

Tysons Straw Man Plan Text
Affordable/Workforce Housing Issues and Recommendations

Issue: Affordable/workforce housing objectives in Non-TOD Districts

County staff and the Tysons Task Force have both recommended that 20% of the housing units built throughout Tysons should be affordable to households with incomes at or below 120% of Area Median Income (AMI). At the request of the PC's Tysons Committee, Straw Man II includes this recommendation in the four TOD Districts but applies the County's workforce housing policy of 12% in the Non-TOD Districts (page 29).

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports the Task Force's objective of 20% affordable/workforce housing in both TOD and Non-TOD Districts. This objective should be coupled with a 20% increase in residential floor area as described in Straw Man II. The Non-TOD Districts are generally planned for lower intensities (with most redevelopment options ranging from 1.2 to 1.8 FAR in Straw Man II). The cost of building affordable/workforce units could be much lower in these districts than in high rises near Metro stations, which will primarily be concrete and steel construction. Therefore, the Non-TOD Districts should not have a lower affordable housing objective.

Issue: Basis for calculating the 20% objective

County staff and the Task Force have both recommended that the objective of 20% affordable/workforce units should be based on the total number of units built, including any units built with bonus floor area. For example, a 100 unit project that is allowed 20 additional units as a bonus (for a total of 120 units) would have an affordable/workforce objective of 24 units (120 x 20%).

The demonstration project participant has suggested that the 20% objective should not include bonus units. For example, a 100 unit project that is allowed 20 additional units as a bonus (for a total of 120 units) would have an affordable/workforce objective of 20 units (100 x 20%). Under such a policy, the affordable/workforce units created would be less than 20% of the total (16.7% in the example given).

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports the guidelines in Straw Man II (page 29), which calculate the 20% objective based on the total number of units built. This is consistent with the County's workforce housing policy, in which the 12% objective is inclusive of any bonus units.

Issue: Area Median Income (AMI) tiers

The following table summarizes the income tiers that have been recommended throughout the planning process.

Percent of Total Units in Each Income Tier

	Below 60% AMI	61% - 80% AMI	81% - 100% AMI	101% - 120% AMI
Task Force Recommendation	2%	not specified	not specified	not specified
Previous Staff Recommendation (April 2009)	5%	5%	5%	5%
Straw Man II (page 30)	3%	6%	6%	5%
Demonstration Project Proposal	0%	6%	8%	6%
Countywide Workforce Policy for “For-Sale” and High-Rise Rental Developments (Minimum 12% of Total)	0%	4%	4%	4%
Countywide Workforce Policy for Mid-Rise Rental Developments (Minimum 12% or Total)	0%	6%	6%	0%

Staff Recommendation: The following table is an alternative to the staff recommendation proposed to the PC’s Tysons Committee in April 2009. This recommendation clarifies that the bottom tier should range from 50% to 60% AMI. However, the Plan should state that housing that serves lower incomes is allowed. The Task Force recommendation of 2% of units at or below 60% AMI is carried forward in this bottom tier. The new staff recommendation also breaks the 61% to 80% AMI tier into two tiers. This recommendation is consistent with the Affordable Dwelling Unit Program objective of 5% of units serving households at or below 70% AMI (for mid-rise developments with structured parking).

	50% - 60% AMI	61% - 70% AMI	71% - 80% AMI	81% - 100% AMI	101% - 120% AMI
Staff Recommendation	2%	3%	5%	5%	5%

Issue: Non-residential contributions (linkage program)

Straw Man II (page 31) recommends, “Non-residential development in Tysons should contribute land or money to a housing trust fund that will be used to create affordable and workforce housing opportunities in Tysons.” The Task Force’s Draft Review Committee has discussed this issue and opposes non-residential contributions because such a policy could handicap development in Tysons if it is not applied in the County’s other employment centers. The demonstration project participant has suggested that mixed-use developments that provide affordable/workforce units should be exempt from non-residential contributions.

Programs where non-residential development supports affordable housing have been successful in other cities in the U.S. Examples are included in the following table.

City	Contribution per Office Sq. Ft.
Sacramento	\$0.99
San Diego	\$1.06
Oakland	\$4.00
Berkeley	\$4.00
Boston	\$7.18
San Francisco	\$14.96

Sources: Policy Link website and Keyser Marston Associates, Inc., 2/20/09

Arlington County requires cash contributions for commercial development at a rate of \$1.70 per square foot for the first 1.0 FAR and \$4.54 per square foot above 1.0 FAR. Developers of mixed-use projects are given the option to provide affordable housing units in lieu of a cash contribution, but the basis for determining the number of units required is based on the total square footage of the development, not just the residential component. The following table demonstrates the average contribution per square foot for commercial projects at various intensities.

Commercial FAR	Contribution per Sq. Ft.
1.0	\$1.70
2.0	\$3.12
3.0	\$3.59
4.0	\$3.83

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends a contribution of \$3.00 per square foot toward a housing trust fund dedicated to providing affordable/workforce housing in Tysons or an equivalent contribution in land or affordable units within Tysons. The contribution amount should be indexed to inflation. The affordable units created or preserved by the trust fund will benefit employees of the office, retail, and hotel developments in Tysons by providing a range of housing opportunities within a short commuting distance of their jobs.