

Attachment 5

From: J Scott Mathie [mailto:jmathie@mbaonline.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 3:53 PM
To: Anderson, Nancy M.; McKay, Benjamin R.; Yunker, Kenneth R.
Cc: Marne Stuck (mjs@gmar.ws); J Scott Mathie
Subject: MBA Housing Study Recommendations

Hi Nancy, Ken, and Ben –

Thank you for your work and diligence on SEWRPC's Regional Housing Study. I believe the Committee has had some beneficial discussions on a variety of issues impacting the availability and cost of housing in our region.

The Metropolitan Builders Association is committed to providing recommendations that address key issues impacting housing affordability. I believe as we transition the Committee's attention on recommendations, it will be important that we focus on fundamental issues that can realistically be achieved and our progress easily tracked.

I would like to suggest some key areas to focus the Study Committee's recommendations:

Understanding Municipal, Market & Demographic Conditions

- Evaluate Regional vs. National Demographic Trends (i.e. generational changes and demands)
- Economic market conditions of job creators (ie. Types/salary of jobs created, economic conditions, business cycle, and future growth)
- Public view of a municipality (i.e. Addressing perceptions/issues: schools, crime, and taxes)

Recommend that SEWRPC and UW-Ext. provide plan commissioner and board level training about demographics, economic market, and community perceptions (SWOT) that impact individual communities. This could be provided to individual communities or county by county.

Land Costs

- Seek increased densities for the purpose of reducing municipal infrastructure replacement and delivery costs.
- Basing density on employment available, jobs created, and demographics within sub-area.
- Identify marketable locations and zone for multifamily projects. Recognize the important role multifamily housing has in the housing cycle.

Recommend that municipalities apply a market and demographic assessment to zoning decisions – (1) considering what impact increasing housing densities would have on effectively delivering services and replacement costs, (2) address any jobs/housing imbalance through rezoning undeveloped areas to address issue.

Improving Land Conditions

- Redevelopment and environmentally challenged properties should not be further impacted by economic and employment conditions such as prevailing wage requirements. Mandated conditions further limit the viability and affordability of any site.
- Increasing incentives and other strategies to improve the desirability of contaminated and targeted redevelopment properties vs. greenfield properties.

Recommend financial incentives, liability protection, and elimination of additional arbitrary mandates (i.e. prevailing wage requirements) to promote the redevelopment of infill or other environmentally challenged properties.

Regulatory Impediments

- Regulatory impediments tend to artificially increase housing costs.
- Seek increased densities (housing and infrastructure), narrower street widths, limited impervious surfaces, flexibility on municipal setbacks, and elimination of strict architectural standards.
- Eliminate the collection of impact fees. The specific need for impact fees is no longer applicable to market conditions – lower housing demand and there is no longer an immediate need for the construction of municipal projects to keep up with new construction projects. Further, impact fees were based on needs assessments of municipal projects that were part of a 30 year planning horizon, which would be unlikely to be constructed.

Recommend municipalities reduce neighborhood street widths to less than 22', limit the use of sidewalks and other impervious surfaces, eliminate excessive and arbitrary municipal architectural standards (i.e. architectural details repeated on all 4 sides of the building), eliminate requirement on corner lots that treat street sides as front lot setbacks vs. side yard and front yard, and consider increasing housing densities or locating multifamily around retail centers and downtowns.

I would welcome the opportunity to share these concepts with the rest of the Study Committee. Please advise me when this discussion would be appropriate. Thank you.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Mathie

Sr. Director, Government Affairs

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