

Meeting the Housing Needs of Young Working Families in Fairfax County

Paul and Yuki Park have rented in Herndon for five years. Paul is a chef at an upscale restaurant in Tysons and Yuki works for DynCorp. They have a household income of \$118,000 (120 percent of Area Median Income). Originally from Seattle, they love living in Fairfax County.

Their son was born six months ago, and they are looking to buy a home in the County. They don't want to spend more than their budget allows—about \$450,000. They have been having a hard time finding a home they can afford. They have started talking about moving back to Seattle.



Fairfax County has attracted record numbers of young workers and many are now starting families. Many young working families are considering a tradeoff—stay in Fairfax County and continue to rent or look for jobs somewhere else where there is a better chance to buy a home. Highly-skilled workers and individuals in creative industries may find lots of job prospects in places where the cost of living is lower.

There are ways the community can support young working families. Fairfax County can expand housing options through its Workforce Dwelling Unit (WDU) policy. It can also expand down payment assistance and change zoning to allow for the development of more, smaller homes close to jobs and transit.

Discussion Questions

Do you think millennials will move out of Fairfax County if they cannot afford to buy a home here?

Do you think that will have an impact on the local economy?

Should the community look for ways to expand homeownership options, particularly for young, first-time home buyers that work in the County?

Note: The couple reflected in this story is fictional but is a representation of many actual residents in Fairfax County, based on an analysis of demographic data for the County.