

Draft Affordable Housing Principles - Input from 8/26/13 forum

1. Housing affordability and accessibility are essential to promoting a sustainable, diverse, inclusive and economically vibrant community.

Suggestions

- Delete the work “promoting”
- “Affordable and accessible housing....”

Clarification/Questions

- Physical accessibility
- What constitutes a sustainable, diverse, inclusive and economically vibrant community
- Does accessibility mean accessibility to affordable housing?
- Accessible units or access to housing?
- Is provision for workers employed by the county and schools covered by this principle?

Comments

- Strongly Agree
- Most important sentence
- Does not address availability of housing
- Affordable housing matters to ALL Arlingtonians, not only those directly impacted.
- Sustainable communities have x% of their housing stock affordable to persons at x% AMI and below.
- How to make affordable housing + funding as important as funding Schools, Metro, Green spaces and other priorities.

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2. A range of housing choices should be available throughout the County to accommodate households of all income levels and needs.

Suggestions

- “will be” rather than “should be”
- Support a range of housing choices...to accommodate households up to 100% AMI
- The County should not establish a principle to accommodate households of all income levels and needs. E.g. upper income levels and needs. Remove language. Further discussion regarding including “All”.

Clarification/Questions

- Does this reflect what the government needs to do that the market does not?
- Throughout the County and at all levels, zipcodes, neighborhoods, buildings.

Comments

- More family-sized homeownership units
- We should support housing for County employees and people who work inside the County in general.
- I support a range of housing choices throughout the County to accommodate households up to 100% AMI including County and School personnel.
- Innovative housing choices
- The preliminary report clearly shows the increase of 20-30 age group. Let’s take care of these yuppies!
- Affordable housing for elders must include supportive services. (2 comments)
- A home of one’s choice.
- Housing choice must include housing options different types of housing models
- Housing affordable to persons of lesser means should be available in close proximity to bus and train services (with headways of 30 minutes or less).
- A range of housing choices – OK. But need to look specifically at gaps (i.e. accessory dwellings, creative occupancy standards, SROs, etc.

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3. Preventing and ending homelessness is a priority.

Suggestions

- Can we add “children shall not be homeless”?

Clarification/Questions

- Is there a stronger word than “priority”.
- Old principle #7 “that no Households with children will be homeless” is gone. Why? (same note as suggestion above)
- Including households who have experienced domestic violence.

Comments

- Homelessness happens!
- Why is homelessness such a big issue? What about the families that are being evicted and are overcrowded – why are they not the priority?
- Multiple pathways should exist for persons seeking to cease being homeless.
- Provide access to housing for people with poor credit, eviction history and criminal history.

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4. Maintaining and expanding the affordable housing supply requires the participation and partnership of the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Suggestions

- and a sustainable stream of revenue to finance the affordable housing supplies.
- Include “active” in participation
- In economically vibrant communities public investment is leveraged with private, non-profit and philanthropic partners.

Clarification/Questions

- Community –based groups are critical for keeping tenants in place – why does #4 not include these types of groups? – only focuses on public, private and non-profit.

Comments

- Nice concept
- Market Driven Solutions

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5. Affordable housing investments should complement the quality and character of the surrounding community.

Suggestions

- Change to “Affordable housing should be integrated into the community.”
- Affordable housing units and complexes should be indistinguishable from the rest of Arlington to the casual observer.
- Balanced and equitable blending in the community with sensitivity to property value vulnerability.

Clarification/Questions

- What problem does this address? It seems very subjective.
- What is the purpose?
- What does this mean? (2x)
- It seems to enshrine NIMBYism. (3x)
- NIMBY?
- Invitation to NIMBY?
- Isn't this a zoning issue?
- Why are we singling out affordable housing as required to complement the community? Is this different from any other development?
- Does it in any way work against principle #2 and #7?
- Does this then limit what can be done with the building because its character doesn't suit the neighborhood?

Comments

- This is the death knell for encouraging geographic distribution. What affordable housing will complement the character of exclusively zoned and economically segregated neighborhoods in 22207? This guarantees that affordable housing will only go where it already exists.
- Could conflict with FHAA intent to increase the stock of accessible housing
- Strange wording.
- Nothing has been done in the last 10 years to really look at this principle. Sounds good, but not a key aspect when development is project by project.
- We should consider ...addition of 2-3 story apartment buildings to single family neighborhoods.
- Proper maintenance of affordable housing (Roaches, hot water)

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6. Housing assistance will be targeted to the lowest income households; particularly those with children, members who are elderly, or members with disabilities.

Suggestions

- And coordination of support services.
- Housing assistance needs to be financial and sometimes needs to include support services.
- Inclusive communities factor the needs of disabled, elderly, the homeless and poor children into their housing and human services priorities.
- A variety of housing assistance programs will be available to households earning up to 100% AMI. Particularly those who work for the County and School Board, those with children, the elderly and those with disabilities.
- “A variety of...” would include programs such as MIPAP and tax rebates, so it wouldn’t just mean housing grants.

Clarification/Questions

- Clarify what “housing assistance” means – i.e. direct support of households, not support of providers.
- What do we do about the 60-80% AMI gap in subsidy?
- How do we assist households in the 60-100% AMI range?

Comments

- Affordable housing for elders must include services to age in place.
- Nice Principle. But we always end up giving subsidies that aid households at 60% AMI and higher. Practice has to support policy
- There isn’t assistance to help pay rent if you are single and under 65.
- Priority/preference in rental subsidy should not be contingent upon receipt of services.
- Strongly agree with the specific mention of these populations and emphasis on their needs.
- This seems to be related to #1 and accessibility to affordable housing. Assistance does need to be broader. Use a lower AMI threshold with priority to families, elderly and disabilities.
- HUD mortgages for 3 senior residences ending – could decrease affordable units.
- Affordable housing units should include those in long term care and senior residences.

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7. Equal housing opportunity should be a reality. Housing discrimination should not exist in Arlington.

Suggestions

- The principle should be stated as an active affirmative statement
- Not should, shall
- Healthy communities do not tolerate housing discrimination.
- Redundant 2nd sentence.

Clarification/Questions

Comments

- Agree. This is not addressed in a meaningful fashion in the goals.
- Equal housing opportunity seems to imply universal housing available to anyone in need.
- Agree Housing discrimination should not exist. It is a real issue that needs its own principle.
- The issue is accessibility to affordable housing. Not everyone who would qualify for affordable housing uses it.

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| 8. Other |
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Suggestions for principles

- Affordable housing investments require a full range of supportive services to be effective. (substance abuse, mental health services, financial counseling, job training, etc.)
- Promotion of long-term residency at all income levels.
- Economically vibrant communities have housing and transportation costs that are 45-50% AMI.
- Need more holistic approach. Importance of transportation
- No mention of funding the County's affordable housing. Suggest dedicated revenue to fund AHIG, grants and other assistance.
- Create a principle that addresses the total needs of the person holistically (housing, transportation, food, health care, etc.).
- Use public resources such as land and buildings to increase housing supplies.
- Use public land for public good to increase opportunities up to 100% AMI especially for County and School Board employees.
- Affordable housing investments should address all the housing goals (family-sized units, geographic distribution, serious housing need, homeownership).
- All housing should be safe and decent.
- Housing needs of persons with disabilities should be addressed in a principle.
- Housing needs of elders should be addressed in a principle.
- Housing needs of people transferring from nursing homes into apartments.
- Create a driving principle that ties County subsidies to developers to a formula that rewards addressing all the housing goals (family-sized units, geographic distribution, serious housing need, homeownership) not cherry-picking the goals that best characterize the project.

General comments regarding principles

- Principles should be shorter, more concise.
- Language should be as consistent as possible (all "should", rather than some "should" and some "shall").
- Need for a preamble that defines affordable housing as a county priority. It cross-cuts all aspects of our County vision (none of the points in our county agenda are achievable without affordable housing).
- Whatever begins this set of principles should clearly state why housing affordability matters to Arlingtonians on 3 dimensions; rationally (head); morally (heart); fiscally (wallet). Regardless of whether a person has experience with housing pressure.
- How to reconcile principles with realities; a) differences in land costs with principle of geographic distribution; b) depth vs. breadth in allocation of limited resources.

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- What about workers employed by private employers in low-wage jobs in the County who cannot afford housing here? Does any principle extend to transit subsidies for them? Or incentives to employers.

Other comments/questions

- Do we want to encourage or discourage the growth of the young adult bulge?
- How are long-term care residences accounted for in the affordable housing study
- Workforce housing needs to be a priority moving forward. 75% of county employees do not live in the county. More than half of School board employees live outside the county!
- Preference for people transitioning from nursing homes into apartment community (because appropriate housing didn't exist in Arlington).