Affordable Housing Incentives SmartCode Module

Prepared by Munsun Park, Sandy Sorlien and Emily Talen

Exclusionary, discriminatory, and unnecessary regulations constitute formidable barriers to affordable housing, raising costs by 20% to 35% in some communities.

Jack Kemp

SMARTCODE ANNOTATED

These annotations are advisory only. The SmartCode itself appears only on the right side of each spread.

The Affordable Housing Incentives Module is regulatory. It is written with "shall" language to be inserted into the Base Code with little or no modification.

The extent to which this content may be implemented is subject to state law and local political support. If the municipality is unable to mandate these standards, they may be changed to "should" language, especially where "shall" appears in colored text, or included in a separate set of design guidelines.

1.X   AFFORDABLE HOUSING INCENTIVES

See also the notes for the Incentives Module, subsections 1.X.1a, g & h. Other incentives may be added particular to the local situation. For example, if there are oversized lots in an area where the community supports adding affordable housing, a subdivision incentive may be possible, whereby a property owner can create a substandard lot if it is dedicated to a deed-restricted affordable unit.

Municipalities may want to specify a percentage of affordable housing after which the incentives would apply.

It is important to design affordable units so that there is no discernable outward difference between them and nearby market rate units.

For more detailed policy provisions, see the Affordable Housing Policy Guide at www.transect.org.

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL TO ALL PLANS

1.X   AFFORDABLE HOUSING INCENTIVES

1.X.1   To encourage the provision of Affordable Housing, the Legislative Body grants the following incentives:

a. Applications containing Affordable Housing that meets this Code shall be processed administratively by the CRC. Others shall be processed by Variance.

b. Applications containing Affordable Housing shall be processed with priority over others, including those with earlier filing dates, providing that other applications are not pushed past their deadlines.

c. Highest priority for processing and for approval shall be given to applications involving partnership with a community land trust or other non-profit organization responsible for ensuring the long-term retention of the Affordable Housing.

d. The municipality shall waive or reduce review fees for applications containing Affordable Housing.

e. The municipality may increase Density for projects containing Affordable Housing.

f. The municipality may waive or reduce parking requirements for Affordable Housing units located within a quarter mile of a transit stop.

g. The municipality shall provide a property tax exemption for Affordable Housing units meeting established criteria.