



703-356-0551
Fax 703-821-4275
TTY 711

E-mail: dranesville@fairfaxcounty.gov
Web site: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX**

McLean Governmental Center
1437 Balls Hill Rd
McLean, VA 22101



**JOHN W. FOUST
DRANESVILLE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR**

**Joint Board Matter
Supervisors John Foust, Kathy Smith,
Dalia Palchik and Walter Alcorn
July 14, 2020**

Approving Workforce Dwelling Unit Task Force Recommendations

BACKGROUND: Mr. Chairman, the Workforce Dwelling Unit (WDU) Policy (“Policy”) is one of many tools Fairfax County uses to provide affordable and workforce housing for our residents. The Policy is adopted as an Appendix to the Housing element of the Policy Plan within the Comprehensive Plan and is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) per the Board’s Administrative Guidelines. In addition, in certain areas of the County, there is site-specific Plan text regarding the provision of WDUs. The WDU Policy is a proffer-based incentive system designed to encourage workforce housing in the County’s Mixed-Use Centers, including the Tysons Urban Center, Suburban Centers, Community Business Centers, and Transit Station Areas.

The Countywide Policy was established in 2007, with a separate Policy established for Tysons in 2010. Since the adoption of the Plan, the Policy has resulted in the construction of approximately 1,600 units, nearly all of which are rental units serving income tiers from 60 to 120 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). The first WDUs were delivered in 2014. Since that time, HCD staff and industry leaders identified challenges renting units at the 100 and 120 percent income tiers, as the rents at these income levels are at or above market rents.

In March of 2019, the Board directed staff to establish a WDU Policy Task Force to evaluate the WDU Policy Rental Program as it pertains to income tiers and percentage of units. This Task Force included staff representation from HCD and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), building industry representatives, affordable housing advocates, Planning Commissioners, and a Redevelopment and Housing Authority Commissioner.

The WDU Policy Task Force met between March 2019 and June 2020 to develop recommendations to revise the current Policy with consideration for the following:

- the challenges of 100 and 120 percent of the AMI units being at or above market rate;
- the ability to provide housing opportunities for households between 60 and 80 percent of the AMI to realize the intent of the WDU Policy;
- the WDU Policy impact to developers and development in the County; and,

- the desire to align recommendations with One Fairfax and the Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan.

The WDU Policy Task Force's recommendations for revising the current Countywide and Tysons WDU Policies were presented at the June 30, 2020 meeting of the Board's Housing Committee, along with the recommendation for a five-year retrospective. The recommended "next steps" are the Board's authorization for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Policy and Area Plans, as well as the Administrative Guidelines. The Housing Committee supported moving forward as expeditiously as possible with the amendment and requested that HCD provide the Board with a bi-annual review of the WDU pipeline of units. Staff estimates the timeframe to gather feedback from the affordable housing community, development industry, residents, and other stakeholders will enable these actions to be brought to the Board in February 2021.

In addition to this work, the amendment offers the ability to review the Housing element of the Policy Plan to reflect current conditions and ensure consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the Board-adopted Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan. The Housing element defines countywide housing availability, critical housing issues, and housing goals and objectives, but has not been updated in its entirety since the 1990s. Similarly, the Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan establishes strategies to encourage, produce, and preserve additional affordable housing units within the county. The evaluation will update data on housing needs from the housing strategic plan and revise outdated terminology. It should be noted that any changes to the Policy Plan that may result from the work of the upcoming affordable housing preservation task force will be handled separately as part of that effort.

MOTION: Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we move that the Board of Supervisors:

- Authorize a Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Housing and Land Use elements of the Policy Plan and for specific guidance in Area Plans and the Glossary related to WDUs based on the policy adjustments recommended by the WDU Policy Task Force on June 30, 2020, as well as other appropriate updates to the Housing element of the Policy Plan. This effort should not include the recommendations in the Reston plan at this time as these will be addressed separately. The upcoming preservation task force may have additional changes which will be handled as appropriate at the conclusion of that effort.
- Direct staff to actively engage stakeholders in the review of these amendments.
- Direct staff to prepare revisions to the Board of Supervisors' WDU Policy Administrative Guidelines and Tysons Corner Urban Center WDU Policy Administrative Guidelines to be consistent with the WDU Policy Task Force recommendations.
- Direct staff to schedule the Board's public hearing on these items in February 2021.