

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998 **http://www.mvcca.org**

Supervisor Dan Storck
Mount Vernon Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306

October 29, 2026

RE: MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA) Resolution on the Proposed Changes to the Accessory Living Unit Ordinance (MVCCA, E&R and P&Z Joint Resolution 2026-J01)

Dear Supervisor Storck,

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) has thoroughly reviewed the proposed amendments to the county's Accessory Living Unit (ALU) Ordinance. On behalf of our member associations, we are writing to formally convey our positions as detailed in the attached joint resolution.

In short, while the MVCCA supports the intentional use of ALUs to accommodate families, we strongly oppose the removal of critical protections regarding parking, owner-occupancy, lot size minimums, and structural status. We believe maintaining these existing requirements is vital to preventing neighborhood overcrowding, infrastructure strain, and enforcement challenges.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns with you or your staff further. Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration of the Mount Vernon community's feedback.

Respectfully,

Scott Taylor

Scott Taylor
Co-chair, MVCCA

cc: Walter Clarke, Fairfax County Planning Commissioner

Attachment: E&R and P&Z Joint Resolution 2026-J01

MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA)
Resolution on the Proposed Changes to the Accessory Living Unit Ordinance
(MVCCA, E&R and P&Z Joint Resolution 2026-J01)

WHEREAS, the Staff Report dated September 29, 2026 on the proposed Accessory Living Unit (ALU) Zoning Ordinance Amendment, scheduled for public hearing before the Planning Commission (PC) on October 29, 2026 and the Board of Supervisors (Board) on November 17, 2026, recommends changes that would:

- *streamline the process;*
- *remove unnecessary requirements;*
- *update the standards to align more closely with those of surrounding jurisdictions;*
- *remove the zoning administrative permit requirement for by-right approvals and the renewal, recordation, owner-occupancy, and additional parking space requirements;*
- *allow more lots to have a detached ALU by revising the current two-acre minimum lot size and special permit (SP) requirement for a detached ALU, allowing a detached ALU by right on a lot of 36,000 square feet or more, and with SP approval, with no minimum lot size, on a smaller lot.*

WHEREAS, the proposed text for the amendment includes changes to the Zoning Ordinance as recommended by staff (Option 1 where options are presented) as well as alternative options for consideration by the PC and Board. For instance, regarding the minimum lot size for a by-right detached ALU, the PC and Board may consider any size larger than the staff recommendation of 36,000 square feet (up to two acres) or smaller, which could include no lot size requirement. The PC and Board may also limit the SP process to lots of at least 15,000 square feet (within a range of 10,500 square feet to two acres).

WHEREAS, the proposal eliminates the additional on-site parking space currently required for an ALU, and the review of parking when an ALU is established, which is expected to further aggravate parking issues, including in areas where parking shortages already exist—so we do not see parking as an unnecessary requirement. The Staff Report notes that 50% of community survey respondents said the current requirement for an additional parking space should remain.

WHEREAS, the proposal eliminates the owner-occupancy requirement, allowing both the principal dwelling and the ALU to be occupied by renters, which is expected to shift ALU housing from supporting family and friends to rental and investment uses—again we do not see owner occupancy as an unnecessary requirement.

WHEREAS, the proposal would allow a detached, freestanding ALU by right—without a Special Permit or public hearing—on any lot of 36,000 square feet or more, which the Staff Report indicates is approximately 14 percent of the County's single-family detached dwellings (about five percent on lots of two acres or more plus an additional nine percent on lots of 36,000 square feet to two acres), and would eliminate any minimum lot size for a detached ALU

approved by Special Permit on smaller lots, where a public hearing would still be required. That Special Permit hearing is the only point at which neighbors of lots under 36,000 square feet can be heard, and the proposal removes the minimum lot size that currently limits where it applies. A project that can adversely impact a neighborhood could therefore be proposed on any single-family lot, and on larger lots neighbors would have no public hearing at which to raise concerns—again we do not see the elimination of the current two-acre minimum lot size and Special Permit hearing as unnecessary requirements.

WHEREAS, the existing requirements for ALUs have been implemented, according to the Staff Report, generally smoothly and in line with expected results, preserving property values and maintaining the quality of life and the proposed changes will reduce administrative responsibilities but may negatively impact the environment and quality of life.

WHEREAS, although the Staff Report states that the County's PLUS system can track ALUs through building permit applications, ALUs that need no new building permit would be reviewed only upon request or complaint and the Zoning Ordinance is enforced on a complaint basis, it is unclear that the county has identified and permitted existing ALUs and the proposed streamlining is unlikely to improve the situation in the absence of significant enforcement efforts.

WHEREAS, the MVCCA appreciates the need to create additional housing but believes that the county should be aggressively promoting mixed use development near Metro stations to provide additional housing, which significantly reduces the need for travel by single occupancy vehicles.

WHEREAS, more infill and impervious surfaces is expected to negatively impact existing communities, especially on smaller lots and in areas already experiencing stormwater problems.

WHEREAS, the provision for a Special Permit for ALUs on lots of 36,000 square feet and less with a hearing is important to so that neighbors can speak to proposals that may adversely impact their neighborhood. The county needs an effective way to notify neighbors of Special Permits and the opportunity to speak at a hearing, such as requiring the applicant to share the draft application with at least 6 neighbors that are close to the applicant's property and obtain their reaction of either support or opposition to the proposed ALU.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Therefore, be it resolved, that the MVCCA strongly opposes removing the following requirements from the existing ordinance:

- **Parking:** Parking requirements should not be eliminated as parking shortages will unnecessarily aggravate parking issues;
- **Owner-Occupancy:** We are supportive of ALUs, especially as part of an existing structure to accommodate aging parents or child that has completed school and is getting started but removing the requirement for owner occupancy is likely to shift the focus of the property owner to simply their commercial interest in making money;

- **Lot Size:** No minimum lot size for detached ALUs on lots of 36,000 square feet or more with a special permit and public hearing would seem to significantly increase the administrative burdens on the county staff and potentially allow ALUs on properties that can significantly negatively impact neighborhoods;
- **Structure Status:** ALUs within 10 feet of the primary structure are not considered to be separate structures, which would afford them as by-right status. Separate structures should not be counted as part of the existing structure as they will add to impervious surfaces and perhaps flooding;
- **Enforcement:** Enforcement is already likely lacking in many situations, since the Zoning Ordinance is enforced on a complaint basis, and the proposed changes will only make it harder on neighborhoods to resolve issues created by ALUs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MVCCA appreciates the existing requirements for ALUs, which are far better than the proposed changes to the ordinance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MVCCA requests that Fairfax County prioritize aggressive code enforcement of existing ALUs and focus regional affordable housing strategies within designated transit-oriented development corridors.

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the MVCCA believes that the proposed changes highlighted above will aggravate existing issues in neighborhoods and negatively impact the quality of life for residents. A focus must be placed on the development of housing, including affordable housing, near Metro stations to reduce infill, parking conflicts, and reduce traffic.

Approved by the MVCCA General Council on October 28, 2026