

# Housing Plan

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## INTENT

The intent of the Housing Plan is to provide a framework for providing for the housing needs of all residents of Prince William County. These needs are expressed in terms of quality, affordability, location, and amenities.

The Housing Plan states the County's commitment to clean, safe and attractive neighborhoods, and to the elimination of neighborhood blight and substandard housing. The Plan recognizes that neighborhoods in which people want to live and can live safely are neighborhoods that do not have illegal occupancies; that are free of debris and illegally parked and stored vehicles; that maintain health and sanitation standards; that do not suffer from excessive traffic and the noise and pollution such traffic brings; and that have sidewalks, public spaces, and streets in good condition. The Housing Plan also recognizes that a variety of housing types must be available to all its residents. Implementation of the policies and action strategies in the Housing Plan will also foster the image of Prince William County as a good place for residential and nonresidential investment.

The components of the Housing Plan are:

- Intent, Goal, Policies, and Action Strategies

***GOAL: Identify sufficient locations and consistent criteria for the provision of diverse housing opportunities to assist in promoting economic development.***

## H-POLICY 1: PRESERVE AND IMPROVE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.

### ACTION STRATEGIES:

1. Encourage the creation and continued operation and effectiveness of property owner associations within communities through recognition, coordination, and appropriate public awareness programs.
2. Continue the voluntary joint program between representatives of property owners associations in the County and appropriate zoning and building code enforcement personnel to increase communication and coordination of these entities in matters pertaining to neighborhood preservation and enhancement.
3. Continue to promote the formation and use of neighborhood watch and McGruff-type programs, as well as close neighborhood liaison with local law enforcement agencies.
4. Establish procedures for determining housing conditions and prepare a housing condition report, which will be annually updated. The housing condition reports

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will identify geographic areas of special concern having characteristics as set forth in Action Strategies 5, 9, 12, and 14, below.

5. Conduct periodic Countywide evaluations of older and lower-cost neighborhoods to prioritize the areas of the County which have above-average concentrations of illegal occupancies, excessive signs, debris, and inoperable or illegally parked or stored personal property (such as boats, trailers, campers, automobiles) and focus more intensive code enforcement efforts in those areas.
6. Maintain Health Department and zoning enforcement inspections to ensure compliance with occupancy and sanitary standards.
7. Evaluate the need for Code revisions that would improve the County's ability to enforce occupancy limitations and health and maintenance standards for structures used as residences.
8. Identify the level at which traffic or the impacts resulting from traffic would be considered "excessive" in existing residential neighborhoods. The considered impacts should include, but not be limited to noise, emissions, speed, and volume based, in part, on the Long-Range Land Use, Transportation, and Environment Plan chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.
9. Target neighborhoods with identified excessive amounts of traffic for mitigation measures.
10. Identify the types of improvements that would be most appropriate to each identified neighborhood with excessive traffic in mitigating the impacts of such traffic or reducing the volume of such traffic.
11. Assign a high priority to those identified improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts of or reduce the volume of excessive traffic in identified neighborhoods in state or County capital improvement programs, management plans, and budgets.
12. Identify those neighborhoods in need of new or repaired sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and street pavement, and initiate a repair and replacement program for these areas through appropriate private or public means.
13. Continue a jointly sponsored residential street tree program with the County, the U.S. Forest Service, the Virginia Department of Forestry, the National Arbor Day Foundation, Virginia Department of Transportation, and local property owner associations. Establish an objective of continuing to add six linear street miles into the street tree program annually.
14. Provide infrastructure and supporting facilities and services where necessary to upgrade existing neighborhoods and, where appropriate, to increase their development/redevelopment potential.

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15. Preserve and conserve historically significant residential structures in accordance with the Cultural Resources Plan.
16. With the cooperation and involvement of the private sector, provide relocation assistance and/or other protective measures, as may be appropriate, to residents of dwelling units that are proposed to be demolished, converted to nonresidential uses, or converted from rental to fee ownerships.
17. Continue operation and improve the effectiveness of the County Healthier Neighborhoods Program, or similar type of program, for providing on-going assistance and encouragement to maintain clean, safe, and unblighted neighborhoods in compliance with local codes.
18. Continue a County-administered community housing rehabilitation program, in the form of forgivable loans and grants, that targets extremely low-income owner-occupants, providing rehab assistance to bring eligible properties up to HUD Housing Quality Standards. Seek federal funding to assist the County in upgrading housing considered to be substandard.
19. Implement, where possible, appropriate elements of the Community Design Plan.

## **H-POLICY 2: ENCOURAGE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY THAT MEET THE NEED OF THE COUNTY'S RESIDENTS, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY THE COUNTY'S WORK FORCE AND POPULATIONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.**

### **ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Encourage the development and construction of housing conducive to attracting increased business to the County.
2. Permit and encourage a variety of housing types and densities in individual developments through the Zoning Ordinance, in a manner that ensures compatibility and additional open space for those living in that development. Planned communities should be encouraged, in locations that are in keeping with the Long-Range Land Use Plan, through appropriate incentives in the Zoning Ordinance and subdivision regulations.
3. Encourage the development of future housing to include supporting infrastructure, such as mass transit, schools, parks, emergency services, water and sewer services, and utilities.
4. Encourage housing that will not adversely affect the environmental quality of Prince William County, in accordance with the Environment Plan.

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5. Maintain an adequate supply of both rental housing and moderate-cost multifamily condominium housing.
6. Monitor the efforts of the Governor's Housing Study Commission as they pertain to housing for populations with special needs.
7. Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance and other local codes, as appropriate, include locational criteria for the establishment of housing for the elderly and institutional housing which considers accessibility, convenience, and infrastructure availability.
8. Investigate the use and development of innovative housing types such as single room occupancy (SRO) housing and detached "granny flats" and/or independent living centers, to address the special independent living needs of certain working individuals with low incomes and/or persons with mental or physical disabilities unable to function on their own and the elderly. If deemed appropriate, amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit such housing in certain residential and/or mixed-use zoning districts.
9. As part of the rezoning and/or special use permit process, encourage developers to support the Housing Preservation and Development Fund, according to the policies contained in the adopted Prince William Area Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan, as a means to make existing and proposed units available to a wide range of low-income groups and populations with special needs living in the County.
10. Encourage the retention of available affordable housing in quantities sufficient to meet the need of residents of all income ranges in Prince William County.
11. Take maximum advantage of federal and state funding for assisting income-eligible County renters to achieve home ownership.

## **H-POLICY 3: PREVENT CONCENTRATIONS AND ENCOURAGE GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

### **ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Amend appropriate codes and ordinances to permit diverse housing types and construction types in any land use classification that permits residential uses, provided that exterior design and the level of maintenance is compatible with that of the surrounding area.
2. Promote the deinstitutionalization of housing for the disabled and elderly by encouraging small-scale group homes for these populations with special needs in a variety of residential neighborhoods. Publicly funded or supported group home facilities shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of the Long-Range Land Use Plan, relative to public facility reviews.

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**H-POLICY 4: SUPPORT STATE AND FEDERAL HOUSING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE DISABLED AND ELDERLY. COOPERATE WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS.**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Revise applicable County codes to incorporate state and federal standards to better accommodate the disabled and elderly.
2. Take maximum advantage of federal and state funding for housing rehabilitation of substandard structures.
3. Take maximum advantage of federal and state grants and private funding for the purpose of increasing/improving the affordable housing stock.

**H-POLICY 5: FOSTER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS COUNTY HOUSING NEEDS**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Assist private entities in identifying and addressing neighborhood housing problems.
2. Encourage the participation of nonprofit developers in the housing delivery process.

**H-POLICY 6: IMPROVE PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY'S HOUSING DATA BASE IN ORDER TO BETTER FACILITATE PLANNING DECISIONS.**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Encourage the establishment of a comprehensive Countywide central repository for housing information. Coordinate and cooperate with the public agencies who collect and use housing data.
2. Encourage the development and improvement of a Countywide housing management information system through the coordination of existing sources of housing data in Prince William County.