

Memorandum

To: Mayor Jerry Abramson

Subject: A Progressive Housing Policy for Metro Louisville

From:

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Most members of the community share the common vision of hoping to see Louisville emerge as a world class cosmopolitan city over the next 25 years. Cornerstone 2020 is a good start at putting our best foot forward to get us partially there, using a grassroots, bottom-up model of planning. However, if Louisville is to become a vibrant, integrated, and equitable place to call home, there must be major coordinated efforts concentrated in the area of housing.

A Progressive Housing Policy for Metro Louisville

1. Institute an urban growth boundary to curb suburban development and stimulate infill re-development
2. Include a team of interdisciplinary academic experts from across many subjects on all boards, commissions, and studies leading to recommendations for future changes, as they are privy to contemporary practices and literatures in their fields of specialization
3. Remove I-64 from downtown Louisville and open the right-of-way for high density residential development to the west of the CBD
4. Inclusionary Zoning or Mixed Income Developments
 - a. Maximize public investment by leveraging the investment with matching private dollars
 - b. Makes "affordability" a requirement alongside market rate units
 - c. Ensures diverse, mixed income neighborhoods which prevents economic and social stratification
 - d. Provides lower income earners with an opportunity to obtain more efficient, newly constructed or rehabbed living structures

5. Environmental sustainability
 - a. Initiate changes in zoning and planning laws that make construction of eco-friendly designs legal
 - b. Provide tax incentives to stimulate investment and develop a trend toward switching to off-grid power sources (solar panels, photovoltaic cells, etc...)
 - c. Develop a public education campaign to promote earth-friendly housing designs, inform citizens of sustainable living technologies, and to paint a picture of the future of housing
 - d. Require all contractors and builders to be approved and licensed by a state board of licensure, ensuring:
 - i. environmental/green architectural structures are the next wave in housing and commercial development
 - ii. builders become educated about the impacts of suburban sprawl on the environment, public health, and society and are given progressive new strategies to counter the trend
 - iii. they are taking advantage of opportunities to utilize recycled materials, which also stimulates the creation of new markets

6. Creation of "Alternative Models" of housing to alleviate anticipated effects caused by the gentrification of neighborhoods in the urban core, ensuring vibrant "mixed income" structures prevail, and that all people have a right inherent in their citizenship to equitably make a "place" or home for themselves in the city regardless of their income level
 - a. Cooperative Housing
 - b. Land Trusts
 - c. The "Down-Payment" Plan – *This is an experimental concept I have been contemplating for a couple of months, but later realized it sounds similar to "rent-to-buy" state housing...*
 1. Government via an external management agency (non-profit/CHDO) using public housing and subsidized housing funds to develop cooperative, multi-family housing
 2. Housing units are rented to tenants
 3. Tenants pay a portion into a general maintenance and insurance fund, the rest is directed into a mandatory "savings account"
 4. After the end of a set period of time (5 years, 7 years, etc...), the money in the required "savings" goes toward a down payment that is matched by the city government allowing the tenant to afford purchasing a home

5. The third-party non-profit management agency can be more responsive and accountable than government because of the contractually-based relationship
 6. Establish a residential requirement to ensure the on-site property manager is a resident and has a stake in the well-being of the development
7. Making Homelessness Illegal Unless it's a Personal Choice
- a. No one shall legally be allowed to exist in a state of homelessness when actively seeking help with regards to obtaining housing
 - b. Eminent Domain
 - i. The city shall exercise eminent domain on housing left vacant and not listed for sale when emergency housing is needed.
 - ii. Housing taken under eminent domain shall not be turned over to the rightful owner until the temporary resident returns to the housing market or finds alternative placement in government subsidized or public housing.
 - iii. Owners of vacant housing shall be notified, if they can be located, by mail within 90 days prior to the property being listed on the "eligible" list for emergency housing accommodations.
 - iv. The property owner shall be notified by mail 30 days prior to the property being placed on the "eligible" list that housing officials will force entry into the home for inspection, inventory, damage repair, and to turn on services.
 - v. Any expense required to rehab or mitigate the property shall be repaid to the city, either through cash repayment, bank financing, or as a low income option financed in the form of a soft second by the city.
 - vi. Property owners have the right to prevent the city from exercising its right of eminent domain by:
 1. placing the vacant housing up for sale
 2. providing proof that the property is inhabited (owner occupied, rented, etc...).
 - c. On under-utilized tracts of public property that are reasonably sized, various forms of low-cost shelters shall be constructed that are sufficient for:
 - i. providing shelter to human beings during bad weather
 - ii. include a restroom
 - iii. provide a sink with running water
 - iv. and are equipped with a solar panel to power one electrical outlet

- v. These structures shall be maintained by a "housekeeping" staff under Metro Parks
- 8. Make real estate wholesaling and predatory lending practices illegal
- 9. Set forth plans to develop an adequate housing market for the elderly and disabled
 - a. Institute creative housing plans such as those set up in Houston
 - i. Shared Housing
 - ii. Congregate Housing
 - iii. Sale Lease Back Options
 - b. Concentrate new developments on strategically located infill sites that are in close proximity to services, transportation, and volunteer opportunities
 - c. Develop a low-interest soft second loan program to support financing of necessary architectural modifications
- 10. Allow "in-law apartments" city-wide to help current homeowners offset the cost of upkeep on existing structures, provide lower cost rental options, stimulate rehabilitation of historic and blighted neighborhoods, and foster a sense of "community"
 - a. Carriage houses
 - b. Basement apartments
 - c. Attic apartments
 - d. Garage apartments
 - e. New construction of on-site tenant living quarters