

May 12, 2022

Important Message from your Glencarlyn Civic Association President

It is my responsibility, as president of your civic association, to inform you about important issues in the County. The Missing Middle Housing Framework is an important issue.

Please read this carefully.

As presented April 27th in the Missing Middle Housing Analysis and Draft Framework Report, **the County Board plans to make zoning changes to allow multi-unit housing, with up to 8 units in each, on ALL lots in EVERY residential neighborhood in Arlington, as long as they fit within the current allowable footprint, set-backs and height limit.** These units will be allowed “by-right,” meaning if you own the property, you are allowed to build without any special permitting. The parking ratio will be reduced to .5, meaning **required parking on the property would be 1/2 car per unit.** Other vehicles would park on the street. In the consultant’s report, there is an example of a 6-unit building with 4 parking spaces on a 6000 sq ft lot, which is the size of lots in Glencarlyn.

Tree canopy protection would be reduced from 20% to 10-15% and the unrestricted removal of established trees would be allowed to continue.

The Glencarlyn Civic Association has not taken a position on the Missing Middle Housing Plan. We were encouraged by the County to wait. Now, because of the extremely limited public engagement period, ending May 27th, we do not have time to do so. Glencarlyn, and 4 other civic associations, asked the County Board to extend the public engagement period before this very important decision is finalized. We were denied.

Therefore, it is extremely important for you to share your thoughts with the County. Whether or not you support Missing Middle, the fact is that this zoning amendment will dramatically change residential neighborhoods forever. Once this zoning change is made, it can never be reversed. At a minimum, please ask for more time for public engagement.

We have asked questions about Missing Middle since the study began two years ago. How will this impact school crowding? What about parking, traffic and stormwater management? We were told to wait until the Phase Two Report came out, so they could identify neighborhoods where these multi-unit housing options would be allowed. We were also told that these zoning changes would be in areas on or near main traffic corridors, where public transportation was available.

We now learn that the County plans to allow multi-unit housing, up to 8 units each, on ALL lots in EVERY residential neighborhood in Arlington, with the exception of Green Valley, Arlington Mill and Penrose. **And they plan to do this soon, with a County Board workshop in July and amendments to the zoning code in the fall.**

Many civic associations believe that such an enormous change to residential neighborhoods requires a longer and more thorough public engagement period.

Why make such a drastic change all at once? Why not try this type of housing development in specific areas of Arlington, near the traffic corridors, as originally proposed?

The consultant's report states there will be NO impact to school population. Their expectation that no more than 20 or so lots per year will be redeveloped county-wide seems questionable. It is based on the number of tear-downs and rebuilds in Arlington over the last 5 years. Here in Glencarlyn alone we have observed quite a few teardowns and rebuilds over the last 5 years. The zoning change will make it much easier for developers to tear down and rebuild. The numbers used to make

feasibility and desirability comparisons between single-family and multi-family housing construction also raises questions. For example, they base the selling price of a single-family home in a neighborhood like Glencarlyn at \$2.2 mil. The County really has no idea how many units will be built. Nor do they know the selling prices.

What is clear - changing the zoning code will make redevelopment of residential properties much easier and much more lucrative for developers.

Missing Middle housing does **nothing to alleviate the skyrocketing housing prices**. County figures indicate that duplexes and triplexes, the most likely type of housing to be built in Glencarlyn and South Arlington, would cost approximately \$1.2 million/unit. Townhomes even more. Developers will benefit, not the homebuyers. There is no expectation other than housing prices will continue to rise for all housing types.

Why the rush to enact these zoning changes? Why the limited time period for public engagement? How does this remedy historical exclusionary practices, with no expectation of reasonably priced housing? How can there be the expectation of only modest changes to communities, impacting schools and infrastructure? How would this population and housing growth be geographically dispersed? These are just a few of the many questions **the County has failed to answer**.

Please take the time to reach out to the County Board. Let them know how you feel about the proposed zoning changes. Read the reports. Ask the tough questions. Ask for time to get answers. These proposed actions will certainly change Arlington County forever. Who is benefiting?

The [Phase 2 Analysis and Draft Framework](#) for the Missing Middle Housing Study

[Online Feedback Form](#)

Through May 27

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Feel free to reach out to me with questions or for further discussion.