



Joint Facilities Advisory Commission
Stacy Snyder, Chair
Wells Harrell, Vice Chair



February 27, 2023

Dear Chair Dorsey and Members of the Arlington County Board,

As you decide whether to approve the advertised Expanded Housing Options proposal, we write on behalf of the JFAC—a Commission that is charged with examining long-range schools, public facilities and land use planning—to reiterate the recommendations we made in the report that we issued to you and the School Board in April, 2022. (The report can be found here: https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/commissions/documents/jfac/jfac_mmhs_finaldraft_report_2022-04-27.pdf).

We are not taking a position on whether you should or should not adopt the Expanded Housing Options proposal. However, we feel strongly that broad and long-range planning and visioning for the future in light of these potential changes is an essential implementation.

In the April 2022 report, we presented the results of our research on six jurisdictions that have pursued or adopted policies to enable the development of Missing Middle homes: Charlotte, NC; Charlottesville, VA; Minneapolis, MN; Montgomery County, MD; Portland, OR; and Sacramento, CA. We prepared this report in response to this question from the County Board and the School Board: “How have jurisdictions that have adopted missing middle housing policies addressed impacts on public facilities, including schools?” Our report described how select jurisdictions addressed impacts on schools and other public facilities. One of the notable aspects of our research was the finding that most of the jurisdictions researched which adopted missing middle policies did so as part of a long-range visioning and planning process that looked broadly at how residents saw the future of their community in 20-30 years.

Based on those findings, we made three recommendations for Arlington County to consider in connection with its own Missing Middle Housing Study, from which the Expanded Housing Options proposal arises. With your decision coming up as early as next month, we felt it important to reiterate these recommendations.

First, we recommended:

“Use information learned from the Missing Middle Housing Study to inform (and to also be informed by) an expanded long-range vision of the future of Arlington as a whole, including considerations for transportation, diversity, equity, parks, environmental conservation, sustainability and schools and public facilities.”

Second, we recommended:

“Continue work to more fully incorporate schools and public facilities into long-range planning processes and the Comprehensive Plan so that there are codified ways to address school and public facility impacts of any future changes to housing policies and zoning. Carefully consider how best to anticipate and mitigate impacts on public facilities from any Missing Middle housing policies that the County may adopt.”

Finally, we recommended:

“Maintain the close collaboration between the County and APS by sharing information on projected student enrollment, new housing developments, student generation factors, and projected capacity utilization of APS facilities—to ensure that APS can successfully anticipate and plan to accommodate enrollment growth that might result from new missing middle housing.”

We hope that you will keep these recommendations in mind as you consider the Expanded Housing Options proposal. Planning broadly for the addition of new homes and new housing types in residential neighborhoods can help the County anticipate and address any impacts of redevelopment, while also inspiring confidence among potentially affected residents. We look forward to working with you in support of any long-range planning and visioning.

Sincerely,
Stacy Snyder, JFAC Chair
Wells Harrell, JFAC Vice-Chair