

Hints For Towns

Building Homes For Long-Term Appeal

(NAPSA)—City planners have discovered that cutting construction costs by using inferior materials can be a bad idea—both for homeowners and the communities these homes are built in.

“The reality is that the builder owns the home for a few months, the new homebuyer may own it for a few years, but the community will own it forever,” said Charles Ostrander, executive director, Illinois Masonry Institute Promotion Trust, who works with some Chicago-area towns.

A growing number of communities are revising building ordinances, increasing the amount of brick, stone or concrete masonry required in new home construction.

Orland Park, Il., a Chicago suburb, now requires 100 percent masonry for commercial construction, 90 percent masonry for residential construction and 50 percent masonry for multi-family construction.

Denver suburb Aurora, Colo. now requires a minimum of 50 percent masonry on new single-family homes and 60 percent masonry on all new multi-family buildings.

“We spend a great deal of time master planning our communities to ensure they are developed according to very high design standards,” said Aurora Mayor Paul Tauer. “We are creating unique neighborhoods with a sense of place in Aurora—the masonry ordinance is one of the design tools we have established to accomplish that goal.”

Revised ordinances in Arlington, Texas, have increased masonry requirements from 65 percent on the first floor for homes 1,600 square feet or less to 100 percent masonry (regardless of square footage) to the top floor of



While a brick home may cost slightly more to build, reduced maintenance and insurance costs—along with high appreciation—more than make up for the initial expense.

the entire house.

“We experienced a housing explosion in the southeast part of town, and were already starting to see deterioration,” said David Whitely, a senior planner for the City of Arlington, Texas.

Enacting or amending building ordinances may help to create more durable and maintainable communities, and can increase a town’s long-term appeal. And often, as with Aurora, it’s the citizens who take action, asking their towns for solutions to “beige fungus” and rundown neighborhoods.

A home built with 50 percent brick may cost a little more than other exteriors, but these initial costs are more than offset by savings in maintenance costs, lower insurance rates and an average six percent premium on resale.

To help cities, suburbs and their residents learn how to enact or amend masonry ordinances, a City Planner’s Toolkit is now available at www.buildingwithbrick.net.