

DAAR Talking Points on the Housing Chapter of the Draft Loudoun 2040 General Plan

During this month, you will have the opportunity to submit comments on Loudoun County's new Draft 2040 General Plan! This Plan's visions, goals, and strategies serve as the road map for the future of Loudoun County. It is your chance to help the County plan to address its critical housing needs.

We have developed the following talking points that could be submitted in writing at an Open House or online at a later time. DAAR recommends that the Plan should:

- Require a housing needs assessment be conducted at least every five (5) years.
- Increase the number of housing choices for the Loudoun County workforce.
- Include incentives to encourage developers to create more affordable housing and housing for all, including the county's special needs populations, such as seniors and disabled veterans.
- Identify land to develop housing that is affordable.
- Be updated at least every five (5) years.

Talking Points

The Plan should require a housing needs assessment be conducted at least every five (5) years.

The real estate market is cyclical and follows a general seven (7) year pattern. It is also based largely on supply and demand, which makes it difficult to predict. DAAR recommends that the county regularly:

- Examine and estimate its unmet housing needs.
- Evaluate its housing programs for their effectiveness in addressing those needs.

The Plan should increase the number of housing choices for the Loudoun County workforce. Employers in Loudoun County are concerned about the lack of housing that is affordable for their employees. Additionally, county employees, such as firefighters and teachers, find it increasingly difficult to live in the county where they work. DAAR recommends that the county:

- Permit and encourage innovative and diverse housing types that will accommodate market demands for increased housing development.
 - Encourage development of newer housing concepts, such as accessory dwelling units, cooperative housing, cottage communities, and similar innovative housing types.
- Include flexible development standards, such as increased building heights, that maximize housing diversification to meet market demand around urban centers.
- Develop a streamlined approach for non-profit organizations to purchase Affordable Dwelling Units that are timing out of their restrictive period.
- Include specific efforts to increase the production of single-family homes to meet market demands.
- Provide a wide-range of urban, suburban, and rural housing choices at all price levels

for those who wish to purchase or rent property.

- Incorporate a mix of rental housing units that are affordable for the workforce to support retail and commercial employment centers.
- Develop and support additional housing programs, including programs that focus on the production of units, specifically targeted for those earning between 70 and 120 percent of the area median income (\$82,040-\$140,640).
- Consider the use of demand side subsidies to increase the purchasing power of renters and potential buyers.

The Plan should include specific incentives to encourage developers to create more affordable housing and housing for all, including the county's special needs populations, such as seniors and disabled veterans.

In order to maximize profits, developers and builders tend to construct larger, high-end units that are not affordable to households earning less than 100 percent of the area median income (\$117,200 in Loudoun County). DAAR recommends that the county establish specific incentives to help offset some of the costs to developers that will encourage the production of units, such as:

- Maximizing density bonuses.
- Creating an expedited permit process to advance permit applications to the front-of-the-line for developers who offer additional affordable units.
- Reducing or waiving application and review fees.
- Updating the methodology for calculating the capital facilities needs and Capital Intensity Factor to consider additional factors, such as unit size.

The Plan should identify land to develop housing that is affordable.

There is a great need for additional housing in Loudoun County. Not only is the average price of a home rising (up from \$503,765 in April 2017 to \$523,113 in April 2018), the county estimates a need for over 18,000 additional units by 2040 (2017 Housing Needs Assessment commissioned by Loudoun County). Adding to this crisis is the dwindling amount of land available for development in the suburban areas of the county. DAAR recommends that the county:

- Identify land within the county which could be used for additional housing that is affordable.
- Identify land that could be redeveloped into new housing or mixed-use communities.
 - In doing so, the county should not deplete the amount of housing that is affordable in the areas targeted for redevelopment.

The Plan should be updated at least every five (5) years.

The current comprehensive plan has been in place for over fifteen (15) years. Comprehensive Plans need to be updated in order to respond and adapt to changing market demands. The Virginia Code, Article 3, § 15.2-223 requires that a comprehensive plan must be reviewed at least every five years. DAAR recommends that the county regularly review and update its Comprehensive Plan in order to accommodate future changes in residential and commercial needs.