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**Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**September 27, 2021, 7:00pm**

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*This meeting was a virtual public meeting held through electronic communications means.*

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**Planning Commissioners in attendance:**

James Schroll (Chair, LRPC)  
Jim Lantelme  
Elizabeth Morton  
Tenley Peterson  
Jane Siegel  
Sara Steinberger  
Daniel Weir

**Planning Commissioners absent:**

Denyse "Nia" Bagley  
Elizabeth Gearin  
Stephen Hughes  
Devanshi P. Patel  
Leonardo Sarli

**Staff in attendance:**

Kellie Brown – CPHD, Planning  
Russell Danao-Schroeder – CPHD – Housing  
Matt Ladd – CPHD, Planning  
Tim Murphy – CPHD, Planning  
Richard Tucker – CPHD, Housing

**Members of the public in attendance:**

Anne Bodine, Nick Cumings, Susan English, Connie Ericson, Jane Green, Tad Guleserian, Matthew Jones, Oliver Lee, Shelbie Lock, Kathleen McSweeney, Benjamin Nichols, Scott Pedowitz, Kathy Scruggs, Thomas Viles

**Missing Middle Housing Study**

LRPC Chair James Schroll opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Commissioner Schroll recognized the members of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) as well as staff members.

Kellie Brown and Matt Ladd provided an overview of the Missing Middle Housing Study process and the newest report in the study, *Expanding Housing Choice: The Missing Middle Housing Study Phase 1 Report*.

Once the staff presentation concluded, Commissioner Schroll solicited comments and feedback from LRPC attendees.

The Commission members offered the following comments and raised several clarifying questions:

Comments related to the housing types reviewed during Phase 1:

- Question regarding usage of "missing middle" and its relationship to housing types as opposed to housing prices. The terminology is meant to refer to housing types and housing choice.
- Question about whether staff has considered housing types, such as duplexes, that could fit in the same building envelope as a large single-family detached dwelling. Yes, that is something that staff has been considering and intends to study further in Phase 2.
- Clarifying question asking which housing types introduced in Phase 1 will not be studied in Phase 2. Staff is not recommending further study for cottage clusters and accessory dwellings in Phase 2.
- Clarifying question about the distinction between "townhouse" and "rowhouse." Staff views these two terms as interchangeable, but the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance uses the term "townhouse."
- Comment that a substandard lot that does not comply with minimum lot size requirements should be allowed to develop as a lot that does comply with those requirements.
- Question about whether the community engagement in Phase 1 sought feedback about where specific missing middle housing types might be appropriate (e.g., on arterial roads). Staff did not seek specific feedback about where housing types might be appropriate; staff intends to conduct additional study in Phase 2 to identify potentially appropriate locations for housing types.
- Comment suggesting that staff analyze and compare the land values of neighborhoods with existing middle housing types with neighborhoods without those housing types.

Comments related to outreach conducted during Phase 1:

- Comment supporting the usage of enhanced public engagement practices in Phase 2. Staff will seek to do more to meet people where they are.
- Comment suggesting that staff consider developing zoning regulations that will allow for flexibility in the establishment of identified missing middle housing types, as well as housing types that have not been identified but may exist in the future.
- Question regarding whether staff conducted outreach to residents in affordable housing dwelling units. Staff has conducted some outreach toward residents in affordable housing and will continue to consider future opportunities to engage with stakeholders who are underrepresented.
- Question regarding whether staff is considering racial and socioeconomic equity and whether staff has coordinated with Arlington's Chief Race and Equity Officer, Samia Byrd, in her work on racial equity. Staff has worked with Ms. Byrd in Phase 1 and intends to coordinate with her in the course of Phase 2 of the study.
- Question about whether staff anticipates establishing a review process to revisit housing types in the future. The County's Affordable Housing Master Plan is reviewed periodically and would be an opportunity to consider and identify potential zoning amendments.
- Question about whether staff did any weighting of survey responses, as responses to demographic questions indicate that more homeowners submitted responses than renters, and renters make up a larger percentage of the County's population. Staff has

not done any weighting to survey responses. Staff intends to conduct additional outreach to reach stakeholders who are underrepresented in the study process.

- Comment supporting staff's efforts to conduct additional engagement to renters.

#### Comments related to the housing types recommended for additional study in Phase 2:

- Comment supporting further study of cottage cluster development and potentially looking at the County's Unified Residential Development (URD) zoning regulations. Staff may consider looking at cottage clusters in the future through a different process.

#### Comments related to the approach for Phase 2:

- Comment suggesting that staff consider opportunities to incorporate feedback from representatives of key advisory commissions into the development and refinement of the methodology for the analysis in Phase 2.
- Clarifying question about the affordability aspect of the economic feasibility section of Phase 2. Staff will conduct analysis of the economic feasibility of missing middle housing types. New missing middle housing types may come in at the top of the market, but they would be less expensive than new, large single-family detached dwellings.
- Clarifying question about whether staff will be reviewing the feasibility of parking with missing middle housing types. Staff will be examining parking as part of Phase 2.
- Comment suggesting that staff consider developing a series of preapproved designs or plans for missing middle housing types to facilitate the permitting process.
- Comment suggesting staff develop and utilize a map of existing middle housing in Arlington in future documents and engagements.
- Clarifying question regarding whether staff has analyzed the existing conditions of existing middle housing, including income characteristics. Staff is familiar with some physical characteristics of Arlington's existing middle housing, such as their size, age, and nonconforming status with current zoning regulations.
- Comment suggesting staff consider looking at an approach that utilizes a floor area ratio (FAR) for lower-density residential housing, where a base density for a site can differ depending on the number of dwelling units on a site.

#### **Public Comment**

- Continue to stress that the study is not intended to solve for affordable housing or committed affordable housing. Appreciated the discussion about preapproved designs for missing middle housing types; as part of that, staff should consider building materials as well. Support looking at retrofitting existing housing to create multiple dwelling units. When considering public facilities, include community centers and libraries, in addition to schools and transit. In Phase 2, indicate what types of missing middle housing might be appropriate in different areas (e.g., transit corridors, within neighborhoods, etc.).
- Would like to see responses of survey to be weighted by housing owner vs. renter responses. Would like the study to move faster and would like accessory dwellings to be considered as part of the study, as currently only one accessory dwelling is currently allowed on a lot, and the owner-occupancy requirement for accessory dwellings is restrictive and should be reconsidered.
- Would like the study to move faster to provide recommendations to provide solutions that can help address housing challenges and climate change. Would like to see how

missing middle housing can help affect change on reducing the number of personal vehicle trips, as well as on trees at a regional scale if new housing is developed closer to existing public transit infrastructure.

- Support additional discussion about housing needs for seniors, including cottage clusters. Staff should consider developing more scenarios of what types of missing middle housing could potentially be feasible on a site.

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Commissioner Schroll adjourned the meeting close to 9:00 pm.