



June 14, 2016

RE: Agenda Item #43 - potential code change for Chapter 20A "Fair Housing," source of income for vouchers

Dear Mayor Rawlings and Dallas City Councilmembers:

The Real Estate Council and the Apartment Association of Great Dallas have a long history of supporting affordable housing solutions that are non-discriminatory and fair to all Dallas residents and citizens. We are also mindful of unforeseen issues from complex policies that could result in decreased development throughout the city. For these reasons, we strongly encourage the Dallas City Council to table consideration of Agenda Item #43 at the June 15th meeting. We hope you will allow our industry and your own governing body the time to better understand the full ramifications of this policy so we can all better evaluate its effectiveness as part of the larger, ongoing discussions surrounding affordable housing.

Our concern with adopting either of the proposed ordinances is that Section 8 rent alone is not high enough in some cases to justify the costs of construction; land costs and construction costs for high-opportunity-area projects are too high. We recommend considering altering the way Section 8 works, such as allowing the rents to adjust based on the type of construction (high rise vs. wrap vs. podium vs. surface parked) and/or taking into account the year of construction – in addition to using zip codes.

In addition to revisiting the formula for how rent is determined for Section 8 housing, we would like for the Dallas City Council to consider our recommendations for alternative funding sources to help mitigate the impact of these kinds of policies. Without an understanding of how the proposed ordinances in agenda item #43 will impact our community in the context of the larger picture, we could be creating an unintended barrier to increasing affordable housing options for the city of Dallas, which is the exact opposite of what we are all hoping to accomplish. For these reasons, we think it is premature to adopt this agenda item.

We do not support housing discrimination in any form. We support finding solutions to increase affordable housing options by doing it in a way that does not kill future development in the city of Dallas and thereby prevent any affordable housing relief to the Dallas residents who need it most. Let's continue to work together to pass fair housing and affordable housing policies that will accomplish these shared goals.

Sincerely,

Linda McMahon
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