



## Legislation Text

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**File #: 23825, Version: 1**

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### **Fiscal Note**

The addition of a new staff person to address issues relating to Housing policies is included in the proposed 2012 operating budget of the CDA Redevelopment Agency. The estimated cost of the position is \$85,500 (\$60,000 in salary expense; \$25,500 for benefits). The position is supported with CDA-related revenues; there is no net effect on the levy.

It is unclear whether an assessment of affordable and accessible housing needs can be completed utilizing existing staff resources, or whether a consultant may be required to undertake a study. A comprehensive study performed by a consultant may cost in the range of \$50,000 to \$150,000, depending on the scope of the study. Such funding is not currently included in the City budget.

### **Title**

That housing be recognized as a human right, and that the City of Madison will work with Dane County, surrounding municipalities, and community partners to develop a Housing Plan and address housing issues in the region.

### **Body**

WHEREAS, in 2009 in Dane County, 2,413 individuals in families were turned away from shelter, 92% of those were individuals with families, and 94% of turned-away families were rejected due to lack of shelter space or lack of funds to pay for motel vouchers; and

WHEREAS, these resource limitations mean families with children can only stay in shelter up to 90 days and have a 180-day lifetime limit; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, 29% of families and 30% of single women reported “the threat or fear of violence” as the reason they were seeking shelter; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, 776 children attending schools in Madison were homeless; and

WHEREAS, homelessness impacts a disproportionate number of people of color in Dane County, with 71% in shelter identifying as non-white, 83% of families, 64% of single women, 54% of single men and 48% of unaccompanied youth identified as non-white, and African Americans make up the largest minority group; and

WHEREAS, in the U.S., 20%-40% of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ), while only 3%-5% of the overall youth population identifies as LGBTQ; 44% of gay homeless youth are African-American and 26% of gay homeless youth identify as Latino; 62% of transgender homeless youth are African-American and 20% of transgender homeless youth are Latino; and LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to be the victims of sexual crimes while homeless; and

WHEREAS, immigrants are more likely to face barriers to enforcing their housing rights including language barriers, cultural mistrust, fear of government agencies, fear of retaliation, lack of familiarity with applicable laws, and lack of familiarity with judicial and administrative procedures for enforcing their rights; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, 69 persons in the Dane County shelter system were 62 years and older and AARP reports that in the U.S. in 2001, 18% of homeowners and 38% of renters over the age of 65 spent more than one half of their monthly income on housing; and

WHEREAS, in the U.S., the National Coalition for the Homeless recorded over a thousand incidents of crimes committed against homeless individuals between 1998 and 2009 due to the housed offender's bias against the victim's housing status, and in 2009 alone, 43 homeless men and women lost their lives to such violence; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the Dane County Enhanced Youth Gang Prevention Task Force, listed "accessible and affordable housing" as one of their prevention strategies and recognized that "stable and affordable housing is foundational to family stability and gang prevention"; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the Dane County Task Force on Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System reported "ex-offenders returning to the community after prison face great difficulty obtaining stable housing, employment, support, and treatment" which is "instrumental in avoiding re-incarceration"; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the Dane County Task Force on Poverty's 2009 report identified "seeking housing" as one of the underlying problems for Dane County citizens in poverty; and

WHEREAS, Madison Gas & Electric reports the rental vacancy rate for multi-family real estate in the Madison area for the second quarter of 2011 is only 3.54%, which is down from 4.72% in 2010 and only half of what it was in 2005, resulting in rental prices increasing by 17.82% from May 2010 to May 2011; and

WHEREAS, a Dane County renter making minimum wage would have to work 79 hours per week to afford rent for a one-bedroom rental unit, 93 hours for a two-bedroom and 125 hours for a three-bedroom rental unit; an affordable rent amount for a Dane County renter whose sole source of income is SSI is \$227, which \$515 less than the fair market rent for a one-bedroom unit; an affordable rent amount for a Dane County renter whose sole source of income is W-2 is \$202, which is \$675 less than the fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit; and 52% of Dane County renters are unable to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rent; and

WHEREAS, we are experiencing a national housing crisis due to a record number of mortgage foreclosures and an extreme shortage of affordable housing, and the Madison area is no exception, with a record number of foreclosures in 2010 and over 30% of Dane County homes in or near foreclosure in early 2011; and

WHEREAS, federal funding for subsidized housing has plummeted in the last 30 years, from \$80 billion in 1978 to \$34 billion in 2006; and

WHEREAS, the CDA waiting list for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rent assistance program has been closed since April 1, 2003, (when it only briefly opened up pursuant to a lottery system) and public housing waitlist times range from 12 months to over three years; and

WHEREAS, our efforts to improve housing opportunity and tenant protection at the local level are under attack by our state legislature, which seeks to preempt decades of our hard work on housing issues; and

WHEREAS, unstable housing causes children to suffer from slowed development, emotional problems, and underachievement in education; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on People with Disabilities has identified increased development of accessible housing as a priority; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that the most important piece of a person getting stabilized from struggles with employment, addiction, mental health issues and physical health is by having stable, long-term housing as a first step; and

WHEREAS, unemployment and poverty are systemic problems, and individuals should not be blamed for the lack of income or stability to maintain housing; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium developed a Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Dane County; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), giving it the force of law, which protects individuals from discrimination based on property and economic status; and

WHEREAS, the UN Human Rights Committee has asked our government to take “adequate and adequately implemented” measures to remedy the human rights abuse of having a 12% African-American population but having African-Americans making up 50% of all homeless in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which requires the government to eliminate all racially discriminatory effects of government laws and rules; and

WHEREAS, the City of Madison, as a recipient of federal funds for housing and development, has an obligation to affirmatively further fair housing; and

WHEREAS, the United States has signed onto the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including...housing...”; and

WHEREAS, the human right to housing includes legal security of tenure, availability of services and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy; and

WHEREAS, we join the efforts of Washington D.C., Cook County, Illinois, Minneapolis, New York City and Los Angeles to recognize and progressively realize the human right to housing at the local level;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that housing be recognized as a human right and that all people who desire a place of shelter and stable long-term housing be prioritized to have this basic need met both temporarily and permanently. In doing so, the City of Madison recommits to the goals in its Comprehensive Plan that call for the availability of safe, decent and sanitary and distinctive housing for all residents as well as the objectives and policies that accompany that goal. The City of Madison also recommits to the goals and objectives in the Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Dane County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Madison will initiate the process of developing a Housing Plan and consider creating a staff position that will be responsible for housing policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Housing Plan will include an assessment of the affordable and accessible housing needs in Madison and recommendations for strategies to provide those housing units and shelter beds at appropriate affordability levels by 2031, including ensuring that enough accessible housing is available.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Madison will explore creative uses of the public (e.g., TIF, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and federal, state and local government funds) and private dollars to provide a variety of increased affordable housing, accessible housing and shelter beds, as identified in the plan above.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the issues and solutions contained in the People's Affordable Housing

Vision will be reviewed and considered for incorporation into the Housing Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Housing Plan will include recommendations of policies to prevent foreclosures, evictions, criminalization of homelessness and to help stabilize people in their housing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Housing Plan will affirmatively further fair housing as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Housing Plan will primarily make recommendations based on the current housing market conditions but will not overlook issues that may face the City if the market changes.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City of Madison will work in partnership with Dane County, surrounding municipalities, and community partners to develop the Housing Plan and address housing issues in the region.