

Tips for encouraging support for the Affordable Housing Master Plan

Remember—

Affordable housing and the AHMP (and accompanying Implementation Framework) are complex. Do the best you can. Saying “I don’t know, but I can find out or put you in touch with someone who does” is OK!

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| Connect benefits to your listener’s values | What does the person value about living in Arlington? Describe how housing affordability contributes to that value—diversity, providing opportunity to all children, ready access to retail and personal services, clean air. |
| Focus on the immediate objective | Taking a specific action in support of AHMP adoption , for persons who already support it— <i>Remember to send the County Board an email by September 16!</i> <i>Come to the Board meeting on the 19th and stand when others speak.</i> A chance to gain support for the AHMP from someone who supports affordable housing in general but is unaware of the AHMP <i>The AHMP updates current housing policy both to respond to changes in demographic needs and to provide creative new approaches to creating affordability for low- and middle-income households.</i> Helping to correct a misunderstanding <i>There is no public housing in Arlington. Units are built and managed by private developers who use County loan dollars to leverage substantial additional, non-County funding.</i> Answering a question |
| Be mindful of language | Avoid using terms such as “poor” to describe those who earn below the median income (very high in Arlington). Such terms can lead to the thinking that “they” don’t deserve help from “us.” The large majority of households in affordable housing work (the exceptions being seniors and persons with disabilities): they are lower-wage earners . Appeal to common values: stability, opportunity, community . |
| Tell a personal story | . . . about someone you know who lives in affordable housing . . . help provided to someone transitioning from an Arlington shelter . . . a teacher who moved to a less expensive school district . . . a worker who must make a long commute to provide services to you . . . how <i>your</i> children can’t afford to live where they grew up |
| Emphasize common concerns | Many Arlingtonians—neighborhood associations, faith communities, civic groups, advocates, elected officials, and individuals—are working together to ensure housing opportunities for households of all income levels for all of our benefit. |
| Emphasize community benefits | A diverse housing mix means that <ul style="list-style-type: none">employees can live near work, reducing personal and environmental stress, and keeping employers happy and the local economy strong. This is especially true for prized Gen Y workers.Arlington can continue its tradition of welcoming immigrant communities and reverse its decline in economic and racial diversity. |

continued

*Emphasize
community benefits, cont'd*

- Stable affordable housing is good for students.

**Paint a picture
wherever possible**

Show pictures of affordable housing in Arlington.

Explain how Arlington's **public–private partnership** is fiscally responsible and has become the national best practice model.

Explain how Arlington is a **recognized leader** in planning housing near transit.

Realize

. . . that not everyone will be convinced . . . but your conversation may “plant a seed.”

Best messenger

Where possible, determine in advance who would be the best messenger for the objective.
