

# HOUSING

## 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 Housing 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, and that there are various regulatory and programmatic mechanisms to achieve affordable housing and housing for all segments of the County's population. 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 non-residential 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 provide housing opportunities for all segments of the County's population and to assist in promoting economic development.

**H-POLICY 1:** Preserve and improve existing neighborhoods. Ensure that Prince William County achieves new neighborhoods with a high quality of life.

## 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. Prepare a housing condition report and annually update that report. The annual housing condition report will identify geographic areas of special concern having those characteristics 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 that 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). 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.
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. Initiate a repair and replacement program for these areas through appropriate private or public means.

13. Enhance the County streetscape program in coordination with 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.
15. Preserve and conserve historically significant residential structures, in accordance with the Cultural Resources Plan.
16. Continue operation and improve the effectiveness of the County's Community Maintenance Program—or similar type of program—for providing on-going assistance and encouragement to maintain clean, safe, and un-blighted neighborhoods in compliance with local codes.
17. 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.
18. Implement, where possible, appropriate elements of the Community Design Plan.
19. 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. Encourage planned communities—in locations that are in keeping with the Long-Range Land Use Plan—through appropriate incentives in the Zoning Ordinance and subdivision regulations.
20. Encourage the development of future housing to include supporting infrastructure—such as mass transit, schools, parks, emergency services, water and sewer services, and utilities.
21. Encourage housing that will not adversely affect the environmental quality of Prince William County, in accordance with the Environment Plan.

**H-POLICY 2:** Encourage the provision of affordable housing for all segments of the County's population.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Encourage the development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and construction of housing at all price ranges, for all segments of the workforce, particularly to encourage the location of increased business to the County to provide jobs to those who live in Prince William County.
2. Maintain an adequate supply of both rental housing and moderate-cost multifamily condominium housing.
3. Monitor the efforts of the Governor's Housing Study Commission as they pertain to housing for populations with special needs.
4. Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance and other local codes—as appropriate—include location criteria for the establishment of housing for the elderly and institutional housing which considers accessibility, convenience, and infrastructure availability.
5. Investigate the use and development of innovative housing types. If deemed appropriate, amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit such housing in certain residential and/or mixed-use zoning districts.
6. 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.
7. Encourage the retention of available affordable housing in quantities sufficient to meet the need of residents of all income ranges in Prince William County.
8. Take maximum advantage of federal and state funding for assisting income-eligible County renters in achieving home ownership.
9. 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 non-residential uses, or converted from rental to fee ownership.
10. 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.

11. Take maximum advantage of federal and state grants and private funding for the purpose of increasing/improving the affordable housing stock.
12. Prevent concentrations and encourage geographic dispersion of affordable housing.

**H-POLICY 3:** 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. Promote the de-institutionalization 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.

**H-POLICY 4:** 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 non-profit developers in the housing delivery process.

**H-POLICY 5:** 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 that 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.