



Las Vegas Mayor
Oscar B. Goodman

Las Vegas, Nevada

Record-breaking appreciation in land value, construction costs and housing prices have led to a short supply of affordable and workforce housing in Las Vegas. Given the impact on the city and throughout Southern Nevada, Mayor Oscar B. Goodman has city staff using innovative ways to help remove affordable housing impediments. The city created an internal taskforce that identified impediments to the development of affordable housing and have already begun implementing strategies including:

- The city receives surplus land from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for future affordable housing developments. The city passes the land to affordable housing developers through an RFP at below market rates.
- Prior to transferring the land, the city makes any necessary changes to land entitlements (i.e., zoning, general plan amendments) to compliment the RFP. This reduces expenses, otherwise transferred to an affordable housing developer.
- The city has modified its grant funding application cycle to better accommodate the affordable housing developer who needs to layer funding sources. The city now allows for funding applications to be reviewed and rewarded throughout the year.

Through the Neighborhood Services Department, the city of Las Vegas has created a variety of affordable housing programs, including:

- Homeownership for Educators Program – In a partnership with the Clark County School District (CCSD), the city funds a program to assist teachers with the high cost of housing.
- Community Land Trust (CLT) – Through long-term land leases the CLT sells homes to qualified home buyers. Homeowners can build equity but the home remains affordable for the next buyer through an equity sharing agreement with the CLT.
- Community Partners Investment Program (CPIP) – Acquires vacant land in existing neighborhoods for affordable housing development and to serve as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization efforts.

For more information on Las Vegas' efforts contact: Stephen Harsin at sharsin@lasvegasnevada.gov or (702) 299-2317.



Tacoma Mayor
Bill Baarsma

Tacoma, Washington

At the direction of Mayor Bill Baarsma, a task force of citizens and city staff was organized to reduce and eliminate barriers to affordable housing and identify incentives that would help retain and create affordable housing opportunities. In October 2007, the task force presented its findings and recommendations to the Neighborhoods and Housing Committee, chaired by the mayor. The 15 recommendations included: encouraging mixed-income housing developments; providing additional subsidies for well-designed, safe developments; exploring guidelines regarding densities and dispersals; reducing parking requirements; offering financial incentives to affordable housing developers, especially mixed-income development; streamlining the permitting process; and reducing the cost of permits. The Neighborhoods and Housing Committee currently has these recommendations under review.

The committee is now working with, fellow NCA member, Pierce County, Washington to develop ideas can be replicated and implement in Tacoma.

For more information on Tacoma's efforts contact: Richard Teasley at teasley@cityoftacoma.org or (253) 591-5238.

Morristown, Tennessee

The City of Morristown has begun a multi-year program entitled the Morristown Affordable Housing Initiative (MAHI) as part of its commitment to the NCA. The objective of the initiative is to identify and mitigate local regulatory barriers that increase the cost or prevent the construction of affordable housing. Common regulatory barriers include zoning and subdivision regulation mandating the installation of sidewalks, and underground utilities in new subdivisions for middle and low income markets.

With financial help from the local Knoxville HUD field office, city officials are addressing the residential permitting process and code enforcement programs. This summer, the city plans to be online with a new permit and project-tracking website that will allow developers to request permits, schedule inspections, and check progress on particular development sites without having to travel to city hall. The web-based permitting program will aid in improving timely communications between city departments by eliminating the need for meetings; by facilitating scheduling between developers and inspectors; and by providing a one-time, one-stop application for building permits ultimately saving time and money to reduce the overall costs of building new affordable homes.

This second phase of the MAHI program is focused on improving the quality of and access to affordable housing. The goal of the program is to improve the local housing stock by making homes more durable, energy efficient, safe and accessible. This phase will also help eliminate and improve deteriorated housing and enhance the city's ability to monitor and enforce adherence to codes and fair housing practices.

Now that the MAHI is being implemented, the mayor's task force is shifting focus toward identifying specific locations for workforce housing developments, evaluating financial incentive programs for affordable housing developers, and evaluating development standards and codes that impede workforce housing.

For more information please contact the City of Morristown Department of Community Development and Planning at (423) 581-0100.

Questions From The Field

Q. Does a task force have to consist of a certain core group of citizens?

A. No, not at all. We recognize that a task force can consist of an in-house committee, an existing housing task force, or appointed citizen committee. Further, the task force can be led by city staff, an elected official, or a community organization, or any combination of these. To learn more about task force development visit:
<http://www.huduser.org/rbc/nca/doc/HUDsGuideToCreatingTaskForce.pdf>

Q. Does the report have to be in a certain format?

A. No, HUD recognizes that each state and local government is different and depending on the type of task force, its assignments, and the issues involved, the report can take different forms. Often the final recommendations prepared by the task force can suffice.

If you have any questions we are happy to provide guidance, support and suggestions. You can contact either: Bryant Applegate at A.Bryant.Applegate@hud.gov or Krista Mills at krista.mills@hud.gov.

Plans are underway for two conferences in 2008!

A National Call to Action conference to be held in late summer in Los Angeles, CA.

A Best Practices Conference to be held in Washington, DC this fall.

Look for more details in the June newsletter!

In the coming weeks, the NCA will be meeting with:

- Pima County, Arizona Board of Supervisors;
- City of Phoenix, Arizona;
- State of Arizona Housing Commission;
- City of Tucson, Arizona;
- Kansas City, Missouri; and
- City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Robert L. Woodson, Jr. Award Profile: Grand Forks, North Dakota

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, Grand Forks, North Dakota 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.

Grand Forks, North Dakota

In 1997, devastating floods destroyed more than 800 homes in Grand Forks. Since then, the city has undertaken an aggressive rebuilding program focused on affordable housing. Local leaders recognized there is no single solution and created a "tool box" of incentives to stimulate the construction of affordable homes including an affordable housing "infill" program and the establishment of "affordable housing districts." In exchange for special concessions on tax assessments and land standards, developers in these areas agree to build higher density, smaller entry-level homes. In the years prior to these efforts, only 14 affordable units were built in the entire city. Since 2002, of the 106 homes built in the affordable housing districts, over 57 percent meet affordable housing target prices.

Specific Actions Taken:

- Grand Forks waived a required 50 percent developer's contribution for infrastructure.
- Local tax authorities deferred special assessments imposed on buyers of affordable housing.
- City officials granted a two-year property tax exemption for the first \$75,000 of a home's assessed value.
- Likewise, the city granted a three-year property tax exemption for increased values resulting from rehabilitation.
- Grand Forks reduced special assessment rates.
- The city relaxed land development requirements (i.e. narrower road widths) and reduced right of ways.
- To encourage more development of affordable housing, local leaders reduced previous lot size requirements.
- Developers seeking zoning variances now find a more flexible, relaxed application process.

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



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