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A Sense of Place:

An Analysis of the Need for Housing in Asmara, Eritrea



Plan B
Submitted to the
Urban and Regional Planning Program

By
Tammy Lynne Holt

2004

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TO THE ERITREAN COMMUNITY

**“IT’S NOT HOW MUCH YOU HAVE,
IT’S HOW MUCH YOU APPRECIATE IT”**

SENNAY STEFANOS
Keren, Eritrea

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PREFACE

The motivation for this study evolved out of my participation in an affordable housing research project and my personal interest in the Country of Eritrea, Africa. It was 1998 when the unexpected border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia erupted and resulted in the deportation of thousands of Eritrean's from Ethiopia. I was aware that the close of the thirty year civil war between Eritrea and Ethiopia would bring thousand of refugees home, which would result in an increased need for housing. However, the need was exacerbated by the deported Eritrean's. This provided me with an opportunity to research the projected housing problem and how it could affect the country.

As I began my research, I discovered that there were housing problems in Eritrea, but the problems were not sole due to the deportation. Instead, I discovered that there were other factors such as a poor economy (Eritrea is one of the poorest nations in the world); Eritrea's newness as a nation; and a poor infrastructure (a result of the thirty year civil war). Although, there were limited documented resources available containing information on housing in Eritrea , I did ascertain that the Eritrean government and other interested parties, i.e. Eritrean's living abroad and private group's, were involved in housing development throughout several cities in Eritrea.

Realizing the lack of available data, I was reluctant to continue the research, but I met Dr. Asmerom Kidane, a visiting professor from Asmara University. Professor Kidane listened to my idea and supported it. Also, he extended an invitation to visit the country

for further research. So, I focused in on the problem and found as much as I could through secondary research. Finally, February of 2001, I had the privilege of a trip to Asmara, Eritrea. Due to location and safety, I decided that Asmara would be the study project area, which proved to be what I needed to gather limited but sufficient data to complete my Paper.

The purpose of this report is to conduct an analysis of the housing needs in Asmara, Eritrea with the intent of facilitating public and private strategic support to build, rehab, and maintain housing in the City of Asmara.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone that provided me with assistance during this project. Moreover, thank you for being patient when I had to pause the research, which prevented me from completing it at the time originally expected.

A special thanks to Dr. Asmerom Kidane, former Dean of Social Sciences, Asmara University, who confirmed the research and provided me with technical assistance while in Eritrea; Dr. Rex LaMore, faculty of Urban and Regional Planning, MSU, who was my advisor and supported my desire to take on this enormous task, all for the sake of a Plan B; Sennay M. Stefanos (one of my best friends) who is the epitome of Eritrean excellence; the Eritrean Community; and my family and friends.

Thank You! (Translated as “Yekanyelay” in Tigrinya)

Executive Summary

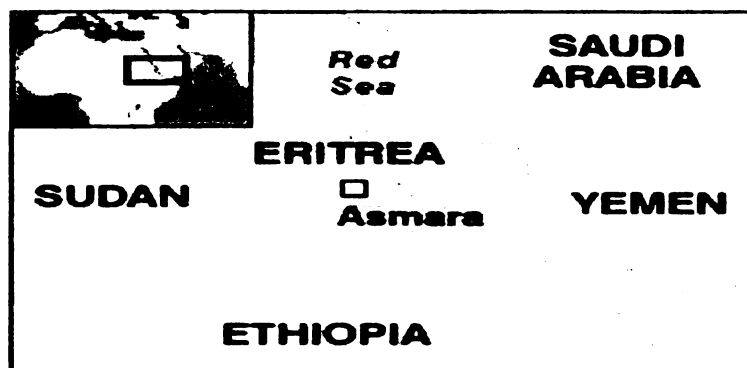


Figure 1: Map of the Eritrean Region highlighting its place in North Africa.

Introduction

Housing is essential to the growth and well being of each individual, regardless of one's status in life. Although, many individuals with sufficient income are afforded the opportunity to secure their own homes, there are many more that are not so fortunate and must depend upon government intervention and/or privatization to obtain shelter. Furthermore, due to politics and war, there are others who struggle to maintain their buildings and basic infrastructure. After a thirty year civil war with Ethiopia, Eritrea is experiencing barriers in attaining the benefits of significant wealth or the build up of its economy.

Eritrea is currently experiencing a housing shortage, particularly in the capital City of Asmara. Although, Eritrea experienced this problem after gaining independence from Ethiopia in 1993, in 1998 a border dispute with Ethiopia exacerbated the problem, which resulted in the deportation of thousands of Eritrean's from Ethiopia, many of whom have never resided in Eritrea. Neither the Eritrean government nor the local citizen's, who are characterized by their self-reliance and resourcefulness, are capable of addressing this issue alone. Even though, there have been attempts to do so with additional aid from private developers and Eritrean's abroad, it is still necessary to advocate for the additional intervention of international support.

The purpose of this report is to conduct an analysis of the housing needs in Asmara, Eritrea, to facilitate public and private strategic support to build, rehab, and maintain housing in the City, and to develop a policy that will support the work of affordable housing construction.

Profile

Eritrea is a relatively small country with an estimated population of 4 million. The country borders the Red Sea, Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti with a total land area of 12.1 million hectares. The study area, Asmara, located on the eastern edge of the Eritrean highlands, is one of ten provinces in Eritrea. It is the largest city in Eritrea, with a population of some 400,000 inhabitants.

History

The modern history of Eritrea dates back to 1890, when it was colonized by Italy for some fifty years. It was followed by the governing of Great Britain from 1941-1952 and in 1952 the United Nations federated Eritrea to Ethiopia, ending in the annexation of Eritrea as Ethiopia's fourteenth province in 1962, which contributed to the 30 year civil war for independence. Over half of the urban population in Eritrea lives in Asmara. Moreover, the deportation, which resulted from the 1998 border dispute, brought many deportees back to Asmara.

Findings

The research findings reveal that the government is committed to providing, supporting, and initiating new housing development projects in Asmara. The government and private developers are funding new housing projects that have been and are still being developed. There is land available for lease from the government. Because of the returning deportees to Asmara, the rents have doubled on many housing units. The need for affordable housing units for lower income residents is imminent. Also, to ensure the completion of all housing projects a plan and cost analysis must be developed and monitored for every housing development project started. Adequate technical assistance is not available for housing development. A Master Plan has not been implemented. There is no affordable housing policy. There has not been an impact study on the housing issues resulting from the deportees. Finally, Eritrea is still vulnerable to war, which may prevent the financial support of outside investors.

SWOT Analysis

The Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis revealed that, although, there are significant weaknesses and threats, the strengths and opportunities provide a balance.

Recommendations

After analyzing the information and data collected, to improve the housing issue in Asmara, I recommend the following:

1. The government support new housing developments that provide affordable housing units for low-income residents.
2. Obtain assistance from Non Government Organizations (NGO's) to provide technical assistance or training for affordable housing.
3. Develop and implement a Master Plan for Asmara.
4. Complete a housing assessment in Asmara that can be accessed on the internet.
5. The government needs to create an affordable housing policy or a Comprehensive Housing Plan that includes building regulations, rents, design, infrastructure, lots, cost, zoning and capacity.
6. Conduct an impact study on the affects of housing resulting from the returning deportees.
7. Maintain peace with the neighboring countries, particularly Ethiopia.

Conclusion

Eritrea is a country with emerging potential and Asmara is a jewel. As the capital city of Eritrea, Asmara will continue to be an attraction for all. So, it is imperative that housing be available to all socio-economic groups interested in residing there. However, due to the demand from the higher income groups and their ability to pay the higher cost for housing, the issue of affordable housing must be addressed. Otherwise, Asmara may experience the negative affects of gentrification.

INTRODUCTION

Housing is a vital part of all communities, it require some form of shelter, sufficient infrastructure, and a decent lot of land. As stated by in the book, The Practice of Local Government Planning, “Every community should provide safe, satisfactory housing opportunities to all households”. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) addresses the issues of “adequate shelter for all” and “sustainable human development in an urbanizing world” through its global campaign of Secure Tenure and Urban Governance (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country>). So, in developing countries, it should be recognized that housing is essential to the growth and well being of each individual, regardless of one’s status in life. Although, many individuals with a stable income are afforded the opportunity to secure their own home, there are many more that are not so fortunate and must depend upon government intervention and/or privatization to obtain shelter. Still there are others who, due to politics and war, struggle to maintain their buildings and basic infrastructure. Consequently, the 30 year civil war with Ethiopia has caused Eritrea to experience barriers in attaining the benefits of significant wealth or the build up of its economy. Eritrea is currently experiencing a housing shortage, particularly in the capital City of Asmara. Even though, Eritrea experienced this problem after gaining its independence from Ethiopia in 1993, in 1998 a border dispute with Ethiopia exacerbated the problem, which resulted in the deportation of thousands of Eritrean’s from Ethiopia, many of whom have never resided in Eritrea. Neither the Eritrean government nor the local

citizen's, who are characterized by their self-reliance and resourcefulness, are capable of addressing this issue alone. Even though, there have been attempts to do so with additional aid from private developers and Eritrean's abroad, it is still necessary to advocate for the additional intervention of international support.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this report is to conduct an analysis of the housing needs in Asmara, Eritrea with the intent of facilitating public and private strategic support to build, rehab, and maintain housing in the City of Asmara.

Goals:

The goal of the project is to provide an analysis of the need for housing in Asmara, Eritrea which will result in a useful document that will impact governmental policies and public and private development projects.

Objectives:

- To assess the housing need in Asmara, Eritrea.
- To ascertain the impact of deported Eritrean's from Ethiopia on housing in Asmara, Eritrea.
-
- To review the role of the Eritrean government, the private sector and other interested groups.
-
- To make recommendation that will result in the development of innovative strategies to increase housing availability.

METHODOLOGY

Literary Research

The target area of the study was the capital City of Asmara. As is the case in many developing countries, there was very little available data on Eritrea, so the methodology of this study consisted of both existing secondary data and primary field research. The secondary data was discovered through a literary review of library and internet sources, a review of available housing data, my attendance at an Eritrean Awareness Program dinner at the Flint International Institute on May 5, 2000 and several conversation with Eritrean professionals and layman.. The best document located was an appraisal report on Eritrea Housing and Urban Development that was prepared by Dr. Burkhard von Rabenau, Urban Economist; Columbus, Ohio, which I refer to in various sections of this report.

Field Research

The field research consisted of a trip to study in the capital City of Asmara for the purpose of touring housing sites and attempting to obtain useful primary data. I conducted informal interviews with Professor Asmerom Kidane, Dean of Social Sciences, Asmara University, Dr. Araya, Tsegai, General Manager, Housing & Commerce Bank of Eritrea, Gabriel Tzeggai, Town Planning Department and Dr. Aldo Jakober, ECO Architecture Development. Also, I video taped segments and photographs of various housing projects throughout Asmara and other parts of Eritrea. Although, I did

review various document in the University library, I did not find any useful information for my study, as most of the documents were written in Tigrinya. Due to the scope and limited availability of individuals, there was no interview instrument used; however, most of the questions asked were based on observations and the initial literary review. Finally, at the invitation of Dr. Asmarom Legesse - on behalf of the Citizens for Peace in Eritrea, I attended a 2 day conference (1 day in Keren and 1 day in Asmara) titled, "Toward Sustainable Peace".

SWOT Analysis

To provide a better analysis of the issue of housing in Asmara, a SWOT analysis was used. The SWOT acronym represents the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the studied area. The following is the result of the analysis:

Strengths:

- There is a demand for housing in Asmara.
- There is available land to build new housing in Asmara.
- Outside investors are developing housing in Asmara.
- Local Eritrean's are capable of building there own housing structures.
- The Government is providing financial support to develop some housing projects.
- The Government is willing to lease the land for housing development.
- New housing strengthens the economy.
- There is a need for affordable housing.
- Asmara is virtually crime free.
- Eritrean's believe in self reliance, not a hand out.

Weaknesses:

- There is a housing shortage in Asmara.
- Housing lots are not affordable.
- Eritrea is not politically stable.

- Asmara is limited on land, which means everyone cannot live there.
- The country has never maintained sustainable peace.
- Eritrea is a poor country.
- Housing is not affordability.

Opportunities:

- The government does allow for private developers to start new housing projects.
- Eritrean's living abroad purchased lots to build new homes in Asmara.
- There are housing research opportunities in Asmara.
- There is a need for technical assistance.
- People want to live in Asmara.
- There are build able lots available in Asmara for new housing.
- Eritreans want peace.
- Eritrean's are welcoming people.

Threats:

- Eritrea is currently in war with Ethiopia.
- Eritrea has a poor economy.
- There is political unrest amongst the Eritrean population.
- There are not enough skilled workers to assist with housing development.
- Written data on housing in Asmara is limited.
- There is no Master Plan.
- Housing is not affordable.

DEMOGRAPHICS

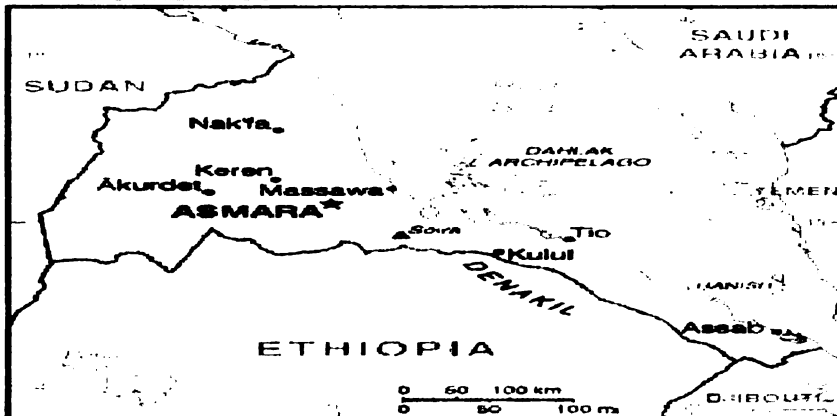


Figure 2: Eritrea and its bounding countries.

Eritrea is a relatively small country with an estimated population of 4 million. It is basically an agricultural economy with approximately 80% of its population living in the

rural areas. It is one of the poorest countries in the world with an annual per capita of approximately \$210 us dollars. The average monthly income for an unskilled worker is approximately 15.00 birr per day, while the skilled worker averages 50.00 per day. The official languages are Tigringa and Arabic, but Amharic (Ethiopian Language), English and Italian are also spoken. The country borders the Red Sea, Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti with a total land area of 12.1 million hectares (Figure 2). The country is divided into ten provinces and covers an area of approximately 124,300 sq. kilometers (45,754 sq miles). Islam and Christianity are the predominant religions (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm>).

BACKGROUND

Origins of Eritrea

Eritrea is founded on the principles of democracy, social justice and the rules of law. The people of Eritrea are united in a common struggle for their right and common destiny (http://www.ertra.com/temp/opimion/ande_g_clear_vision.htm). “It is believed that the first written history of Eritrea dates back to the time when naval commerce flourished between the pharaohs of Egypt and the local chiefs on the Red Sea coast of Eritrea. During the Hellenistic conquest of Egypt, the Greeks occupied the Eritrean coast and kept it for centuries. Furthermore, it is said that the Greek influence was so strong that the name Eritrea is derived from the Greek word Erithraea, which means “red” (RICE 1987, 7).

History

The modern history of Eritrea dates back to 1890, when it was colonized by Italy for some fifty years. It was followed by the governing of Great Britain from 1941-1952 and in 1952 the United Nations federated Eritrea to Ethiopia, ending in the annexation of Eritrea as Ethiopia's fourteenth province in 1962, which contributed to the 30 year civil war for independence. This would result in Eritrea's longest battle ever (<http://europa.eu.int/comm./development/body/country/>).

In 1991, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) eventually liberated the country and established a Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE). On April 1, 1993 a referendum was conducted, which allowed the Eritrean people to decide if they wanted to become an independent nation. Finally, on May 24, 1993, Eritrea received its formal independence (Government of Eritrea 1993, 1-4). Mr. Isaias Afwerki, a well-known military leader in the fight for independence, was elected President by the National Assembly (<http://europa.eu.int/comm./development/body/country/>).

Post Civil War

The bombing raids from the 30 year civil war with Ethiopia devastated many of the villages and cities, some of which were completely ruined. This resulted in the need for major reconstruction and revitalization throughout several areas in Eritrea, including small portions of Asmara (Rock 2000, 221).

Refugees

Another affect from the war were the settlement needs for Eritrea's refugee population,

which has been a tremendous challenge for the country. The needs extend beyond simple repatriation. It is estimated that there are more than 750,000 Eritrean refugees scattered throughout the world, with at least 500,000 in Sudan. Furthermore, after the civil war thousands of refugees returned to Eritrea, with approximately, 80,000 coming from Sudan (Government of Eritrea 1993, 42).

Border Dispute

In 1998, while the Eritrean Government was diligently working to rebuild the country, a dispute ensued between Eritrea and Ethiopia over the border of Badme (Figure 3).

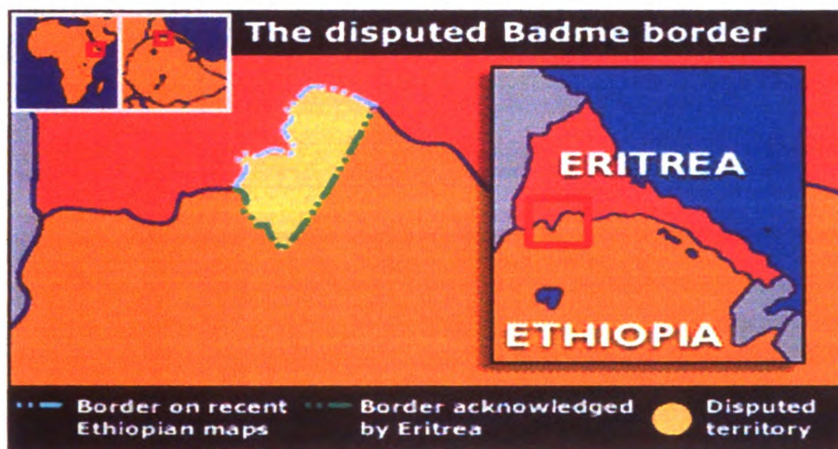


Figure 3: The Badme Border.

Deportation

The consequences of the border dispute lead to the massive expulsion of thousands Eritrean's from all areas of Ethiopia, particularly the Capital City of Addis Ababa. Since the beginning of the border dispute Ethiopia has deported approximately 67,000 Eritreans from the country. These Eritreans were forced to leave their homes and personal property in Ethiopia. The deportees come from a wide array of people including

professionals, business people, and other international organizations, and they come from both urban and rural backgrounds (ERREC 2000, 4), with many of the deportees settled in Asmara. It is estimated that there are more than 75,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin that will have to be cared for by the government (http://www.ertra.com/temp/opinion/ande_g_clear_vision.htm).

The arrival of the deportees has been a terrible burden for the community. Nearly half of the expellees moved in with relatives. Some of the early deportees owned or inherited property in Asmara but those numbers have declined significantly. Furthermore, much of the property in Asmara was built to house officials and middle class tenants, yet the population of the city kept increasing because people were using the city as a refuge from military predators. The result is that the city became filled with people who were using it as a wartime shelter. The deportees also absorbed themselves into this overcrowded city with a number of expellees moving into rental housing (Legesse 2000, 37).

Asmara

History

In 1935 the modern City of Asmara was birthed. The original plan and related service was intended for a small number of the population, which segregated the colonist from the natives. By 1941 the housing stock in Asmara could be compared to any European city, however, the homes were intended for the Europeans and not the Eritreans. Due to the control of Eritrea by the British Administration, from 1941 to 1952, there was limited

urban growth anywhere in Eritrea; the international and regional recession of the late 1940s and 1950s further impeded urban development; from 1961 to 1991 the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia left the country with physical and economic destruction, mismanagement of land and resources and deteriorating urban services (Tzeggai 1995,7).

Area

The Capital City of Asmara, with its urban charm, is one of Eritrea's better served communities. It is a walking city with mixed use developments, colorful villas, cafes, churches, schools, and theatres to name a few. One of ten provinces in Eritrea, it is located on the eastern edge of the Eritrean highlands. It is the largest city in Eritrea, with a population of some 400,000 inhabitants and it is surrounded by the village and cities of Ghinda (N), Keren (W), and Decamere (S) (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Aerial view of Asmara.

It has been identified as one of Africa's safest and cleanest cities. The architecture is comprised of Roman, Gothic, Renaissance, Modern, and Classic designs (Oriolo 1998, 65). Unlike many of the other towns in Eritrea it is relatively undamaged from the war.

Under thirty years of Ethiopian occupation, the city was allowed to deteriorate, but it still retains its essential beauty and since coming under Eritrean control in 1991 it has been undergoing a rapid improvement in infrastructure, building repairs and repainting. Although the city was not the most severely damaged from the conflict, it too requires improvements to the infrastructures, existing housing and the development of new housing.

Housing

Professor Asmerom, during an informal interview, advised that it is hard to obtain good affordable housing in Asmara. Affordable housing for the poor can range from 400-1000 birr and 1000 to 2000 for higher income groups. While the estimated cost for renting a 1-3 bedroom villa/house could range from \$500-\$4000 US dollars, this is a challenge because at least 60% of people living in Asmara rent.

The development of housing is in a formative stage but there has been no housing policy developed. The government has stated that it has no intention of becoming a majoring supplier of houses and that housing should be mainly the domain of the private sector (Tzeggai 1995, 10).

Over half of the urban population in Eritrea lives in Asmara. Moreover, the deportation, which resulted from the 1998 border dispute, brought many deportees back to Asmara. It is projected that Asmara will continue to grow more rapidly and will require greater planning and infrastructure resources than other urban areas.

It is estimates that the urban population is approximately 760,000 (29%) of the total population, and the refugees expected to return to urban areas is approximately 380,000 (55%) of the total population. This means that the housing demand will be at 15,200 more units annually for the next six years (von Rabenau 1995, 19, 22, 26).

Development

Since Eritrea's independence in 1993, the Ministry of Construction, the Department of Town Planning, the Housing Bank of Eritrea and local government have engaged in activities that involve housing development (Tzeggai 1995, 9). Araya Tsegai, the General Manager of the Housing & Commerce Bank (HCB) of Eritrea (established in January 1, 1994) stated that many of the housing projects are funded by the Bank. The goal of the HCB is to help alleviate the acute housing shortages of the country by providing mortgage loans to individual customers, as well as financing the fast development of housing complexes in the country. Since its inception, the HCB has funded at least 2 major housing projects: Sembel Housing Complex and the Mai Temenai, a low-cost housing project (these will be discussed in the later part of this section).

The Space 2001 housing factory was a project implemented to provide more housing. The \$4.5 million construction materials factory evolved out of the belief that it could ease housing problems. The factory produces earth blocks, floor tiles, roof tiles, sanitary fixtures as well as doors, windows and kitchen furniture, and has the capacity to construct

600 housing units per year (well below the estimated demand of 15,200 units stated by von Rabenau). It is a joint venture investment in which the Municipality of Asmara, Eritrean Investment & Trading Agency, Mr. Serge V. Taddei from Belgium and Martyrs O Children are the share holders (von Rabenau 1995, 113).

Housing Styles

“Asmara’s beauty is not only stated in its unique architectural and planning style, but in the variety of housing models that represent the National, Egyptian and Italian colonial eras (Oriolo 1998, 67).” Traditional housing structures vary according to geographical locations. Housing ranges from temporary nomadic shelters built from sticks and mats made from doum palm leaves and other foliage, to wood and thatch huts in western lowlands, and stone and mud homesteads in the highlands. The following houses contain, but are not limited to, a main gathering room and a bedroom. However, additions may include a kitchen, a bathroom (with a toilet and sink), and more bedrooms.

- 1) This is a European style villas of high standard, i.e., attached row houses and apartment blocks that were built during both the Italian and Ethiopian period with the majority being built during the Italian period (Figure 5).



Figure 5: a, European Style - villa.



Figure 5: b, European Style- apartment block.

2) This is a single story brick and concrete house, attached in a row or with boundary walls and a courtyard (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Single story house.

3) This structure, located in one of the poorest areas in Asmara, represents an informal house made of mud walls with an elongated rectangular shape divided into rooms, occupied by several families (Figure 7).



Figure 7: The streets of Sembel.

4) This is a traditional house made of mud walls and thatched roofs (Figure 9).



Figure 9: a, Traditional House



Figure 9: b, Contemporary Traditional House

5) The least desirable house is this temporary structure made of different materials such as iron sheets with a mixture of branches and tin (Figure 10).



Figure 10: temporary housing structure

These houses are a reflection of the older housing stock in Asmara. The houses range from good to poor. Professor Kidane stated that the good houses are secured by those who can afford them and the poor structures are left to those who are poor or without an income.

Housing Projects

Asmara has been fortunate enough to inherit new housing structures through developments funded by the government and private developers. The HCB developed the Sembel Housing Complex sponsored by the government and the Mai Temenai Low cost Housing Development. Sembel, similar to the concept of New Urbanism, is a condominium development with 1,022 units ranging in size from small efficiencies to three bedroom apartments. All units include a kitchen and indoor toilet. Also, included in the projects is commercial space and it encompasses a school, hospital, church and recreational area (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Sembel Housing Complex.

The Mai Temenai development consisted of 512 semi-attached duplex units with plot sizes ranging from 300 to 800 sq. ft. The units were initially started by the German Bank for Reconstruction, intended to benefit the poor, but the projects high cost (estimated at approximately \$50 million), resulted in the failure of the plan. As a result, the HCB took over the development and when it was completed, the units were sold at cost recovery prices (estimated at 100,000 birr) to middle income buyers.

Another project (unnamed) located west of the Intercontinental Hotel, was a low cost housing development funded by the government. However, when the dimensions were determined to be insufficient for the projected habitation, it was stopped. The units were never completed and the unfinished units were left abandoned (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Abandoned structures built by the government.

Professor Kidane accompanied me to an upscale housing development west of the Five Star Intercontinental Hotel. The project was initially funded by a German developer who pulled out because it became, too, expensive. The homes are 2 story structures (what Eritreans call ground 1 plus 2, some even had 3 levels) built out of concrete and brick with approximately 1500 – 2000 sq ft of living space a kitchen, bathroom and various other amenities as chosen by the builder. The prices range from \$100,000 - \$150,000 U.S. dollars (Figure 13). This housing, although considered single family, has enough space to accommodate renters, as Professor Kidane advised that when the homes are completed, some of the owners plan to rent out rooms.



Figure 13: a, Upscale Housing; Professor Kidane.



Figure 13: b, Upscale Housing

The housing development in Asmara is slow but moving forward and will continue. However, the need for affordable housing is still necessary, but it appears that due to overcrowding and increased rents, this may cause the relocation of lower income residents out to the bordering villages or force the government to create new affordable housing units elsewhere in the region.

Although, the new housing developments are necessary and improve the housing stock in Asmara, it is evident that these new homes will not be affordable as the rents have already increased on most of them due to the returning deportees, according to Professor Asmerom. The units are minimal in number when compared to the overall population, so again it is imperative that housing development continue. Also, the units in the poorest areas should be rehabbed and legislation must be created to address the issue of affordable housing. That is if the future of Asmara is to reflect all socioeconomic groups in its housing.

LAND USE

Background

During one of my conversations with Professor Asmerom, he advised me that the ownership of land in Eritrea is the exclusive right of the Government and that Eritrea established a Land Proclamation in 1994. Due to the border dispute, except in a few pilot projects in Asmara, the proclamation was not fully implemented; however, the terms and conditions of lease are reasonable. He further advised that there were indigenous systems of land tenure in Eritrea. The following list briefly defines those systems:

1. **Diesa** – is common property of the village with rights of access based on village residence.
2. **Tsilmi** – is considered that owned by immediate family or larger kinship with rights of use going to individuals through inheritance, but involving no right of sale or other alienation.
3. **Quah Mahtse** – is the association of a large area with a particular local community, members of which are entitled to cultivate any unused plots which they clear of bush.
4. **Domeniale** – is state-owned land (Rock 2000, 223).

Some of the tensions driving the land tenure issue to a proclamation were the imminent return of some 500,000 refugees from Sudan, and the demobilization of fighters, the great majority of whom needed to be resettled, the need to demarcate and specify secure rights for commercial farmers and other potential investors; the need to clarify Land rights collectively; and the need to provide livelihoods for the significant minority of rural landless, who were unable to secure employment (Rock 2000, 223)

Eritrea Land Proclamation of 1994

The Land Proclamation is composed of fifty-nine articles. The goals of the land

proclamation were to reform the system of Land Tenure in Eritrea, to annex the Land for purposes of national development, and to determine the powers and duties of the Land Commission. Contained in the proclamation is a declaration of basic principles and guidelines for categories of land interest. The proclamation recognizes three categories of land rights or interest:

- Usufruct-reviews rights to arable land and rural areas;
- State leasehold-land granted by the state on a concession or contractual basis;
- Customary land tenure-governing of grazing lands, woodlands, and water rights (Rock 2000, 224).

Moreover, it establishes the following primary land rights:

- All land is owned by the State;
- Life-time usufruct to individuals, with no rights of sale or inheritance;
- Every Eritrean over the age of 18 who wants to live by farming is entitled to land;
- Equality of land distribution to all qualified Eritreans; and
- Acquisition of land by the state for public or private purposes- but only upon payment of adequate compensation.

Master Plan

At the time of this research, Eritrea was without a Master Plan. However, Dr. Asmerom advised me that a land use map was being developed. Also, Aldo Jakober, an architect and director of the Eco Architecture Development Company in Asmara advised me that he had drafted the Mai Hutsa Development Plan and North-Asmara Concept Plan

(Appendix A). This plan was evolved from his idea of the development of piazzas around the city. Included in the plan are development zones of residential, commercial, and government buildings that would total approximately 5547 units of development. He further stated that the government did accept the draft, but it was never implemented it. Unfortunately, Dr Jakober stated that he has seen replications of his plan in various developments by the government, but he has not been credited.

FINDINGS

The research findings revealed that, although much of the older existing housing in Asmara is still habitable and several new projects have been developed with more underway, there is a need for additional affordable housing units in Asmara. Moreover, the government is committed to providing, supporting, and initiating housing development projects that will produce housing. Furthermore, new market based housing developments constructed in Asmara appear to provide housing opportunities for the higher-income groups. The housing need of low- income groups is not currently being addressed; there is a need for the creation of more affordable housing units to house low-income persons. There needs to be a more effective cost analysis-project management conducted for each project to ensure that the projects can be completed within the designated budget in hopes of preventing unfinished projects, which result in the unnecessary loss of money. The Mai Temenai housing project is one indicator of that need. The issue of war is an instability factor in Eritrea and may cause reluctance on the interest of financial supporters.

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Recommendations

After analyzing the information and data collected, to improve the housing issue in Asmara, I recommend the following:

Recommendation 1: The government support new housing developments that provide affordable housing units for low-income residents.

The government has already committed to supporting housing development projects by allocating land and even financing some of the projects. However, there is no decent affordable housing for low-income residents. The creation of more units like the Mai Temeni project should be built but the government must ensure that projects built for low-income residents are not sold to higher income groups. This can be accomplished by establishing affordable housing policies and conducting an adequate cost analysis. Also consider the use of non government organizations (NGO's) that support low-income housing like Habitat for Humanity (Appendix B).

Recommendation 2: Obtain assistance from Non Government Organizations (NGO's) to provide technical assistance or training for affordable housing.

To successfully develop and rehab housing, Asmara is in need of technical assistance. The appraisal report completed by von Rabenau on technical assistance to strengthen the development sector for low cost housing should be reviewed as it will provide useful information.

Recommendation 3: Develop and implement a Master Plan for Asmara.

Although, there was no implemented Master Plan at the time of my visit, there may have been one drafted. If there is still not Master Plan there needs to be one developed. Review other Master Plans, i.e. Ethiopia (Appendix C).

Recommendation 4: Complete a housing assessment in Asmara that can be accessed on the internet.

An internet based housing assessment could provide interested developers, NGO's and other groups to access the necessary data in order to ascertain the housing information needed to develop useful housing projects.

Recommendation 5: The government needs to create an affordable housing policy or a Comprehensive Housing Plan that includes building regulations, rents, design, infrastructure, lots, cost, zoning and capacity.

Review other comprehensive housing plans. Although not an international plan, the Wisconsin housing plan can be used as a guide (Appendix D).

Recommendation 6: Conduct an impact study on the affects of housing resulting from the returning deportees.

Professor Asmarom Legesse has done extensive research on this issue regarding the deportees. Use his material as a resource to do the study or request that he complete it.

Recommendation 7: Maintain peace with the neighboring countries, particularly Ethiopia.

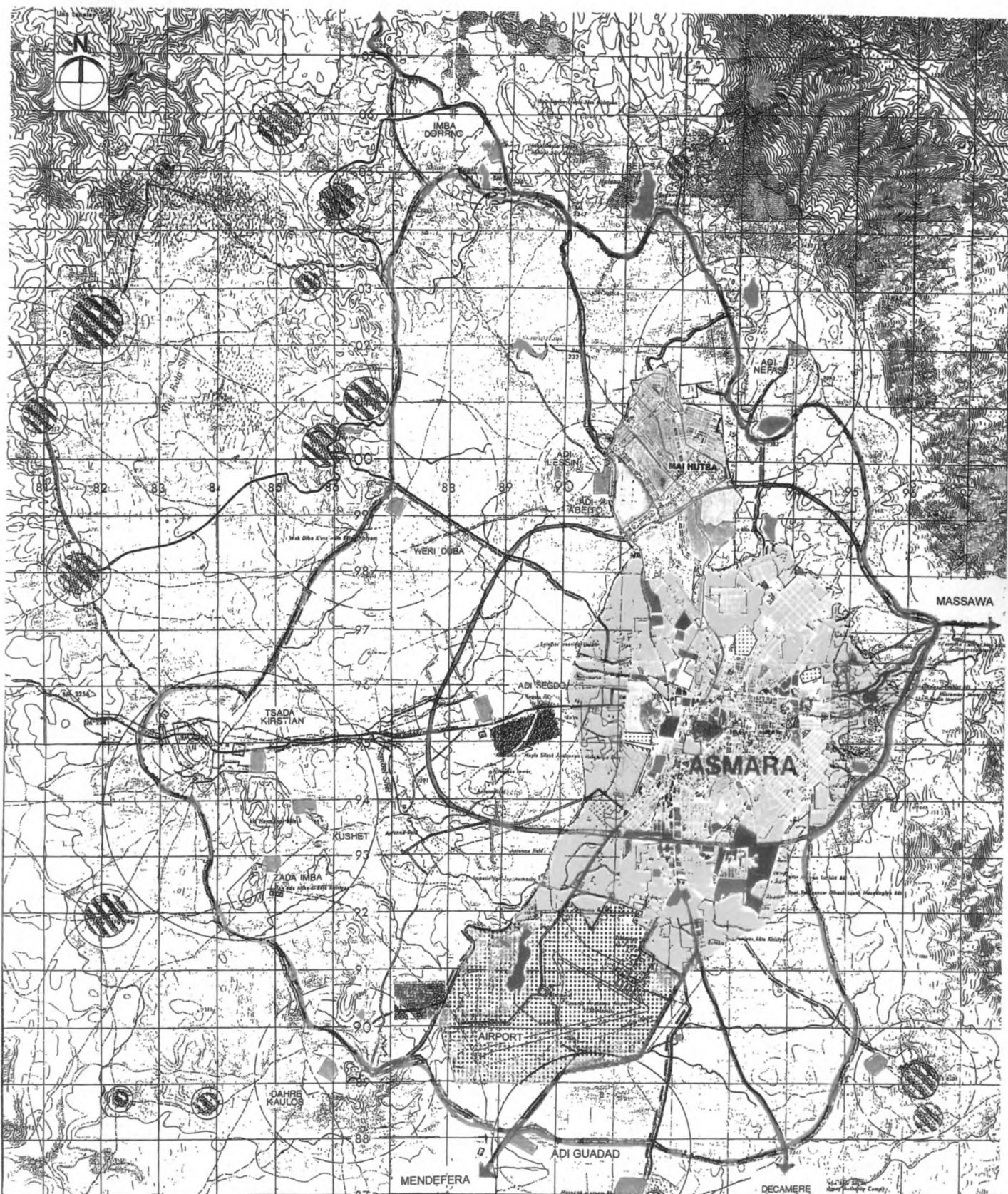
Eritrea is still at war with Ethiopia. The borders of Ethiopia and Sudan remain closed due to current conflicts. These issues will continue to keep Eritrea vulnerable. It is time for the government to workout a lasting peace plan.

Conclusion

Eritrea is a country with emerging potential and Asmara is a jewel. As the capital city of Eritrea, Asmara will continue to be an attraction for all. So, it is imperative that housing be available to all socio-economic groups interested in residing there. However, due to the demand from the higher income groups and their ability to pay the higher cost for housing, the issue of affordable housing must be addressed. Otherwise, Asmara may experience the negative affects of gentrification.

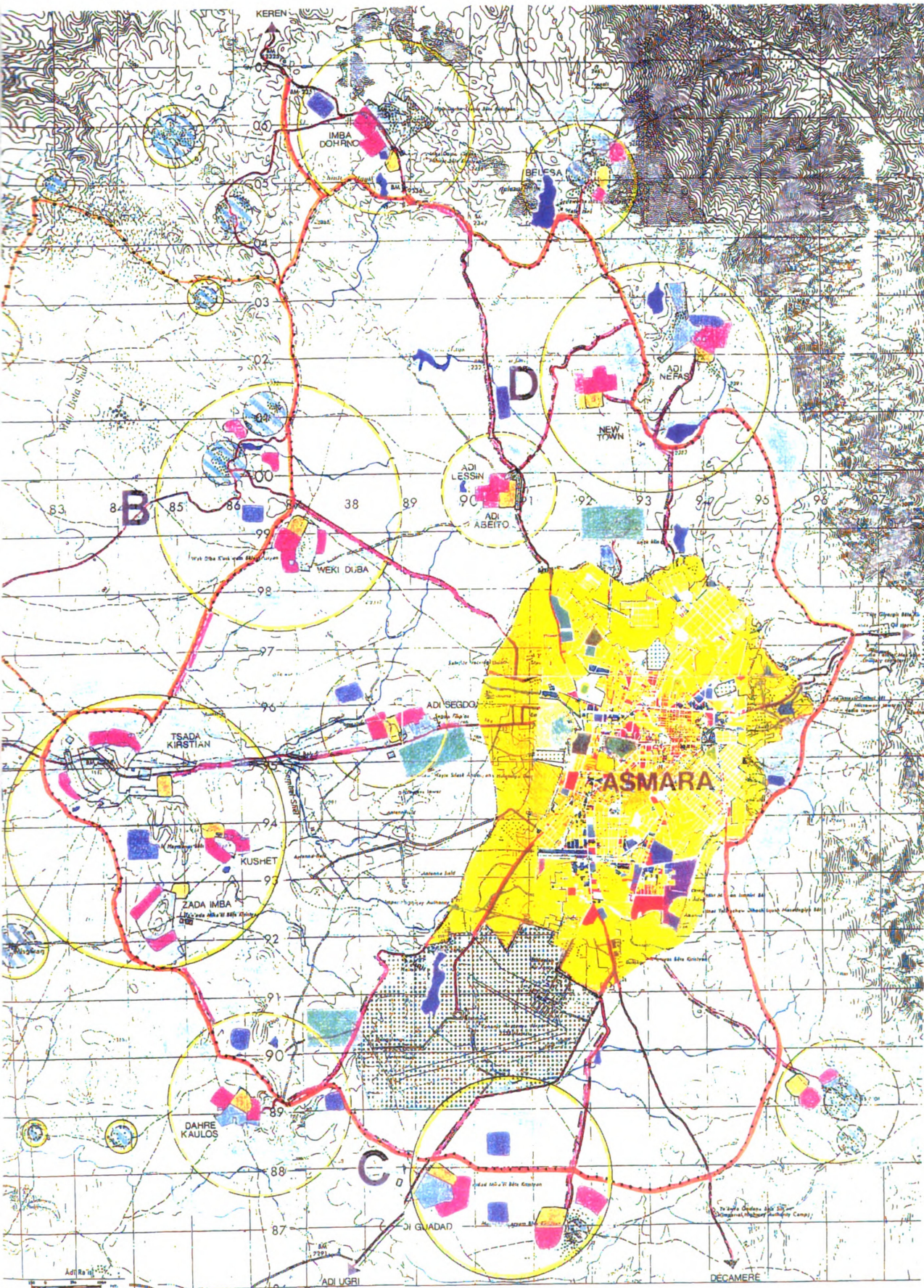
Appendices

Appendix A



ECO ARCHITECTURE DEVELOPMENT

OBJECT MAI HUTSA DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND NORTH-ASMARA CONCEPT PLAN	DATE DECEMBER 2000	ASMARA AND SURROUNDINGS		ALDO JAKOBER arch.	ARCHITECTURE
	SCALE 1:50000	== ROAD TO KEREN, MASSAWA		& ERITREAN	TOWN PLANNING
	DESIGN N°	== EXTERNAL RING ROAD		& INTERNATIONAL	ENGINEERING
		== INTERNAL RING ROAD		COLLABORATORS	ENVIRONMENT ARCHAEOLOGY INTERIOR DESIGN
				Asmara, Eritrea Development road 23 Tel./Fax 00291-1-120142	Milano, Italy via Spezia 22 Tel./Fax 02-8435570



- RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION AREA
 (CONTEMPORANEOUS INCLUSTERING)
 RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION AREA
 (TRADITIONAL THROUGHS)
 PERIPHERAL CENTER
 INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION AREA
 LINEAR EXPANSION
 ORDER AREA
 LAKES - RESERVOIRS - RIVERS
- POLES WITH DATA
 POLES WITHOUT DATA
 NOT SURVEYED AREAS

MASTERPLAN OF ASMARA
 STUDIES
 POLYCENTRIC CITY



Appendix B

Doing Good: The Best Practices List 1

Shelter, Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Regeneration

Africa

1. Peri-Urban Upgrading Programme in Sambizanga, Angola: War refugees constitute the main population of the unplanned settlements in the peri-urban areas in the Municipality of Sambizanga. Access to water was scarce and sewage, waste removal and sanitation services were non-existent. Living conditions were deteriorating and employment opportunities were few. The main programme components have been water supply, treatment and storage, basic sanitation, community health training and community development. The Sambizanga Project has been implemented by the NGO Development Workshop (Canada) together with CBOs, national NGOs, church organizations, local government, the provincial health office, water and solid waste companies and the residents themselves. Contact: Ms. Maribel Gonzalez, Development Workshop, C.P. 3360 Luanda, Angola Tel: (2442) 348-371, Fax: (2442) 393 445 marked Attention: Development Workshop, E-mail: dwang@angonet.gn.apc.org.

2. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: Given the hardships of structural adjustment the Mayor of Abidjan has opted to focus on unemployment, poverty and environmental degradation. Neighbourhood Committees (CDQs) were established to engage the energies and resources of local communities and channel efforts towards improving their living conditions and economic situation. CDQ activities range from environmental improvements that provide a sanitary setting for housing to the building and operation of community facilities and services. By building the capacity of CDQs, the municipality promotes individual self improvement initiatives and economic self-reliance among communities. Contact: Mona Serageldin, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 48 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA, Tel: 617-495-4964, Fax: 617- 495-9347, E-mail: MSerageldin@gsd.harvard.edu.

3. An Integrated Rural Development Program to Improve the Quality of Life of Women and their Families in Kibwezi, Kenya: By the early 1980s, many Kamba families had migrated to Kibwezi as drought, erosion and overpopulation took their toll on their lands of origin. Women were left to fend for themselves as menfolk went off in search of employment. The women engaged in subsistence agriculture for a number of years, but eventually the arid land failed to yield sufficient food to feed their children. An integrated development programme was implemented with the Council for Human Ecology - Kenya. The women were empowered to sustain themselves and their children through training in traditionally male-dominated skills: bee-keeping and earth- block making. Livestock entrepreneurial projects were implemented. The women constructed a canteen and set up a boarding school for girls. The projects are now self- supporting. Contact: Erica Mann, Council for Human Ecology - Kenya (CHEK), Box 20360, Nairobi. Tel: 254 2 720399. Fax: 718730.

4. Mbatia Women's Groups and Shelter Improvement in Nyeri District, Kenya: The Mbatia Women Groups' movement was started in Nyeri in the early 1960s for poor uneducated women left to fend for themselves as menfolk sought employment elsewhere.

A top priority was to improve the quality of their houses. Traditionally, Kikuyu roofs were made of thatched grass. However, two factors made the women consider improved roofing technology: grass for thatching was becoming increasingly scarce, and has the tendency to rot. The women decided to roof their houses with "mbati" (iron sheets) and make other housing improvements: replacing walls and fencing their homesteads. They then undertook economic activities, including sewing and knitting classes for girls, and the establishment of a revolving loan fund to assist members. The fund has enabled women to educate their children and buy property. There are currently over 1,200 largely self-supporting women's groups in Nyeri. Contact: Dr. Joyce Malombe Housing & Building Research Institute, P O Box 30197, Nairobi.

1. Reduction and Prevention of Crime in Kisumu, Kenya: Working from the assumption that if parents can provide the basic necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter) then crime among children and youth will be reduced, the Citizen's Social Care Centre (CSCC) have reduced the number of street children/youth in Kisumu. The programme specifically targets children, youth and women who have run away from home because of poor living conditions. Counselling sessions are held with parents or guardians. Children and youth are encouraged to join drama groups set up by CSCC to sensitize the community to the needs of street children/youth. Women, particularly teenage and/or single mothers are trained as environmental educators. The programme has improved the lives of over 200 individuals. Contact: Mr. Joseph Mokaya, Citizen's Social Care Centre, Box 5320, Kisumu.

2. Tanzania-Bondeni Community Land Trust (CLT) Project, Kenya: Tanzania-Bondeni was a typical informal settlement in the southern part of Voi town: temporary structures, no infrastructure, limited income (half the settlement's 5,000 inhabitants earned less than US\$ 40 per month), unemployment (30%), and no legal right to the publicly-owned land. Consultations between the community, the local authority, the Ministry of Local Government, and GTZ's Small Town Development Project agreed on a set of principles including the need for land tenure. Various pieces of legislation were used to institutionalise the system. A Society controls a charitable trust which holds the community's land. An elected management committee runs the CLT. Society members have saved Kshs 1.5 million, paying for surveys to register bona fide structure owners, 66% of whom are women. A development plan has been drawn up, and roads and water supply have been brought to the area. Contact: Ms. Ursula Eigel, GTZ Small Towns Development Project, Box 41607, Nairobi, Tel: 254 2 210234; Fax: 212434.

3. Lesotho Urban Upgrading Project (LUUP), Mafeteng and Teyateyaneng, Lesotho: LUUP aims to improve social and economic opportunities by upgrading physical infrastructure, social facilities and facilitating access to housing by lower-income families. The project provides families with building material loans and 267 families (134 of which are women-headed) build themselves starter homes. The proximity of the project to urban facilities and schools means that more children attend school. Improvements in infrastructure facilitate communication and transport between villages and urban centres. The project also strengthened town administrations to enable them to assume the increased responsibility for future development and management of the respective urban centres. Contact: Mr. E.R. Mapetla, P.O. Box 460, Maseru. Tel: 266 313 736. Fax: 266 310 185.

4. Low-Cost Housing in Malawi: Habitat for Humanity (Malawi) works in partnership with local communities and the government to build simple, decent houses and latrines. A locally-elected committee chooses applicants based on total combined income, their willingness to provide volunteer labour, and their willingness and ability to repay the cost of the inputs. Habitat for Humanity provides all materials and skilled labour. Repayments

are put into a revolving fund which stays in the community to build more houses and latrines. Contact: Matthew Maury, Int. Programme Coordinator, Habitat for Humanity, Box 2436, Blantyre. Tel: 265 640 073. Fax: 265 643 117. Em: HFHM@iac.pix.za.

9. Piped Supplies for Small Communities in Malawi Urban Areas: Development and Impact of a Gender Strategy: After an earlier water project failed, a study concluded that it was not lack of willingness or capacity to pay, but a lack of sensitivity towards gender issues and the management of water resources. After a gendered strategy was developed the results of the implementation were a success. More women occupied key positions in the water committees and special training programmes were organized for women which aimed at increasing their leadership and management capacities. Hygiene education and sanitation promotion were also important to the success rate. All partners involved learned that simply including women in water management organization was not sufficient. The degree and quality of participation of women and men during the whole process of the project were essential for ensuring a sustainable impact. Contact: Mr. Fabiano Kwaule, Ministry of Works/Water Department, Private Bag 390, Lilongwe 3, Malawi, Tel: 265-780-344/784-200, Fax: 265-730-389.

10. Community-Based Refuse Collection and Recycling, Municipality of Rufisque, Senegal: Rufisque Municipality, part of Greater Dakar, named after Rio Fresco (Fresh Water River in Portuguese), faced by 1990 serious sanitation problems: lack of sewage and garbage collection and disposal, a beach used as a public toilet and a garbage dump, and diarrhoea topping the list of health complaints. The scheme, run by elected Local Management Committees, with women and youth active at all levels, uses appropriate technology such as horse-drawn rubbish collection carts, low-cost sewers, recycling and composting, use of water lettuce to purify waste water. International funding is being replaced by a local revolving credit scheme. The combined efforts of 8 low-income communities, ENDA-Tiers Monde, Canadian funding, and the Municipality, are turning Rufisque back to Rio Fresco again. Contact: Mr. Malick Gaye, ENDA, 133, Rue Carnot, BP 1830, Dakar. Tel/Fax: 221 21 74 84.

11. Upgrading and Legalization of Squatter Settlements in Senegal: The expansion of irregular urban settlements has considerably increased in Senegal during the last decades, particularly in the Dakar area, which lacks basic infrastructure. The strategy for implementing the upgrading and land legalization operations was based on five principles which are flexible enough to be adapted to the specificities of the different neighborhoods and executing agencies. The five principles adopted were access to land security, community participation, cost recovery, providing infrastructure in relation to ability to pay, concern for protecting the environment and management of the living environment. Contact: Dua/GTZ Project, B.P. 2100, Dakar. Tel: 22 89 02/ 22 32 04. Fax: 21 57 84.

12. Mobilizing the Community to Upgrade and Construct their Own Infrastructure and Amenities, Soweto, South Africa: Soweto was developed as a black township with no institutional arrangement to manage the city, to invest in new infrastructure or to develop a tax base. Low standards of infrastructure, and its temporary status discouraged commercial and industrial development, affecting the quality of life of the 1.5 million inhabitants. A community development strategy was undertaken by the City's Engineering Department employing community based-contractors. Professional management, supervision and training were used to improve project management skills and productivity. A contractor development programme focusing on labour, transport, materials, plant and finance was implemented. Today, physical development parallels human development: infrastructure has been installed, skills and competencies gained remain within the community. Contact: Dick Hallett, Deputy City Engineer, Soweto Administration. Tel: 27

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13. Urban Poverty Reduction through Sustainable Development: The Katwe Case, Uganda: The urban low-cost water, sanitation, drainage and waste disposal project in Katwe began in 1993. Unlike many other projects which provide handouts to communities, Katwe Urban Pilot Project is geared to community empowerment by using community-based participatory approaches with special emphasis on sustainable development. The community ranks environmental problems according to priority. Workshops and seminars were conducted. A review of the project objectives, its mode of operations, and analysis of roles went a long way to improve collaboration and communication between different parties during the implementation phase. Contact: Mr. M. Mpabaisi, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning, P.O. Box 7122, Kampala, Uganda, Tel: 256-242-931/3, Fax: 256-235-856.

Appendix C



ORAAMP

**ADDIS ABABA CITY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE FOR THE REVISION OF ADDIS ABABA MASTER PLAN**

**Addis Ababa in Action:
Progress through
Partnership**

Address
Addis Ababa Master
Plan
Historical Perspective
Master Plan Revision
Process
Vision of Addis Ababa
Addis Ababa Hinterland
Linkage
Addis Ababa as a
National/
International Settings
Participator Planning
City Management

**Local Development
Plan**

**Strategic
Development
Framework & Action
Plan**



• The Way Forward

Structure Plan

- Centrality
- Market Hierarchy
- Strategic Investment Areas
- Manufacturing & Industries
- Road Network
- Transportation
- Social Services
- Housing
- Environment
- Historical Structure & Sites
- Synthesis of the Structure Plan

Regulations

- Urban Planning Regulation
- Construction Permit Regulation

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Addis Ababa in Action:
Progress Through
Partnership

ORAMP

**ADDIS ABABA CITY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE FOR THE REVISION OF ADDIS ABABA MASTER PLAN**

HOUSING

Adequate residential options for all income level

CHALLENGES

Severe housing shortage
Dilapidated condition of
existing housing stock
Poorly serviced working
and living environment

Efforts targeted at solving the housing problem in Addis Ababa have fallen short of the accumulated demand. Shortage is especially acute for low-income households that account for over 80 percent of the city's population. Overcrowding and deterioration widely prevail. An estimated 60 percent of the city's core is dilapidated, and about a quarter of all housing units have been built informally. The city is also not able to provide adequate services to the extension areas thus discouraging house construction and contributing to the expansion of the slums.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Improving the existing
housing stock through

- Housing maintenance and upgrading projects
- Appropriate redevelopment
- Privatization of public houses

Manage existing informal
settlements and control
future developments to
avoid creation of new
slums

Maintain appropriate
density levels

Ensure large supply of
land with minimum basic
infrastructure for all
income groups

- Self help & cooperative housing
- Minimum building standards and local

- Remove obstacles for self-help housing maintenance in areas reserved for housing
- Upgrade existing housing areas and support and encourage upgrading initiatives by communities and non-governmental organizations
- Introduce differentiated ownership options such as condominium and air rights.
- Privatize public houses through redevelopment and upgrading projects.
- Introduce **phased development and improvement system** and provide incentives to the private sector; integrate the community in self-help upgrading and redevelopment projects, devise compensation, relocation and resettlement strategies
- **Manage informal settlements** through focusing relocation on 'untenable' location provision of some security of tenure for others, and enabling the community to improve infrastructure through supporting community-based construction and management, control squatter settlements through Woredas and Kebeles

- **De-densify and maintain appropriate and healthy density levels at the city's core, re-densify intermediate and infill areas**

- **Provide land in-fill (1100 ha.) and expansion areas (8950 ha) the latter through wide-weave grid development with minimum infrastructure services**

Structure Plan

- Centrality
- Market Hierarchy
- Strategic Investment
- Manufacturing & Ind
- Road Network
- Transportation
- Social Services
- Housing
- Environment
- Historical Structure &
- Synthesis of the Stru Plan

Regulations

- Urban Planning Re.
- Construction Permi Regulation

material	
• Support private rental housing construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise building regulations and codes: permit self-help housing with only minimal building standards; foster the use of indigenous, low-cost construction materials and technology; give developed plots to low-income population at subsidized rates, support the construction of low-income private rental housing.• Avoid closed account deposit requirements for land acquisition. Create a system whereby house builders deposit only a small part of the construction cost as initial fund.
Maintain mixed use social diversity as one characteristic of Addis Ababa	
improve urban quality of residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote mixed income and activity profile in housing areas; mix real estate, cooperative housing, and housing for low-income in expansion areas. Limit the size of high standard real estate development projects and the size of gated communities.
improve housing finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create formal market for the transfer of public-owned houses by giving priority to the current occupants so as to promote private initiative. Also remove barriers for ownership transactions and redress capital gains and rental income taxes and laws which act as disincentives for investment in rental housing• Develop urban design and greenery regulations for street planting and open spaces and ensure viable enforcement mechanisms and responsibility; impose one-plot-one-tree obligations; promote new sub-centers in expansion areas for proximity of services.• Promote housing construction and saving associations through regulatory measures, and extend loan guarantees and expand micro-finance programs for housing in collaboration with NGOs for poor residents• Re-institutionalize land and housing development and financing agencies and institutions• Strengthen cost-recovery mechanisms for infrastructure provision

[Home]

[Address][Addis Ababa Master Plan Historical Perspective][Master Plan Revision Process][Vision of Addis Ababa]
[Addis Ababa Hinterland Linkage][Addis Ababa as a national/ International Settings]
[Participator Planning][City Management][Local Development Plan][Strategic Development][The Way Forward]

Appendix D

Housing Wisconsin: A Guide to Preparing the Housing Element of a Local Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

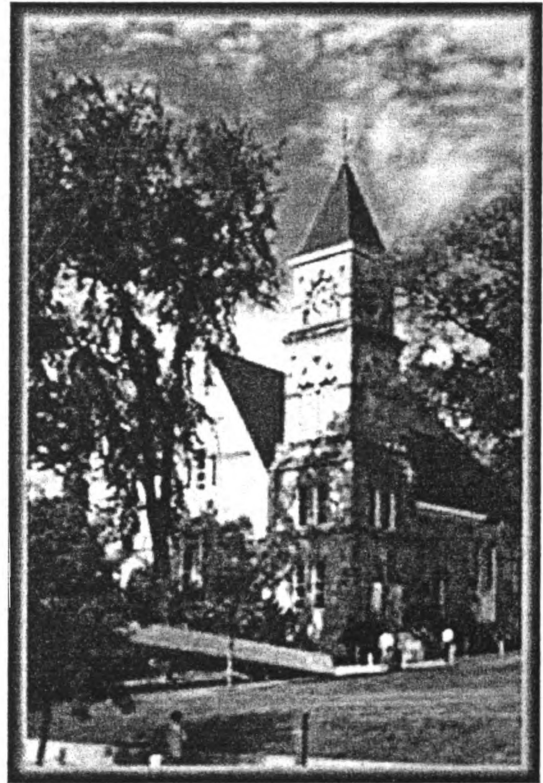
Wisconsin's planning law requires that a local Comprehensive Plan include a Housing Element. The Housing Element is one of nine elements that comprise a Comprehensive Plan. The other elements are Issues and Opportunities, Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities, Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use, and Implementation. Each of these elements may affect other elements.

Planning for the provision of housing may be new to many local units of government. Local governments are generally not housing developers. Nonetheless, the programs and actions of local governments can influence the housing market.

The comprehensive planning process necessitates that local governments analyze the impact of the policies and regulations of the local government on the development of various types of housing. The analysis is intended to take into account the current and projected housing needs in the community. The analysis should result in policies which provide opportunities for the development of the types and amounts of housing expected to be needed over a twenty-year planning horizon.

The requirements for a Housing Element are:

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit's housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit's existing



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housing stock. Wis. Stat. § 66.0295(2)(b).

This guidebook is intended to help Wisconsin communities to develop the Housing Element of their local Comprehensive Plans. The Comprehensive Planning statute does not prescribe the way to prepare the Housing Element of a Comprehensive Plan. This guidebook offers a step-by-step process for developing the Housing Element with an emphasis on securing broad community participation in the planning process. It discusses data needed to document the current housing supply and demand. It also provides a list of strategies communities might use to implement some common housing goals. However, the actual planning process a community uses should be appropriate for that community.

Why Plan for Housing?

Housing is very important for Wisconsin and the people who live here. Housing costs are the single largest expenditure for most Wisconsin residents. In fact, according to the *Consumer Expenditure Survey* prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (1997), Midwest households spend an average of 31% of their incomes on housing, compared with 19% for transportation and 14% for food.

Over two-thirds of Wisconsin households are homeowners and it is likely that their home is their most valuable asset and largest investment. Appreciation in home value continues to be the major source of wealth in the United States, and nearly 60% of the net worth of the typical homeowner is equity in the home.

While many Wisconsinites enjoy good housing situations, other Wisconsinites are struggling. According to the State of Wisconsin's *2000 Consolidated Plan: For the State's Housing and Community Development Needs*, households in the low-income range have great difficulty finding adequate housing within their means and that can accommodate their needs, despite the state's stable economic health. Families that cannot afford housing frequently become homeless and must face all the disruptions this can bring. The federal government has cut back drastically on housing assistance, leaving the state and local communities to grapple with these problems.

The social benefits of housing are important but difficult to quantify. In addition to being a place to sleep, relax, raise a family, store possessions, receive mail and

telephone calls, decent shelter is important for one's self-respect. Furthermore, as people develop responsibility and pride in their homes, it is likely that they will participate more frequently in community activities, attend church, and vote.

In addition to its importance for social reasons, housing plays a critical role in the state and local economies. It is likely that housing is the largest land use in the community and the community's largest capital asset. According to a study entitled *Housing's Contribution to Wisconsin's Economy*, prepared by the Wisconsin Realtors Foundation in 1992, the value of the state's housing stock was worth nearly \$1 trillion dollars. In 1990, the construction industry employed 83,000 workers (not including lawyers, real estate, financial, and insurance workers), making it the state's second leading industry in employment. The study estimated that housing contributed about 12% to the state's gross product. Housing is also a major source of revenue for local communities in the form of property taxes.

Benefits of Planning For Housing

There are a number of benefits a community can realize by developing a Housing Element:

The process of developing the element encourages citizens to start thinking and talking about local housing concerns;

The data collection and analysis can increase understanding of the local housing situation;

The community can gain more control over the nature of future housing development;

It increases the chances that housing decisions are coordinated with decisions regarding other Comprehensive Plan elements such as the Land Use, Transportation, Economic Development, Utilities and Community Facilities, and Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources Elements;

It can bring together a diverse range of groups, agencies, and citizens that otherwise may not work together;

It provides the chance to consider the community's housing concerns in relation to those of adjacent communities;

If certain types of housing are in short supply, the element may encourage housing development which may in turn be important for recruiting and retaining businesses;

By planning for housing, there is much greater likelihood that housing development will meet a broad range of needs.

Housing is a critical part of the comprehensive planning process. According to Wisconsin's *2000 Consolidated Plan: For the State's Housing and Community Development Needs*:

The resounding need stressed is for community housing, public facilities and economic development professionals to give greater weight to the interrelationships between these components. Without adequate infrastructure, housing quantity and quality suffers. Without adequate infrastructure, economic development is limited. Without adequate housing, infrastructure and economic investment, a community's downtown, the heart of a community, deteriorates and results in disinvestment, a dwindling labor force due to out migration, and declining tax base making it even more difficult for local government to sustain itself (p. 11).

References/Additional Resources

2000 Consolidated Plan: For the State's Housing and Community Development Needs prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations, and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

Housing Your Community: A Housing Element Guide by the State of Washington, Department of Community Development, Growth Management Division (1993).

Planning for Affordable Housing by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs (1990).

Affordable Housing: Proactive and Reactive Planning Strategies by S. Mark White (American Planning Association, PAS Report #441, 1992).

Florida Model Housing Element by the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Bureau of Local Resource Planning, (1987).

Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook by the American Planning Association (1998).

Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning (1995).

The Housing Element and HUD's Consolidated Plan

A Housing Element within a Comprehensive Plan should not be confused with the *Consolidated Housing Plan* required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The consolidated plan is designed to *consolidate* the application procedures for HUD's housing programs. Consolidated plans are required by HUD for the state, cities with populations over 50,000, as well as designated urban counties. These jurisdictions must file a consolidated plan to be eligible for Community Development Block Grant funds and other types of HUD funds. The plans must be prepared using a detailed format provided by HUD that requires demographic and housing information as well as specific local goals for improving housing for low income households and populations with special needs. The Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations, located within the Department of Administration, files the consolidated plan for the state on behalf of jurisdictions which do not have to file their own plans.

While the HUD consolidated plan can be a useful source document for the Housing Element of a Comprehensive Plan, it does not remove the need for developing a Housing Element. The consolidated plan focuses only on low income and special needs housing, and not the more general issues necessary in a Housing Element. The format for the consolidated plan is one that is designed primarily for HUD use and may not be compatible with that of other Comprehensive Plan elements. However, in developing strategies to be included in the Housing Element it is important to note that requests for HUD funds usually requires that the community be in compliance with the consolidated plan covering their jurisdiction.

HUD also requires that public housing authorities develop agency five year plans. These plans focus on improving existing housing authority programs but do include agency efforts to develop additional housing units. They rely on internal housing authority information and information from HUD for the jurisdiction in which they reside.

Developing the Housing Element

Format of the Housing Element

The following is an overview of a possible format for a Housing Element.

Executive summary. Few people are likely to read the entire element so having a brief overview of the highlights of the element at the beginning can be important. It may be all some people read and it may lead others to read more of the element.

Context and "general housekeeping". This is the place to explain why the element was developed and to acknowledge all the people and agencies that contributed to the process of developing the element. The latter is important to demonstrate the breadth of participation in the planning and as a record of who was involved for future reference.

Data and analysis. This section presents a summary of the information collected during the planning process.

Vision and goals. This is a critical part of the element. It sets forth the community's collective ideas about the direction housing policy should take and what should be accomplished.

Strategies, programs, and actions. This section describes the strategies, programs and actions proposed to implement the element's goals.

Evaluation and revision. Every element should include a specific process for periodic review and revision.

EP 1: Developing the Planning Team

Broad participation from as many sectors of the community as possible will yield more ideas and a fuller vision. It will also increase the political buy-in of the element. However, the planning team itself should be manageable in size. While broad representation is important, there are other critical characteristics of team members. They need to be able to commit the time required to the process, not be so controversial that they alienate others, have a track record of completing

work, and have a broad network of contacts.

Even if the planning team is broadly representative it should seek ways to include other perspectives and broad public input. The views from sectors that are not represented directly on the team can be included through focus groups, special listening sessions, interviews, or written testimony. The following is a list of interest groups to consider including on the team or in other ways:

Elected officials. They have the authority to allocate resources to the planning effort. They will be inclined to allocate more resources if they themselves are involved in the process and understand its value to the community. Their leadership can also be critical to securing the participation of others.

Planning, Zoning, and Community Development Commissions. These groups have jurisdiction to review plans and proposals and to make decisions or recommendations. Because of their role, these groups should play a key role in the process.

Public Housing Authority. Staff and commissioners of any county or municipal housing authorities can provide information on federal housing programs, on the local subsidized housing that exists, and also on local low income housing needs. Housing authorities are required to develop their own agency plan which includes information about community housing needs.

Municipal Departments. County or municipal departments such as the University of Wisconsin Extension community development, building/permitting, zoning, soil and water conservation, finance, assessor, highways, fire protection and human services can bring specific areas of expertise to the process.

Housing interest groups. Groups such as realtors, housing developers, appraisers, mortgage lenders, property managers, tenant and landlord organizations can contribute critical information about housing needs and resources and have important perspectives that are vital to include in the planning process.

Nonprofit housing developers and housing advocates. These can include social service groups working with populations with special needs or housing concerns. Such groups can be an important source of information about the extent of need for housing affordable to low and moderate income households.

School Districts. School districts often have

information about changing demographics and are concerned about the direction of residential growth as they plan new facilities.

Business Leaders / Major Employers. Housing can be a key issue for businesses, whether it is finding appropriate housing for executives or affordable housing for workers. The support of business leaders can also be important to implementing the Housing Element.

The Public. Even with the best of intentions, the interests of various sectors of the community may not be fully considered in the planning process without opening the process to the public at large. Public participation generally takes two forms: 1) expression of individual opinion at meetings, through letters, surveys, phone calls, etc., or 2) membership on a review body.

STEP 2: Organizing the Planning Team

The planning team should begin by setting up ground rules for operation. Who will chair meetings? Who will keep minutes and other records? Who will send out meeting notices? When will meetings be held? What is the time line for the planning process? Where will meetings occur? Is there a budget to support the effort? If there is a budget, how much is it, who will control it and are there limitations as to how it may be spent? Will more money be needed? If so what are possible sources?

The team should then clarify its purpose as well as that of the convening authority. The planning team may be the same group of individuals charged with preparing the entire comprehensive plan. It may be a separate group of individuals. The specifics will vary locally.

One way to begin is to invite team members to share with each other what they already know about the local housing situation and their views as to problem areas. Everyone may agree on the problems or there may be several points of view. It is important that the subsequent planning process accommodate the perspectives of team members so that they feel they have a stake in the process and so that the process taps the energy of team members.

STEP 3: Visioning

An early part of the planning process is to seek out the concerns and values the community holds about housing. This can reveal sensitive issues as well as issues that already enjoy a high level of interest. It can also build enthusiasm and commitment to the planning process. The process of collecting this information is often called *visioning*.

It is important to develop a visioning process that allows for and encourages broad community input. Techniques for soliciting input vary. Some planners use creative techniques to enrich the process. These techniques include:

Asking people to describe what they imagine the community would look like in 20 years and how the housing would have changed.

Invite people to take photos of the things that are right with housing and also housing problems. Have others vote on which of the photos they think best represent what housing should be like and housing that should be changed.

Ask people to describe the local housing market to someone who is planning to move to town.

If a visioning process has already been done as part of the larger Comprehensive Plan effort and it addresses housing issues, it may not be necessary to do a separate visioning for housing. Instead, the Housing Element could use those parts of the larger vision statement that deal with housing.

References/Additional Resources

Building Our Future: A Guide to Community Visioning by Gary P. Green, Anna L. Haines, and Steve Halebsky (University of Wisconsin Extension Publications, 2000).

A Guide to Community Visioning by State of Washington, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development - Growth Management Division (1994).

STEP 4: The Housing Needs Assessment

A core part of the planning process is the collection and analysis of information about the housing situation in the community. It is referred to as a *needs assessment* because historically the process emphasized problems that needed to be solved or needs that were not being met. Modern planning theory suggests that the data collected should be analyzed for community strengths or assets as well as needs. The needs assessment uses historical trends and data on current conditions to project the community's future needs for various types of housing and the likely supply.

In addition to providing the factual and analytical basis for the Housing Element, the information in a needs assessment may also have value for developers, builders, bankers, real estate professionals, as well as for housing advocates. In addition, a needs assessment may provide the documentation and support necessary for funding requests pertaining to housing.

Ways to Gather Information

Quick and Easy:

It is smart to use existing information whenever possible. Collecting new data is often very expensive and can be very time consuming. It is also important to collect only data for which there is a clear and important use. Many communities find themselves overwhelmed with information to the point that they become bogged down in information and analysis.

Before beginning the search for data, check other sections of the Comprehensive Plan. The needed data may already be there ready for your use. Doing so will not only save time but will also ensure consistency between elements.

Begin by asking planning team members which information they already have or can help obtain. Local assessors and regional planners may have other needed information. A list of information sources is provided in the next section. For information that is important but not available, planning team members may collect information through *key informant interviews* or *focus groups*. These techniques do not yield hard numbers. However, they do provide a quick, low cost substitute that is usually sufficient for this stage of the planning process.

Key informant interviews. These are interviews with persons in the community who are recognized as authorities on specific issues. They are likely to have the

most accurate information on the topic and their answers will have credibility. Focus groups are useful when there is no recognized expert and where a blend of opinions and experience are needed.

Using teams of two persons often makes the key informant interviews easier. One person can ask the questions while the other takes notes. The team should have questions prepared beforehand and the questions should focus on topics which call on the interviewee's special experience, observation and judgements. It is often a good idea to start with simple factual questions and then progress toward more difficult questions that require judgement and opinion. Ask the person being interviewed for any supporting documents, as well as whether they know of others who may bring additional insights to the topic. After the interview the team should review what they have heard and also discuss making a record of the interview. The record need not be a word for word transcription but should record key points accurately and completely. The record should be typed and shared with the person interviewed to ensure that it is consistent with what he/she intended to convey.

Focus groups. These are structured group interviews intended to examine perceptions and experiences in a way that is difficult to do in written questionnaires or interviews. Krueger in his book *Focus Groups* (1994) provides detailed instructions for conducting successful focus group interviews. The group should be selected to represent the population from which information is desired. For, example if the focus is on the housing experience of moderate income renters, then persons who are renting and have incomes in the target range should be selected. The number of questions should be short so that each may be explored in depth. A facilitator and at least one note taker are needed to conduct the group interview.

After the initial round of informal data gathering, an assessment should be done to determine if the desired information has been gathered and is consistent. In other words, do team members feel the information is complete and clear enough to move on.

Formal and Focused:

It is often assumed that the first step in a housing needs assessment is some type of formal citizen survey. It can be unwise to rush into such a survey. Surveys can be expensive. If they are done without adequate planning and focus, the results are often ambiguous. However, if informal information collection efforts have left questions unanswered, then some type of survey may be needed.

The survey should be as focused as possible and carefully designed and pretested. Doing so will increase the probability that it will yield the desired information.

Before the survey is actually conducted, the planning team should begin considering strategies to address the housing issues that appear to have the highest priority, for example, housing rehabilitation, starter home ownership opportunities, transitional housing for homeless persons or victims of domestic abuse, sheltered housing for seniors etc. This can allow the survey to collect specific information.

Sources of Data

The U.S. Bureau of the Census - This is a major source of statistical data about housing and population. It has traditionally conducted a national census every 10 years, however, it is now converting to a system of continual data collection that will allow census information to remain current. You can find out what the Census Bureau has to offer by checking its web site <http://www.census.gov>. While you can go the census bureau directly, it may prove easier to work with one of the state agencies that maintain files of census data specific to Wisconsin.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - Offers a Geographical Information and census data software program named Community 2020. It incorporates an easy to use mapping system with a data base of 640 census elements and is expected to be updated periodically. The scale of mapping capabilities is evolving. Information about this software is available by calling (800) 998-9999 or from the following web site <http://www.hud.gov:80/cpd/c2020sft.html>.

The Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations - This agency which is part of the Department of Administration administers a variety of state and federal housing programs. In addition it prepares the state's HUD Consolidated plan which includes data about housing and population. It also maintains data sets including data from the Bureau of the Census and other sources as part of its Housing Information System. You can contact the Division staff through its web site <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/doh> or by phoning (608) 266-0288.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development

Authority (WHEDA). This quasi state agency maintains an online directory of all federally subsidized housing in the state by community. The directory also includes a list of all public housing authorities. WHEDA's web site is www.wheda.state.wi.state.

Demographic Services Center. This is part of the Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs within the Wisconsin Department of Administration. The Center maintains various data sets for the state including data from the Bureau of the Census. Visit the Center's web site at www.doa.state.wi.us/deir/boi.htm. The Center phone number is (608) 266-1927.

Office of Land Information Services. This office is in the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Information available from the office includes information on general planning, planning grants, GIS mapping resources, Wisconsin Land Council and Land Information Board resources, and inter-agency coordination efforts. The office phone number is (608) 267-2707. The web site for the office is <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/olis>.

Regional Planning Commissions. These planning agencies have been established to provide data and planning services to most communities in Wisconsin. They often can provide census data for your community. A listing of the regional planning commissions is included in Appendix A. Other sources may include county planning departments.

Community Action Agencies. These agencies provide a variety of programs including housing programs to low and moderate income households in communities across Wisconsin. They routinely collect information on needs in their service areas. To identify the Community Action Agency serving your area contact the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association at (608) 244-4422.

University of Wisconsin-Extension. The staff in the county Extension office may be able to help you obtain Census Bureau data and other data. Look in the phone book under the county government listings for University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Local housing trade groups. Groups such as the

Board of Realtors, the local builders association or bankers association may keep data that will help in documenting the local housing situation. Representatives of such organizations should be on the planning team or involved in other ways and can be asked what information they can provide.

STEP 4A: Determine the Housing Supply

An important part of the needs assessment is to understand the nature of the community's current housing stock - its size and characteristics. The specific supply information that is often included in a housing needs assessment is described below.

Number and type of housing units. Type refers to whether the units are single family detached home, duplexes, in multifamily structures or mobile homes.

Tenure. Tenure refers to whether the housing unit is owner-occupied or rented by the occupant. Information on tenure is important because the community should have a sufficient supply of units to satisfy both renters and owner-occupants. This also includes the number of units held for seasonal use.

Vacancies. Bureau of the Census information on tenure provides a count of the number of housing units that were vacant and available for rent or sale.

Value of housing. The price of owner occupied housing is important information to consider. Knowing how the median price varies over time is an indication of housing demand. It is equally important to know the distribution of housing of different values. For example, are there homes for sale that would be affordable to employees of a new business offering jobs at \$9.00 an hour? Information provided by the Bureau of the Census is based on reported value given by home owners. Other statistics of housing value may be available from real estate groups, however, such information on value will usually be higher than that reported by the Bureau of the Census because it is based on the value of homes sold during the reporting period. Local tax assessors are also a source of housing value. Assessments are usually adjusted annually to reflect recent sale prices but often lag behind actual sale prices.

Contract rent. It is also important to know the market

rents for housing. The Bureau of the Census provides information about this. The number of rental units available at different rents provides an indication of the availability of an adequate supply of rental housing for different income groups in the community.

Housing cost. Information on housing value and contract rent gives only a rough measure of the monthly housing costs experienced by occupants. For owners, property taxes, home owner insurance and mortgage interest rates should also be considered. Utilities and maintenance are additional housing costs that should ideally be considered.

Subsidized and special needs housing. Many communities have at least some housing that is subsidized by the federal government. In some cases, the housing was built with federal help. This may be owned by the local housing authority or by private groups. In other cases, the subsidy goes to the household who uses the money to help pay rent of a privately owned unit. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) produces an inventory of subsidized housing in Wisconsin by community. Local housing authorities are another source of information about local subsidized housing. They may also be able to share waiting lists for their housing. Waiting lists are a measure of unmet need.

There are a variety of agencies, including regional independent living centers, which help find and develop housing for persons with various physical and mental disabilities or other special needs. The community or county human services department should be able to identify what groups are active in the community and the nature of the local unmet housing need for persons with special needs.

Condition of housing stock. It is important to examine the condition of the housing stock as part of the needs assessment. Doing so will show which units need rehabilitation and which units are beyond repair (units beyond repair should be subtracted from the housing supply). Unfortunately, information on the condition of housing stock is not readily available.

Sometimes age of homes is used as a measure of condition. However, many older homes have been remodeled and are kept in good repair. Therefore, age alone is probably not a good measure. However, combining age and assessed value may indicate older homes which have not been maintained. This information should be available from property tax records.

To be more accurate, a community may want to do a visual assessment of housing conditions. These are often referred to as *windshield surveys* because they entail driving or walking through the community and evaluating each housing unit based on visual appearance. Exterior conditions generally correlate with interior conditions. The advantages of using a windshield survey are that it does not intrude upon the occupant of the property, and it is relatively quick and inexpensive. Typically a survey instrument is used with agreed-upon criteria. Survey-takers should be trained to interpret the criteria uniformly so that the survey results are consistent.

STEP 4B: Determine Housing Demand

A housing needs assessment usually addresses demand issues as well as supply issues. Demand for housing depends on, among other things, current population and household characteristics and on economic conditions. It should be developed with an eye towards eventually linking it to the supply section in order to determine the community's housing needs. Much of the information needed may have already been collected at the larger Comprehensive Plan level. In this case, the Housing Element may simply use this information and adapt it accordingly. The following are some housing demand factors:

Population. It is important to gather information about the composition of the community's population such as its age, gender, race, income, and education. For example, is there a large number of people of retirement age who may be in need of specialized housing in the coming years? It is also helpful to look at trends in the population. What segments of the population are growing and which ones are shrinking? This requires data from previous census documents and population forecasts. Population forecasts are available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and also from the Wisconsin Demographic Services Office, located within the Department of Administration. Forecasts for population and economic conditions may have already been done as part of the community's larger Comprehensive Plan, in which case the Housing Element should simply use those forecasts. Using these forecasts not only saves time but also furthers inter-element consistency.

Households. Since the demand unit for housing is the

household, it is critical to obtain information on the characteristics of the community's households. For example, if household sizes are shrinking but population is stable or increasing, then there will be demand for a greater number of units and possibly units that are smaller. Information (both current, historical, and forecasted) should be gathered on the number of households, their size and also their type (family, non family, married couple, etc.) and income level. The Census does not include as households those people living in group quarters such as dormitories, boarding houses, asylums, or prisons.

Income and economic factors. Income and economic data most likely already exists in the Economic Development Element of a community's Comprehensive Plan. If this is the case, then this section should merely borrow information from the Economic Development Element. Income is important to housing because it controls the type of housing people can afford. Economic conditions are important to housing because they are correlated to income as well as population. Information (current, historical, and forecasted) should be collected on median household income, the number of jobs, the type of jobs, the size of the labor force (both resident and nonresident), the location of the job opportunities, and commuting patterns.

STEP 4C: The Housing Development Environment

Infrastructure. This refers to roads, schools, sewer and water service, parks, and other public improvements. Infrastructure is intrinsically linked to housing development. For this reason, housing should be coordinated with infrastructure projects set forth in the Transportation Element and the Utilities and Community Facilities Element.

It is not necessary for this section to list all of the infrastructure in a community. Instead, it should be used as an opportunity to reference other Comprehensive Plan Elements in order to connect housing with infrastructure. Future capital improvements should be discussed as well as existing housing/infrastructure needs.

Developable land. The availability of land that can be developed into home sites is a critical consideration in housing planning. If no land is available in a community for housing development, housing prices may increase

and put pressure on residents to move to surrounding communities for housing. Methods of identifying and determining the amount of vacant land in a community include aerial photos, drive-by surveys, information from local Realtors and builders, county assessors files (particularly where these files are computerized), and planning and zoning offices. Planning and zoning offices may also be helpful for identifying redevelopment opportunities. This inventory should be coordinated with other plan elements so that the land chosen for development is most appropriate.

Development regulations. As part of the needs assessment, an inventory of regulations effecting the development of land for housing in the community should be compiled. Regulations influence demand because they help determine whether or not housing may be built and at what density.

Housing development capacity. *Housing development capacity* refers to the ability of developers to build housing in a community. The needs assessment should inventory the developers operating in a community and their past production of units per year.

STEP 4D: Analysis

When the data has been collected, the next step is to make sense of it. This means combining the various types of data to determine how the housing supply matches the demand. What type of housing is needed and at what price level? Is there sufficient land supply? The analysis section is important because it identifies the issues that the Housing Element will need to address. Analysis also can help set priorities for the Element. Is rehabilitating existing housing stock more important than creating new housing? Is adding rental housing more important than adding owner occupied housing? For what income groups is housing most needed? Should housing for older persons be a priority? What about persons with special needs? These are the kinds of questions that the planning team should consider as they study the information they have gathered.

The planning team should focus not only on the present situation but also on future trends and issues. It is natural to become caught up in a current crisis. However, because the Housing Element will guide community housing policy and action over the next 20 years, it is important to consider longer-term issues as well.

Future housing production need. One place to start the analysis is with an estimate of future housing production needs. The method that is suggested here is a simple forecast model. It is based on the expected number of households, on the current housing stock, and on the forecasted changes in the stock based on current trends. Obviously, other factors such as consumer income, preferences, and price will determine actual demand for housing. Since these factors are not easily forecast, this simple model can serve as a starting point for the analysis:

First: Determine the projected number of households. To do this subtract the number of persons expected to reside in group quarters such as nursing homes, dormitories and correctional facilities. Unless there is reason to believe this number will change, use the percentage from the most recent census and multiply it by the projected population in the target year to determine the number in group quarters. Then divide the total projected population for the community by the anticipated average household size. Multiply this number by the desired vacancy rate. For example, if the community wants a 3% vacancy rate then multiply by 1.03. The resulting number is the total projected housing units needed.

Second: Subtract the number of units beyond repair or expected to be lost from the total number of current housing units in the community and then add the anticipated number of replacement units. The resulting number is the total housing units available for the projected year.

Third: Subtract the number of projected housing units available (see second part above) from the total number of housing units needed (see first part above). The result is the total number of additional housing units needed for a specific future year.

This analysis should also consider various trends that will effect the nature of this demand. Will the relative demand for owner occupied versus rental housing continue? Will there be changes in household size due to immigration or to the increasing number of older persons? Will there be changes in the income distribution so that there will be more demand for high end or low end housing? Will there be changes in the employment structure in the community that will effect the type of housing needed?

Housing affordability analysis. There should also be an analysis of housing affordability. Does the supply of housing and its pricing match the ability of households

to pay? There are a number of different approaches to analyzing housing affordability. The approach required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Consolidated Plans is to look at the median income for a community and determine how many units are available to various low and moderate income households. *Extremely low income* households are those with incomes below 30% of the area median household income. *Very low income* is defined as an income between 30% and 50% of the area median household income. *Low income* households are those with incomes between 50% and 80% of the area median household income. *Moderate income* households have incomes between 80% and 95% of the area median household income. HUD defines affordability as paying no more than 30% of household income for housing. This affordability standard is not an underwriting standard; it does not say that households are unable to pay more than that amount. Households may choose to pay more to get the housing they need or want. However, according to HUD standards, people should have the choice of having decent and safe housing for no more than 30% of their household income.

HUD annually publishes a table for all counties and for entitlement jurisdictions (large cities and urban counties) that lists median household income and incomes at 30%, 50%, and 80% of the median income for households of different sizes. It defines these categories as extremely low income (30% and lower), very low (50% and below), and low (80% and below). Households with incomes between 80% and 100% are categorized as moderate income households. Many federal and state housing funding programs are tied to these definitions.

To learn whether there is an adequate supply of affordable housing, the number of households within the various income categories must first be determined. In order to determine if there is an adequate supply of housing affordable to households in various income categories, the incomes in the various categories must be converted to an affordable monthly housing payment. For example, assume that the annual income for a household in the 50% median income for a certain area is \$24,000. The first step is to determine the monthly income by dividing \$24,000 by 12. This yields \$2,000. The next step is to multiply the monthly income by .30 to determine the monthly amount the household can afford for housing. This yields \$600. The next step is to determine how many units are available in the community at monthly costs of \$600 or less. To determine if the supply is adequate, compare the number of units available with the number of households with incomes in that category. This is a very rough

measure since most of the households in that category will have a range of incomes with \$24,000 being the maximum.

Another issue to consider is the availability of housing for employees of new or growing industries. Is there an adequate housing supply at prices affordable to employees of these industries? Is there appropriately priced housing convenient to the facilities or will workers need to commute from elsewhere?

Problems identified by the supply and demand analysis should be followed up with investigation into the local housing industry. Are there specific problems that underlie the problem which could be addressed in the Housing Element? For example, there might not be enough developers to provide the number or type of housing units needed or developers might have difficulty obtaining financing to purchase land.

References/Additional Resources

Building Our Future: A Guide to Community Visioning by Gary P. Green, Anna L. Haines, and Steve Halebsky (University of Wisconsin Extension Publications, 2000).

Assessing Your Community's Housing Needs by the State of Washington, Department of Community Development (1992).

Housing Needs Assessment Manual: An assessment tool for Rural Communities in Iowa (1998). Available at <http://www.state.ia.us/ided>.

STEP 5: Setting Goals and Actions

This is the action part of the Housing Element. The community sets goals based on the assessment and proposes actions the community can take to address these goals. It links together the data and analysis, vision, and implementation sections of the Housing Element. It should also coordinate with other plan elements, as well as all governmental units in the community, with the municipality's budget, with the private sector, with neighboring communities, and with the region as a whole.

The Housing Element is long-range in scope. In Wisconsin, Comprehensive Plans and their elements are intended to look 20 years into the future and must be

updated at least every 10 years. There is no boilerplate standard for how the element must look. What is necessary is that the element state the goals of the community and the specific means by which it intends to achieve them.

Goal Setting

Goals are statements of desired outcomes or achievements. They should be stated specifically enough so that it is easy later to assess whether progress has been made in achieving them. Reaching consensus on which housing goals are most important can be difficult. Agreement will need to come through discussion, negotiation, and compromise. It is important that formulation of the goals not be left to a small circle of planners but draw from a broad range of community interests. The vision statement developed earlier may be a good source of goals, or at least a good starting point, because it represents community-wide input. In addition, section 66.0295(1)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes states that the Housing Element of a Comprehensive Plan must identify specific policies and programs that do three things:

- 1. Promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs;*
- 2. Promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing; and*
- 3. Maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental units's existing housing stock.*

Strategy Formation

Strategies are specific actions proposed to achieve goals. A good strategy statement includes not only the action to be taken but who will be responsible for initiating the action and what the time frame is for taking the action. Strategy formation is part creativity and part research. A good place to start is with a group brainstorming exercise to get ideas on the table. The group then could discuss the ideas, clarify them, and evaluate their appropriateness and feasibility to the local situation. Many groups find it useful to consider strategies that build on each other. For example, an education campaign might be a useful first step. If it works well and community interest increases, then the community

may decide to pursue a strategy that directly addresses the problem, for example, applying for funds to develop or purchase homes.

In developing strategies it is important to balance various points of view. The analysis may reveal a serious need for additional rental units affordable to persons with income under 50% of the area median income. On the other hand, there may be concerns that typical rental developments will have a negative effect on the character of the community or that concentrating low income households will create social problems. If a strategy designed to meet the need for low income housing is to be successful it must incorporate elements that address these concerns.

There usually comes a point in strategy formation when more information is needed. Are there potential funding sources for a particular strategy and who can apply? Do state and local laws and regulations support or interfere with a proposed strategy? Has some other community tried it? What will particular parts of the strategy cost? The group will have to decide how to get answers to these questions.

Coordination with Other Comprehensive Plan Elements

Because housing is the major user of land in urban areas, it directly affects most other comprehensive plan elements. Land Use, Utilities and Community Facilities, Transportation, Economic Development, and Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources are all elements affected by housing. The goals and policies set forth in the Housing Element will affect these elements and vice versa. Therefore, it is important that all the elements are consistent and support one another. The following is an example of several specific elements and how they might influence housing. The example reinforces the importance of planning comprehensively rather than by single-function.

Economic Development Element. Housing needs must be linked to a community's economic development plans. For example, what type of industry is a community seeking to attract? Given the wages, is the community's housing stock affordable? Where will new businesses locate? How does that location relate to the availability of housing?

Land Use Element. Land use dictates the amount of land available for housing, as well as its location, type, cost, and density. If the Land Use Element is

inconsistent with the Housing Element, it will not respond adequately to the demand for housing and may result in increased housing costs. The Land Use Element might describe the number of acres devoted to residential use and the density allowed. It might examine building permit and residential platting activity to gauge development trends. It might also map the location of the community's current and proposed housing.

Transportation Element. The location of housing affects commuting patterns and transportation costs. The inverse is also true. The location and density of housing affects transportation needs. The affordability of housing influences from how far people must commute. If housing is not affordable then workers must commute from elsewhere. The location of housing influences on which roads people drive, or whether they need to drive at all.

Utilities and Community Facilities Element. Improvements such as roads, sewer, water, parks, recreational facilities and schools all need to be coordinated with housing decisions, and vice versa. Doing so will greatly enhance the efficiency of capital improvement expenditures.

Sample Housing Element Scenarios

The brief examples that follow provides a brief overview of how three different fictitious communities approached development of their Housing Element. They illustrate the issues the communities faced the goals they set and the strategies and policies they chose to achieve their goals.

Example 1 - "Nelsonville"

Needs assessment

Nelsonville is a county seat with a population of about 11,000. It is located well outside the state's metropolitan areas. It has an aging population with over 40 percent of its households headed by a person over 55 years of age. The median household income is \$38,000. It is a fully developed community with 65 percent of its housing stock in the form of single family detached homes, 23 percent in duplexes and town houses and the rest in garden apartments. The median value of the single family homes is \$78,000 and 56 percent of its housing is

over 30 years old. There are several neighborhoods in which many homes are owned by absentee landlords, the homes are smaller older and a windshield survey revealed that 35 percent of the homes in these neighborhoods need substantial exterior repairs. The economic development plan calls for recruiting new industry to replace jobs being lost in the agricultural sector. However, there is concern that there may not be enough housing for employees moving in for the proposed jobs. The communities older citizens are concerned that there are no apartments for them if they want to give up the responsibilities of home ownership. An inventory of senior housing reveals one 16 unit subsidized apartment complex. There are income restrictions on residents and it does have a waiting list.

Goals

1. To conserve or improve the quality of existing single family housing stock.
2. To increase the supply of independent and assisted living facilities for elderly residents.

Implementation strategies

1. Adopt and implement a municipal housing code to encourage home owners to provide basic maintenance.
2. Apply to the State for Community Development Block Grant funds to establish a local home repair loan program. The city will also check with regional agencies to see if there is an existing rehabilitation program they can join.
3. Review existing development controls to see if they need changing to encourage developers to develop additional housing for seniors.
4. Talk with the local hospital and others to find sponsors and developers for additional housing for seniors.

Example 2 - "Elm Heights"

Needs assessment

Elm Heights is a fast growing town of 4,300 located adjacent to a new interstate interchange making it a twenty minute drive to a large metropolitan area. Population estimates indicate that most heads of

households are between 25 and 44 years of age. Over a third of its housing has been built since 1990. Seventy five percent of the new housing is single family detached.. The median value of the homes sold in the last two years is \$225,000. The median household income is \$57,000. Long time residents have expressed concern that the new subdivisions are using up prime farm land and that traffic on township roads has become very congested at rush hours. They are also concerned that views of the Lincoln River which runs through the town are being ruined by all the new housing. Recently industry has also been moving into the community because of relatively low land prices and access to the interstate highway.

Goals

1. To increase the supply of housing affordable to moderate income households and employees of local businesses.
2. To maintain the environmental assets of the community so that it continues to be an attractive place to live.

Implementation strategies

1. To develop land use regulations that guide the location of future development and protect prized features of the natural environment.
2. To seek sponsors and funds to support development of rental and owner occupied homes affordable to households with incomes between 60 and 80% of the local median household income.

Example 3 - "Silver River"

Needs assessment

Silver River is an older industrial city with a population of 17,000. Recent population estimates indicate that most heads of households are between 45 and 64 years of age. Forty percent of its housing was built before 1940 another third before 1980. Sixty percent is single family detached. Another 30 percent is in the form of duplexes or small apartment buildings scattered in its single family neighborhoods. There are a number of abandoned or severally neglected homes, stores and small industrial buildings scattered throughout the city. The median value of the homes sold in the last two

years is \$87,000. The employment base has been shifting from well paying industrial jobs to lower paying service and distribution jobs. The median household income is \$48,000. There is a growing minority population and there are occasionally tensions over cultural differences.

Goals

1. To increase the supply of housing affordable to very low and extremely

low income households.

2. To strengthen established neighborhoods by finding new uses for abandoned or under used land.

3. To assure that the fair housing rights of all citizens are protected.

Implementation strategies

1. Aggressively enforce housing codes to encourage property owners to

upgrade or sell poorly maintained property.

2. Aggressively pursue payment of delinquent property taxes to pressure

owners of abandoned or under used property to sell.

3. To support the development of a local public or non profit agency to

develop low income housing.

4. To develop an incentive program to encourage redevelopment of available lots in existing neighborhoods.

5. Establish a Fair Housing Commission to propose and implement programs to enforce fair housing rights in the community.

STEP 6: Housing Implementation Strategies

Following the development of housing objectives,

policies, and goals, communities must next think about implementation. The Implementation Element of the Comprehensive Plan requires that the local community develop strategies to carry out the goals and policies of the plan. Section 66.0295(2)(i) of the Wisconsin Statutes specifically requires that the Implementation Element include:

A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, sign regulations, erosion and storm water control ordinances, historic preservation ordinances, site plan regulations, design review ordinances, building codes, mechanical codes, housing codes, sanitary codes or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in [the Housing Element].

The Implementation Element also requires that each element be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. For example, implementing the goals and policies of the Housing Element will need to correspond to actions undertaken in other elements such as land use, economic development, and community facilities. The programs and actions which a community will undertake to implement the Housing Element can be included as part of the Housing Element and restated in the Implementation Element. This may make it easier to integrate the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following sections are organized consistent with the provisions under Wisconsin law that the Housing Element of a Comprehensive Plan identify specific policies and programs that:

- 1. Promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs;*
- 2. Promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing; and*
- 3. Maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental units' existing housing stock.*

All communities in Wisconsin have a number of

implementation options available to them. One important implementation option is ongoing education of citizens and local officials about the contents of the Housing Element and on the role of housing in the community. Citizens need to understand the relationship of housing to economic development, land use, community facilities, and transportation.

Other implementation options available to communities include regulatory tools, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, governmental and private non-profit programs available to encourage the maintenance and development of affordable housing. A basic overview of many of these planning implementation tools is provided in the *Guide to Community Planning in Wisconsin* by Brian W. Ohm available from University of Wisconsin Extension Publications at 1-877-947-7827.

More detailed explanations of some programs and specific actions to implement the policies of the housing element are discussed below.

1. Promoting the development of housing which provides a range of housing choices to meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs.

An increasing number of people cannot find housing in their community that is suitable for their stage of life--from young wage earners to couples with grown children. This provision requires that local governments pursue strategies that encourage the development of a range of housing choices to meet the needs of people with different income levels and with various needs. People with special needs typically include the elderly, physically and mentally disabled persons and may include other classifications such as farm workers and migrant laborers. As the general population of Wisconsin ages, affordability, security, accessibility, proximity to services, transportation, food, and medical facilities will all become very important.

Housing Programs

A number of federal and state housing programs are available to help local communities promote the development of housing for individuals with lower incomes and certain special needs. Some communities may also want to explore developing their own programs.

Federal programs and revenue sources

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** is the federal agency with primary responsibility for housing programs and community development. It provides subsidized housing through low-income public housing and the Section 8 program which provides subsidies for rent in private apartments to low-income households. Both of these programs operate principally through local public housing authorities. To be eligible for these programs and others, a community may want to explore establishing a public housing authority under section 66.40 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

HUD also provides money to communities for a variety of housing purposes. Part of this money is distributed to entitlement jurisdictions. These are cities of over 50,000 population and designated urban counties. It provides money to other communities through grants to states who distribute the money to non entitlement communities. In Wisconsin, the state agency that serves as the conduit for these funds is the Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR) within the Department of Administration. It awards these funds through a competitive request for proposals process. Funding from other HUD programs is distributed through national competitions.

For information about programs that might be available for specific local initiatives, contact the Wisconsin HUD office which is located in Milwaukee. The general phone number is (414) 297-3214. You can also visit the office's web site at www.hud.gov/local/mil/.

Rural Development - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA-RD) provides a variety of housing and community development programs for rural areas. Its programs are generally available in areas with populations of 10,000 or less. It provides support for rental housing development, direct and guaranteed mortgage loans for home buyers, and support for self-help and cooperative housing development.

USDA-RD has district offices serving most parts of Wisconsin. To find out about programs that might benefit your community, look in the phone book in the federal government listings under "Agriculture, Department of" for "Rural Development." You can also call the state office which is located in Stevens Point at (715) 345-7600, or explore the web site of the national office at www.rurdev.usda.gov/agency/rhs/rhs.html.

the Wisconsin Statutes for redeveloping blighted areas. TIF can be used to cover costs of public works or improvements including costs for demolition, land assembly, public improvements, and new buildings. Under TIF, new private development creates higher property values, thus creating a greater tax base (the tax increment). This increment, or a portion of the increment, is set aside for reinvestment in the area. Tax increment financing could be used to assist in the building or rehabilitating of affordable housing for middle- and lower-income households.

Private programs

Non-profit housing development corporations. A non-profit corporation is an organization that may qualify for tax-deductible donations, foundation grants, and public funds. To be eligible, the organization must apply for and receive non-profit status from the IRS. Non-profits build and maintain housing in many areas of Wisconsin. Their projects help communities improve their range of housing opportunities.

Non-profits are eligible for state and federal financial resources, making them an important vehicle for publicly desired housing. They often work in collaboration with local governments, civic organizations, citizens groups, and for-profit developers. This improves communication and coordination in the community and creates an atmosphere for future projects. Municipalities too small to have their own housing staff or programs may contract with non-profits to provide services such as housing management and grant-writing. They may also be able to pool resources with the non-profit and other area communities. Non-profits can develop technical expertise and skills with regard to finance, construction, rehabilitation, and project management.

Wisconsin is unique in that it has a program to specifically assist nonprofit housing organizations. The program is called the Local Housing Organization Grant (LHOG) Program. It provides grants to nonprofits to increase their capacity. To find out if there is a non-profit housing developer serving your area or about LHOG, contact the Department of Administration, Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations at (608) 266-0288.

Specific actions

Local governments affect the type and cost of housing available in their community through their regulations

income households. The fund is used to fill financial gaps to make projects feasible. Trust funds may be replenished yearly or they may be designed to be perpetual and self-sustaining. Revolving funds are sustained by the payments of loan recipients which are then used to supply additional loans. Sources of revenue to begin or replenish housing trust funds include escheated or abandoned funds, sale of public land, general obligation bonds, general appropriations, endowments and grants, and surplus reserve funds.

Housing trust funds are particularly well-suited to meet the large and long-term capital investment needs of projects. Unlike funds that rely on the vagaries of state or local annual appropriations, a housing trust fund is a permanent dedication of a specified amount for housing. Trust fund money can be used in a number of ways. It may assist in home purchase, down payment assistance, security deposit assistance, housing construction, rehabilitation, maintenance, and operation, technical assistance for housing organizations, homeless shelters, debt or equity financing, and second mortgages. The City of Stevens Point, in central Wisconsin, is one example of a community that has established a housing trust fund. For information on how this fund was established and how it is used, contact the Housing Authority of the City of Stevens Point (715) 371-3444.

Housing linkage programs. Voluntary housing linkage programs encourage developers of office, commercial, retail, or institutional development to construct or make financial contributions towards affordable housing. The underlying rationale is that new non-residential development creates a need for housing by attracting employees to an area. Therefore, the developers should contribute towards satisfying this need. Linkage programs usually apply to new construction but they may also apply to expansion of existing space. The programs are popular with developers when they either reduce costs or add value to the project. Examples of incentives are density bonuses, reduced setbacks, and reduced parking requirements.

These programs benefit businesses, the developer, and the community. Developers benefit from the incentives while communities benefit from more affordable housing. Businesses benefit from a well-housed and accessible labor force. Office/housing linkage programs will be most useful in cities experiencing high growth rates where developers are more willing to take advantage of incentives and where linkage programs can reduce the pressure for housing.

Tax increment financing (TIF). TIF is a tool available to cities and villages in Wisconsin under section 66.46 of

State programs and revenue sources

Department of Administration, Division of Housing & Intergovernmental Relations (DHIR) is one of two state agencies that administers housing programs. It administers several programs that are funded by the state and many more that are funded by HUD. State programs funded by general purpose revenue cannot be used to invest directly in housing development. Instead these funds are used to help organizations develop the capacity to develop houses or to provide various types of financial assistance to home buyers or renters through grants to local governments or non-profit agencies.

Information about current programs administered by DHIR can be obtained by telephoning (608) 266-0288.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) is a quasi-governmental agency that

finances housing development through the sale of bonds. It receives no direct state-tax support. It provides mortgage financing for first-time home buyers and financing for multifamily housing as well. Specific programs evolve and change with the needs of the housing market.

WHEDA also manages several federal housing programs. One program, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, encourages housing development by providing private investors with Income tax credits when they invest in low income housing development. Tax credits are allocated to housing projects on a competitive basis.

Information about WHEDA programs can be obtained by telephoning (800) 362-2761 or by visiting its web site at www.wheda.state.wi.us.

References/Additional Resources

A Guide Identifying Public Sources of Housing Financial and Informational Assistance for the Development of Low and Moderate-Income Rental Housing. October, 1999
Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations,
Department of Administration. (Updated annually)

Local programs and revenue sources

Housing trust fund. A housing trust fund is a pool of money available for housing projects for middle or lower

the larger community.

A word of caution: Concentrating the very lowest income households together in high densities has proven to have a negative effect upon the community, the residents, and the condition of the housing. A broader mix and range of housing choices throughout a community is, therefore, important.

Standards in zoning and subdivision ordinances

Many communities have zoning and/or subdivision ordinances that contain building requirements that may unnecessarily increase the cost of housing thereby limiting the range of housing choices available in the community. These include requirements setting forth minimum floor area size. By removing minimum floor area sizes, communities can increase the range of housing opportunities.

Many local subdivision regulations also include standards for how subdivisions are designed (e.g., road widths, sidewalks, tree plantings, setback, materials, land dedication, sidewalks or paths, location of the structure on the site, garages). Communities should review their subdivision ordinances to identify provisions that constrain housing. Old ordinances in particular may be in need of revision to meet current needs. Current neighborhood design emphasizes social, economic, and environmental aspects and endeavors to create neighborhoods that are more energy efficient and that have a greater range of housing options.

The following are some suggestions for reviewing subdivision regulations:

Setbacks - Large setbacks increase housing costs. They originated as a means of fire protection. Subdivision regulations should establish maximum front yard setbacks, either in addition to or instead of minimum setbacks. Side yard setbacks may also need to be decreased.

Streets - Narrower streets can reduce development costs.

Lot layout - Traditional platting design has been to site large, one-sized lots without regard to local climate, topography, or hydrology. Current practice emphasizes variety in lot size, shape, and use to increase housing options within the development.

and policies. While most government regulations are implemented in order to serve specific community health, safety, and welfare needs they may have unintended adverse impacts on affordability. A review of local regulations may reveal areas where changes can be made to decrease the impact on affordability without compromising the protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

Some specific strategies to promote a range of housing choices to meet a variety of needs include the following:

Zoning and subdivision regulations for smaller lot size

One technique for insuring a range of housing is to provide a range of densities and lot sizes. Traditional zoning ordinances may only allow a limited variety of lot sizes throughout a community for single-family residential development.

Land costs can be 25 % or more of the total cost for a home. One way to reduce land costs is to reduce lot size. First, lot prices are less expensive for smaller parcels. Second, land development costs are less because they may be spread over a larger number of units. Third, less infrastructure is needed because development on smaller lots requires fewer miles of roads, sidewalks, gutters, and shorter utility runs. In a competitive market, reduced land development costs are passed on to consumers.

Smaller lot sizes which seek to increase overall density within the community can also be linked to other community planning objectives. For example, higher density development can (1) preserve farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas by reducing the overall amount of land needed for housing; (2) improve the viability of mass transit, provide opportunities for residents to live near their jobs, and thereby help reduce vehicle miles traveled; (3) use existing infrastructure more efficiently than less compact development thus reducing service costs and saving tax dollars.

Increasing density may meet with opposition from existing area residents. To address these concerns attention must be given to site design characteristics. For example, design elements such as the layout of streets, lots, mixing of lot and house sizes, variation in building setbacks and elevations, variation in exterior designs, and quality landscaping to provide privacy. The development must be attractive if it is to be accepted by

Lot design and vegetation - Using breezes and topography and trying to capture winter sun and block summer sun can save residents money on fuel costs.

References/Additional Resources

Removing Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing in Wisconsin: A Report by the Governor's Task Force on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing (1994).

Affordable Housing Techniques: A Primer for Local Government Officials by the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (1992).

Changing Development Standards for Affordable Housing by Welford Sanders and David Mosenia (American Planning Association, PAS Report # 371, 1982).

Planning for Affordable Housing by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs (1990).

A Citizen's Guide to Conserving Land and Creating Affordable Housing by the Burlington Community Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust (1990).

Smart Growth: Creating Communities for People by Allison Semandel and Mike Kinde (Citizens for a Better Environment, 1999).

Model Code Provisions - Urban Streets & Subdivisions Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (1998).

Innovative zoning and subdivision techniques

Innovative development techniques, such as ***mixed-use development***, ***zero lot lines***, and ***cluster development***, can also encourage a broader range of housing choices.

Mixed-use development allows different land uses, such as commercial and residential, and allows several different housing densities within a single development. Mixed-use developments can range in size from single buildings with apartments located over retail uses, to large-scale projects that include office and commercial space along with housing.

With mixed uses, commercial uses may make housing

development economically feasible when it otherwise would not be. Higher density housing in commercial zones may be more politically acceptable than increasing densities in established single-family areas. Sensitive design and site planning is critical with mixed-use developments.

Mixed-use developments can be regulated in various ways. Some communities allow residential uses by-right in certain identified commercial zones. Other communities consider housing in commercial areas as conditional uses. Other communities allow mixed uses within a planned development district (also commonly referred to as planned unit development or PUD) or in special mixed-use districts.

Zero-lot-line. Conventional zoning requires that the home be set back from every lot line. However, for small lots the "yards" created on each side of the house are very small, and usually useless. Zero-lot-line ordinances place the house on one of the side-lot lines and/or on the rear or front-lot line. By placing a house on the lot lines, the amount of useable space on the other sides is doubled.

Some communities permit houses to be sited on a common lot line so that they resemble duplexes. Other communities require that they be sited on alternate lot lines, to give the appearance of housing in a conventional development. The advantage of zero lot line is that it offers the lower costs associated with high-density development while still maintaining the privacy and appearance of traditional single-family detached housing.

Cluster development allows housing units to be grouped within a residential development on lots smaller than those normally allowed. (See figure on page 42.) Clustering can help reduce housing costs because of decreased lot sizes and because of decreased development costs. But, cluster development may increase site planning, design, and engineering costs. It can create common open space and protect environmentally sensitive land. It is a technique that has been used in developing urban areas and in rural areas. Cluster developments are regulated in a number of ways. Zoning ordinances can specify zones in which cluster developments are permitted and/or allowed by special permit. Subdivision regulations can outline development standards for clustering. Cluster development may also occur as part of a planned development district.

References/Additional Resources

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission,
Rural Cluster Development Guide (Planning Guide No. 7,
1996).

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission,
*Rural Development Guide for East Central Wisconsin
Governments and Landowners* (1999).

Randall Arendt, *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A
Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks* (Island
Press, 1996).

Density bonuses

A *density bonus* allows a developer to build more units in a project than would otherwise be permitted. Bonuses may be offered in exchange for preservation of open space or other things valued by the community. Density bonuses increase the value of the overall project and may therefore make certain projects economically feasible when they otherwise would not be. Density bonuses offer a positive alternative to mandatory programs that may be resisted by developers. Developers may decide for themselves whether participation will be cost effective.

The community will need to decide the amount of increased density given in exchange for the desired development features. Because the market ultimately determines the success of density bonus programs, program designers will need a thorough understanding of the local and regional real estate market. For example, if current zoning already allows enough density to satisfy market demand, developers will have no interest in a density bonus. Density bonus programs may be implemented through zoning or subdivision ordinances, or both.

Inclusionary zoning

Inclusionary zoning requires that a certain number of units in a new development be set aside as affordable. Inclusionary programs may apply to both rental and owner-occupied units and may be mandatory or voluntary. Some communities have found that mandatory programs impose costs on developers that are too heavy and actually retard new construction of

both affordable and market-rate units by making them economically unfeasible. If requirements are imposed, they should be modest enough to ensure developers an adequate return on their investment. Voluntary programs are preferable to mandatory programs if developers will use the incentives.

Voluntary programs provide incentives to allow developers to determine for themselves whether participation will be cost effective. Incentives may be density bonuses, waiving development fees, and financial assistance through federal, state, and local programs.

The following is an example of an inclusionary zoning ordinance from Bellevue, Washington:

A. Purpose: to consider the housing needs of all economic segments of the community and assure that the impacts of new development will be mitigated to the extent feasible to assure an adequate affordable housing supply in the Community.

B. General: This section applies to: all new residential development; all new subdivisions; and all rezone applications...

1. Multifamily Development: At least 10% of the units in all new multifamily development proposals of ten units or greater must be affordable units. In addition, one bonus market rate unit is permitted for each affordable unit provided, up to 15% above the maximum density permitted in the underlying zoning district.

2. Subdivision Development: At least 10% of the units in all new subdivision proposals of ten lots or greater must be affordable units. In addition, one bonus market rate unit is permitted for each affordable unit provided, up to 15% above the maximum density permitted in the underlying zoning district.

3. Rezones: All rezone proposals for an increase in residential zoning density must provide that at least 10% of the units buildable under the original maximum density be affordable units and that at least 20% of the units buildable as a result of the increase in density from the original maximum density to the total number of approved units must be affordable units. In addition, one bonus market rate unit is permitted for each of the affordable units provided to meet the minimum 10% requirement of the original maximum density, up to 15% above the original maximum density.

References/Additional Resources

Affordable Housing Techniques: A Primer for Local Government Officials by the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (1992).

Planning for Affordable Housing by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs (1990).

Affordable Housing: Proactive and Reactive Planning Strategies by S. Mark White (American Planning Association, PAS Report #441, 1992).

Accessory or "granny" apartments

An *accessory or "granny" apartment* is a living unit separate from the primary residential unit. It includes separate kitchen, sleeping, and bathroom facilities. Accessory apartments may be attached to the primary dwelling or detached. Attached accessory units typically involve some space in the existing home, such as an attic, garage, or basement family room. Detached units are sometimes also referred to as "accessory cottages." They may be guest or servant quarters, converted sheds, or garages.

Accessory apartments benefit elderly persons with limited resources living in large single-family homes with under-used space; households with an older relative who is still able to live substantially independently but requires some degree of assistance; and young adults who want to live independently while still being near to their parents.

Accessory units may already exist in the community without ordinances. Communities may want to adopt regulations to address the size of units, their concentration, their exterior appearance, and parking requirements. In some communities accessory units can only be used for a frail elderly person or caretaker and the kitchen must be removed when this permitted use ends.

References/Additional Resources

Accessory Apartments: Using Surplus Space in Single-family Houses by Patrick H. Hare, Susan Conner, Dwight Merriam (American Planning Association, PAS Report #365, 1981).

Streamlined permitting processes

The land-use permitting process affects the cost of housing. Delays in the review of proposed housing developments can add to development costs. A more efficient land-use review process can also result in a more cost-effective way to administer land-use regulations.

The following are ideas for streamlining the land use permitting process. Because each of these reform measures is designed to accomplish different objectives, they are best used in combinations:

Self-assessment - Begin by taking stock of the permitting process. For example, how long does a typical development review take from start to finish? Are there places where the system bogs down? Are there ways to eliminate or consolidate some of the steps in the approval process?

Centralized one-stop permit desk - This saves applicants from needlessly backtracking to different offices and departments. Include interdepartmental review to help coordinate the numerous departments that may be involved in the development process.

Checklists and flow charts - Consider publishing guidebooks that outline the local permit process.

Zoning and subdivision ordinances should describe the application process from start to finish - Ordinance language should be simple and direct and the sections and standards that relate to one another should be cross-referenced. Doing so benefits applicants and those who administer and enforce the ordinance.

Pre-application conferences - Formal or informal meetings with community staff to present concept or sketch plans, address requirements and save money by clarifying expectations before the expensive technical and engineering work begins.

Concurrent review - Concurrent review allows different steps in an application to proceed at the same time (like a petition for a zoning change and review of a subdivision plat) thus reducing the overall time needed.

Staff discretion on administrative matters - Minor subdivision approvals and issues involving mostly technical and minor changes to submittals can be handled by planning staff. Plan commission time should not be wasted on such matters.

Fast-tracking - Development projects that are desirable because of type or location can be encouraged by exempting them from certain permit requirements.

Encourage innovation - Innovative techniques may be encouraged by an expedited permit process and by allowing them as conditional uses or as overlays to existing zoning districts.

References/Additional Resources

Streamlining the Development Approval Process by Debra Bassert (Land Development, Winter 1999, pp. 14-19).

Streamlining Land Use Regulations: A Guidebook for Local Governments by John Vranicar, Welford Sanders, and David Mosen (American Planning Association, 1982).

Affordable Housing: Proactive and Reactive Planning Strategies by S. Mark White (American Planning Association, PAS Report #441, 1992).

Impact fees

Impact fees are fees imposed on development to mitigate the capital costs of new public facilities necessitated by the development. Public facilities include infrastructure for transportation, water, stormwater, parks, solid waste, and fire and police. However, impact fees cannot be used for school facilities. Under section 66.55(7) of the Wisconsin Statutes, impact fee ordinances must provide for an exception from or a reduction in the amount of impact fees on developments that provide low-cost housing.

2. Promoting the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing

Communities must promote the availability of undeveloped or underused land as one way to meet the low and moderate-income housing needs identified in the housing element. Several options are available to communities. For example, communities should insure an adequate supply of land is planned and zoned for multifamily housing and for development at higher densities to meet forecasted demand.

Promoting the availability of land for low and moderate-

income housing also can be integrated with other planning issues. For example, urban communities may try to identify areas near transit lines or where new transit might be feasible because of higher density and mixed-use development.

Additional strategies for promoting the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low and moderate-income housing include the following.

Housing Programs

[See the description of federal, state and local programs discussed in the preceding section.]

Specific actions

Community land trust

Community land trusts protect housing by keeping land from the speculative market. They typically work by owning the land and selling or leasing the buildings. Buyers or lessors agree to a limited appreciation should they decide to later sell or lease to another. The model works to preserve both existing residential units and new units built on the land. Also, it can be used to preserve affordable space for such things as community centers, health care facilities, small businesses, or day care centers. Community land trusts are similar to conservation land trusts which protect natural resources and open space.

Community land trusts provide the following benefits:

Lower land costs - Because land trusts remove land costs from the purchase price of a property, housing units can be sold or rented for less;

Permanent affordability - Removing land costs and limiting the amount of appreciation means that land trust housing will always be more affordable than market-rate housing for as long as the trust exists (which may be indefinitely);

Retention of investment - Grants, loans and other investments in a land trust are effectively recycled year after year through rents or sale prices, instead of requiring continuous financial support;

Community stability - Community land trusts are non-profit organizations controlled by local personalities. They are committed to stabilizing local housing costs for the long term and preserving a community's social fabric;

Speed - Land trusts can more quickly purchase properties that become available than can government.

The Madison Area Community Land Trust has been active since 1990 working with the City of Madison. For more information about the Madison Area Community Land Trust call (608) 255-6442.

References/Additional Resources

Institute for Community Economics, 57 School Street, Springfield, MA 01105-1331. 413-746-8660.

A Citizen's Guide to Conserving Land and Creating Affordable Housing by the Burlington Community Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust (1990).

Use of public or donated land for housing

Development of housing on publicly owned land or land donated for affordable housing can substantially increase the financial feasibility of many housing projects. Communities can also seek to encourage the donation of land for affordable housing.

Lands acquired by the community through tax forfeiture may be appropriate for affordable housing. Local governments and nonprofits may also engage in a program to acquire land and hold it until the community is ready to develop housing. Funding to acquire land may be available from federal and state programs.

Infrastructure improvements reserved for affordable housing

Giving priority for sewer and water extension to projects that include housing units affordable to middle- and lower-income households can increase the likelihood that such housing will be built. The priority may be formalized in an ordinance or informally as a plan policy.

Infill development

Infill refers to development on vacant or under-used land within built-up urban areas. Infill can range from construction of single-family housing on one or two adjacent lots to development of entire city blocks containing both residential and commercial uses.

Infill development has several advantages. Infill areas are already served by public facilities, including roads, sewer and water, police, fire, utilities, schools, and transit. Infill opportunities may sometimes be located on higher-cost urban land. If this is the case, then multi-family housing and/or mixed-use projects which have lower per-unit development costs may be most appropriate. Density bonuses or faster permitting may also add to an infill project's economic feasibility.

Communities may encourage infill development by preparing an inventory of potential infill sites and distributing it to developers; adopting flexible regulations which allow development of irregular or substandard infill lots; allowing mixed uses for infill developments, which may enhance the economic feasibility of projects; assisting in the consolidation of infill lots into larger, more easily developed sites; and acquiring abandoned property and demolishing structures beyond rehabilitation.

To minimize neighbor concerns infill units should be designed to fit in with the massing and density of the existing neighborhood as much as possible. For example if the neighborhood is all two story houses with steep pitched roofs the infill units would probably be more acceptable if they had two stories with steeply pitched roofs. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority has had a special financing program to support the development of infill housing. They used this program in several cities where they successfully added new structures to existing neighborhoods using modular homes.

Adaptive reuse

Adaptive reuse involves the conversion of surplus and/or outmoded buildings to economically viable new uses such as housing. Examples of outmoded buildings include old schools, hospitals, warehouses, and factories. It is one method for introducing housing into non-residential areas. Projects that involve historically or architecturally significant buildings may qualify for preservation tax credits.

Communities can facilitate adaptive reuse by developing flexible ordinances to facilitate adaptive reuse, by

arranging for possible property transfers of publicly-owned buildings, and by providing assistance in obtaining sources of funding such as loans, grants, and rent subsidies.

Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing can be an important source of low and moderate cost housing in a community. Communities may want to encourage manufactured housing as a means of expanding the range of housing opportunities. Manufactured housing is less expensive to build than site-built housing because of lower production costs. The term *manufactured housing* describes housing that is constructed in a factory and delivered to the site as a finished product. While these homes are often referred to as "mobile homes" fewer than 5% of manufactured homes are moved once placed on a site.

Local communities often try to prohibit the siting of manufactured housing due to concerns about the effect on the tax base since manufactured housing is often taxed as personal property. However, a study by the University of Wisconsin-Extension suggests that manufactured home communities may actually have a positive impact on local taxes. There also may be concerns about the effect on adjacent property values and the visual quality of manufactured homes. A University of Michigan study, however, concluded that manufactured home parks have little or no impact on adjacent residential property values.

Communities may want to review their zoning ordinances to be sure that their regulations do not unduly restrict the use of manufactured homes. For a model zoning ordinance integrating manufactured housing into single-family neighborhoods, contact the Wisconsin Manufactured Housing Association at (800) 236-4663.

The Foundation for rural housing located in Madison has developed a program with the Wisconsin Manufactured Housing Association and the Department of Corrections to obtain donated manufactured homes, rehabilitate them with prison labor and make them available for low income housing. For information contact the Foundation at (608) 238-3448.

References/Additional Resources

Manufactured Housing: Regulation, Design Innovations, and Development Options by Welford Sanders (American

Planning Association, PAS Report #478, 1998).

Manufactured Housing Impacts on Adjacent Property Values by Kate Warner and Jeff Scheuer (University of Michigan, 1993).

Municipal Revenue Impact of Tax Exempt Mobile Homes: A Methodology for Extension Agents by Richard Stauber (University of Wisconsin-Extension, 1995).

Product Report: 'Manufactured Housing' available from the American Association of Retired Persons website at www.aarp.org/manhov1.html.

Manufactured Housing and Standards: Fact Sheet for Purchasers of Manufactured Homes (1999) available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website at hud.gov/fha/sfh/mhs/mhssht3.html.

Regulating Manufactured Housing by Welford Sanders (American Planning Association, PAS Report # 398, 1986).

3. Maintaining or rehabilitating existing housing stock

It is important that the housing plan consider conservation of the communities existing housing stock. The existing stock often is the primary source of affordable housing. In many communities this existing housing is aging and may need investment to maintain its utility. Planners should consider strategies that prevent neglect and encourage reinvestment in the existing housing stock.

Housing Programs

[See the description of federal, state and local programs discussed in the first section.]

Specific Actions

Building code

The State of Wisconsin has a uniform dwelling code which must be followed for the construction and

inspection of all one- and two-family dwellings in the state. Local communities in the state have certain responsibilities for enforcement of the code. The uniform dwelling code is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and is found in the Administrative Rules for the Department of Commerce (COM 20 - COM 25).

Historic building code

The standard state building codes may make rehabilitation of certain older homes prohibitively expensive or impractical. Communities in Wisconsin which have adopted historic preservation ordinances certified by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin can use the Wisconsin Historic Building Code for locally designated historic buildings. The Historic Building Code, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, permits a flexible and cost-effective approach to rehabilitating historic buildings. The code is found in the Administrative Rules for the Department of Commerce (COM 70). Information is also available from the Division of Historic Preservation at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at (608) 264-6500.

Housing code

All communities in Wisconsin can enact housing codes under their general authority to protect public health, safety, and welfare. Housing codes provide standards for how a dwelling unit is to be used and maintained over time.

It is important for communities to review housing code enforcement efforts to determine if they need to be increased or modified to make them more effective. Communities can intensify housing code enforcement programs to help maintain housing and upgrade deteriorating housing stock. In some communities code enforcement capacity is so limited that routine inspections are scheduled only once in ten years. Communities could consider focusing enforcement efforts on select neighborhoods, publicizing code provisions, and complaint procedures.

The City of Madison has a housing code which is available from the City's web site at www.ci.madison.wi.us.

Community paint/fix up events

Local governments should target home maintenance/rehabilitation programs at the neighborhood level because the visibility can help create peer pressure to motivate others to fix up their homes. One strategy is to organize painting/fix-up events in partnership with local professional and civic groups to encourage volunteers to help with exterior maintenance of target residences.

Rehabilitation loans and grants

Code enforcement can be supplemented with financial and technical assistance to homeowners and tenants. Communities may establish loan or grant programs to assist owner occupants with repairs. Such programs are commonly funded by federal Community Development Block Grant dollars. The programs often focus on specific census tracts or neighborhoods where the concentration of deferred maintenance is highest. In addition to keeping housing units functioning, maintenance and rehabilitation are also worthwhile because they build pride among residents, stimulate others to repair their homes, encourage long-term investment and maintenance, and reduce potential neighborhood problems.

Occupant education and cooperation

Many repairs are simple enough that most homeowners can help if given some guidance. Educational programs to train homeowners and renters can help ensure that the homes are rehabilitated and maintained in good condition. These educational programs help property owners better understand the responsibilities of home ownership.

STEP 7: Evaluation and Updates

Finally the law requires that the Implementation Element *"include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan."* To accomplish this, the community next needs to establish a process to measure its progress in carrying out the goals, policies, and strategies of the Housing Element in the context of the entire Comprehensive Plan. This may entail the preparation of a progress report on housing to be submitted to the governing body and shared with the citizens of the community. Progress can be measured through a number of criteria which the community can develop.

Some examples of possible evaluation criteria are the following:

extent to which problems and/or opportunities have been reduced or increased;

extent to which the goals articulated in the housing element has been achieved;

extent of change in the assumptions, forecasts, projections, goals, policies, and guidelines that were the basis of the last plan adoption or evaluation;

whether affordable housing projects have been denied a permit?

whether the community has lost housing stock? If so, of what type?

Participants in the evaluation should represent a wide range of housing interests from both the public and private sectors, as well as nonprofits and citizen groups. It may even be possible to include the people who helped develop the element.

The process developed by communities should also include a schedule for review of the local Housing Element. The timing for this review could be annually, or on some other interval selected by the community such as 3 or 5 years. The review must occur at least once every ten years since the law requires that a Comprehensive Plan be updated at least once every 10 years. Federal and state programs for certain communities may also specify a particular time for review.

A review of the plan is not the same as an update of the plan. For example, an annual review may show twice as many building permits as forecasted issued in that year. Building trends develop over a longer period of time than one year. Building permits for the next year may be below forecasts. It would be a mistake to update a plan based on unusual events in one year. However, if the trends continue for a longer time period, those trends may form the basis for updating the plan. For this reason, the law also requires that the Implementation Element *"include a process for updating the comprehensive plan"* that is separate from the mechanism to measure progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. Nonetheless, the evaluation process and the plan update process can work together. A good evaluation process will make updating the Housing Element easier.

Appendix A

Regional Planning Commissions

Bay Lake	Suite 211, Old Fort Square 211 North Broadway Green Bay, WI 54303	(920) 448-2820
Dane County	City-County Building, Rm 523 Madison, WI 53709	(608) 266-4317
East Central Wisconsin	132 Main Street Menasha, WI 54952	(920) 751-4770
Mississippi River	907 Main Street La Crosse, WI 54601	(608) 785-9396
North Central Wisconsin	City Hall, 407 Grant Street Wausau, WI 54401	(715) 845-4208
Northwest	302 Walnut Street Spooner, WI 54801	(715) 635-2197
Southeastern Wisconsin	916 North East Ave. Waukesha, WI 53817-1607	(414) 547-6721
Southwestern Wisconsin	426 Karrmann Library UW--Platteville Platteville, WI 53818	(608) 342-1214
West Central Wisconsin	124½ Graham Ave. Eau Claire, WI 54701	(715) 836-2918

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