


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 4, 2007  
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER   
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AN INFILL TASK FORCE

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**ISSUE:** The establishment of an Infill Task Force to study and make recommendations for addressing the impact of large houses in existing single family neighborhoods.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the resolution establishing an Infill Task Force as discussed below; and
- (2) Authorize the Mayor to appoint the members of the Task Force.

**DISCUSSION:** At its December 16, 2006, legislative meeting, City Council passed an ordinance to extend the temporary Interim Residential Infill Development Regulations adopted on June 27, 2006. The staff report accompanying the proposed ordinance recommended that an Infill Task Force be created to study short and long-term infill initiatives that the City could undertake. Council agreed with the recommendation for the creation of an Infill Task Force, and directed staff to report back clearly defining the mission, composition, and scope of the Task Force.

An Infill Task Force can identify short and long term initiatives that the City could undertake to address the issue of infill development in Alexandria. Staff will provide technical and administrative support to the Task Force over several months. Findings and recommendations are anticipated to be reported to the Planning Commission and City Council in Fall and Winter 2008.

**Mission**

The mission of the Infill Task Force will be to:

- Study the impact of large new housing construction and major residential additions in existing, established single-family neighborhoods.
- Analyze existing City regulations that pertain to limiting infill impacts and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for any regulatory changes.

- Keep the public informed about the study, briefing the community at large on the progress of the infill study, and briefing the Planning Commission and City Council on their analysis and recommendations.

### **Task Force Composition**

The Infill Task Force would consist of nine members, chaired by a member of the Planning Commission. Four members would be residents in neighborhoods impacted by infill development. Four members would be representatives from the development community; e.g., architects, small builders, large builders.

### **Staff Support**

Planning and Zoning staff will provide administrative and technical support to the Task Force which may be supplemented by staff from other city agencies. The staff will also conduct focus group sessions with key members of the community (i.e., residents, architects, builders) early in the study to provide background on infill issues to the Task Force.

### **Timeline**

The Infill Task Force will meet at least monthly. They will be asked to provide their analysis and short term recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council by Fall 2007. Staff will present Task Force final findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council by Winter 2008. The Task Force will sponsor community meetings on a regular basis on the progress of the study.

### **Task Force Agenda**

- Identify the issue and extent of the problem
- Identify and analyze the regulations that the City has in place to address infill
- Review and study possible alternatives and strategies
- Prioritize infill initiatives to study (see possible initiatives below)
- Analyze each proposed initiative and regulation and address the impact
- Provide final recommendations

### **Possible Infill Initiatives**

Following is a list of possible infill initiatives. The two interim regulations (front door threshold height, subdivision regulation changes) would also be reviewed by the Task Force to see if they should be part of a permanent infill regulatory package.

- Consider regulations to require an SUP for tear-downs/new construction or substantial redevelopment on substandard lots. Currently, only construction on vacant substandard lots requires an SUP.
- Study the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and other measures of bulk control in single family residential zones. Options include:
  - Consider the FAR a gross measurement of bulk;

- Substitute a measure of building volume rather than the FAR square foot rules to regulate bulk;
  - Use a lot coverage ratio, along with setbacks and height measures to regulate bulk rather than FAR;
  - Change the requirement that basements will be counted as floor area if they are 3 feet (or 2 feet) or more below the bottom of first floor construction (rather than the current 4 feet).
- Study building height controls in single family residential zones. Options include:
    - An average building height limit based on existing houses along a block;
    - For certain neighborhood conservation areas, an overlay district that would have a lower height limit than permitted by the underlying zone;
    - Lower the height limit in certain zones;
    - Change the way height is measured or clarify the way height is determined with complex roof structures.
- Study design review requirements for infill situations in single family residential zones. Options include:
    - Use a design review overlay district to require a review and approval of compatible design in a neighborhood infill situation;
    - Develop exceptions to strict bulk requirements to encourage good design. For example, Arlington County does not count freestanding garages as part of the lot coverage ratio if the garages are located in the rear yard. If the City wants to encourage covered front porches, they could be exempted from FAR calculations.

**ATTACHMENT:** Resolution

**STAFF:**

Richard Josephson, Acting Director, Planning and Zoning  
 Kathleen Beeton, Division Chief, Neighborhood Planning and Community Development  
 Stephen Milone, Division Chief, Zoning and Land Use Services  
 Peter Leiberg, Zoning Manager  
 Valerie Peterson, Urban Planner

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, Infill development has been a concern to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to study the impact of constructing very large houses in neighborhoods that consist of mainly small or medium-sized houses; and

WHEREAS, City Council wishes to establish a task force to study and make recommendations for addressing the impact of large houses in existing single family neighborhoods;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE  
CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA THAT:

1. There is hereby established an Infill Task Force.
2. The Task Force shall consist of nine members chaired by a member of the Planning Commission, as follows: the member of the Planning Commission who shall serve as chair, four members representing residents in neighborhoods impacted by infill development and four members from the development community; e.g., architects, small builders, large builders.
3. The Mayor shall appoint the nine members of the Task Force.
4. The functions of the Task Force shall be to:
  - a. Study the impact of large new housing construction and major residential additions, in existing single-family neighborhoods;
  - b. Analyze existing City regulations that pertain to limiting infill impacts and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for any regulatory changes; and
  - c. Keep the public informed about the study, briefing the community at large on the progress of the infill study, and briefing the Planning Commission and City Council on their analysis and recommendations.
5. Administrative and technical staff assistance to the Task Force be provided by the Department of Planning and Zoning and supplemented by staff from other City agencies.
6. The Task Force shall endeavor to present its findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council by Winter of 2008.

ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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WILLIAM D. EUILLE      MAYOR

ATTEST:

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JACQUELINE M. HENDERSON    CMC    CITY CLERK

RESOLUTION NO. 2223

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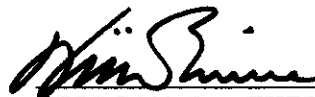
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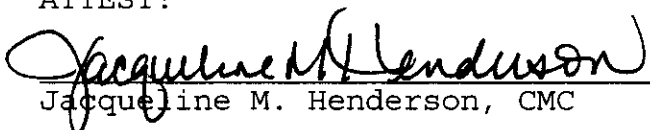
ADOPTED: April 10, 2007



WILLIAM D. EULLE

MAYOR

ATTEST:



Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC City Clerk