

Statement from County Board Chairman, Walter Tejada (12/17/13):

On behalf of the County Board, we want to thank Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement for their Call to Action and for their important work on behalf of those members of our community, who live, work and serve in Arlington and are in need of affordable housing. The County Board shares your concern and, as you know, has made affordable housing one the County's top priorities. The County Board is the steward of the community's public land. In that capacity, we have a responsibility to assure that land decisions consider how best to provide what the community needs - schools, parks, recreational opportunities, and facilities. Our recent successful experience at Arlington Mill leads us to believe that combining community facilities and affordable housing on the same parcel of publicly held land can deliver important benefits to the community.

In response to a recent petition with signatures delivered by VOICE on behalf of more than 10,000 residents who either live or work in Arlington, the County Board intends to instruct the County Manager, as part of the 2014-2024 Capital Improvement Program guidance issued in January, to identify the 3-5 publicly-owned sites with the greatest potential for redevelopment, which may include some of the sites identified by VOICE, that could incorporate the development of new affordable-housing units within the next 10 years.

Priorities in the CIP would be based on core governmental function needs and debt capacity. The CIP should state that affordable housing must be carefully considered as a possible use in the master planning processes of those facilities, using the successful public-private Arlington Mill development which minimized the AHIF contribution as a possible model. Following adoption of the CIP, a timeline for a comprehensive land use review process involving the community would be developed for each of the priority sites identified in the CIP. In addition, the Affordable Housing Study, currently underway and expected to produce a report by the end of calendar year 2014, will incorporate and examine in more detail "public land for public good" as a strategy to produce affordable housing.