



March 10, 2008

*Sent by E-Mail &
First Class U.S. Mail*

Mr. Ty Warner, AICP, Principal
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Sears Tower, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Re: The Challenge of DRI's

Dear Ty:

Can the installation of water mains which serve a population of 1,000 people possibly be construed to have a regional impact to a region of 9,000,000+ people?

Can the conversion of 100 acres of farm land in a region containing many thousands of acres of land possibly be construed to have a regional impact?

Can a development which impacts its neighboring community possibly be construed to have a regional impact on a region that contains several hundred communities?

Can a decision to grant a franchise to a sewer district to exclusively serve an area with sewer infrastructure be deemed to have a regional impact?

These levels of development have been suggested by the staff for CMAP as "potential" triggers for DRI's. CMAP is a regional planning body (i.e., covering seven counties and 9,000,000+ people, etc.). Are these triggers more appropriate for a local planning board? Truly, a water main planned to serve 1,000 people has an impact to Caledonia north of Rockford, which currently has no public infrastructure. That, however, should be Caledonia's business.

When a potential trigger occurs, what event transforms that particular development into a real DRI?

While I admit I'm not a planner, in the last four decades I have initiated many developments that would meet the suggested trigger(s) for DRI. I'm trying to understand how the proposed DRI process might improve or help produce a better result.

Will the DRI process result in a better plan? I acknowledge that often the plan ultimately approved through the entitlement process has changes. The changes I have experienced most often make the plan more expensive, which is generally the motivation of local political bodies because of (you guessed it) traffic, schools, no growth advocates disguised as environmentalist and NIMBY's.

As a matter of fact, I don't recall ever in that 40 year time of having any political jurisdiction try to help me lower the price of my product such that more people could benefit from home ownership, or maybe live closer to where they work.

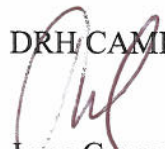
For residential developments, will the DRI process make the end product more expensive or less expensive? Will the DRI process improve upon the often 18 to 24-month timeframe that many entitlement processes now take? I would truly like for you, your staff or someone to explain to me how the DRI process is going to improve upon the current system. What is the goal we are trying to achieve? What's broken that the DRI process, as suggested, will fix?

If the state of Illinois, through the watchful eye of CMAP, actually has funding available for infrastructure, perhaps the DRI process could help guide where to spend those funds. It's difficult for me to believe that residential projects would compete well with airports, railroads, major thoroughfares, etc., for such funding. It's also not my expectation that any great amount of state or local infrastructure funding will be available beyond that usually available for such projects of regional magnitude.

In any event, I'm listening, hoping and praying that if you can't quantify the benefits of a DRI process, you will rethink the DRI process and make it one that we can all agree would be at least worthy of evaluation. In my opinion, there is merit to the acquisition of the EJ&E railroad by Canadian National being labeled a DRI, and thoroughly evaluated with respect to its positive and negative impacts. It truly is regional in scope and should be a focus for CMAP.

I would also truly be interested in the experience, knowledge and benefits gained from the DRI process in Florida and Georgia. The immediate response when I talk to people who have participated in the Florida DRI process is that it's absolutely broken and of negative value. Clearly that's the perspective of the private sector. What has the public sector gained?

Sincerely,


DRH/CAMBRIDGE HOMES, INC.

Jerry Conrad
Senior Vice President

JC/pjp

cc: Mr. Randy Blankenhorn
CMAP Land Use Committee Members