

A RESOLUTION

Proposed  
Resolution  
20-47

*To declare the sense of the Council that the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority ("WMATA") should adopt a policy to promote the development of affordable housing on property owned by WMATA.*

Sense of the  
Council  
Regarding the  
Need for an  
Affordable  
Housing  
Policy at the  
Washington  
Metropolitan  
Area Transit  
Authority  
Resolution of  
2013

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Sense of the Council Regarding the Need for an Affordable Housing Policy at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Resolution of 2013".

Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

(1) The District of Columbia and the Washington region as a whole have an increasing demand for affordable housing. According to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, median rents have increased by 50% in the District and median home prices have doubled over the past decade, causing the availability of low-cost rental units and low-value homes to decrease by 50% and 72%, respectively. In that same time, incomes for most District residents have been stagnant or have not kept pace with increased housing costs. As a result, 20% of all households and two-thirds of low-income households in the District have a "severe housing burden," meaning that residents pay more than half of their monthly income for housing expenses.

(2) The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority ("WMATA") owns a considerable amount of undeveloped land in and around its 86 Metrorail stations and pursues development of this land with private and public partners. Although units for low and moderate-income households are sometimes created as a result of these joint development projects, they are not done in a comprehensive and strategic manner.

(3) Comparable public transit systems, such as Atlanta's MARTA, have adopted affordable housing policies, the results of which have created more affordable housing options, boosted transit ridership, and generally allowed for more effective smart growth policies.

(4) WMATA's current "Joint Development Policies and Guidelines" includes affordable housing as a goal. It also recommends that the Board of Directors of WMATA adopt a separate affordable housing policy to provide additional detail and direction, but this step has not yet been taken.

(5) WMATA should adopt an affordable housing strategy that outlines overall policy goals, strategies and tools for implementation, and a system of performance measurement.

(6) The affordable housing strategy should also include:

(A) Clear targets for the number of affordable units produced on WMATA property at a range of income levels not to exceed 120% of the area median income, but that are predominately at the 30%, 50% and 80% levels;

(B) Preferences and other incentives for developers who exceed affordability requirements in the solicitation process;

(C) Strategies for WMATA to coordinate its affordable housing efforts with jurisdictions that are signatories to the WMATA Compact and non-profit organizations that specialize in the field of affordable housing; and

(D) Strategies to utilize all possible affordable housing funding sources, including government programs and special financing structures.

(7) Creation of an affordable housing strategy at WMATA will help ensure that the metropolitan Washington area remains an affordable, diverse, and thriving region.

Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that WMATA's Board of Directors should adopt an affordable housing policy as part of its "Joint Development Policies and Guidelines" to be implemented by the General Manager and staff of WMATA.

Sec. 4. The Secretary of the Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution, upon its adoption, to the WMATA Board of Directors and its General Manager and CEO, Mr. Richard Sarles.

Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.