



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 20-471, **Version:** 1

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**AGENDA DATE:** 10/7/2020

**TITLE:**

Housing Albemarle - draft housing policy recommendations

**SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:** Presentation and discussion of the draft housing policy document

**ITEM TYPE:** Regular Information Item

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Stacy Pethia

**PRESENTER (S):** Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Filardo, Rapp, Pethia

**LEGAL REVIEW:** Not Required

**REVIEWED BY:** Jeffrey B. Richardson

**BACKGROUND:** Albemarle County is committed to creating sustainable communities and safe, decent housing opportunities for our residents. Since 2004, our Comprehensive Plan and Affordable Housing Policy have provided guidance on how we meet that need. However, new residential development in the County has not kept pace with growing housing demand, leaving many County residents struggling to find housing they can afford that meets their needs. The *Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Analysis* report released in 2019, identified more than 10,000 homeowners and renters who are paying more than the recommended 30 % of gross household income for housing and housing related costs. As the County continues to grow, that number is estimated to increase by 4,000 households by the year 2040. To ensure the County continues to provide sufficient and appropriate housing opportunities in our community, the County embarked on an effort to update our housing policy in October 2019. The new policy recommendations provide the tools necessary to meet the diverse housing needs of all County residents regardless of income, age, or other special needs.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** Infrastructure Investment: Prioritize, plan, and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs

**DISCUSSION:** In April 2019, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission published the *Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Assessment* report. This study, which examined housing needs on both a county level and region-wide basis, identifies more than 10,000 Albemarle County households - both renters and homeowners (20 % and 42 % of total households, respectively) -- struggling with housing costs. Households with incomes less than 50 % of area median income experiencing the greatest housing cost burdens (67% of all very low- and extremely low-income households). The report further shows that the number of households paying more than the recommended 30 % of income for housing costs is anticipated to increase 34 % by the year 2040. To help meet current and future housing needs for county residents, staff is undertaking an update of the county's Housing Policy.

The Planning Commission directed staff to begin work on updating the Housing Policy at their July 23, 2019 meeting. The Housing Policy update was a three-phased process. It began with a series of community

engagement activities to collect feedback on housing-related issues and aspirations, as well as on potential tools the County may use to meet current and future housing needs in Albemarle County. The information collected through these activities directly informed the second and third phases of the policy update process - creation of a comprehensive housing policy, as well as an implementation strategy. An overview of this process is outlined below.

**Community Outreach** Between August and December 2019, approximately 400 county residents engaged with the new policy development process. Staff conducted three community meetings in October 2019 with the goals of sharing information about affordable housing in Albemarle County, listening to residents' concerns about housing in the county, and identifying solutions to support affordable housing in our neighborhoods.

In addition to the community meetings, staff worked with local nonprofit service providers to organize focus group sessions with nonprofit staff, and the individuals and households they serve. Staff completed a total of seven focus group sessions between November 1, and December 17, 2019. These discussions focused on a set of general topics:

1. What, if any, housing related issues are you or someone you know struggling with?
2. How does a lack of affordable housing affect you, your neighborhood, our county?
3. What types of housing do we need in Albemarle County?
4. What can Albemarle County do to address affordable housing needs?

Meeting and focus group participants represented a diverse cross-section of persons who live and/or work in Albemarle County, including residents from both the Development and Rural areas, seniors, renters and homeowners, developers and real estate professionals, local employers and nonprofit service providers. Other engagement and data collection activities undertaken by staff include: Rio29 Form Based Code Public Event & Survey - August 2019 Rivanna Roll Call - November 2019 Office of Equity and Inclusion Roadshow Stop - November 2019 Regional Housing Survey (*conducted by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission*) Jack Jouett Middle School, Eighth Grade Student Project - November 2019 to January 2020 Community outreach activities were supplemented by staff discussions with various county departments including: the Economic Development Office, Facilities and Environmental Services, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, the Office of Housing, and the Department of Social Services.

**Stakeholder Committee** To develop the new policy recommendations, staff worked with a nine-member a Stakeholder Committee comprised of individuals representing the following interests: county residents aged 65 years and older; IMPACT; people experiencing homelessness; for-profit developers of multi-family rental housing; the Regional Housing Partnership; homeowners; local employers; low-income households; and the City of Charlottesville. The recommendations developed by this committee include a range of tools and policy objectives to advance affordable housing and encourage the creation of inclusive, sustainable communities throughout Albemarle County.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** There is no immediate impact to the budget associated with this item. However, future implementation of some of the policy objectives may require county investment.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Board review and discuss the attached draft policy recommendations, and provide feedback to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A - Draft Housing Policy & Implementation Plan

Attachment B - Minutes Planning Commission Work Session August 11, 2020