

myths about affordable & workforce housing

myth. People in affordable housing are on welfare and don't fit into my neighborhood.

reality. The word affordable simply means that housing should cost no more than 30% of a household's income. As housing costs rise, many of our neighbors struggle to keep up. Most residents of modern and affordable mixed-income housing work full-time at lower or moderate paying jobs. Housing of this type is also referred to as "workforce housing." People already working in our town to serve our citizens are in need of housing they can afford.

myth. Affordable housing will reduce property values.

reality. Studies have shown that housing developments which are well-designed do not have a negative effect on neighboring property values. In fact, some developments may actually increase property values. **According to recent appraisals, Community Housing Partners' Roanoke-Lee Street duplex units appreciated approximately 10% since 2006.*

myth. Affordable housing will increase crime in the community and bring in undesirable residents.

reality. Affordable housing can help a community maintain a stable population by making it easier to retain people who already live and work there. In fact, The National Crime Prevention Council calls for the construction of affordable housing to reduce crime because "neighborhood cohesion and economic stability are enhanced in areas where the continuing supply of affordable housing is assured."

did you know?

Every year, hundreds of homes are built in Montgomery County to shelter its growing population. Many of these homes are too expensive for the county's workforce to afford. For many reasons, it is important for the housing market to provide a variety of home types at different price levels. Workforce housing:

- Encourages diverse communities and provides the chance to continue living among friends and family.
- Gives workers who commute into the county the opportunity to live here.
- Reduces commuting time and traffic congestion by allowing people to live closer to their jobs.
- Permits essential members of our workforce -- teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters, hairdressers, sales clerks, and secretaries -- to live near their place of employment.
- Attracts young professionals to jobs in the area.
- Strengthens the economy by helping employers attract and retain critical workers.

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myth. Investors will buy the workforce homes with the intention to sell or “flip” them.

reality. That cannot happen because purchasers of the workforce homes sign agreements to repay public subsidies if they sell their home. This protects the community’s investment and returns public funds to the locality or developer for reinvestment in the community.

myth. Affordable housing means poor quality construction.

reality. Builders of affordable and/or workforce housing must meet the same building codes and design standards as market rate housing. In fact, housing built with public money sometimes needs to comply with even higher standards and additional restrictions.

myth. Workforce housing causes traffic congestion.

reality. Studies have shown that people who live in workforce housing own fewer cars per household and drive fewer miles. Living closer to their work dramatically improves traffic flow. With proper planning, a community can keep pace with its overall transportation needs while also providing a variety of housing choices.

myth. “Affordable housing” means large, uninviting projects.

reality. The latest generation of affordable and mixed-income housing is based on good planning, minimal environmental impact, and a neighborhood design with attractive, energy efficient buildings clustered to leave areas of green space.

why should you care?

- Many people in Montgomery County can’t find an affordable place to live.
- A lack of affordable/workforce housing close to jobs and services stifles economic growth, increases traffic problems, creates worker stress, and affects the quality of life of our region.
- Lack of affordable housing causes families to pay substantially more than 30% of their income for housing or to live in overcrowded, sub-standard conditions.
- Well-kept, energy efficient, reasonably-priced homes provide families with a safe and healthy place to live.

a direct effect

People will have more time for their families and volunteering in their community if they don’t have to commute long distances.

Adequate workforce housing also improves the quality of local schools:

- Availability of affordable homes helps schools attract and retain the best teachers
- Children who grow up in stable housing are more successful in school and experience better physical and social health.