

# METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGIONAL FAIR HOUSING PLAN

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## Highlights for Public Comment in the City of Alexandria

February 2023



Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

# Housekeeping

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## Agenda:

- 6:35 - 7pm Presentation
- 7 - 7:15pm Questions
- 7:15 - 8pm Comment period

## Ground Rules:

- Please introduce yourself using your full name.
- Please be civil.
- Please stay on topic and only comment on the Regional Fair Housing Plan and its Goals and Strategies, including those specific to Alexandria.
- Please do not respond to previous comments or other speakers, unless your comment adds to them.
- Comments are limited to three minutes each. A warning will be given when there are 30 seconds left.
- If your comment is long, please submit it in writing using the available comment forms, the MWCOCG website or postal mail.



# What is the Regional Fair Housing Plan?

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- A planning process (also known as the “**Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice**”) for local governments and public housing agencies (PHAs) to take *meaningful actions* to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination.

## Key Components of the Plan Include:

1. Robust community participation and comment process that allows for meaningful dialogue for key stakeholders;
2. Assessment of past goals and actions;
3. Analysis of data and issues that impact fair housing; and
4. Establishment of measurable fair housing goals and priorities – local and regional.

# Timeline & Partners



- District of Columbia & DC Housing Authority
- City of Alexandria & Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority
- Arlington County
- Prince William County

- Fairfax County & Fairfax Redevelopment & Housing Authority
- Loudoun County
- Montgomery County & City of Gaithersburg

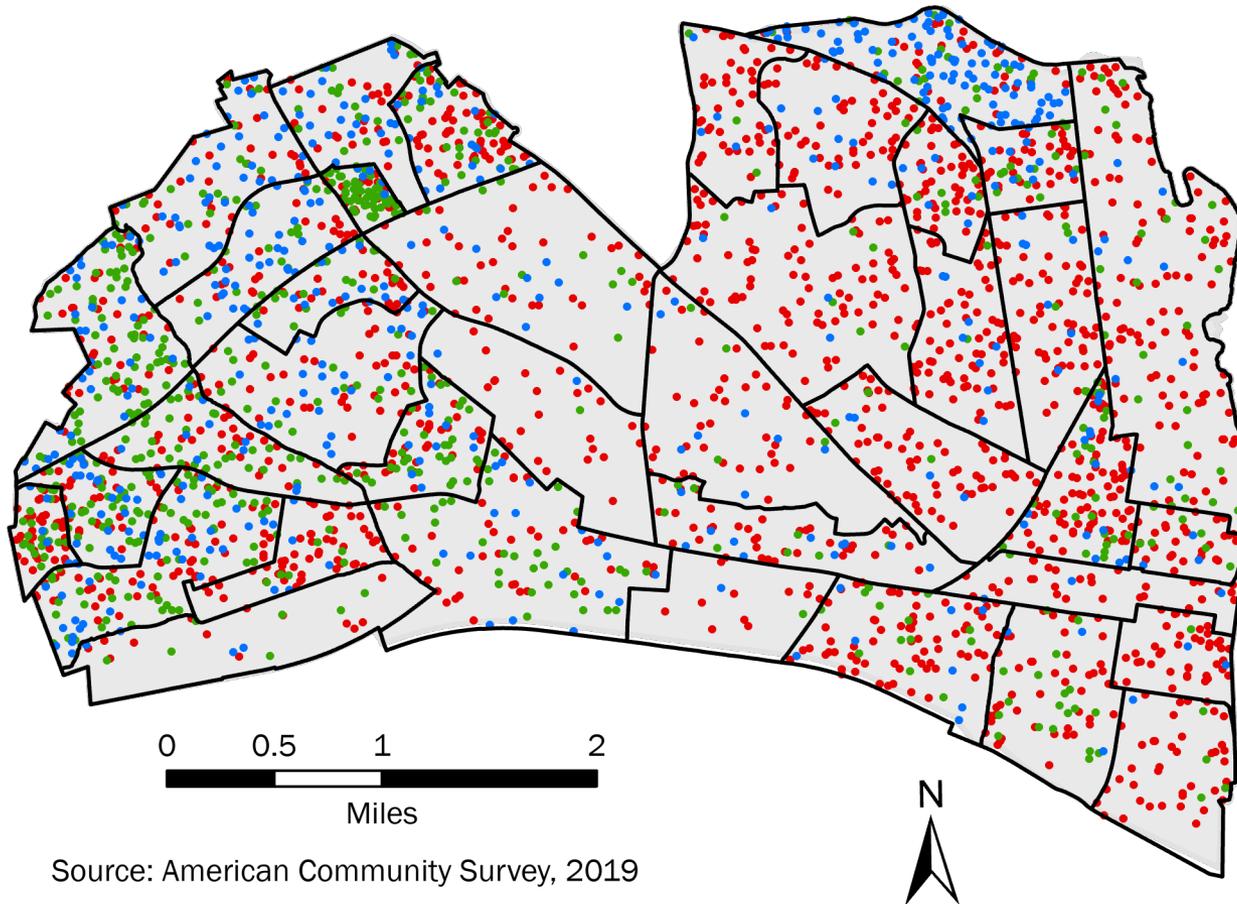


# Select Demographic Data: City of Alexandria

- Alexandria residents are 51.9% White, 21.1% Black, and 16.7% Latino. Compared to the region, Alexandria has a larger White population and a smaller Asian American or Pacific Islander population. Alexandria's population is 5.8% Asian, just over half the region's percentage.
- Among non-US-born residents, Ethiopia is the most common country of origin, followed by El Salvador and Honduras.
- More than 11 percent of the population speaks with Limited English Proficiency. The top foreign languages spoken by those with LEP are Spanish, other Indo-European languages, and Arabic. Since 2015, the persons with limited English proficiency population has grown by 36 percent.
- The racial and ethnic demographics of Alexandria have shifted since 1990. Most notably, the Hispanic population has grown significantly.

# Demographic distribution by census tract in Alexandria city, Virginia

● Hispanic (All Races) ● Non-Hispanic Black ● Non-Hispanic White



Each dot represents 50 people

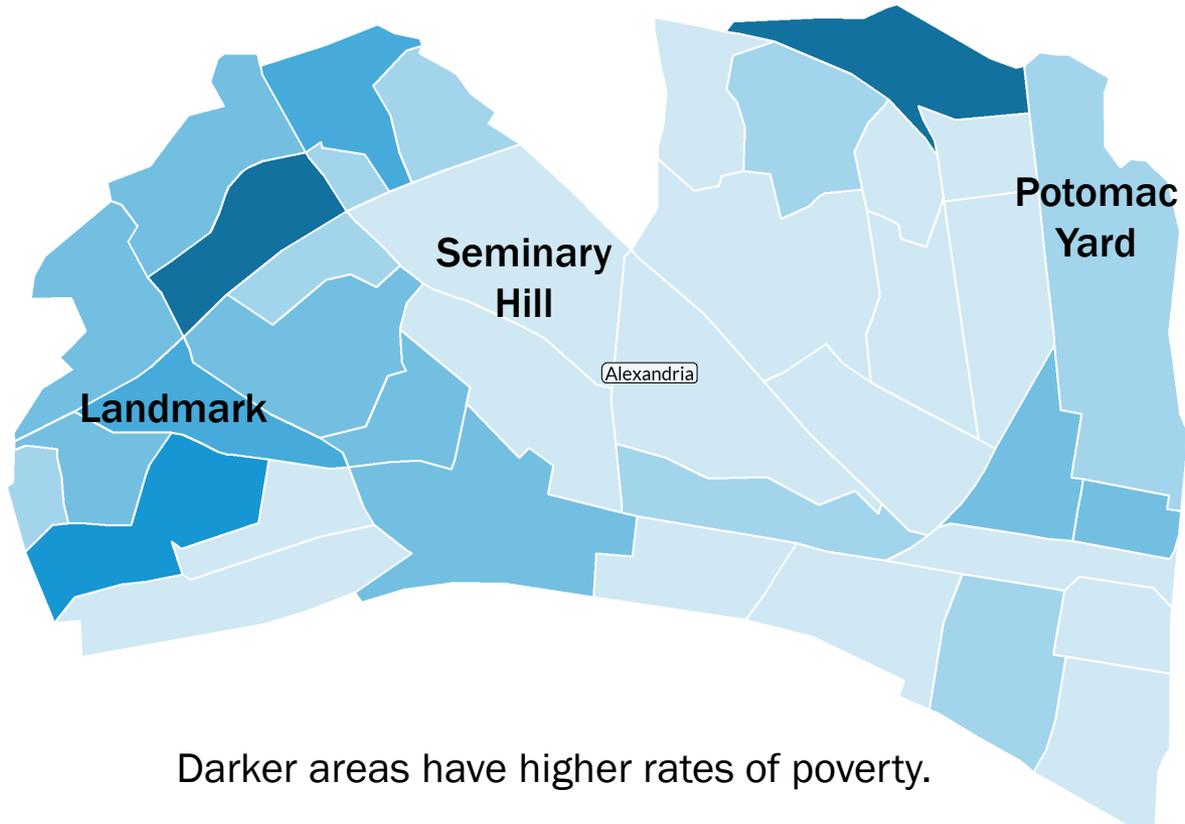
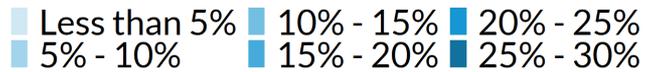
The city's Hispanic population is concentrated in Arlandria, but is also high in the West End

The city's Black population is concentrated in Alexandria West and Landmark

The center and east side of the city are predominately White

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

# Poverty rates by census tract in Alexandria city, Virginia



Central Alexandria has low rates of poverty, with most tracts below 5 percent.

Only three tracts have poverty rates of 20 percent or more, with two tracts 25 percent or higher.

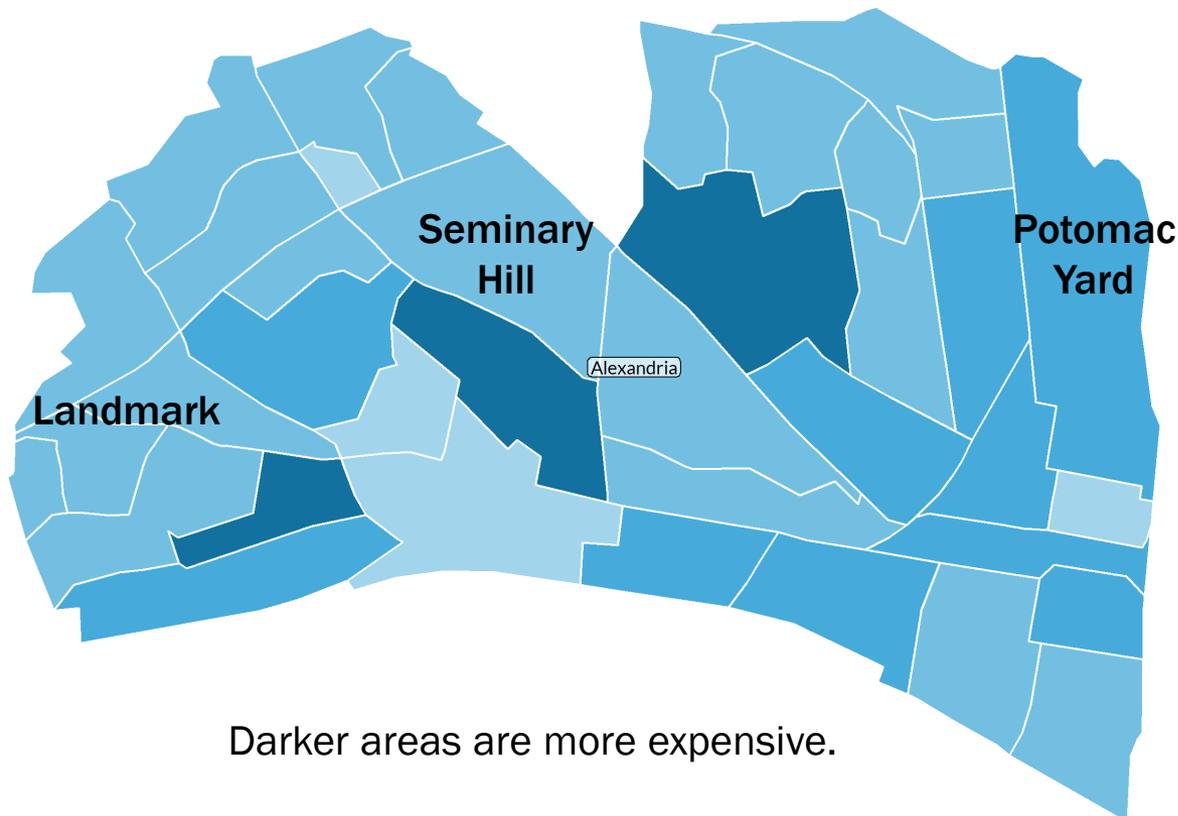
Darker areas have higher rates of poverty.

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Source: American Community Survey, 2019

# Median rent by census tract in Alexandria city, Virginia

■ \$1,000-\$1,500 ■ \$1,500 - \$2,000 ■ \$2,000 - \$2,500 ■ \$3,000 - \$3,500



Three tracts in Alexandria have median rents of \$3,000 or more.

Almost 90 percent of tracts in Alexandria have median rents \$1,500 or more

Median rent paid by current renters in apartments and houses. Median = the middle rent (half of units rent for more than this amount, half for less).

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

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# Draft Regional Goals & Strategies

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- **7 Regional Goals and Strategies.** Data-driven from a multi-year planning process.
- **Regional goals are implemented as local goals;** some jurisdictions have additional goals specific only to their communities.
- **Quality, not Quantity.** Limited goals, implemented effectively, were selected to have the greatest possible impact in improving fair housing choice in metropolitan Washington.



# Draft Regional Goal 1 & Draft Strategies

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- 1. Increase the Supply of Housing that is Affordable to Families with Incomes at 60% AMI or below in the Region, Particularly in Areas that Have Historically Lacked Such Housing**

Strategies:

- **Lower the income targeting** of housing affordable to people with incomes of 80% of area median to 60% and below in order to address the chronic housing shortage for low-income individuals and families.
- **Provide low-interest loans to single-family homeowners and grants to homeowners** with household incomes of up to 80% AMI to develop accessory dwelling units (ADUs) with affordability restrictions on their property.

# Draft Regional Goal 1 & Draft Strategies

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- 1. Increase the Supply of Housing that is Affordable to Families with Incomes at 60% AMI or below in the Region, Particularly in Areas that Have Historically Lacked Such Housing**

Strategies:

- **Use local government financing and regulatory tools**, such as bonds, real estate transfer taxes, inclusionary housing, as-of-right Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), public land set-aside for affordable housing, expedited permitting and review, and relaxation of parking requirements for affordable housing developments.

# Alexandria Only - Additional Draft Goal 1

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## **1. Increase the Supply of Housing that is Affordable to Low- and Moderate-Income Families in the Region, Particularly in Areas that Have Historically Lacked Such Housing**

In addition to the regional goal above, the City of Alexandria is encouraged to explore, and implement, as feasible:

- Prioritizing public land for affordable housing use including co-location of affordable housing with municipal uses and facilities.
- Provide partial tax abatements for homeowners who rent their accessory dwelling units to low- and moderate-income tenants.

# Draft Regional Goal 2 & Draft Strategies

## 2. Reform Zoning and Land Use Policies to Expand Access to Fair Housing Choice by Increasing the Development, Geographic Distribution, and Supply of Affordable Housing

### Strategies:

- **Increase inclusionary zoning incentives** for creating onsite affordable housing and increase fees in lieu of providing on-site affordable housing.
- **Adopt affordable housing overlay zones** to increase the amount of land where developments that meet robust affordability criteria are allowed as of right.
- **Incorporate a fair housing equity analysis** into the review of significant rezoning proposals and specific plans.



# Alexandria Only Draft Regional Goal 2 & Draft Strategies

## 2. Reform Zoning and Land Use Policies to Expand Access to Fair Housing Choice by Increasing the Development, Geographic Distribution, and Supply of Affordable Housing

### Strategies:

- In accordance with Virginia Code § 15.2-2304 on affordable dwelling unit ordinances in certain localities, adopt an ordinance to institute mandatory inclusionary zoning citywide, and provide an array of incentives such as density bonuses, special financing, expedited approval, fee waivers, and tax incentives.
- Reduce the 20,000 square-foot minimum lot size in the R-20 zone or permit duplexes in this zone.



# Draft Regional Goal 3 & Draft Strategies

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## 3. Implement Preservation Policies Designed to Preserve Affordable Housing and Prevent Displacement with a Goal of No Net Loss of Existing Affordable Rental Units

Strategies:

- **Track affordable housing developments** with expiring subsidy contracts, adopt a proactive outreach program, and prioritize resources for the preservation of that housing.

# Draft Regional Goal 4 & Draft Strategies

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## 4. Increase the Number of Homeowners in the Region and Reduce Inequities and Discriminatory Practices that Limit Homeownership Opportunities by Members of Protected Classes

### Strategies:

- **Increase homeownership opportunities** for low- and moderate-income members of protected classes by ensuring affordable housing set asides in new developments offer homeownership as well as rental; supporting first-time homebuyers by expanding financial literacy programs and homebuyer education; and using innovative homeownership models such as cooperatives and community land trusts;

# Draft Regional Goal 4 & Draft Strategies

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## 4. Increase the Number of Homeowners in the Region and Reduce Inequities and Discriminatory Practices that Limit Homeownership Opportunities by Members of Protected Classes

### Strategies:

- **Support current homeowners with protected characteristics** including racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and seniors, through increasing funding for repair, rehabilitation, and renovation programs and products, expanding programs that provide energy efficient improvements to lower utility costs, and providing comprehensive foreclosure prevention counseling and legal referrals.
- **Address issues of appraisal bias and increase fair housing testing and monitoring for lenders and real estate entities.** Use local and regional CDFIs to target members of protected classes to reduce inequities in mortgage lending.

# Draft Regional Goal 5 & Draft Strategies

## 5. Protect the Housing Rights of Individuals with Protected Characteristics

Strategies:

- **Reduce barriers to accessing rental housing** by eliminating application fees for voucher holders and encouraging landlords to follow HUD's guidance on the use of criminal backgrounds in screening tenants.
- **Pilot a Right to Counsel Program** to ensure legal representation for tenants in landlord-tenant proceedings.
- **Expand and increase support for fair housing outreach, education, and enforcement.**



# Draft Regional Goal 6 & Draft Strategies

## 6. Increase Community Integration and Reduce Housing Barriers for Persons with Disabilities

### Strategies:

- **Prioritize HOME and CDBG funds** for developments that include permanent supportive housing units.
- **Negotiate project-based voucher contracts** for a portion of affordable units in inclusionary developments and set aside a portion of such project-based voucher units for permanent supportive housing.
- **Advocate for public housing authorities to adopt admissions preferences** for individuals with disabilities who are institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization.
- **Advocate for new multifamily developments with public funds** to have at least **10%** of total units **accessible** to persons with mobility disabilities and at least **4% accessible** for persons with hearing and/or visual disabilities.

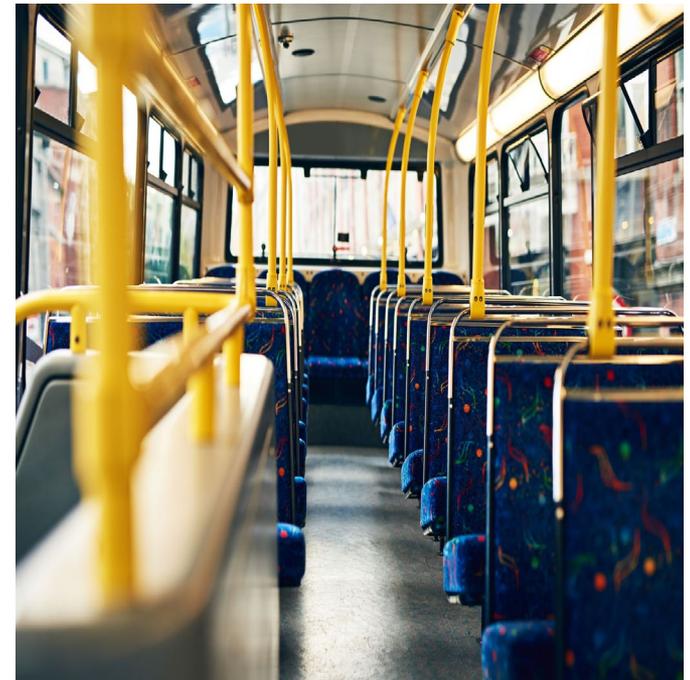


# Draft Regional Goal 7 & Draft Strategies

## 7. Expand Access and Affordability of Public Transportation for Members of Protected Classes

### Strategies:

- **Provide free bus transportation** to low-income households.
- **Study and make recommendations to improve and expand bus routes across borders** to ensure that members of protected classes can access jobs in employment centers.



# Key Takeaways

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- *Local, regional, and national impact.* The region is evolving, and decisions here affect the city, the region, and can inform other regions across the country.
- *Coordinated regional action is designed to improve local outcomes.* No one jurisdiction can end discrimination or reverse decades-old patterns of residential segregation on its own.
- *Share, share, share!* We want to hear from you about the proposed goals, actions, and strategies.

**Please help spread the word!** [www.mwcog.org/fairhousing](http://www.mwcog.org/fairhousing)

**Questions or comments:** [fairhousing@mwkog.org](mailto:fairhousing@mwkog.org)

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