

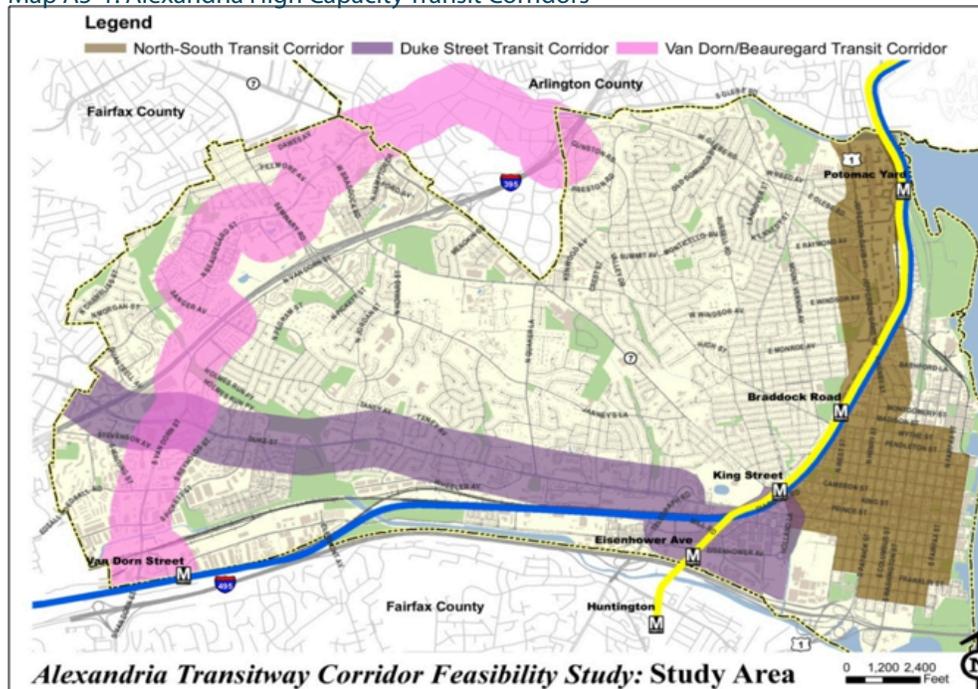
APPENDIX 5: AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND TRANSIT

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) allows for higher density near Metro stations, transit stops and along transit corridors to maximize the benefit of having people live near multi-modal transit hubs. To be successful, a TOD needs to have enough people populating residences, workplaces, shops and restaurants within a compact area to encourage non-automobile transportation usage. When the proper critical mass is achieved, public spaces will be activated, commercial establishments will have more walk-in customers and sidewalks will be safer within a “24/7” environment.

Some of the City’s most successful redevelopment efforts to date have been compactly clustered within comfortable walking distance of Metro stations. The City is currently in the process of conducting the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study to make recommendations for providing enhanced high capacity-transit service in the North-South, Duke Street, and Van Dorn/Beauregard corridors. The goal of the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study is to identify and adopt a transit enhancement strategy for each study corridor and provide an action plan to guide future study (Map A5-1)

Map A5-1: Alexandria High Capacity Transit Corridors





Carlyle Place and Meridian at Eisenhower
Eisenhower Ave Metro
Source: City of Alexandria



Small-Scale Infill
Transition Areas along Bus Routes



Hoffman Development Rendering
Eisenhower Metro Station
Source: City of Alexandria

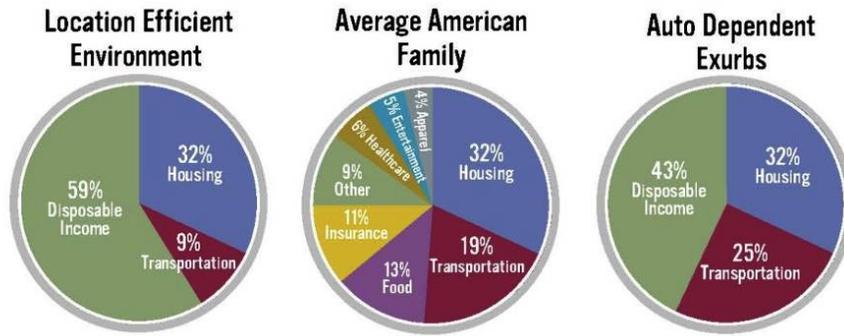
As the transit improvements are approved and implemented along the City’s High Capacity Transit Corridors, land values will be increased and affordability will be challenged. One of the key challenges in corridors that will experience an upgrade in service (including a switch from regular bus service to Bus Rapid Transit or some other form of light rail or streetcar) is staying ahead of development with affordability. It is critical to identify locations within the transit corridors that will allow for both affordable housing preservation and new development. While there are locations in these corridors for major redevelopment projects, some of the infill strategies such as civic/institutional land, buffer strips/liner conditions, and transition zones may offer some possibilities to surgically add affordable units in these TOD corridors. TOD’s also help to decrease the overall parking needs and requirements, which has a positive effect on housing affordability. The City has already started to implement lower parking standards in many of the newly adopted Small Area Plans and the Parking Reduction for Affordable Housing Tool discussed in Chapter 6 recommends further reducing parking ratios for affordable housing

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS COMBINED

The standard for establishing whether or not housing is affordable is to determine the percent of a household’s income consumed by housing costs. However, there is a growing amount of support to combine a household’s housing and transportation cost to measure true affordability. The reasoning behind this movement is because after housing, transportation is the second largest cost of living for American households. Figure A5-1 compares the transportation costs of households that lived in different locations. While the average household expends 19% of its income on transportation, in auto-dependent exurban locations transportation costs consume 25% of income. However, in what is often termed “location efficient environments”, meaning within convenient access to transit and/or walking distance to daily services and employment, the amount of household income expended on

transportation drops to 9%, about one-half the national average. This highlights how advantageous it is to develop affordable housing in locations well served by transportation and/or within walking and biking distance of shopping, services and employment.

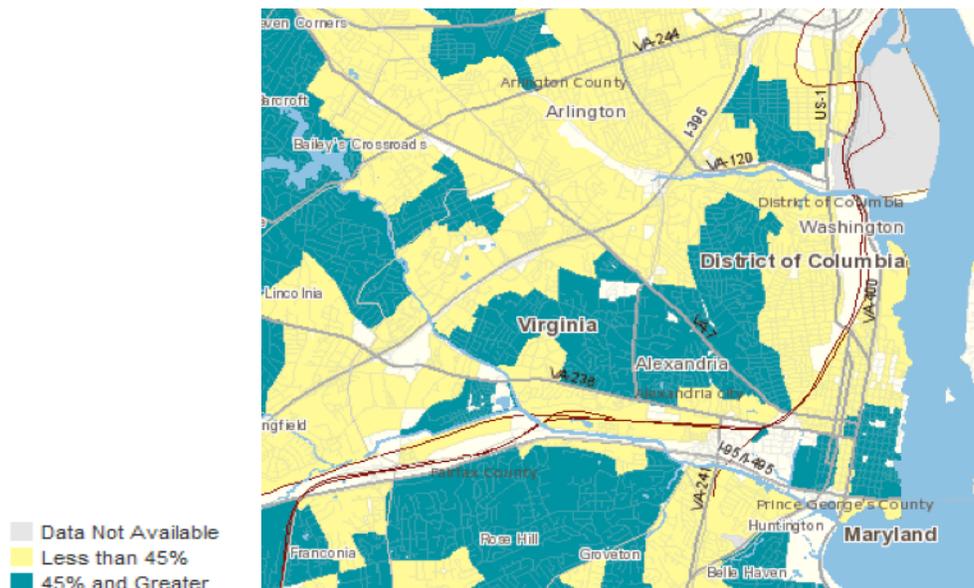
Figure A5-1: Transportation Costs in Location Efficient Environments vs. Auto Dependent Exurbs



Source: Reconnecting America, Why Transit-Oriented Development and Why Now?

Map A5-2 indicates the Housing and Transit Affordability Index for Alexandria and the surrounding jurisdictions. The areas on the map that are colored blue represent locations in the Alexandria area where housing plus transportation cost is greater than 45% of the overall household income (Map A5-2). The areas in yellow represent locations in the area where housing plus transportation cost is less than 45% of the overall household income and correspond closely to the corridors in the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study. Housing in transportation efficient locations allows lower income households to reduce living expenses while also allowing more moderate income households to either reduce costs or make trade-offs like living in a slightly more costly location, but covering that increase in housing costs through transportation savings.

Map A5 -2: Alexandria Housing and Transit Affordability Index



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology