

Rose Hill Coalition

Rose Paper: Affordable Housing

Opposition to Nomination CPN22-LE-001

Rental control is the key to affordable housing in Fairfax County. However, its effect is curtailed over time as time limits will eventually remove income eligibility and rent requirements, so the rental then becomes standard housing.

Developers will agree to the minimum 6% requirement for affordable housing, because they know the stick is short and the carrot is small. They can also tout their support of affordable housing when they apply for zoning changes and when they are most likely to have the most opposition from the neighborhood.

Assisted Housing in the Rose Hill Planning District includes housing constructed and/or managed under programs which limit the amount of rent charged and the eligibility of occupants based on income. These limits are a condition for the provision of financial assistance from federal, state, or local sources.

Assisted Housing includes units provided under the affordable dwelling unit and workforce dwelling unit programs, as well as other federal, state and local programs. In many cases, the assisted housing units represent only a portion of a larger development.

Some programs have time limits, and those units would no longer be considered “assisted” after income eligibility and rent limitations have been removed.

Source: FAIRFAX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2017 Edition, AREA IV, Rose Hill Planning District, *Amended through 2-23-2021*

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/compplan/area4/rosehill.pdf>

The County clearly knows that affordable housing is not the carrot at the end of the stick that developers are interested in.

The proof of this is in the County's push to aggressively build affordable housing even though, officially, "public housing" exists only in the District.

In the last several years, the County has worked diligently to go beyond the 6% handicap by approving the construction (or conversion) of multiple affordable-housing complexes.

> Franconia (Van Dorn): 150 affordable independent senior units

> Seven Corners: 95 units for seniors

> Fairfax Governmental Center: 279 units for families and individuals

> Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force created in 2020

> Comprehensive Plan change in 2021 also allows single-family homes to add an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) with an administrative permit.

Source: Rose Hill Coalition Update, 3/7/2023

<https://rosehillcoalition.org/coalition-updates/>

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All redevelopment results in higher rents. In fact, the current goal of real estate developers is create long-term rental income through redevelopment and zoning changes.

“Affordable properties in the County are at risk of losing affordability through redevelopment into more expensive residential and renovations that result in higher rents that outpace the rise in household incomes,” according to the Fairfax Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force.

Source: Fairfax County, Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force, Plan Amendment 2021-CW-1CP, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/affordable-housing-preservation>

Public housing has significant challenges. In our region, DC is the biggest landlord in the city and is failing in its management of its 30,000 public housing households with loses at \$10 million annually. Occupancy rates are below 74 percent which is lowest in the country.

In 2018, an assessment found nearly a third of the District’s public housing units nearly uninhabitable.

D.C. has more public housing vacancy than any other major city.

The occupancy decline underscores entrenched troubles at the agency tasked with housing some of the District’s poorest residents. The city’s largest landlord, the authority serves about 30,000 households through housing vouchers and mixed-finance and traditional public housing properties.

The vacancies cost more than \$10 million annually in forgone rent and federal subsidies, according to a federal housing department estimate, and they drag down communities the authority is supposed to serve. Their boarded-up doors and windows are often pried loose and attract crime, and residents say the trash left behind fuels roach and rodent infestations.

In March, as the occupancy rate stood at 79 percent, Donald pledged to raise it 10 percentage points by the end of September. Instead, it has fallen below 74 percent.

...an assessment [in 2018] found nearly a third of the District’s public housing units nearly uninhabitable. The findings, which presaged HUD’s recent determination, included lead-paint hazards, out-of-code electrical systems, structural issues, water damage, mold and rodent infestations.

Source: *The Washington Post*, 10/19/2022

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/10/19/dc-public-housing-vacancy-spirals/>