



# Update on Missing Middle Housing February 2020

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Missing Middle (MM) – Adds density in urban areas to “transition” between high-rise and single-family homes



## MM – “All the Rage” in 2019, But Yet Untested

- Minneapolis rezoned all single-family neighborhoods in 2019 -- permitting triplexes in single-family neighborhoods
- Oregon in 2019 required towns over 25,000 residents to upzone for up to fourplexes
- Seattle in 2019 upzoned 27 transit zone hubs, allowing more housing types on 6% of blocks in single-family areas
- California homeowners may build accessory dwelling units (ADU's) on most residential lots, but statewide upzoning bill defeated in 2020
- Arlington county in May 2019 allows ADU's on most residential lots
- Virginia State Delegate Ibrahim Sameerah (D-Loudon) proposed statewide upzoning in Dec 2019; the bill is defeated January 2020

# No Concept in Arlington Beyond the Name

- County leaders say “we are not doing Minneapolis,” but have not defined outcomes
- County leaders say either we need a “new **type** of housing” or a type for “**middle incomes.**” They can’t say why, where, or what types
- County leaders cannot demonstrate if/how MM promotes affordability
- County leaders have not indicated MM impact on schools, parks, roads, services, taxes

*ASF seeks an objective comprehensive study, including no  
upzoning if merited*

# Arlington's Short Timeline - Irreversible Change

3 phases – “building understanding, focused study, implementation”

- MM announced - Dec 17 board meeting
- Resident survey and county board briefings March 2020
- Kickoff April 2020
- Process through late 2021



Engaging Citizens or  
Box Checking?

# County Hints What's Coming Our Way

- 1) More density in neighborhoods
- 2) Even shorter setbacks
- 3) More impervious surface
- 4) Taller height limits
- 5) More cars, less parking
- 6) McMansion sized duplexes/triplexes and more





# Who Says We Need a New “TYPE” of Housing?

**Let’s inventory “existing middle” housing. Duplex in Ashton Heights**



**Upzoning will promote teardowns of EXISTING duplexes.**





# The County Says: We Are Missing “Middle Income” Housing



16% of Feb 18 Zillow listings were \$400k-600k – affordable for Arlington median income of \$115,000



# The County Says MM Will Provide Affordable Housing – Will It?

- New single family homes cost \$1.7 million in “teardown” ‘hoods
- A duplex will likely cost \$2.2 million, a triplex more
- Railroad cottages in Falls Church sold for over \$700,000
- Land prices will rise, pushing out existing homeowners and eroding diversity
- UCLA’s Michael Storper has shown trickle-down effects don’t apply to our market type







The County says MM helps the environment, but densifying in residential zones lots kills trees, increases runoff/floods



**The County says we  
must act now, but...**

**... if planning for schools,  
transportation, and services  
came first, might we see the  
costs push us toward other  
solutions?**



# Pitch in and Ask Arlington County to:

- Explain how missing middle is “affordable” given Arlington’s economic/income patterns
- Demonstrate effectiveness of MM programs adopted elsewhere
- Consider affordable housing strategies other than upzoning single-family neighborhoods
- Publish research and solicit meaningful citizen input before promoting options
- Answer any of ASF’s questions on Missing Middle posted to our website

Questions? [asf.virginia@gmail.org](mailto:asf.virginia@gmail.org)  
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