

Components of Zoning for Housing

Karl Moritz, Planning Director
City of Alexandria

March 23, 2023



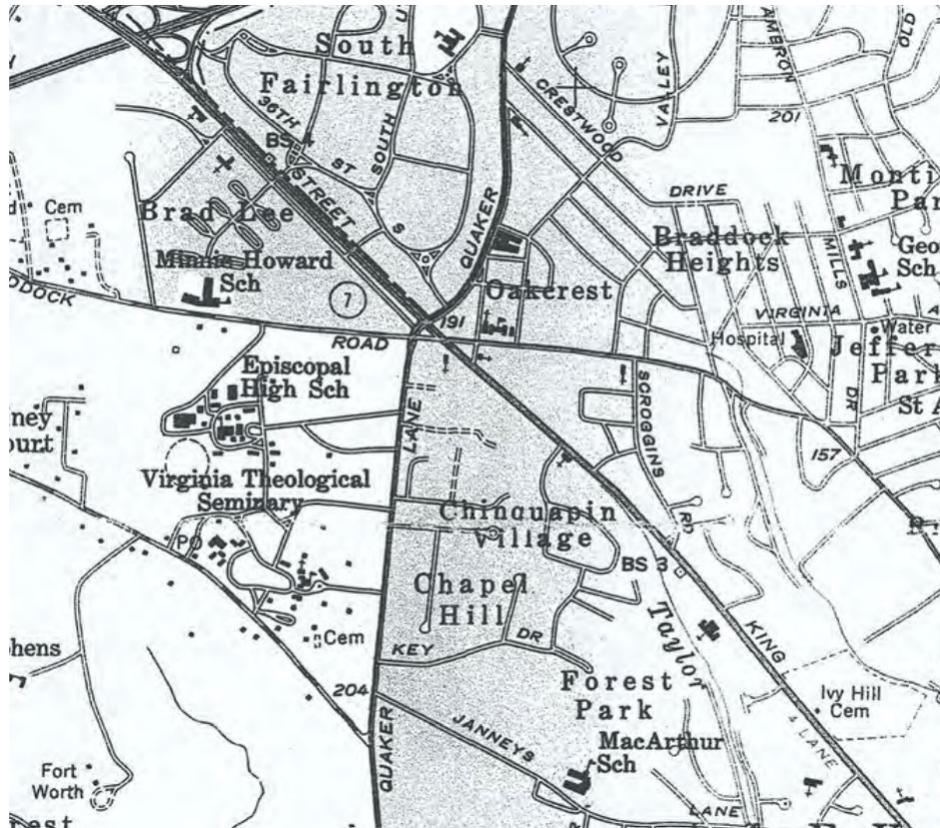


What are the initiatives being proposed?

Zoning for Housing is a comprehensive proposal of zoning reforms with the goal of expanding housing production and affordability and addressing past and current barriers to equitable housing access.

- **Accessibility:** There is unequal access to housing opportunities in Alexandria
- **Affordability:** Far too many Alexandrians cannot afford a place to live in our City
- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone

Removal of Restrictive Language



Portion of a 1956 map of Alexandria

This effort is to remove from the Zoning Ordinance restrictive language tied to past laws and policies which created exclusionary barriers for some groups to equitable living opportunities across the City. This project will be supported by historic research on the origins of this language, the identification of other Zoning Ordinance language that may be exclusionary, and a discussion of how this language operates in present-day Alexandria.

- **Accessibility:** There is unequal access to housing opportunities in Alexandria

Historic Development Patterns

The purpose of this initiative is to identify land use patterns, such as the mix of uses and building types found in historic neighborhoods (Del Ray, Rosemont, Old Town, and Parker-Gray) that can no longer be built under existing zoning. Characteristics of historic land use patterns that are desirable would be identified along with recommendations for changes to the Zoning Ordinance to allow these patterns to be considered.



Alexandria Square condominiums, Del Ray

- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone

Coordinated Development Districts and Affordable Housing



Potomac River Generating Station, Old Town North

Coordinated Development Districts(CDDs) establish the zoning for large tracts of land planned for redevelopment. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that the creation of affordable housing is supported in each new CDD. The recent CDD for the Potomac River Generating Station site is a model that staff will examine for potential application in future CDDs.

- **Affordability:** Far too many Alexandrians cannot afford a place to live in our City

Expanding Housing Opportunities in Single Family Zones



This initiative will propose a zoning framework to expand housing options in single family zones by enabling new typologies in neighborhoods where they don't exist now. These options may by their nature be less expensive than the typical new single family home, but this initiative will not be examining the potential for these new units to be "committed affordable" as we have interpreted that without specific tools or public investment to make them so.

- **Accessibility:** There is unequal access to housing opportunities in Alexandria
- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone



A neighborhood in Alexandria composed of single-family detached homes

Expansion of Transit Oriented Development



Illustration from the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan

This initiative will review existing permitted densities within the walksheds of existing and planned Metro stations and BRT stations. It would further analyze any existing barriers currently in place that limit increased densities around transit stations.

- **Accessibility:** There is unequal access to housing opportunities in Alexandria
- **Affordability:** Far too many Alexandrians cannot afford a place to live in our City
- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone

Residential Multi-family (RMF) Zone Analysis

The RMF zone provides a substantial density incentive to induce landowners to preserve and/or produce affordable housing. This initiative will analyze potential expanded opportunities for the Residential Multi-family (RMF) Zone including looking at criteria for consideration of the RMF zone in existing and future Small Area Plans.

- **Accessibility:** There is unequal access to housing opportunities in Alexandria
- **Affordability:** Far too many Alexandrians cannot afford a place to live in our City
- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone



The Heritage at Old Town, the first project to use the RMF Zone

Townhouse Zoning Analysis



Townhouses on Goddard Way in Alexandria

Townhouses have been a popular housing type throughout Alexandria's history. Alexandria's zoning ordinance allows townhouses in multiple zones, but the rules can be very different depending on the zone. This initiative will seek to create a common set of rules for townhouse development and reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to townhouse construction within commercial zones.

- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone

Office to Residential Conversions



This initiative will review Alexandria's recent experience with office-to-residential conversions, including an evaluation of the impacts of conversions from a variety of perspectives, including housing supply, economic development objectives, and fiscal impact. The project will determine whether the Zoning Ordinance includes impediments to office-to-residential conversions and whether there are areas where we want to encourage or limit conversions.

- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone



A rendering of the office-to-apartment conversion project at the Park Center complex in Alexandria.

Bonus Height Text Amendment

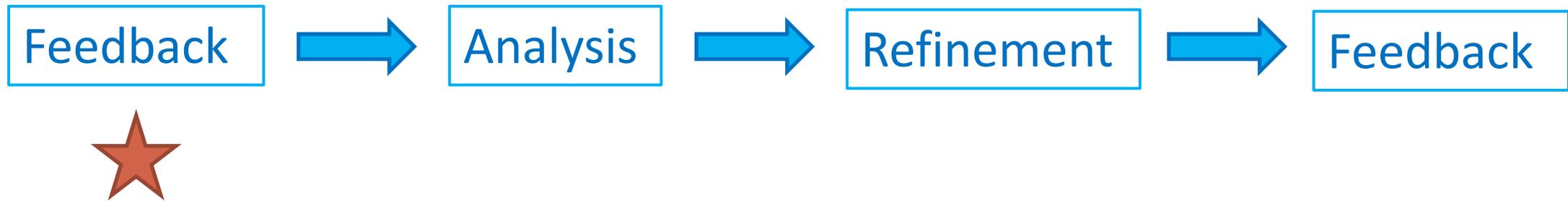


Visual depiction of “bonus height.”

This initiative would incentivize more use of Section 7-703 of the zoning ordinance that allows additional height in new residential projects in exchange for affordable housing. Current law allows the provision to be used in areas with a height limit greater than 50 feet, and the proposal is to allow it to be used in areas with height limits of 45 feet or more. A goal of the initiative is to expand housing choices and dispersion throughout more areas of the City in a manner that is harmonious to the surrounding physical context of the community.

- **Affordability:** Far too many Alexandrians cannot afford a place to live in our City
- **Availability:** Housing production has not kept pace with increasing demand, reducing housing options for everyone

What are the next steps?



Analysis examples:

- Who or what is impacted?
- Does the proposal achieve the stated goal?
- Will there be unintended consequences?
- Are there other methods that could achieve the same goals?



What are the next steps?

As we launch, we welcome questions, comments and suggestions about the proposals, how they will be evaluated, and the process for engaging all of the stakeholders in the decision-making.

Estimated Timeline

January – March

April – June

July – August

September – October

November – December

Activity

Public Launch

Community Engagement – A Review of Preliminary Analysis and Findings for Community Input

Update Analysis/Findings and Develop Preliminary Recommendations

Community Engagement – A Review of Updated Findings and Recommendations for Community Input

Schedule Public Hearings

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

March 23, 2023

Zoning for Housing/Housing for All Listening Session



Housing for All



- Housing for All is the equity component of the Zoning for Housing Program.
- Historically, as heard here and as history reflects, past laws and covenants have precluded groups of color, religion and nationality access to safe, decent, affordable housing and to holistic communities.

Zoning for Housing



- 2020, the City initiated the Zoning for Housing Program to:
 - Expand the City’s toolbox of programs to help increase the supply of market rate and affordable housing to meet Alexandria’s current and projected need as described today;
 - Identify/remove, if present, exclusionary zoning provisions within the City’s Zoning Ordinance that may be creating barriers to housing production, affordability and/or equal access for some groups.
 - Utilize the City’s wider toolkit of resources (education, CIP, Budget, AMP) to help ensure communities reach par in terms of quality of life factors which are important to All Alexandrians and to all communities.

Government Alliance for Race and Equity



- City of Alexandria participated in a year-long Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) training with approximately 10 other jurisdictions: 2019-2020
- Alexandria's cohort consisted of an interdepartmental group: P&Z, TES, AHD, APD, Housing, CMO, RPCA, ACPS, etc.
- Post the year-long GARE Training: Later formed the Housing for All Subcommittee from the City's Equity Interdepartmental Core Team

City's Housing for All Subcommittee continues the Work



- Alexandria City Public Schools
- Alexandria Health Department
- City Managers Office
- Department of Community and Human Services
- Department of Planning & Zoning
- Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
- Office of Housing
- Office Human Rights
- Office of Performance Accountability
- Office of Race and Social Equity

Housing for All Subcommittee Continues work of GARE Cohort



- Researching historical laws, policies and practices of housing discrimination.
- Researching historical communities of color – African American Alexandria historical communities:
 - Where were they?
 - What was the quality of life like?
 - Do they still exist today and if not why not?
 - What happened to the residents?
- Researching the impact historical policies and laws may have had on communities of color today.
- Developing Equity Impact Statements for Zoning for Housing Initiatives
 - Incorporate measures as part of Zoning for Housing initiatives to ensure fairness and equity in housing access, types, and choice and affordability
 - Leverage related City tools to support building, sustaining and strengthening holistic communities throughout Alexandria
 - Incorporate metrics to gauge progress

Visit the Housing for All Webpage: Housing for All Subcommittee



- [Housing for All | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](https://alexandriava.gov)
 - A Courageous Journey: A Guide to Alexandria’s African American History (Source: Office of Historic Alexandria and VisitAlex)
 - A list of Alexandria African American Neighborhoods and Oral Histories on the Office of Historic Alexandria’s webpage: *List developed in response to the Housing for All Subcommittee Research*
 - A Timeline of African American Housing History in Alexandria (Documentation of communities and restrictive housing programs): *Research developed in response to the Housing for All Subcommittee*

Vist the Housing for All Webpage (Continue)



- An expanded African American Historical Neighborhoods Map (Sources: Office of Historic Alexandria, VistAlex, City of Alexandria and Dr. Krystyn Moon): *Expanded map and research in response to the Housing for All Subcommittee*
- *Equity Emphasis Map (Sources: MWCOCG and The Office of Professional Accountability), Map and research in response to Housing for All Subcommittee*
- *Restrictive Covenant Report: (Source: Research by Dr. Krystyn Moon response to the Housing for All Subcommittee)*

Next Steps



- Continued Housing for All equity component research will help set metrics, if/as appropriate, for Zoning for Housing initiatives
- Continued research on ways to leverage Zoning for Housing work by other Departments and Community Groups to help improve and strengthen the quality of life for all communities in Alexandria and access to housing choice throughout Alexandria.

Nancy J. Williams
Assistant Director
Department of Planning & Zoning
Nancy.Williams@alexandriava.gov