

February 25, 2010
Housing Task Force
2010 Working Group – Formation and Direction

Housing / Transportation / Employment Linkages Working Group

Purpose: The 2010 Annual Comprehensive Housing Plan (ACHP) calls for the formation of a **Housing / Transportation / Employment Linkages Working Group** (here on out referred to as “Linkages Working Group” (LWG)). This Linkages Working Group is intended to build upon work begun as part of the initial 2004 Housing Task Force “Community & Regional Strategies Working Group” which, among other topics, examined a **jobs/transportation/housing mismatch in Illinois**. The new working group will revisit that examination and propose new and timely solutions. These solutions will be designed to address the issues in the current financial environment where it is important to stretch and access all available dollars for housing and infrastructure.

Linkages Working Group Formation Meeting: A preliminary meeting of interested parties convened at IHDA on February 3, 2010. The purpose of this informal meeting was to discuss the scope and composition of the working group, and possible deliverables. In attendance at this meeting was Gloria Materre (IHDA, Executive Director and Housing Task Force Chair), Robin Snyderman (of Metropolitan Planning Council, Housing Task Force Member and Chairperson of the 2004 Community & Regional Strategies Working Group), King Harris (of Chicago Metropolis 2020, Housing Task Force Member and 2004 Community & Regional Strategies Working Group participant), Nancy Firfer (Chicago Metropolis 2020), Jane Bilger (Senior Policy Director of IHDA), Jennifer Novak (IHDA, Assistant Director of OHCS), Alan Quick (IHDA, OHCS), and Nicki Pecori (IHDA, Finance),.

Discussions focused on helping to create regional housing plans in order to break down barriers to affordable housing and re-connect neighborhoods via effective transportation and building near job centers – comparable to Chicago Metropolis 2020’s Homes for a Changing Region Vision Plans. Topics for the Linkage Working Group to discuss include expanding statewide capacity for **employer assisted housing** and **housing counseling providers**. It was also agreed that it would be important to examine the topics at hand with the **viewpoint of the current fiscal situation, using the working group as a way to pull out new ideas that can be used to revamp and reorient the IHDA (and other State Agency) approach to funding and lending where possible, and to seek other funding sources**.

Working Group Parameters: Because the Housing Task Force is part of a statewide entity that recognizes the need to serve all of the varied statewide populations, efforts have been made with all working groups to emphasize statewide representation – the Linkage Working Group will be no exception. Given the regional nature of the housing, transportation, and employment linkages being explored by this working group, **statewide representation is a critical part of recognizing all regions throughout the state**. Recent information in HUD’s FY2011 budget justification indicated that SCI will also be targeted to States and regions which are planning for pre-disaster mitigation strategies.

Additionally, it is important that this working group be aggressive in its formation, agenda, and meeting schedule. Time is of the essence and because one of the chief goals of the Linkage Working Group will be to **prepare the State of Illinois to access federal dollars anticipated to come online under the HUD’s CDBG-funded Sustainable Communities Initiative and other federal Housing/ Transportation/ Employment linkage initiatives**, it becomes extremely important to operate swiftly and efficiently. While the working group will operate throughout 2010, the group will work to accomplish its initial goals within six months.

The 2010 Annual Comprehensive Housing Plan sets forth an preliminary scope of work for the Linkages Working Group (on page 12). This scope of work will be further refined as the Linkages Working Group is established and formed.

Revised Scope of Work: The formation meeting successfully narrowed the initial scope of work down to the following revised list of activities/areas of investigation for the Linkages Working Group:

- Development of **methodology and/or regional capacity building models** - both in metropolitan areas and outside of them – designed to help coordinate and leverage maximum funding under live near work and transit initiatives. This methodology may include organizing the state into a series of sub regional hubs or through existing regional planning structures;
- **Examination of standards established by both anticipated Federal and State legislated mandates regarding housing and transportation linkage** – with particular emphasis on the applicability of such standards outside of metropolitan areas as well as within them – in an effort to assist State, regional, and local preparedness for federal funding sources that may become available (e.g. The Sustainable Communities Initiative Act, federal inter-agency funding schemes, et al);
- Best practices for all regions of Illinois regarding **preservation and rental development near transit nodes or downtown employment centers**;
- Revitalization and expansion of **Employer Assisted Housing efforts** throughout the entire State, especially outside the metropolitan Chicago area; and
- Coordination of **Hazard Mitigation strategies and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Strategies**

These general topic areas must be translated into actionable, deliverable items. The development of such specificity will be a key part of the advance work before the Working Group is officially convened. The Working Group will be encouraged to work aggressively in a sub-group format that will drill down at each of these topical areas.

Working Group Composition: It is proposed that the Linkages Working Group chair should be Robin Snyderman of Metropolitan Planning Commission, who also chaired the 2004 Community & Regional Strategies Working Group, and it was agreed that a co-chair be chosen from outside the Chicago Metropolitan area in order to encourage statewide participation. It is additionally suggested that one-third of the participants be from communities located outside of metropolitan Chicago (keeping with the rule of thumb that 2/3 of Illinois' population resides in the Chicago metropolitan areas).

Certain types of participants will be targeted in order to assemble the proper kind of expertise to best navigate the Working Group's scope of work. It was agreed that this working group should be populated by:

- Developers;
- Financial Experts (Banks, Mortgage Counselors);
- Advocates;
- Transportation Experts;
- Environmental Experts;
- Regional / Metropolitan Planning Organizations;
- Public Housing Authority representatives;
- Appropriate State Agency Representation (IHDA, DCEO, IDOT, EPA, IEMA);
- Federal Agencies (HUD, DOT, U.S. EPA);
- Regional Employers;
- Workforce Development Agencies
- Energy Conservation Advocates
- County and/or Municipal Representatives; and possibly
- Philanthropic Entities.

It is suggested that in choosing the participants, IHDA ensure that there is non-metropolitan and/or rural as well as metropolitan representation in each category, to the extent practicable.

Next Steps:

- IHDA will work to formulate a list of participants for the Working Group in the next month, and by March 15, 2010 aims to have fully formulated and vetted list of Linkage Working Group participants;
- Once formed the working group will meet on a monthly basis, beginning as soon as possible. Meeting locations will alternate between Chicago (IHDA offices) and locations outside of Chicago, including downstate, (TBD) in an effort to encourage statewide participation;
- A fully realized scope of work – with actionable items, as discussed above – will be refined in the initial meeting(s) of the working group;
- Subgroups may be formed to more closely examine particular scope of work items;
- The group will work towards the creation of one coordinated report to the Housing Task Force by November 30, 2010 (in time for inclusion in the 2011 ACHP), but is expected to develop proposals and reports as needed throughout the year in advance of or in response to RFPs as they are issued.