



## Memorandum

To: City Council

From: Andy Agle, Director, Community Services Department

RE: Proposed FY 2021-22 Annual Automatic Adjustment for the Affordable Housing Unit Base Fee

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This memo summarizes the results of applying the annual adjustment calculation methodology adopted by the City to establish the Affordable Housing Unit Base Fee pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 9.64.070.B ("the affordable housing unit base fee shall be adjusted [annually] based on changes in constructions costs and land costs."). This methodology was approved by the Santa Monica City Council at a public hearing on June 13, 2006, based on the recommendation of HR&A in a letter to City staff dated April 24, 2006. A copy of the April 24, 2006 letter is included for reference as Attachment A hereto. The City Council approved the last annual increase for FY 2019-20 using this methodology when it adopted Resolution No. 11191 (CCS) on August 13, 2019. For 2020, the annual increase in construction costs was offset by decreasing land costs, resulting in zero adjustments for the Affordable Housing Unit Base Fee and Affordable Housing Unit Development Cost.

For the construction cost inflation component of the calculation approach, the Engineering News Record's (ENR) Construction Cost Index specific to the Los Angeles metro area is utilized, because it is updated monthly and is readily available via the Internet by subscription. The applicable index change was 0.6 percent measured between March 2021 (the current budget adoption year) and March 2020, as compared with a 0.8 percent change between March 2020 and March 2019.

Although there is no comparable index for inflation in land cost, the City-adopted

method uses the weighted average annual change in median condominium sale prices, by ZIP Code, as a proxy measure for land cost changes measured for the immediately preceding calendar year. Based on our analysis of 2020 sales data compiled by Dataquick from Los Angeles County Assessor records, the weighted average change for the City during 2020 was negative 10.5 percent, as compared with a 2.4 percent decrease during 2019.

The relative balance between land cost inflation (based on changes in median condo prices) and construction cost inflation (based on a construction cost index) continues to be based on development cost data for the two most recently completed and/or under-construction multi-family affordable developments assisted by the City. For the current analysis, the two City-assisted projects are 1819 Pico Boulevard and 1834-1848 14th Street. The City-adopted calculation approach uses a simple average of the ratio between land purchase price and the sum of land cost and hard construction cost to derive the land value percentage (29.2%). The inverse of the land value percentage is the construction cost share (70.8%).

Table 1, on the following page, presents the annual adjustment calculation establishing the Affordable Housing Unit Base Fee for FY 2021-22. It shows that a weighted average inflation index using this City Council-approved approach results in a 2.7 percent annual decrease (as compared with a 0.0 percent adjustment for FY 2020-21):

- \$35.50 per square foot for apartment developments (a decrease of \$0.99 per square foot from the FY 2020-21 Fee).
- \$41.47 per square foot for condominium developments (a decrease of \$1.15 per square foot from the FY 2020-21 Fee); and

The results of the calculations shown in Table 1 will be the basis for a Resolution changing the Affordable Housing Base Fee for FY 2021-22.

**Table 1**  
**Affordable Housing Development Cost Annual Inflation Adjustment Calculations for 2021-2022**

**Land Cost Inflation**

Zip Code	Median Price Change	# Condos Sold	Calculation	Weighted Avg.
	2020-2021		Weights	
90401	0.4%	13	2.9%	0.0%
90402	-31.1%	39	8.6%	-2.7%
90403	-13.8%	185	40.9%	-5.6%
90404	-6.2%	109	24.1%	-1.5%
90405	-3.0%	106	23.5%	-0.7%
		452	100.0%	<b>-10.5%</b>

Source: CoreLogic Information Services (subscription required; data available from Housing Division, City of Santa Monica)

**Construction Cost Inflation**

Engineering News Record's Construction Cost Index -- Los Angeles

March 2020 Index Value	12043.18
March 2021 Index Value	12119.31
Percentage Change 2020-2021	<b>0.6%</b>

Source: Engineering News Record (subscription required; data available from Housing Division, City of Santa Monica)

**Derivation of Land Cost and Construction Cost Calculation Weights**

Most Recent City-funded Affordable Housing Developments	Hard Construction		Sum
	Land Cost	Cost	
1819 Pico	\$ 8,300,000	\$ 20,198,497	\$ 28,498,497
1834-1848 14th	\$ 11,950,000	\$ 28,826,980	\$ 40,776,980
	\$ 20,250,000	\$ 49,025,477	\$ 69,275,477
	29.2%	70.8%	100.0%

Source: Housing and Human Services Division, City of Santa Monica

**Inflation Factor Derivation**

	Inflation Value	Weight	Wtd. Avg.
Land Value Inflation	-10.5%	29.2%	-3.1%
Construction Cost Inflation	0.6%	70.8%	0.4%
			<b>-2.7%</b>

**Adjusted Fees**

	2020-21 Fees	Inflation Factor	Updated Fees	\$ Change
Apartments	\$ 36.49	-2.7%	\$ 35.50	-\$0.99
Condos	\$ 42.62	-2.7%	\$ 41.47	-\$1.15

For Information Only:

Consumer Price Index Change, LA-Riv-Or Co., All

Urban Consumers, 1982-84 = 100

Mar. 2020 Index Value 276.589

Mar. 2021 Index Value 282.648

Percentage Change Mar. 2020-Mar. 2021 2.2%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (available at <http://www.bls.gov/cpi>)

Prepared by: Housing and Human Services Division, City of Santa Monica

ATTACHMENT A

April 24, 2006 HR&A Letter re: Annual Adjustment  
Methodology



HAMILTON, RABINOVITZ & ALSCHULER, INC.  
Policy, Financial & Management Consultants

April 24, 2006

Mr. Ron Barefield  
Housing Administrator  
City of Santa Monica  
2121 Cloverfield Blvd., Suite 100  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Re: Annual Adjustment for the Affordable Housing Fee

Dear Ron:

Per your request, this letter summarizes an annual adjustment approach we recommended for the City of Santa Monica's ("City") Affordable Housing Fee, which developers of multi-family residential developers may elect to pay, pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 9.56.070, as amended. This recommendation was included in Section V of our recent report, *2005 Update, The Nexus Between New Market Rate Multi-Family Developments in the City of Santa Monica and the Need for Affordable Housing*, July 1, 2005 ("2005 Nexus Study Update").

In order to better ensure that the Affordable Housing Fees remain consistent with changing market conditions, it would be prudent for the City to apply an annual adjustment index, but to use an inflation concept other than the Consumer Price Index (CPI). While the CPI is often used to make inflation adjustments because of its convenience, the monthly changes in the value of consumer goods that dominate the CPI are not the most appropriate basis for measuring change in the City's cost to develop affordable housing. However, to be meaningful, any alternative index must rely on data that is readily accessible to City staff for calculating the change, and for the public's information.

A suitable alternative approach would need to measure annual changes in land cost and construction costs, which together account for about 75-80 percent of the cost of new affordable housing development.<sup>1</sup> There are, in our experience, several well-established construction cost indices. We recommend Engineering News Record's (ENR) Construction Cost Index, because it

<sup>1</sup> The other 20-25% consists of professional fees and other "soft costs" and financing costs, neither of which is regularly monitored by third party sources for inflation changes.

Ron Barefield  
Housing Division  
City of Santa Monica  
April 24, 2006

is updated monthly and is readily available via the Internet. However, there is no comparable index of changes in land cost. One proxy measure that could be used for land cost changes is change in median condominium purchase prices.<sup>2</sup> Since the median condo sale price for the City as a whole would be skewed by the tendency for sales to be concentrated in a few subareas, a more neutral measure would be the weighted average annual change in median condo sale prices by ZIP Code. These data are published by the Los Angeles *Times* each January, using Los Angeles County Assessor data compiled by Dataquick. They are also available on a subscription basis from other vendors, such as First American Real Estate Solutions.

The relative balance between land cost inflation (based on changes in median condo prices) and construction cost inflation (based on a construction cost index) could be determined based on current development cost data for recently completed or construction-in-progress multi-family affordable developments assisted by the City. We recommend using a simple average of the ratio between land purchase price and the sum of land cost and hard construction cost to derive the land value percentage; the inverse of this ratio would be the construction cost share.<sup>3</sup>

Since the proposed annual inflation adjustments to the Affordable Housing Fee will be adopted by Resolution of the City Council as part of the annual budget process each June, we recommend that City staff measure the weighted average annual change in median condominium price for the immediately preceding calendar year, and the construction cost index change between March of the budget adoption year and March of the immediately preceding year. We recommend using the annual change in median condo prices in the calculation, rather than year-over-year changes in March or any other month, because median monthly prices can vary significantly due to the number of sales and particular composition of the sales in any particular month. The annual average tends to smooth out these effects. We recommend the monthly year-over-year approach for construction costs, however, because construction represents a much larger share of total project cost. Using the most recently available construction cost inflation data better ensures that the Affordable Housing Fee will keep pace with the actual cost to the City of developing affordable housing.

Table 1 below, which is a variation on Table V-5 from the 2005 Nexus Study Update,<sup>4</sup> illustrates how such an annual index could be constructed and applied to the recently adopted Affordable Housing Fees for new market rate apartment and condominium projects, for FY 2006-07. It shows, for example, that a weighted average inflation index as proposed herein

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<sup>2</sup> Consistent with the City's historical experience, this assumes that most new affordable multi-family projects will be developed in multi-family districts, although some recent projects include sites in commercial districts. Unlike residential property, there is no readily available data source for commercial land price changes.

<sup>3</sup> For example, if the average land cost for recent projects was \$3.0 million and average hard construction cost was \$9.0 million, the land to land plus construction cost ratio would be 25% ( $\$3.0 \text{ million} / (\$3.0 \text{ million} + \$9.0 \text{ million})$ ) and the construction cost to land cost plus construction cost ratio would be 75%.

<sup>4</sup> Table V-5 was based on Citywide average fees, which was one alternative fee schedule presented in the 2005 Nexus Study Update. Table 1 herein uses the alternative *weighted average* fees, which were also presented in the 2005 Nexus Study Update, and it was these fees that the City Council actually adopted on October 11, 2005.

Ron Barefield  
Housing Division  
City of Santa Monica  
April 24, 2006

would result in a 7.9 percent annual increase, compared with a 5.2 percent increase based on construction costs alone, or 5.1 percent based on the CPI.

It is my understanding that the inflation adjustment approach described above will be presented to the City Council on May 9, 2006. We are available to assist you, as needed, with that presentation.

Sincerely,

  
PAUL J. SILVERN,  
Partner

Ron Barefield  
Housing Division  
City of Santa Monica  
April 24, 2006

Table 1  
**Affordable Housing Fee Annual Inflation Adjustment Calculations for FY 2006-07**

<b>Land Cost Inflation</b>					
ZIP Code	Median Annual Price Change During 2005	# Condos Sold	Calculation Weights	Weighted Avg.	
90401	35.9%	27	4.5%	1.6%	
90402	-2.1%	30	5.0%	-0.1%	
90403	9.8%	237	39.5%	3.9%	
90404	25.5%	162	27.0%	6.9%	
90405	10.5%	144	24.0%	2.5%	
		600		<b>14.8%</b>	

Source: Los Angeles Times, Real Estate Section, p. K19, January 22, 2006 (based on DataQuick Information Systems)

**Construction Cost Inflation**

Engineering News Record's Construction Cost Index

March 2005 Index Value	7,309
March 2006 Index Value	7,692
Percentage Change 2005-2006	<b>5.2%</b>

Source: Engineering News Record (available at <http://www.enr.construction.com/features/coneco/subs/constIndexHist.asp>)

**Derivation of Land Cost and Construction Cost Calculation Weights**

Most Recent CCSM Family Rental Projects	Land Cost	Hard Construction	Total
1424 Broadway	\$ 3,640,000	\$ 8,100,000	\$ 11,740,000
2601 Santa Monica Boulevard	\$ 3,250,000	\$ 8,100,000	\$ 11,350,000
2209 Main Street	\$ 3,120,000	\$ 9,123,910	\$ 12,243,910
	\$ 10,010,000	\$ 25,323,910	\$ 35,333,910
	28%	72%	100%

Source: Housing Division, City of Santa Monica

**Inflation Factor Derivation**

	Inflation Value	Weight	Wtd. Avg.
Land Value Inflation	14.8%	28.3%	4.2%
Construction Cost Inflation	5.2%	71.7%	3.8%
			<b>7.9%</b>

**Adjusted Fees**

	Oct. 2005 Base Fees	Inflation Factor	Updated Fees	\$ Change
Condos	\$26.08	7.9%	\$28.15	\$2.07
Apartments	\$22.33	7.9%	\$24.10	\$1.77

**For Information Only:**

Consumer Price Index Change, LA-Riv-Or Co., All Urban Consumers

Feb. 2005 Index Value	197.4
Feb. 2006 Index Value	207.5
Percentage Change 2005-2006	5.1%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cpi>)

Prepared by: Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Inc.