

REGIONAL HOUSING AND AIRPORT STUDIES BEGIN

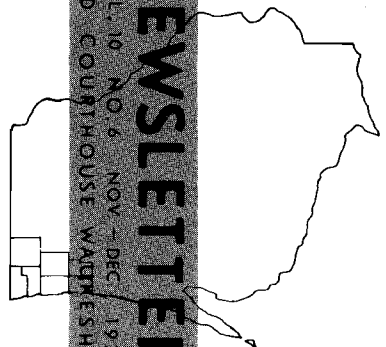
The Commission has begun in recent months work on two additional major planning programs—a regional housing study and a regional airport system planning program. Both of these new programs grew out of requests from constituent local units of government and out of planning requirements tied to federal aid planning and construction grant programs.

The regional housing study was initially requested in June 1968 by the City of Milwaukee as an aid in conducting its various housing and renewal programs and in assessing its role in the provision of housing within the larger Milwaukee metropolitan area. In addition, the U. S. Congress, in the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, stipulated that all federally assisted comprehensive planning must include the preparation of a housing plan element. In response to these actions, the Commission prepared and published in December 1969 a Regional Housing Study Prospectus.

The regional airport system planning program was initially requested by Milwaukee County and by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, such requests being prompted not only by a need to meet federal planning requirements contained in grant-in-aid rules but also by a recognition of the pressing need to develop a regional airport system plan to guide the financing, operation, and development of the airport facilities in the Region, with particular emphasis on the integration of an

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HOUSING AND AIRPORT STUDIES—continued

airport system plan with the adopted land use and highway and transit regional plan elements. The Commission, in response to these requests, prepared and published in December 1969 a Comprehensive Regional Airport Planning Program Prospectus.

Regional Housing Study

The regional housing study formally got underway in July 1970, with initial work elements being directed primarily at the preparation of detailed study design memoranda for each of the specific inventories outlined in the Prospectus. The end result of the regional housing study will be a series of recommendations addressed specifically to at least two principal subject areas which, taken together, will provide the initial framework for the development of a regional housing strategy. Such recommendations will, of course, be based upon detailed inventories, thorough analyses of the data collected, forecasts of housing demand and supply, and an appraisal of unmet housing needs within the Region. The recommendations to be made in the study will deal at least with: 1) the maintenance of a uniform, areawide data file of relevant housing market information, including the specific identification of the data considered most relevant and required to be maintained, the preferred source of the data, the frequency of collection, the geographic area of coverage, the uniformity of compilation, and the means of dissemination; and 2) the role that all levels of government—federal, state, and local—acting together with the private sector, can best assume in the provision and maintenance of housing in a suitable environment for every resident of the Region. This latter recommendation will include specific existing and possible future public housing program sponsorship proposals and specific areas of influence and activity that each level of government can best serve. Technical and policy guidance for the regional housing study is being provided by a 14-member Technical and Citizens Advisory Committee.

The inventory phase of each study element of the regional housing study is a six-step process which consists of the preparation of study design

HOUSING AND AIRPORT STUDIES—continued

memoranda, data collection, quality control procedures, data processing, mapping and graphics, and the preparation of a descriptive report. Several study design memoranda have been prepared to date and approved by the Committee. These include: housing cost trends, including land, land development, construction, and finance costs for conventionally and nonconventionally built housing units; land use; soils capability; and public utility inventories.

Additional memoranda, dealing with alternative advisory committee structures and sizes; consultant services; existing housing stock inventory; and land use controls inventory, are presently under consideration by the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committee. Work on preparation of memoranda dealing with technological changes in the housing industry, tax structure, government-sponsored housing programs, and an attitudinal survey has also begun. It is expected that the extensive inventory phase of the regional housing study will be completed by the end of 1971. The data analyses, preparation of forecasts, and preparation of a regional housing market simulation model will be conducted during 1972. The preparation and evaluation of recommendations will begin late in 1972 and be completed in July 1973, when the study will terminate. A series of technical and planning reports is contemplated to document the findings and recommendations of the study.

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE
SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF

HOUSING AND AIRPORT STUDIES—continued

The total cost of the regional housing study, which is being conducted over a three-year period, is \$531,000. Two-thirds of the needed funds are being provided by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under a comprehensive planning grant to the Commission. The remaining one-third is being provided by the seven member counties in the Region on the basis of relative equalized assessed property valuation.

Regional Airport System Planning Program

The Prospectus for the regional airport system planning program recommended the establishment of a three-year work program beginning in January 1970. Funding of the \$396,000 study was proposed to be shared as follows: U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development—25 percent; U. S. and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation (jointly)—65 percent; and seven county boards in the Region—10 percent. Although funding was secured in January 1970 from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the seven county boards, the joint funding arrangements with the state and federal transportation department was not settled until the fall of 1970, when the Wisconsin Department of Transportation agreed to fund the entire 65 percent share and seek at least partial reimbursement from the U. S. Department of Transportation under the new planning grant provisions of the federal Airport and Airways Development Act of 1970, which Act was passed by the U. S. Congress in May 1970.

Technical and policy guidance for the regional airport system planning program is being provided by a 12-member Technical Coordinating and Advisory Committee. During the past few months, the Committee has met to review and approve the interagency agreements and contracts needed to govern the conduct of the study. The Committee also impaneled from its members a Consultant Examining Board to screen several consulting firms invited to discuss participation in the study. Many of the air transportation economic and engineering skills needed for the study will be provided by a consultant retained for that purpose. After interviewing in an all-day session six consulting firms, the Examining

HOUSING AND AIRPORT STUDIES—continued

Board recommended that negotiations be undertaken with the firm of R. Dixon Speas Associates, Inc., Manhasset, New York, as the major consultant for the airport system planning program. The R. Dixon Speas firm has an international reputation in the field of airport and airway system planning and numbers many of the major commercial airlines, as well as many governmental agencies, among its clients. The negotiations were successful and contracts with the R. Dixon Speas firm were signed in December 1970, with work to begin in January 1971. Because of the need to complete the airport planning program by the date originally scheduled, it was agreed by the consultants, the interagency staff assigned to the program by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the Commission staff that intensive efforts would be made to complete the program within a two- rather than a three-year period, with completion scheduled for December 1972.

Major inventories to be included in the regional airport system planning program are the following: special-purpose base mapping; climatologic data; soil capabilities; land use; population and economic activity; public utilities; community plans and zoning; air transportation system, including airways, airports, and associated surface transportation facilities, existing air transportation movement, including the "ground" origins and destinations within the Region of all air travel, scheduled air service patterns, and aircraft characteristics; and the legal framework, institutional structure, and public financial resources for plan implementation. These inventories will be followed by extensive analyses and the preparation of forecasts of probable future air traffic demand. Alternative airport system plans, including various proposals for airport facility location, function, capacity, service area, and related land use proposals, will be prepared for public evaluation, after which a recommended airport system plan will be detailed.

SEWRPC NOTES



NEW COMMISSIONER APPOINTED

Mr. Ralph J. Huiras, Chairman of the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors and an attorney in private practice in Ozaukee County, was elected to the Regional Planning Commission by the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Huiras replaces Mr. Ray F. Blank and will serve an unexpired term ending September 1972. Mr. Blank had served on the Commission for 10 years, being one of the original 21 Commissioners appointed at the Commission's inception in 1960. In recent years, Mr. Blank had begun to retire from public life, after serving for many years as both Chairman of the Ozaukee County Board and the Grafton Town Board. Mr. Huiras is currently Chairman of the Town of Cedarburg and has served continuously on the Town of Cedarburg Plan Commission since 1957. He is a graduate of Marquette University and its Law School and is a former agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As a county board-appointed Commissioner, Mr. Huiras automatically serves on the Intergovernmental and Public Relations Committee for the Commission.

ELECTION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Pursuant to Commission Bylaws, the annual election of Commission Officers was held at the Commission Quarterly meeting held on December 3, 1970, in the Milwaukee County Courthouse. The Commission unanimously approved the election of the following Officers for calendar year 1971: George C. Berteau, Kenosha County, who was reelected to his tenth term as Chairman; James F. Egan, Ozaukee County, who was elected to his second term as Vice-Chairman; Richard W. Cutler, Milwaukee County, who was reelected to his seventh term as Secretary; and Joseph A. Schmitz, Washington County, who was reelected to his third term as Treasurer.

Commission Bylaws provide that the Executive Committee be composed of the four Officers of the Commission and such additional members as to ensure that each of the seven constituent counties is represented on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets monthly and is empowered to act for the full Commission on all matters except the adoption of an annual budget and the adoption of regional plan elements. The Executive Committee for 1971, elected at the December Quarterly

meeting, consists of the four above-named Commission Officers and the following Commissioners: Eugene Hollister, Walworth County; Milton F. LaPour, Racine County; and Theodore F. Matt, Waukesha County.

FIRST ADOPTIONS OF FOX RIVER WATERSHED PLAN

As reported in an earlier issue of this Newsletter, the Commission adopted on June 4, 1970, a comprehensive plan for the Fox River watershed, which plan contains integrated proposals for land use development, natural resource protection, park and outdoor recreation development, flood control, surface water pollution abatement, and water supply in this important urbanizing watershed. This plan was then formally certified to the affected constituent local units of government and state and federal agencies for adoption or endorsement and subsequent plan implementation. The Commission has since received notice of two formal plan adoption actions and several plan endorsements. The plan was formally adopted as a guide for urban and rural development within the watershed by the Walworth County Board of Supervisors on September 24, 1970, and by the Village Board of the Village of Rochester on November 5, 1970. In addition, the plan has been acknowledged or endorsed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation; the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service; and the U. S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division.

The Commission notes with deep regret the untimely death of Mr. Ray Schmidt, a member of the Commission from Walworth County since 1964. Mr. Schmidt, a teacher at the Milwaukee Technical College, died suddenly on November 22, 1970. During his tenure on the Commission, Mr. Schmidt served on the Planning and Research Committee, helping to structure the important work programs of the Commission. Mr. Schmidt is survived by his wife and family, who live in the Village of East Troy.

AROUND THE REGION

CITY OF WAUKESHA

Frank M. Hedgcock has been appointed City Planner for the City of Waukesha. Mr. Hedgcock has been in the planning field for over eight years, most recently as Executive Director, Coles County Regional Planning Commission, Charleston, Illinois. He formerly was Chief Planner for the Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

RACINE COUNTY

The Racine County Park Commission has recently published a planning report entitled, Racine County Parks Comprehensive Plan. This report analyses the present and anticipated future park and outdoor recreational needs of Racine County and presents a recommended future park acquisition and development plan. Racine County is a signatory to the interagency Southeastern Wisconsin Open-Space Planning and Land Acquisition Agreement. Preparation of the Racine County park and outdoor recreation plan will help ensure continued eligibility for the County under the federal LAWCON and state ORAP park and open-space grant-in-aid programs.

CITY OF MEQUON

The City of Mequon Common Council recently enacted a temporary moratorium on all building within the 100-year recurrence interval floodplain as determined by the Commission under the Milwaukee River watershed study. The City intends to update its existing floodplain zoning ordinance to incorporate the newly developed flood hazard data and to meet the requirements of the State Water Resources Act of 1965.

QUESTION BOX

WHAT IS "235" HOUSING?

A great deal of interest has been evidenced recently in the Region regarding so-called "235 housing." Just what is this program?

Formally titled, "Interest Supplements on Mortgages for Home Ownership for Lower-Income Families," and authorized by Section 235 of the National Housing Act of 1968, as created by the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, the 235 housing program is administered by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The 235 housing program provides assistance in the form of federal interest subsidy payments and mortgage insurance to assist lower-income families in acquiring a new or existing home. The program enables lower-income families to purchase their own homes with a down payment of \$200 and with mortgage interest rates as low as one percent on a 30-year mortgage. The amount of subsidy will vary according to the income of each homeowner and the total amount of the mortgage payment at the market rate of interest. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development makes periodic assistance payments on behalf of the homeowner to the lender in an amount necessary to make up the difference between 20 percent of the family's monthly income and the required monthly payment under the mortgage for principal, interest, taxes, insurance, and mortgage insurance premium.

The Section 235 housing program has been heavily utilized in the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region during the last three years, where lower-income families have obtained approval for the purchase of 893 new homes, 577 existing homes, and 207 rehabilitated homes, representing a total of 1,677 units, or 49 percent of all units acquired in Wisconsin under the auspices of the Section 235 program. While these statistics appear impressive in terms of the volume of construction

QUESTION BOX—continued

which has taken place, the number of applications for 235 housing continues to exceed the number of approved applications by a large margin. In addition, progress has been slowed by the lack of final Congressional approval of the 1970 HUD appropriations for housing. This has led to limiting the use of Section 235 funds for hardship cases only. Hardship cases are determined according to the following criteria:

1. The applicant family must have five or more minor children; or
2. Is being displaced by governmental action; or
3. Is being forced to move from public housing because its income has increased beyond the eligibility limits for continued occupancy of the public housing units; or
4. Is presently residing in housing representing demonstrable health or safety hazards.

These criteria leave eligible only a fraction of the applications received for 235 housing.

Other specifications of the Section 235 Assistance Program include limitations on family income¹ regarding eligibility for 235 housing and maximum floorspace areas. Family income limitations vary according to family size and geographic location, ranging from a high of \$9,990 for a family of 10 to a low of \$4,050 for a single individual. Maximum floorspace limitations also vary according to family size and geographic location, ranging from 1,150 square feet for four-bedroom units to 930 square feet for three-bedroom units. Since priority is given to large families, all units purchased contain three to four bedrooms. This effectively rules out families of less than four persons, while the number of applications for families with five persons or more continues

¹Family income herein refers to gross annual income of all members of the family who propose to live in the unit less 5 percent for Social Security and \$300 for each minor dependent.

QUESTION BOX—continued

to exceed the funds available for application approvals. Current FHA policy concerning the allocation of units according to family size is as follows:

Three-bedroom home: family heads with three children, or two children above age 10, or one teenage child and one very young.

Four-bedroom home: family heads with four children of any age, or three children above age 10, or two teenagers plus one very young.

The program also currently specifies that purchase prices may not exceed \$21,000 for a three-bedroom house and \$24,000 for a four-bedroom dwelling, including lot and site development costs. These limits are for so-called "high-cost" areas. Somewhat lower limits are enforced in lower-cost building areas.

The Section 235 Assistance Program has, to date, provided housing for 1,677 families within the Region who presumably would not have been able to afford adequate housing facilities at present-day prices. In addition, the program has stimulated the housing construction industry at a time when national economic conditions have greatly reduced the production of housing units throughout the nation. A total of 66 builders have been or are currently involved in the production of "235 housing" within the Region. The primary intended impact of the Section 235 Assistance Program, however, is the provision of decent, safe, and sanitary housing for those who have the greatest need but lack the necessary economic resources to obtain such housing.

QUOTABLE QUOTE.....

"Neighborhood decay starts slowly, but when it has gained momentum, it has the force of a hurricane or a great storm at sea. It destroys values, it destroys families, it destroys people."

Robert F. Wagner
Mayor of New York
1960

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RETURN REQUESTED

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