

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2011
To: Housing Committee Members
CC: Ray Harmon, Bill Clingan, Brad Murphy and Natalie Erdman
From: Dave Porterfield
Subject: Strategic Housing Plan

Based on the input from Staff and the discussions at previous Housing Committee meetings I am proposing that at the next Housing Committee meeting we pass a resolution and forward it to the City Council to authorize the development of a City of Madison Strategic Housing Plan and that they approve up to \$50,000 in funding to hire the required consulting services to assist in developing such a plan.

Prior to considering this motion I would like to ask the committee members to continue and conclude our discussion on the focus of this planning effort. As part of this discussion I would like to provide some additional ideas that are a result of my recent meeting with the city staff members listed above. I asked for a meeting with city staff to get their further input and reactions to the concept of establishing a City Strategic Housing Plan. My synthesis of that discussion follows.

Overall there appears to be good reason to develop a strategic housing plan if that plan can provide the City policy and decision makers with future direction on issues pertaining to housing. The Housing Committee and this plan should be focusing on broad housing policy issues that include not only affordable housing issues and needs but policies that cover the full spectrum of housing needs in the community. The purpose of this plan should be to provide a future vision of for housing and how it relates and supports other aspects of the overall community including neighborhoods, employment and education. This is not to say that affordable housing would not be considered and included in the plan but rather it is not the central or only focus of the plan.

Housing is a complex social, political and economic issue that has many challenges. Housing has played a central role in creating culturally and economically diverse schools, communities and neighborhoods. However, it has become markedly more difficult for residents to meet their housing needs with the increase of low income students in the school districts and the decline in the average household median income. Additionally demographic trends, changes in household makeup, age, tenure, employment and other major shifts warrants the consideration of new and more nuanced policies to accommodate and facilitate possible new patterns in living. These issues really do suggest a different approach to meeting future housing needs.

It is in the City's and its citizens' best interests to consider ways to improve the standard of living for everyone and to attract, assist and sustain residents who are able to more easily participate and compete in the global economy. With its many significant assets the City of Madison and the surrounding region has much to offer. Having a well thought out Strategic Housing Plan is one important part of creating a future vision for our community. This effort can provide the community the opportunity to think more globally and identify specific action steps to assist citizens to better meet their specific goals and needs as they relate to housing issues.

The process of establishing a Strategic Housing Plan needs to include meaningful participation from the business community, real estate professionals, political leaders as well as housing advocates. As members of the Housing Committee we need to request that the City Council and administration provide the resources and leadership needed to ensure effective participation. It is my hope that our committee can send a recommendation that will bring this result.