



## **SECTION 10**

### ***Housing***

#### **PREFACE**

To serve the diverse needs of the residents of Hanover County, County ordinances, policies and procedures are intended to ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate and safe housing. To accomplish the goals of this policy, it is the intent of the Board of Supervisors that the implementation of the provisions of the County's zoning regulations and the Property Maintenance Code help to encourage the construction and maintenance of housing that meets the needs of Hanover County residents, including families, individuals who are living on their own for the first time, and older residents who are looking for new residences that will meet their needs in light of changing employment and family dynamics

#### **THE PRESENT**

##### **Housing Inventory and Household Income**

The availability of safe and affordable housing is a fundamental element in determining the quality of life and vitality of a community. The cost and variety of new residential units should be compatible with the income of the County's workforce to ensure that those who wish to live in the County are able to find housing that meets their needs. If individuals who wish to live in Hanover County are unable to find housing in the County, then areas adjacent to the County and in close proximity to their employment within the County may be a feasible alternative. If not able to find housing in close proximity to their employment, these individuals may face increased commute distances and times, which have a negative impact on the environment and the quality of life of these individuals and place a greater strain on the regional transportation network.

While the residents of the County have been fortunate in that the value of their houses and properties have generally increased annually, this increased cost of housing has resulted in a situation where many working individuals cannot find housing in the County. This has been most clearly seen in the decrease in the availability of “workforce housing”.

Based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) recommendation, an individual or family should not use more than 30% of household income on housing. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) defines “workforce housing” as housing for households making between 60 and 120 percent of the area median income. To determine whether there is an adequate supply of “workforce housing” in the County, it is appropriate to apply HUD’s recommendation to the County’s median income, and to utilize a target of those earning no more than seventy percent of the County’s median income. After a review of 2006-07 sales figures, it is clear that the number of new and existing homes that are sold in Hanover which can be afforded by an individual or family making the County’s median income or less has dropped considerably in recent years. This decrease in the number of home sales in an amount that can be afforded by these individuals indicates that it is often extremely difficult for these individuals to find housing in the County.

In addition to the need for an increase in “workforce housing” options in the County for those seeking to purchase a home, there also exists a need for housing options beyond traditional owner-occupied housing. This type of housing is most often utilized by younger individuals who are new to the workforce, those in transition between owner-occupied housing, those with limited incomes or who are unable to secure the credit necessary to purchase a house, and older residents who are looking for housing with significantly less maintenance and other responsibilities that accompany owner-occupied housing.

### **Maintenance of Quality Housing**

Whenever possible, County ordinances, policies and procedures should be implemented that strive to alleviate sub-standard housing in the County. For example, the 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 5,300 housing units in the County are more than 50 years old, 190 units lack complete plumbing fixtures and facilities, and 160 lack complete kitchen facilities.

Hanover County has working relationships with private and federal and state government agencies that strive to address housing deficiencies, and County policies and procedures should be implemented in a way that results in the ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation of older housing units. Programs that Hanover County has been involved with include state and private initiatives to install indoor plumbing where indoor plumbing does not exist, to construct, refurbish and

service household water well systems, to provide new homeownership opportunities for those in the rural sections of the County, and to renovate and repair existing homes. Hanover County currently participates in the affordable housing objectives of Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit organization that works in partnership with qualified families and community volunteers, including businesses and organizations, by reimbursing County development fees for homes constructed for new homeowners that are low-moderate income level as defined by HUD standards.

Hanover County participated in a comprehensive community improvement project in conjunction with a Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Community Development Block Grant; this project was completed in 2005. The project provided housing rehabilitation, new housing, water and sewer service, and road drainage improvements to the Brown Grove community. Until 2011, the County will receive Program Income from this project, generated by property owners repaying 10-year rehabilitation loans. The County's established Program Income policy targets the use of these funds to low to moderate income qualified residents in the Brown Grove community for emergency housing repairs, up to a maximum of \$5000 per household.

Additional programs for housing assistance and repair for special needs populations are administered by various Hanover County human services departments, including the Department of Social Services, Community Services Board and the Department of Community Resources.

### **Housing for Older Residents**

Based on the 2000 Census, 15% of Hanover County's population is 60 years of age and older. The "baby boomer" generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, is entering this age bracket, reflecting a major national population change. From 2000-2007, over 800 housing units intended for persons fifty-five years of age or older were approved or formally proposed within the County's Suburban Service Area. These units are designed to meet the special needs of those individuals within this age group. This housing should continue to be made available in appropriate locations in the County. In addition, housing appropriate for those with more intensive needs, such as independent living apartments, cottages, assisted living, memory support and nursing care suites, should also be encouraged in appropriate locations throughout the County.

The increasing number of older residents in Hanover County will have a significant impact on the future quality of life in the County and it is anticipated that housing constructed specifically for older citizens will increase. The Hanover Older

Perspective (HOP) was organized in 2003 as an advisory body for planning proposals that directly impact older residents. HOP is comprised of members that are actively involved in agencies or organizations addressing the needs of older residents with a focus on housing affordability, structural design and type, the condition of existing housing, access to public facilities, and access to commercial and medical uses.

## **THE GOALS**

### **Goal 1: To provide safe, efficient, and appropriate housing for all citizens of Hanover County.**

Objective 1: Encourage development of new housing types to better address the needs of all citizens.

Objective 2: Promote the in-fill development of vacant land within the current Suburban Service Area to maximize the efficiency of utilities, expand the existing communities, and extend the life of the Suburban Service Area.

Objective 3: Provide new locations for rental communities as well as communities built for sale.

Objective 4: Encourage developers to include lower-cost housing within projects and to disperse available housing throughout the community.

Objective 5: Offer incentives to promote the development of housing to satisfy the needs of the County's workforce.

Objective 6: Review the application and implementation of the Property Maintenance Code to ensure the ongoing maintenance and safety of housing in the County.

**Goal 2: To recognize the housing needs of all citizens of the County regardless of age or income levels.**

Objective 1: Encourage housing intended for older residents in appropriate locations in the County, which will allow these residents to remain within the community in which they have lived and been active.

Objective 2: Explore new methods of addressing the needs of the County's workforce through new zoning districts and housing types.

Objective 3: Create opportunities for live-work units within the Hanover County community, to allow for both new businesses and new housing types to be available to the citizens

Objective 4: Create policies and procedures that encourage the inclusion of workforce housing in proposed developments, in-fill developments, and areas that are being redeveloped.

**Goal 3: Protect the existing residential base throughout the County, to ensure that housing in the County remains safe and attractive.**

Objective 1: Utilize available revenue sources to fund home improvements, especially those that enhance the safety and efficiency of existing housing stock.

Objective 2: Consider the potential impacts that proposed new developments will have on the character and quality of existing nearby neighborhoods.

**THE MEANS**

1. Monitor the cost and variety of new and existing residential dwelling units in the County to reflect the housing needs of the County's workforce. Calculations for appropriate housing costs meeting the needs of existing and prospective homebuyers should be evaluated each year using median household income as a basis; using a

percentage of household gross monthly income as a limit for a monthly mortgage payment; a mortgage rate; and a minimum down payment.

2. Continue to consider, in discussions regarding proposed developments, design elements and the inclusion of proffers that encourage diversity in housing types and affordability to those seeking workforce housing, including proffers regarding maximum house sizes, the maintenance of these housing units as workforce housing for a defined period of time, and the integration of compatible workforce housing into conventional subdivisions proposals.
3. In light of the need for workforce housing throughout the County, it is anticipated that proposed developments that seek to be constructed at a density greater than 1.5 units per acre in the suburban transitional category, 2.5 units per acre in the suburban general category, and 6 units per acre in the suburban high category (as described earlier in this Plan) shall include workforce housing units determined to be affordable in accordance with the annual analysis described in #1. As the density for a proposed development increases from those amounts to the maximum permitted density, the percentage of workforce housing units available in relation to the total units within the proposed development should increase from a minimum of ten percent (10%) to a maximum of twenty percent (20%).
4. Where available and appropriate, the use of available tax relief authority to address the housing costs of older residents that may be outpacing the ability of these residents to continue to live in or find suitable housing within the County.
5. The encouragement of housing options for those who do not wish to live in owner-occupied housing.

## **THE FUTURE**

The Planning Department will annually review the number of existing and new homes in the County that are affordable to households meeting the “workforce housing” definition to ensure the availability of housing in the current range of workforce housing affordability is not diminished.

The Planning Department will identify opportunities for application of the “mixed use” ordinance to encourage greater variety of housing types (townhouses, condominiums, modular manufactured housing and single bedroom units), at prices that will create and maintain workforce housing opportunities in the County.

The County will consider proposals for applicants to partner with non-profit housing developers to provide new and existing workforce housing opportunities. The County will also consider policies and programs that promote the stabilization and improvement of existing workforce housing neighborhoods and prevent deterioration of the existing housing stock. Stabilization of these neighborhoods may include funding of utility and other infrastructure costs through grants or service authorities in response to requests from a significantly high percentage of residents of that area.