

Town of Warrenton Warrenton Virginia Request for Information On Affordable Housing

1.0 Introduction

The Town of Warrenton is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) on affordable housing. The private sector, non-profit organizations, and citizens are encouraged to respond. This RFI is for informational purposes only and is not any commitment legislatively, legally, or programmatically to commit the Town of Warrenton government to any affordable housing concept, idea, or program. This RFI is not a public notice for any zoning or other regulatory change within the Town of Warrenton code ordinances. This RFI is for information gathering only. Responses are voluntary, and the Town government of Warrenton will not pay for any expense associated with any organization preparing a response. Responses to this RFI will help the Town government of Warrenton continue to examine how Warrenton, a town of 10,000 citizens on the edge of Northern Virginia, can begin to find solutions to many of the same housing issues nationwide. Affordable housing is important for our citizens to thrive and prosper.

The Town of Warrenton government recognizes that affordable housing is a complex issue. Many factors from the public and private sectors contribute to housing prices, stock, quality, and access. We seek to understand new, innovative, partnership-based approaches to solve this challenge. We recognize there is no single solution to this issue. Affordable housing affects many citizens across complex economic, racial, gender, health, education, income and disability, and personal history situations. As a government entity, the town government of Warrenton has some capabilities to make contributions to creating the right conditions to diversify our housing stock and create affordable options for our citizens. Finally, the Town government of Warrenton recognizes that solutions to affordable housing in Warrenton will require private-sector investment, cooperation, and engagement.

2.0 Considerations for Concept Papers

In preparing RFI responses, the following information should be considered:

Housing Spectrum: The Town of Warrenton has the full spectrum of citizens affected by housing prices. This includes 1) homeless, 2) temporary housing, 3) transition housing (from homelessness or recent life change), 4) income challenged (we have the full HUD AMI ranges), 5) seniors, 6) disabled, 7) veterans, and 8) young professionals. RFI responses may address all of this spectrum or specific ones.

Diversification: Warrenton has a diversified affordable housing stock within its 4.25 square mile boundaries. Historically, affordable housing has been developed in specific Warrenton neighborhoods. These programs have been successful. But in the future, the Town seeks to diversify this affordable housing stock better.

Impactful: This RFI is not seeking a solution for a specific housing unit. We are seeking concepts that will transform the housing stock in Warrenton and create meaningful capacity and diversification. RFI responses that focus only on one house or structure, while important, appreciated, and very helpful, are not the intent of this RFI.

Home Ownership and Equity: RFI responses should present concepts that enable the benefits of home ownership to those who live in these properties. This includes generating equity and selling the property to extract the equity. This does not mean concepts that are not ownership models should not be submitted. We recognize that rental units or other ownership models provide value.

Renovation: RFI responses should discuss options that enable the renovation of existing housing stocks or infrastructure. This includes structures that may not currently be used in residential housing definitions but can be converted. Any concept that addresses this renovation component must discuss how it would address any displacement of persons currently living in a structure if it were to be renovated.

Maximize Local Trades and Supplier Base: RFI responses should discuss how those concepts can maximize the use of Warrenton-Fauquier's employment and business base. This includes using local contractor trades personnel and local suppliers of materials.

Maximize Local Financing: RFI responses should discuss how our local banks, financing, or private funding can contribute to meaningful solutions. We desire our community to participate and be part of the overall solution.

Innovative: RFI responses are encouraged to bring forward new and creative thinking on affordable housing. Affordable housing is not a new problem; the blockers preventing affordability are long-standing. We seek ways to break through long-standing barriers and perceptions of affordable housing.

Minimize Public Sector Investment: The Town of Warrenton government has no desire or intent to operate a Public Housing Authority or have equity interests in the housing stock. RFI responses should not assume significant investment from the Town government of Warrenton.

3.0 Town Government Role and Contributions To Addressing Affordable Housing

To create new and innovative solutions to this challenge in Warrenton, there are certain contributions the Town government may make to create the right conditions for affordable housing. Outlined below are the potential actions and contributions that the Town is considering. The items listed below are not firm commitments at this time. Nor are they a promise of future commitments. Any future commitments will be based on policies and programs presented to and approved by the Town Council.

Land Contributions: The Town of Warrenton government currently owns several plots of land. Some of this land may be donated to spur the development of innovative housing programs. The town is not committing to any donation program in this RFI. Donation recipients may be from the private sector or non-profit community.

Real Estate Tax Deferrals: The Town may consider real estate tax deferrals for affordable housing programs. These are deferrals, meaning there would be a period of time when the Town would not charge real estate taxes on the properties. The town is not committing to any tax deferrals in this RFI.

Zoning Changes: The Town of Warrenton government is legally responsible for creating, enforcing, and changing zoning ordinances. Below is a list of possible zoning changes the Town may consider addressing affordable housing. The town is not committing to any zoning changes due in this RFI. Future changes would follow the normal process of zoning changes as outlined in our Town code and ordinances.

- Potentially create zoning overlays on existing residential, commercial, or industrial land to help spur innovation and development of affordable housing capacity.
- Potentially revise density restrictions in residential and commercial zones allowing smaller housing units such as one-bedroom or studio apartments.
- Potentially revise building height restrictions to allow taller structures on less property. This will enable increased density within a more optimized space.
- Potentially revise setbacks, parking, and other land restrictions that can assist in freeing up land use or reduce construction costs.

Initial Investment Funding: The Town of Warrenton has designated an initial \$250,000 as possible investment funding for private or non-profit affordable housing concept implementations.

Fast Track Permit Approvals: The Town of Warrenton may consider changes to its permitting process to expedite the approval of affordable housing concepts. This can reduce developer costs for concepts that require permitting. The town is not committing to any permit changes in this RFI.

Construction Financial Off Sets: The Town of Warrenton may consider waiving fees associated with the construction of affordable housing. This may include water and sewer hookup fees and permit filing fees. The town is not committing to any permit changes in this RFI.

4.0 RFI and Concept Paper Guidance.

Interested organizations and citizens may submit RFI responses to the Town of Warrenton. The page count is 10 (excluding cover page, table of contents, and items 1-2). The RFI responses shall provide the following information. Please be succinct and direct in your writing.

1. Name of Submitting Organization and address of Submitting Organization
2. Point of Contact, Phone and Email
3. Organization Overview: Describe your organization: mission, purpose, size, and expertise.
4. History in Warrenton and Fauquier County: Describe if you have done or done any business or non-profit work related to housing in the Town of Warrenton and Fauquier County.
5. Concept: Describe your concept for increasing affordable housing in Warrenton.
6. Constituency: Describe what housing constituency concept your will help. For example, does your concept help those who are chronically homeless? Does it help those at the 80% AMI?
7. Dependencies: Define any critical dependencies for your concept to come to reality. Examples include zoning changes, financing, and infrastructure.
8. Outcomes: Describe the outcomes and benefits of your concept.
9. Financing: Describe how your concept would be financed.

4.1 Freedom of Information

All RFI responses submitted as part of this RFI will become public records. This means they can be requested to be released via the Freedom of Information Act. The Town of Warrenton will follow its established FOIA processes for any requests for papers submitted under this RFI.

4.2. Submission Instructions and Timeline and POC

Interested parties shall submit their concept papers via email no later than 3 PM X September 2023. Submissions shall be made to affordablehouse@warrentonva.gov The Point of Contact for this RFI is Mr. Joe Smith.

4.3 Notice

Nothing in this RFI is a commitment by the Town government of Warrenton to fund, approve, deny, sponsor or change any housing, property, code, law, zoning ordinance, or existing permits or programs within the town of Warrenton. This RFI is informational only and is designed to help understand the level of interest and support for solving Warrenton's Affordable Housing challenges.