

# YEAR 2035 REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN



NEWSLETTER 4

REVISED OCTOBER 2012

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decent and affordable housing helps people live more secure lives. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has completed a preliminary housing plan for our seven-county Region to help improve housing in the Region. Carrying out the plan would help provide decent housing for all residents of the Region, including housing affordable to low-income residents and persons with disabilities. Housing near job centers would become more affordable to the people holding those jobs, and help broaden lower-cost housing options in cities and villages throughout the Region.

Public input on preliminary plan recommendations is being sought at meetings in November and December 2012. Public input is also being sought regarding the findings of an analysis of the possible socio-economic impacts of the plan on low-income and minority populations and persons with disabilities.

Data analyzed for the plan found that:

- Households with incomes between 50 and 80 percent of the Region's median income (\$26,940 to \$43,104 per year) would likely be able to afford higher-density multi-family housing at market (non-subsidized) rents. About 127,000 households, or 16 percent of Region households, fall within this income category.
- Households with incomes between 80 and 135 percent of the Region's median income (\$43,104 to \$72,737) would likely be able to afford market-rate multi-family rents or modest single-family housing. About 191,000 households, or just over 24 percent of Region households, fall within this income category.
- Households with incomes more than 135 percent of the median income would be able to afford a variety of market-rate housing.
- Housing subsidized by the government or housing developed by non-profit or faith-based organizations would likely be necessary to provide decent and affordable housing for households with incomes less than 50 percent of the Region's median income (less than \$26,940). Over 187,000 households, or just under 24 percent of households in the Region, have incomes of 50 percent or less than the Region's median income. In 2011, there were 45,676 subsidized housing units and housing vouchers in the Region, or about 25 percent of the potential need. The shortage of vouchers helps create a market for dilapidated housing by households that are unable to afford decent housing without financial assistance.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

A series of meetings has been scheduled to present and obtain public input on the preliminary recommendations of the regional housing plan, and the findings of a draft socio-economic impact analysis of the preliminary recommendations. Persons may choose to attend any meeting they find convenient. All meetings will be held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. and will be held in an informal, "open house" format with summary materials provided and staff available to individually answer questions, provide information, and receive comments. A presentation will be made at 5:00 p.m. upon request. An opportunity to provide comments in a public hearing format will also be available at the meeting on December 6.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
November 13, 2012	Racine Gateway Technical College, Michigan Room (Room 113) 1001 S. Main Street, Racine
November 14, 2012	Kenosha County Job Center, Commons Area 8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha
November 19, 2012	Matheson Memorial Library and Community Center, Community Room 101 N. Wisconsin Street, Elkhorn
November 27, 2012	Rotary Building, Frame Park 1150 Baxter Street, Waukesha
November 28, 2012	Washington County Public Agency Center, Rooms 1113 A-B 333 E. Washington Street, West Bend
November 29, 2012	Ozaukee County Administration Center, Auditorium 121 W. Main Street, Port Washington
December 3, 2012	HeartLove Place, Bethel Empowerment Room 3229 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Milwaukee
December 5, 2012	IndependenceFirst 540 S. 1st Street, Milwaukee
December 6, 2012	Tommy G. Thompson Youth Center, Wisconsin State Fair Park Banquet Rooms 1 and 2 640 S. 84th Street, Milwaukee

Following these meetings, a record of public comments will be assembled and provided to the Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee and to the Commission. In addition to providing ideas and comments at the public meetings, residents may also forward them through December 14, 2012, via U.S. Mail, fax, e-mail, or the SEWRPC website (see last page for contact information).

Persons with special needs are asked to contact the Commission offices at (262) 547-6721 or at [bmckay@sewrpc.org](mailto:bmckay@sewrpc.org) a minimum of 72 hours in advance of the meeting date so that appropriate arrangements can be made. This may involve site access, mobility, materials review or interpretation, questions or comments, or other needs.

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To help provide housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households, the preliminary plan recommends that additional multi-family housing and modest single-family housing on lots of 10,000 square feet (about one-quarter acre) or smaller be developed in communities with sanitary sewer service throughout the Region, particularly in communities with major employment centers. Development of multi-family and modest single-family homes throughout the Region will increase the supply of affordable housing, help address job/housing imbalances in communities that do not have enough housing for workers holding low- and moderate-wage jobs in the community, and help reverse the concentration of low-income and minority households by providing lower-cost housing outside the central cities of Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine where existing low-cost housing is concentrated. Additional multi-family housing will also increase the supply of housing that is accessible to persons with disabilities, due to fair housing laws that require multi-family housing to include accessibility features.

The preliminary plan includes additional recommendations relating to affordable housing, and recommendations regarding fair housing, subsidized housing, accessible housing, job/housing balance, and housing development practices. Key recommendations are summarized in this newsletter.

## **BACKGROUND**

SEWRPC is the areawide public planning agency for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region, which includes Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties. The Commission's planning under State law is advisory, and addresses land use and infrastructure, including transportation, water quality, water supply, parks and open space, and floodplain management. The Commission exists to help the seven counties and 147 cities, towns, and villages in the Region consider issues and problems which, for their sound consideration and resolution, require the cooperation of multiple county and local governments.

The new housing plan updates a regional housing plan adopted by the Commission in 1975. SEWRPC was not able to undertake the work necessary to revise and extend the first regional housing plan during the next 30 years because of the elimination of Federal housing planning funds administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the early 1980's, and the refusal of State and Federal transportation agencies to allow SEWRPC to use a portion of its funding for the land use and transportation planning program for housing planning activities. In a reversal of that policy, and in response to requests from local elected officials, SEWRPC reached agreement with transportation officials in 2006 to include housing planning activities in the Commission's land use and transportation work program. Work on the new housing plan was initiated in 2008.

## **ADVISORY AND REVIEW COMMITTEES**

A 29-member Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee was established to guide preparation of the plan. The Committee consists of members appointed by the Regional Planning Commission from groups representing housing advocacy organizations; local, county, and State government agencies; home builders; and research and policy organizations and institutions. The Advisory Committee provides intergovernmental and interagency coordination, and serves as a direct liaison between SEWRPC and the government agencies and housing advocacy groups responsible for carrying out plan recommendations.

SEWRPC also works with its Environmental Justice Task Force to obtain input on the housing plan. The Task Force is an advisory body of the Commission established to enhance the consideration and integration of issues of concern to minority and low-income populations and persons with disabilities throughout the regional planning process.

## **PRELIMINARY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The regional housing plan recommendations are intended to provide a guide, or overall framework, for future housing development to meet the current and future housing needs of the Region's residents. They address the multiple components of the regional housing problem identified through public meetings at the beginning of the planning process, and the housing vision and objectives. The housing vision was developed with the guidance of the Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee to express the desired future of housing in the Region with one concise statement:

***“Provide financially sustainable housing for persons of all income levels, age groups, and special needs throughout the entire Southeastern Wisconsin Region.”***

Preliminary plan recommendations were developed based on the demographic and economic data, projections, and analyses conducted as part of the planning process and documented in the draft regional housing plan report. This newsletter



Low Income Tax Credit multi-family housing in the City of Kenosha.



Former school converted to senior housing in the City of Hartford, with funding assistance from HUD.



New single-family home on an in-fill lot in the Village of Mt. Pleasant.

summarizes the major findings of the analyses and key plan recommendations developed to address the findings. All of the preliminary plan recommendations are documented in Chapter XII of the draft plan report. A separate document containing only the recommendations can be obtained by contacting SEWRPC staff or from the SEWRPC website at <http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/HousingPlan/Files/revised-reg-housing-plan-appro.pdf>.

Sub-regional housing analysis areas (sub-areas) were identified early in the planning process to help organize data collection and analyses. The delineation of the analysis areas was based on existing and anticipated future clusters of job centers and residential areas. Several of the preliminary plan recommendations are directed to communities with sewer service in specific sub-areas.

### **Affordable Housing**

#### ***Related Plan Objective:***

Provide decent, safe, sanitary, and financially sustainable housing for all current residents of the Region, and the Region’s anticipated future population.

#### ***Related Findings:***

Housing is considered “affordable” if a household spends no more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs, in accordance with a standard established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For renters, housing costs include monthly rent and water, sewer, heating oil, gas, and electric utilities paid by the renter. For homeowners, housing costs include monthly mortgage payments, property taxes, homeowners and private mortgage insurance, and water, sewer, heating oil, gas, and electric utilities. A household has a “high housing cost burden” if it spends more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs. Households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing may lack sufficient income for food, medical care, and other necessities.

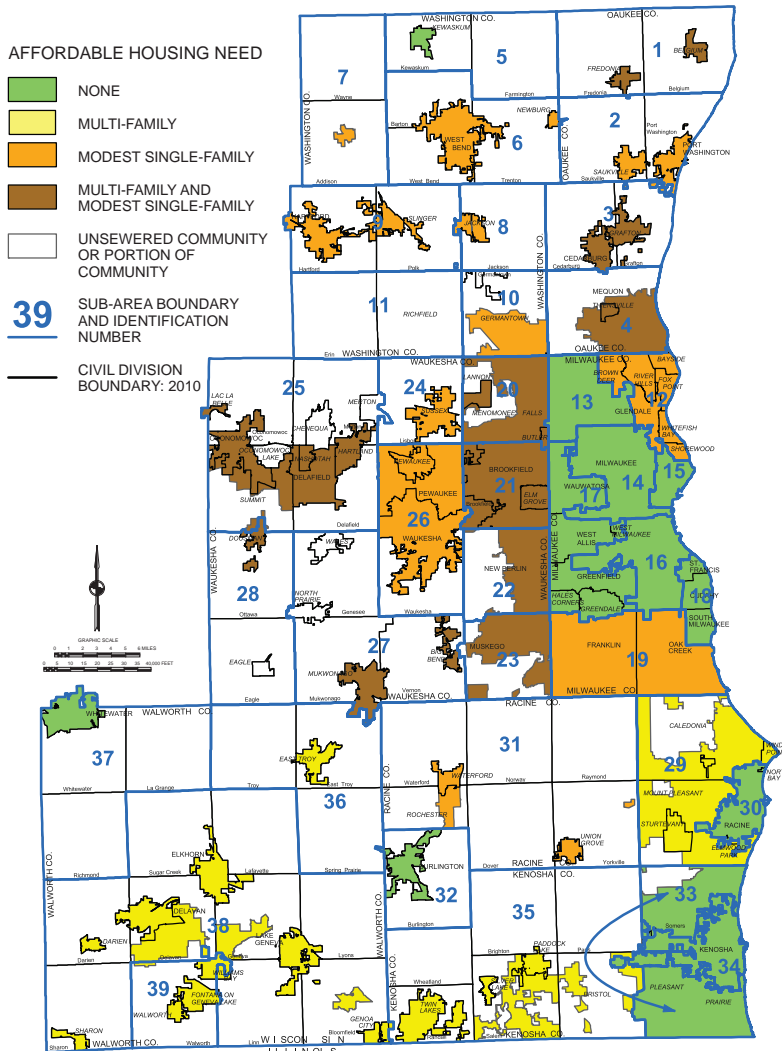


Condominium development in the Village of East Troy.



Map 1

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED IN SEWERED COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGION: 2035**



Source: SEWRPC.

There is a need for additional affordable housing in the Region. Over one-third of households in the Region, 282,576 households or about 36 percent, had a high housing cost burden according 2005-2009 Census data. About 21 percent of households spent between 30 and 50 percent of their income on housing, and an additional 15 percent spent more than 50 percent of their income on housing. About two-thirds of households with a high housing cost burden had incomes less than the Region median annual household income of \$53,879.

Housing affordability is closely related to the type and density of housing. Multi-family housing and smaller single-family homes on smaller lots tend to be more affordable to a wider range of households than larger single family homes on large lots. Data analyzed as part of the plan on the estimated costs of developing new housing indicate that households with incomes between 50 and 80 percent of the Region median income (\$26,940 to \$43,104 per year) would likely be able to afford higher-density multi-family housing at market-rate (non-subsidized) rents. Households with incomes between 80 and 135 percent of the Region median income (\$43,104 to \$72,737) would likely be able to afford market-rate multi-family rents or modest single-family housing (homes costing \$123,000 to \$164,000 for median-income households). Households with incomes more than 135 percent of the median income (more than \$72,737 per year) would be able to afford a variety of market-rate housing.

The development of housing in the Region is greatly influenced by community comprehensive plans and by zoning, subdivision, and other ordinances regulating land uses. Map 1 shows sub-areas in the Region that may have a need for additional affordable housing in the future based on an analysis of the comprehensive plans adopted by seweraged communities in the sub-area. Map 2 shows

that several of these seweraged communities have zoning ordinances that may currently restrict the development of new single-family and/or multi-family housing at densities that would be affordable to low- and moderate-income households at market (non-subsidized) rates. The development of such higher- and moderate-density housing is most appropriate in communities with sewer service, and the analysis of local plans and ordinances was focused on seweraged communities.

**Preliminary Plan Recommendations for Affordable Housing:**

The key plan recommendation calls for local governments that have sewer service to identify areas within the community for the development of new single-family homes on lots of 10,000 square feet or smaller, with home sizes of 1,100 to 1,200 square feet, to encourage the development of housing affordable to moderate-income households; and areas for the development of multi-family housing at a density of at least 10 units per acre to encourage the development of housing affordable to lower-income households. Areas for the development of multi-family and modest single-family housing should be identified in local government comprehensive plans, and zoning ordinances should include zoning districts that would allow housing at the recommended sizes and densities. The plan further recommends:

- Local government comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances for communities with sewer service should encourage a variety of housing types in urban neighborhoods, including apartments, townhomes, duplexes, small single-family homes and lots, and live-work units.

- Flexible zoning regulations intended to encourage a mix of housing types (single-, two-, and multi-family) and a variety of lot sizes and housing values within a neighborhood, such as planned unit development (PUD), traditional neighborhood developments (TND), density bonuses for affordable housing, and adaptive re-use of buildings for housing should be included in zoning ordinances in communities with sewer service.
- Accessory dwellings should be considered in all communities to help provide affordable housing in single-family residential zoning districts.
- Local officials should review ordinances to determine if changes could be made to landscaping, building façade, and street improvement standards to reduce the cost of housing without compromising quality.
- Cities and villages should consider extending the life of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts for one year after paying the district’s projected costs to improve the municipality’s affordable housing stock, as permitted under a recent change to State law.

The recent recession and related housing crisis have resulted in falling home values, a high foreclosure rate, and restrictive lending practices for prospective buyers of single-family homes and for prospective developers of multi-family housing. The preliminary plan recommends that State and Federal governments work cooperatively with private partners to provide a housing finance system that includes private, Federal, and State sources of housing capital; offers a reasonable menu of sound mortgage products for both single- and multi-family housing that is governed by prudent underwriting standards and adequate oversight and regulation; and provides a Federal guarantee to ensure that 30-year, fixed-rate mortgages are available at reasonable interest rates and terms.

### Subsidized and Tax Credit Housing

#### **Related Plan Objective:**

Maintain and expand the stock of subsidized housing in the Region to meet the anticipated need for such housing.

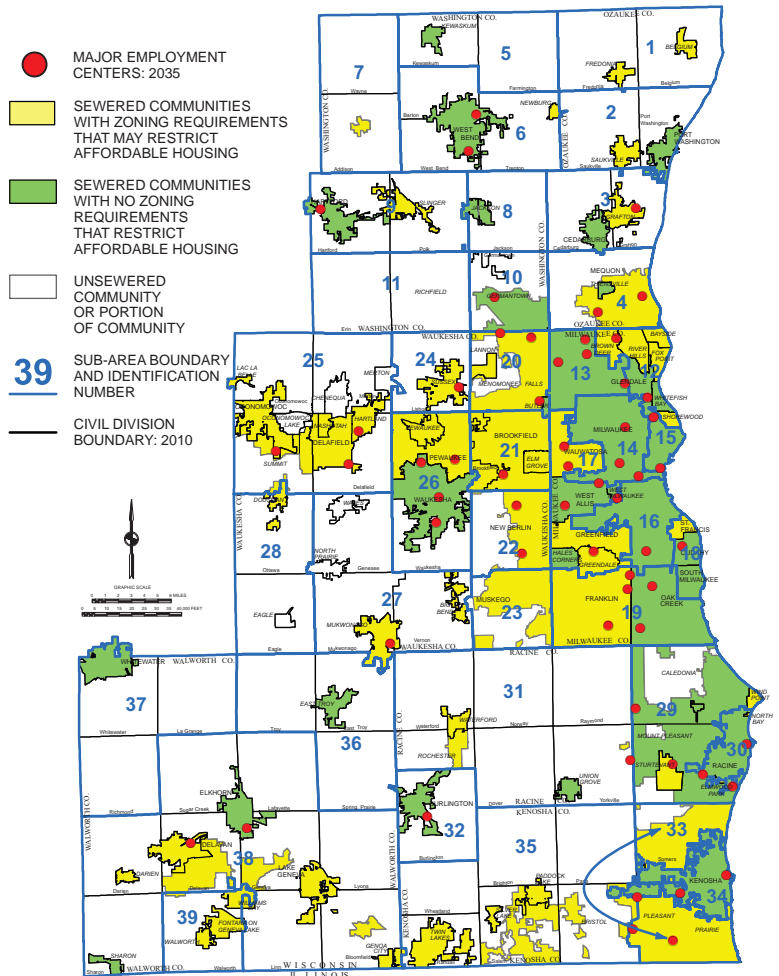
#### **Related Findings:**

Housing subsidized by the government, or housing developed by non-profit or faith-based organizations, would likely be necessary to provide decent and affordable housing for households with incomes less than 50 percent of the Region median income (less than \$26,940); particularly housing for family households that would require two or more bedrooms. Over 187,000 households, or 24 percent of households in the Region, have incomes of 50 percent or less than the Region median income. In 2011, there were 45,676 subsidized housing units and housing vouchers in the Region, or about 25 percent of the potential need. There is a need for additional subsidized housing in all sub-areas of the Region.

#### **Preliminary Plan Recommendations for Subsidized and Tax Credit Housing:**

Due to funding challenges, the preliminary plan recommends that the development of subsidized housing be targeted to sub-areas with the greatest need, which are shown on Map 3. The identified priority areas are those with the highest concentrations

**Map 2**  
**SEWERED COMMUNITIES WITH RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS THAT MAY RESTRICT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGION**



Source: Local Government Zoning Ordinances and SEWRPC.



Duplex constructed by Habitat for Humanity nearing completion in the City of Waukesha.



Redevelopment of Westlawn public housing by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee.

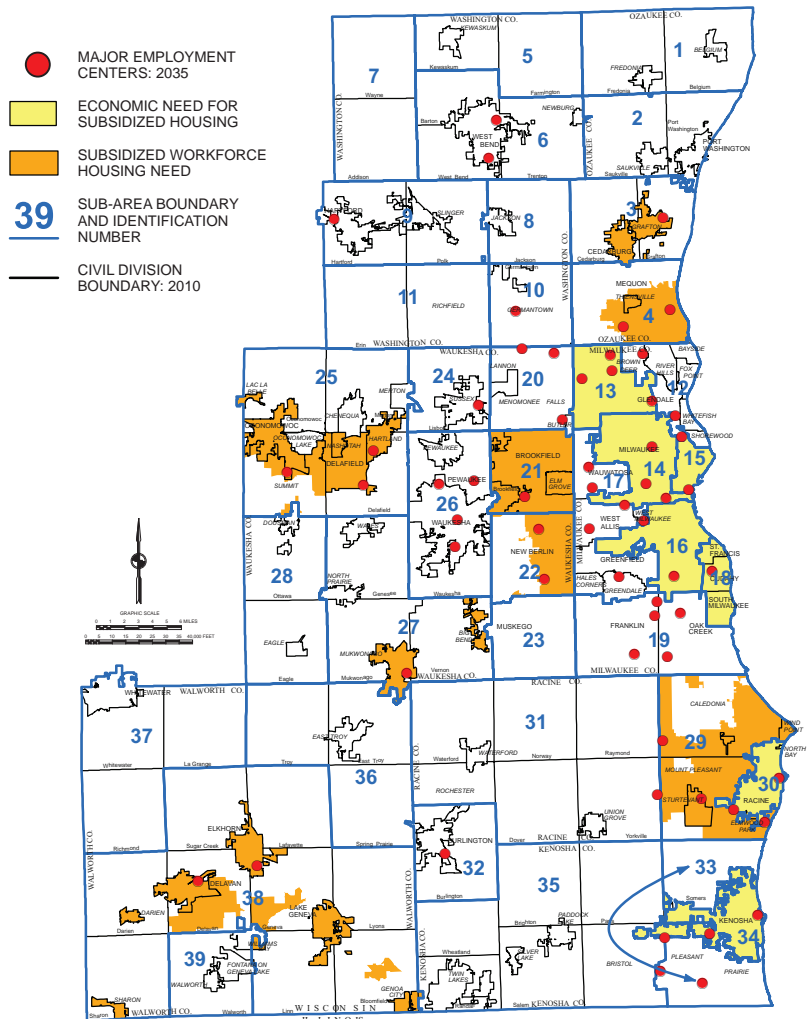
of the Region’s lowest income households (economic need)<sup>1</sup> and sub-areas with a current or projected lower-cost job/housing imbalance and a major employment center (subsidized workforce housing need). All sub-areas with major employment centers should be considered priority areas for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developments to provide housing for low- and moderate-wage workers.

Addressing the Region’s housing needs will require greater public sector coordination, greater private sector participation, and interjurisdictional collaboration that address both the supply side of the equation and the demand side. To help address the need, the preliminary plan recommends the establishment of a regional Housing Trust Fund for Southeastern Wisconsin (HTF-SW) to assist in the acquisition of land and development of affordable housing. Housing trust funds typically provide “gap” financing, or funds to fill part or all of the gap remaining between the actual cost of producing housing and the amount raised after all other funding sources have been secured. For example, between its formation in 2006 and 2011, the Housing Trust Fund of the City of Milwaukee provided about \$3 million in grants and loans, which leveraged over \$62 million to help construct 421 affordable housing units, including over 200 units of supportive housing for the homeless. The proposed HTF-SW could be formed initially through the merger of the existing Housing Trust Fund of the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Special Needs Housing Trust Fund, and Milwaukee County Inclusive Housing Fund, and expanded to communities in other counties, and ultimately all seven counties in the Southeastern Wisconsin Region.

<sup>1</sup>Sub-areas with more than 25 percent of households with incomes less than 50 percent of the region median annual household income are considered in economic need.

Map 3

**SEWERED COMMUNITIES IN PRIORITY SUB-AREAS FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING IN THE SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGION**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Local Comprehensive Plans, and SEWRPC.



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The preliminary plan also recommends that the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) should consider revising the criteria used to award low income housing tax credits (LIHTC) to give higher priority to proposed housing developments in communities with a shortage of affordable housing, to communities identified as priority areas on Map 3, and to non-elderly housing developments in communities with a job/housing imbalance. WHEDA should also consider the type of jobs and income levels in a community when evaluating projects competing for tax credits. Proposed tax credit housing should not be penalized if there is a lack of community support for the proposed development.

With regard to housing vouchers, the preliminary plan recommends that administrators of voucher programs, county and local governments, and housing advocates continue to work with Federal agencies and Congress to increase funding levels for additional housing vouchers to help meet the demand for housing assistance in the Region, and that State law be changed to recognize housing vouchers as a lawful source of income to increase housing options for lower-income households.

## **Fair Housing/Opportunity**

### ***Related Plan Objectives:***

1. Eliminate housing discrimination in the Region.
2. Reduce economic and racial segregation in the Region.

### ***Related Findings:***

The concentration of minority and low-income populations in the Region's central cities has been a continuing challenge with several negative effects, including decreased access to jobs in outlying areas for central city residents in need of employment. In 2010, about 86 percent of the Region's African-American population, and about 74 percent of the Region's total minority population, lived in Milwaukee County. African-American and Hispanic household incomes are about 50 to 60 percent of those of White/Non-Hispanic households in the Region, which limits housing choices for minority households.

The results of court cases, testing, and other measures, such as predatory lending to minority residents, demonstrates that fair housing violations continue to occur despite legal protections. Remedies to correct discriminatory practices are specified in Federal and State fair housing laws and regulations. State, county, and local governments that receive funding under HUD Community Planning and Development (CPD) programs are required to certify to HUD that they will affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH). Recipients of CPD funds must proactively identify and take action to reverse patterns of discrimination and segregation under AFFH requirements. Fair housing advocacy groups have expressed concerns that communities in the Region have taken limited actions to address impediments to fair housing, which contributes to continued residential segregation.

### ***Preliminary Plan Recommendations for Fair Housing and Opportunity:***

Additional lower- and/or moderate-cost housing is recommended by the preliminary plan in communities with sewer service throughout the Region. This would increase housing opportunities for minority and low-income households near major employment centers outside central cities. It would also provide opportunities for minority and low-income households to live in areas with better schools and safer neighborhoods.

The preliminary plan also recommends that programs be established in the Region to help reduce the concentration of minorities in high-poverty central city neighborhoods by providing assistance to low-income families in moving to less impoverished areas, such as help in finding suitable housing, work, enrolling children in school, and other services. Establishment of a regional voucher program is also recommended to streamline the process for households receiving vouchers to move to housing outside the jurisdiction that issued the voucher. The change to State law recommended by the preliminary plan to recognize housing vouchers as a lawful source of income would also help increase the housing options and locations available to voucher holders, and help reduce the concentration of low-income households in central cities.

The preliminary plan further recommends that communities evaluate comprehensive plan recommendations and zoning requirements to determine if their plans and regulations act to affirmatively further fair housing; and that State, county, and local governments that receive Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other funding from HUD and "pass through" some of the funding to other agencies require those sub-grantees to certify that they will affirmatively further fair housing as a condition of receiving the funds.

## **Job/Housing Balance**

### ***Related Plan Objective:***

Improve links between jobs and affordable housing by providing additional affordable housing near major employment centers; increasing employment opportunities near concentrations of existing affordable housing; and providing improved public transit between job centers and areas with affordable housing.

**Related Findings:**

Several communities outside the central cities of Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine have industrial and commercial job centers, or have adopted comprehensive plans that accommodate industrial and commercial growth. An analysis of community comprehensive plans indicates that many communities have not designated enough areas for the development of lower-cost housing (multi-family housing) and/or moderate-cost housing (smaller single-family homes on lots of 10,000 square feet or less) to provide affordable housing for low- and moderate-wage workers in the community. The analysis was limited to areas planned by local governments to have sewer service by 2035, since these areas will accommodate the majority of jobs and higher-density housing. The analysis was necessarily based on a number of assumptions and generalized data for each community due to the regional scope. In addition, information for some sewered communities was combined within sub-areas identified early in the planning process.

Sub-areas that may have a higher percentage of lower-wage jobs than lower-cost housing, based on the housing plan analysis, are referred to as having a lower-cost job/housing imbalance. Sub-areas that may have a higher percentage of moderate-wage jobs than moderate-cost housing are referred to as having a moderate-cost job/housing imbalance. Sub-areas with projected job/housing imbalances in 2035 are shown on Map 4.

Central city areas of the Region, which do not have job/housing imbalances, have among the highest percentages of households with a high housing cost burden. These areas also have high unemployment rates and low median incomes compared to other areas of the Region. Residents of the Region without access to a car are almost entirely dependent on public transit to provide access to jobs, health care, shopping, and education. Many of the major employment centers in outlying areas of the Region are not accessible by public transit, which may restrict employment in these centers to persons with a vehicle or carpool availability or persons who live close enough to walk or bicycle to work.

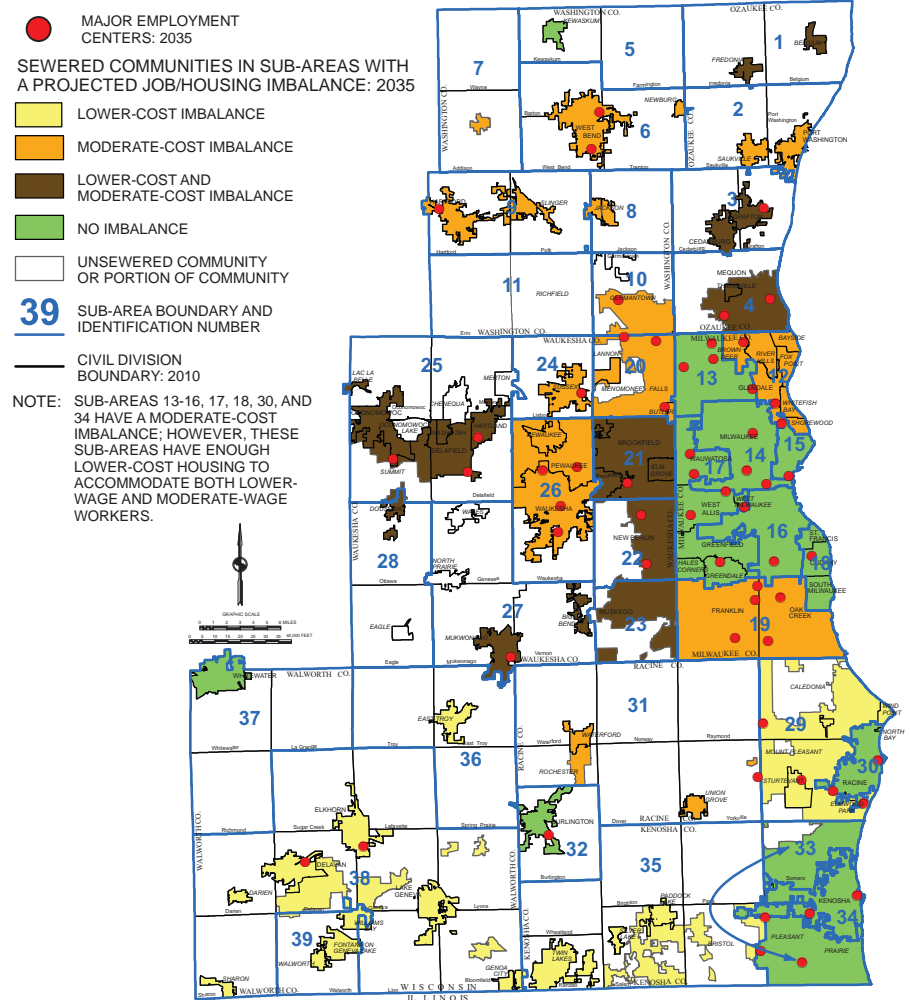
**Preliminary Plan Recommendations for Job/Housing Balance:**

The preliminary plan recommends that sewered communities in sub-areas identified as having an imbalance between job wages and housing costs conduct a more detailed analysis based on specific conditions in their community as part of their comprehensive plan updates. If the local analysis confirms an existing or future job/housing imbalance, it is recommended that the local government consider changes to the comprehensive plan that would provide housing appropriate for people holding jobs in the community, thereby supporting the availability of a workforce for their community’s businesses and industries. Additional multi-family housing is recommended in communities where the local analysis indicates a shortage of lower-cost housing in relation to lower-wage jobs. Additional modest single-family housing is recommended in communities where the local analysis indicates a shortage of moderate-cost housing in relation to moderate-wage jobs. The plan further recommends:

- The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) or other appropriate State agency should conduct a Statewide job/housing balance analysis. Job/housing balance should be a criterion considered by

**Map 4**

**PROJECTED JOB/HOUSING IMBALANCES IN SEWERED COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGION: 2035**



Source: Local Comprehensive Plans and SEWRPC.



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administering agencies during the award of Federal and State economic development incentives. Incentives should be directed to local governments that can demonstrate a job/housing balance, or to communities that will use the incentive to address a job/housing imbalance.

- State, county, and affected local governments should work to fully implement the public transit element of the year 2035 regional transportation system plan to improve connections between affordable housing and jobs. Implementation will require continued State funding and dedicated local funding for transit.
- State law should be amended to prohibit the creation of new TIF districts in communities with a job/housing imbalance, as determined by a Statewide job/housing balance analysis, unless the TIF proposal includes documented steps that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the job/housing imbalance. To avoid creation of a TIF that would cause a job/housing imbalance, State law should also be amended to require TIF proposals to include an analysis of the number and wages of jobs likely to be created as a result of the TIF in relation to the cost of housing in the community, and to include steps to address any potential job/housing imbalance identified through the analysis.
- Strategies to promote job/housing balance should also include increased economic development, job training, and education efforts in areas with low- and moderate-income households and high unemployment and under-employment.

### **Accessible Housing**

#### ***Related Plan Objective:***

Provide accessible housing choices throughout the Region, including near major employment centers.

#### ***Related Findings:***

It is estimated that there are up to 61,640 multi-family housing units in the Region constructed since 1991 that may be accessible to persons with disabilities, due to Federal and State fair housing laws. These laws require newer multi-family housing to be accessible to persons in wheelchairs by providing features such as zero-step entrances and wider doorways and halls. In 2010, about 169,000 households in the Region reported a member with a disability, which indicates a significant need for additional accessible housing. Housing affordability is also a concern to persons with disabilities, whose annual average income is about half the income of a person without a disability.

Preliminary plan recommendations call for the development of additional multi-family housing to help provide housing that would be both accessible and more affordable to persons with disabilities.

Design concepts such as universal design and visitability are intended to increase the accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities without specialization of housing or a significant increase in the cost of housing. These goals may not be realized until some accessible design features, such as wider doorways, zero-step entrances, and accessible electrical outlets and environmental controls become standard construction practices.

#### ***Preliminary Plan Recommendations for Accessible Housing:***

To help address the need for accessible housing, the preliminary plan recommends that seweried communities in sub-areas identified as having a job/housing imbalance or an imbalance between existing household incomes and housing costs identify areas for additional multi-family housing in their comprehensive plan. Additional multi-family housing would help to address both affordability and accessibility needs. The preliminary plan further recommends:

- Local governments should support efforts by private developers and other housing providers to include construction design concepts to make homes easier for people with a mobility impairment to live in or visit. Features that promote ease of use for persons with disabilities include wide hallways, a useable ground floor bathroom with reinforced walls for grab bars, and electrical outlets and switches in accessible locations. The preliminary plan also recommends that building inspectors receive training on the accessibility requirements of State and Federal fair housing laws to ensure that required accessibility features are included in multi-family housing construction and renovations.



Accessible housing for the elderly and persons with disabilities constructed as part of the Highland Gardens redevelopment by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee.



Mixed use (retail, office, and residential) development in the City of Port Washington.

- The Governor and State Legislature should continue to support funding for publically-funded Long Term Care programs such as Family Care; Include, Respect, I Self-Direct (IRIS); and Family Care Partnership as these programs provide the major funding for home modifications which allow persons with disabilities and the elderly to maintain their independence in their homes and communities. The preliminary plan also recommends that existing programs be modified to allow renters to use funding sources for accessibility improvements that are available to homeowners.
- Local governments will have access to estimates regarding accessibility of housing through the American Housing Survey (AHS) beginning in 2012. Local governments should analyze AHS and census data to estimate the number of accessible housing units in the community to help ensure that there are plentiful housing options for persons with mobility disabilities not only to reside in, but also to visit their families and neighbors. To achieve this, municipalities should prioritize remodeling of homes and apartments to improve accessibility with funding from HUD grants, TIF extensions, and other sources.

### **Housing Development Practices**

#### ***Related Objectives:***

1. Encourage the use of environmentally responsible residential development practices throughout the Region.
2. Encourage neighborhood design principles that provide housing in a physical environment that is healthy, safe, convenient, and attractive.

#### ***Related Findings:***

Multi-family housing and higher-density single-family housing can provide more affordable housing and at the same time provide for a more compact development pattern. Compact development allows housing to be located closer to jobs and services, such as shopping and schools, which minimizes vehicle travel and increases opportunities for walking and bicycling. Compact development also minimizes the conversion of farmland to urban uses.

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***Preliminary Plan Recommendations for Housing Development:***

The preliminary plan recommends that local governments consider preparing detailed neighborhood plans for each residential neighborhood where significant urban development or redevelopment is expected, based on the overall neighborhood densities and land uses recommended in the community's comprehensive plan. Neighborhood plans should more specifically identify areas for multi-, two-, and single-family development, with a variety of lot sizes for single-family development, and, potentially, areas for mixed uses (retail, service, or office with residential and live-work units). The preliminary plan also recommends the redevelopment and infill of vacant and underutilized sites, including the cleanup and reuse of brownfields, as a key element in planning for the revitalization of urban areas and the development of affordable housing.

The preliminary plan further recommends that public housing agencies and developers consider the use of green building methods and materials for new and renovated housing where financially feasible, with priority given to energy-saving materials and construction practices, such as low-flow water fixtures; energy-star appliances; and high-efficiency furnaces, water heaters, windows, and insulation.

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

An important part of the housing planning effort is monitoring plan implementation to determine progress towards achievement of the plan vision and objectives. The preliminary plan recommends that SEWRPC conduct an ongoing, regionwide data collection and analysis effort to monitor progress towards the implementation of plan recommendations, based largely on information to be gathered from Federal and State agencies and county and local governments.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS**

SEWRPC has contracted with the UW-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development to conduct a socio-economic impact (SEI) analysis of the preliminary recommendations of the regional housing plan. The preparation of the SEI is a result of a recommendation made by SEWRPC's Environmental Justice Task Force that a SEI analysis be conducted for all regional plans prepared by SEWRPC to help identify potential benefits and adverse impacts of regional plans on minority and low-income populations and persons with disabilities, and to help assess whether such populations may be expected to receive a proportionate share of any plan benefits and/or a disproportionate share of any negative impacts. The findings of the SEI will be considered by the Commission prior to any formal action on the regional housing plan. The SEI findings will be presented during the public meetings listed on page 1. Information about the SEI is available on the UWM website at <http://www4.uwm.edu/ced/sewrpc/index.cfm>, or by contacting SEWRPC at (262) 547-6721.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Final plan recommendations will be developed in response to the SEI findings and public review and comment on the preliminary plan recommendations. It is anticipated that the final plan recommendations will be reviewed by the Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee and Environmental Justice Task Force in early 2013 and that the Regional Planning Commission will consider adoption of the regional housing plan in Spring of 2013. SEWRPC will then transmit a copy of the adopted plan to each County and local government in the Region and to all concerned local, areawide, State, and Federal agencies. It is recommended that each of the concerned agencies and units of government endorse the plan and integrate the findings and recommendations into their planning, regulatory, and other activities related to housing and land use. It is particularly important that the plan be integrated into community planning efforts, especially in communities with sewer service.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT**

Meetings to gather public input on the preliminary plan will be held throughout the Region in November and early December 2012. Meeting dates and locations are listed on page 1. Additional information about the plan is available on the SEWRPC website at [www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/housing.htm](http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/housing.htm). Written comments can be submitted at the public meetings, through the website, or by contacting SEWRPC staff by mail, e-mail, or telephone using the contact information on the last page. Public comments submitted in writing by December 14, 2012, will be included in the Record of Public Comments that will be published for review by the Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee and the Regional Planning Commission when they consider approval of the plan.



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## CONTACT INFORMATION

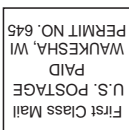
Contact information to submit a comment, obtain additional information, or request a briefing:

Website: [www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/Housing.htm](http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/Housing.htm)  
E-mail: [sewrpc@sewrpc.org](mailto:sewrpc@sewrpc.org)  
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This newsletter was mailed directly to a list of individuals and organizations that have expressed interest in receiving such information. If you would like to receive future issues directly, or would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact SEWRPC using the information above.

### THIS NEWSLETTER CONTAINS:

<b>Executive Summary and Meeting Schedule</b> .....	p. 1
<b>Background</b> .....	p. 2
<b>Advisory and Review Committees</b> .....	p. 2
<b>Preliminary Plan Recommendations</b> .....	p. 2
<b>Plan Implementation and Monitoring</b> .....	p. 11
<b>Socio-Economic Impact Analysis</b> .....	p. 11
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	p. 11
<b>Opportunities for Public Input</b> .....	p. 11



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