



Leveraging the Approval Process to
Get the Development You Want
New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
2016

Speakers:

- Drake Butsch, First American Title/Moderator
- Brian Blaesser, Robinson & Cole LLP
- Debbie Bassert, National Association of Home Builders
- Bob Kaufman, Maryland Building Industry Association

Session Objectives

- Learn about where the development approval process typically bogs down in most communities today.
- Understand the impacts of a lengthy and unwieldy process for all involved, including renters and home buyers and the very types of projects that can be built.
- Hear about recent efforts across the country to improve process efficiency in order to facilitate desired development.

Renewed concerns about housing affordability

- ◎ Many factors contribute to the challenge:
 - > Plans that solicit jobs but don't adequately provide for housing
 - > Outdated ordinances that limit the range and mix of housing types
 - > Increasing fees that add to housing costs
 - > Environmental/growth controls that constrain land supply
 - > NIMBY opposition to development

A factor many don't consider

- Length and complexity of the development review and approval process
- No longer 6 to 9 months but 1 to 2 years
- As long as 4 to 7 years in some areas

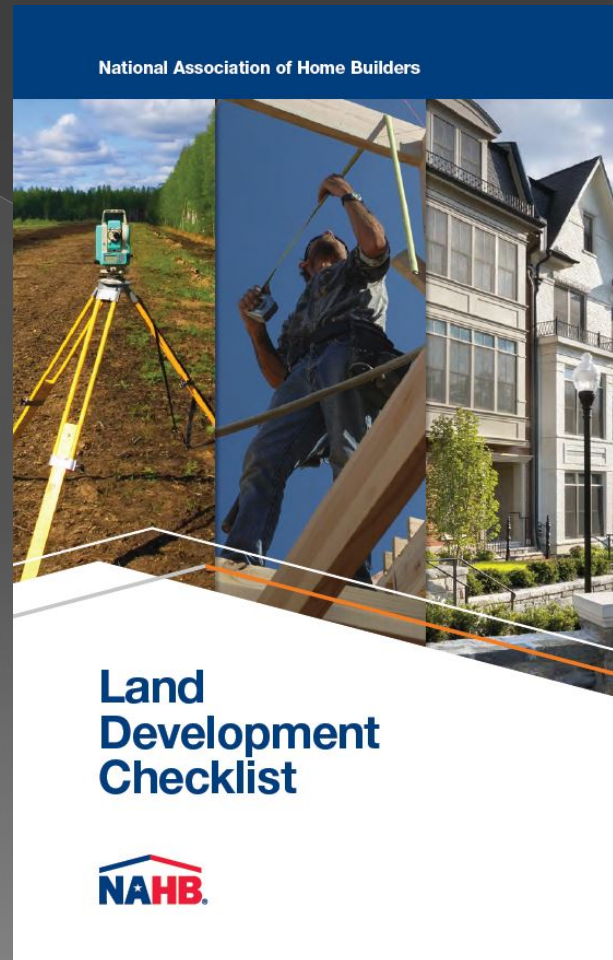
Complex, lengthy, and unpredictable process

- Ties up developers', builders', and investors' capital
- Adds unexpected interest and carrying costs
- Those add to cost of housing, at all price levels
- Particular challenge for affordable product
- Can even affect project feasibility
- Also ties up public investment!

Reframing the discussion

- Old:
 - > Streamlining techniques
 - > Regulatory barriers removal strategies
- New:
 - > Process efficiency

Documenting the Process



New research for NAHB by Abt Associates

- ◎ Frustration stems from
 - > Complexity of the process
 - > Lack of information about steps involved
 - > Unclear how long each step will take
 - > Process differs across municipalities

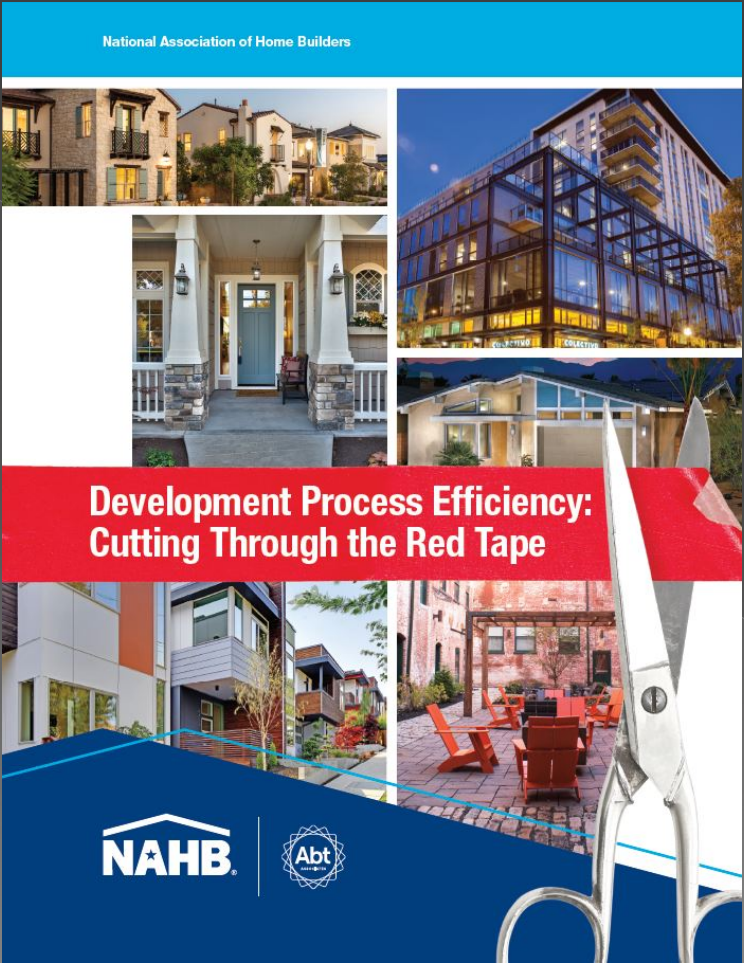
Time is money for government too

- Inefficient process increases government's administrative costs
- Reflects poorly on government competence and image
- Creates perception of a negative climate for business

Increased process efficiency is a win-win for all

- ◉ Developers and builders
- ◉ Homebuyers and renters
- ◉ Local government
- ◉ Taxpayers

New NAHB Report



Report includes:

- Information about each strategy
- Multiple examples of communities using the strategy with links for more information
- Examples of comprehensive system overhauls
- Detailed case studies

Streamlining/consolidating the review process

- ⦿ Overhaul permitting approval process
- ⦿ One-stop permit system
- ⦿ Increase coordination between agencies
- ⦿ Standardize interpretation
- ⦿ Change or update zoning to reduce need for variances
- ⦿ Combine public hearings

Increasing staff capacity

- Maintain appropriate staffing levels
- Hire specialized staff
- Establish reliable mechanism for funding building services

Creating a separate process for expedited review

- For desirable housing projects
- Based on pre-approval
- For an extra fee

Implementing online permitting

- ◉ Online permitting
- ◉ Online submission of plans
- ◉ Real-time inspection updates

Creating accountability

- Annual report on approval times
- Online permit progress tracking
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Tie employee advancement to performance
- Limit review times

Making process more user friendly

- Comprehensive checklists
- Development assistance department
- Assist with quality of applications
- Improve communication through regular meetings with developers

State-level strategies

- Regional authorities to provide assistance to local governments
- State legislation on process
- Provide resources to local governments

Development Process Efficiency: Cutting Through the Red Tape

- Report available online at www.nahb.org
- For more information contact:
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