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HOME BUILDERS
ASSOCIATION
—of—
METRO DENVER®

August 1, 2024

City of Aurora
Jeannine Rustad
Director, Planning and Development Services
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, CO 80012

Dear Ms. Rustad:

I am writing to share our recommendations in response to the Aurora Housing Analysis Round Table's request for feedback from the residential construction industry as the City evaluates its current Uniform Development Ordinance (UDO) and considers updates to its housing priorities and processes.

As the largest HBA in Colorado, the HBA of Metro Denver represents over 550 homebuilders, developers, remodelers, architects, mortgage lenders, title companies, subcontractors, suppliers, and service providers in the eight metro-area counties we serve.

In Aurora, HBA Metro Denver represents over 20 different developers and builders with over nearly 1,000 permits just this year.

First, we would like to express our appreciation to the members of this roundtable and the dedicated staff within the City's Building and Development Services Departments for making the welfare of the home building industry a priority. As you are undoubtedly aware, significant time, energy and capital is always expended in our industry long before ground is broken, a foundation is poured, or a home is built within a new development. Your invitation to work collaboratively together to improve the City's building environment is admirable and we look forward to doing our part toward continuing to make Aurora one of the best places in Colorado to build a home.

In order to ensure our industry is broadly represented throughout this process, the HBA of Metro Denver reached out to all of our builder members in Aurora for their initial input. While the below recommendations should not be considered a final list of recommendations, it does provide inclusive feedback from all of our builders to date and represents the collective voice of our industry.

The HBA of Metro Denver's recommendations are as follows:

1. RECOMMENDATION: Amend Section 146.4.2.3.A.3 Amount and Distribution of Small Residential Lots so that Alternatively Loaded Two-Family(Duplex) Units do not count against the maximum permitted number of Small Residential Lots.

This section of the UDO currently reads that single family attached (townhome) units do not count against the maximum permitted number of small lots thereby not limiting the number of townhomes. Unfortunately, there are a limited number of townhomes being constructed due to the Construction Defects Reform Act passed in 2001 which applies to any building with 3 or more units. The increased risk of litigation along with the increased cost of construction insurance has many builders opting out. The highest density product not impacted by the Construction Defects Reform Act is a Two-Family Home (Duplex) and Aurora is restricting the number of these homes that can be built. The effect of this provision in the UDO is to limit the lowest price-point product readily available on the market, almost every builder has a duplex product.

The UDO has other provisions that will ensure that a community is not exclusively developed with two-family units. Section 146.4.2.3.A requires a maximum of 60% of any single product type along with a required product mix for any master plan utilizing small lots. In addition, the number of duplex lots would be restricted by the maximum density allowances in the R1 and R2 zone districts.

Duplex homes are more desirable than townhomes in that they have only one shared wall and they have smaller footprints which often times mimic the look of a large single-family home creating a more attractive neighborhood.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Amend Section 146-4.2.3.E.1.b.- Motor Courts to permit two-family dwelling units within a motor court. No more than 8 two-family dwelling units may be located on a motor court.

This amendment would provide an alternative configuration for front-loaded two-family homes. The result would be fewer garage doors on the street along with fewer driveway cuts allowing for additional curbside landscape, both of which greatly enhance the aesthetic of the streetscape.

3. RECOMMENDATION: Amend the Neighborhood Park requirements for high density multi-family developments.

The neighborhood park requirement for residential development per the PROS manual is 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents. For a multi-family development on a 20-acre parcel with 400 units (20 du/ac) this equates to 3 acres or 15% of the site. This requirement greatly impacts a developer's ability to develop multi-family housing, especially since amenities such as pools are not permitted to be included in neighborhood parks.

4. RECOMMENDATION: Remove Section 146-4.5.3.B.1 – Access and Connectivity – Local Destinations.

This section requires that each lot may be accessed by travelling over no more than two (2) local streets after departing from an arterial or collector street. The result of this requirement is to limit creativity and design of neighborhoods. An example is that a local street cannot terminate into a park or other amenity because it forces an additional turn to circumvent the amenity.

5. RECOMMENDATION: Reduce the masonry requirements for townhomes and multi-family buildings in Table 146-4.8-6.

Masonry is the most expensive exterior material. The requirement for 50% of the exterior façade to include masonry for single family attached units (townhomes) greatly increases the cost of a townhome. In a market where few builders are opting construct townhomes, the goal should be to reduce costs to the greatest extent possible to reduce the price for home buyers. There are many good examples of architectural exteriors with limited or no masonry or that would meet any quality standards of the City.

The HBA of Metro Denver looks forward to our continued participation in the roundtable process and appreciate the City's request for feedback. Please feel free to follow up if you have any questions or additional clarification is needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Ted Leighty
Chief Executive Officer
Home Builders Association of Metro Denver

Cc: Steve Timms, Planning Supervisor