

Rose Hill Coalition

Rose Paper: Housing Trends

Opposition to Nomination CPN22-LE-001

We must ask the question, what does the current and future success for mixed-use development look like? It sounds good and may work well in some places, but is it practical and applicable everywhere?

What was considered mixed use in the past? A small shopping center within a residential community that provided both convenient and essential services.

Now mixed use is defined as high-density residential with minimal retail which requires the local community to drive further for those essential services because they are no longer convenient. The new vision for mixed use also seems to contradict the move toward walkable communities and reducing our dependence on cars.

We don't have a housing problem; we have an income disparity problem.

The affordable housing crisis has forced the County to lower the income criteria, because more people are falling into the poverty trapped due to inflation.

New regional housing plan pushes Fairfax County to lower income criteria for affordable housing

Source: FFX Now, 2/8/2023

https://www.ffxnow.com/2023/02/08/new-regional-housing-plan-pushes-fairfax-county-to-lower-income-criteria-for-affordable-housing/?mc_cid=e4f4efdd9a&mc_eid=01602b2871&fbclid=IwAR2yB3J2iOBOFvTe9y1GvEwogg7kz72TgSFBjfz8OLcscMwj4tEOGEfQikU

Fairfax County bases its plans for high-density development on an outdated 2005 white paper by the Urban Land Institute. ULI wrote the report with significant bias that is apparent in the report's partnership with the National Multi Housing Council and American Institute of Architects.

In addition, the ULI document focuses on sprawl which does not characterize Franconia District or the Rose Hill neighborhoods. Thus, the arguments UTI makes are not relevant to this part of the County and should not be taken out of context.

Higher Density Facts and Myths

ULI is proud to have partnered with NMHC—the National Multi Housing Council, Sierra Club, and AIA—the American Institute of Architects on this publication. This convergence of interests highlights the importance each organization has placed on finding a new development pattern that better fits the needs of a growing and changing country.

Unfortunately, in too many communities higher-density mixed-use development is difficult to construct because of zoning and building codes that favor low-density development with segregated uses and because of opposition from the community. This publication looks at

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several myths surrounding higher-density development and attempts to dispel them with facts to help dismantle the many barriers such developments face.

Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

The Urban Land Institute classifies Rose Hill's single-family houses on small lots as higher-density development. Oddly they also classify mixed-use town centers the same.

...in a sprawling area with single-family detached houses on one-acre lots, single-family houses on one-fourth or one-eighth acre are considered higher density. In more densely populated areas with single-family houses on small lots, townhouses and apartments are considered higher-density development. For many suburban communities, the popular mixed-use town centers being developed around the country are considered higher-density development.

Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, p 6, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

Housing affordability is not solely a supply-side problem.

Monetary and fiscal policies that support more efficient and stable housing markets would help to reshape the demand side of housing systems. Presently, there is much debate that focuses on housing solely as a supply-side problem.

Source: Economics Observatory, How does the housing market affect wealth inequality?
2/28/2023

<https://www.economicsobservatory.com/how-does-the-housing-market-affect-wealth-inequality>

Since the 1970s, rising home sale prices related to income and lack of savings have made buying a home untenable for more and more people.

Research suggests that this approach – using home ownership to strengthen household capital formation and spread it more equally – was successful until the late 1970s

But in the decades since then, rising house prices – particularly relative to incomes – have made savings from working largely insufficient to buy a home. This is especially the case for lower-income individuals and for those without family wealth to help raise a deposit.

This has had consequences for social mobility (the extent to which young people's opportunities in life are affected by their family backgrounds) and long-term wealth accumulation – concentrating wealth among older groups and in metropolitan areas.

As real house prices have risen relative to incomes, savings from working are generally no longer sufficient to meet rising deposit requirements.

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Source: Economics Observatory, How does the housing market affect wealth inequality?
2/28/2023

<https://www.economicsobservatory.com/how-does-the-housing-market-affect-wealth-inequality>

Monetary policies have created a "rentier" economy. Creating more rental housing does not address the cost of housing or the lack of affordable housing.

Despite the longevity and severity of the problem of rising house prices, governments have 'kicked the can' of dealing with the problem down the road. With inflation targeting as the core remit of central banks, monetary policies have paid insufficient attention to how rising investment and real prices for the existing housing stock lay the foundations for a rentier economy rather than an entrepreneurial/innovation economy.

Source: Economics Observatory, How does the housing market affect wealth inequality?
2/28/2023

<https://www.economicsobservatory.com/how-does-the-housing-market-affect-wealth-inequality>

The Rose Hill area and the plaza provides exactly the amenities highlighted by the ULI, including sidewalks, shops, restaurants, libraries, and schools.

The proposal by Combined Properties would take away the majority of shops and restaurants that round out the convenience and character of the neighborhood.

In a recent study by the National Association of Realtors® and Smart Growth America, six in ten prospective homebuyers, when asked to choose between two communities, chose the neighborhood that offered a shorter commute, sidewalks, and amenities like shops, restaurants, libraries, schools, and public transportation within walking distance.

Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, p 7, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

Families purposefully move to the Rose Hill and surrounding neighborhoods because of the schools. Arguing that families who might live in the new apartment complex are less likely to have children contradicts the high-value draw of the schools in the neighborhood.

The nature of who lives in higher-density housing—fewer families with children—puts less demand on schools and other public services than low-density housing. Moreover, the compact nature of higher-density development requires less extensive infrastructure to support it.

Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, p 9, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

Services that will be needed by the residents in 400 rental units include police, fire protection, and trash removal all of which are either at or above their limits in their ability to serve the

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neighborhood.

In fact, the Franconia Volunteer Fire Dept was required just recently to give its large ladder fire truck to another district. At the cost of hundreds of thousands, where will funding and support staff come from for the extra public resources needed?

...new residents need police and fire protection, schools, libraries, trash removal, and other services.

Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, p 10, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

Even if the new apartments bring in fewer students, the schools are already at or above capacity with no plans or funds for future expansion.

Schools that will exceed capacity are Rose Hill, Bush Hill, Twain, and Edison. That capacity surge will be further impacted by new residences in Rose Hill.

Source: FCPS Capital Improvement Plan, Proposed 2023-28, p 158

https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/pdf/Proposed-FY-2024-28-CIP_0.pdf

Senior and physically challenged residents who cannot or do not like to drive long distance in traffic will be especially disadvantaged.

See [Testimony](#)

The property taxes from the new development is unlikely to offset the additional costs incurred for the infrastructure needed to support it.

...apartment renters do not pay property tax...

Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, p 11, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

The argument that higher-density development attracts more employers and workers does not hold water in this instance. The reason is Fairfax County is more residents are moving out than moving in. (*See below*)

Another emerging body of research suggests that higher-density development is an important component of economic development initiatives and helps attract new employers. "Information economy" is a term used to define the growing industries based on the economics of the Internet, information goods, and intellectual property.

Workers in this field are known as "knowledge workers," and many believe they are the future of the American economy. These workers are comfortable with the latest technology and, because their skills are transferable, choose their jobs based on the attributes of the town or city where they are located. They seek out vibrant, diverse urban centers that offer access to technology, other knowledge workers, and lifestyle.

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Source: Urban Land Institute, *High Density Myth and Fact*, p 12, 2005

<https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Baileys-Crossroads-Seven-Corners/ULI%20Higher%20Density-facts%20and%20myths.pdf>

Trends in Fairfax County show that more people are moving out of the County primarily due to their jobs, to be closer to family, and retirement. The cost of living is barely a blip on the radar for reasons to move out of the County.

Source: United Van Lines, National Movers Study: Where and Why Americans Moved in 2022

<https://www.unitedvanlines.com/newsroom/movers-study-2022>

Virginia Governor Youngkin reiterates that homes have gotten so expensive in parts of Virginia that they are out of reach for people who "find themselves on the lower rungs of the income ladder."

He erroneously blames zoning policies and land-use regulations. That implies that more housing overall leads to more *affordable* housing, which is not true, certainly not the numbers he states are needed: 300,000 affordable rental units.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin says, "Virginia needs more houses—tens of thousands of them, including as many as 300,000 affordable rental units." Youngkin's initiative "presents a problem: the state's housing supply has been lagging population growth for almost two decades and, as a result, homes have gotten wildly more expensive in parts of Virginia. They now are out of reach for people who, for a variety of reasons (youth, age, ethnicity), find themselves on the lower rungs of the income ladder. Youngkin has also named a significant culprit: zoning policies, land-use rules and building codes that snarl up homebuilders' various development projects."

Source: Rappahannock News, Gov. Glenn Youngkin's initiative, "Make Virginia Home"

https://www.rappnews.com/foothills_forum/youngkin-s-housing-ideas-stir-worries-of-lost-local-control-over-virginia-land/article_dbfb9380-b092-11ed-8f90-e36454de392b.html

Not Enough Affordable Housing is the Real Problem

"The disappearance of such affordable homes is central to the American housing crisis. The nation has a deepening shortage of housing. But, more specifically, there isn't enough of this housing: small, no-frills homes that would give a family new to the country or a young couple with student debt a foothold to build equity."

Source: NY Times, *Whatever Happened to the Starter Home?*, 9/25/22

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/upshot/starter-home-prices.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>