

Talking Points for City of Alexandria Council Budget Public Hearing Testimony
Help Us Preserve City Funding for Affordable Housing

Sign up to testify on Wednesday, March 10

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Alexandria Housing Action

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Background

1. The proposed FY11 housing budget would decrease by \$686,849, or -29.8% relative to FY10. The largest factor is the reduction of \$502,060 of the real estate tax dedicated for affordable housing initiatives.
2. This proposed budget cut for the Department of Housing is the largest percentage drop among all city departments.
3. The proposed cut comes immediately after several recommendations to increase the number of affordable housing units (made by the Affordable Housing Initiatives Workgroup and the Goal 7 Strategic Planning Process) and prior to a new Housing Master Plan effort.

Current Need

1. Affordable housing, especially affordable rental housing, is rapidly disappearing in Alexandria. From 2000 to 2008, Alexandria lost more than 10,000 non-subsidized affordable rental housing units due to rent increases.
2. One thousand non-Resolution 830 (non ARHA) publicly-assisted units face potential loss of subsidy during the next five years.
3. Preserving affordable housing shows “Alexandria is a caring and inclusive community that values its rich diversity, history, and culture, and promotes affordability” (Goal 7)

What Must Happen

1. We must preserve all of the roughly 3,400 publicly-assisted units and tenant-based vouchers that Alexandria presently has, not just ARHA units. This includes the 1,150 ARHA units, the 1,300 Housing Choice Vouchers currently available, and the roughly 1,000 units of privately-owned, publicly-assisted units with project-based, Section 8 contracts that enable tenants to pay no more than 30% of income for rent.
2. The City is about to begin a the development of a Housing Master Plan. Removing current resources will hamstring that conversation before it begins.
3. Do no harm. While we can't expand our efforts to preserve affordable rental housing at this time, we shouldn't abandon them either. We must preserve the city's momentum to “promote a continuum of affordable housing opportunities for all residents, especially those most in need (Objective #1, Goal 7).”