

## Affordable Housing Smart-Growth Solutions

### Using density – not dollars – to increase affordable, transit-oriented apartments near busiest Metro station in D.C. region

**The opportunity:** An aging building near the busiest Metro station in the Washington, D.C., region.

**The challenge:** Increasing the number of affordable units on a site with limited density.

**The solution:** Transferring density from an existing renovated historic affordable community in the Metro corridor.

**The bonus:** Combining affordable apartments with market-rate condominiums creates self-sustaining model; project will need no Arlington County affordable housing funds.

AHC Inc. is developing a plan to renovate Key Boulevard, an aging affordable apartment community in Arlington's sought-after Rosslyn neighborhood. Built in the 1940s, the complex has aging heating systems, inefficient windows and appliances, no central air conditioning, and accessibility issues. With just 41 units, the complex offers a prime opportunity to create more affordable housing five blocks from the busiest Metro station in the D.C. region.

#### **AHC's goal**

AHC's goal is to increase the number of transit-oriented, green affordable living opportunities for Arlingtonians with low to moderate incomes. As Arlington has become more dense, affordable housing near Metro stations has become increasingly scarce. Key Boulevard offers a rare opportunity to double the number of affordable units on an existing site while turning an inefficient, aging structure into a more energy efficient and green living environment.



### **Creative use of density**

To increase the density on the site, AHC is proposing to transfer development rights from an existing affordable community in the Metro corridor that was renovated between 2005 and 2007. Because AHC's renovation maintained the Gates of Ballston's historic integrity with its low-rise garden-style ambiance, the property is under developed with available development rights.

Although transferring development rights is a common practice in the County, transferring rights from one neighborhood to another is an innovative approach to maximizing affordable opportunities in the transit corridor.

### **Mixed-income model saves dollars**

AHC has developed a model for creating affordable housing without using local municipal dollars. In 2007, AHC built twin nine-story buildings next to one another in Arlington's Courthouse neighborhood, also within walking distance of a Metro station. The Frederick provides 108 affordable apartments and The Park at Courthouse offers 98 market-rate condominiums. The market-rate units helped to finance the affordable property.

### **The bottom line**

By creatively using density and innovative financing models, AHC hopes to double the number of affordable apartments within walking distance of one of the area's busiest Metro stations – without using financial resources from Arlington County, which would allow those resources to fund additional affordable housing in the county.

### **What now**

AHC is working closely with Arlington County and the Rosslyn neighborhood to develop the Key Boulevard renovation concept. If you like the idea of using density – not dollars – to increase affordable housing in Arlington please let County Board members know. Email: [countyboard@arlingtonva.us](mailto:countyboard@arlingtonva.us).

### **About AHC Inc.**

AHC Inc. is a nonprofit developer of affordable housing based in Arlington, VA. Founded in 1975, AHC has developed 38 properties with 4,486 units in the mid-Atlantic region. AHC also provides homeownership services and onsite educational services to improve the quality of residents' lives. For more information, visit [www.ahcinc.org](http://www.ahcinc.org).