



**Housing Master Plan  
Advisory Group Meeting  
Thursday, March 3, 2010 6:30p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Jefferson Houston School**

Meeting materials are available online at: [www.Alexandriava.gov/housingplan](http://www.Alexandriava.gov/housingplan)

**Meeting Summary**

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Please note that comments reflect individual statements by AG committee members  
and/or members of the audience. Comments are signified by "C," questions by "Q" and  
answers by "A."*

The first presentation was given by Mildrilyn Davis, Director, and Jon Frederick, Housing Analyst, Office of Housing, on the common and diverging themes that emerged from the January 29 Affordable Housing Allocation Exercise. Members of the Advisory group and the public were then asked to provide additional comments or observations about the event.

C: Group 4 placed housing near Metro because of the opportunity to maximize density there, not necessarily because Metro itself is very helpful to low income residents, many of whom cannot afford Metro or are not well served by its routes. For this community, walking and buses tend to be more practical/accessible.

C: It's important to note, though, that using the bus system can also be expensive and difficult, requiring multiple transfers and taking a long time to reach destinations.

C: Based on the summary, it seems obvious that there were strong commonalities regarding the places that affordable housing should be located, such as Landmark/Van Dorn, Eisenhower West. Why hasn't affordable housing been located there yet?

A: Most likely because of cost and lack of subsidy in those locations.

C: Also because there hasn't been a Housing Master Plan to help guide affordable housing citywide.

The second presentation was given by Kyle Talente, RKG Associates, Inc. Mr. Talente provided an overview of the draft framework of the housing master plan and a detailed description of the draft housing master plan goals, as shown below:

1. To preserve all existing subsidized and all market rate affordable rental housing units within the City
2. To encourage the development of new affordable and workforce rental housing units, in specific market segments where there is unmet demand within Alexandria, with priority for housing units priced to support households at 50% of AMI and below
3. To assist households seeking homeownership to prepare for the financial and other responsibilities of owning property
4. To provide households who are elderly, have physical or other disabilities, or are homeless the opportunity of choice in selecting safe, quality housing
5. To enhance the awareness of the entire community about the need for and benefits of affordable housing as well as the opportunities that exist within the City

The following questions, answers and comments were made by the advisory group and public in response to the proposed draft outline and goals.

Q: Will the goal regarding Fair Housing include a recommendation/requirement that the City's Zoning Code be consistent with Fair Housing Laws? Currently, the code is not consistent.

A: Staff will look into this.

C: With regard to Goal 3, the City does not have a responsibility to make sure that people have homes. The City has a responsibility to make sure that the City is safe. The HMP needs to be able to explain/quantify the benefit of affordable housing to the City. It should also include measures for quantifying results.

A: The objectives in the Plan will include measurable benchmarks where applicable. It should be noted that financial resources identified will include more than just taxpayer dollars; they will also include grant funds, developer contributions, etc.

C: Other than using the AMI needs assessment, is there any other way of demonstrating the need for affordable housing and what the benefit to the community is? Why should these people live in Alexandria?

A: We're talking about people who currently live in Alexandria who don't have homes, or who may be paying more than 30% of their income on housing, or who might be doubling/tripling up to pool funds in order to afford housing.

Q: Would the City consider a role in information sharing between providers? A clearinghouse or networking service for providers would be very useful to avoid duplication and help identify resources.

A: Yes, this is definitely an aspect of the clearinghouse we have discussed before that can be proposed in the Plan.

C: The words “and resources” should be added after the word “need” in Goal 5.

Q: Do you know that the City charges double the cost for a business license for rental properties than do other nearby jurisdictions? Does this impact affordable housing provision?

A: No likely impact as the cost of a business license is relatively small.

C: With regard to Goal 4, I think that special needs populations should not be called out as having separate needs. They should be integrated and implicit in all goals. Goal 4 should be amended to read: *To provide **all households** the opportunity of choice in selecting safe, quality housing.*

Q from Staff: Are you asking that we not call out these populations in the objectives of Goal 4 at all?

A: Should be all inclusive and integrated into everything.

C: All affordable housing should be accessible, adaptable, visitable, 100%.

C: Agree. Need to emphasize the importance of providing choice in Goal 4.

C: I understand these goals are aspirational. But my concern is that the objectives may conflict from goal to goal. Want to make sure that the Plan offers the City the flexibility to be as efficient as possible in achieving the goals.

C: ADA already requires a minimum level of accessibility in new development. We need to be realistic and separate wishes from needs.

C: We are hoping to go beyond what the ADA requires.

Q: What is the composition of the Developer Contribution Workgroup?

A: A variety of housing developers, including conventional and non-profit, land use attorneys, and a representative from the AHAC. As soon as the group is finalized and meeting dates have been set, that information will be published.

Q: Why is the City recommending financial support for home ownership in this Plan?

A: Supporting affordable home ownership is a small part of the work that the Office of Housing does. The focus is on increasing affordable rental opportunities, as addressed in Goals 1 and 2. Over the course of the process, there has been consistent support for providing a wide variety of housing options – a diversity of housing types and incomes, to include rental and ownership.

Q: How much money is in the Housing Trust Fund and where does it go?

A:: It varies depending on the year. In FY2012 it is about evenly split between homebuyer programs and rental programs.

C: I don't have a problem with assistance for home rehabilitation, but with purchase assistance, the benefit to the City needs to be better defined. The City should look more carefully at who receives the money.

C: One thing to keep in mind when considering rental vs. purchase assistance, is household size. Families may often need larger size units than are available for rent.

C: I think the emphasis of Goal 3 is appropriate on the education and preparation of owners for home ownership. Emphasis in the plan overall should be on renters, as currently reflected in the draft goals.

C: One of Kyle's data points shows that people at 80% are occupying units affordable to lower income residents. Providing affordable home ownership opportunities opens up some of those units by creating a flow or a continuum of housing options. We need incentives for people in those units to move up and out.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.