



NEWSLETTER

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WHO WE ARE

Welcome Home is a nonprofit coalition of individuals, businesses and organizations committed to proactively making meaningful changes and improvements in the public policy arena that allow for significant growth in the starter housing market for families, first-time home buyers and future Nebraskans.



OUR APPROACH

- Developing and improving leadership with state and local elected officials.
- Communicating with elected officials regarding the needs and challenges of the market.
- Proactively introducing legislation at the state and local level to encourage the development of starter homes.

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA OMAHA



RESEARCH

Welcome Home has partnered with the University of Nebraska at Omaha to replicate the study conducted by the [National Association of Home Builders](#). That study found that regulations imposed by all levels of government account for 23.8% of the current average sales price of a new single-family home nationally.

This [study](#) examined the cost of government regulation imposed during construction of new single-family homes in the Omaha metro area. Researchers found that regulatory costs account locally for an estimated 32.8% of total construction costs.

Nebraska Examiner's Cindy Gonzalez featured an [article](#) outlining Welcome Home and their study, and found the average price of newly constructed home in Omaha shot up to over \$500,000.



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MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

Bill would mandate affordable housing in SIDs

The Legislature's Urban Affairs Committee heard testimony Jan. 24 on a bill that would update state law relating to sanitary and improvement district regulations when an SID is located just outside the corporate boundaries of a municipality, known as a city's extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction, or ETJ.

LB246, introduced by Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney, would require an SID located within a city's ETJ to comply with the comprehensive development plan, affordable housing action plan, municipal zoning regulations and any other reasonable planning requirements established by the municipality.

Welcome Home officially opposed this legislation. President Jason Thiellen, testified at the hearing on behalf of Welcome Home.

Requiring SIDs to abide by a city's affordable housing action plan, which currently is undefined in state law, would affect the overall cost of a home for buyers, Thiellen said.

"In our opinion, undefined regulations create uncertainty," Thiellen told the committee. "Creating uncertainty in our marketplace, particularly as it relates to housing, just increases the cost and the unaffordability of housing."



ZONING CHANGES

Welcome Home encourages City of Omaha to Streamline PUD Process

Welcome Home has submitted a formal request to have the City of Omaha planning department modify the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning code to allow for waivers to the subdivision and zoning code to be approved through the entitlement process and not be required to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) if supported by staff.

The standard by which waivers can be approved at the ZBA board is regulated to proving a “hardship” that does not fall within an “economical” reason for why the waiver is needed. While the developer and staff often are in agreement that the waivers are acceptable and needed for the project, there is no way for staff to approve them without the ZBA. This is a cumbersome process that adds additional time and is subject to another public hearing and board approval adding additional time.

During this time of higher development costs in the area that are resulting in higher housing costs, we believe that modifying the PUD code to allow requested waivers to subdivision and zoning codes that can be approved by staff, Planning Board and City Council will help encourage more developers to bring unique design, denser housing products and overall, a better project to the City of Omaha.



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