1 replacement of affordable housing in a redevelopment proposal. Both of these nominations still must go through a development approval process, a hearing before the Planning Commission and final approval by the BOS. There will be multiple opportunities for public comment.

Interactive Data Visualization We applaud the county's use of data visualization to track demographic trends that can be used to develop policy recommendations to address unmet needs. The County's [Data Visualization Gallery](#) offers a comprehensive look at issues like population, housing, income and commuting patterns, but it also tracks human service needs like free and reduced lunch (from 2002-2014, elementary student membership increased by 17%. During the same time period the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunches increased by 72%); households living in poverty (16.2% of children under 18 live in poverty; 31.2% of full time employees live below the poverty level); and internet accessibility (Having internet access through a cell phone plan doesn't promote online learning for low income families). We encourage everyone to take some time to review these important data sets.

Eviction Prevention The latest update on the county's rental assistance program can be found in the [September 16, 2020 report from the Health and Human Services](#).

Regarding the County's **Eviction Prevention Task Force**:

"The Eviction Prevention Task Force, which includes stakeholders from county agencies, the Sheriff's Department, and Legal Services of Northern VA, has pulled together relevant data points illustrating a point-in-time snapshot of the eviction situation in Fairfax County. The team will be analyzing this data to be purposeful in our application of resources and efforts. Future considerations include exploring the various multi-family housing settings in high risk areas. Fairfax County is also working with local landlords to launch a housing stability pledge for residents who demonstrate a significant financial impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. The team continues to explore opportunities to work with landlords to prevent eviction and to better facilitate the use of rental assistance resources."

Do you want to learn more about collaboration and the response of Northern Virginia's jurisdictions to prevent evictions? Please visit the [COVID-19 Resources](#) page at our [redesigned website](#). We update this resource page regularly, to share new developments at the local, state and federal levels so that impacted residents and landlords will have the latest information.

[Temporary Shelter Available During COVID-19](#): The availability of Quarantine, Protection, Isolation, and Decompression (QPID) Hotels as a temporary resource for those who meet the eligibility criteria and are unable to safely practice infection control was announced to the broader community. More than 450 people have transitioned into QPID Hotels since April 16th with locations now operating in Falls Church, Herndon, and Alexandria. The QPID Hotels are managed by several non-profit partners including **Shelter House, Cornerstones, New Hope Housing, and FACETS**. **Northern Virginia Family Service** operates a central intake to triage referrals to the various QPID Hotels. [Donations are needed to support nonprofit organizations who help individuals experiencing homelessness](#). Learn more about how you can help [here](#).

GA Special Session Legislation There are multiple bills that address eviction notice and prevention and utility cut-offs. More information about these bills can be found on the [Virginia Housing Alliance Special Session Updates page](#). As budget deliberations get underway, both the House and Senate have offered amendments to the Governor's proposed budget. The House made significant changes to the Housing Trust Fund allocations, taking \$25 million from the first year of the budget trust fund allocation for additional eviction rental assistance funding, and deferring any decision on the amount of trust fund allocation for the second year until the General Assembly has a clearer picture of the state's revenues. The Senate version retains the Governor's proposed language for the housing trust fund (\$85 million over two years) and Permanent Supportive Housing (\$26 million). Conferees are expected to begin deliberations in earnest around October 7 to reconcile budget differences.

Resources to Bookmark [Fairfax County Affordable Housing Guide](#), a useful breakout of affordable and workforce housing in magisterial districts, [Fairfax County Affordable Housing Dashboard](#), a look at publicly and privately owned committed affordable housing stock, as well as market-affordable housing stock. This dashboard will be referred to frequently by the Preservation Task Force in their committee work.