

Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA)

Resolution Regarding the Fairfax County Accessory Living Unit (ALU) Policy Proposal

(P&Z-2026-03)

WHEREAS, Fairfax County is considering a proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment to streamline the approval process for Accessory Living Units (ALUs) to align with broader countywide housing initiatives and attainable housing goals; and

WHEREAS, countywide public outreach and survey data indicate a strong community preference for “exploring zoning changes” (58%) rather than implementing mandatory, sweeping regulations; and

WHEREAS, a significant majority of residents expressed critical concerns regarding neighborhood stability, specifically citing impacts on street parking, localized traffic, stormwater runoff, environmental preservation, tree canopy loss, and overall neighborhood character; and

WHEREAS, the current county proposal emphasizes administrative streamlining—including eliminating land record recording requirements, re-evaluating the two acre minimum for detached units, and reconsidering setbacks and the 1,200-square-foot maximum cap—yet fails to provide explicit, enforceable regulatory language to guarantee that ALUs remain truly “subordinate” to the principal dwelling;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Mount Vernon Civic Association (MVCCA) adopts the following positions regarding the proposed ALU ordinance:

1. Establish Definitive Design Standards: The County must implement clear, measurable zoning and architectural standards for both attached and detached ALUs. This must include explicit limitations on height, massing, building footprint, roof pitch, facade materials, window placement, and overall lot coverage to prevent visual encroachment on neighboring properties.
2. Implement Lot-Size Proportionality: The ordinance must recognize that smaller residential lots lack the physical capacity to absorb the same structural and environmental impacts as larger parcels. The County should institute strict, lot-size-sensitive tiers to ensure that accessory units do not overwhelm the principal dwelling, crowd property lines, or compromise neighboring privacy.
3. Enforce Comprehensive Infrastructure and Neighborhood Protections: The County must establish rigorous mechanisms to evaluate and mitigate the cumulative impacts of ALUs on local infrastructure. Regulations must proactively safeguard neighborhoods by addressing off-street parking requirements, preventing unregulated short-term rentals, managing stormwater runoff, protecting mature tree canopies, and ensuring strict building code compliance to eliminate unsafe construction.

Approved by the MVCCA Membership 5-27-2026