



City of Austin MEMORANDUM

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

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Date: August 6, 2014

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Betsy Spencer, Director
Neighborhood Housing & Community Development

Subject: S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ Certification Consideration for the Songhai Westgate Multi-family Project

This memorandum serves to provide background information on a proposed agenda item scheduled for the Austin City Council meeting in this month – August 2014. NHCD will be requesting S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ certification for the Songhai Westgate Multi-family project.

As you know, certification for the City of Austin's S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ program is administered by Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) Office. The S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ Policy and Guidelines require Council approval for certification under the program when a site plan has been approved for a "House Bill (HB) 1704 exemption." HB 1704, passed by the Texas Legislature in 1999 and codified in Chapter 245 of the Texas Local Government Code, allows a development to proceed under the development rules that were in effect at the time the original site plan was submitted. In this case, the Songhai at Westgate project would be subject to Land Development Code rules that were in effect in 1985. The 1985 regulations allow increased impervious cover, exemption from the requirement to provide on-site water quality controls, and the project would not be required to meet the current Tree Ordinance standards.

NHCD staff required the applicant to propose a water quality plan and other environmental concessions to the Environmental Officer for review and approval in order to be considered for eligibility under the S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ program. The applicant worked with Chuck Lesniak, the Environmental Officer, to achieve an acceptable water quality plan and has worked with the City Arborist to address tree preservation issues. Mr. Lesniak presented and recommended this project to the Environmental Board on June 18, 2014. The Environmental Board approved staff recommendations.

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In addition to the increased environmental benefits negotiated with the applicant, the project will provide the following affordability benefits: 20 percent of the total units (29 units) will be affordable to households with annual incomes at or below 60 percent of the Median Family Income for the Austin area for a period of 40 years. The project will also meet all other S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ guidelines which include Green Building construction and 10 percent of the units will be accessible. The estimated fee waivers for the project are \$106,450.

NHCD will execute a restrictive covenant with the applicant to secure the terms of the affordability, as well as the conditions agreed to by the applicant and the Environmental Officer. On August 28th, staff will be recommending this project for City Council approval to move forward with the S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ certification.

Please contact Javier Delgado at 512-974-3180; or Regina Copic at 512-974-3182, if you have any questions.

cc: Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager
Chuck Lesniak, Environmental Officer
Regina Copic, Real Estate & Development Manager
Javier Delgado, Project Coordinator