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## MEMORANDUM

To: Loudoun County Board of Supervisors  
From: Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance  
Re: Draft Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan  
Date: April 26, 2021

Dear Chair Randall and Members of the Loudoun Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance (NVAHA), a coalition of cross-sector housing industry professionals and advocates working in six jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. Our mission is to promote healthy, sustainable and equitable communities that meet the diverse housing needs of Northern Virginia residents. Our activities include housing research, policy analysis and advocacy, as we seek to build political will to advance housing affordability through a better understanding of its impact on health, equity, and economic development.

Our Leadership Council is composed of affordable housing developers (for profit and non-profit), housing policy experts, human service providers and representatives from financial institutions. Some of our members have participated in developing the County's multifamily loan program guidelines and a few are currently developing affordable housing in Loudoun. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the County's Draft *Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan*.

We commend staff for a thoughtful, thorough and comprehensive draft plan that examines the continuum of housing needs from 0 to 100% of the area median income, and considers the existing inventory of affordable rental housing and opportunities for homeownership. Through the recommendations in this draft plan, Loudoun joins neighboring jurisdictions in Northern Virginia and the greater Washington area in identifying solutions that affirm the unanimous 2019 COG-member endorsement of the 2030 regional housing goals.

We have highlighted the following recommendations from the draft plan as ones that we enthusiastically support:

- Maintaining fluid communications to meet the housing needs of all county residents by cultivating partnerships and building relationships between local government, nonprofit and private sector stakeholders;
- Creating a Housing/Equity Task Force comprised of relevant stakeholders to examine the connection between the social determinants of health and housing;
- Examining current financial tools and considering new resources such as a dedicated source of revenue for housing, and maximizing all the federal funding resources, including the 4% low-income housing tax credits for the multifamily housing loan program;
- Revising the multifamily housing loan guidelines to prioritize the income levels with the greatest housing needs, locations near transit, jobs and amenities;
- Identifying public land appropriate for residential development and/or co-locating housing with public facilities such as schools, community centers, and fire stations;
- Adopting right-size parking requirements for developments with access to transit;
- Adopting a clarifying policy for mixed-income housing in the transition and suburban compact neighborhoods land use designation;
- Removing regulatory barriers to affordability in the zoning ordinance and considering barriers during the zoning ordinance rewrite project;
- Committing to “no net loss” of affordable rental units.

As we look at communities in Northern Virginia that have been successful in developing affordable housing, we note the common elements of zoning flexibility and density bonus, sources of revenue that are reliable and consistent, and a site plan and approval process that is efficient and not overly burdened with regulation. To provide focus in achieving the county’s housing goals and implementing best practices, we heartily support the new Office of Housing.

This is an exciting chapter in Loudoun’s goal to create a healthy, diverse community that includes affordable, quality housing for all. We applaud these efforts and look forward to working with you and county staff to continue to realize the vision for this plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Michelle Krockner, Executive Director  
Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance

Cc: Sarah Coyle-Etro, Project Manager, Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan