



July 29, 2014

Denver City Council
1437 Bannock St., Rm. 451
Denver, CO 80202

Members of the Council:

Enterprise Community Partners is a national non-profit organization with expertise in affordable-housing finance and policy with many years of experience in Denver. Much of our work over the past decade has focused on enhancing the region's transit investment by co-locating affordable housing and community facilities in station areas whose housing costs have rapidly increased.

Closely aligned with our mission, Enterprise worked diligently with Councilwoman Kniech as she led stakeholder engagement regarding her proposal to strengthen the City's inclusionary-housing ordinance. By applying different per-unit subsidies based on a combination of neighborhood demographics and transit proximity, the proposal thoughtfully advances the City's commitment to geographic and economic diversity and considerately prepares for Denver's ongoing and equitable growth.

Enterprise commends Economic Planning Systems for testing the proposal across development types and neighborhoods. The agency has helped us as a stakeholder committee to refine the proposal to one that will support and incent developers to build in neighborhoods with fleeting affordability and in greatest need of workforce housing. As an advocate for myriad housing options, Enterprise is optimistic that these changes will result in a flexible but consistent program in a creative suite of affordable and workforce housing tools intended to expand the City's overall effort to address our dire housing needs.

Thank you in advance for your support.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melinda Pollack".

Melinda Pollack
Vice President, Transit-Oriented Development
Enterprise Community Partners



Date: August 5, 2014

To: Ms. Robin Kniech, Denver Councilwoman At-Large
From: Ismael Guerrero, Executive Director 

Re: Support for proposed IHO Amendments

Dear Councilwoman Kniech:

The Denver Housing Authority (DHA) appreciates and supports your many efforts to retain and improve the City of Denver Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. As a member of the IHO Task Force, I appreciate the approach and the detailed information that has been exchanged at the stakeholder meetings. DHA is also a member of the Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NDC), which has also participated actively in the meetings. NDC is comprised of 12 Denver-based nonprofits providing a variety of housing counseling and economic development activities. NDC has not had an opportunity to vote on the proposed draft ordinance; however, members have reviewed the amendments and expressed their support. We expect at the next meeting we will vote in favor of supporting the proposed improvements to the IHO.

DHA believes that the amendments proposed in the draft ordinance will result in a more effective tool to address the City's growing affordable housing needs. We specifically support the following major amendments to the current IHO because we expect these will result in more consistent production of affordable units in high opportunity neighborhoods with the greatest need for additional affordable housing.

I. DHA supports the concept of a tiered system for calculating both the onsite MPDU subsidy and the Cash In Lieu amounts for various statistical neighborhoods. We think that because development costs are different in various neighborhoods, reflecting the differences in submarkets will provide a more realistic and market driven system for the IHO policies. We are comfortable with future revisions in the actual amounts as long as the tiered system remains in place in the revised Ordinance.

II. DHA agrees with the approach of defining statistical neighborhoods as High, Average, or Low need, for purposes of establishing tiers for the MPDU reimbursements and the Contribution Alternative Payments. The IHO revision should reflect the reality that development costs will be different in different neighborhoods.

III. DHA supports the additional flexibility emphasized in the Alternative satisfaction language. We believe that this language will encourage market rate developers to work with experienced affordable housing developers to identify alternative development options that will lead to creation of more diverse unit types to meet the continuum of affordable housing needs in Denver.

We believe these items are crucial for a more a useful ordinance that will be simpler for developers to work within, while at the same time provide more accountability and flexibility in utilizing a program that is critical for addressing the City's affordable housing shortfall. DHA looks forward to continuing to work with your office and the Office of Economic Development to participate in any additional discussion and evaluation of the IHO as well as broader City housing policy.