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Metropolitan Mayors Caucus 2011 Housing and Community Development Committee Action Agenda

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In 2001, the Housing Task Force of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus developed its first "Housing Action Agenda" which outlined proactive steps toward the full range of quality housing options for the diversity of households that call this region home. The document was approved by the entire Caucus in 2002. In 2011, the new Housing and Community Development Committee of the Mayors Caucus revisited the Action Agenda to reflect changes in the region's housing market and the economy, as well as the Committee's updated commitment to address municipalities' housing needs in conjunction with transportation, economic and workforce development, land use and infrastructure planning. The 2011 Housing and Community Development Action Agenda reflects our current work and future priorities.

2011 Housing and Community Development Action Agenda

Planning and Community Education

The current housing and economic crisis has underscored the importance of good housing and comprehensive plans as a tool to (a) ensure a community's sustainability, affordability and livability, including a diverse and stable housing stock and access to jobs, transportation and other key amenities, and (b) address or prevent a serious mismatch between jobs and housing supply and demand for people at every stage of the life cycle. The Caucus will help communities interested in creating long-term housing and community policy plans which promote a mix of housing options, serve the needs of all future residents and enhance the livability of communities. It will encourage and help identify additional resources to enable municipal leaders to plan for the appropriate mix of housing near jobs and transit. Communities are encouraged to follow the general principles outlined in the Housing Endorsement Criteria during the planning process.

Community education is inextricably linked to planning and capacity building. Local residents, businesses and civic institutions should be invited to participate in the planning process so they can help to shape and inform their community's future goals. Employers and developers can be engaged to help explore how municipal leaders can encourage business development and implement effective public-private partnerships in their communities. Finally, the Caucus will partake in a broader community education effort through its participation in region-wide networking activities to promote housing that meets the Mayors Caucus Housing Endorsement Criteria.

Further, the Caucus will encourage municipal leaders to seek a housing market that encourages all families to compete in the market regardless of their ancestry, national origin or any other impediment to fully accessing the market place.

Housing Preservation, Community Stabilization and Economic Redevelopment

To ensure the appropriate mix of housing options and an efficient use of limited resources, it is critical to be strategic about housing development activity. Recognizing that much of the affordable housing stock in metropolitan Chicago is in older, private sector properties, the Caucus encourages municipalities to focus resources on housing rehabilitation, code enforcement, building code unification and property management training, including training for the owners of properties using Housing Choice Vouchers and other public resources. Toward this end, local leaders can support and advocate for additional public and private sector resources to be made available to preserve rental properties.

Similarly, municipal leaders can ensure that any funds dedicated to addressing the foreclosure crisis are targeted for maximum impact. Communities across the Chicago region have been devastated by foreclosures. The number of distressed homeowners, troubled renters and vacant residential, commercial, and industrial properties has put a growing strain on municipalities and threatens the appeal and safety of neighborhoods. The Caucus will work with partner organizations on a coordinated regional response to address the full range of issues stemming from the foreclosure crisis, including prevention activities such as capacity building among housing counseling agencies, as well as efforts to put vacant properties back into use. While some foreclosed upon properties will be best suited for parks or urban gardens or other non-housing uses, other sites will be appropriate for land assembly and redevelopment. The Mayors Caucus will help develop the land banking and assessment tools to chart the best course. New mixed-income and mixed-use development is most appropriate when tied to transit stops and job centers, and the Caucus offers a number of tools and policies to promote transit-oriented development. Finally, the Mayors Caucus can explore and support activities that encourage job growth and economic development near existing housing development in suburban communities.

Leveraging Private and Public Sector Resources

Municipal leaders should take advantage of additional dollars available to support the necessary links between housing, transportation and employment in their communities. For example, communities can collaborate with local businesses to leverage non-governmental dollars to connect housing and employment through employer-assisted housing (EAH), car sharing, telecommuting and other resources available through the new Commute Option Program (COP). The Mayors Caucus will work with the Metropolitan Planning Council to promote the implementation of EAH and COP for municipal and private workers. It will also continue its efforts to leverage philanthropic dollars to support community development work on a broader scale throughout the region. Finally, the Caucus can be a powerful voice in securing public sector support for land acquisition, redevelopment, senior housing, regional Housing Choice Voucher innovations and other resources to advance local goals and this Housing and Community Development Action Agenda. The Mayors Caucus will review and endorse legislation at the state and federal level as appropriate opportunities arise.

Leadership and Interjurisdictional Coordination

Metropolitan mayors can show leadership on housing and community development issues beyond the local level in a variety of ways. The Mayors Caucus encourages municipalities to adhere to the principles outlined in *GO TO 2040*, the comprehensive regional plan developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Consistent with the Livability Principles advanced at a national level, *GO TO 2040* supports investment in existing communities to create opportunities for more compact, walkable, and mixed-use development, with a range of housing options. It provides principles that municipalities can apply when they decide how and where development should happen or which infrastructure investments to make in their communities. MMC can encourage state and federal policy makers to support policies that adhere to these principles.

Recognizing that housing and economic development challenges rarely adhere to municipal boundaries and that no town has the resources to recreate the wheel, mayors can also show tremendous leadership by working with their neighboring municipal leaders to collaborate jointly on housing and community development issues. The alignment of housing, transportation and workforce development can often be more efficiently and effectively dealt with on an interjurisdictional basis. The Mayors Caucus will support communities that want to work together on housing and community development issues, investing in needed capacity building and policy incentives.

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