

# Housing

In order to function equitably and inclusively, the City must prioritize the availability of housing units for people of widely varying income levels, ages, and lifestyle choices. While there is great variety among the approximately 9,000 housing units in the City, several types or characteristics of housing may be underrepresented among the current housing mix, especially as other nearby communities undergo redevelopment and expand their offerings.

Although the City is primarily built out, a variety of new housing types can be accommodated through redevelopment on a relatively limited basis to broaden the current offerings and accommodate changing demands. Accordingly, housing that is affordable, housing that is designed for older adults and people with disabilities to accommodate the City's relatively high proportion of older adults, and housing for growing younger families seeking modern single-family housing without leaving the City should be prioritized.

## Guiding Principle:

In 2035, Fairfax is a city with... a choice of housing types that meet the needs of our community.

Existing housing units can also accommodate changing demands through renovations and retrofits. Prioritizing additional housing units in underrepresented market segments, improving the functionality of existing housing units, and accommodating in-demand housing types would help to ensure that the City is as welcoming as possible to current and potential residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, age, or other circumstances.

In addition to expanding housing choices, proactive strategies should be taken to ensure that existing housing units that are affordable are preserved and that new units that are affordable are added to the City's overall housing unit mix.



# Housing Goal 1

Support a wide range of housing types.

It is vital that a variety of high-quality, attractive housing choices continue to be available in the City to support differing needs and demands of residents. Housing needs and demands are reflective of the existing housing stock and fluctuating market trends, making them subject to change over time. Specific housing types are identified in the Land Use Strategies Section of the Comprehensive Plan. Current shortages could include multifamily rentals and condominiums, of which the majority of the City's stock was built in the 1960s, and townhomes, of which the City currently has a lower ratio than many surrounding communities in Fairfax County. Although significant single-family development is not anticipated as the City is primarily built-out, potential redevelopment and infill housing that keep up with modern expectations and meet demand are encouraged, provided they comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

**OUTCOME H1.1:** Continued development of housing types that are underrepresented in the City's existing stock of housing units.

**ACTION H1.1.1** Create a housing policy that can best provide for the types of housing units that are most in demand.

**1.1.1.1** Conduct a housing assessment to examine the types of housing that are most in demand in the City for a full income range of households, or are most supportive of growing sectors of the local economy.

**1.1.1.2** Support development of housing types that are not heavily represented in the City's housing stock, as identified in the housing assessment, where reasonable.

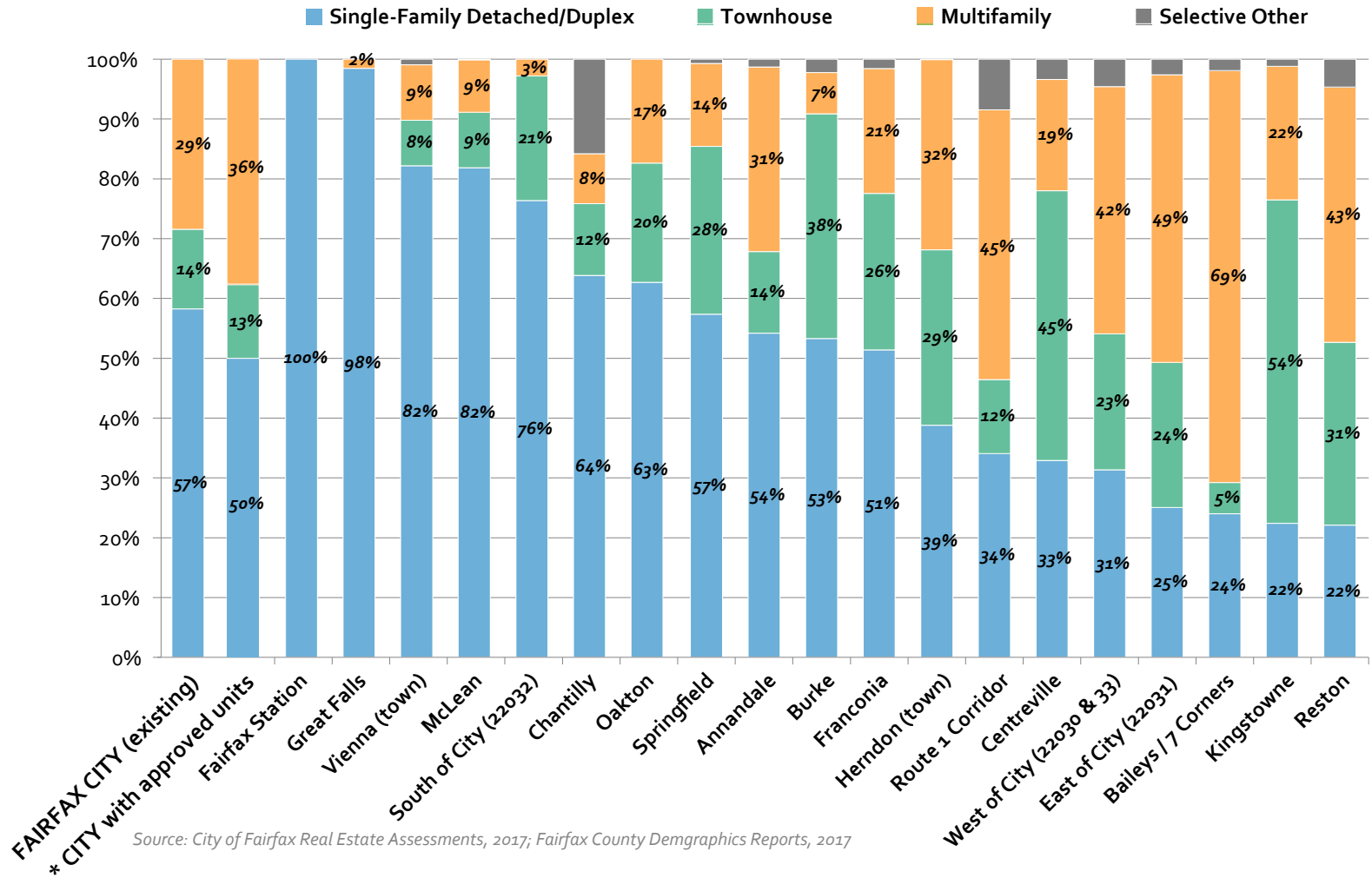
**1.1.1.3** Consider efforts to market new and existing housing stock in the City to growing sectors of the regional economy.

**ACTION H1.1.2** Research changes to the zoning regulations to expand opportunities for accessory dwelling units, while ensuring they do not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood.



Figure 12 on the following page provides a comparison of housing type percentages between the City (both current and approved) and other parts of Fairfax County.

FIGURE 12 HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



\* City with approved units = Approved and unbuilt units as of the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

# Housing Goal 2

## Ensure availability of housing that is affordable.

During the Comprehensive Plan outreach process, affordable housing was the primary issue that rose to the forefront of the housing discussion. (Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2201 defines affordable housing as housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities. However, the actions associated with this goal could target households with incomes below the median.) In addition, Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2223 states that the Comprehensive Plan “shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality.” There are a number of tools available to encourage the establishment of new affordable residential units as well as to preserve existing “naturally occurring affordable housing” that is

**OUTCOME H2.1:** Affordable housing units have been added to the City’s housing stock through redevelopment and strategic investments.

**ACTION H2.1.1** Maintain a robust housing affordability program and dedicated housing trust fund that could be used to rehabilitate and preserve existing housing that is affordable or to help leverage other funding streams for new construction.

**ACTION H2.1.2** Provide regulatory and financial incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing, including amending the City’s Zoning Ordinance to include an Affordable Dwelling Unit ordinance.

**ACTION H2.1.3** Pursue a contractual partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development to administer elements of a housing affordability program for the City.

**ACTION H2.1.4** Provide alternative means of accommodating new dedicated affordable housing units, such as leveraging vacant or underutilized public land; supporting or partnering with private, non-profit, or faith-based organizations; and co-locating affordable housing with public construction.

**OUTCOME H2.2:** Preservation of and reinvestment in the City’s existing supply of affordable multifamily rental housing units.

**ACTION H2.2.1** Facilitate partnerships between existing property owners and nonprofit organizations to preserve and ensure long-term affordability of existing multifamily complexes.

**ACTION H2.2.2** Promote the use of the Low Income Housing Tax Credits, tax abatements, low-interest loans, the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Program, and other funding sources available to reinvest in and upgrade existing multifamily complexes.

affordable to families earning below the region’s median household income. Affordable housing should be encouraged in higher-density areas of the City, particularly in the Activity Centers.

# Housing

## Goal 3

### Provide housing options for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Housing that is designed for older residents and persons with disabilities was another issue that rose to the forefront of the housing discussion during the Comprehensive Plan's public outreach sessions. Given the relatively high concentration of older adults in the City as compared to surrounding jurisdictions, demand for such units from existing City residents could be strong. Housing should be suitable for a range of choices, such as aging in place, accessory dwelling units, dedicated senior housing, and assisted living/nursing care. In addition, options should be available for people with a variety of disabilities and incorporate features of universal design - the design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.

**OUTCOME H3.1:** A range of accessible housing types with appropriate levels of support and care is available for older adults and persons with disabilities that incorporate the concept of universal design.

**ACTION H3.1.1** Express preferences regarding housing units that are appropriate and/or in demand for seniors and those with disabilities and incorporate features of universal design at a range of price points.

**ACTION H3.1.2** Encourage development of congregate living facilities - a group of independent dwelling units that have common kitchen and dining areas - to support older adults and persons with disabilities.

**ACTION H3.1.3** Review provisions within the City's Zoning Ordinance to identify and amend provisions that impede the ability to construct or modify housing containing minimal physical barriers for people of all ages and abilities, including but not limited to standards of universal design.



# Housing Goal 4

Support residential improvements of existing housing units.

Home renovations and expansions allow existing housing units in the City to keep up with modern expectations, including characteristics such as floor area, layout, style, technological amenities, and sustainable infrastructure. The Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation has assisted in such housing improvement projects throughout the City since 2000, as shown in Figure 13. In addition, the City has engaged in other programs, such as Solarize NOVA, to encourage residents to consider sustainable elements in home renovations.

**OUTCOME H4.1:** A greater number of renovated housing units.

**ACTION H4.1.1** Continue to encourage property owners to undertake residential reinvestment projects that can collectively modernize the City's housing stock.

**ACTION H4.1.2** Encourage energy-efficient retrofits that reduce water use and heating and cooling costs.

**ACTION H4.1.3** Continue to enforce compliance with building and property maintenance codes to prevent deteriorated, unsafe, and unhealthy housing conditions.

**ACTION H4.1.4** Incentivize reinvestment in existing multifamily complexes.

**OUTCOME H4.2:** Expanded City-sponsored residential improvement programs.

**ACTION H4.2.1** Continue to explore modifications to the FRHC program to encourage greater participation.

**ACTION H4.2.2** Encourage further engagement of programs to promote sustainable retrofits and incorporation of sustainable elements in residential renovations.

FIGURE 13 RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS WITH FAIRFAX RENAISSANCE HOUSING CORPORATION (FRHC) LOANS

The Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation (FRHC) was incorporated in 2000. As of December 2017, 224 applications have been approved and completed.

