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Board Matter

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay

Housing Initiatives to Increase Production and Sustain Our Economic Advantage

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At the August 26, 2025, Board meeting I presented a Board Matter entitled "Fairfax County's Economic Competitiveness". This Board Matter aligns with that motion and is an integral part of sustaining our strong economic position.

The provision of attainable housing remains a major priority for Fairfax County and has a significant role to play in our economic health and competitiveness. We know that our entire nation, region, state and county are facing a housing crisis. We have been very active in meeting that crisis head on but always want to be a leader in that effort, always re-thinking and challenging our community to meet this need and looking for opportunities to try innovative approaches. Pursuant to my Board Matter of March 22, 2022, the Board set a goal of adding 10,000 affordable units by 2034 and we are well on our way to achieving that goal. There is more work to be done to ensure that we are able to produce at the scale necessary to meet the need for housing that is attainable across the continuum of need so that those who want to live here can find a place to rent or own that is affordable to them and that will help keep our community vibrant and affordable for all working families. With that outcome in mind, I have a number of initiatives that I am proposing for review as follows, which I expect will be helpful for both affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families as well as for the production of the full spectrum of housing generally.

- **Development Incentives and Process:** As the Board is aware, we adopted certain incentives for commercial revitalization districts and areas to facilitate development in those areas of the County that had been identified as in need of assistance to thrive. Those incentives include reduced parking requirements, expedited processing and the ability to do concurrent processing of site plans without Board authorization. I believe that it is time to consider whether we should adopt similar incentives for affordable housing projects. As such, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and Land Development Services (LDS) to propose

incentives for housing projects that contain affordable units similar to those incentives in commercial revitalization districts and the circumstances in which the incentives would apply.

I further move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with the Deputy County Executive for Community Development and other appropriate agencies to establish a cross functional housing working group, focused on identifying and facilitating opportunities to streamline the development process for all residential developments, as having supply to meet demand is a key factor in affordability, and to make recommendations to the Board as appropriate.

- **An Expanded Focus on Entry-Level Homeownership:** While we are making progress on our 10,000-unit goal for affordable housing, I believe that we would benefit from further considering how we meet the continuum of need of those we are working to serve.

  Much of our emphasis on affordable housing is, appropriately, on the rental side. There is also a critical need for starter homes for people who want to move from rental units into home ownership. Our Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance provides some units, but not enough to satisfy the need. Furthermore, the need may also include those whose income exceeds the limits of the ADU program. I believe that we need strategies to foster the provision of starter homes for moderate-income families, which, among other things, is essential for retaining workers who want to move from rental housing to home ownership.

  Therefore, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with HCD and other appropriate departments to develop strategies for the various demographics that are hard pressed to afford to purchase a home in Fairfax County.

  This analysis should include but not be limited to an expansion of already successful transit-oriented development (TOD), accessory living units, and other innovative strategies to help reduce the cost of building new housing units across the county. For example, there are circumstances around the country where individuals, non-profits or municipalities have created "villages" of small relatively affordable homes. I believe that there are some sites owned by the Board that may be suitable for a pilot project for the creation of such a starter home "village". I therefore move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with appropriate agencies identify potential sites and determine the feasibility and logistics of such a proposal.

- **Faith Community Properties:** A number of years ago, the Board directed staff to inventory places of worship that might be suitable for adding affordable housing to their property. Since that time, First Christian Church in Seven Corners was rezoned to permit the addition of affordable housing by Wesley Housing and, at the last Board meeting, a plan amendment and rezoning to add housing to the St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Idylwood Road was approved. In addition, we have received a number of SSPA nominations with similar requests. As these collocations can be highly desirable, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with DPD and HCD to review how we might further incentivize such requests. This might include, but should not be limited to, consideration of the possibility of removing the requirement for a Plan Amendment under certain conditions such as we did with Building Repurposing or allowing

affordable housing by-right in certain circumstances and providing the option for faith communities to transfer land directly to the FCRHA.

- **Public-Private Partnerships and Capacity:** HCD has been very successful in facilitating affordable housing developments through both solicited and unsolicited proposals. Several of these are in process or in the queue but are held up due to resource issues. Over past budget cycles, staff resources in HCD have been increased to support this critical need. However, additional existing resources from other departments within the County would be beneficial to support HCD's efforts. Therefore, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to review options by which other departments could provide increased technical support to HCD so that we can expedite their review and increase the number of proposals that lead to public/private affordable housing developments. I further move that the Board direct the Department of Purchasing and Material Management (DPMM) in partnership with the Office of the County Attorney, HCD and other appropriate agencies to review the Public-Private Educational Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) Guidelines to identify opportunities to streamline our processes.

- **Affordable Housing Finance: Fairfax** County has a highly successful local housing finance agency in the form of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority. HCD, on behalf of the FCRHA, has done an excellent and creative job in financing affordable housing projects with their capital stacks. Since the financing of projects in today's economy is a major obstacle in getting projects constructed, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with HCD and other appropriate departments to explore additional opportunities and capital strategies to make affordable projects feasible.

- **The Role of the Private Sector:** As we heard in the Housing Symposium on August 28th, attracting and retaining talent is a challenge that we share with the private sector. A major component of that challenge is the ability of workers to secure housing that is attractive, convenient and affordable to them. I therefore move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with the appropriate county agencies and the private sector, including the NOVA Chamber, who made affordable housing a key goal as well in their recently published "NOVA Roadmap", to explore ways in which the private sector can assist in enhancing the production of affordable and market-rate housing in Fairfax County.

- **Legislative Priorities:** We are not alone in viewing the provision of housing as a key component of a successful and economically viable community. Both the Federal government and the Commonwealth are considering housing-related legislation. It is critical that our voice be heard in those forums. Therefore, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to work with staff to adjust our state and federal legislative packages for the upcoming legislative sessions to clearly reflect the Board's positions and resource needs related to affordable housing.

I recognize that this is a robust request with a number of components, but we know that addressing the problem in a multi-faceted, coordinated and timely manner is required. As such, I move that the Board direct the County Executive to provide a road map to address the requested information wholistically no later than Spring of 2026 at a Land Use Policy Committee meeting since many of these items are land use related, including how they may fit into the update of the Housing element of the Comprehensive Plan Policy Plan expected in 2026. Other topics may need to come back to the Housing Committee or other Board committees, as determined by staff, my office and specific committee chairs.