

Achieving Affordable Housing— the Role of the General Land Use Plan & Zoning



ALLIANCE FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS
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Land Use 101

2

- In Virginia, local government has regulatory authority over land use decisions while the Commonwealth of Virginia retains authority over transportation decisions.
- Authority to develop a land use plan, which is one element of a comprehensive plan, comes from the Commonwealth.
- Local governments adopt land use plans, area plans & policy plans, as well as zoning regulations

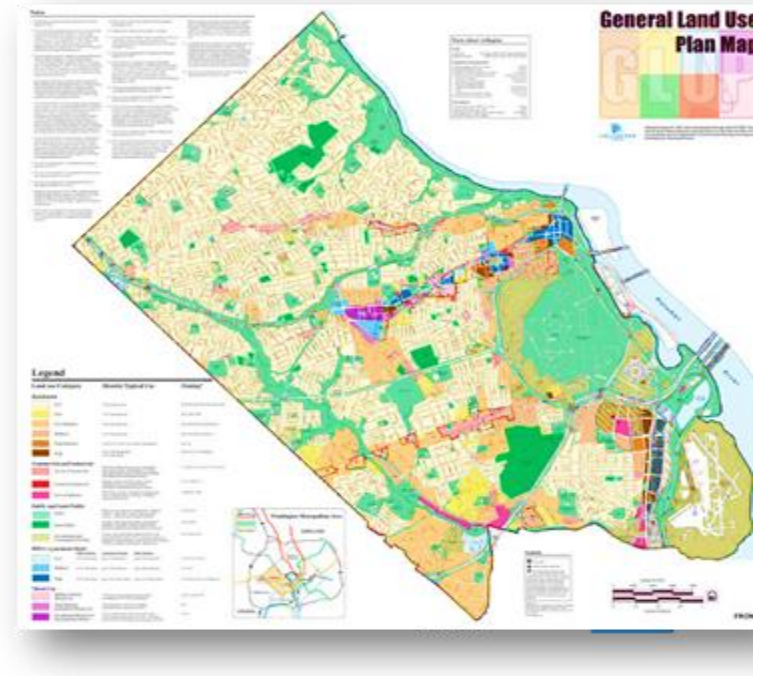
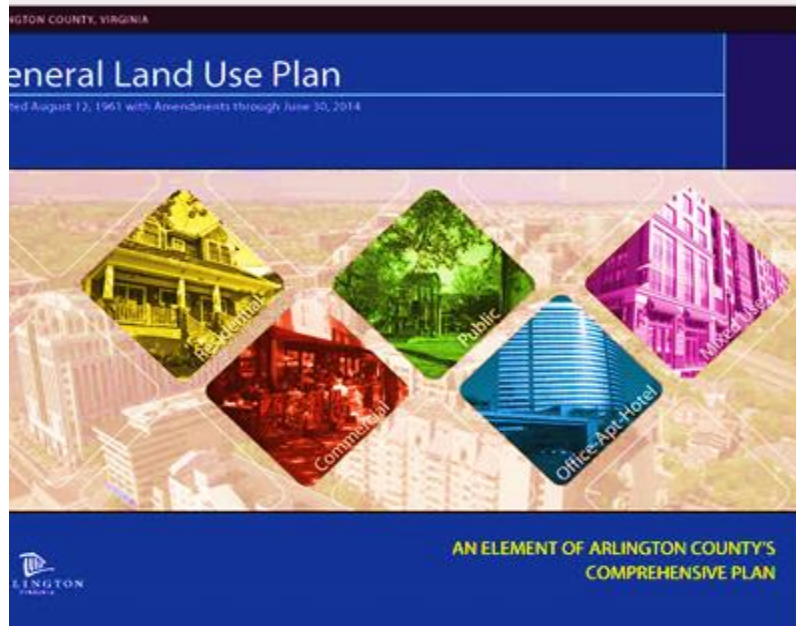
Why have a Land Use Plan?

3

- Arlington adopted its first General Land Use Plan (GLUP) in 1961.
- Establishes the community's land use **vision** by depicting general locations for various types of development (i.e. office, residential, retail, open space, education, etc.)
- **Policy framework** for decision-makers
- GLUP is 1 of 11 elements of the Comprehensive Plan

GLUP Document & Map

4



Keeping Plans Current

5

- Policy may change over time, become dated or no longer reflect community's vision
- Plan elements, sector plans and area plans are reviewed & updated over time to ensure they are current
- Updates of different elements occur on a different time schedule--which can lead to conflicts & unresolved issues between Plan elements
- Arlington tends to resolve these conflicts in Site Plan approvals

GLUP – Zoning Link

6

- **General Land Use Plan** is a **policy** document that looks to the future
- **Zoning** is a **regulatory tool**, not discretionary
- GLUP guides Board decisions on rezonings & approval of special exceptions including Site Plans
- Land use designations and compatible zoning districts shown on GLUP so it's clear how they are linked
- Zoning is the tool used to **implement** the land use policy embodied in the GLUP

Zoning...It's Complicated

7

- Zoning Ordinance regulates what can be built where, how tall, how dense, uses allowed, parking requirements
- Arlington's Site Plan process is structured as incentive zoning
- Optional increases in density, greater height and reduced parking are approved in return for the developer providing benefits to the community that mitigate the impacts of that density, height and reduced parking

Zoning & Affordable Housing

8

- Affordable Housing Ordinance – Adopted 2005
- Applies to site plans >1.0 FAR; sliding scale approach; units or cash
- 30 year term, for residents earning 60% AMI
- Units can on-site, off-site nearby or off-site elsewhere in the County
- Additional requirements where density requested exceeds GLUP designation

Affordable Housing Ordinance

9

Option	Location
On-site Units	5% of GFA above 1.0 FAR
Off-site Nearby	7.5% of GFA above 1.0 FAR, within .5 miles of Metro Station or project
Off-site Elsewhere	10% of GFA above 1.0 FAR

Zoning & Affordable Housing

10

- Cash out - \$1.50/ sq. ft. GFA up to 1.0 FAR; \$4.00/ sq. ft. GFA 1.0-3.0 FAR for residential & \$4.00 for all GFA in commercial projects; \$8.00/sq. ft. GFA greater than 3.0 FAR for residential

New Tools in the AHMP

11

- Reduced Parking – residents with less income tend to have fewer cars. Current regulations do not distinguish between affordable & market units.
- Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance – strict provisions resulted in fewer units. Needs review.
- Home Sharing - currently limited by Zoning definition of family
- Expedited Approvals – opportunities to move projects faster through review process

Amending the Zoning Ordinance

12

- Proposal to amend the Zoning Ordinance comes to Board, Manager, or staff
- Evaluation includes review of provision origins (e.g. what problem is it solving), how provision has/has not evolved since adoption, current related policy, how it is handled in other similar jurisdictions
- Draft language developed for review by Zoning Committee of Planning Commission
- Planning Commission holds a public hearing
- County Board holds a public hearing