

## **Tysons Land Use Task Force Affordable Housing Subcommittee Recommendations**

Tysons has a severe imbalance of housing to jobs. While approximately 115,000 people work in Tysons Corner, only 17,000 residents live there. To create the kind of transit-oriented, mixed-use development that is desired for Tysons, we not only need more housing, but housing that accommodates a variety of incomes and lifestyles.

The County's Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance currently exempts high-rise residential development from providing affordable units, in conformance with the state enabling legislation for affordable dwelling units. In January, 2006, however, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following general policy resolution recommended by the High Rise Affordability Panel<sup>1</sup>:

"In instances where increases in residential density or non-residential intensity in Fairfax County's planned and/or existing high-density areas are granted, it is the policy and expectation of Fairfax County that a substantial amount of affordable/workforce housing shall be provided." This policy directive has clear implications for the redevelopment of the Tysons study area.

- **Currently, there are no clear County policies regarding affordable units in residential high-rise development in rezoning cases.** Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and affordable units are acquired through the proffer process. Two recent rezonings before the Planning Commission of transit-oriented proposals offered different percentages of affordable units as a result of their proffers.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Committee endorses the policy recommendations of the High Rise Affordability Panel that at least 12 percent of units produced in high-rise/high-density developments be affordable/workforce housing. Such housing should be provided in equal tiers affordable to households earning up to 60, 80, 100 and 120 percent of the Area Median Income supporting a goal of mixed income communities within Tysons.
  2. Developers should receive bonus density for the proffer of affordable/workforce units.
- **It is more likely that affordable housing will be secured through changes to the Comprehensive Plan rather than new state enabling legislation.** The formulas in the current ADU ordinance do not provide good guidance for developing affordable units in high density areas as they are complicated and confusing. A simpler approach that links densities to an expectation of a certain

---

<sup>1</sup> This Panel was appointed in October, 2005 to develop, for Board consideration, a policy statement and guidelines for the inclusion of affordable/workforce housing in high-rise development

percentage of affordable units is needed so developers have clear guidelines and understand expectations.

**Recommendations:**

1. Amend Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan to reflect a requirement of a stated percentage of affordable/workforce units for rezoning applications in high-density areas.
2. Reduce or eliminate excessive parking requirements, especially in developments near transit stations. Excessive parking raises construction costs and reduces overall housing densities.
3. Promote alternatives to parking through the requirement of transportation demand management plans (TDMs) by developers and increased pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle access.
4. Develop a "toolbox" of regulatory incentives such as fee waivers, and expedited permitting process to reduce time and cost of providing units.
5. Develop an inventory of all existing market rate affordable housing in the Tysons study area and require a 1:1 replacement of those units in any redevelopment proposal of those existing residential areas.
6. The Committee does not recommend allowing developers the option of a cash contribution to a Housing Trust Fund in lieu of providing affordable units. However, if it is not possible to provide units on site, or off-site at a location within one-half mile of a Metro Station, then the applicant should be required to make a cash contribution similar to the formula calculated in the Arlington County ordinance.<sup>2</sup>

• **Other recommendations for affordable units:**

1. The committee recommends exploration of a linkage program between commercial development and housing which recognizes that one of the outcomes of economic expansion and job creation is the need for housing. To mitigate traffic congestion, housing should be located near job centers. Contributions from commercial development to support housing could be accomplished through policy guidelines that give direction to the proffer process.

There are several examples of linkage programs requiring financial contributions to a housing fund from commercial development, including the Boston Linkage Program, A Chicago Regional Jobs/Housing Fund Concept and the City of Sacramento Program.

---

<sup>2</sup> Reference 15.2-735.1 Code of Virginia, Section A 2(c).

