

City of Alexandria, Virginia

**Joint City Council  
Planning Commission  
Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory  
Committee  
Work Session**

**Update on the Comprehensive Package of Potential  
Zoning for Housing &  
Housing for All Initiatives**

Monday, June 26, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.  
Durant Center



# INTRODUCTION BACKGROUND

# Topics to Cover



- Alexandria's Overall Housing Need and its current and future Overall effort toward addressing the Need
- Intent/Role of Zoning for Housing/Housing for All – Accessibility, Affordability and Availability
- Schedule for Zoning for Housing/Housing for All
- Community Outreach: Winter/Spring 2023 and Planned Summer/Fall 2023 Outreach
- Sourced Research related to Equity- Housing for All
- Status of Data Gathering and Analysis and other related Research on Potential Zoning Reforms
- Questions/Dialogue

# Alexandria - Affordable Housing Need and the Resource Toolbox



- 15,000 Alexandria households with incomes up to \$75,000/year are housing cost-burdened
- The Housing Master Plan (2014-2025) provides an array of tools to help address the need, but more are needed to maximize production
- Regional Housing Initiative (2019) connects housing availability – at a variety of price points - to economic development and job growth
- Zoning for Housing/Housing for All is designed to mitigate housing need by increasing supply as well as by addressing inequities in the housing market
- Housing Master Plan Update (FY 2025) will add to affordable housing toolbox, including a study of new initiatives like Inclusionary Zoning

# Intent/Role of Zoning for Housing/Housing for All



To add to the City's Toolbox of Resources by Expanding Housing Production and Affordability through:

- Accessibility – Choice of Housing Types and Price
- Affordability – Expansion of Supply, among Housing Types, to Bring Down Prices
- Availability – Expansion of Types and Locations of various Choices

The Potential Zoning for Housing/Housing for All Reforms are designed to meet one or more of these intents.



# List of Potential Reforms

- Bonus Height Text Amendment
- Conversions from Office to Residential Analysis
- Coordinated Development Districts
- Historic Development Patterns Analysis
- Industrial Zones Analysis
- Residential Multi-Family Zones Analysis
- Single Family Zones and Parking Analysis
- Townhome Zones Analysis
- Transit Oriented Development Analysis
- Restrictive Language Analysis

# Schedule for Zoning for Housing/Housing for All



- Summer 2023
  - Complete Pending Research
  - Continue with Outreach
- Fall 2023
  - Anticipated Release of Recommendations (Sept.)
  - Anticipated Fall Community Engagement Meetings (September and October)
  - Anticipated Public Hearings (November)

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WINTER/SPRING –  
SUMMER/FALL 2023

# Community Engagement Winter/Spring 2023



## Continued Communications

- Website (information, comment board)
- Social media posts, includes video segments
- eNews notifications
- Collaboration with community partners/organizations
- Print/Promotional materials
- 311 message for community members on hold (Spanish, English)

## Video production

- Kick Off event
  - Participant viewpoints (12 short segments)
  - 4 minute highlight video of 1.5 day event
- TBD – Additional videos for communications

# Community Engagement Winter/Spring 2023



- March 20-21: In-person 1.5 Day Kick-Off Event
- March 22: Evening All-Virtual Kick-Off Meeting
- Spring Outreach Two-Hour Hybrid Community Meetings:
  - April 18 – William Ramsay Recreation Center (West End)
  - May 10 – Beatley Central Library (Central Area)
  - May 22 – Lee Recreation Center (East End)
- April 27 – Mark Center Renaming Event Information Table
- May 5 – Building Safety Week Event Information Table
- May 6 – Southern Towers Farmers Market Event Information Table
- May Community Cookout Events Information Table
  - May 11 - Southern Towers
  - May 16 – Hillwood Apartments
  - May 18 – South Port Apartments
  - May 23 – Adkins ARHA Housing
  - May 25 – Mount Vernon Recreation Center
- June 12 – Family Fun Day, William Ramsay Recreation Center
- June 19 – Global Food Pop Up
- June 26 – Joint Work Session

# Community Engagement Winter/Spring 2023



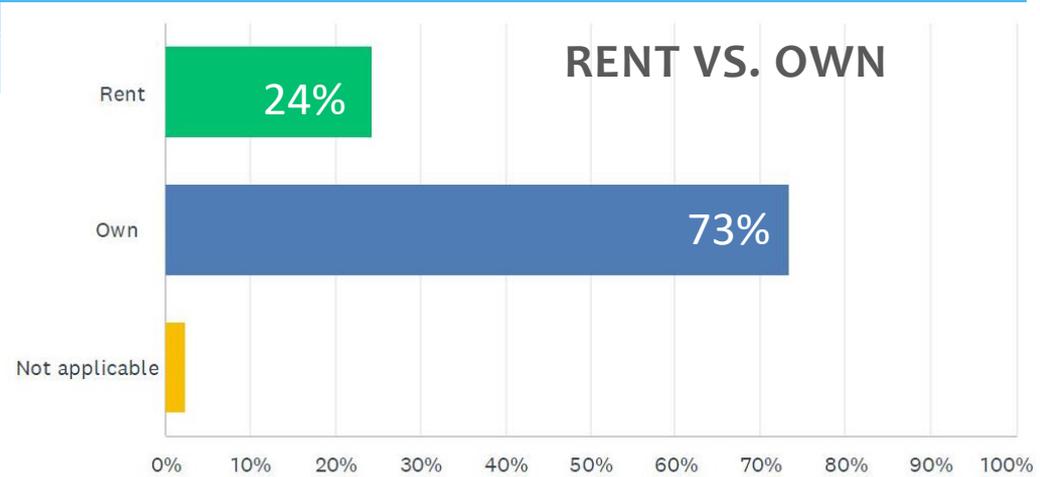
- Community Questions/Comments – Ongoing
  - Total Received To-Date: Approximately 400
  
  - Top 5 Topics To-date (Alphabetical Order):
    - Bonus Height
    - Changes to single-family zone
    - Housing costs
    - Infrastructure
    - Increases in density

# Community Engagement Winter/Spring 2023

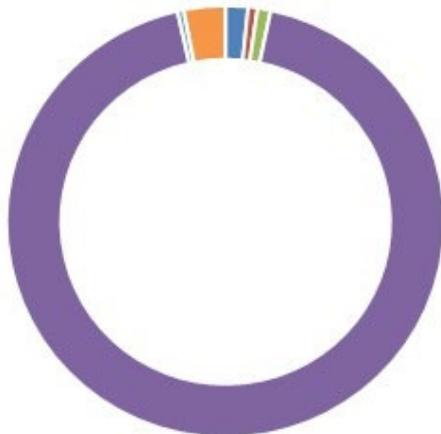


## Citywide Questionnaire

- May 23 – June 19
- Total Respondents 1,756

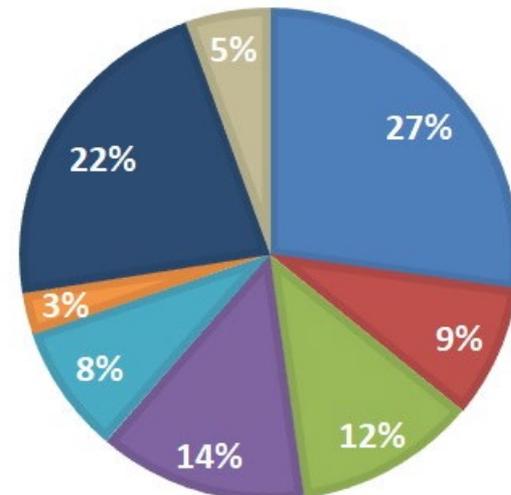


### LANGUAGES



- Amharic
- Arabic
- Darsi
- English
- Pashto
- Spanish

### ZIP CODES



- 22301
- 22302
- 22304
- 22305
- 22311
- 22312
- 22314
- Other

# Planned Summer/Fall 2023 Engagement Events



- Exploring:
  - ACPS Summer Social Studies and Economics Classes
    - Classroom Presentation
    - Student Poll
    - Multiple options to amplify messaging
    - Tentative DASH Bus Advertisements
    - Expanded social media
  - Late August Pre-Release Community Meeting Panel Discussion:
    - Review Key Community Comments
    - Alexandria's Housing Market
    - Alexandria's Economy
    - AARP Community Indicators for All Generations
    - HUD's NOFA for Zoning Reforms
    - Alexandria's AA Homeownership History

# **HOUSING FOR ALL EQUITY COMPONENT SOURCED DATA AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

# Equity: Sourced Data and Reference Documents

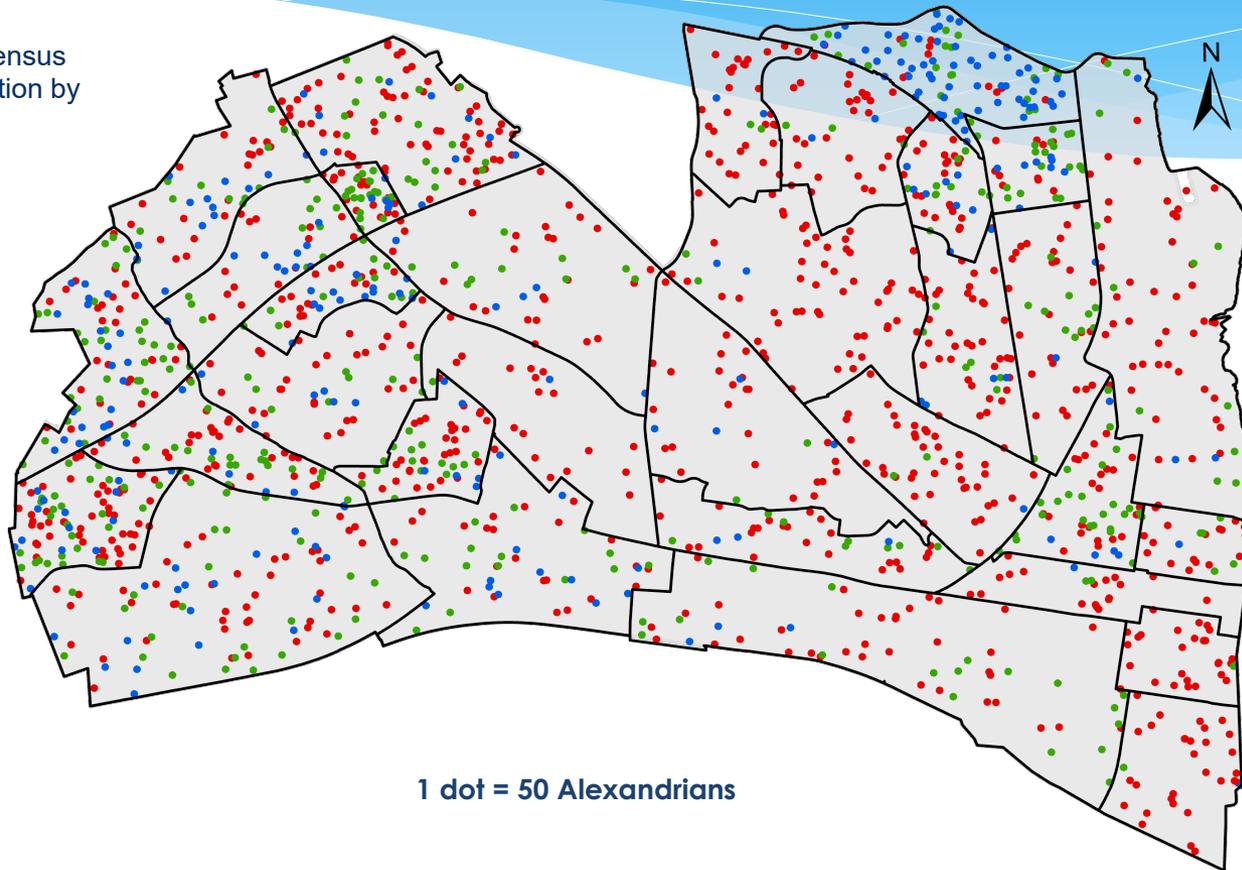


- Data Maps and Resources
  - 2000 – Map of Households by Demographics
  - 2020 – Map of Households by Demographics
  - 2022 – Equity Emphasis Areas Map
  - 2023 – Equity Tool Kit
  - 2023 – Equity Index Map
  - 2023 – Black Education in Alexandria 1793-2023
  - Alexandria Restrictive Covenants Report
- 18<sup>th</sup> Century and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Historical Timeline of African American Housing Patterns in Alexandria
- African American Historical Neighborhoods in Alexandria
- Oral History related to African American Historical Neighborhoods

# Household Distribution by Race and Ethnicity



Source: 2000 US Census  
Geographic Distribution by  
Census Tract



1 dot = 50 Alexandrians

● Hispanic (All  
races)

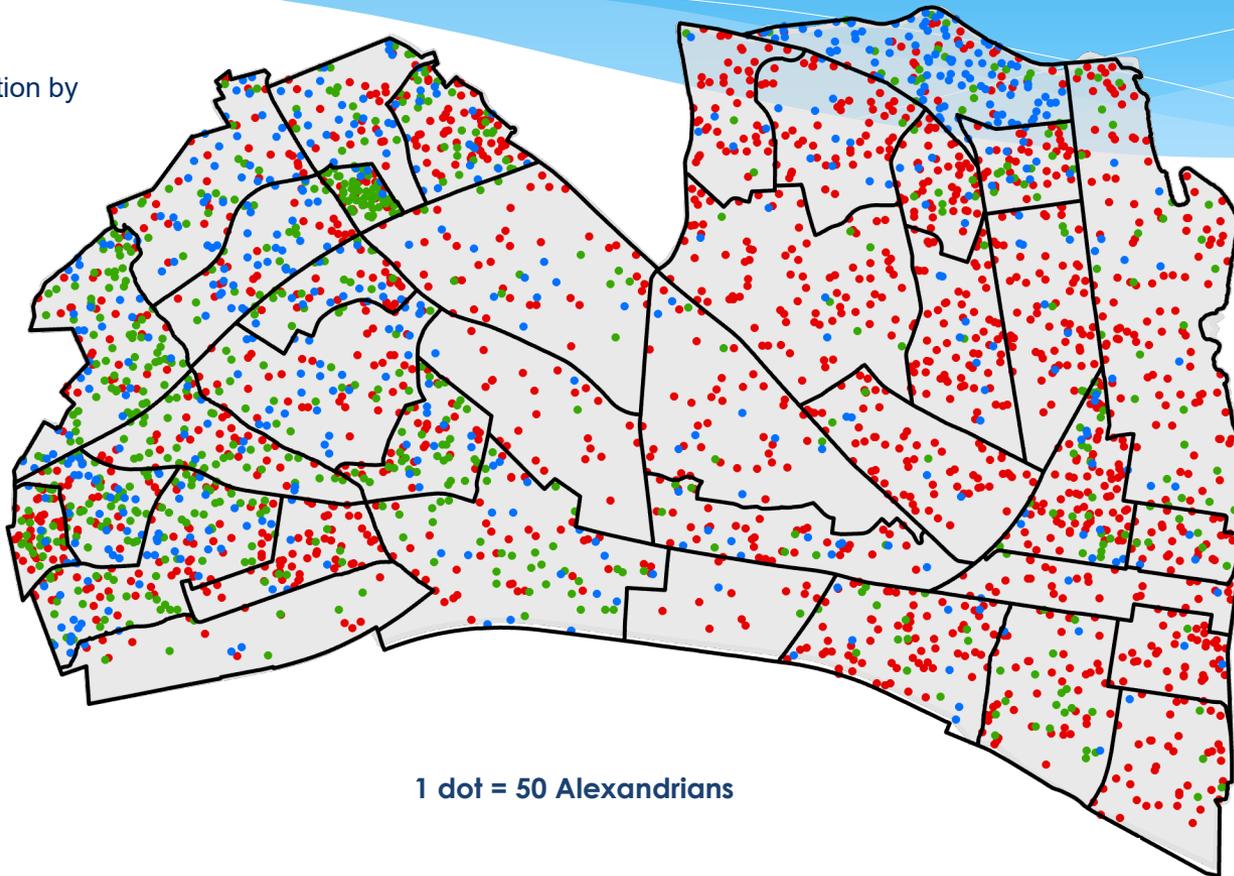
● Non-Hispanic  
Black

● Non-Hispanic  
White

# Household Distribution by Race and Ethnicity



Source: 2019 ACS  
Geographic Distribution by  
Census Tract



1 dot = 50 Alexandrians

● Hispanic (All  
races)

● Non-Hispanic  
Black

● Non-Hispanic  
White

# Equity Emphasis Areas

*measuring race and income*



## 2022 Alexandria Equity Emphasis Areas



About Equity Emphasis Areas: *Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs) are a regional planning concept adopted in 2021 by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors to elevate equity and address past investment disparities in these areas. Using the methodology described below, COG identified twelve census tracts within the City of Alexandria as equity emphasis areas. The 2021 Alexandria Mobility Plan incorporated EEAs into its equity metrics to measure transportation outcomes in these areas.*

Source: Census

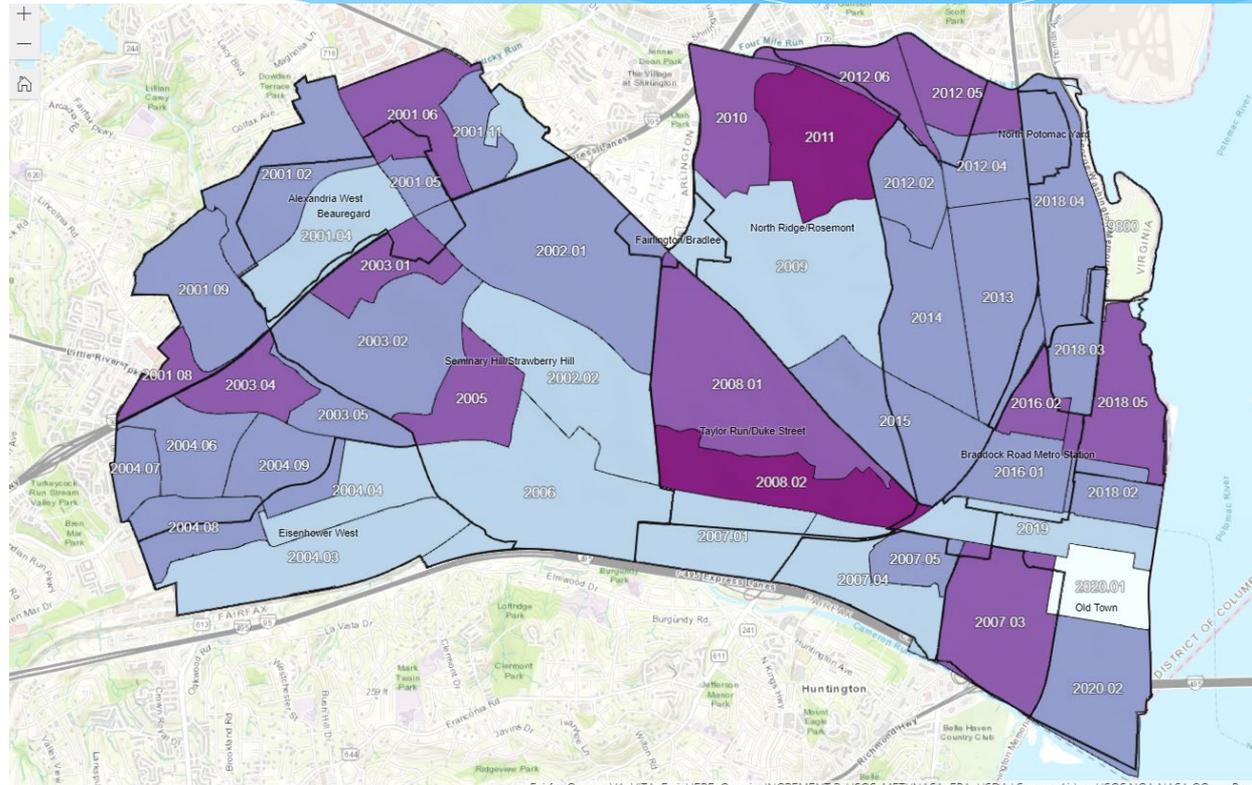
# Equity Index Map

*measuring racial disparities in homeownership, poverty, education, employment and income*

[Equity Index Map Experience \(arcgis.com\)](http://Equity Index Map Experience (arcgis.com))



The Equity Index Map identifies disparities in key socio-economic outcomes to help staff and community partners make equitable and inclusive decisions. (Source: Census)



2023

[Equity Index Map Experience \(arcgis.com\)](http://Equity Index Map Experience (arcgis.com))

# Potential Zoning for Housing Reforms

## Status of Ongoing Research and Analysis

# Focus/Status of Research for Potential Zoning for Housing Reforms



- Examples of Mapping Tools posted
  - Industrial Zones
  - Residential Multi-Family Zones
  - Potential Bonus Height Text Amendment Areas under Study (from June 2022)
  - Single Family Zones
  - Multi-family Housing
  - Other
- Organization of Common Community Comments from May-June Questionnaire related to each initiative for review.
- Case Studies under analysis
- Financial Analysis

# Bonus Height



**Purpose:** To allow use of Section 7-703 (bonus height for 1/3 affordable housing) in zones with height limits of 45 feet or more. Currently it can be utilized in zones with a height of more than 50 feet.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Case studies (large, medium, and small redevelopment sites)
- Analyzing for Regulatory Consistency/Non-consistency
- Analyzing for financial feasibility
- **Potential new directions**
- Results of feasibility/compatibility analyses will determine if this initiative will be effective or have unintended consequences.

## **Equity**

- Bonus height/density programs expand affordability and accessibility in a fine-grained way in a broader array of neighborhoods

# Bonus Height



**Discussion question:** If our research shows that this would have limited use, should we look for those limited locations and situations where this provision will be most effective/compatible? Or focus on other initiatives with a clearer benefit?

# Office-to-Residential Conversions



**Purpose:** Assess Office-to-Residential conversions for impediments, costs and benefits and whether there are areas where we want to incentive or de-incentivize conversions.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Reviewing conversion reports from ULI, US Chamber of Commerce, etc., in coordination with recommendations from AEDP, case studies of recent conversions and conversations with local experts

## **Potential new directions**

- Consider whether Zoning Ordinance amendments and/or incentives are needed to encourage conversions in targeted locations

## **Equity**

- Provides opportunities for adaptive reuse to expand housing within areas with existing infrastructure. Also supports the City's Green Building policy.
- Assessing options to support affordable housing

# Office-to-Residential Conversions



**Discussion question:** What are your thoughts about ensuring a balance of the City's goals for housing and for office space? Are you comfortable supporting office conversions if onsite parking or open space is limited?

# Historic Development Patterns



**Purpose:** 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.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Reviewed the history of development patterns, identified compatible historic development patterns, and documented zoning issues.
- Identified representative case studies of several blocks in Old Town, Del Ray, Rosemont and Parker Gray

## **Potential new directions**

- Changes to Zoning Ordinances since 1931 show how/when the Zoning Ordinance has become increasingly complex
- Certain compatible historic development patterns are not possible under current Zoning Ordinance

## **Equity**

- Expanding choice through zoning changes that could allow similar typologies today.

# Historic Development Patterns



**Discussion Question:** How can we stimulate similar typologies (Old Town Washington Street; Del Ray, etc.) without triggering redevelopment of the ones that exist?

# RMF Zone Expansion



**Purpose:** This initiative will analyze potential expanded opportunities for the Residential Multi-family (RMF) Zone including looking at criteria for consideration of the RMF in existing and future Small Area Plans.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Inventory of existing RMF projects
- Analysis of areas where RMF projects are consistent with land uses in SAPs
- Conversations with affordable housing developers and experts
- Analysis of barriers to development of RMF and affordable housing projects

## **Potential new directions**

- RMF projects are challenging because of the deep levels of affordability.
- It is possible the RMF concept could work on a smaller scale.

## **Equity**

- More broadly distributed use of RMF and other affordable housing tools allows people with more modest incomes access to neighbors that might otherwise be out of reach.

# RMF Zone Expansion



**Discussion Question:** What if the Residential Multi-family concept could be accomplished at varying scales? What are your thoughts about how or where use of the RMF zone could be expanded?

# Townhomes



**Purpose:** Remove inequities in zoning regulations within the various Townhouse Zones (RA, RB, RC, RM, others), and reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to residential development within commercial zones.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Review past Zoning Ordinances to understand rationale for existing townhouse lot, bulk, and open space standards
- Review approvals that received relief from townhouse lot, bulk, & open space regs.

## **Potential new directions**

- Townhouse lot, bulk, and open space standards may need adjustment to allow flexibility for reasonable development and to legitimize existing development on narrow lots especially in the City's commercial zones
- Previous approvals generally indicate that relief from lot, bulk, and open space requirements is well received by surrounding residents

## **Equity**

- Small scale townhouse projects face possibly unnecessary regulatory barriers that can increase housing costs by artificially limiting supply and preventing adaptive reuse.

# Townhomes



**Discussion Question:** Simplification and consistency would help in expanding opportunities and affordability. What opportunities or concerns do you have regarding streamlining townhouse reviews?

# Expanding Opportunities in Single Family Zones



**Purpose:** To add housing type options within zones currently reserved for single-family detached dwellings.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- 34% of the City's land area is zoned exclusively for single-family detached dwellings.
- Review of distribution of SFDs and characteristics such as race and income compared to other housing types.
- Discussions with developers of small-scale residential projects.
- Analysis of existing Zoning Ordinance lot and bulk requirements and impact on potential for new multi-unit dwelling (two-family, multi-family) redevelopment.

## **Potential new directions**

- Single-family zoning has resulted in socio-economic segregation that could be mitigated by the inclusion of additional housing types.
- Lot and bulk requirements pose challenges to adding multiple unit structures in these neighborhoods.

## **Equity**

- While not strictly "affordable," more diverse set of housing types could lower the barrier to entry of some neighborhoods.

# Single Family Zones



**Discussion Question:** Should the focus be more on use rather than size, given limitations under current zoning standards that may preclude expanded unit options? What are your thoughts on balancing physical compatibility with the number of units?

City of Alexandria, Virginia

# Zoning for Housing/Housing for All Website

[Zoning for Housing/Housing for All | City of Alexandria,  
VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)

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Department of Planning & Zoning: [Planning and  
Zoning | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)



# Updates on other Z4H initiatives

# Questions for Dialogue and Discussion related to six Potential Zoning for Housing Reforms



***Bonus Height:*** *Should we look for those limited locations and situations where this provision will be most effective/compatible?*

***Conversions:*** *What is the appropriate policy approach to achieve the intent relative to expanded housing, while keeping a commercial balance and housing affordability in mind?*

***Historic Development Patterns:*** *How can we stimulate similar typologies (Old Town Washington Street; Del Ray, etc.) without triggering redevelopment of the ones that exist?*



# Questions for Dialogue and Discussion related to six Potential Zoning for Housing Reforms

***RMF:*** What if the Residential Multi-family concept could be accomplished at varying scales? For example, adding a mid-density scale to be compatible with such areas of the City.

***Town Homes:*** Simplification and consistency would help in expanding opportunities and affordability. What opportunities or concerns do you have regarding streamlining townhouse reviews?

***Single Family/Parking:*** Should the focus be more on use rather than size, given limitations current zoning standards that may preclude expanded unit options?

# Affordable Housing & Coordinated Development Districts



**Purpose:** To structure new Coordinated Development Districts to maximize the provision of affordable housing, principally through maximizing and streamlining the use of Section 7-700.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Researched the affordable housing provisions for several recently approved CDDs; how they have worked; and potential for future change.

## **Potential new directions**

- Whether regularly requiring 1/3 of bonus density (above SAP) to be committed affordable units is feasible.
- Provisions similar to Section 7-700 can be incorporated into CDD upfront, without need for additional Special Use Permit in such areas.

## **Equity**

- A streamlined method of approving more affordable housing in CDDs.



# Industrial Zones

**Purpose:** To explore the potential for allowing land zoned industrial to apply for Residential Multi-Family (RMF) zoning. It will also look at any barriers to the planned transition in some areas from industrial uses to mixed-use/residential uses

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Analysis of industrially-zoned properties, including rental and vacancy rates
- Ownership data
- Inventory of existing businesses and land uses

## **Potential new directions**

- Demand for industrial buildings is quite strong but most uses are not “industrial” per se. Demand for uses like self-storage could delay production of housing and implementation of approved SAPs.

## **Equity**

- Zoning tools could help planned redevelopment (including mixed income housing) better compete with existing low-scale “industrial” uses.
- Housing in industrial areas will be evaluated for suitability for housing (environmental justice)



# Transit-Oriented Development

**Purpose:** Review permitted densities within the walksheds of existing and planned Metro stations and BRT stations and analyze barriers to increased density around transit stations.

## **Data & Analysis Underway**

- Analysis of land use plans within TOD walksheds shows high land values; higher density construction is more expensive.
- The number of high density sites is held by a limited number of landowners.
- Market may be requiring higher parking ratios than the City does, adding costs to projects.

## **Potential new directions**

- TOD benefits extend beyond major transit stations when overall transit service is high and there are services within walking distance.

## **Equity**

- Opportunity for mixed-income housing may lie in well-served locations between, as well as at, high capacity transit stations<sup>40</sup>