

lower-rise, lower-density affordable housing on land which is currently too valuable to support such construction.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing Assistance Tools

1. Review the City's homeownership programs, including the provision of set-aside units in new developments, and make recommendations for improving program operations and expanding program utilization.
2. Review the operation of the Rent Relief Program for senior citizens and persons with disabilities in FY 2001 and develop recommendations for improvement for consideration in the fall of 2001. Possible recommendations include establishing an open (year-round) enrollment period, and making payments on a monthly basis rather than in an annual lump sum.
3. Consider the development of a City rental assistance program to assist households not currently being served by other rental assistance programs. One option would be a rental assistance program for participants in the City's VIEW/welfare-to-work program who are not currently receiving rental housing assistance.
4. Support ARHA requests for additional Section 8 assistance when such assistance is to be targeted for specific purposes (e.g., assisted living, special needs households, homeownership) or project-based uses.
5. Change the City-funded portion of the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP), and seek state approval for a change in the state-funded program, to allow repeat assistance after five years, rather than current rule of once in a lifetime.
6. Maintain a minimum Housing Trust Fund balance to ensure a minimum funding stream for the Moderate Income Homeownership Program and other activities.
7. Monitor efforts by other Northern Virginia jurisdictions to study the issue of seeking authority from the General Assembly add a protection, under local human rights ordinances, from discrimination on the basis of source of income. This would benefit households receiving SSI and similar income, but may

not necessarily be successful in preventing landlords from refusing to rent to households receiving Section 8 subsidies.

8. Explore, in conjunction with community groups and banking institutions, the development of Individual Development Accounts for low and moderate income households to encourage savings and asset development.
9. Provide homeownership assistance to move-up buyers, as an incentive for them to remain in the City of Alexandria, by allowing a one-time rollover of City homeownership assistance loans for loan recipients who sell the home the City assisted them to buy. Eligible recipients must immediately purchase a subsequent home within the City, and must be income-eligible for home purchase assistance at the time of the rollover.
10. In order to make HAP and MIHP buyers more competitive with non-assisted buyers in a hot housing market, pay \$1,000 of the real estate commission in order to reduce the seller's costs. This would be done only in a hot housing market such as exists today.
11. Include in the City's homeownership counseling program a discussion of the merits of all types of sales housing, including condominiums, in an effort to attract buyers to the most affordable segment of Alexandria's sales housing stock.
12. Support and encourage the involvement of existing Community Development Corporations, and/or the development of a new such corporation, in order to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Alexandria.



City of Alexandria, Virginia

INTERIM REPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*Prepared for use at the
Affordable Housing Summit*

Saturday, May 19, 2001

8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Radisson Hotel Old Town

901 N. Fairfax Street



PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The goals and recommendations included in this document are meant to be a starting point for the community discussion to take place at the Affordable Housing Summit on May 19, 2001, regarding the issue of affordable housing in Alexandria. The Task Force will consider community input from the summit in the development of its final policy goals and recommendations. The final report of the Task Force will be docketed for City Council consideration in the fall.

The recommendations included in this summary are more fully described in the full report, available from the Office of Housing (703)-838-4990. To register for the Housing Summit, please call (703)838-4800.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE GOALS

Overarching Policy Goal

In developing its recommendations, the Affordable Housing Task Force has defined as its overarching goal the establishment and preservation of stable communities and self-sufficient households, and has recognized that the provision of affordable housing opportunities, whether through the production of housing units or the furnishing of individual housing assistance, cannot operate in isolation, but must, in order to effectively achieve this goal, work in tandem with other City policies, programs and activities that are designed to achieve the goal.

Housing Production Goals

- Provide a range of housing choices for households at all income levels.
- Provide affordable housing choices throughout the City.
- Support mixed-income communities.
- Encourage housing near employment centers, with adequate access to a variety of facilities and services.
- Maintain and enhance the quality and safety of housing and neighborhoods.

Housing Assistance Goals

- Provide a range of housing assistance opportunities for households at all income levels in a manner designed to maintain or increase self-sufficiency; e.g., assist homeowners to remain in their homes, assist renters to remain renters in Alexandria or to become homeowners in Alexandria, and assist homeless/transitional households to become stabilized in permanent housing.
- Assist and encourage families to reside in Alexandria on a long-term basis.
- Assist and encourage households with members who work in Alexandria, including public employees, to reside in the City.
- Assist and encourage households that have resided in Alexandria for many years to remain City residents.

HOUSING PRODUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Housing Production Tools (Non-Zoning)

1. Facilitate the development of affordable rental housing through acquisition and rehabilitation of existing multifamily¹ rental housing.
2. Make direct grants or loans to non-profit or for-profit developers to secure a commitment of affordable rents, in new or existing housing, for a specified period of time (e.g., 20 years or more). This would generally be associated with new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation.
3. Encourage developers of new rental housing to use an amount equivalent to their formula Housing Trust Fund contribution to provide affordable units on site.
4. Provide funding to non-profit developers and/or partnerships for feasibility analyses and pre-development costs. Assistance would become a loan if the project goes forward but would be a grant if it does not.

¹ For the purposes of this report, multifamily property shall mean property with four or more residential units.

5. Allow flexibility in the design, location, and layout of affordable set-aside units in new developments (on-site housing in lieu of developer contribution to Housing Trust Fund), with the understanding that this may result in affordable unit designs that differ from the market rate units, but are architecturally compatible, as a means of making it possible to produce more affordable units.
6. Where financially feasible, aggressively encourage developers of new sales housing to provide affordable units on site in lieu of contributing to the Housing Trust Fund, and provide financial support to non-profit organizations to develop affordable sales units.
7. Conduct further study of the adequacy and appropriateness of Alexandria's \$0.50 per square foot formula for developers' voluntary contributions to the City's Housing Trust Fund, and involve the development community in the review of this issue.
8. Establish an infrastructure fund that can be used, on a negotiated basis, to offset, in whole or part, a developer's costs for improvements such as undergrounding, landscaping, bricking, etc., for projects that provide affordable housing, with the stipulation that there shall be no difference in public infrastructure between developments that include affordable housing and those that do not.
9. Monitor the reported federal initiative to create a tax credit program for sales housing units, and encourage the use of such program when it becomes available.

Recommended Approach to Zoning Matters: Future Land Use & Policy Options

1. Evaluate the development and implementation of Overlay Zones designed to encourage the construction of new affordable units in selected areas.
2. Evaluate the development and implementation of Performance Zones designed to stimulate the integration of affordable units within proposed market rate developments and/or the payment of fees in lieu of performance.
3. Evaluate the development and implementation of a program of Transfer of Development Rights for the purpose of creating