

June 24, 2026 Recommendations for Rent Stabilization Review from Community Vision for Takoma

CVT celebrates the City's 46-year-old Rent Stabilization Law as vital to promoting a more just community and Takoma Park's racial and socio-economic diversity. Dozens of residents praised the law June 10th. And 400-plus residents have signed CVT's petition to protect and strengthen the law. The consultants' June update also confirms that our rent stabilization policy, limiting annual rent increases to no more than the rate of inflation, has been hugely successful in promoting affordability and stability for renters.

But we're concerned that the next phase of the Council's review may weaken the law, not strengthen it. We urge the Council to focus its review on these four top rental housing priorities, especially now, when so many renters are economically struggling and/or threatened as immigrants:

- 1. Protect Current Residents from Displacement.**
- 2. Preserve our stock of affordable housing for residents of very low to moderate means.**
- 3. Adopt immediately a racial equity lens for every remaining step of this review.**
- 4. Identify and improve rental housing that is deficient, or at risk of becoming so.**

To meet these priorities, we urge the Council to focus on the following areas that our Community can wholeheartedly rally behind:

Protect Current Residents from Displacement

Takoma Park's current residents made and sustain this community. Here are ways to strengthen our neighborhoods, instead of forcing current residents out.

a) **Continue to support vacancy control and limit rent increases to no more than inflation.** Our current law prevents rents from jumping to market rate the moment a unit turns over. That protects affordability and encourages landlords to keep good tenants.

b) Continue advocating for a State law to let local governments set rules for evictions for **good causes only**. We need a clean law that does not sacrifice vacancy control. No tenant should lose their home without reasonable cause.

c) **Review rent-stabilization policy holistically**, to include all housing policies that interact with it. For example, Maple Avenue’s recent upzoning and the generous new tax credits for new construction increase incentives to tear down and replace older buildings with more expensive housing. That’s likely to displace residents and reduce affordable housing. **Expanding the current 5-year exemption from rent stabilization for new construction would exacerbate that.**

d) **Review the fairness of permanent exemptions for certain housing types** – especially units in deed-restricted buildings that are themselves not deed-restricted or rent-stabilized.*[See notes at bottom]

e) **Do not weaken the law’s key accomplishments – affordability and stability.** It’s a bad idea to tinker with exemption periods, rent banking, or utility transfer policies without solid evidence that such changes would be the fairest way to address landlords’ cost concerns – and that they would not risk unpredictable and unmanageable rent increases for tenants! Focusing on whether the Fair Return Petition process is fair and easy to navigate is a much better idea for helping landlords recoup costs.

Preserve and Improve Quality for Existing Housing

Our older buildings are some of Takoma Park’s greatest assets, being quite affordable and often structurally sound. Investing in them – rather than tearing them down and replacing them with more expensive housing – is good for residents, good for the climate, and far less costly. To save them:

a) **Promote capital improvement financing.** Connect small landlords with new and existing resources, including the Housing Reserve, the County’s Green Bank, and State and local grants – such as the one on the Council’s June 24th agenda – so upgrades get funded without driving rents beyond tenants’ ability to pay.

b) **Get a clear picture of building quality.** A building-by-building review – available in a public database -- will show us where buildings are thriving and where we can target support.

c) **Make compliance work for everyone.** Start tracking “Troubled” and “At Risk” properties, as the County does. And let’s adapt [another successful County idea](#): Pause rent increases on “Troubled” and “At Risk” properties, both rent-stabilized and exempt, until violations are fixed.

Improve Transparency and City Processes

A simpler, clearer process is a win for landlords and tenants alike: It gets repairs done faster and helps everyone trust that the system is working. That means:

- a) Make improvements easier to start. **Offer small landlords up-front help**, including financial, technical, or just simpler cost accounting, so investing in a building is the obvious choice.
- b) **Invest in education and outreach.** Broad distribution of clear, friendly materials on rent stabilization regulations and processes would help both tenants and owners understand them and participate fully.

Address Data and Information Gaps

Let's measure what's working and build on it. That includes:

- a) **Track our housing inventory in a public database.** Establish a clear baseline and a shared housing vision to grow our community while keeping those who already call it home.
- b) **Gather and review rent data on the more than 300 non-subsidized units** in deed-restricted buildings and compare them to rent-stabilized and deed-restricted units.
- c) **Bring more voices into the conversation** and give them the information they need to participate: **Release the full landlord and tenant survey results so everyone is working from the same set of facts.** And whenever the City considers partnering with others to help renovate or develop sites, keep the entire process open, with tenants, homeowners, and all partners at the table early. Transparency includes selecting City partners in an open, broadly participatory way too.

In the context of the four priorities above, we also urge the Council to explore [social housing](#):

Let's look creatively at how Takoma Park can help grow the supply of genuinely affordable homes without displacement -- scoping a small, publicly financed rental pilot, with most units affordable for residents from very low to moderate incomes, and built on land the City or a non-profit or public partner already owns.

Thank you!

* NOTE: Below is City data, provided by HCD Director McNally, which indicates the number of individual units in deed-restricted buildings that are neither under the deeds nor under our Rent Stabilization Law. (If you subtract the number of restricted units from the number of total units for each building, you can derive the total citywide number of unrestricted units in all deed-restricted buildings) :

From HCD Director McNally: “Based on our current records, here is our list of Deed-Restricted Buildings”

Property Address	Total Units	Restricted Units	% Qualified
1001-1005 University Blvd	20	18	90%
1007 University Blvd	4	4	100%
108 / 110 Lee Avenue	25	14	56%
126 Lee Avenue	6	3	50%
128 Lee Avenue	6	3	50%
641 Houston Avenue	28	25	90%
666 Houston Avenue	46	23	50%
676 Houston Avenue	33	16	49%
7051 Carroll Avenue	187	187	100%
7101 New Hampshire Avenue	96	96	100%
7401 New Hampshire Avenue	216	108	50%
7513 Maple Avenue	45	39	87%
7520 Maple Avenue	101	72	72%
7610 Maple Avenue	36	28	78%
7620 Maple Avenue	185	183	99%
7667 Maple Avenue	125	105	84%
7777 Maple Avenue	135	125	93%
7901 Lockney Avenue	4	4	100%
8 Philadelphia Avenue	2	2	100%

<i>8316 Flower Avenue</i>	6	6	100%
<i>8508-8510 Flower Avenue</i>	21	17	81%
<i>8624-8626 Flower Avenue</i>	27	24	89%
Total	1,354	1,022	

Question: For those market-rate units in deed restricted buildings, are they all now either under the County's new rent-stabilization law or required to follow the County's voluntary guidelines, or are at least the ones in buildings that have a deed with the County required to follow either of those County limits, in terms of rent increases? Or are the owners totally free to raise rent whatever amount they think the market can bear? This is of direct interest to tenants in those buildings, and it's also of interest to the Council and others, in terms of discussing the issue of exemptions.

Answer from HCD Director McNally:

“Without knowing the exact language of the agreements of each of these buildings, the answer would be the there is nothing barring these units from having rent increases above the Voluntary Rent Guideline or Rent Stabilization. My understanding is that in practice these units receive rent increases in line with the rest of the building but that is not a requirement. This would be something that would be worth investigating further as a potential change to our policies. As part of the first Council Work Session RSG and City Staff will be looking for direction on policies to investigate further. “