



January 19, 2023

Honorable Christian Dorsey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Missing Middle Housing Request to Advertise Options

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

The NAACP Arlington Branch supports the goals of the Missing Middle Housing Study and is committed to ensuring the most equitable and inclusive outcome possible. We write now to express which options presented in the County Manager's January 13, 2023 request to advertise will best address Arlington County's history of racial discrimination and segregation, as well as provide additional housing opportunities to create a more diverse and prosperous community.

The NAACP Arlington Branch encourages the County to allow up to 8 units per dwelling (Option 1B), so that the most attainable homes can be built, and allow sites larger than one acre to be built under a special use permit process (Option 3A). We also support allowing expanded housing options to have additional flexibility with their maximum lot coverage percentage (Option 4B), as they will likely not have detached garages, and the additional landscaping requirement of planting one shade tree per dwelling unit to offset any reduction of the tree canopy (Option 6A). Furthermore, we ask that the County allow conversions of existing buildings into expanded housing options without a use permit, which would give current owners more flexibility and could be an alternative to teardowns (Option 8A). The County should also allow Missing Middle homes to reduce their parking requirement through a parking study, although we encourage staff to eliminate the parking requirement for lots near transit (Option 5C).

We ask that the County provide flexibility in the density and number of new expanded housing option developments (Options 2A and 7B). A tiering scheme or a cap on these developments would stifle development and are counterproductive to the aim of creating more housing for traditionally vulnerable communities.

The Missing Middle Housing Study recommendations successfully balance the needs of existing single-family home residents by keeping design standards the same while opening previously closed single-family home neighborhoods to diverse residents by allowing townhouses and

buildings with 2-8 units in R-5 to R-20 zones. This change will begin to rebalance Arlington's land-use policies with the makeup of its population. Additionally, the proposed zoning changes could result in additional housing attainable for up to 39% of Black households, 39% of Latino households, and 60% of Asian households in the Washington metro area, according to a county staff analysis.

The proposed zoning changes also advance an environmental justice objective by allowing more low- and moderate-income workers to live closer to their places of employment, thereby reducing the negative environmental and social consequences of long commutes. Effects of the proposed changes on tree economy should be minimal, as the status quo in Arlington is for small single-family homes to be replaced by very large homes that cover as large a percentage of single-family zoned lots as would the townhouses and homes with 2-8 units envisioned under the Missing Middle framework. Moreover, to help offset any reduction of the tree canopy, the proposed additional landscaping provision would require one shade tree per dwelling unit.

Arlington County's zoning and housing laws have a long history of racial discrimination via both de jure and de facto segregation practices committed by governmental and nongovernmental entities that segregated and marginalized people of color. The Missing Middle Housing proposal finally puts an end to exclusionary zoning in Arlington, the roots of which are founded on racism. For us to begin reconciling with those harmful practices of the past, as an inclusive and diverse community, everyone must play an active role in shaping a brighter future.

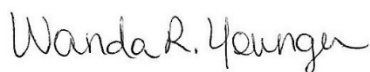
Sincerely,



Michael Hemminger
President, NAACP Arlington Branch



Bryan J. Coleman
Chair, Housing Committee



Wanda Younger
Branch Secretary

- c: Arlington County Board Members
 Samia Byrd, Chief Race and Equity Officer, Deputy County Manager
 Claude Williamson, Director, CPHD
 Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., CPHD Planning Director
 Anne Venezia, CPHD Housing Director
 Devanshi P. Patel, Chair, Planning Commission
 Kellen M. MacBeth, Chair, Housing Commission
 NAACP Arlington Branch Executive Committee & Members