



ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA



**Arlington County
Housing Commission
2025 Annual Report**

January 15, 2026

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A Message from the Chair

2025 has been a year like few others. The upheaval from the Trump administration’s assault on federal spending, federal employees and contractors, and civil rights protections—including enforcement of fair housing laws—are still reverberating throughout Arlington County. With rising unemployment and increasing need for basic social services, Arlington County is facing a challenging budget outlook for FY 2027. With drastic cuts planned for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs and the Trump administration’s rejection of proven solutions for reducing homelessness and housing instability, addressing the affordable housing crisis impacting our community will require creativity and flexibility.

The Housing Commission worked with the County Board and county staff to address some of these challenges in 2025:

- We worked with community stakeholders to recommend that the Virginia General Assembly return power to the County Board to decide what developers should be contributing toward affordable housing. If the proposed legislation passes in 2026, it will allow our community to exert significantly more control over what developers should be doing to support affordable housing while maintaining a positive environment for real estate investment.
- We developed recommendations to enhance the role of historically marginalized communities in housing policy decision-making to ensure that equity is a guiding principle for shaping housing policies, planning, and programs.
- We worked with the County Board to increase funding for fair housing enforcement and education and to secure commitments to increase fair housing testing in the county.

Much more, however, remains to be done. In 2026, the Housing Commission will work with the County Board and staff to identify new opportunities and policy solutions to address our affordable housing challenges. This will include actions that the county can take as well as opportunities for the private and nonprofit sectors and the Virginia government to remove barriers to housing affordability, increase the supply of attainable housing, and ensure that Arlington residents have access to safe, fair, and quality housing.

2025 has proved again that the Housing Commission is capable of tackling complex, critical problems and developing sound and innovative policy solutions. I’m looking forward to working with my fellow commissioners, partners, staff, and County Board members to advance affordable and fair housing in the new year!

Sincerely,

Kellen MacBeth
Chair, Housing Commission

Purpose

The Housing Commission serves as the chief advisory commission to the County Board on housing issues in Arlington County. The Commission will serve a variety of functions aimed at advising the County Board on County housing conditions, trends and needs, and developing policy recommendations. The Housing Commission submits this annual report to inform the County Board and the public of its work and accomplishments in 2025.

Membership

- Kellen MacBeth, Chair
- Katie Wenger, Vice Chair
- Nikki Blake
- Bryan Coleman
- Elena Fierro (joined February 2025)
- Elizabeth Escovar (departed January 2025)
- Zackary Linick
- Margaret McGilvray
- Anika Montgomery
- Danny Ross
- Jason Schwartz
- Karen Serfis
- Joe Ventrone

Areas of Focus

In the Housing Commission’s 2025 Work Plan, the Commission identified four main objectives for its work during the year:

- a) Maintaining and strengthening role as chief advisory commission to County Board on housing issues;
- b) Identifying policy areas where the Housing Commission can provide its knowledge and experience to provide a positive impact upon the policy process;
- c) Continuing its collaboration with a variety of stakeholders in 2025, all with the goal of better integrating adjacent concerns and issues into housing discussions and better informing the Commission’s recommendations to the County Board.

Maintaining and strengthening the commission’s role as chief advisor to the County Board on housing issues

The Housing Commission continued to build upon the progress made in 2024 to strengthen its role as chief advisory commission to the County Board regarding housing matters, again most notably ensuring that the Commission was represented at nearly every regular County Board meeting in 2025, especially those where items upon which the Commission made a formal recommendation were up for action before the Board. Chair MacBeth also kept in regular contact with the Housing Director (Anne Venezia), the Housing Commission Liaison (County Board Member Maureen Coffey), representatives from the Planning Commission, Tenant-Landlord Commission, and Commission on Aging, Human Rights Commission, and various county officials, stakeholders, and community members. The County Board appointed Katie Wenger to serve as Vice Chair, and the Commission added one new member, Elena Fierro, to better reflect Arlington’s diverse communities with respect to backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

The Commission continued to work with county staff to ensure that equity-related information is collected and available for the Commission to consider before making recommendations to the County Board in line with the Housing Commission’s Equity Framework, adopted in 2023.

In 2025, the Commission tackled long-standing issues impacting housing policy in Arlington County: concerns with the impact of the Affordable Housing Ordinance adopted in 2005 and the lack of engagement with historically marginalized communities in housing policy decision-making. The Commission formed subcommittees with representatives from throughout the community to identify solutions which are detailed in the following section of this report.

Community Engagement Task Force

Concerned about the consistent underrepresentation of historically marginalized communities and renters in the feedback Arlington County gathers about housing policies, the Housing Commission

established the Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) in February 2025. The CETF was charged with identifying barriers to participation in housing policy decision-making for historically marginalized communities within Arlington and with developing recommendations for the Housing Commission, County Board, and County Manager for increasing participation in housing policy decision-making for these communities.

At its December 4, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission voted unanimously, 9-0, to approve the final recommendations of the CETF. The CETF—chaired by Katie Wenger and made up of representatives from the Housing Commission, Tenant-Landlord Commission, and community organizations that work with low-income and historically marginalized residents—held public meetings, conducted a survey with 248 respondents, held listening sessions with 40 people (focusing on low-income renters in both the survey and listening sessions), and gathered information from county staff and the public to identify barriers to engaging in housing policy decision-making for historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.

The CETF identified eight barriers (see below) to public engagement found among historically marginalized and underrepresented populations in the county and developed 31 recommendations for the County Board, County Manager, and Housing Commission to consider that, if implemented, would lead to increased participation in housing policy decision-making for historically marginalized communities in Arlington.

Barriers to Engagement in Housing Policies:

1. Most residents are unaware of opportunities to participate in housing policy feedback, and/or do not understand these policies enough to participate.
2. Many residents are not interested in participating in housing policy engagement because they do not see how it impacts their lives.
3. Residents have competing responsibilities (i.e., multiple jobs or caregiving responsibilities) and lack the time to participate in community engagement opportunities for housing policies.
4. Some residents experience language and accessibility barriers that hinder their ability to fully engage in housing policy engagement efforts.
5. Some residents have a distrust and fear of participating in engagement opportunities with the county government on housing policies.
6. Tenants are often underrepresented on Site Plan Review Committees (SPRC).
7. Area and sector planning community engagement focuses heavily on existing residents in impacted neighborhoods and not residents who have been unable to live in those neighborhoods (but would like to) due to historical redlining, lack of affordable housing, or other barriers.
8. Residents are often unaware of what the Housing Commission is focused on and don't see how their voice is represented on the commission.

The [CETF Findings & Recommendations Report](#) summarizes the Housing Commission’s research and data collection, findings, and recommendations on what Arlington County can do to help overcome these barriers to participation for historically marginalized communities. The CETF also produced a [briefing](#) with information and visualizations related to the CETF’s data collection efforts.

Results:

The CETF Findings & Recommendations Report was sent to the County Board in December 2025. The Housing Commission will continue to engage with the County Board and county staff in 2026 to advocate for implementation of the recommendations.

Identifying policy areas where the Housing Commission can provide its knowledge and experience to provide a positive impact upon the policy process

Affordable Housing Ordinance Working Group

To identify solutions to maximize the value of developer contributions under the Affordable Housing Ordinance (AHO), either through onsite committed affordable (CAF) units or in lieu of cash contributions to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF), the Housing Commission created the Affordable Housing Ordinance Working Group (AHOWG) in February 2025. The AHOWG had the following charge:

- Examine the county’s AHO and Virginia enabling legislation and assess it against neighboring jurisdictions’ policies and its benefits to the Arlington community
- Develop recommended changes to the AHO and enabling legislation to recalibrate the formula to increase affordable housing production in Arlington and respond to updated market conditions in alignment with the AHMP goals
- Develop recommended changes to the AHO and enabling legislation to make other changes needed to improve the tools available to the county government for affordable housing production

The AHOWG—made up of representatives from the Housing Commission, Planning Commission, Tenant-Landlord Commission, Commission on Aging, developer community, affordable housing advocates, and the public—met from March 2025 through September 2025 to analyze the history, impact, and shortcomings of the AHO and to compare the impact of Arlington’s AHO against alternative policies in use by the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County.

At the September 17, 2025, meeting of the Housing Commission, the chair of the AHOWG, Bryan Coleman, presented the working group’s recommendations to the Commission for consideration (the

AHOWG recommendations can be found [here](#)). The Housing Commission, thankful for the hard work of the AHOWG, adopted the following recommendations for the County Board in a unanimous, 8-0, vote:

1. The County Board should work with the General Assembly to amend § 15.2-735.1 of the Code of Virginia to provide Arlington County with the authority to revise its affordable housing ordinance as needed to respond to evolving policy goals and community needs.
2. The County Board should convene a multi-sector working group to further develop options for amending 15.5.8 (base density) of the Arlington County Code. The working group should operate within the following parameters:
 - a. Base Density – Cash contributions to the AHIF resulting from the AHO are not commensurate with the value of the provision on on-site affordable units. The working group should identify a solution to bring the value of cash contributions into closer alignment with the value of on-site affordable units. The working group should also identify mitigation measures for potentially burdensome cost increases for developers, if they are an impediment to additional housing development in Arlington.
 - b. Bonus Density – Members of the public and developers stated that there is a lack of transparency around bonus density negotiation (15.5.9) that increases uncertainty during the site-plan process. The working group should consider potential policy guidance, standardization, whether cash contributions to AHIF or onsite units should be prioritized and under what circumstances, and/or other measures that could increase transparency to the bonus density approval process, resulting in more certainty and decreased costs.
 - c. Commercial Properties – Cash contributions to AHIF from commercial property development should continue unchanged.
 - d. Comprehensive Plan – The working group’s work should align with updates to Arlington’s Comprehensive Plan.

Arlington County continues to fail to produce the level of affordable housing needed to meet the 2015 Affordable Housing Master Plan’s (AHMP) goals. Our current supply of rental housing units affordable to residents earning up to 60% of area median income (AMI) is only 12.1% and we are not increasing supply at a rate fast enough to reach the AHMP goal of 17.7% by 2040.

The Housing Commission has grown frustrated that over the last 20 years since Arlington’s Affordable Housing Ordinance (AHO) was put in place by the General Assembly, the value of cash contributions to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) from developers has not kept pace with the income foregone from new committed affordable units for site-plan projects. Today, we are collecting a lower cash contribution on a per square foot basis and producing fewer affordable units in exchange for allowing developers to exceed restrictions on building heights and density.

The Housing Commission believes that the Arlington County Board, elected by Arlington residents, should control its own affordable housing policies. It is an extraordinary burden for the Arlington community to have to go before the General Assembly, a body made up of 97% of delegates and 95% of senators who do not represent Arlington County, and then seek approval from the Governor, to change our local affordable housing policy. This power should belong to our County Board so that it reflects the needs and desires of Arlington residents and can be more easily changed as economic circumstances and housing needs evolve. The Commission believes that now is the time for the County Board to regain this authority.

The specific formula used to determine developer contributions to AHIF or in on-site or off-site CAF units for each site-plan project is complex and tied to both the community's need for more housing affordable to low-income residents as well as the economic conditions that make residential and commercial developments in Arlington feasible. The Housing Commission believes that a new working group made up of diverse representatives from across the many stakeholder groups impacted by the AHO will be best positioned to produce thoughtful and viable recommendations for enhancing the AHO. We strongly believe that the County Board, and not the General Assembly, should be the ultimate decision-makers on what those changes should be.

Results:

In November 2025, the County Board adopted its 2026 General Assembly Legislative Package which includes the following related legislative initiative:

- Increase Local Authority Over Affordable Housing – Allow localities increased flexibility to promote affordable housing through housing solutions tailored to fit local needs, including but not limited to negotiating affordable set-asides through a collaborative local process, which includes interested parties.

The County Board has been working with Senator Barbara Favola and Delegate Alfonso Lopez to carry legislation ([SB296](#) and [HB922](#)) related to the Housing Commission's recommendation for the 2026 General Assembly Session.

HUD Fair Housing Assistance Program

At its January 16, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) after a briefing from the HUD FHAP Director and from Arlington's Office of Human Rights. FHAP is a federally funded program that provides states and localities with funds and training to investigate claims of fair housing discrimination. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the County Board that the County take all the necessary steps—reviewing and amending Arlington's Human Rights

Ordinance and beginning collaboration with HUD—to become a FHAP jurisdiction. This would allow for more funds and training from HUD to investigate claims of fair housing discrimination made within Arlington County.

In March of 2024, the County Board took an important step to implement the 2023 Fair Housing Plan by adding Source of Funds as a protected class to the Human Rights Ordinance. Among the many goals of the Fair Housing Plan, the County Board also committed the county to exploring becoming a FHAP. Becoming a FHAP, in addition to the financial and technical assistance benefits, would ensure that Arlington County’s fair housing investigation processes are consistent with HUD standards. We would join Fairfax County in fair housing discrimination investigations made within our own county that are now sent to HUD and typically investigated by the Virginia Fair Housing Office. This is an opportunity for Arlington to prioritize identifying and ending fair housing discrimination throughout our community.

Initial reports from the Office of Human Rights suggest that the 2024 fair housing testing revealed multiple instances of discrimination within the county. We also know that much of the fair housing discrimination that occurs goes unreported. HUD expressed excitement that Arlington is considering becoming a FHAP and a strong willingness to immediately work with the county to start the process. The Housing Commission recommends that the County Board move quickly to begin the process of making Arlington a leader in fair housing enforcement.

Results:

It does not appear that Arlington County took any action to pursue becoming a HUD Fair Housing Assistance Program in 2025.

Crystal House 6 AHIF Allocation

At its February 13, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Crystal House 6 Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) Allocation. The Commission is overwhelmingly in support of the project. The \$13,800,000 loan to True Ground Housing Partners (TGHP) will help construct a new affordable senior apartment building with 80 Committed Affordable Units (CAFs). The Commission had questions around specific design choices, specifically discussing the amount of Type A units included in the project, and whether a fund for reasonable modifications would be in place to help low-income seniors with disabilities modify their units.

The Commission voted unanimously, 8-0 with one abstention, to approve the AHIF allocation. Commissioner Ross abstained as a TGHP employee.

Results:

At its February 22 meeting, the County Board voted 5-0 to allocate the \$13,800,000 in AHIF funds for the Crystal House 6 project.

Melwood

At its February 13, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Melwood site plan proposal and Revitalization Area Resolution. The Commission is overwhelmingly in support of the project. The project will add 105 Committed Affordable Units (CAFs) to the County's affordable housing supply. It also meets many Affordable Housing Master Plan goals, such as providing family sized units, very low-income units, Type A accessible units, and units close to transit. The project will also designate up to 30% of units as priority preference for people with disabilities and include institutional space for Melwood, which provides workforce development and support programs for people with disabilities.

The Commission voted unanimously, 9-0, to approve the project and Revitalization Area Resolution.

Results:

At its February 22 meeting, the County Board voted 4-0, with one abstention, to approve the Melwood site plan and designate the site as a "Revitalization Area." [See more here.](#)

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

At its March 27, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission considered the County Manager's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. The Commission voted unanimously to approve a list of recommendations. Those are:

1. **Increase AHIF funding to \$21M** (an \$8.6M increase from the County Manager's proposal) to ensure that the county has additional funds in upcoming fiscal years to contribute to increases in CAF supply. There may be upcoming (re)development projects for CAFs that are at risk of not having AHIF funding at a time when construction costs and interest rates are making affordable housing development more expensive.
2. **Provide additional funding to the Office of Human Rights** to expand enforcement and outreach for fair housing violations, especially based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Trump administration has stopped enforcing federal fair housing cases based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which means that Arlington residents will only have these protections enforced by Virginia or Arlington County. Additionally, the Trump administration has announced plans to reduce fair housing staff within the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by almost 80%, which means that all federal fair housing

investigations may become extremely delayed. With capacity issues for all fair housing cases within the Virginia Attorney General’s Office, Arlington may be the only option for fair housing complaints under these protected classes. To ensure that Arlington residents and workers have their rights protected, we recommend:

- a. Consistent with the Housing Commission’s January 2025 letter, take all the necessary steps—reviewing and amending Arlington’s Human Rights Ordinance and beginning collaboration with HUD—to become a Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) jurisdiction. This would allow for more funds and training from HUD to investigate claims of fair housing discrimination made within Arlington County.
 - b. Conduct a marketing campaign—to residential property owners, landlords, and residents—to 1) reinforce Arlington’s key role in protecting residents from housing discrimination and 2) ensure that residents who face discrimination understand their rights and how to seek redress. Many residents do not know that their rights are protected by the county and may think that they have no enforcement mechanism available given the Trump Administration’s plans to stop or limit enforcement.
 - c. Ensure that the Office of Human Rights has the necessary staff to conduct fair housing enforcement and begin doing outreach to the community on their rights and responsibilities.
3. **Provide adequate funding for the implementation of the county’s strategic plan to functionally end homelessness by 2027.** The plan’s goals are not achievable at current funding levels. Additionally, ensure that the county has adequate funding to address increased levels of homelessness that may occur as the regional economy enters a period of turbulence and potential contraction. Needed funding includes:
- a. More short-term rental subsidies (like flexible Rapid Rehousing) that also create pathways for undocumented residents to stable housing
 - b. Supportive services resources to attract and retain case managers to do the work
 - c. More behavioral health resources and Permanent Supportive Housing
 - d. A continued portfolio of housing for all subsidized households on the low-income stream.
4. **Fund a study of rent stabilization in Arlington** based on the Housing Commission’s resolution sent to the County Board in November 2024.
5. **Do not eliminate the Principal Planner position** on the Comprehensive Planning team to ensure that long-term planning is not negatively impacted by short-term budget constraints.
6. **Ensure adequate funding for eviction prevention** as needs arise in excess of the proposed \$2.1 million in funding.
7. **Fund a Deputy Director position for the Department of Human Services’ Housing Assistance Bureau.** Given the strain on front-line staff from increasing caseloads and resident needs for housing services, bureau leadership needs additional resources to help with strategic problem-

solving and efforts to make programs like Housing Choice Vouchers, Housing Grants, Permanent Supportive Housing, Homelessness Services, the Continuum of Care, and Real Estate Tax Relief more efficient and effective. A deputy director would support the director and staff across critical program areas to implement important program enhancements that will ultimately save the county money while improving program delivery.

Results:

In April 2025, the County Board adopted some of the Housing Commission’s recommendations in their FY2026 budget:

- Included an additional \$35k for the Office of Human Rights to fight housing discrimination through education and enforcement.
- Included a requirement for the Office of Human Rights to conduct fair housing testing annually, instead of every other year.
- Included an additional \$1 million for homeless services for a total of \$7.8 million.

Hotel Pentagon

At its March 27, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Hotel Pentagon site plan proposal. The project will add 9 Committed Affordable Units (CAFs) to the County’s affordable housing supply and will contribute over \$2,000,000 to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) through the base contribution. The project will also contribute over 500 market-rate units to the housing supply.

During public comment, Commissioners heard concerns from Green Valley residents about the project. The Commission voted unanimously, 10-0, to recommend approval of the site plan amendment, with the following recommendations:

1. The applicant should work closely with the Green Valley Civic Association, Lomax AME Zion Church, and other Green Valley residents to better integrate the project into the Green Valley neighborhood through public art or other projects that celebrate and reflect the history and culture of the historically black neighborhood and events at the historic church.
2. The applicant should commit to developing an additional committed affordable unit at the property, for a total of 10 CAFs.
3. The applicant should extend the period of affordability of the onsite CAF units beyond the required 30 years.
4. The county should consider future opportunities to work with the applicant to convert the townhouses on the site from rental to homeownership properties using whatever tools the county has available to advance attainable homeownership opportunities.

5. The applicant should provide funding for Lomax AME Zion’s childcare center.

Results:

At its April 9 meeting, the County Board voted 4-0, with one abstention, to approve the Hotel Pentagon site plan.

Goodwill AHIF and HOME Allocations

At its May 1, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Goodwill Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) allocations. The Goodwill project, which was approved in 2024, will add 128 Committed Affordable Units (CAFs) to the County’s affordable housing supply for 60 years, as well as a childcare center serving 40 children. In 2025, the County Board was asked to allocate \$7,630,465 in AHIF funds and \$6,057,000 in HOME loan funds to Affordable Homes and Communities (AHC) to assist with the completion of the project.

The Commission overwhelmingly supports the project and voted unanimously, 11-0, to recommend approval of the allocation requests.

Results:

At its May 10 meeting, the County Board voted to 5-0 to approve the allocation of the \$7,630,465 in AHIF funds and \$6,057,000 in HOME funds for the Goodwill project.

Clarendon Square

At its May 1, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Clarendon Square site plan proposal. The Commission supported the project and recognized the project will improve the site and the community, while adding 8 Committed Affordable Units (CAFs) to the County’s affordable housing supply and contributing approximately \$945,000 to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) through the base contribution.

The Commission voted unanimously, 11-0, to recommend approval of the site plan, with recommendations to include two (2) additional 2-bedroom CAF units, and to increase the base contribution to at least \$1,000,000.

However, Commission discussion focused mostly on a concern about the overall site plan process. Commissioners expressed frustration that the Housing Commission’s involvement in the site plan process comes too late for applicants to seriously consider any changes to the project recommended by the Commission. The applicant confirmed that it would be extremely difficult for them to

meaningfully change the project prior to the County Board meeting. Commissioners discussed the need to change the Housing Commission’s involvement in the site plan process to ensure that Housing Commissioners, members of the public who comment at our meetings, and the applicants engage in meaningful discussions about the projects while there are still opportunities to consider recommendations to benefit the housing needs of the community.

Results:

At its May 10 meeting, the County Board voted 5-0 to approve the Clarendon Square site plan.

One Rosslyn

At its July 10, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the One Rosslyn site plan proposal. The Commission overwhelmingly supported the project. The project will improve the site and the community, meets the Affordable Housing Ordinance requirements, and will provide a \$7,545,485 contribution to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) for earned bonus density, for a total AHIF contribution of \$11,218,313.

The Commission voted unanimously, 7-0, to recommend approval of the site plan. We were excited that the \$7,545,485 bonus density AHIF contribution can be leveraged to provide about 65 off-site affordable units, and at longer affordability periods than the standard site plan term of 30 years. The Commission also was glad that this project will contribute 845 market-rate units to our county’s housing supply. We expressed desire to bring a grocery store into the retail portion of the development. We also noted support for the condominium units that will be created, with one commissioner asking staff to consider whether the \$651,858 portion of the total \$7,545,485 earned density contribution that is due prior to First Partial Certificate of Occupancy for the Northeast Tower (condominium tower) can be utilized for homeownership programs.

Results:

At its July 22 meeting, the County Board voted 5-0 to approve the One Rosslyn site plan.

Shirlington House

At its July 10, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Shirlington House site plan proposal. The Commission overwhelmingly supported the project. The project will improve the site and the community, while adding 12 Committed Affordable Units (CAFs) to the County’s affordable housing supply.

The Commission voted unanimously, 7-0, to recommend approval of the site plan. The Commission felt that the 12 on-site CAFs are a significant housing contribution, making up 16% of the new units, and was glad that half (6) of them will be two-bedrooms.

The Commission was glad to hear that current Shirlington House residents will not be displaced, and felt that the infill development is an efficient use of land. Commissioners asked how current Shirlington House residents will be impacted, what the overall unit composition would be, the construction completion date and confirmed there is sufficient parking on-site.

Results:

At its July 22 meeting, the County Board voted 5-0 to approve the Shirlington House site plan.

Ballston One

At its July 10, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Ballston One site plan proposal. The Commission overwhelmingly supports the project. The project will improve the site and the community, meets the Affordable Housing Ordinance requirements, and will provide a \$2,020,590 contribution to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) for earned bonus density, for a total AHIF contribution of \$3,200,784.

The Commission voted unanimously, 7-0, to recommend approval of the site plan. The Commission was supportive of the bonus density cash contribution to AHIF in lieu of on-site units. We asked why the Applicant wasn't proposing a taller building, but understood the financial constraints guiding this decision. Commissioners were also glad to hear about the sustainability features included at the site.

Results:

At its July 22 meeting, the County Board voted 5-0 to approve the Ballston One site plan.

2500 Wilson Blvd

At its September 4, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the 2500 Wilson Blvd. site plan proposal. The Commission overwhelmingly supported the project. The project will improve the site and the community, meets the Affordable Housing Ordinance requirements, and includes 20 on-site Committed Affordable Units (CAFs). The Commission voted unanimously, 9-0, to recommend approval of the site plan.

The Commission expressed frustration upon learning that county staff had requested that the applicant reduce the building height from 16 stories to 14 stories. The Commission discussed how reducing building heights along the Rosslyn-Ballston metro corridor is at cross-purposes with the

county's goals to increase housing supply and bring down the cost of housing. The Commission urges the County to encourage taller building heights along major transit corridors in order to increase the overall housing supply.

Some commissioners also asked if 3-bedroom CAFs were considered on-site. Staff responded that the subsidy required for a 3-bedroom CAF was very high. The Commission would like staff to consider identifying opportunities to add 3-bedroom CAFs through the site plan process in the future.

Results:

At its September 13 meeting, the County Board voted 5-0 to approve the 2500 Wilson Blvd site plan.

Inn of Rosslyn

At its September 4, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission discussed the Inn of Rosslyn site plan proposal. The Commission supported the project's approval. The project will improve the site and the community, meets the Affordable Housing Ordinance requirements, and will provide 13 on-site Committed Affordable Units (CAFs).

The Commission voted unanimously, 9-0, to recommend approval of the site plan. The Commission discussed how the need for housing outweighed the open space goals that aren't being met in the current proposal. Despite the County Manager recommendation being denial, the Housing Commission would like to see this project approved. The applicant stressed that it was not feasible for them to develop the site in a way that met county staff's open space requirements. Given the likelihood that rejection of the site plan would lead to a vacant lot for a decade or more and that the Radnor-Ft. Meyer Heights Civic Association is in favor of the site plan, the Commission recommended that the project move forward.

Results:

At its September 13 meeting, the County Board voted to defer the Inn of Rosslyn site plan. The proposal will be revised and returned to the review process.

2026 General Assembly Legislative Priorities

The Commission formed a Legislative Priorities Subcommittee that met in July and August and considered a total of 32 potential legislative proposals. The subcommittee was chaired by Commissioner Nikki Blake. The Subcommittee recommended that the Commission consider 11 legislative priorities. At its September 17, 2025, hybrid public meeting, the Housing Commission

finalized its 2025 Legislative Priorities package. The Commission recommends that the County Board consider the following ten priorities that will advance the County’s housing vision and address the housing needs of county residents:

1. **Grant authority to Virginia localities to enforce tenant rights and protections under the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (VRLTA), especially concerning health and safety conditions.**
 - The County Board has included this item in its legislative priorities since 2021 and the Commission believes it should continue to be a priority for the county. Although Delegate Price (HB802, HB597, HB1718) patroned legislation aligned with this legislative priority in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 the bills were vetoed after being passed by the Virginia House and Senate.
2. **Expand localities’ negotiation authority with developers for site-plan conditions to include habitability conditions, neighborhood equity projects, bedroom size, and Type A accessibility for market rate units.**
 - The Housing Commission recommends expanded negotiation authority for local governments, like Arlington County, to use the site-plan process to address community needs beyond areas like transit facilities, roads, affordable housing, or onsite green or community space. This new authority would allow local governments to negotiate commitments regarding certain habitability and quality conditions for tenants, funds for addressing the impacts of historic segregation in the local neighborhood (local projects to address disparate access in opportunity to employment, environmentally healthy neighborhoods, education, etc.), unit bedroom sizes based on needs within the community for certain family-size units, or additional Type A accessible units.
3. **Enhance anti-retaliation protections for tenants who form a tenant association, seek to enforce their rights under the Fair Housing Law, VRLTA, and Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, or raise grievances to their property manager or landlord.**
 - The Housing Commission has heard directly from tenants, especially low-income tenants, that they have hesitated to or not reported violations of their rights as tenants because they fear retaliation. Additionally, the Regional Fair Housing Plan adopted by the County Board in July 2023 notes that that Spanish-speaking residents reported “fear of reprisal as a major issue in reporting housing discrimination or substandard housing conditions.” This is a problem affecting tenants across the county across income levels and current law places the burden of proving a landlord’s intent to retaliate on the tenant.
 - In 2022, Delegate Lopez patroned HB840 which would presume that a landlord is retaliating against a tenant if they increase their rent or evict them within 6 months after the tenant brings up complaints. The bill failed to advance in the General Assembly. In

2024, Delegate McClure patroned HB817 to modify and expand the list of actions a landlord may take without violating the prohibition on retaliation and allow a tenant, when the landlord has unlawfully retaliated, to recover actual damages and to assert retaliation as a defense in any action brought against him for possession. The bill passed the House and Senate but was vetoed by the Governor.

4. Increase funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF).

- The VHTF creates and preserves affordable housing and reduces homelessness in the commonwealth similar to Arlington's Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) through competitive loans and grants. The Commission believes that much more funding is needed to ensure that Virginia increases its supply of affordable housing.

5. Allocate more resources toward enforcing Virginia's Fair Housing Law to prevent discrimination.

- The federal government has stopped or sharply curtailed enforcement of federal fair housing cases based on sexual orientation and gender identity and the Trump Administration has announced plans to reduce fair housing staff within the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by almost 80% which means that all federal fair housing investigations may become extremely backed up. The Housing Commission recommends that the General Assembly allocate to Virginia's Fair Housing Office more resources to conduct housing discrimination investigations and ensure the state has sufficient resources to enforce fair housing law.

6. Support a Faith in Housing policy that would reduce barriers and speed up the process for congregations and nonprofits to build affordable housing on their land.

- Religious and nonprofit owned property is fast becoming one of the primary locations for new affordable housing projects in Arlington but continues to face sustained opposition from residents who do not want affordable housing in their neighborhoods. The Housing Commission supports a Faith in Housing Bill that accomplishes the following goals:
 - Reduces the cost and time needed for religious congregations and nonprofits to redevelop their property to build affordable housing.
 - Includes a limited public engagement process that maximizes the community's ability to raise community needs and desires with the applicant while minimizing opportunities to employ delay tactics to draw out the process in hopes that the increased effort and cost will sink the project.
 - The affordable housing developed on the congregation or nonprofit property serves residents at 60% of area median income (AMI) or lower and is affordable for at least 99 years.

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- The Housing Commission also recommends that the county advocate that the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) and the Virginia Municipal League (VML) not oppose the policy.
7. **Require landlords to include legal aid office contact information with notice of tenancy terminations.**
 - § 55.1-1202. Notice, section D of the Virginia State Code requires that legal aid contact information is provided by landlords to tenants on termination of tenancy notices for public housing and Housing Choice Voucher leases. The Commission believes that extending this requirement to all termination of tenancy notices will ensure that more tenants know who they can contact to enforce their rights if their tenancy is terminated.
 8. **Fund a pilot Virginia state-wide housing voucher program.**
 - In 2023, Virginia’s Department of Housing and Community Development developed the Virginia Housing Stability Fund (now known as the 5,000 Families Fund) proposal to create a state-wide rental assistance program. However, the General Assembly did not take action on the proposal that session. In 2025, Delegate Sewell patroned HB1879 and Senator Locke patroned SB832 (5,000 Families Fund) to establish a state-wide rental assistance pilot program. The bills did not pass the House of Delegates or Senate.
 - Over half of Virginian renter households are cost burdened (they pay more than 30% of their income towards housing costs) and 83% of extremely low-income households are cost-burdened. The Housing Commission recommends that Virginia establish a pilot state-wide housing voucher program and maximize eligibility screening efficiency by using data from existing programs supporting low-income residents such as Medicaid, SNAP, and/or WIC. Connecticut has worked to improve efficiency for its state-wide Rental Assistance Program integrating intake processes for multiple low-income resident serving programs.
 9. **Development and use of accessory dwelling units.**
 - Delegate Srinivasan patroned HB 900 and Senator Salim patroned SB304 in 2024 which require a locality to include in its zoning ordinances for residential zoning districts accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, as defined in the bill, as a permitted accessory use. The bill requires a person to seek a permit for an ADU from the locality, requires the locality to issue such permit if the person meets certain requirements enumerated in the bill, and restricts the fee for such permit to \$250 or less. The bill prohibits the locality from requiring rear or side setbacks for the ADU greater than that of the primary dwelling or consanguinity or affinity between the occupants of the ADU and the primary dwelling. Both bills failed to pass the House and Senate.
 - The Housing Commission recommends that the County Board inform the VML, VACO, and our General Assembly delegation that Arlington does not take issue with the General Assembly enabling more streamlined construction of accessory dwellings or

granny flats so that homeowners can provide housing to family members and other people in need of housing.

10. Require localities to develop a streamlined development process for 100% affordable housing developments.

- The Housing Commission recommends that the General Assembly pass legislation mandating that every locality create an approval process for 100% affordable housing developments/redevelopments that significantly decreases the time and expenses associated with gaining local governing body approval for the project and provide whatever authority is required for localities to execute this mandate. Virginia should also develop a model approval process for local governing bodies to adopt if they do not develop their own process.

Results:

In November 2025, the County Board adopted housing-related legislative priorities that encompassed some of the Housing Commission’s recommended legislative priorities in their final legislative package:

1. **Protect Tenants: Strengthen tenants’ rights by providing additional recourse, including local enforcement, for inadequate health and safety conditions and access to legal resources during eviction proceedings. Support measures to keep housing costs affordable, including anti–rent gouging protections.**
2. **Adequately Fund Affordable Housing Initiatives: Ensure the Virginia Housing Trust Fund and local housing initiatives are adequately resourced and have the flexibility they need to address housing needs.**
3. **Create and Maintain Inclusive Housing Standards and Planning: Make sure housing policies consider the needs of individuals from all backgrounds, including older Virginians and those with disabilities, and that anti-discrimination policies are enforced.**
4. **Provide Maximum Flexibility for Addressing Housing Affordability and Quality: Allow for creative solutions for developing more housing and for flexibility in dealing with housing quality issues such as inadequate heating or A/C causing risks during extreme heat or cold.**

Fair Housing Recommendations

At its December 4, 2025, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission received a briefing by the Acting Assistant County Manager for the Office of Human Rights, EEO & ADA (given the recent departure of the head of the Office of Human Rights). The Commission discussed the 2024 Fair Housing Testing Report and implementation of the 2023 Regional Fair Housing Plan.

After a hiatus of four years, Arlington County contracted with the Equal Rights Center, a U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Housing Initiatives Program nonprofit, to perform fair housing

testing. The 2024 testing was the first time the county expanded testing to a total of 4 protected classes (Disability, Familial Status, National Origin, and Source of Funds). The county published their 2024 Fair Housing Testing Report in August 2025. The testing found the following evidence of potential discrimination:

- Disability Tests: Evidence of potential discrimination in 1 test out of 15 (6%) single-sided phone tests and 3 inclusive tests that merit future re-testing.
- Familial Status Tests: Evidence of potential discrimination in 2 tests out of 10 (20%) matched-pair phone tests and 2 inconclusive tests that merit future retesting.
- National Origin Tests: Evidence of potential discrimination in 4 tests (and 1 retest) out of 20 (20%) matched pair email rental tests and 5 in-person matched pair tests which were inconclusive.
- Source of Funds Tests: Evidence of potential discrimination in 6 tests out of 15 (40%) single-sided phone tests and one inconclusive test that merits future retesting.

This report comes on top of the work of the Housing Rights Initiative (HRI) this year in Arlington to test for Source of Funds discrimination. HRI found evidence of potential discrimination in 27.2% of its tests.

The Housing Commission is concerned about significant rates of housing discrimination, ranging from 6-40% in the county. Additionally, there does not appear to be progress in implementing several critical goals and sub-goals from the 2023 Regional Fair Housing Plan:

- The Office of Human Rights does not appear to have taken any action to consider amendments to Arlington’s Human Rights Ordinance to align its authority with Virginia’s Fair Housing Law and the federal Fair Housing Act in 2025. The Housing Commission and outside fair housing and civil rights organizations have urged the county to take action in the last 12 months to enhance the tools and structure of Arlington’s fair housing enforcement consistent with the 2023 Regional Fair Housing Plan.
- The Office of Human Rights does not appear to have begun implementation activities for the following goals in the 2023 Regional Fair Housing Plan:
 - Explore becoming a substantially equivalent Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) partner with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
 - Reduce inequities and discriminatory practices that exacerbate the wealth gap between White households and households of color by addressing issues of appraisal bias and by increasing fair housing testing and monitoring for lenders and real estate entities. Use local and regional Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to target members of protected classes to reduce inequities in mortgage lending.
 - Support education regarding the application of the Fair Housing Act’s reasonable accommodation duty in the context of criminal history screening.

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- Provide education and outreach to elected and appointed officials and those responsible for making housing and housing-related decisions.
 - The \$30,000 allocated by the County Board for fair housing enforcement and education in the FY 2026 budget will be spent on four trainings in 2026 for landlords and property managers on fair housing requirements. However, no additional outreach to Arlington residents to educate them on their rights is planned.

The Housing Commission voted unanimously, 10-0, to urge the County Board to strengthen fair housing enforcement and to strive to be a leader among Virginia localities in combatting housing discrimination by:

1. Amending the Human Rights Ordinance to make it consistent with Federal and state fair housing laws.
2. Beginning the process of becoming a Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) with HUD to receive training and funding to improve our fair housing enforcement.
3. Strengthening collaboration between the Office of Human Rights, Department of Human Services, and Department of Community Planning, and Housing Development to ensure that complaints of discrimination (wherever they surface within the county government) are proactively referred to and addressed by the Office of Human Rights. Arlington's Housing Choice Voucher recipients revealed in focus groups to the county that they experience high levels of discrimination based on their source of funds.
4. Increasing outreach and education to Arlington residents to ensure they understand their fair housing rights and how to report potential violations.
5. Including public service announcements on county websites and electronic communications informing residents and businesses that it is illegal to deny rental housing based on housing voucher status or source of funds.
6. Taking steps to prioritize fair housing enforcement and education to the public in the Office of Human Rights.

Results:

The letter was sent to the County Board in December 2025. The Housing Commission will continue to engage with the County Board and county staff in 2026 to advocate for implementation of the recommendations.

Housing Commission

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<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Housing-Commission>