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New Loudoun County Housing Needs Assessment and public employee poll show future need for much more housing than County has planned to date

Housing Needs Assessment

Loudoun County’s consultants, the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis (“GMU”) and Lisa Sturtevant & Assoc., LLC, presented the final version of their [Housing Needs Assessment](#) (HNA) to the County Board of Supervisors on February 23, 2017. The HNA reports a likely shortfall of 18,300 housing units by 2040, due to the tremendous demand that will be created by new workers in the businesses Loudoun hopes to attract, compared to the amount of new housing that can be accommodated under current County land use planning and zoning.¹

According to the HNA, the county faces a potential demand for nearly 64,000 new housing units between now and 2040. However, under current plans Loudoun only has the capacity for about 46,500 new homes, due to current zoning constraints, according to the report.

The data in the HNA is extraordinarily robust, including more than 100 detailed tables documenting current housing-related conditions and forecasts for future conditions in the County by 2040. The 267-page HNA also includes a 90+ page narrative summary of its findings, and a 45-page explanation of its methodology. To access the entire document, please click on [Loudoun County Housing Needs Assessment 2017](#).

Public Sector Employee Housing Needs Survey

Loudoun County’s Dept. of Family Services is finalizing the results of a new Public Sector Employee Housing Needs Survey. The County’s public employees (school teachers, police, fire, and other employees) were asked in January, *via* an online Survey Monkey

¹ HNA at 8, 9 and Figure A-6. Sydney Kashiwagi, *Loudoun housing report met with skepticism from supervisors*, Loudoun Times Mirror, March 1, 2017 (online edition). GMU is the Washington, DC, region’s leading source for economic, demographic and housing market research, and it is relied on by local jurisdictions throughout the region. Dr. Sturtevant is a former Deputy Director of the CRA and Associate Research Professor at GMU’s School of Public Policy.

poll, about their housing situations. The preliminary version presented at the May 10 meeting of Loudoun's Housing Advisory Board indicated that 22% of Loudoun government employees responded to the poll.

Among the results in the preliminary report: 73% of the respondents who rent their housing in Loudoun feel the amount they pay for rent and utilities is not affordable. Only 15% consider their housing costs affordable. And only 1% said that housing affordability is a reason they live in Loudoun.

By contrast, only 44% of the respondents who rent elsewhere feel that the amount they pay for rent and utilities is not affordable. Housing affordability is by far the leading reason those respondents gave for living outside of Loudoun (69% of responses included that reason). (The poll did not ask about whether any of the public employees who responded get government housing assistance.)

As to Loudoun government employees answering the survey who own their homes, 58% of those who live in Loudoun said their housing costs are not affordable, whereas 63% of those responding who live outside Loudoun feel their housing costs are affordable. About 86% of the responding homeowners who live outside Loudoun give housing affordability as a reason why they do—by far the leading reason given.

Some 74% of the respondents who rent in Loudoun said they want to buy a home there at some point, but 83% thought they cannot afford to do so now. Some 70% of respondents who rent said they would purchase a home in Loudoun that offered an affordable sales price, even if there were controls on the future sales price of the home (as with Affordable Dwelling Units).

Also, 63% of respondents favored increasing the supply of affordable housing units through government action, and/or by letting the laws of supply and demand determine the mix of housing and costs in the real estate market. EHI advocates a combination of those approaches—action by the Loudoun County government to end the unjustified zoning restrictions on the supply of housing, which interfere with normal supply and demand balances in the housing sector, to the detriment of low- and moderate-income Americans.