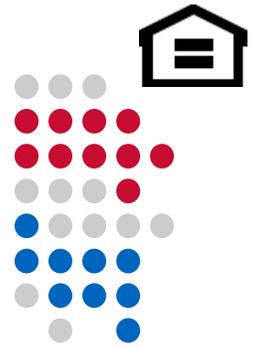




National Call to Action Alert



June 2008 Issue

Tucson Tackles Tough Issues

On a recent visit to the City of Tucson, Arizona the National Call to Action's (NCA) Co-Director, Bryant Applegate, met with a group of dedicated city officials who are determined to improve the city's regulatory environment to foster affordable housing development in their community. The meeting was conducted by the Honorable Nina J. Trasoff, the city's vice-mayor. Also in attendance were C.T. Revere, city manager, Emily Nottingham, director of community services, Ernie Duarte, the city's director of development services, and Phyllis Lim, the Tucson HUD field office director.

The best practices meeting was marked by several interesting ways local city leaders in Tucson are collaborating to create real solutions to housing issues. One such notable practice that particularly struck Mr. Applegate was the way in which city officials worked together to examine the broad range of regulations and codes that have an impact on the cost of housing. He stated that, "it is obvious Tucson is taking its commitment to the NCA very seriously and there is no doubt that great things will result from their efforts. The city's officials recognize that it is a difficult effort but one worth taking in order to help produce more workforce housing in their great community."



Mr. Applegate addressing the Arizona Housing Commission in Tucson.
Photo Courtesy of Victor Lim

Regulatory reforms already implemented include a prohibition against field inspectors overruling the reviewer's approvals and the elimination of redundant and outdated processes. Under consideration for are such items as revising the city's land use requirements, using parallel reviews to speed up the review process, assigning one staff representative to help guide proposed projects through the approval process, and improving coordination with outside agencies.

It is the NCA's hope that other cities will learn from the positive effort that Tucson is undertaking. It is the cornerstone principle of the National Call to Action that local issues need local solutions. The Department of Housing and Urban Development will continue to work with communities across the nation in promoting reform efforts. Krista Mills, HUD's field office director for the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the co-director of the NCA, often states that, "governments at all levels must work together to solve our housing issues, and by doing so, more Americans will find a place to call home."

June 2008



A. Bryant Applegate
Co-Director



Krista Mills
Co-Director

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Jacksonville, Florida

In April 2006, Jacksonville's City Council President appointed the City Council Task Force on Affordable and Workforce Housing to identify and make recommendations to remove or reduce regulatory barriers to the development of workforce housing.

The task force's first step was to define affordable housing as one in which "a homeowner or renter should pay 30% or less of their gross monthly income on housing costs." The city also defined a workforce person or household as having a total annual gross household income of 100% to 140% of Duval County's area median income, adjusted for family size.

Important task force's recommendations include:

- Waive city approval on developments that have already achieved tax-exempt bond transactions with AAA credit enhancement. This step can reduce permitting time by up to eight weeks;
- Implement density bonuses to developments meeting workforce housing unit criteria;
- Promote in-fill developments through improving infrastructure;
- Target workforce housing developments in areas where individuals have easy access to mass transit and transportation corridors;
- Expedite the permitting process for workforce housing developments, if the developer signs a Land Use Restriction Agreement to ensure the units remain affordable;
- Waive or defer permitting fees for workforce housing units;
- Develop an inventory of city-owned land which may be appropriate for affordable housing;
- Allow the transfer of concurrency reservations from one property to another, if it is clearly for new affordable housing units;
- Adjust zoning codes to reduce setbacks, increase building height abilities, and use of nonconforming infill lots for development; and
- Encourage inclusionary communities through incentives, not mandates.

To read Jacksonville's task force recommendations visit: www.huduser.org/rbc/nca/report9.html

Montgomery County, Maryland

As part of its commitment to the NCA, the Montgomery County Affordable Housing Task Force's report identifies issues and makes recommendations to meet the affordable housing needs of the county. Montgomery County has nearly one million residents and covers 500 square miles of land. The county's diverse housing challenges arise from balancing the demands of a suburban community located near Washington DC with maintaining its rich and productive agricultural history. Significant issues identified by the task force include:

- Add "Increasing Affordable Housing" as an objective to all future master plans;
- Reduce parking requirements for housing developments;
- Permit accessory apartments without requiring special exception permits;
- Expedite regulatory reviews;
- Develop a community support educational campaign aimed at improving the public image of affordable housing;
- Encourage businesses to support affordable housing initiatives; and
- Create a housing program to help county employees purchase homes within the county.

To read Montgomery's entire report visit: www.huduser.org/rbc/nca/report_montgomery.html

HUD recently held a roundtable on how to do safe and affordable clean-up of brownfields for affordable housing development. Key points made during the forum were:

- Urban brownfields represent an important component of sound sustainable urban development and redevelopment;
- Reliable and cost-effective strategies exist to spur redevelopment;
- Many brownfield sites are better suited for sustainable community development than are greenfield locations in outlying areas; and
- FHA's multi-family cleanup policies may actually inhibit the development of affordable housing on urban brownfield sites.

NCA Reports

To view submitted NCA participant reports visit

www.huduser.org/rbc/nca/reports.html

Hawaii's NCA Task Force Moving Forward

Hawaii's twenty-one member National Call to Action task force, created pursuant to Governor Linda Lingle's commitment to HUD's National Call to Action (NCA), has been meeting on a regular basis for nearly one year and is in the process of developing a number of recommendations for changes to Hawaii's development laws and regulations. The non-partisan group is clearly committed to working together to implement regulatory reform. All five of Hawaii's mayors are members of this important task force. The task force has compiled a considerable amount of data and hopes to have a set of recommendations developed and ready to present to state assembly members for the next legislative session.

Housing Hawaii, a non-profit organization created to promote the development of affordable housing throughout the state, is assisting the task force. Bryant Applegate, co-director of the NCA, addressed Housing Hawaii's national conference last October and met with the Governor's task force at its inaugural meeting. In introducing its platform statements, Housing Hawaii declared:

"Although funding is the starting point for any increase in our affordable housing supply, Housing Hawaii agrees that other actions must occur simultaneously to effectuate true, systemic change, which will ultimately manifest in the form of more affordable housing units."

Simply stated, Hawaii's leadership in government and in the private sector recognizes that in addition to funding sources, it takes creativity, planning, and people with diverse backgrounds and interests working together to solve its affordable housing problem. Hawaii's NCA Task force is to be commended for its commitment to the National Call to Action.

Watch for future news alerts providing updates on Hawaii's progress in regulatory reform.

The State of Rhode Island

Rhode Island's Housing Resources Commission (HRC) was created in 1998 to assist in the planning and coordination of the state's efforts to provide affordable housing. The HRC's Office of Policy and Operations, is responsible for drafting strategies to address regulatory barriers impeding affordable housing development.

Key activities the HRC is currently working on include:

- Developing model ordinances focusing on inclusionary zoning and mixed-use zoning to share with communities throughout the state. A consortium of eight communities in the South County Area are helping to develop these model ordinances.
- Working with local communities to ensure proper monitoring and counting of low and moderate income units that received local, state, and federal subsidies.

Local governments in Rhode Island commonly address regulatory barriers by:

- Codification of the community's comprehensive permit process;
- Increasing areas allowing multi-family zoning;
- Establishing special development districts;
- Utilizing mixed-use or village-center zoning; and
- Broadening accessory unit zoning

To learn more about the State of Rhode Islands efforts to reduce regulatory barriers to workforce housing visit the Housing Resources Commission website at www.hrc.ri.gov, or contact Simon Kue at skue@doa.ri.gov, or call 401-222-4897.

HUD Report on Impact Fees Published

Impact Fees are becoming an increasingly popular way to finance community facilities (schools, roads, etc.) generated by new residential development. These fees, if not done properly, can be a barrier to and a burden on affordable housing development, particularly in growing communities. HUD has recently published the report, "*Impact Fees: Equity and Housing Affordability—A Guidebook for Practitioners*," to address this issue. The report offers sound, technical information on how to develop impact fees that reflect the actual capital costs that different kinds of housing impose. This approach assures that affordable housing developers pay only their fair share and are not overcharged. The report is available at www.huduser.org, and will soon be available in regular hard-copy form.

2008 Western Regional Housing Summit

August 25—26, 2008

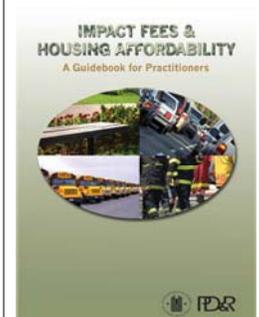
All NCA participants are invited to this two day conference centered around HUD's National Call to Action.

It will be an exciting event for public officials and public sector employees responsible for affordable housing programs.

To be held at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in University City, CA

In July, NCA is planning to meet with

- San Diego, CA
- Santa Fe, NM



Robert L. Woodson, Jr. Award Profile: Oxnard, California

Each edition of the *National Call to Action Alert* will feature a profile on one of the Robert L. Woodson Award recipients. The Woodson Award, established in 2005 by HUD's America's Affordable Communities Initiative, honors those communities that have expanded affordable housing opportunities by reducing regulatory barriers. In this case, Oxnard, California demonstrates another example of how a community can overcome unique challenges to create affordable housing within their neighborhoods. We encourage those that have submitted reports or are preparing reports to apply for the Woodson Award.

Oxnard, California

Oxnard is a city north of Los Angeles located in a fast growing county with significant growth management controls. With restrictions on land supply and growing market demand, prices in the metropolitan area are rising at a very rapid rate. Between 1999 and 2004, the median price of a home had rose from \$169,000 to \$445,000. In response to these intense market pressures, Oxnard is undertaking a series of significant broad-based regulatory reforms to reduce costs and increase supply of affordable units. As a result, hundreds of affordable units have become available to low and middle income residents.

Oxnard, California is a 2005 recipient of the Robert L. Woodson Award.

Specific Actions Taken:

- Oxnard provides a Density Bonus and Incentive Program to developers of affordable housing-offering a maximum 25 percent bonus to developers who dedicate 10 percent of their units for lower income families.
- The city reduces or entirely waives most development fees (water, wastewater, drainage, traffic, parks) for infill housing without income conditions.
- For developers who devote 10 percent of their units for very low-income families (or 20 percent for low-income households), the city defers or waives most development fees.
- In addition, the city provides major waivers or adjustments to development standards where significant numbers of lower income housing are to be built.
- The city offers "special use" permits if substantial land use improvements result (with variances for density, area, yard, height, parking, and related requirements).
- Local leaders provide expedited development approvals by administrative staff if projects are consistent with the city's plans.

About the National Call to Action Alert

This newsletter is prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The newsletter is intended to provide assistance and support to members of HUD's National Call to Action, an initiative designed to enlist states, local communities, and affordable housing advocacy groups across the nation to commit to producing affordable housing through public participation in a national network for regulatory reform. To learn more about the National Call to Action campaign visit: <http://www.huduser.org/rbc/nca/index.html>



Apply Now

Recipients of the Robert L. Woodson, Jr., Award are selected from nominated states, counties, cities, towns, townships, and other municipalities that have significantly reduced regulatory barriers to the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families.

In selecting award winners, the review team considers these five factors: Nature of the regulatory reform, Impact, Transferability, Partnership, and Innovative approaches.

To learn more about the Woodson Award or to download a nomination application at www.hud.gov/initiatives/woodson/award.cfm



To receive the Alert newsletter send your contact information, including email, to nca@newportpartnersllc.com.