



# Living Well

High quality, affordable housing choices exist for all ages, incomes and circumstances

## What strategies are working?

### **PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

- The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority's programs are working well and have received high performance awards.
- Public housing benefits from its strong resident councils.

### **INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Collaboration among funders resulted in legislative success.
- Our efforts go beyond the built environment to encompass community engagement.
- We understand that housing stability is critical to every City and County department's spending.
- We acknowledge that we face housing disparities and are committed to working on them.

### **DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Minneapolis has a savvy development community that does well-built affordable housing.
- There is interest in building new housing.
- We understand the connection that links housing with health, neighborhoods, jobs, etc.

### **POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND REGULATIONS**

- Many of our regulations are helping to preserve our housing stock.
- Neighborhood stabilization program dollars helped us navigate through the foreclosure crisis.

## What strategies are not working?

### **AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- Public housing has lost units to demolition, and we're not building enough new rental housing. Today, we have the same number of affordable housing units we had 25 years ago. The housing waiting list has been closed to new names since 2008. We have 14,000 people on the waiting list, and the list would be significantly longer if we could add every applicant.
- The vacancy rate is very low, so there are few affordable housing opportunities outside of public housing.

### **RELIANCE ON THE MARKETPLACE**

- The marketplace won't provide affordable housing for poor people.
- Single family mortgages are still hard to obtain for minorities and people of modest income.
- Investors are reluctant to do mixed-income housing projects.
- Some irresponsible developers provide affordable housing, but it isn't high quality housing.

### **FUNDING**

- Federal government support has decreased dramatically despite the fact that the population has grown. There hasn't been a public housing development project in more than 20 years. Widespread homelessness is a symptom of federal withdrawal. We need more money.
- Development is costly because public and private sources of money aren't aligned.
- Immigration laws are boosting our population, yet there isn't enough help for these newcomers.
- More mobility and disparity assistance is needed.

### **RACIAL AND GEOGRAPHIC INEQUITIES PERSIST**

# Living Well

## High quality, affordable housing choices exist for all ages, incomes and circumstances

---

- There is less affordability in today's marketplace. Due to demand, rents are going up while incomes are stagnant. Communities of color are disproportionately impacted.
- Poverty isn't dispersed, and some neighborhoods have a disproportionate amount of affordable housing.
- Suburbs also need affordable housing, and putting affordable housing in the suburbs doesn't change the concentration of poverty in north Minneapolis.

### GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS AND REGULATIONS

- Developers get a lot of heat from residents for trying to build affordable housing. The City listens too much to one or two vocal opponents, and as a result things don't happen. Elected officials need to think about what's best for the whole community.
- Some of our own regulations limit options for developers. We put developers through the wringer and, as a result, projects take years. Our inefficiency costs developers money.
- The rental community is hard to regulate and we don't always know when there are problems. If we don't know about the problem, we can't fix the situation.
- More collaboration is needed between housing policymakers and the school district [due to mobility of student population.]

## Working in partnership, what strategies could we pursue?

### STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

- Listen to the community. Lower-income neighborhoods want a variety of housing that spans the income spectrum. These neighborhoods want market-rate homes as well as affordable units. Adding more market-rate housing in poor areas could provide economic balance.
- Ensure that collaboration among the State, the City and developers occurs earlier in the process. Earlier involvement will help ensure the City's high priority projects meet State priorities.
- Come to the Legislature with one policy voice. Minneapolis should make State funding for housing a priority.
- Build goodwill regarding supportive housing. Although supportive housing generates very few complaints, myths persist. Publicize the facts.

### PROTECT AND IMPROVE EXISTING HOUSING

- Raise property management standards.
- Allocate resources to keep our existing housing stock stable. Help good rental managers avoid foreclosures that displace families. Avoid foreclosure of owner-occupied homes.
- Consolidate money and focus on rehabilitating single family housing.

### SET PRIORITIES AND RE-EXAMINE FUNDING PROCESSES

- Find a way to have one massive round of funding that includes money from all the partners.
- Learn from other cities. Boston, for example, requires a 20 percent set-aside for affordable housing. If the developer doesn't put affordable units in a project, money is put into a fund to help other developers include or build affordable housing.
- Focus efforts for the people who are at the lowest levels of income.
- Create a regional fund to help developers build affordable units.

### IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT AND INTRODUCE MORE FLEXIBILITY

- Streamline the regulation process so developers don't have to wait so long.

# Living Well

## High quality, affordable housing choices exist for all ages, incomes and circumstances

---

- Make hard political decisions and set a limited number of priorities. Making everything a priority isn't reasonable when you have limited dollars. Set specific, yearly priorities. Don't change priorities in the middle of a project.

This conversation had representatives from City of Minneapolis Mayor's Office, City Council Offices, City Coordinator's Office, Community Planning and Economic Development, Regulatory Services Department, Commonbond Communities, JADT Development Group, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Housing and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.