



HOPE HALLECK
CLERK TO THE
COUNTY BOARD

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OFFICE OF THE COUNTY BOARD

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July 27, 2015

Dear *Emma*,
Emma,

As you know the County Board has for nearly 3 years had a citizen task force looking at how and whether the County's existing Affordable Housing policies should be changed to ensure that we have plans in place to provide a range of housing affordability in our community. Providing good quality affordable housing is an important component of Arlington's long-term sustainability and vibrancy. It is good for the folks who live in it, good for Arlington neighborhoods because families put down roots and participate in the community, and good for the many Arlington employers who are attracted by a diverse workforce that lives near work.

Our draft Master Plan calls for providing affordable housing using a variety of strategies, including:

- Preservation of existing affordable units wherever and whenever possible;
- Seeking new sites for affordable housing proximate to existing transportation corridors and developing the necessary new land use tools to achieve that housing; and
- Exploring a less constrained approach to accessory dwelling units in single family neighborhoods.

In the last few months, a number of community members have raised issues about whether the location of housing committed to be affordable to those who make 60% of Area Median Income (approx. \$65,000 a year for a family of 4) has any impacts on student and school achievement that should be considered as we update the County's housing policy. At our June meeting, County Board members requested that we seek data from the Arlington Public Schools that could inform the County Board and the community on that point. The purpose of this letter is to make those requests and ask that you provide answers to us and the community in late August so that we have sufficient time to process them in advance of our September consideration of the Housing Master Plan.

Our questions, specific to APS' experience, generally fall into two areas:

1. The achievement of children on standardized tests from similar demographics across schools in Arlington.
2. The impacts of student mobility on student achievement – both for the individual student and for the school. National research has demonstrated that students who live in committed affordable housing are likely to move less frequently and have greater opportunities to excel in school thereby contributing to school success.

Please know that we share your commitment to access to excellence at every school in Arlington for every child. For decades families with children have been less than 20% of our population; at the same time school funding has been at or near the top of our region and the nation. Our graduates are scattered throughout the country, successfully plying their trades and giving back as they become productive adults. We are immensely proud of the excellent education Arlington has been able to provide for one of the most truly diverse student bodies in the country.

Thank you for your attention to these requests. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure Arlington's sustainability and vibrancy for years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.