

**Remarks to Arlington Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
May 26, 2022**

I'm Anne Bodine from [Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future](#), thank you for the opportunity to speak.

(NOTE: Remarks are enumerated according to slides presented at the meeting, a video you may soon find at the [FNRC](#) website. Bracketed text was omitted from spoken testimony due to time limits.)

Before presenting slides, I first want to say something about timing and sequence [of Missing Middle in Arlington.] This is a make-or-break moment, because once the Board gives the nod for phase 3, there is no way it's dialed back. There will be a summer break, focus is lost, then come September, October, BAM, they VOTE TO advertise, and the next month approve new ordinances. And upzoning is forever. So July 12 is the real deadline to speak up.

Many of you know that ASF has 3 core concerns, displacement, fiscal solvency, and the environment. The first two are as important as the third. With our focus on displacement, we deplore redlining, but that's not the real crux of this policy. How do I know?

Because if we wanted to address inequality, we would first have approved an Affordable Housing review, the Housing Conservation plan, maybe looked at gentrification occurring along Columbia Pike. We have done none of these. We would have looked at inventive ideas for home ownership among low-middle income residents, and we would have done that BEFORE LAND ACQUISITION COSTS RISE WITH NEW ZONING. We haven't done that either.

So, If I don't make it through all my slides, you have copies and I hope you'll at least see that more time is in order before we go to Phase 3.

2. If the county says don't worry about 8-plexes everywhere and it's only 150 new people a year, then this study has failed, because the whole point was to provide significant supply. If we only need to house 150 folks, why not just add them into soaring new complexes enabled by new density in areas [where the

Board has added new capacity,] inside Metro corridors? We ask the commission to please also take stock of all these other density plans approved without financing or even planning for new green space; don't let that happen with Missing Middle.

3. A few highlights from this list of questions for staff. ASF opposes reduction of tree canopy, and note 20% for single family now is too little. We worry that hardscape for cars will preclude areas for future tree planting. We worry about lot consolidation, which I'll address in more detail later.

4. Back to displacement. Several residential areas already allow Missing-Middle new builds. We've seen sales of duplexes like this one for \$1.4 million, and townhomes for \$800,000. Qualifying incomes for such units are above the median earned by Arlington's African American, Latino and senior households.

Remember the staff reassurance again of only 19-20 new teardowns and 150 new people? Then consider Ballard near Seattle. In ten years, many blocks have become 80% multifamily with 6- or 8-plexes like this. [This churn (teardowns) is not environmentally friendly, and these lots are obviously not as green as their predecessors.]

5. We will see mounting pressure for teardowns being bought by investors with deep pockets. This will start first near Metro, in R-5 and R-6 zones. Builders will get several benefits with these combined lots [not fully disclosed in staff plans.] The side setbacks will be reduced from 36' to 18'. And on these smaller lots, builders will exploit the lot coverage loophole that I believe I've addressed with the commission previously. [This allows them to cover up to 48% of a lot in R-5, even if the lot is much larger, let's say a newly-consolidated lot of 20,000 sq.ft. If that 20,000 ft² lot were in the R-20 zone, where much larger lots are standard, they would only be able to cover 33% of the area, not 48%. Lot coverage with up-zoning must be modified to assure proportions are not skewed through consolidation.]

6. ASF is asking the county to delay phase 3 til September, it asks the county for three studies, to compare existing zoning with Missing Middle zoning countywide in three aspects: the fiscal impact, the income inequality effect, and the environmental impact. [Please see our [Missing Middle page](#) for more information.] Thank you very much