



June 15, 2017

Mr. Harold L. Price
Executive Director
Florida Housing Finance Corporation
227 N. Bronough Street, Ste. 5000
Tallahassee, FL. 32301

Dear Mr. Price,

The City of Orlando supports keeping the Local Government Area of Opportunity incentive designation in the selection and award of Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding for large counties.

Cities and counties always face challenges in maintaining and growing decent and safe housing for all of their residents. Like many communities, Orlando has worked for years in neighborhoods addressing the needs, investing resources, providing public and social services, infrastructure improvements, supporting education and youth development, growth for jobs and businesses, and assisting in the development and redevelopment of housing. Extensive open planning processes and public input goes into the various initiatives the City pursues and insures the most appropriate strategies are followed.

Local governments recognize the fact that affordable and workforce housing has become more and more difficult to provide. It is important that the local jurisdictions be able to prioritize affordable housing projects that leverage the investments that have already been made in a community and those that fulfill the communities adopted planning and redevelopment efforts. Local governments should be able to prioritize developments located within proximity of major employment centers and mass transit, and those which demonstrate architectural excellence and contribute to environmental sustainability.

The Local Government Area of Opportunity designation provides one of the few and most significant tools to a local jurisdiction to direct the tax credit resource to revitalize existing neighborhoods, preserve affordable housing options in neighborhoods facing gentrification, and to expand workforce and attainable housing to new growth areas. This funding option provides the boost that completes the various neighborhood building exercises.

In the latest Large County funding round the ability of the City Of Orlando to designate a preferred application for housing tax credits, along with the added investment of local CRA funding, moved the redevelopment of the City owned site in one of our neighborhoods to the front of the applicants.

Without the Local Government Area of Opportunity preference incentive this project would not have been selected further hindering numerous redevelopment efforts in an area the City has been seeking solutions for over fifteen years.

While the system of awarding tax credits through a lottery to interested developers succeeds in providing needed affordable housing it often fails to significantly leverage other efforts local jurisdictions are already making in education, jobs, fair housing, and neighborhood development. Developers, as they should be, tend to be risk adverse by avoiding areas that may be suffering challenges. The option of the Local Government Area of Opportunity incentive allows local jurisdictions the means to partner with private and not-for-profit developers to address housing needs, often assisting more vulnerable residents, while ensuring the overall success of the housing development as the jurisdiction and the residents complete broader plans.

The City of Orlando supports keeping the Local Government Area of Opportunity and revitalization rounds in the LIHTC program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Buddy Dyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Buddy" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Dyer".

Buddy Dyer
Mayor