

Policies for Housing Affordability in VA

How ADUs, RICZ, and YIGBY Can Unleash Housing in the Commonwealth



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)

ADUs are secondary units on lots that have a principal dwelling unit. ADUs offer a variety of benefits, both for housing affordability and for households with specific lifestyle preferences. ADUs provide a potential source of income for the homeowners who build them while they also generally rent for less than apartments in the same neighborhood. ADUs allow for intergenerational living. They are often housing for seniors at their adult children's homes, sometimes providing an opportunity for grandparents to care for their grandchildren.

3 Rules for ADU Legislation

There are three common pitfalls that hurt ADU laws. (1) Owner occupancy requirements can discourage homeowners from building them because if they decide to move, they will may not be able to profit from their investment. (2) Parking requirements can make it impossible to build ADUs in areas with limited space. (3) Requiring a public hearing to receive an ADU permit can turn off homeowners.



BENEFITS OF RICZ

Legalizing multifamily construction in commercial zones creates the opportunity for apartments to be built at sites that no longer make sense in their current use, such as dead malls or low-value commercial buildings with large parking spots that sit in prime locations. Beyond increasing housing supply and affordability, this type of reform can allow people to live near work. It can create opportunities to live where they can walk to patronize local businesses. It can also make more retail viable by increasing the number of people who live in mixed-use neighborhoods.

How to construct an RICZ bill

There are two essential components of residential in commercial zone bills. The first requiring local zoning rules to facilitate building types that make multifamily or townhouse construction feasible with reasonable allowance for three-story buildings and at least 60% lot coverage.

The second is to keep parking requirements from hindering growth by capping parking minimums to no more than one space per housing unit.



WHY YIGBY IS IMPORTANT

In Bryan, OH one pastor sought to fulfill his church's charitable mission by operating a shelter for homeless people in the church. However, Bryan officials shut down the shelter for violating the local zoning code. Yes In God's Backyard (YIGBY) laws can prevent this sort of situation by enabling religious institutions to help their communities through using their property for housing. Where YIGBY is allowed, housing on faith-owned land is often highly affordable because religious institutions typically offer the housing at discounted rates or even for free. Some of these religious institutions go even further to help families who are living on their property by offering daycare for children. This primarily benefits lower income citizens who are struggling to afford housing.

How to construct a YIGBY Bill

There are three essential components to YIGBY bills. The first is requiring local zoning rules to facilitate building types that make multifamily housing feasible with reasonable allowance for three-story buildings and at least 60% lot coverage. The second is to cap parking requirements to no more than one space per housing unit. The third is to legalize supportive housing and group homes.