

Housing Policies Related to Sustainability from August 2022 Draft of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Housing Policy 2: Creating New Diverse Housing Communities Promote diverse mixed income housing communities throughout the County that address the demand for additional housing, the demand for a variety of housing, and the demand for affordable housing to meet the needs of residents at all income levels throughout all stages of life.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H2.6: Encourage geographic dispersion of affordable housing throughout the County, particularly in areas where existing supply is low.
- H2.7: Explore the concept of expanded rural communities based on the design concept of hamlets and villages as an alternative to large-lot residential zoning and permit clustered housing developments to both increase housing options and preserve open space.
- H2.15: Permit and encourage higher-intensity multifamily apartment living in the County's activity areas as part of both stand-alone and mixed-use developments.
- H2.16: Consider ordinance updates to permit for quality infill projects that support the “missing middle housing” needs. The “missing middle housing” describes housing styles that fall between detached single-family and large multifamily buildings, such as live/work units, bungalows, duplexes, triplexes, and small-scale multifamily buildings. These house-scale building types fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods and support walkability, locally serving retail, and public transportation options. They provide solutions along a spectrum of affordability to address the available housing stock crisis, shifting demographics, and a growing demand for walkability. They add variety to the housing supply and blend in with single-family neighborhoods.

Housing Policy 5: Sustainability/Environmental Growth Policy Foster environmentally sustainable housing communities with a variety of housing types, densities, locations, and affordability to promote a safe and livable environment for all residents.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- H5.1: Ensure that all elements of the built environment including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreating, with a high quality of life.
- H5.2: Promote mixed-use, well connected, and walkable neighborhoods that are resilient communities with lower carbon emissions. Consider enhanced Design and Construction Standards Manual (“DCSM”) requirements to mitigate impacts from the construction and infrastructure projects, especially on water quality. • Encourage compact growth to improve the environmental performance of site and building development. • Redevelopment of existing sites allows for the adoption of modern stormwater controls, especially on sites characterized by a high proportion of impervious surface cover. • A compact form of infill

development or redevelopment can reduce stormwater runoff and heat island effect by using green infrastructure, green roofs, and other green cover, as well as building design and orientation to reduce urban temperatures.

H5.3: Promote construction design options to build sustainable, green neighborhoods. Explore funding opportunities, design implications, and practical solutions to reduce residents' energy cost burden and encourage the housing industry to build environmentally sustainable housing.

H5.4: Research energy-conserving building design standards and incentivize implementation of any adopted standards. Energy-efficient affordable housing focused on sustainability and the reduction of utility costs benefits renters and homeowners. To avoid rising rents, consider energy saving cost reduction measures to support both property owners in fixed rent situations and homeowners by considering the following:

- Design projects using the Earth Craft Gold certification or comparable program for resource and energy efficiency;

- Research the green building standard called Passive House, which relies on building materials and methods, like insulation and thicker windows, to maintain fixed temperatures inside a living area while using very little energy-despite outside conditions;

- Incorporate high-efficiency toilets, showerheads, and faucets in bathrooms including accessible units;

- Utilize a photovoltaic solar array to reduce building energy load and a solar thermal hot water heater to preheat water and stabilize utility bills;

- Install Energy-efficient LED lighting;

- Incorporate Energy Star style appliances, HVAC and water heating systems;

- Enhance insulation and air sealing to eliminate transfer of air between units and the outside environment;

- Utilize native and draught-tolerant plantings in the landscaping;

- Reduce impervious areas; and • Utilize reflective roofing that creates a cooler environment around the building; require high-albedo (reflective) surfaces on rooftops and in paved areas where appropriate and encourage green roofs to reduce the urban heat island effect.

H5.5: Encourage state-of-the-practice sustainability features such as net-zero/carbon positive buildings, biophilic design, and on-site energy generation. Focus on affordable housing to create opportunities where the building produces as much energy as the residents consume to reduce utility costs. Utilize multiple energy efficient designs including solar energy panels.

H5.6: Streamline County approval of solar panels installed at private homes and businesses.

H5.7: Support coordination between County and state departments and agencies and utility companies to improve outreach and access to funding that supports home/improvement and

maintenance, including energy efficient audits, upgrades and retrofits, weatherization assistance, solar panel installation, and age in place maintenance and construction.

- H5.8: Encourage the utilization of modular building designs, where appropriate, that when constructed in factory settings incorporate strict specifications which reduce construction time, reduce carbon emissions, and generate less waste resulting in less impact on the environment fostering more energy efficient construction as compared to traditional construction.
- H5.9: Increase percentage of renewable energy utilized by the County to support reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Implement Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (“MWCOG”) targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sources within the County to 50% of 2005 level by 2030, and to be carbon-neutral by 2050.
- H5.10: Reduce auto-centric development patterns to reduce transportation costs and environmental impacts. Support future housing growth at transit supportive densities, with a variety of housing types, especially in designated activity centers and corridors. Track the number of new dwelling units proposed and/or built inside and outside of activity centers as a measure of sustainability growth and HOUSING to enhance funding opportunities.
- H5.11: Identify areas of environmental concern to reduce negative impacts to underserved communities. To promote equitable developments, prioritize underserved communities for both open space acquisition and tree saving/replanting efforts.
- H5.12: Support cultural and civic facilities (libraries, firehouses, museums, state and County parks, landmarks, and County facilities) as disaster preparedness and relief centers that provide emergency social services in times of distress (cooling station, food distribution, widespread power outage or hurricane/tornado relief shelter).
- H5.13: Incorporate adaptive reuse to provide viable housing alternatives to solve the housing deficit. Cost-effective infill and adaptive reuse design strategies should be utilized to retrofit single-use commercial sites such as retail strips, malls, and office parks into mixed use developments in a sustainable and resilient manner.
- H5.14: Incentivize the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and existing structures to accommodate the evolution of communities, maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring affordable space, and retain the embodied energy of structures.
- H5.15: Conduct an economic analysis study to determine “exchange rate” for density for green building and/or affordable housing in order to establish a cost/ benefit analysis with these programs and to understand both the short- and long-term benefits of sustainable initiatives to the community