

March 1, 2011

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

We write to you in unanimous support of the FY 2012 Housing Blueprint recommendations, which continue to build upon the priorities endorsed by the Board of Supervisors in FY 2011.

In 2010 the Board adopted a new framework that defines the continuum of housing needs in Fairfax County, the "Housing Blueprint: A Housing Strategy for FY2011 and Beyond." The Blueprint, developed through a collaborative of housing and human service providers with the assistance of related county agencies, provides a template to guide the County and the community on strategies and financial decisions needed to address housing needs in the future.

During the current fiscal year, progress has been made. The Bridging Affordability Program is requesting proposals from non-profit organizations, and homeless families and individuals have housing through collaborative County and non-profit efforts. This partnership between the County and the non-profit community provides long-term rental subsidies, finances housing acquisition, and short-term emergency assistance. These steps will reduce the number of households on the waiting lists, and provide housing for special needs and homeless populations.

In addition, the Board of Supervisors approved recommendations for the redevelopment of Tysons, including a requirement that 20 percent of all residential development serve the workforce. This policy will be instrumental in addressing the jobs/housing imbalance in Tysons, supporting the County's TOD policies by provide housing opportunities for a diversity of incomes near the four Tysons metro stations.

However, the goals and strategies identified in the FY 2011 Blueprint will not be achieved in one year. The FY 2012 Blueprint therefore, re-commits to the goals that were endorsed for FY 2011:

- To end homelessness in 10 years
- To provide affordable housing options to those with special needs
- To streamline and reduce the waiting lists for affordable housing by half in 10 years
- To produce workforce housing sufficient to accommodate projected job growth

To sustain progress in reaching of these goals, the FY 2012 Blueprint recommends continued funding for the Bridging Affordability Program, as well as new resources to address the shortage of affordable units that are available for people who have become more self-sufficient.

We emphasize our support for:

\$4.1 million to continue funding the Bridging Affordability Program. This funding will provide housing for more than 360 households (new plus continued from last year) from the County waiting lists. Ten percent of this funding is earmarked for CSB eligible persons, and ten percent for persons with physical/sensory disabilities.

The acquisition or preservation of a 200-unit multi-family property by a non-profit affordable housing developer. This development would serve all four Blueprint goals, since it would provide permanent affordable housing for homeless person, households on the waiting lists (including those with special needs), and persons seeking workforce housing. In its work on the Consolidated Plan One-Year Action Plan, the CCFAC has identified \$2.8 million in federal funding to support this project.

While this project would help to address the shortage of affordable units, much more needs to be done. A total gap of nearly 200 households in homeless and waiting lists goals would remain. The private sector vacancy rate is at an historic low. Households receive rental vouchers, but many have reported difficulties finding apartments where they can be used, and the County's non-profit partners have no vacancies.

We therefore urge the Board to approve additional funding of at least \$2 million to invest in supporting more non-profit acquisition or preservation.

Housing and human services advocates understand the budget challenges that face the Board of Supervisors in FY 2012. But as the need for affordable housing continues to grow in the face of this current economic downturn, we realize that there are public costs in failing to address this issue.

In closing, we want to enthusiastically emphasize our expectation that the Board will commit the County to bridge the chasm between the incomes of many Fairfax County residents, including those most in need, and the costs of safe and secure rented and owned homes. We are asking you to pledge the County to strong and continued funding to meet this need, and to support the comprehensive continuum of strategies that are outlined in the Blueprint for Housing.

We look forward to continuing this work in partnership with the Board to expand the resources and tools needed to create affordable housing opportunities for all of the citizens of Fairfax County.

Sincerely,