



Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations

Helping Civic Organizations Remain Educated for 65 years

Post Office Box 9252

Virginia Beach, VA 23450-9252

www.vbccco.org

Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations Conversations with the City

Topic: Workforce Housing

Definition of Workforce Housing:

Workforce housing refers to housing that is affordable for middle-income earners who are essential to the local economy, such as teachers, nurses, police officers, and firefighters. These workers often earn too much to qualify for traditional affordable housing but still struggle to afford market-rate homes. Workforce housing typically serves households earning between 60% and 120% of the area median income (AMI). This housing is crucial for retaining a stable workforce in high-cost regions([City of Virginia Beach](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).

Why is Workforce Housing Important to Citizens and Residents?

Workforce housing is critical to supporting Virginia Beach's essential services. Many local workers, especially in education, healthcare, and public safety, find it increasingly difficult to afford housing close to their jobs. Rising housing costs have forced many of these workers to live farther from their workplaces, leading to long commutes, reduced quality of life, and higher transportation costs([City of Virginia Beach](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).

Additionally, the lack of workforce housing negatively affects employers' ability to attract and retain skilled workers, which can undermine the economic stability of the city. Addressing workforce housing needs can help ensure that the people who provide vital services can afford to live where they work, benefitting the entire community([WHRO](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).

Challenges/Concerns Related to Workforce Housing:

- High Housing Costs: The increasing cost of both homeownership and rental properties in Virginia Beach has made it difficult for middle-income workers to find affordable housing options([WHRO](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).
- Supply Shortages: While affordable housing options exist for low-income households, there is a gap in housing availability for workers who earn too much to qualify for assistance but cannot afford market-rate homes([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).



Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations

Helping Civic Organizations Remain Educated for 65 years

Post Office Box 9252

Virginia Beach, VA 23450-9252

www.vbccco.org

- **Zoning Barriers:** Many areas of Virginia Beach are restricted to single-family homes, which limits the ability to develop higher-density workforce housing. Zoning reforms are needed to enable more diverse housing options([VBCCO](#))([City of Virginia Beach](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).

What are Potential Solutions or Approaches to Workforce Housing?

1. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between the city and private developers to create workforce housing, with incentives such as tax credits or zoning benefits to make development financially viable([City of Virginia Beach](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).
2. **Support Multifamily Development in Designated Areas Without Adversely Affecting Single-Family Neighborhoods:** While preserving the integrity of established suburban neighborhoods with single-family homes, Virginia Beach can expand workforce housing in appropriate areas. These areas should be strategically located in places like underutilized commercial zones or near transportation hubs, where higher-density development would not disturb the character or quality of life in existing single-family home communities(Comp-Plan-2016-ref-hand...)(Comp-Plan-2016_policy-d...).

This approach supports workforce housing by focusing new development in areas designated for mixed-use or higher density, such as strategic growth areas (SGAs). These zones have already been identified as suitable for new housing and economic opportunities without threatening the suburban areas that many residents value for their tranquility and lifestyle . By concentrating development in these areas, the city can balance its housing needs while protecting the suburban and rural character of established neighborhoods .

3. **Inclusionary Zoning Policies:** Implement zoning policies that require a portion of new developments to include workforce housing units, offering incentives like density bonuses in exchange([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#)).
 4. **Workforce Housing Assistance Programs:** Create local housing assistance programs for middle-income earners, such as down payment assistance or rental subsidies, to help them afford homes in the community([HousingForward Virginia](#))([HousingForward Virginia](#))([City of Virginia Beach](#)).
 5. **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):** Focus on developing workforce housing near public transportation hubs, reducing commute times and making it easier for workers to live near their jobs([HousingForward Virginia](#))([VBCCO](#)).
-



Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations

Helping Civic Organizations Remain Educated for 65 years

Post Office Box 9252

Virginia Beach, VA 23450-9252

www.vbccco.org

What Would You Like to Know from City Representatives?

- What specific steps will the City take to expand workforce housing in the next five years?
- How will zoning laws be reformed to facilitate the development of higher-density workforce housing?
- Are there any financial incentives or programs available to help essential workers afford homes in Virginia Beach?

Contact Information:

www.vbccco.org | P.O. Box 9252, Virginia Beach, VA 23450-9252

Phone: 757-589-4893 | Email: James R. Boyles, President