



January 19, 2023

Honorable Christian Dorsey, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

**Re: Missing Middle Housing Request to Advertise Options**

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

The NAACP Arlington Branch supports the goals of the Missing Middle Housing Study and is committed to ensuring the most equitable and inclusive outcome possible. We write now to express which options presented in the County Manager's January 13, 2023 request to advertise will best address Arlington County's history of racial discrimination and segregation, as well as provide additional housing opportunities to create a more diverse and prosperous community.

The NAACP Arlington Branch encourages the County to allow up to 8 units per dwelling (Option 1B), so that the most attainable homes can be built, and allow sites larger than one acre to be built under a special use permit process (Option 3A). We also support allowing expanded housing options to have additional flexibility with their maximum lot coverage percentage (Option 4B), as they will likely not have detached garages, and the additional landscaping requirement of planting one shade tree per dwelling unit to offset any reduction of the tree canopy (Option 6A). Furthermore, we ask that the County allow conversions of existing buildings into expanded housing options without a use permit, which would give current owners more flexibility and could be an alternative to teardowns (Option 8A). The County should also allow Missing Middle homes to reduce their parking requirement through a parking study, although we encourage staff to eliminate the parking requirement for lots near transit (Option 5C).

We ask that the County provide flexibility in the density and number of new expanded housing option developments (Options 2A and 7B). A tiering scheme or a cap on these developments would stifle development and are counterproductive to the aim of creating more housing for traditionally vulnerable communities.

The Missing Middle Housing Study recommendations successfully balance the needs of existing single-family home residents by keeping design standards the same while opening previously closed single-family home neighborhoods to diverse residents by allowing townhouses and

buildings with 2-8 units in R-5 to R-20 zones. This change will begin to rebalance Arlington's land-use policies with the makeup of its population. Additionally, the proposed zoning changes could result in additional housing attainable for up to 39% of Black households, 39% of Latino households, and 60% of Asian households in the Washington metro area, according to a county staff analysis.

The proposed zoning changes also advance an environmental justice objective by allowing more low- and moderate-income workers to live closer to their places of employment, thereby reducing the negative environmental and social consequences of long commutes. Effects of the proposed changes on tree economy should be minimal, as the status quo in Arlington is for small single-family homes to be replaced by very large homes that cover as large a percentage of single-family zoned lots as would the townhouses and homes with 2-8 units envisioned under the Missing Middle framework. Moreover, to help offset any reduction of the tree canopy, the proposed additional landscaping provision would require one shade tree per dwelling unit.

Arlington County's zoning and housing laws have a long history of racial discrimination via both de jure and de facto segregation practices committed by governmental and nongovernmental entities that segregated and marginalized people of color. The Missing Middle Housing proposal finally puts an end to exclusionary zoning in Arlington, the roots of which are founded on racism. For us to begin reconciling with those harmful practices of the past, as an inclusive and diverse community, everyone must play an active role in shaping a brighter future.

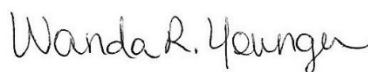
Sincerely,



Michael Hemminger  
President, NAACP Arlington Branch



Bryan J. Coleman  
Chair, Housing Committee



Wanda Younger  
Branch Secretary

- c:     Arlington County Board Members  
       Samia Byrd, Chief Race and Equity Officer, Deputy County Manager  
       Claude Williamson, Director, CPHD  
       Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., CPHD Planning Director  
       Anne Venezia, CPHD Housing Director  
       Devanshi P. Patel, Chair, Planning Commission  
       Kellen M. MacBeth, Chair, Housing Commission  
       NAACP Arlington Branch Executive Committee & Members



May 23, 2022

Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

**Re: Missing Middle Housing Study Phase 2 Draft Framework**

Dear Ms. Cristol:

Arlington's shameful history of racist, exclusionary zoning policies needs reforming, and we urge the County Board to adopt the Missing Middle Housing Study Phase 2 Draft Framework. The framework is a first step in a series of necessary actions to reverse the damage done to Black and Brown residents by governmental and nongovernmental acts designed to segregate and disempower. We appreciate the work county staff have put into the Missing Middle Housing Study and the strength of their recommendations.

The recommendations successfully balance the needs of existing single-family home residents by keeping design standards the same while opening previously closed single-family home neighborhoods to diverse residents by allowing townhouses and buildings with 2-8 units in R-5 to R-20 zones. This change will begin to rebalance Arlington's land-use policies with the makeup of its population; 70% of Arlington's residential land reserved for single-family homes will potentially provide desperately needed housing to many more residents. We are particularly pleased to see the inclusion of 8-plex units because these will be the most attainable for residents making the area median income.

Black and Brown residents have struggled to find affordable homeownership opportunities in Arlington. The proposed zoning changes could result in additional housing attainable to up to 39% of Black households, 39% of Latino households, and 60% of Asian households in the Washington metro area, according to county staff analysis.

The proposed zoning changes also would aid environmental justice by allowing more low- and moderate-income workers to live closer to their places of employment, thereby reducing the negative environmental and social consequences of long commutes. Effects of the proposed changes on tree canopy should be minimal, as the current pattern in Arlington is for small single-family homes to be replaced by very large homes that cover as large a percentage of single-family-zoned lots as would the townhouses and homes with 2-8 units envisioned under the Missing Middle framework.

Allowing missing middle housing to be developed in R-5 to R-20 zones is a foundational element of improving housing affordability broadly, encouraging greater racial and economic integration, and expanding access to homeownership. However, this necessary step is not sufficient to bridge the gap between the market and lower income households and the victims of historical discriminatory practices. We strongly urge the County to commit to increased funding for affordable homeownership that targets first-generation homeowners as well as other programs that seek to affirmatively address the past harms of de jure and de facto racial segregation and associated discriminatory policies.

The proposed zoning changes in the draft framework, in and of themselves, will not repair the harm done to communities of color in Arlington in the last hundred years. However, the proposed Missing Middle framework is an important first step to addressing the legacy of racial discrimination and segregation in the housing market.

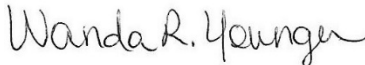
Sincerely,



Julius D. "J.D." Spain, Sr.  
President, Arlington Branch NAACP



Kellen M. MacBeth  
Chair, Housing Committee



Wanda R. Younger  
Branch Secretary

- c:     Arlington County Board Members  
        Samia Byrd, Chief Race and Equity Officer, Deputy County Manager  
        Claude Williamson, Director, CPHD  
        Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., CPHD Planning Director  
        Anne Venezia, CPHD Housing Director  
        Daniel Weir, Chair, Planning Commission  
        Eric Berkey, Chair, Housing Commission  
        NAACP Arlington Executive Committee & Members