



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COUNCIL

August 9, 2023

TO: Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay  
Supervisor James Walkinshaw, Legislative Committee Chair  
Supervisor, John Foust, Housing Committee Chair  
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

FR: Kerrie Wilson, Co-Chair, Affordable Housing Advisory Council  
Dr. Gerald Poje, Chair, AHAC Legislative and Policy Committee

RE: **Affordable Housing Advisory Council (AHAC) Priorities  
for the 2024 Virginia General Assembly Legislative Agenda**

The Board of Supervisors charged the Affordable Housing Advisory Council (AHAC) with monitoring progress and recommending resource and policy requirements to support its goals for new affordable housing production, preservation and enhancement of existing affordable units and neighborhoods, and interrelated issues of homelessness, fair housing, homeownership and other policies.

As the Fairfax County Legislative Committee develops its priorities for the **2024 General Assembly Legislative Program** and Human Services Issue Paper, we ask that you consider these key areas for inclusion as priorities in your platform. Many of these issues are also subject to action by Congress; we highlighted action on housing tax credits which is pending now. AHAC will provide additional detail and background as you move forward in the process and is available as a resource to you and staff.

## **Affordable Housing as a Priority**

AHAC recommends that Affordable Housing be the top priority in the draft Legislative Agenda and Human Services Issues Paper. Affordable housing is the foundational issue for quality of life and well-being across many domains. Available, safe and affordable housing is inextricably tied to Fairfax County's "One Fairfax" policy, and the Board of Supervisor's 10,000 affordable (60% AMI and below) unit goal. Housing and housing supports need to be expanded now and are essential to the rebuilding process following the pandemic and underlying the family, health and economic recovery of our residents, communities and county.

## **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)**

AHAC endorses the recommendations of the Fairfax County Redevelopment Authority (FCRHA) to seek federal and state changes to **maximize the impact of the LIHTC program** in financing affordable housing projects. *(See attached item from FCRHA).*



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Support the federal **Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act** (S. 1557 and H.R. 3238) to expand and improve the LIHTC program by increasing allocations to states by 50% and to make other policy changes that enable and leverage bond financing.
- Champion a state policy change to **lift the bond volume cap on LIHTC applications** so that worthy proposals may be submitted at any time of the year. Currently, LIHTC applications submitted in the first half of the calendar year are subject to a \$20 million bond value cap per project which imposes unnecessary delays in building the housing we need, and disproportionately affects Northern Virginia with its inflated costs of development.

## **Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF)**

Expand and Sustain the Trust Fund as an essential tool for housing and homelessness prevention efforts and economic competitiveness of the Northern Virginia region. AHAC joins the Virginia Housing Alliance in recommending an additional \$150 million in this biennium budget.

## **Assistance and Protections for Low-Income Residents Facing Eviction**

Establish the Virginia Housing Stability Fund and/or sustain similar programs to provide state assistance for rental assistance to our most vulnerable neighbors. Ensure that policies designed to extend COVID-era eviction protections are working and promoted. Prioritize funding for the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia to provide right to counsel for families facing eviction.

## **Increase Investments for Permanent Supportive Housing Programs**

AHAC and the Fairfax County Continuum of Care have consistently advanced this recommendation as a top priority. The Board of Supervisors has prioritized the review of housing and services available to people experiencing chronic homelessness, and/or people with disabilities who would be eligible for permanent supportive housing. This is a top-level priority in the community-wide housing strategic plan and “unfinished business” in the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness “Retrospective” commissioned after the 10-Year Plan (2008-2018).

## **Expand Homeownership Opportunities**

Support state initiatives to increase and expand homeownership opportunities for lower wage earners. Homeownership is the most important way that middle class households have increased their wealth. Higher wealth means better healthcare, more educational opportunity, and overall improved quality of life. Lower wage workers have too frequently been shut out from this opportunity.

## **Preservation, Fair Housing and Zoning Modernization**

Fairfax County has consistently advocated at the state level for improved local flexibility for the development and preservation of housing for its residents through adoption and modernization



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COUNCIL

of inclusionary zoning practices. AHAC supports all efforts to tailor housing solutions based on locally determined need.

AHAC's Fair Housing Task Force identified a range of issues around Fair Housing and Tenant Protections. AHAC commends the Board of Supervisors on the adoption of Regional Fair Housing Goals which include a number of specific goals for Fairfax County to advance fair housing, address the legacy dual housing market, and overcome and prevent future housing discrimination by race and income. A number of issues identified by Fairfax County require state-level support and resources.

AHAC has also offered detailed recommendations for state-level action to protect tenant-owners in Manufactured Housing communities and extend local control in the case of a sale or redevelopment effort, and asks you to revisit these recommendations for state level action in 2024.

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Thank you for the opportunity to inform the Affordable Housing priorities for 2024, and for your continued service on behalf of all residents and communities in Fairfax County.

These recommendations are presented on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Affordable Housing Advisory Council, with special thanks to AHAC's Legislative and Policy Committee chair Dr. Gerald Poje.

Please feel free to contact me, or other members of the Affordable Housing Advisory Council for more information. I can be reached at [Kerrie.wilson@cornerstonesva.org](mailto:Kerrie.wilson@cornerstonesva.org) or 571-323-9571 or 703-628-4876.

Cc: Rip Sullivan, Co-Chair, Affordable Housing Advisory Council  
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