

Housing Task Force Phase 2  
Local Issues Subtask  
Preliminary Recommendations  
November 9, 2022

Objective: Identify problems and formulate recommendations and best practices for local agencies and political leaders.

Note: These recommendations need to be vetted and more carefully specified yet.

Recommendation #1:

Consistent and timely measurement of housing outcomes and regulatory throughput.

It is hard to manage what is not measured, or measured consistently. Even data that are measured (e.g., building permits) reflect interpretations and definitions (e.g., of ADU's) that are different between different cities or the same city at different point in time.

There are data on the regulatory process – e.g., applications, applications under review, review outcomes and duration of review – that could and should be measured if improvements in the process is desired.

Recommendation #2:

Identify/streamline/reduce the list of decisions that must be brought before city councils for votes.

Recommendation #3:

Formulate a list of practices that local jurisdictions could implement to reduce the costs of development and increase the supply of affordable housing, including:

- reducing parking minimums
- transitioning to form-based zoning that allows mixing of building types
- relaxing height restrictions
- reducing the number of dimensional requirements for buildings
- emphasizing development in areas with high transit capacity
- reducing the number of variances needed

#### Recommendation #4:

Explore ways to increase the capacity of regulatory agencies to consider, process and review permits, including

- the adoption of “self-certification” programs that allow those who have been trained and certified to conduct reviews to make decisions and certify project compliance.
- elimination of duplicate reviews at multiple agencies

#### Recommendation #5: Community land trust

Explore ways for communities to implement Community Land Trusts. The trusts can be for residential single and multi-family, commercial and agricultural.

Many communities around Montana have them in place with no two land trusts alike. Additionally, there are Community Land Trusts across the nation giving many templates for communities to review.

Explore how to foster Public/Private coalitions

#### Closing comment:

Some problems that have been identified we do not yet have recommendations to address. These include:

- The perceived unresponsiveness of agencies (remote work)
- The practice of producing studies instead of actions