



Community Lodgings Submits Request to Expand Affordable Housing in Alexandria's Arlandria-Chirilagua as neighborhood faces rent increases due to location near Amazon HQ2, Potomac Yard Metro

Project would double nonprofit Community Lodging's affordable housing offerings in Alexandria and its impact lifting families from instability to self-sufficiency

Alexandria, VA – March 7, 2022 – Community Lodgings submitted a stage 1 development concept plan this week to the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning to expand affordable housing in the Arlandria-Chirilagua neighborhood. The project focuses on redeveloping the Elbert Avenue Apartments, an aging complex of three three-story buildings built in the 1940s that currently provides 28 affordably priced apartments to individuals and families who live on limited incomes at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

After years of “band-aid fixes” to maintain the Elbert Avenue Apartments, the physical property has outlived its useful life after 80+ years of wear and tear. Community Lodgings is now looking to direct funds to redevelop the property and expand the affordable housing options to serve the increasing demands for affordable housing in Alexandria well into the future.

“The need for affordable housing in our region is well-established and increasingly urgent. The modernization and expansion of this property will help grow housing stock for moderate- to low-income households, reduce the economic burden of housing in this community, improve the quality of living for residents, and enable Community Lodgings to support the community by doing what we do best: provide housing stability for struggling individuals and families,” said Community Lodgings executive director Lynn Thomas.

Community Lodgings currently operates 45 residences across five affordable and transitional housing communities in Alexandria. The new property, currently proposed to include 96 apartments, would substantially expand Community Lodging's impact. The project provides a unique opportunity as Arlandria-Chirilagua faces challenges of rent increases and gentrification due to its location near Amazon HQ2 in Arlington and the upcoming Potomac Yard Metro. Arlandria-Chirilagua is a majority Latinx community with median household incomes below 50% of the DC-VA-MD metropolitan statistical area (MSA) Area Median Income (AMI). The historically underserved and underinvested community is one of the few Opportunity Zone census tracts in the City of Alexandria, pointing to the need for responsible investment in the neighborhood.

Preserving, enhancing, and investing in affordable housing in Alexandria:

The proposed new apartment building not only looks to provide modernized amenities to residents, but also to significantly expand the number of available affordable housing units, especially 2+ bedroom apartments to better serve families. The project will need to obtain a rezoning to the Residential Multifamily Zone (“RMF Zone”), which will be sought in the coming year with the Alexandria Planning Commission and City Council. If successful, construction could begin sometime in 2024.

“Since 1987, Community Lodgings has a proven track record of helping Alexandria's working families, low-income families and families coming out of homelessness to get back on their feet and on the road to self-sufficiency by providing housing stability and support services. We are pleased that Community Lodgings is continuing to invest in Alexandria and devise solutions to help address the affordable housing shortage in our region,” said Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson.

Expanding housing options, enhancing resident experience and community connections:

With the economic impacts of the pandemic coupled with skyrocketing real-estate and rental prices in Alexandria, a growing number of individuals and families lack the means to afford housing. Financing will be sought through the housing tax credit program and will be accessible for households at or below 60% of the Area Median Income; with 20% of the units specifically designated to be to households at or below 50% AMI.

The new project will offer enhanced facilities not only to its residents but also will be an important part of ongoing investments in and improvements to the Arlandia-Chirilagua area under the City of Alexandria's [Small Area Plan](#) for the neighborhood. The Community Lodgings project is envisioned to provide enhanced community-focused amenities such as outdoor recreational space, a new "family learning center" with computer workstations and homework rooms, and public meeting rooms for after-school programs and adult education, for example.

Community feedback opportunities:

The submission of the stage 1 development concept plan is the starting opportunity for not only the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning to provide input, but also for the community. Throughout this process, Community Lodgings invites feedback from local community stakeholders, civic associations, and neighborhood groups. It has already held an initial series of Q&A and listening sessions with both current residents of the Elbert Ave. Apartments and with neighbors in the surrounding community at large. Additional community input sessions will be held as the project progresses. Community Lodgings has created a page on its website where updates will be posted: <https://communitylodgings.org/programs/affordable-housing/elbert-redevelopment/>

"We look forward to partnering with our neighborhood stakeholders and with the City to increase the quality and number of affordable housing units for Alexandria's residents," said Community Lodgings' Lynn Thomas.

About Community Lodgings

Celebrating 35 years of impact in the local community, Community Lodgings lifts families from homelessness and instability to independence and self-sufficiency through its [affordable housing](#) and [transitional housing](#) options, as well as community outreach and [youth education programs](#). Learn more at www.communitylodgings.org.

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Photo of Elbert Ave. Apartments below, JPEG available upon request.

