

SEWRPC Regional Housing Plan Work Scope

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) is the areawide planning agency for the seven-county southeastern Wisconsin region. It is charged by State law with “the function and duty of making and adopting a master plan for the physical development of the region.” In carrying out those designated responsibilities, the Commission has proceeded with the preparation—and, as fiscal resources permit, regular updating—of numerous individual plan elements, which together form the comprehensive plan for the region. The regional land use plan serves as the foundation for all other Commission plan elements. The current regional land use plan, with a design year of 2035, was adopted in June 2006.

In 1975, the Commission prepared and adopted a regional housing plan. This plan is documented in SEWRPC Planning Report No. 20, *A Regional Housing Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin*.¹ The regional housing plan was comprehensive in scope, setting forth an analysis of housing need, a strategy for allocating subsidized housing throughout the Region, and a series of recommendations aimed at the abatement of housing problems. The latter recommendations were focused on reducing economic, institutional--primarily property tax structure and land use controls--and social constraints to the provision of housing in efforts to help meet the most pressing housing needs identified in the Region. The 1975 regional housing plan, like the companion regional land use and transportation plans, was financed in large part through Federal funds, which at that time came from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

With the completion of the regional housing plan, the Commission began what was envisioned at the time as an ongoing regional housing planning work effort. The purpose of the ongoing effort was to promote implementation of the housing plan recommendations through outreach services, monitor progress toward meeting housing plan objectives, and provide the basis for the periodic updating—likely at ten year intervals—of the regional housing plan. This continuing housing planning effort was carried on through 1981. At that point, the Commission lost any ability to access Federal funds to support housing planning efforts. Those fiscal constraints led the Commission to terminate its housing planning program, an action documented in the Commission’s 1981 Annual Report.

¹ SEWRPC Planning Report No. 20 may be viewed at www.sewrpc.org/publications/

As the midpoint of the first decade of the 21st Century neared, the Commission received inquiries about the possibility of finding a way to resume regional housing planning work efforts. These inquiries came from representatives of not only housing advocacy groups, but homebuilder groups as well. Discussions with elected officials in the City of Milwaukee also made it clear that the City desired that the Commission find a way to resume housing planning work. In response to those requests, the Commission explored once again with Federal and State transportation agency program managers the feasibility of conducting housing planning work under the umbrella of the Commission's responsibility as the Federally-recognized metropolitan planning organization for transportation planning. In a reversal from historic positions, agreement was reached that such planning activities would be eligible for inclusion in the land use/transportation work program recognizing, however, that Federal and State funds to support that program were effectively frozen and that supplemental funds to support the additional work would not be forthcoming. Given that Commission matching funds raised via property taxes in the Region were also effectively frozen, this meant that a period of time would be required to complete prior committed work before financial and staff resources could be made available for the initiation of housing planning work.

During the second half of 2008, the Commission was able to begin organizational efforts to reestablish a housing planning effort, including the formation of a Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee that fall (Committee roster attached as Exhibit A). Significant staff work on the housing study was then programmed to begin in 2009. Under these arrangements, the housing planning work is being funded under the Commission's continuing regional land use/transportation study, financially supported with 80 percent Federal funds, 10 percent State funds, and 10 percent local funds. There is no specific study budget for housing related work. Rather, a portion of the total financial resources made available annually under the broader land use/transportation study budget will be allocated for housing planning work. It is the Commission's intent to rebuild staff expertise in the housing area as this effort proceeds and thereby re-establish the continuing housing planning effort that was terminated in 1981.

DEFINITION OF THE HOUSING PROBLEM

The first operational step in the housing study will be to define the regional housing problem that needs to be addressed. That definition will provide the framework for the data collection and analytical activities required to permit the ultimate articulation of policy recommendations intended to address that problem. It may be expected that the housing problem definition will include the following matters:

- The imbalance between jobs and housing in the Region, particularly with respect to the existence of an adequate supply of affordable housing stock in proximity to new employment centers.
- The challenges faced in sustaining the present supply of subsidized housing stock in the years ahead. Major issues attendant to this topic include the termination of tax incentives, the wearing out of properties, and deferred maintenance of such properties.
- The need for accessible housing stock to accommodate disabled individuals.
- Unlawful discrimination attendant in particular to the rental of residential real estate.

ARTICULATION OF A REGIONAL HOUSING VISION

The next operational step in the housing study will be to articulate a regional housing vision for southeastern Wisconsin. This vision will be supplemented and supported by a review and reconsideration of a series of housing objectives, principles, and standards articulated in the first regional housing plan.

DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The third operational step in the housing study will be to define, and reach agreement upon, the term “affordable housing.” In this respect, a review of present definitions being used in the housing planning field will be made.

DETERMINATION OF SUBREGIONAL HOUSING ANALYSIS AREAS

The fourth operational step in the housing study will be the delineation of housing analysis areas within southeastern Wisconsin. The Region presently consists of seven counties and 147 individual municipalities that are either cities, villages, or towns. The delineation of subregional housing analysis areas will be related to clusters of existing and anticipated future urban development and patterns of existing and future job locations. The intent is to identify logical combinations of municipalities to permit a reasonable number of subregional housing analyses to be undertaken and articulated.

ANALYSES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF MARKET-BASED HOUSING

The fifth operational step in the housing study will be the conduct of analyses relating to the provision of market-based housing. There are a number of aspects relative to this topic, including the following:

- **Permitted Development Densities**

Development densities impact housing costs. An analyses will be made of trends in development densities over time to the extent available data will permit. These analyses will be structured by residential building type, i.e., single-family and multi-family. To the extent possible through interviews with local officials, the likely reasons attendant to changes in development densities within communities will be ascertained.

- **Available Range of Housing Stock**

Based upon available data, an analysis will be made of the available housing stock by housing type within local communities and subregional areas.

- **Local Housing Mix Policies**

An inventory and analysis of local housing mix policies will be undertaken. These may be explicit housing mix policies articulated in local plans, or de facto housing mix policies as evidenced by development results.

- **Housing Development Costs**

Based upon available data, an analysis will be made of the significant factors affecting housing development costs, updating work done in the original regional housing plan. This will include land costs, building costs, site improvement costs, and regulatory costs, including impact fees.

- **Costs of Community Services**

To the extent that data can be collated, an analysis will be made of the cost of providing community services by residential development type. This analysis will be intended to address a common perception that higher density multi-family housing carries a substantially higher community cost burden, borne by property taxes, than does lower density single-family development.

ANALYSES RELATING TO THE JOBS/HOUSING IMBALANCE SITUATION

The sixth operational step in the housing study will be the conduct of analyses relating to the jobs/housing imbalance situation. There are several aspects relative to this topic, including the following:

- **Demographic and Employment Profiles**

Demographic profiles and employment will be prepared attendant to each community and housing analysis area, including an analysis of commuting patterns between areas.

- **Market Housing Costs and Incomes**

An analysis will be undertaken relative to the relationship between market housing costs and salary and wage rates in each community and subregional area. Housing affordability ratios will be developed. Comparisons between typical incomes for various job categories and housing costs within each area will be made in an effort to illustrate any housing affordability issues.

- **Affordable Housing Stock Availability**

An analysis will be made of the existing affordable housing stock within each community and subregional area. This will include an assessment of the extent to which such stock is adequate to meet the demand for affordable housing in that area as evidenced in part by those individuals employed within that area.

- **Affordable Housing Needs**

Based on the foregoing analyses, affordable housing needs in each community and subregional area will be estimated. These estimates will be compared with available housing stock and any deficiencies ascertained.

- **Affordable Housing and Economic Development**

An analysis will be undertaken in an attempt to determine the extent to which a lack of affordable housing in a given subregional area may impact economic development efforts. This will be accomplished through interviews with economic development practitioners in the Region.

ANALYSES RELATING TO HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

The seventh operational stop in the housing study will be the conduct of analyses relating to housing discrimination. The following two types of analyses are envisioned:

- **Reported Evidence of Housing Discrimination**

Federal and State housing laws make housing discrimination illegal against any individual in a protected class.² These laws also address a wide range of unlawful housing actions ranging from refusing to rent, sell, insure, construct, or finance housing to printing, publishing, or displaying advertisements or notices that indicate a preference affecting a protected class. Based upon available data from several sources, the extent of reported housing discrimination activity will be ascertained and displayed. The purpose of this particular activity is to inform and educate local officials and members of the general public on the amount of illegal housing discrimination activities that occurs and to reinforce the intent of the laws.

- **Local Land Use Controls**

An analysis will be undertaken on the extent to which local land use controls may operate to effectively—albeit not illegally nor necessarily intentionally—discriminate against sub-groups of the Regional population.

ANALYSES RELATING TO ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

The eighth operational step in the housing study will be the conduct of analyses relating to the provision of adequate numbers of accessible housing units. The Federal Fair Housing Act requires all multi-family buildings first occupied after March 13, 1991, to be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. To the extent data are available, an attempt will be made to quantify the number of accessible dwelling units in each housing analysis sub-area. These estimates will be compared with estimates of accessible housing needs derived from any available data and the knowledge base of groups and organizations who work with disabled individuals in the Region.

² *Protected classes include: race, color, sex, national origin/ancestry, religion, age, disability/handicap, marital status, lawful source of income, sexual orientation, and family status.*

ANALYSES RELATING TO EXISTING SUBSIDIZED HOUSING STOCK

The ninth operational step in the housing study will be the conduct of analyses relating to the existing stock of subsidized housing in the Region. There are several aspects relative to this topic, including the following:

- **Number and Distribution of Subsidized Housing Units**

An inventory will be undertaken relative to the number and distribution of existing subsidized housing units of various types.

- **Historical Perspective/Lessons Learned**

From time to time, questions have arisen as to why certain actions and location decisions were made in past years relative to the type, amount, and location of subsidized housing units. Based upon interviews with knowledgeable people who were involved in making those decisions, an attempt will be made to analyze the impacts of those decisions and from the analyses perhaps draw conclusions as to what lessons have been learned in terms of locating various types of subsidized housing units.

- **Problems Associated With Extending the Life of Existing Subsidized Housing Stock**

There are concerns about possible growing problems associated with extending the life of certain types of existing subsidized housing stock. These problems include the phasing out of subsidized payments, significant amounts of deferred building maintenance, and the general aging and deterioration of that stock. Interviews will be conducted with owners and managers of such subsidized housing units in an attempt to identify and quantify these problems and perhaps provide a basis for articulating recommendations to address those problems.

REVIEW OF BEST HOUSING PRACTICES

The tenth operational step in the housing study will be to review and document best housing practices not only in the Region but throughout the State of Wisconsin and indeed the Nation. This will be accomplished primarily by literature review and interviews with knowledgeable individuals. In particular, this activity will focus on fair-share programs, land use control practices, community development programs, and non-profit organization practices, and will extend to include local case studies of

successful efforts in the Region to ensure within communities an adequate supply of affordable housing, presuming that such case studies can be identified.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

The eleventh and last operational step in the housing study will be the articulation of a series of recommendations focused on addressing the several aspects of the regional housing problem. These recommendations will be addressed primarily to local and State elected officials and will focus on activities aimed at: 1) improving the provision of affordable, market-based housing; 2) strengthening the Region's stock of subsidized housing; 3) reducing housing discrimination activities; and 4) providing adequate numbers of accessible housing units. These sets of housing recommendations will together constitute an updated regional housing plan suitable for adoption by the Commission.

PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF THE HOUSING STUDY

Primary responsibility for guiding, shaping, and strengthening the regional housing study and plan recommendations lies with the 30-member Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee identified in Exhibit A. In addition, the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF), the roster of which is set forth in Exhibit B, will monitor the work of the Housing Study Advisory Committee with a view toward ensuring that Federal environmental justice and related requirements are being met as the housing study progresses. Toward this end, the EJTF will be given an opportunity to review and comment on this scope of work and other materials as produced throughout the duration of the study. Any comments, suggestions, and recommendations that the EJTF may have will be regularly reported to the Housing Study Advisory Committee for their consideration.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE HOUSING STUDY

It is the Commission's intent that there be a range of opportunities for the members of the general public to become engaged in the regional housing study. This will include, but not necessarily be limited to, newsletters, the SEWRPC website, public meetings, outreach, Advisory Committee meetings, Environmental Justice Task Force meetings, other meetings, and news releases.

Public meetings will be held in at least three intervals during the planning process: 1) study initiation (to enable discussion on the work scope and content of the plan), 2) study initial findings (to enable

discussion on initial data and findings and permit suggestion of potential actions), and 3) study alternative and preliminary plan recommendations (to permit discussion of preliminary and final plan recommendations). These intervals will coincide with the release of newsletters and cover the same topics. News releases, as well as the website, will be used to publicize upcoming public meetings. Commission staff will also provide briefings or presentations regarding the regional housing plan to all interested groups, including government agencies and housing advocacy groups, and individuals upon request.

Efforts to increase public participation of low income and minority populations in the planning process will be undertaken during the consideration of the number and location of public meetings. The Commission will actively conduct outreach to provide information to, and receive comments from, low income and minority groups and organizations. A list of organizations is maintained by SEWRPC for the purpose of facilitating such outreach and will be consulted in an effort to publicize regional housing plan public meetings.

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Exhibit A

SEWRPC REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

William R. Drew, Chairman SEWRPC Commissioner
Julie Anderson Planning Director, Racine County Planning and Development
David Cappon Executive Director, City of Waukesha Housing Authority
Michael Cotter Director, Land Use & Resource Management, Walworth County
Damon Dorsey Owner, The Dorsey Group, Milwaukee
Joe Heck Assistant Director, Racine Department of City Development
Rob Henken President, Public Policy Forum, Milwaukee
Michael Hoeft City Planner, City of Waukesha
Gary Koppelberger City Administrator, City of Hartford
Jeff Labahn Director of City Development, City of Kenosha
J. Scott Mathie Government Affairs/Educational Programming;
Director, Metropolitan Builders Association, Pewaukee
George E. Melcher Director, Kenosha County Planning and Development
Michael Murphy Alderman, City of Milwaukee
Falamak Nourzad Principal, Continuum Architects & Planners, Milwaukee
Linda Olson Director of Aging and Disability
Resource Center, Washington County
Antonio M. Pérez Executive Director, City of Milwaukee Housing Authority
Brian Peters Housing Policy Advocate, IndependenceFirst;
Member of EJTF, Milwaukee
Kim Plache Milwaukee Office of WHEDA
Maria Prioletta Housing Development Director, Milwaukee
Department of City Development
Matrio “Marty” Reed Shorewest Realtors, Milwaukee
Delbert F. Reynolds Field Office Director, Housing and Urban Development
Welford Sanders Executive Director, M.L. King Economic
Development Corporation
Mary Kay Schleiter Associate Professor, Department of Sociology-Anthropology,
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
Kori Schneider-Peragine Program Manager, Community/Economic Development Program,
Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
Dale R. Shaver Director, Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use
Michael J. Soika Executive Director, YMCA Urban Campus, Milwaukee
Andrew T. Struck Director of Planning and Parks, Ozaukee County
Scott Thistle President, Brookstone Home Builders, Waukesha
Rev. James C. Thomas Retired, Board of Ezekiel Community
Development Corporation
John F. Weishan, Jr. Supervisor, Milwaukee County Board

Exhibit B

SEWRPC ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Adelene Greene, Chair Secretary, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission;
Director of Workforce Development, Kenosha County

Ness Flores Attorney, Flores & Reyes Law Offices

Joettee Heckenbach COPE Services

Nancy Holmlund President, Racine Interfaith Coalition

Darryl Johnson Executive Director, Riverworks Development Corporation

Lo Neng Kiatoukaysy Executive Director, Hmong-American Friendship Association

Gary Koppelberger City Administrator, City of Hartford

N. Lynnette McNeely Attorney, Law Offices of Thomas J. Awen; NAACP

Larry Moore Community Partnership Coordinator, City of Milwaukee Housing Authority

Brian Peters Housing Policy Advocate, Independence *First*
Credit Union; former Racine Police Officer

Yolanda Santos Adams Director, League of United Latin America Citizens

Jackie Schellinger Indian Community School

Theresa Schuerman Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach

Willie Wade Alderman, City of Milwaukee