



TO: GWRC Board of Commissioners

FROM: Dr. Linda Struyk Millsaps
Executive Director

DATE: January 25, 2019

SUBJ.: Regional Affordable Housing Effort

More than a decade ago GWRC produced a region-wide affordable housing study. Since that time the local housing market has changed substantially and will likely continue to evolve with the location of Amazon to Northern Virginia. Moreover, new data has made it clear that several segments of our population struggle with finding appropriate housing within their means. These include ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households, some senior citizens, and local governmental employees, to name a few.

Some localities have already considered developing their own affordable housing research and strategies. However, after some discussion in the community, a suggestion was made that GWRC become the lead for a new regional affordable housing effort. This would include a look at the data, a review of best practices, and options and a roadmap to move forward.

We have also become aware that substantial funding may be available through the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), potentially without a cash match requirement, to develop just such an effort.

This proposal is to authorize the GWRC Executive Director to begin working with the appropriate County and City staff, as well as the Fredericksburg Area Association of Realtors® (FAAR) to develop an initial proposal for funding to VHDA. As a part of their process, the Executive Director and local staff will reach out to interested individuals and advocacy groups for their input and suggestions.

Key elements of the proposal will include:

1. Analysis of locality-specific and regional data on demographic and housing characteristics in the GWRC region, providing a data-driven understanding of housing-related issues, and the basis for identifying implementation strategies that address important issues in each community.
2. Development of a menu of strategies that each jurisdiction could consider for their community. These would range from limited to moderate and more robust.
3. A matrix for each jurisdiction, and the region as a whole, of options to consider for each type of need they would potentially choose to address (general affordability, senior, workforce, etc.)
4. An array of best practices and examples for each of the strategies noted above.

The proposal will be vetted with the GWRC Board before it is submitted to VHDA.