Housing Policy Update

HOW WE GET THERE
Albemarle County’s Affordable Housing Policy was first adopted in 2004. Some minor amendments were made to the policy during the 2015 update to our Comprehensive Plan. Recognizing the need for a housing policy that addresses the housing needs of our residents today, the Albemarle County Planning Commission approved staff undertaking a process to review and revise our current policy. Once complete, the new housing policy will again, become part of the County’s Comprehensive Plan.
Current policy

Provides and strategies and recommendations to support affordable housing in Albemarle County.

Defines affordable housing as: ‘houses affordable to…the County population that have household incomes at or below 80% of area median income’.

Our current housing policy provides strategies and recommendations to support the preservation and production of affordable housing the County. In the policy, affordable housing is defined as homes that are affordable to County residents with household incomes no greater than 80% of area median income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Qualifies for Affordable Housing?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area Median Income (AMI) 2019: $89,400</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>% AMI</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>$18,800</td>
<td>$21,450</td>
<td>$24,150</td>
<td>$26,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>$31,300</td>
<td>$35,800</td>
<td>$40,250</td>
<td>$44,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>$50,050</td>
<td>$57,200</td>
<td>$71,500</td>
<td>$71,500</td>
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Current policy goals & strategies

Five policy objectives:

- Safe, decent, and affordable housing options
- Housing choice and equal housing opportunities
- Safe, high quality, sustainable neighborhoods
- Meeting housing and services needs of diverse population
- Direct assistance towards households most in need

Five strategies

- Regulatory and administrative functions
- Set targets for affordable housing development
- Long-term affordability
- Private sector partnerships
- Additional resources

Our Affordable Housing Policy currently sets out five broad policy objectives addressing housing quality and choice, neighborhood sustainability, differing housing needs, equality of access to housing, and ensuring resources for housing are provided to those most in need of support.

The policy also identifies five types of strategies to meet our housing goals. These strategies include regulatory functions, setting targets for affordable housing development, and identifying ways to ensure long-term affordability of housing in our community.
Why a housing policy update?

In April 2019, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission released the Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Assessment report. This report identified a high need for housing affordable to low- and moderate-income families including 10,700 cost-burdened households who are paying more than 30% of their monthly income toward housing costs. The high cost of housing in our County has a significant negative impact on our lower-income neighbors, with 3 out of every 5 households with incomes at or below 50% AMI paying more than half of their income for housing. Without taking steps to address the increasing cost of housing now, the number of cost burdened households in Albemarle County will increase by approximately 34% by the year 2040.

To meet current and future affordable housing needs, additional tools are needed for the County’s ‘affordable housing tool box’. Completing a comprehensive review and update of our Affordable Housing Policy now will equip the County with the policies and programs needed to help meet not only our current housing needs, but those of future County residents, as well.

30%

The percentage of monthly income that should be dedicated to housing costs.

3 in 5 households with incomes less than 50% AMI pay more than half of their monthly income for housing.
Process

To complete the housing policy update, we will follow a three-step process that includes:

- A period of community engagement;
- Development of new policy recommendations; and
- The creation of a policy implementation strategy.
Community engagement

Our community engagement process has been designed to engage with as many County residents as possible and includes the following activities.

• The creation of two advisory committees

• Focus group discussions

• Community meetings in partnership with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission. These sessions will offer opportunities for:
  • Learning
  • Listening
  • Examining solutions
  • And providing comments on the draft policy

• A web page to include:
  • Meeting materials and summaries
  • Housing information
  • Updates on our progress
  • Ways to provide comments/feedback

• Links to a resident questionnaire
Advisory committees

Two advisory committees are being created, a Stakeholder Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee.

Stakeholder advisory committee

The eleven member Stakeholder Advisory Committee will work with staff to craft recommendations for the new housing policy and implementation plan. Just as importantly, this committee will work to make certain both documents are reflect the housing needs and aspirations residents share through the community engagement process. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee membership is anticipated to include:

• 1 member of the Board of Supervisors’
• 1 member Planning Commissioner’
• 1 member of IMPACT’
• Representatives from the County’s Department of Social Services the City of Charlottesville, and the Regional Housing Partnership,
• A local employer, and a developer or landlord,
• The Thomas Jefferson Coalition for the Homeless, and
• Low- or moderate-income homeowners and renters.

Technical advisory committee

The Technical Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from various County Departments, will provide technical assistance to the Stakeholder Committee and help ensure all policy recommendations coordinate with existing County policies and are supported by State laws.
Focus groups

Because housing issues affect all areas of our community – from schools to employers to healthcare – staff will be organizing focus groups with representatives from various sectors of our community. These discussions will focus on topics specific to each sector to gain a better understanding of how housing impacts school performance, economic development, and health outcomes among other community measures.

Staff will also work with local nonprofit housing and service providers to arrange focus groups with the clients they serve. These discussions will help ensure the voices of individuals and families typically under-represented in traditional community engagement activities, are heard.

Sample discussion topics:

- Barriers faced by low-income renters
- Barriers to the development of affordable housing
- How does a lack of good quality affordable housing impact an individual’s health?
- Is a lack of affordable housing affecting the ability of local businesses to hire new workers?
Drafting the policy & strategy

1. Draft policy
2. Policy review
3. Collect and analyze community input
4. Develop recommendation s for housing vision/goals
5. Review State enabling legislation/best practices
6. Establish targets
7. Develop housing metrics & reporting mechanisms

Flowchart:
- Draft policy → Policy review → Collect and analyze community input → Develop recommendations for housing vision/goals
- Draft strategy → Review State enabling legislation/best practices → Establish targets → Develop housing metrics & reporting mechanisms
Timeline

June-August 2019: Develop materials, workplan, web page

September – November 2019: Community engagement

December 2019 – March 2020: Policy and strategy development

April 2020: Joint work session with Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
Timeline

May – June 2020:
Public comment period

June – July 2020:
Finalize policy/strategy recommendations

August – September 2020:
Present draft Housing Policy and Housing Strategy to Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for approval