



**Housing Master Plan
Seniors, Persons with Disabilities, & Homeless Needs Public Meeting
Thursday, July 1, 2010 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

Meeting Summary

Meeting materials are available online at: www.Alexandriava.gov/housingplan

SENIOR HOUSING

Panel Discussion

Bob Eiffert

- Universal Design is critical, given aging population – 0 step entrance, 3’ doorways, 4’ hallways, 5’ turnarounds
- Visitability is a factor that needs acknowledgement – accessibility for ingress/egress, use of bathroom facilities within housing units
- Affordability
 - look into Section 202 program
 - Need to consider density as a way of achieving more affordable units – trade densities for affordability; City is historically opposed to increasing density, but should explore opportunities for public private partnerships and make use of density to achieve more affordable housing
 - Redevelopment potential exists in Alexandria – Bradlee, Duke Street, etc...places that could have good urban designs, accessibility to services, transit.

John Freeman

- Annie B. Rose Senior Independent Living Facility houses 90 senior citizens in 90 1BR apartments
- 80% of residents pay less than \$300/month rent; very low income residents; 10 year waiting list
- Fed government is currently subsidizing rents here, but these high subsidies will not exist in the future—they are not sustainable
- Not designed or authorized to provide assisted living, but residents stay longer than they should because they have no other options, and become very frail in place
- Need a change to the public policy model on this issue -- Extra-elderly (75+) population will impact housing policies into future as senior population continues to increase
- Should consider increased density, reduced unit sizes – consider SROs (single room occupancy)

Bill Harris

- Alexandria has no waiting list for affordable assisted living (AAL), because it doesn’t exist in the city.
- Only 3-4 nursing home or AAL options that Alexandrians have access to -- and only 13 beds total
- Very difficult to build this type of housing because land is expensive, sites are scarce, SUPs face neighborhood opposition and there are lender/capital difficulties
- Chesterbrook is a good example of a successful AAL development (collaboration among Fairfax County, faith communities and others; some market rate units help subsidize affordable units).

- Successful development of AAL requires free land, a non-profit that has AAL experience, and local jurisdictions to contribute (capital and operating dollars)

Public Questions/Issues

- More accessible units in new senior housing developments are needed
 - All of Culpepper Gardens and Chesterbrook are accessible according to panelist (one attendee disagreed with this)

HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Panel Discussion

Jeannie Cummins

- Need for granular, micro-scale detail of the housing needs of persons with disabilities to assist developers in producing what people want (bedroom sizes, incomes, etc.)
- Density is needed to accommodate accessibility – accessible units are often bigger
- Development fees and policies discourage innovation in affordable housing and keep the cost of affordable housing development too high
- Services (social and community) and housing departments need to coordinate

Mary Riley

- Ethics principles should be applied to housing (this guides Community Services Board decisions now)
 - Fairfax model –practices and policies – housing for those with the greatest needs come first
- Need to revisit the option of building SROs to serve this population
- Need to establish permanent supportive housing
- More money is available from 811 program

David Chamowitz

- Regulatory obstacles exist to getting accessible affordable housing developed
 - 2004 Safe Haven example – difficulties in providing congregate housing, needed a special-use permit which delayed approval and delivery because of neighbor opposition
- Board of Architectural Review (BAR) creates an extra level of difficulty and cost -- City should change policy to ensure that BAR does not have review over accessibility improvements. See APA and ADA, HIPPA, etc.

Mary Ann Weber

- Community Services Board was established to help those with MHMRSAs disabilities Many CSB clients are the poorest in the City – unemployed, chronic health problems
- In 2009, completed a 2 year plan with a new direction to provide supportive services within one's own affordable housing. Now advocating for affordable housing uncoupled from services.

Abbie Moore

- Need for affordable accessible housing is extreme
- Accessibility and affordability should be available in all new housing
 - Successful projects include Station at Potomac Yard and Chatham Square
- Mixed-income development should be focus
- Appoint a disabled persons panel to consult on new projects

Public Questions/Issues

- Universal design for all new and renovated housing should be mandatory
 - How do affordability and universal design intersect?
- Universal design should not only cover widths and turnarounds, but also materials, ventilation systems, etc...

- Policies for density bonuses and concessions should take into consideration affordability and accessibility/visitability of properties

HOUSING FOR HOMELESS

Panel Discussion

Chyrell Bucksell

- Many homeless were paying 50%+ for housing in Alexandria - including teachers and other members of the local workforce
- Need more affordable units that allow people to spend only 30% of their income or less on housing
- Need more transitional housing to help people move from shelter to independence

Michael O'Rourke

- SROs (what are now called affordable efficiencies) could provide very good transitional housing between life in shelter and fiscal independence; using rent subsidies and intense case management
- AACH operates a 2-year transitional housing program
 - 11 families from Alexandria are involved
 - Live on their own but get counseling, emphasis on savings plans
 - 10 HUD funded, 1 faith-based
- 11 families currently on the waiting list – these are families that demonstrate the strong need for more affordable housing

Bonnie Baxley

- Operates Community Lodgings, a transitional housing program in the City; provides family services to enable self sufficiency
- Homeless Services Coordinating Committee (HSCC) - developed a 10 year plan to end homelessness; mission is to prevent homelessness and provide supportive services to help households regain self-sufficiency; homeless children need extra help
- Affordable efficiencies are a major need in the city

Public Questions/Issues

- Accuracy of HUD point in time homeless count
 - Response was “very accurate”
 - Canvassing the neighborhood during a single day reduces duplicate responses
- Look at creating a regional coalition to assist the homeless
- Affordability gap is too large in Alexandria - Minimum wage vs. average rents

GENERAL DISCUSSION

- Affordability analysis should look largely at rental properties, not ownership; some perceive that the “City doesn’t want renters in Alexandria”
- Too many groups (non-profits) exist with similar missions and there is not sufficient coordination among them
- Where will funding coming from to execute master plan?
- Master plan needs to look at future demographic forecasts, not just today’s profile
- Define terms of need for incomes, age, social status, etc...
- Plan should examine successful practices to develop an action model
- Do incentives exist for low-cost rental property managers to accept special needs tenants?
- What are the regulatory issues for converting single family residences to multifamily residences?
- How can accessory dwelling units be utilized to assist those with disabilities with affordability?

- “Guest House” is a good model –provides support for women in need
- How can the City help residents age-in-place? - Home equity conversion loans? Accessibility renovations?
- Assessor’s office should be included in all discussions pertaining to affordability
- Look at UVA Housing & Transportation toolkit recently released (<http://www.tjpd.org/housing/THAtoolkit.asp>)
- Financial feasibility is important for implementing the master plan