



DAAR Loudoun 2040 Talking Points

With planning, Loudoun County can accommodate needed residential development AND retain the unique qualities of Loudoun County!

There are those who often rely on fear and claim that residential development has and will continue to ruin the character and nature of our county. However, retaining our great qualities and addressing housing needs are not conflicting goals. Flexible policies and tools to address housing needs could be established and administered in a way that retains the qualities that make Loudoun County a special place in which to live, work, and play.

DAAR believes that Loudoun 2040 should:

- Encourage development of affordable and attainable housing.
- Include strategically-targeted residential development.
- Stay current to address changing market conditions.

Encourage development of affordable and attainable housing.

Not only is the average price of a home rising (up from \$506,294 in September 2017 to \$520,303 in September 2018), the county estimates a need for over 18,000 additional units by 2040, especially single-family housing (2017 Housing Needs Assessment commissioned by Loudoun County). Adding to this crisis is the lack of housing today! In September 2018, Loudoun County had the fewest September homes listed for sale in over a decade. The low inventory resulted in the median sales price of homes to increase, making housing in Loudoun County unaffordable and unattainable for many.

Policy statements to create housing that is affordable and attainable require supportive land use policies if they are to become a reality. Unfortunately, the draft plan contains several land use policies that are inflexible and overly prescriptive. These policies would make it difficult to provide such fundamental housing.

DAAR recommends that the Planning Commission closely review the Land Use and Implementation chapters and remove language that would negatively impact the development of affordable and attainable housing. The land use policies should be strengthened to encourage development of affordable and attainable housing. These policies should also include flexible development and design standards, such as increased building heights or decreased open space requirements on individual parcels, to maximize housing diversification to meet market demand.

Include strategically-targeted residential development.

The Vision of the Transition Policy Area (TPA) provides an opportunity to accommodate a development pattern that promotes housing diversity. Because there is a dwindling amount of land available for development in the suburban areas of the county, development in the TPA is critical to addressing the county's need for affordable and attainable housing.

The draft plan includes options for addressing the housing needs of the county. One option is to increase development of the county's needed affordable and attainable housing in the TPA. The plan should encourage innovative and diverse housing types, rather than requiring a conservation design approach, to create communities that will address the need for more single-family housing.

DAAR is concerned that new language inserted into the Rural Policy Area would result in a decrease in the current by-right levels of residential development. This is a substantive change to the RPA that could significantly the county's ability to meet the critical need for affordable and attainable housing. DAAR strongly disagrees with including such a dramatic policy shift in the RPA without having public discussion, with citizen and stakeholder input, similar to the process for the Suburban Policy Area during Envision Loudoun.

Stay current to address changing market conditions.

The current comprehensive plan has been in place for over fifteen years. Comprehensive Plans need to be updated in order to respond and adapt to changing market conditions. The Virginia Code, Article 3, § 15.2-223 requires that a comprehensive plan must be reviewed at least every five years. Additionally, the real estate market is cyclical and follows a general seven-year pattern. The market is also based largely on supply and demand, which makes it difficult to predict.

Not only should the county regularly review and update its Comprehensive Plan in order to accommodate future changes in residential and commercial needs, it should also regularly examine and estimate its unmet housing needs and evaluate its housing programs for their effectiveness in addressing those needs. Additionally, the county should conduct and make public an annual growth study. Only through having accurate information will the county be able to adequately address current and future needs. There should also be an opportunity for citizens to propose changes to the plan in between updates.

DAAR says [YES!](#) for housing that is affordable and attainable in Loudoun County.