



YIMBYs of NoVA Comment Guide: Alexandria West Small Area Plan, Planning Commission

Planning Commission will take public comment on the Alexandria West Small Area Plan at their hearing on **Thursday, November 7th**. Alexandria housing supporters are encouraged to use this comment guide to submit written comments and speak either live or in person during the hearing.

Verbal comments must be under 3 minutes long, but can be as brief as you like. Remember to be polite and positive!

- [Hearing details](#)
- [Zoom registration](#)
- [Send written comment](#)
- [Sign up to speak](#)
(Docket Item: 5. Case #: N/A)

Want more details? The full Plan is available on the [Alexandria West web page](#), and you can [read our comment here](#).

Verbal Comment Suggestions

Be sure to state:

- Your name
- That you live in Alexandria
- That you believe the Alexandria West Plan is a good step, but should do more to legalize homes especially near transit and amenities.
- Planning Commission should further increase allowed heights and density near transit, then pass the plan.

You can stop there if you want! Optionally, it'd be great to include a personal story about how housing costs impact you, and/or our specific asks for how the Plan can be improved:

- Increase allowable heights in the 35-feet and 45-feet zones to 60 feet, with allowed densities to match.
- Increase allowable heights in the 100-feet, 110-feet, and 130-feet zones to 150 feet, with allowed densities to match.
- Require staff reports to document the displacement impacts of failing to build additional housing.
- Acknowledge impacts of city parking minimum policies and recommend changes.

Example written comment:

I appreciate the Draft Plan's attention to multimodal transportation networks, expanded and connected parks, and accessible neighborhood amenities, but don't believe it does enough to promote housing affordability.

To truly meet the goals of improving housing affordability and preventing displacement, the Draft Plan should be modified to allow affordable housing everywhere, and maximize allowable housing near transit and amenities.

- **Increase allowable heights in the 35-feet and 45-feet zones to 60 feet.** Staff's changes to the draft plan include a proposed new incentive for additional height in exchange for deeply affordable housing. Unfortunately, large portions of the plan area are ineligible for new and existing incentives to build affordable housing, because their allowable height is less than 50 feet. **Affordable housing should be legal to build in all of Alexandria West, not just select parcels.**
- **Increase allowable heights in the 100-feet, 110-feet, and 130-feet zones to 150 feet.** Increasing allowable heights in the 100+ foot zones to 150 will ensure we legalize as much housing as possible surrounding planned West End Transitway stops, and will also ensure that if an existing high-rise multifamily building is redeveloped, the building that replaces it is not mandated to be shorter.
- **Require staff reports to document the displacement impacts of failing to build additional housing.** Staff has proposed adding a requirement that staff reports will document the displacement impacts of redeveloping existing housing. Should you choose to implement this proposal, we ask you to add a requirement in cases where the proposed redevelopment will build more housing than what currently exists on the site, that staff reports document the displacement impacts of *not* building this additional housing. Far too many of our neighbors in Alexandria West are already facing displacement due to rent increases caused by our housing shortage.
- **Acknowledge impacts of city parking minimum policies and recommend changes.** We need as much new housing as possible in Alexandria West, and we can't afford to take up space with government-mandated parking spaces beyond the amount needed by residents. While the Plan itself cannot change citywide policy, it should recommend that the City repeal its parking minimum policy to ensure effective implementation of the Plan.

These changes will legalize a larger supply of both market rate and dedicated affordable units to stabilize rents and prevent displacement, encourage transit-oriented and walkable development, and ensure lower income Alexandrians are welcome in all neighborhoods. Thank you.