

**Affordable Housing Roundtable**  
**Sub-Group Discussion**

**June 22, 2005**

**Attendees:** Bob Bushkoff, Mark Ingraio, John Shooshan, John Milliken, Stanley Taylor, Charlie Rinker, Brian Coulter, Jeff Sherman, Susan Retz, Doug Peterson, Jay Fisette, Ken Aughenbaugh, Ron Carlee, Steve MacIsaac, Susan Bell

The meeting opened with a review of the handouts (agenda, items from 6/16 small groups, revised draft components of a “housing proffer”). The group then offered comments on components of the formula. See attached version of housing proffer, as modified by John Shooshan and others.

One attendee noted that the compensation should be based on FAR—ie. the dollar value of the ground, not the value of units. There is precedent for this approach in the “C-O Rosslyn” district.

Size of units is a factor in this matter. The Housing Commission wants family-sized units. This affects on vs. off-site locations.

Using GFA is “cleaner” than units since you don’t get into the variations of the number of bedrooms, whether there is a den, etc.

Does % of GFA mean a number of units or a value of GFA (determined based on cost to build by agreement—or through 3 appraisers)? Do you transfer these units off-site or use the value to buy off-site units?

The formula should be above by-right. What is the by-right baseline in each district? In some cases the by-right might be very difficult to calculate in certain districts – especially in mixed use districts.

Ron Carlee then summarized the proposed approach of the first small group—a sliding scale or % of affordable housing that would increase as you approached the maximum allowed under the GLUP designation. The % would be known and would be above by-right, or the existing site plan.

One attendee indicated that they favor the progressive approach, including a % increase for density above the GLUP. Another asked about the impact of bonus, and asked how height would be treated.

The group then moved to the issue of on vs. off-site units. One participant noted that in today’s market, off-site units made sense. On-site units could be provided in instances of density above the GLUP. Another noted that with commercial projects you have no choice but to go off-site; this also makes sense for condo projects. He favors providing

funds. Funding raises the issue of actually getting the units. The process is too long and makes competition for units tough.

One of the attendees commented on the revised components of the formula, noting 5%, 60% AMI, 30 years. The County needs to expand what is considered “off-site”.

Preservation of existing units is key. Look at County maps—Ft. Myer Heights, Buckingham units not part of Gates. Should the formula include greater cost if far off-site?

Pockets of units are a bad idea. Developers can’t underutilize sites.

The County has given up units due to public pressure—how can we deal with that?

Should developers be able to “bank” density credits by participating in an affordable housing project now for density that would be given to them in a future site plan?

If a site plan is approved as a rental project and then converts to condo prior to final Certificate of Occupancy, then the developer should pay the difference to the County.

The group then summarized key points—off-site units are strongly preferred in a condo project; if off-site, the preference is for nearby in the Corridor, then elsewhere in the County; preservation of existing stock is key.

Could incentives be created for in-Corridor units? What are alternative incentives? Getting units on-line is key. What about a higher % outside the Corridor?

The bonus methodology is a different discussion.

One member noted that the other subcommittee discussed using the 60% of AMI affordability level as the benchmark against which any higher affordability level units (workforce housing) or very low income units would be measured.

Should by-right include what is already built on a site in cases where that is more than what current by-right zoning would allow?

It was noted that on commercial projects, monetary contributions are probably the only logical way to proceed.

Discussion of whether collaboration between non-profit and for profit developers made sense in all cases – several developers noted potential problems with that approach.

Draft Components of a  
“Housing Proffer”

Concept: Create a calculable formula which would become the basis of a “housing proffer” on site plan projects. Satisfying the housing proffer, like satisfying other proffers (such as utility undergrounding), would be part of attaining approval of a project under the existing GLUP.

Formulate the Requirement

1. The required amount of affordable housing will be calculated as an area equal to \_\_\_% (say 5%) of the increased density (measured in square feet) determined as the difference between the density currently on the site [or allowed by-right under the current zoning] and the density obtained through the site plan process. General agreement with all but one of our group agreeing to use a fixed % of (say) 5%, regardless of how large the increase is over the “by right” density, but it was pointed out that we need to clarify exactly what the existing zoning really is.

- Alternative to using s.f. (units, bedrooms, etc.)

While there was no consensus on how to apply G.F.A., a preference expressed here was to use the value of the increase in the G.F.A. in terms of the land value versus the value of the finished unit to attempt to make the process more predictable and to eliminate the debate over the value of the finished product.

The value could be based on fair market value at the time of the site plan regardless when the property was acquired.

- Basics of % (over “by right” density/ total project density, etc.)

Agreed.

Other: There was a much discussion given to monetizing the entire contribution as would be done with commercial properties once again in an attempt to make the process more predictable and not try to tie two or more projects together etc.

Denominate the Requirement

2. Affordable housing is to be defined as housing which can be rented by a family of [number] making 60% of the area median income (published “tax credit” rules would be used for family-size, annual escalations, etc.).

Agreed

3. The affordable housing could be located either on or off site (within a Neighborhood/metro corridor).

Agreed but also expanded to include the entire County to maximize the number of units that could be produced. There was a discussion about perhaps including some incentives to create affordable housing in the Metro Corridor versus the entire County (or some disincentives not to provide this in the Metro Corridor.)

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Comment [AC1]: John, I'm not comfortable that enough people were explicit on this point. The most vocal had a strong preference, but I'm not sure it is really a consensus.

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4. The term of the committed affordable housing would be equal to 30 years.

-Equivalencies:

i.e. ½ of requirement @ 50% of area median income and ½ @80% of area median income is equal to total @60% of area median income The 60% guideline would be used as the base for calculating the benefit and become the point of departure in either direction based on policy objectives.

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Agreed

Phase In

5. This policy might be phased in over a 2-3 year period to address projects

Currently in planning.

Not discussed

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Clarification

6. Any discussion relating to bonus density/additional affordable housing will be

Considered (as they historically were) only related to density approved in excess

of

the GLUP

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Note: This was not discussed during our meeting but in our meeting of June 16, there was some confusion as to whether any "Bonus Density" was in excess of the GLUP or the zoning?

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