

The [Alliance for Housing Solutions](#) is a nonprofit organization in Arlington that works to increase the supply of affordable housing in our area. AHS was founded in 2003 by civic leaders who were concerned that Arlington was becoming a place where only the affluent could afford to live.

AHS has a tradition of asking candidates running for the County Board to answer a set of questions related to affordable housing. We post candidate answers in full on our website and publicize them through local media and social media channels. Because we do not support individual political candidates, AHS does not evaluate or rate these responses.

Arlington County has called a Special Election (to be held on July 7, 2020) to fill the seat vacated by the tragic passing of Arlington County Board member Erik Gutshall. The candidates are Bob Cambridge, Susan Cunningham, and Takis Karantonis. The questions AHS provided to the candidates are:

1. Since adopting its Affordable Housing Master Plan in 2015, Arlington has only reached about half of its yearly goal of 600 new or preserved committed affordable rental units. Should Arlington be investing more funds to help meet this goal? If so, what funding sources should be used?
2. What zoning policies should the County use to help increase affordability?
3. What other policies would you prioritize to help prevent the displacement of low- and moderate-income residents from Arlington, especially during this time of crisis?

Each candidate’s responses to these questions are provided below in their entirety. For more information on the candidates please see <https://vote.arlingtonva.us/elections/>

Question 1: Since adopting its Affordable Housing Master Plan in 2015, Arlington has only reached about half of its yearly goal of 600 new or preserved committed affordable rental units. Should Arlington be investing more funds to help meet this goal? If so, what funding sources should be used?		
Bob Cambridge	Susan Cunningham	Takis Karantonis
Half of the goal says it all. The plan does not really meet the need and we are not even meeting the plan. And now we have to deal with the economic fallout of COVID-19. I was interested in underground construction in the 1970’s and planned to so build when a job offer that could not be declined moved me to California in 1979. We returned to Arlington in 1982 but we had sold the lot we were planning to build on. I still think that option should be appropriately considered. Underground housing costs less than above ground so you get more built for the same dollars. Underground housing costs less to cool and heat. At Terraset Elementary School in Fairfax County, heat generated by the students’ bodies must be vented from the building in winter. No	We have a national and regional housing crisis, not just in Arlington County. The federal government has fundamentally shifted away from subsidizing affordable housing, especially operating funds. In Arlington, land values and density have grown quickly, driving more new construction and less affordability, COVID-19 has brought urgent and long-lasting housing needs. Our first priority must be keeping our current residents housed during the crisis, through rent grants and emergency support that avoids crippling debt accumulation and future eviction. During COVID and beyond, we must continue to push for the Affordable Master Plan goals. In addition to seeking additional	I want to begin by affirming my commitment to the County’s Affordable Housing Master Plan, and the annual goal to add 600 new or preserve committed affordable rental units. Crafted with input from the community, it emphasizes the importance of collaboration among the public sector, housing services providers, the development community, and businesses to achieve our goals. AHIF is our revolving loan fund that provides gap financing for projects; leverages project dollars at a ratio of anywhere from 1:3 to 1:7, depending on the project; and is critical to our ability to deliver new units. Each year for the past several years, I have been the only candidate to advocate for more investment to help reach

<p>heating cost. Affordable? Certainly going in the right direction. This idea is not the only one and may not even be feasible. But the point is if the dollars are not doing the job we need to get more bang from each dollar. And we can. We just need to tap the creativity and insight of Arlington’s almost quarter million residents. They are a resource we have not begun to fully utilize.</p>	<p>government funding sources, we need to (1) drive additional private sector investment in affordable housing, and (2) preserve existing housing affordability (both rental and owned) for current residents. This could be through land grants, operating and maintenance loans, and master leasing of blocks of units in existing buildings, or other public-private partnerships.</p> <p>Finally, Arlington County must strengthen local collaboration between residents, government, business and non-profit partners to ensure we all, regardless of age or income, are welcome and thrive everywhere in Arlington. We must push ourselves to get beyond the legacy of racial and economic bias in low density housing and exclusionary zoning. Selective increased density along transit corridors can expand housing choice and community connection, enabling residents to age-in-place, rent as young adults, and welcome new arrivals -- all can provide opportunities to build equity and thrive.</p>	<p>this goal during budget testimony. As a Board member, I would find fresh sources to increase our funding of the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF). Contrary to what some may think, now is exactly the right time to step up our investment. Our AHIF is leveraged to bring additional funding to Arlington for each project we build, and spurring development is critical to our economic recovery. We must be ready to take advantage of potentially flagging markets and lower construction costs.</p> <p>I will also work with our State representatives to increase funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund and target Northern Virginia as a recipient of these funds.</p>
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Question 2: What zoning policies should the County use to help increase affordability?

Bob Cambridge	Susan Cunningham	Takis Karantonis
<p>Zoning to permit creative solutions. Dare I suggest such as the above? While more density can be seen by some as a negative factor, more density allows more parts of the county to be adequately serviced by our transportation system. There are limits to how much a transportation system can be subsidized. More ridership, less subsidy, and we all win. Above ground transport might also make sense. Much less expensive than underground and it possibly can be done with acceptable aesthetics. My tendency is not to provide all of the answers, but to listen more than talk. I get great ideas that way and at age 75 I do not even have to pretend they are my ideas. Giving credit where due primes the pump and we get more good ideas. The Arlington County Board really needs to better take advantage of its greatest resource, Arlington’s citizens.</p> <p>I have practiced since the 1990’s as a criminal defense attorney. [Attorney joke: I call what I do “practice” because I have not gotten it right yet.] My clients are more often than not fairly characterized as low- and moderate-income residents. And they</p>	<p>We have seen precipitous loss of economic diversity across the County as land prices have escalated rapidly and affordable rental units have declined and become more concentrated along Columbia Pike and in Buckingham. Ethnic diversity is spotty, perpetuated in part by exclusionary zoning that supported racial segregation early in Arlington’s development. We must strengthen local collaboration between residents, government, business and non-profit partners to ensure we all Arlingtonians are welcome and can thrive here.</p> <p>The goals of Housing Arlington consider various options for tackling this challenge such as land use and financial tools, institutional partnerships, county employee housing, Condominium Initiative, Affordable Housing Master Plan review. I support targeted, data-driven, financially-viable efforts to increase housing-type diversity and look forward to examining assumptions, data, and possible solutions during the Missing Middle Housing study. Wholesale zoning changes may not be the solution as recent studies by MIT and the London School of</p>	<p>First, I would look to more fully utilize some of the zoning we have put in place. For example, I will make use of the recent zoning amendment that provides increased density within allowable heights, to incentivize the creation of more onsite affordable units on the land being developed.</p> <p>I would examine and amend zoning to promote the co-location of uses so housing may be built with community centers, schools, libraries and other public facilities. With our limited land, it is critical we maximize co-location opportunities.</p> <p>We should move forward on well-planned Missing Middle pilot projects to test concepts and determine in which zoning categories they may be built. Diversity of housing forms – such as stacked flats, duplexes and triplexes – will increase the availability of housing.</p> <p>It is critically important to continue preserving the affordable units we already have. In some areas of the County, we have committed affordable units (CAFs) where the affordability period is close to</p>

<p>are frequently actually decent individuals, the criminal charges notwithstanding. Humans make mistakes, lots of mistakes. I definitely include myself in that analysis. But we are also capable of doing really neat stuff, particularly when the environment supports creativity.</p>	<p>Economics find that blanket upzoning creates more market speculation, increased land value, displacement and less affordability.</p> <p>I support targeted innovation pilots including accessory dwellings and limited, strategic efforts to increase housing diversity near retail and office corridors to improve business viability while enabling residents to age-in-place, rent as young adults, and welcome new arrivals. I encourage a comprehensive approach to preserving current affordability and choice, including rent grants and co-op programs that help lower-income neighbors stay in Arlington and build equity. Finally, I will prioritize diverse community engagement, focused pilots, and comprehensive cost-benefit analysis both proactively and retrospectively.</p>	<p>expiring. As a Board member, I would look to extend the definition of the Housing Conservation Districts (HCDs) across Arlington to include not just existing market rate units but committed affordable complexes as well, to ensure that they won't be torn down when the affordability period expires.</p> <p>I would encourage new policies that promote land banking and address the issues around the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) here in Arlington, to include a system for TDR banking or a certification process to make TDRs a viable option to fund housing development.</p>
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Question 3: What other policies would you prioritize to help prevent the displacement of low- and moderate-income residents from Arlington, especially during this time of crisis?

Bob Cambridge	Susan Cunningham	Takis Karantonis
<p>I agree that displacement of low-and moderate-income residents from Arlington is definitely a detriment. We need people who provide much needed services but we seem unwilling or unable to pay them what they would have to be paid to afford much of the current Arlington housing. And the affordable housing initiatives do not appear to come close to the demand. I do not pretend to have a ready answer, but I do have some ideas which, with a little help from interested citizens, might result in movement in the right direction. The need for more and better ideas was addressed above.</p> <p>There are five members of the Arlington County Board. How often have each of them made promises that were not kept after election? Sufficient affordable housing, transparency, schools that equal or exceed the results of neighboring jurisdictions? Failures here are not because Board members are bad or incompetent people. The biggest problem I see is that there are only five of them. All with a similar way of looking at things. Add County staff and you still have a very small percentage of the quarter million number representing county residents and a much larger number if you add individuals who work here. Those residents and visitors</p>	<p>I have worked on planning and sustainable design for private owners of affordable housing, as well as financing to refresh and reposition housing authority properties in other cities. I understand that it takes all kinds of solutions, cross-sector collaboration, and a regional, long-term approach. And, while new construction is sometimes most feasible, we should always prioritize reuse and preservation of existing affordable homes where possible.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 crisis and recovery, I will prioritize preventing evictions, ensuring rent and utility assistance, and strategic taxpayer assistance loans where needed for homeowners to manage cash flow when property taxes are due.</p> <p>Each time we fail to preserve existing affordable units we risk displacing our neighbors. I will work to reduce the costs for preserving existing stock, through accelerated permit review, building recommissioning support, and stormwater fee reduction for preservation of existing units. In addition, I will work with owners and communities to support infrastructure improvements,</p>	<p>Putting people first has been central to my life's work and this campaign, and housing and household stability is the top priority during and after this pandemic. It will take us a few years to recover fully from the job losses and massive economic downturn from this pandemic, and the County Board will need to take additional action to increase funding to programs and services related to eviction prevention, food distribution, and emergency assistance. The County should also increase support to job training and placement services. This is an appropriate and critically important role of local government at this time.</p> <p>We must immediately work with our State Delegation and the Governor to order an extension of the moratorium on evictions, and request that courts suspend all eviction related proceedings. Currently, these protections are set to expire on June 28th.</p> <p>We have not yet seen the extent of the economic fallout from this crisis, and the toll it is taking on Arlington households. Financial support from the County for key programs is critical. Arlington's housing grant program, which fills the rent gap for low income families should be increased to cover more families as they fall</p>

<p>are an idea factory, but we have not sufficiently developed and exploited that resource. Most people cannot spend all of their time contemplating the numerous problems confronting our County government. But they do often perceive problems and often even complain about said problems. We should not make them wait through a three-hour hearing, allow them to talk for two minutes, and then ignore what they said. Fixing that alone should provide significant benefits.</p>	<p>from stormwater management to trash cans, that improve livability and quality of life.</p>	<p>into the gap. In addition, our County's partnerships with non-profits like Arlington Thrive, AFAC, and others have served us well during this crisis, and have proven an ability to scale up as demands increase. I would continue to fund these groups from a variety of Federal, State and local sources as the need continues.</p>
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