

## **Housing for All**

By Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck

Affordable Housing. We all hear the term, but, especially in today's market, what does that mean? To me, it means having a broad spectrum of new and existing housing options that provide opportunity for all who want to live, work or stay in Fairfax County to do so. This applies to many more individuals and families than you might expect - first time homebuyers, seniors aging in place, students, and of course, middle class families and folks with lower incomes, including custodians, clerks, new teachers and police officers, service workers, the list goes on.

The definition of an affordable home means having enough income to pay your housing expenses and still have enough money left over to provide for basic needs like food, clothing and medical care. Ideally housing expenses should not exceed 30-35% of your income. I deeply believe everyone needs a home they can take pride living in, regardless of income level, whether renting or owning - a place to relax and call your own at the end of a long day. The security of a home is crucial to our growth as individuals and families. With rents continuing to rise and incomes not keeping up, many critical frontline and essential workers are finding it increasingly difficult to find homes in the communities where they work. A housing market which accommodates the diversity of workers needed to support a community is an essential element of a thriving, healthy and vibrant one.

My Board colleagues and I recently dedicated more than \$100 million and doubled our affordable housing production goal from 5,000 to 10,000 new units by 2034. The Board is also committed to preserving the affordability of the approximately 9,000 market affordable multifamily units. The Board's Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force has made recommendations to preserve existing affordable housing – including addressing the unique challenges and opportunities of manufactured (mobile) home communities.

In the Mount Vernon District, we have many projects underway, including North Hill (216 multifamily and 63 senior units), The Arden (126 units); and the preservation of Cityside Huntington Metro Apartments (569 units) and The Landings I & II (292 units) as affordable housing. We also continue to look for new and creative opportunities to utilize or repurpose County-owned properties. The Beacon Hill Emergency and Supportive Housing is an example where we are co-locating County services with various levels of supportive housing to increase successful transitions for our neediest residents.

I understand and have been involved with supporting this basic need since the 1970's when I first led non-profits' housing support efforts. Later, as President of Good Shepherd Housing's (GSH) Board, I led GSH to begin purchasing affordable housing units to better serve its clients. I am very proud to say that GSH just celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> housing purchase! Housing is basic for us all, while the strongest communities are built on homeownership. Homeownership is essential to me for building generational wealth and stable, vibrant, welcoming communities, enabling folks to reach their full potential.

In our District, which has both the most expensive and least expensive homes, and with Fort Hunt named the healthiest housing market in Virginia, we understand the importance of having a full spectrum of housing options. Maintaining this balance matters as we support our existing beautiful homes and neighborhoods while revitalizing the Richmond Highway corridor, creating its new vibrant, walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use and mixed-income developments. As your Supervisor, I am committed to affordable housing for all and to Leaving No One Behind as our revitalization continues, ensuring that folks who live here now, or who want to, will have a home.