

*Missing Middle Housing Study*

# ARLINGTON'S LAND USE POLICY AND ZONING

*Bulletin*

4



**HOUSING  
ARLINGTON**

# ARLINGTON'S LAND USE POLICY AND ZONING

As detailed in Bulletin 2, Arlington experiences limited diversity in its housing stock. This bulletin provides an overview of the events and regulatory decisions in Arlington's land use and zoning history that have most contributed to the County's patterns of development and demographic composition. It then reviews Arlington's current General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and Zoning Ordinance and their impacts on missing middle housing today.

## ARLINGTON'S LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY

**1900-1920:** At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Arlington was a rural county with small village communities, including the African American communities of Hall's Hill and High View Park, Arlington View, and Green Valley (formerly Nauck). This period, however, was one of transition from rural to urban. During World War I, the size of the federal workforce tripled. Between 1910-1920, Arlington's population increased by 60%.

**1908:** Los Angeles became the first city in the United States to adopt a zoning ordinance designating residential and industrial districts in certain parts of the city.

**1920-1930:** Arlington's population continued to grow steadily, increasing by 40% over the decade.

**1922:** The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed in *Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Amber Realty Co.* that cities could adopt zoning ordinances to regulate development within their boundaries. Notably, the decision used classist language that compared the apartment house to a "mere parasite" when located near single-family detached houses.

**1927:** A Zoning Commission appointed by the County held its first public hearing to study and draft zoning regulations for Arlington.

**1930-1950:** Arlington experienced a residential construction and population boom due to New Deal programs, World War II, and returning veterans after the war. Planned single-family detached neighborhoods continue to be developed throughout Arlington.

Arlington's established African American communities were walled off from new single-family neighborhoods. In the 1930s, a series of privately-owned, connected walls was built at the southern and eastern edges of High View Park to separate the longstanding African American community from a new, adjacent subdivision.

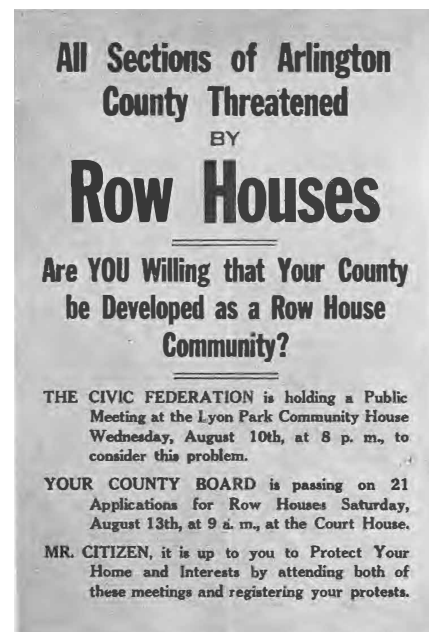
Between 1934 and 1954, 176 new apartment complexes were constructed in Arlington, including Fairlington, the nation's largest defense housing complex, and Colonial Village, the first apartment complex financed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). During this period, the FHA would only provide financing for exclusionary housing developments that would not offer housing opportunities to African Americans.

**1930:** Arlington adopted its first Zoning Ordinance, which included six zoning districts, and an accompanying zoning map.

- The "A" Residential district allowed for single-family detached houses.
- The "B" Residential district allowed for side-by-side duplexes, stacked duplexes, and apartment houses.
- Some areas that had existing multifamily residential buildings were zoned as "A" Residential, resulting in nonconforming multifamily housing.
- "A" Residential districts represented the vast majority of land zoned for residential uses.

**1938:** On June 3, Arlington adopted a new Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance defined the "row house" as a unique housing type as "one of a series of three or more houses, or living units, under a common roof, with common exterior walls, separated from one another by single partition walls extending from basement to roof, or otherwise so planned that the several unit houses may be sold to separate owners."

**1938:** On November 14, Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that explicitly banned row houses throughout the County.

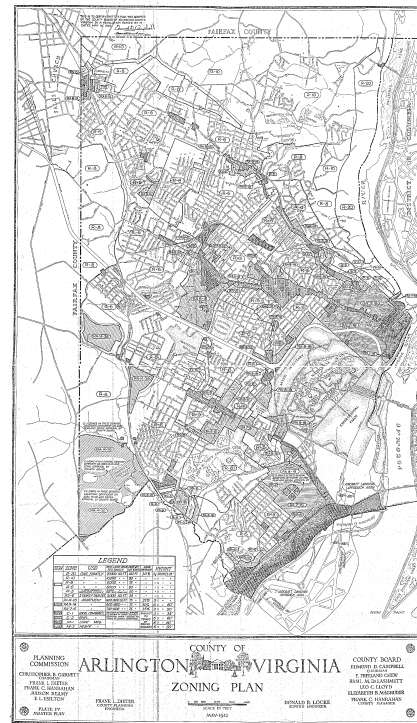


*Source: Arlington County  
Historical Society*

## ARLINGTON'S LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY

**1942:** Arlington adopted a new Zoning Ordinance and map that introduced 13 zoning districts and included some of the Residential (R) and Residential Apartment (RA) districts Arlington has today in its current Zoning Ordinance.

- Single-family detached houses were permitted in all 13 zoning districts.
- Stacked duplexes were permitted in two R districts (R-5 and RS-6, now known as R2-7) and three RA zoning districts (RA14-26, RA8-18, and RA6-15).
- Side-by-side duplexes were permitted in only one zoning district (RS-6, now known as R2-7), and the side yard requirements increased, making some existing side-by-side duplexes (as well as some single-family detached houses) nonconforming.



Source: Arlington County,  
Department of Community Planning,  
Housing and Development (CPHD)

### LOOKING AHEAD

In adopting the 1942 Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map, Arlington permitted stacked and side-by-side duplexes in five of the total 13 new zoning districts, translating into only a small fraction of total land area zoned for residential development. These regulatory barriers persist to the present day and severely limited opportunities for development of missing middle housing, explaining why the County's inventory of missing middle housing represents such a small share of the County's total housing stock. What are the impacts of these regulatory barriers and the resulting lack of missing middle housing? How should the Missing Middle Housing Study address these issues?

**1950-1980:** As Arlington approached complete build-out, the creation of new single-family detached residential subdivisions slowed. Instead, residential development primarily took the form of multifamily residential development. Condominium conversions were legalized in the 1960s and 1970s, which resulted in the displacement of thousands of renters who were unable to afford purchasing a home. Toward the end of the 1970s, Arlington began planning for higher-density development along the new Metro corridors.



**1950:** Arlington adopted a new Zoning Ordinance that consisted of 15 zoning districts. This ordinance increased minimum requirements for side yards, as well as lot area and width for side-by-side duplexes. Almost all side-by-side duplexes were built on lots smaller than the new required dimensions, making almost all lots with side-by-side duplexes nonconforming to the Zoning Ordinance and thus unable to make structural improvements to their homes without special approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

- Stacked duplexes continued to be permitted in two R districts (R-5 and R2-7) and the three RA districts (RA14-26, RA8-18, and RA6-15) and were now permitted in a third R district (R-6) only in limited circumstances when a site met specific locational criteria.
- Side-by-side duplexes continued to be permitted in one R district (R2-7) and were now permitted in the three RA districts.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In adopting the 1950 Zoning Ordinance, Arlington continued to permit stacked and side-by-side duplexes in only a small fraction of total land area zoned for residential development. In addition, the new regulations for larger lots and setbacks required the purchase of more property, representing another barrier to entry for new construction.

The new minimum lot size requirements created significant issues for the existing stock of duplexes. In requiring a minimum lot size larger than the vast majority of the existing duplex housing lots, the 1950 Zoning Ordinance now classified almost all of the existing duplexes and duplex lots as nonconforming. Duplex property owners were thus unable to make changes to their homes unless they could find a way to conform to the new Zoning Ordinance requirements or request a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals. Zoning Ordinance amendments addressing this issue of nonconformity were not adopted until 2018.

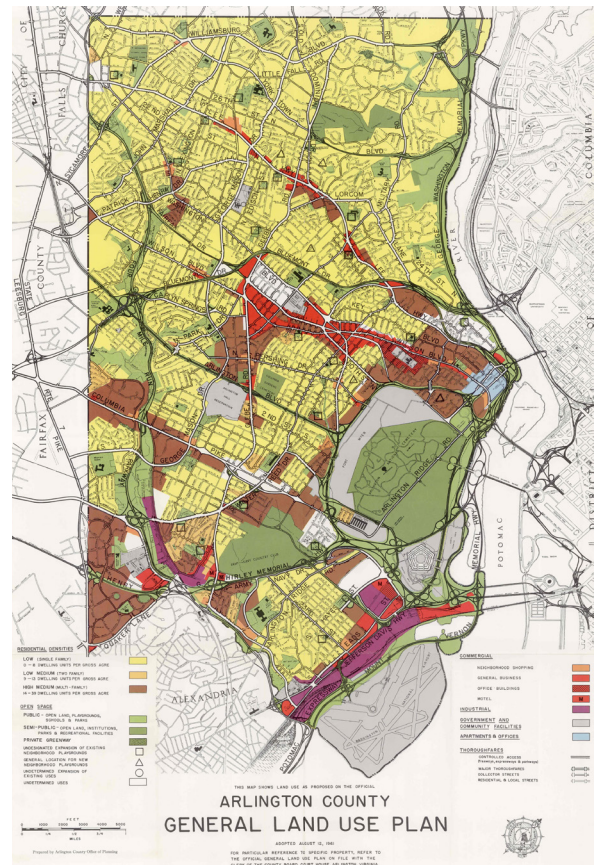
Finally, the 1950 Zoning Ordinance lacked any districts dedicated to the production of other missing middle housing types, such as townhouses (banned since 1938), triplexes, quadplexes, or small apartment buildings. Any building with three or more units could only be built in RA districts, where there was much more incentive to build larger apartment buildings on larger lots.

What are the impacts of these barriers on missing middle housing? How should the Missing Middle Housing Study address these barriers?

# ARLINGTON'S LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY

**1961:** Arlington adopted its first countywide General Land Use Plan (GLUP), which outlines the County's land use vision. The original GLUP map used a color-coded system of 13 different land use designations, including three Residential designations: "Low (Single Family) 0-8 dwellings per acre", "Low Medium (Two Family) 9-13 dwellings per acre", and "High Medium (Multi-Family) 14-39 dwellings per acre."

- The areas designated "Low (Single Family) 0-8 dwellings per acre" and "Low Medium (Two Family) 9-13 dwellings per acre" have remained almost unchanged for nearly 60 years.



Source: Arlington County, CPHD

## LOOKING AHEAD

The County's first General Land Use Plan in 1961 corresponded to the zoning in place since the 1930s, thus institutionalizing zoning decisions of the past. The unchanged vision for areas originally designated "Low" Residential (0-8 dwellings per acre) and "Low Medium" Residential (9 to 13 dwellings per acre) has been translated into a long-established understanding that only single-family detached housing and townhouses, in very limited circumstances, should be permitted in the majority of the County's land area. As a result, missing middle housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, or small apartment buildings, belong in only very limited locations.

What are the impacts of the exclusionary nature of the County's General Land Use Plan? How has the General Land Use Plan impacted housing type diversity and household diversity throughout the County? How should the Missing Middle Housing Study address these issues?

**1962:** Arlington adopted amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that restricted how side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes could be developed.

- In the R-5 district and three RA districts (RA14-26, RA8-18, and RA6-15), they were now only allowed via a use permit.
- In the R-6 district, they were only allowed via a use permit on sites that met specific locational criteria.
- In the R-5 and R-6 districts, they now had to meet new, larger minimum lot area and width requirements.
- They were now required to look like single-family detached houses from the outside.

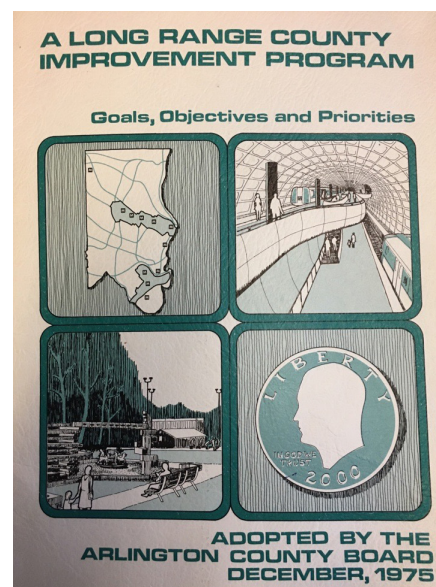
## LOOKING AHEAD

The 1962 amendments further restricted permissions for side-by-side and stacked duplexes, creating virtually no incentive for developers to seek to build them, which required special exception approval, rather than single-family detached houses which could be built by right. Row houses were still banned, and all other missing middle types were only permitted in RA districts.

How should these issues be addressed in the Missing Middle Housing Study?

**1965:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that introduced the townhouse housing type. Townhouses were allowed in a new zoning district, the R-10T district, by site plan approval by the County Board on sites where an older building was being removed or that were located next to an RA, commercial (C), or industrial (M) zoning district.

**1975:** Arlington adopted Development and Growth Goals as a result of the County's Long Range County Improvement Program, established in 1973. These goals, intended to support the concentration of higher-density development in the Metro corridors and the preservation of lower-density residential neighborhoods, were incorporated into the GLUP and are used as a guide for development.



Source: Arlington County, CPHD

## ARLINGTON'S LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY

**1976:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that deleted the design requirements for side-by-side and stacked duplexes and permitted their development by site plan in the R-5 district (in addition to use permit).

**1977:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that deleted the prohibition on row houses, which stood for nearly 40 years.

**1978:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that allowed for the subdivision of a lot in the R-5 district to make two side-by-side duplex lots.

**1978:** Arlington created a new zoning district – R15-30T – to allow for a new form of townhouse development in the Metro corridors. The district originally allowed townhouses and side-by-side duplexes to be developed by right and by site plan.

**1979:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that permitted townhouses by right in the higher-density multifamily RA districts (RA14-26, RA8-18, and RA6-15).

**1980-2010:** With the advent of the Metro in the late 1970s, Arlington focused growth along the Rosslyn-Ballston and Richmond Highway Metrorail corridors. Sector and area plans and incentive zoning regulations were developed to concentrate high-density residential and mixed-use development near the Metro stations. Arlington adopted a plan and optional set of zoning regulations for the Columbia Pike corridor to allow for Main Street-style development.

**1986:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that further restricted side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes in the R-5 district.

- They were now only allowed on sites that met certain locational criteria.
- They now had to meet new, larger minimum lot area and width requirements. This change would now make all older side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes built to the old minimum lot area and width requirements nonconforming.
- They now had to provide two parking spaces per dwelling unit, higher than the requirement for single-family detached houses.

**1989:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that restricted development of townhouses and side-by-side duplexes to site plan approval in the R15-30T district.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Arlington's historical Zoning Ordinances contained restrictive language regarding townhouses for nearly 40 years. By the late 1980s, townhouses were permitted in R-10T and R15-30T, the two districts designed for townhouse development, only by site plan approval in large groupings on large sites with design requirements that challenged the ability to integrate townhouses into the character of existing neighborhoods.

For many years, townhouses were only permitted by right in the higher-density RA districts, and the recent construction of luxury townhouses in the place of demolished market-rate affordable apartments led to a 2017 amendment that restricted townhouse development to site plan approval in the Housing Conservation District.

What are the impacts of restrictions on townhouses as a missing middle housing type? How should the Missing Middle Housing Study address these issues?

**2008:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that permitted accessory dwellings attached to or within a single-family detached house.

**2010-PRESENT:** As Arlington recovered from the Great Recession, housing costs continued to rise in the County, leading to increased pressure on households attempting to achieve housing affordability. Arlington began to focus on ways to promote flexibility in zoning regulations to help facilitate housing and to preserve existing affordability.

**2017:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that permitted the conversion of an *existing* accessory building into a detached accessory dwelling on a lot with a single-family detached house.

**2017:** Arlington adopted the Housing Conservation District (HCD) for areas where market-rate affordable housing was concentrated. These multifamily areas contained older apartment buildings that were under the threat of redevelopment into for-sale townhouses, which would lead to displacement of current residents. Townhouse development now required site plan approval in the HCD.

**2018:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that permitted additions and expansions to nonconforming side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes in the R2-7 district.



## ARLINGTON'S LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY

**2019:** Arlington adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that permitted the establishment of *new* detached accessory dwellings in *new* accessory buildings on lots with single-family detached houses.

**2020:** Arlington drafted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that would permit additions and expansions to nonconforming side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes in the RA districts.

### LOOKING AHEAD

This timeline of changes to the Arlington Zoning Ordinance and General Land Use Plan over time highlights many of the barriers for housing types that differ in form from large, single-family detached houses.

Arlington's Zoning Ordinance standards for side-by-side duplexes, stacked duplexes, and townhouses remain mainly the same as those adopted in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

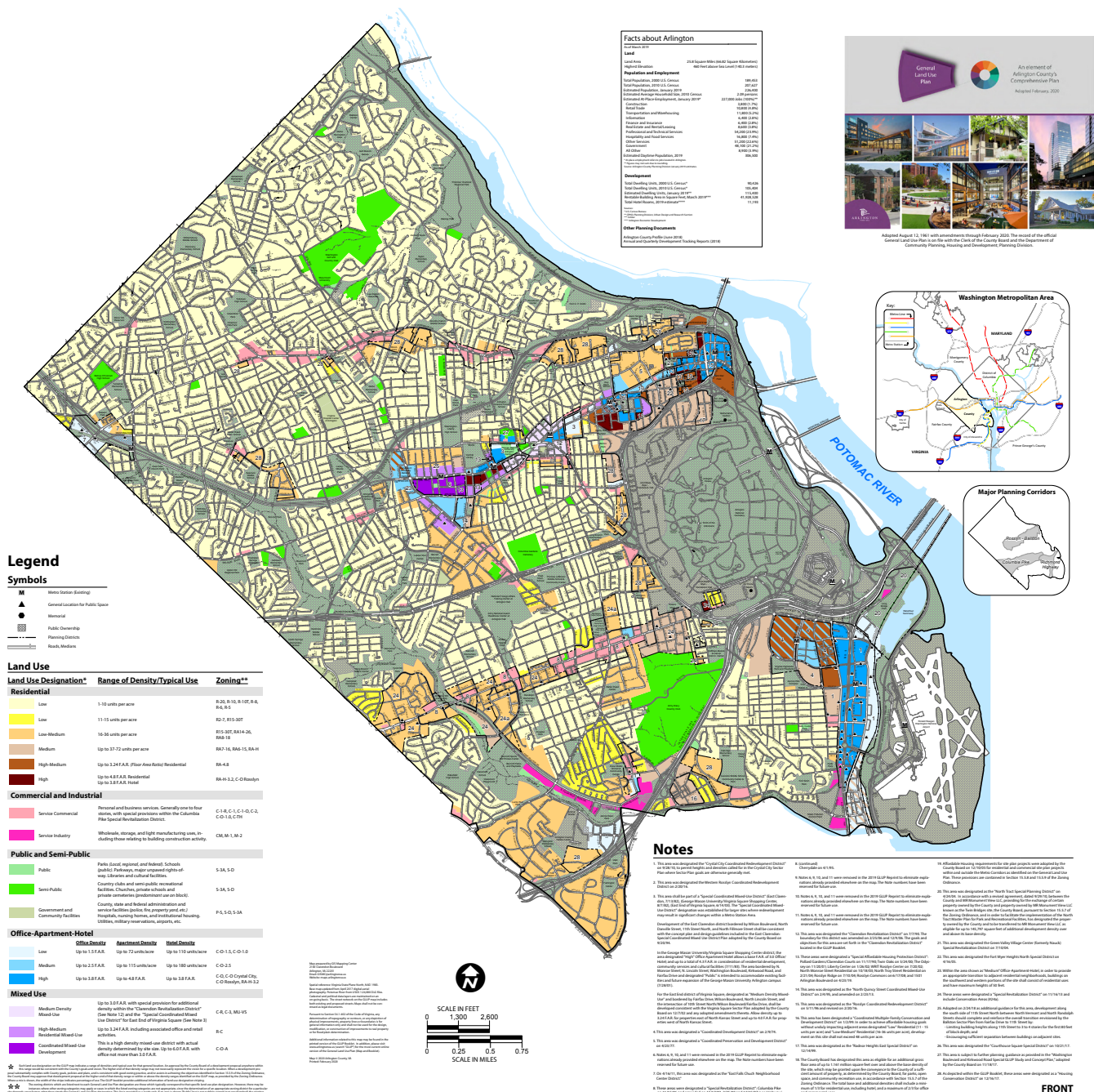
- Side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes are allowed by right in R2-7 and RA districts and by special exception approval in R-5 and R-6 with certain locational requirements.
- Townhouses are allowed only by site plan approval in R-10T and R15-30T and are permitted by right (outside the Housing Conservation District) in RA districts.

Arlington's General Land Use Plan (GLUP), one of 11 elements that comprise the Comprehensive Plan, provides policy guidance for side-by-side duplexes, stacked duplexes, and townhouses that remains essentially the same as the guidance of the late 1960s.

- Side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes are envisioned only in the areas designated "Low" Residential 11-15 units/acre.
- Townhouses are envisioned in areas designated both "Low" Residential 1-10 units per acre and 11-15 units per acre (consistent with the R-10T and R15-30T zoning districts), yet still only through site plan approval by the County Board.
- Other potential missing middle housing type (e.g., triplexes, mansion apartments, small multiplex buildings) could only be developed in areas actually designated for higher-density residential development.



## GENERAL LAND USE PLAN (2020)



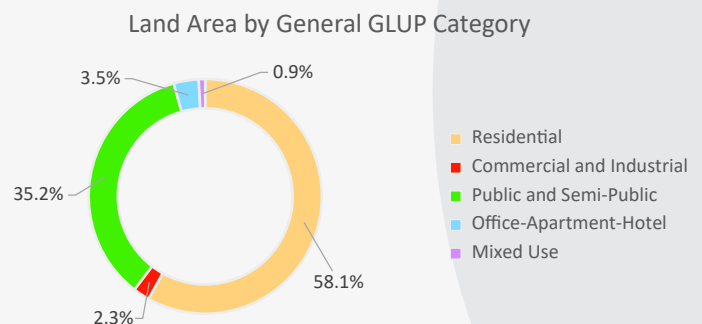
**ARLINGTON'S GENERAL LAND USE PLAN LAYS OUT THE AREAS WHERE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IS CURRENTLY ENVISIONED.**

# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

The previous section on Arlington's Land Use and Zoning History provides a foundation for understanding Arlington's current land use policy and zoning. This section reviews the current General Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance and how they influence different housing types in Arlington.

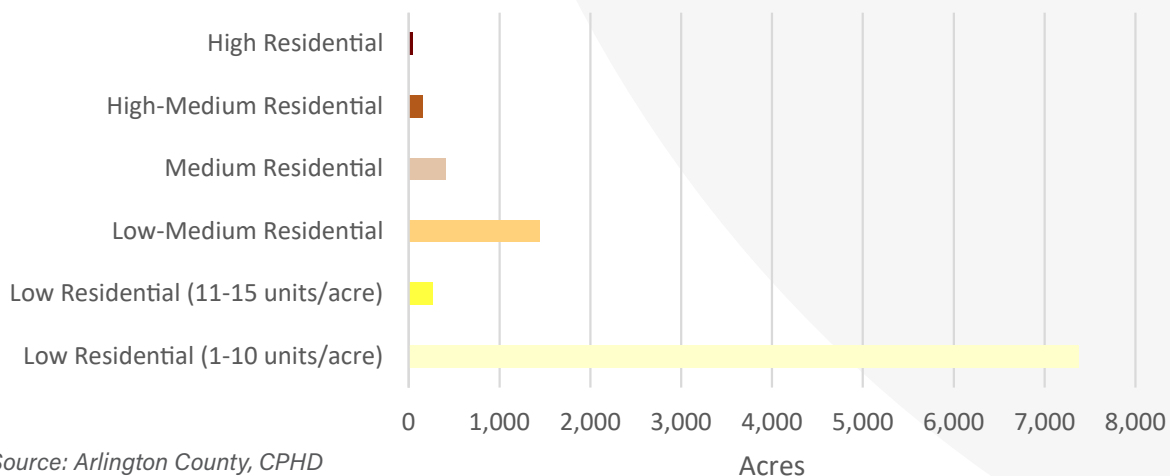
Arlington's land use policy, called the General Land Use Plan (GLUP), establishes the vision and location for land uses, such as residential, commercial and industrial, and mixed use. The GLUP consists of a map that identifies the land uses throughout Arlington and is accompanied by a booklet. The various land use designations are divided into five categories: Residential; Commercial and Industrial; Public and Semi-Public; Office-Apartment-Hotel; and Mixed Use. Nearly 60% of the land in Arlington is identified as Residential land on the GLUP.

Within the Residential GLUP category, there are six different designations, and the largest by far is "Low" Residential (1-10 units/acre), which covers approximately 7,400 acres – 76% of land area in the Residential category. The other five Residential designations combined make up approximately 2,300 acres of land in Arlington.



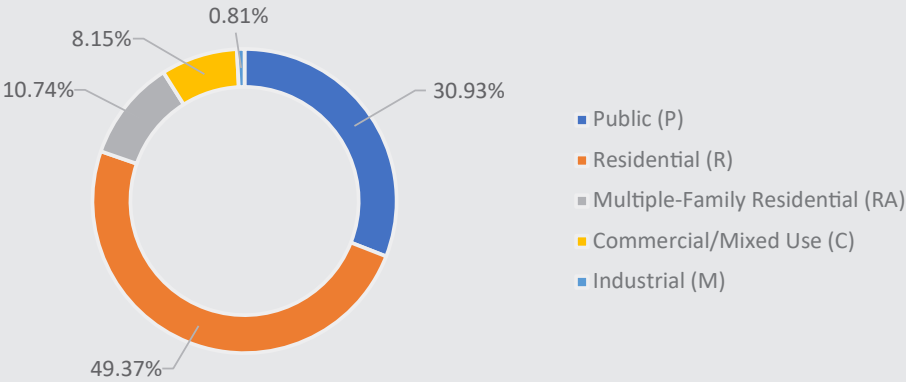
Source: Arlington County, CPHD

## Land Area by Residential GLUP Designation



# SEVENTY-NINE PERCENT (79%) OF ARLINGTON'S LAND AREA ZONED FOR RESIDENTIAL USE ALLOWS ONLY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOUSES BY RIGHT.

Breakdown of County Land Area by Zoning District Category

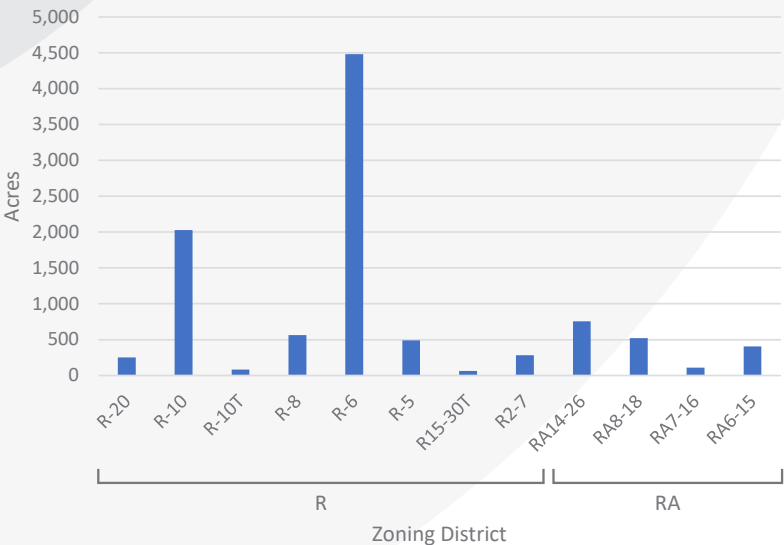


Source: Arlington County, CPHD

Arlington’s Residential (R) and Multiple-family Residential (RA) districts consist of a total of 12 different zoning districts. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of Arlington’s land area that is zoned either Residential (R) or Multiple-family Residential (RA) only allows for the establishment of single-family detached houses by right. The largest zoning district by area is the R-6 district, which covers nearly 4,500 acres. The R-6 district allows for the development of single-family detached houses by right, and stacked and side-by-side duplexes by special exception approval via use permit or site plan approval by the County Board only when properties are located next to properties zoned RA, commercial/mixed use (C), or industrial (M). The R2-7 district allows stacked and side-by-side duplexes by right, but the district only covers approximately 300 acres.

Arlington’s Zoning Ordinance establishes the rules and regulations for development in the county via 38 zoning districts that are separated into five general district categories: Public (P), Residential (R), Multiple-family Residential (RA), Commercial/ Mixed Use (C), and Industrial (M). Each zoning district has specific rules for what types of development is allowed, how much development is allowed, and where and how the development can happen on a property. In Arlington, nearly 50% of the land is zoned Residential (R), located in a zoning district that allows for single-family detached houses by right, and in limited circumstances, stacked duplexes, side-by-side duplexes, and townhouses.

Total Land Area of R and RA Districts



Source: Arlington County, CPHD



# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

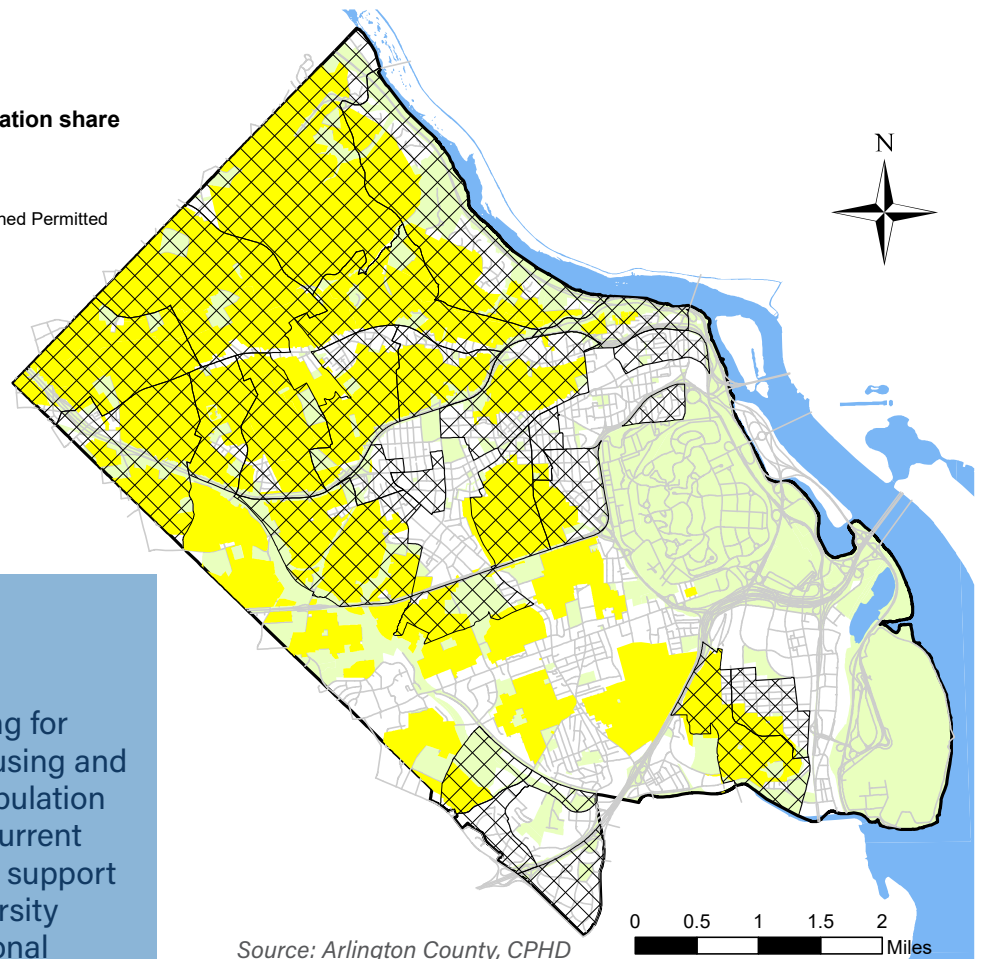
## SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED ZONING AND RACE

When looking at Arlington's zoning districts, a pattern emerges when the zoning is compared with racial demographics data. The areas of Arlington zoned primarily for single-family detached housing overlap with census tracts where at least 70% of the population is white.

### Legend

#### White (non latino) population share

-  70% or greater
-  Only Single Family Detached Permitted



Source: Arlington County, CPHD

## LOOKING AHEAD

The overlap between zoning for single-family detached housing and predominance of white population suggests that Arlington's current zoning framework may not support the County's goals for diversity and inclusion. What additional questions come to mind in viewing this map?

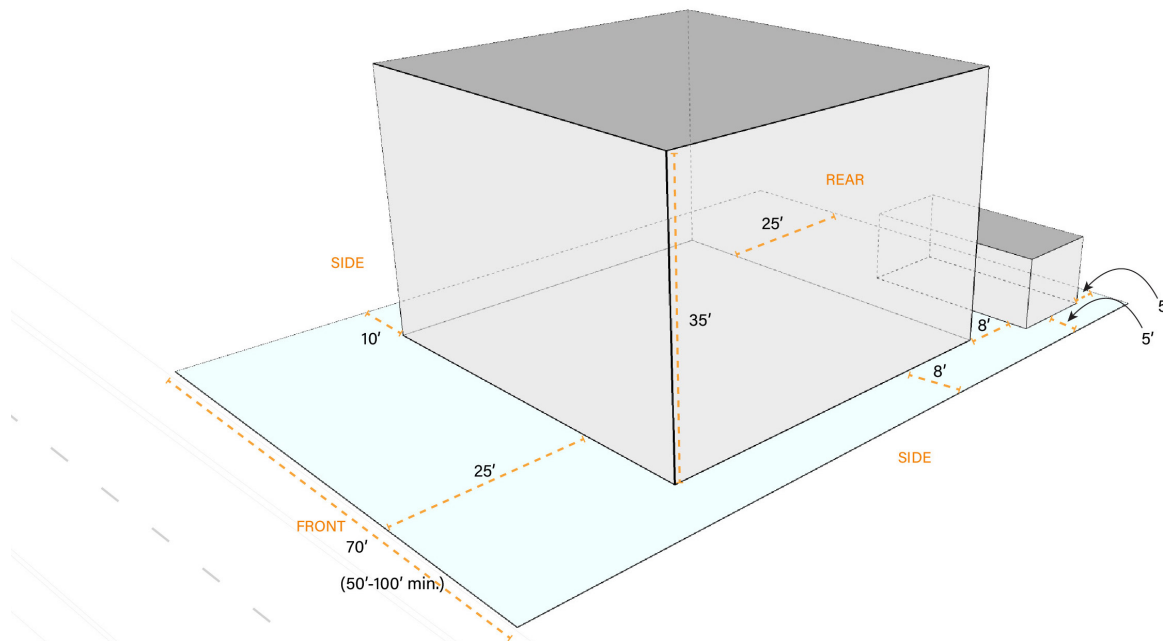
## HOUSING TYPES AND ZONING

The following pages dive deeper into five different housing types found in Arlington – single-family detached, stacked duplex, side-by-side duplex, townhouse, and small multiplex (for the purposes of the Research Compendium, low-rise multifamily residential buildings containing three to sixteen units) – and provide details about zoning standards for each housing type as well as observations related to how the regulations affect each housing type.



# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

## SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED



This diagram reflects the current Zoning Ordinance standards for this dwelling type where they are allowed. The standards presented in these diagrams do not reflect the conditions of existing dwellings, which in many cases were built before these standards were adopted.

### ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Regulation	R-5	R-6	R-8	R-10	R-20
Maximum lot coverage (%)	45-53	40-48	35-43	32-40	25-33
Maximum main building footprint (sq. ft.)	2,380-2,590	2,520-2,772	2,800-3,136	3,500-3,920	4,480-5,320
Minimum lot area (sq. ft.)	5,000	6,000	8,000	10,000	20,000
Minimum lot width (ft.)	50	60	70	80	100
Off-street parking (not on a cul-de-sac)	1 space per dwelling unit				

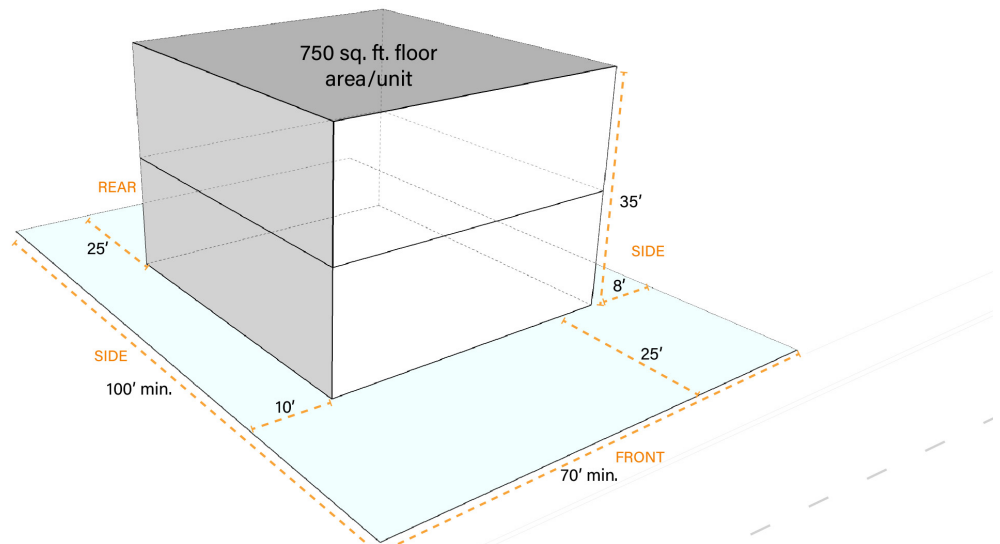
### OBSERVATIONS

The R-5, R-6, R-8, R-10, R-20 districts contain a total of 29,444 properties where single-family detached houses may be eligible for development by right. These zoning districts are consistent with the "Low" Residential (1-10 units per acre) designation on the GLUP. These zoning districts also permit accessory dwellings on properties with single-family detached houses. The zoning regulations require at least one off-street parking space per dwelling, and they prohibit lots less than 5,000 square feet in area and 50 feet in width. The minimum lot area requirement, combined with maximum lot coverage and main building footprint requirements, encourage construction of new homes that are much larger than the original single-family detached houses in these zoning districts.

# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

## STACKED DUPLEX

7,000 sq. ft.  
min. lot area



This diagram reflects the current Zoning Ordinance standards for this dwelling type where they are allowed. The standards presented in these diagrams do not reflect the conditions of existing dwellings, which in many cases were built before these standards were adopted.

## ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Regulation	R2-7	R-5*	R-6*
Maximum lot coverage (%)	56	56	56
Minimum lot area (sq. ft.)	7,000	8,700	8,700
Minimum lot width (ft.)	70	70 (use permit) 56 (site plan)	70 (use permit) 56 (site plan)
Off-street parking (not on a cul-de-sac)	1 space per dwelling unit		

\* By use permit or site plan only abutting RA, C, or M District or located on a principal or minor arterial street

## OBSERVATIONS

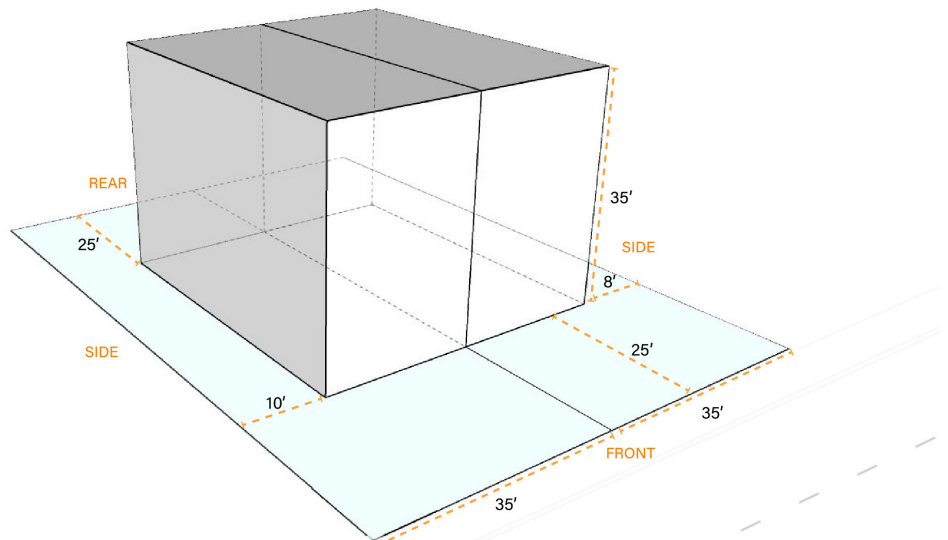
Stacked duplexes and side-by-side duplexes are closely linked in Arlington's Zoning Ordinance. To view observations related to zoning standards for both stacked and side-by-side duplexes, see the Side-by-side Duplex section on page 17.



# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

## SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX

3,500 sq. ft.  
min. lot area



*This diagram reflects the current Zoning Ordinance standards for this dwelling type where they are allowed. The standards presented in these diagrams do not reflect the conditions of existing dwellings, which in many cases were built before these standards were adopted.*

## ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Regulation	R2-7	R-5*	R-6*
Maximum lot coverage (%)	56	56	56
Minimum lot area (sq. ft.)	3,500	4,350	4,350
Minimum lot width (ft.)	35	35 (use permit) 28 (site plan)	35 (use permit) 28 (site plan)
Off-street parking (not on a cul-de-sac)	1 space per dwelling unit		

*\* By use permit or site plan only abutting RA, C, or M District or located on a principal or minor arterial street*

## OBSERVATIONS

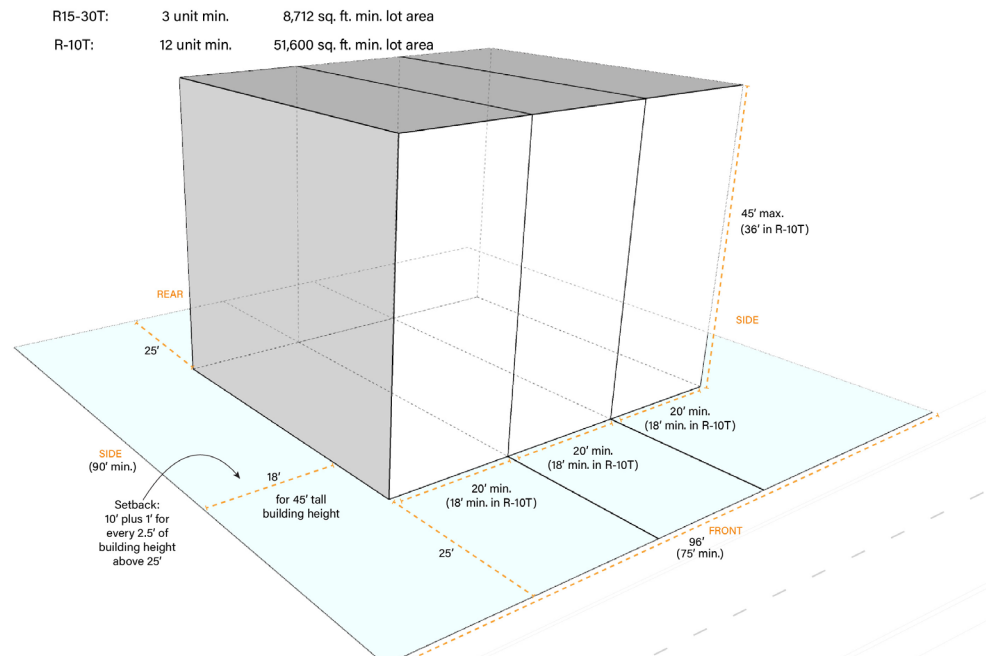
Stacked and side-by-side duplexes are permitted by right in the R2-7 district, which contains a total of 2,447 properties where they may be eligible for development. This district is consistent with the "Low" Residential (11-15 units per acre) designation on the GLUP. The R2-7 district prohibits lots less than 7,000 square feet in area and 70 feet in width, thus restricting new construction on existing lots that were originally platted with smaller dimensions. If lots were subdivided for new construction, the lot area and coverage requirements would result in construction likely larger than the original stock of stacked and side-by-side duplexes.

In the R-5 and R-6 districts, stacked and side-by-side duplexes are permitted by special exception via use permit or site plan approval by the County Board on sites located next to an RA, C, or M district or on a principal or minor arterial street. These districts are consistent with the "Low" Residential (1-10 units per acre) designation on the GLUP.

Recent zoning ordinance amendments in 2018 and 2020 have enabled additions and expansions to existing nonconforming two family dwellings in the R2-7 and RA districts (where both duplexes are also permitted by right). However, nonconforming stacked duplexes in the R-5 or R-6 districts are still unable to be improved (unless they are granted a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals).

# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING TOWNHOUSE

This diagram reflects the current Zoning Ordinance standards for this dwelling type where they are allowed. The standards presented in these diagrams do not reflect the conditions of existing dwellings, which in many cases were built before these standards were adopted.



## ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Regulation	R15-30T*	R-10T*	RA Districts
Minimum number of units	3	12	n/a
Maximum lot coverage (%)	56	56	56
Minimum site area (sq. ft.)	8,712	51,600	7,500
Minimum lot area per dwelling unit (sq. ft.)	2,904	by site plan	1,800 (RA14-26), 1,200 (RA8-18), 900 (RA6-15)
Minimum lot width per dwelling unit (ft.)	20	18	n/a
Off-street parking	2 ½ spaces per dwelling unit		

\* By special exception site plan only

## OBSERVATIONS

Townhouses are permitted in the R15-30T and R-10T districts by special exception via site plan approval by the County Board. These districts are consistent with the "Low" Residential (1-10 units per acre) and "Low" Residential (11-15 units per acre) designations on the GLUP, respectively. The R-10T district requires a minimum lot size of 51,600 square feet, at least 12 townhouses in a group, and permits townhouses to be taller than single-family detached houses and stacked and side-by-side duplexes. These regulations do not encourage opportunities to blend small groups of townhouses into existing neighborhoods. In addition, the zoning regulations for townhouses require 2 ½ parking spaces per townhouse, higher than the requirement for a single-family detached house due to a visitor parking requirement, resulting in significant space devoted to parking.

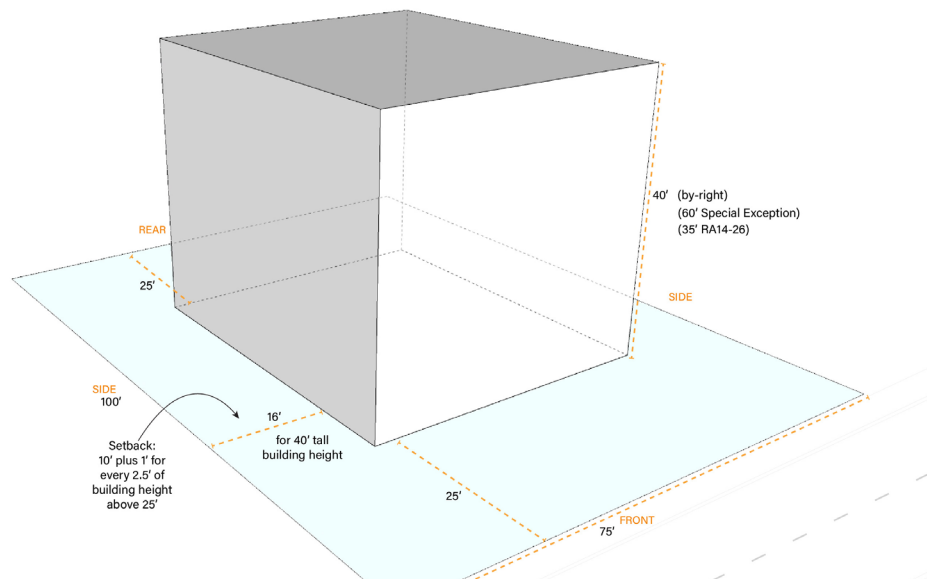
In the higher-density RA districts (RA14-26, RA8-18, and RA6-15), townhouses are permitted by right unless located in the Housing Conservation District (HCD); in the HCD, townhouses require site plan approval. These districts are consistent with the "Low-Medium" Residential and "Medium" Residential designations. In these areas envisioned for higher-density housing development (up to 72 units per acre for the "Medium" Residential designation), the opportunity for higher-density housing development translates into a high cost of land. As a result, these areas will not support missing middle townhouses, but rather large multifamily apartment buildings, or very large and expensive townhouses.

# ARLINGTON'S CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

## SMALL MULTIPLEX

7,500 sq. ft. min. lot area

*This diagram reflects the current Zoning Ordinance standards for this dwelling type where they are allowed. The standards presented in these diagrams do not reflect the conditions of existing dwellings, which in many cases were built before these standards were adopted.*



## ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Regulation	RA14-26	RA8-18
Maximum lot coverage (%)	56	56
Minimum site area (sq. ft.)	7,500	7,500
Minimum lot area per dwelling unit (sq. ft.)	1,800	1,200
Minimum lot width (ft.)	75	75
Off-street parking	1 ⅓ spaces per dwelling unit	

## OBSERVATIONS

Small multiplexes are permitted by right in RA14-26 and RA8-18, as well as the other two RA districts (RA7-16 and RA6-15). The RA14-26 and RA8-18 districts are consistent with the "Low-Medium" Residential designation on the GLUP. The zoning regulations for small multiplexes permit the same building height as single-family detached houses in the RA14-26 district, yet the setbacks are greater for the small multiplex. The regulations also prohibit small multiplexes from being developed on lots less than 7,500 square feet. The zoning regulations require 1 ⅓ parking spaces per dwelling unit, which is higher than the minimum requirement for a single-family detached house. Finally, opportunities for small multiplexes today are located in areas with a GLUP vision for 16-72 dwelling units per acre; however, high land values incentivize development of mid- and high-rise multifamily development or large, expensive townhouses.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What do you think are the impacts of current zoning regulations on middle housing?



*The Missing Middle Housing Study will explore how new housing types could help address Arlington's shortfall in housing supply and gaps in housing choices.*



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