



**Arlington Partnership  
For Affordable Housing**

May 24, 2021

Arlington County Board  
Bozeman Government Center  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 307  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Missing Middle Housing Study Draft Framework

Dear Arlington County Board and Staff

APAH supports the Missing Middle Housing Study's Phase 2 Draft Framework recently published by county staff. We support the staff's initial proposal to allow for 2-8 units by-right in all zoning districts currently limited to single-household development. This change represents a significant step forward in providing more housing diversity and affordability countywide, and we urge the County Board to support the proposal.

Although new missing middle housing options will not primarily serve low-income households, they would nonetheless be a powerful complement to APAH's work by providing more housing affordability in single family areas. Currently in these areas – which make up the vast majority of all residential land in the county – large single-family home redevelopments are the only legally allowed form of new housing. Due to their large size and expensive land, most of these new homes are only affordable to the highest-income households earning seven-figure salaries. The proposed changes promise to alleviate this problem by allowing for smaller homes that can spread expensive land costs over multiple units. This will provide for more affordable housing suitable for young couples, retirees, and middle-income households, most of whom do not qualify for committed affordable housing.

The framework includes a few key details that APAH is pleased to see and would like the County Board to preserve in the plan. First, we support staff's proposal to make these changes countywide, as this represents the most equitable way to grow as a community. This would allow more people to reap the benefits of living in the wealthiest parts of the county, which, currently due to exclusionary land use policy, are off-limits to growth. We are confident in the county's ability to invest in

schools and infrastructure to manage the pace of this growth, especially if it is spread out throughout the county. Second, we support the staff's proposal to make these changes by-right, meaning missing-middle housing builders would not have to seek special design or development approval beyond that of typical single family home redevelopments. Clear, predictable standards are critical to providing potential builders with confidence and so is key to incentivizing missing middle construction. We therefore encourage the County Board not to impose any further design or review requirements on these units beyond the standard review required for building permit approval. Third, we support the staff's recommendation to reduce on-site parking requirements for these units, as this will help minimize environmental impacts as missing middle housing is built.

We urge the County Board to support the staff's draft framework proposal and pass related zoning ordinance amendments as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

*Carmen Romero*

Carmen Romero  
President and CEO  
Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing

