

MEMO OF MEMBERS

The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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Capitol Hill

Appropriations Work in High Gear

Congress comes back on Tuesday, November 16 for a lame-duck session. It is expected that the session will not last longer than a week, during which time appropriations bills and raising the debt ceiling are on the agenda.

Domestic spending legislation is expected to be gathered into an omnibus bill, but a major disagreement between the House and the Senate over the total cost of the package will make this a difficult bill to pass. The total spending package from the Senate is \$8 billion over the spending cap. The House is not over the cap. Resolving this \$8 billion difference will be difficult and could result in an across the board cut that would include housing programs. If the White House is unhappy with how the difference is resolved, or not resolved, some pieces of the omnibus bill may face year-long continuing resolutions.

House and Senate staffs have been working to develop a conference agreement on the VA-HUD bill that will be under consideration beginning on November 16. Housing advocates have been active in making their voices heard to ensure that adequate funding is included in the final omnibus legislation.

In a letter to the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee chaired by Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), NLIHC expressed support for the funding levels in the Senate bill over the House measure that cut all HUD programs, except Section 8, by 4%. The Coalition also endorsed the Senate measure because it attempts to reverse some of the negative impacts on the Section 8 program caused by HUD in FY2004.

Another letter signed by housing industry groups including the National Multi Housing Council, the National Leased Housing Association and others was sent to leaders in both the House and Senate urging the conference committee to retain the Senate funding for Section 8. The letter also urges that the language that instructs HUD in the management of the Section 8 program be retained.

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HUD

HUD Releases New Data related to FMRs

In the past few weeks HUD has released two datasets related to the FMRs. The first is HUD's 50th percentile rent estimates for all FMR areas, released on Friday, October 29. Fiftieth percentile rents can be used as FMRs in public housing agencies in 39 metropolitan areas. They can also sometimes be used in tight markets when voucher holders encounter difficulties in using their vouchers. View these estimates at: www.huduser.org/datasets/50per.html.

Also released was a public use data set that approximates the local rent distribution data HUD used to rebenchmark the FY05 FMRs. These data differ from the

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POINT OF VIEW

by Sheila Crowley, President

Our elected officials are returning to Washington to complete the work of the 108th Congress. In one short week, they expect to finish the remaining nine of 13 spending bills that will dictate the operations of the federal government for a year. In order to do that, they will have to roll all nine bills into one big omnibus bill that covers such a vast array of programs that it will be assured of passage. Making decisions in this way also assures us that no one who votes on this bill will know and understand everything they are voting for or against.

The rumors on the HUD budget are not good. Despite the wholesale rejection by both the Senate and the House Appropriations Committees of the Administration's proposal to cut the housing voucher program by \$1.6 billion, the White House is said to be pressuring the negotiators on the omnibus bill to accept the Administration's numbers for the program. Pressure means threat of a veto, which could lead to paying to run the government for the next year with a continuing resolution to fund everything at its current level. In the case of federal housing programs, a continuing resolution is the better alternative.

Veteran federal housing budget trackers are all too familiar with the drastic disinvestment in low income housing assistance since the 1970s when the intended funding for federal housing programs was at an all time high. NLIHC has just documented this downward slide again in the 2004 edition of *Changing Priorities*

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NATIONAL LOW INCOME
HOUSING COALITION

Capitol Hill *(cont'd from p. 1)*

The industry letter concludes by urging Congress to continue the Section 8 voucher program in a manner that supports the original intent of the law, allows landlords to rely on the program and allows the lenders to have confidence that the government will honor its commitments.

Advocacy groups are also speaking out against Section 224 of the Senate bill, which prohibits public housing authorities from spending any public housing funds on most any voting-related activity, including voter registration, voter identification and get-out-the-vote activities related to federal, state or local elections. If enacted, this section would inhibit the potential for public housing residents to vote.

Debt Ceiling Increase

On October 14, the federal government reached its \$7.4 trillion debt ceiling or credit limit. The government regularly borrows money to pay its bills. According to *The Washington Post*, the “debt ceiling was first imposed in 1917 to act as a brake on the total amount of accumulated debt the government owes. Today the total debt includes money owed either to private investors or, in the case of funds borrowed from surplus Social Security taxes, to other government programs.” Prior to October 14 Treasury Secretary John Snowe had asked congressional leaders to raise the debt ceiling. However, congressional leaders did not want to raise it during the campaign cycle. Now that the campaign cycle is over, Congress will work to raise the debt ceiling when it reconvenes the week of November 16. The debt ceiling increase, which has been pegged as “must-pass” legislation, will likely be attached to the omnibus spending bill.

Bills At a Glance

Current information on legislation being tracked by NLIHC is available through NLIHC’s legislative action center, at capwiz.com/nlihc/issues/bills/.

HUD *(Cont. from p.1)*

actual distributions because the Census Bureau requires the counts be rounded to preserve anonymity. Still, by providing a basis, these data may help advocates trying to understand where their FMRs came from.

There are seven levels of geographic aggregation in the data, including, national, state, county, major civil division, place, metropolitan statistical area, and pri-

mary metropolitan statistical area. The data also separates out “Standard Quality” units, where occupants are paying cash rent and the unit is on fewer than ten acres with full facilities and built over two years ago, and recent movers. The rent distribution is divided into 99 categories from zero to \$2500.

While these data may prove useful as advocates continue to grapple with current and future FMRs, it also appears that this may be an excellent local rent distribution dataset for other research and advocacy efforts. Find the 2000 Census Rent Data Used in the Calculation of the FY05 FMRs at www.huduser.org/datasets/fmr/CensusRentData/index.html.

HUD Streamlines Information Collection for High-Performing PHAs

A new rule further reduces the Annual Plan requirements for public housing authorities HUD has deemed high-performing. Effective November 8, 2004, these PHAs will submit detailed information only about their civil rights certification, capital improvements, and certain discretionary policies. They can simply list any other policy revisions they have made, along with data about the impact these changes have had on residents. High-performing PHAs participating in this streamlined process would have to submit more detailed information every five years, along with their Five Year Plans.

The notice of this rule, Directive Number FR-4829-N-01, is available at www.hudclips.org.

HUD Requests Comments

HUD has proposed a new survey for “the people and organizations HUD works with” to share their opinions about agency administration and programs. The plan calls for approximately 2,500 people to be surveyed, including local elected officials and community development department directors, PHA and fair housing agency directors, HUD-assisted multifamily housing owners, and leaders of nonprofit groups. The information collected will be incorporated into a report that follows up on a similar study carried out in 2001.

HUD is requesting comments on this survey, including suggestions on improving “the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.” These comments are due on January 11, 2005 and should be submitted to: Reports Liaison Officer, Office of Policy Development and Research, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, SW., Room 8226, Washington, DC 20410. More information about the proposed study is available at www.hudclips.org.

Voucher Funding Crisis - Week 30

By passing resolutions or conducting surveys, cities and towns continue to look for ways to solve the problem of housing low income families because of a variety of HUD's harmful actions this year.

Vermont Resolution

In Vermont, the city of Burlington is poised to pass a resolution urging Vermont's congressional delegation and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to work to block the Section 8 cuts affecting Burlington and the surrounding area. If HUD does not restore the necessary funding, the resolution says that as many as 207 families will lose their vouchers in the coming year. The resolution projects that the number of voucher losses will double by 2009. The Mayor of Burlington, Peter Clavelle, is also directed by the resolution to advise HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson of the city's opposition to the cuts.

No Assistance in Flagstaff, AZ

The executive director of the Flagstaff Housing Authority, Mike Gouhin, reported in the *Arizona Daily Sun* that the programs designed to help homeless families don't have the necessary federal funds.

There are 265 units of public housing in Flagstaff and no vacancies. There are an additional 560 families on the waiting list. The Section 8 program currently provides rental assistance to 327 with 358 families on the waiting list. Gouhin said that the average stay for families in both public housing and Section 8 is two years, and so families can expect to wait at least that long before a voucher becomes available.

Response to FY05 FMRs

Local Groups Respond to FMRs

As reported last week in *Memo* (November 5) the period for public comments on the FY05 FMRs officially closed on November 5. Since then NLIHC has received copies of the public comments submitted by a number of local and national groups, and has posted them online (www.nlihc.org/2005fmrs/finalcomments.htm). There have also been a number of news stories on the issue.

Most local comments were succinct, documenting the local need for housing and how the FY05 FMRs undercut the effectiveness of federal housing programs in meeting these needs. Given the haphazard way in which the proposed and final FY05 FMRs were released, few local groups had a chance to do significant analysis of their local market.

One exception, written up in *Newsday*, is a group of public housing authorities of Long Island, which focused on the results of the HUD random digit dialing survey conducted in August to verify the local rent level. The comments pointed out that while the survey is supposed to be of 2 bedroom units, HUD often relied on the adjusted results of one bedroom units. On Long Island, half of the responses came from one-bedroom renters, with an average adjusted value of \$1,182. Yet the actual two-bedroom units in the survey were valued at \$1,303.

The drop in the FMR for Long Island is essentially a drop in the subsidy, and housing advocates argue that this will only increase the rate of homelessness. The housing authorities, along with country executives and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), are urging HUD to increase the rent structure.

A number of New England groups also submitted comments. The Massachusetts Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) focused on the RDDs including the adjustment for substandard and subsidized units as well as the ratios used to adjust one-bedroom units. Along with commenting on changes to how HUD estimates FMRs for larger bedroom sizes and comparisons of the FMRs to other measures of rent level, the CHAPA comments also question the decision to do away with the rural minimum.

If you have a public comment or an analysis of the FMRs that you would like to have posted on the NLIHC website, please submit it to tessa@nlihc.org.

National Housing Trust Fund Pushing for a strong finish

Congress returns to Washington this week, and amidst all the unfinished business of budgets, appropriations, and intelligence issues, advocates will renew the push for Representatives to sign the discharge petition on H.R. 1102, seeking to move the National Housing Trust Fund Legislation to the floor. Though it is a short period of time, by getting more signatures the Campaign is set up for a stronger start in the next Congress when NHTF legislation is reintroduced. There are currently 178 signatures on the petition out of the 218 needed.

Update from the Field

DE Group Analyzes the Benefits of Investing in Housing

In order to help quantify the positive results of investing in affordable housing, the Delaware Housing Coalition (DHC) will release an economic impact study on November 15 analyzing the effects of increased state investment in housing. The study is the most recent step in the DHC's work to increase the state's role in providing affordable housing.

For more than two years, DHC has been part of the Delaware Housing Trust Fund Working Group, which has a goal of increasing funding for the state's Housing Development Fund (HDF). After an original needs assessment by the Group in 2003 found that addressing the state's housing needs completely would require more than \$965 million, the Group met to discuss a more plausible funding level for the HDF that could still have an impact on the state's needs. The Group's subsequent five-year strategic housing plan, presented to the Governor in late 2003, called for a \$60 million investment in projects including rental housing, homeownership, and special needs housing.

The current economic impact study shows the effects of fully funding the strategic plan over five years, and clearly establishes affordable housing as a sound investment. For example, each dollar of investment in affordable housing is found to leverage seven additional dollars, a much higher return than most state investments. In addition, the study shows that almost 3,400 jobs and \$43 million in annual tax revenues would be created. In total, the study anticipates over \$420 million of net new economic output.

The Group hopes to use the report to continue to increase the number of supporters and endorsers of the five-year plan, says Ken Smith of DHC. "The Group sees the release of the study as the beginning of a long campaign to give affordable housing something like the resources it deserves in Delaware. With the help of committed housing advocates, business community members, and state officials, this is possible," Mr. Smith said. "The ideal scenario is the adoption and funding of the five-year plan."

As one of its next steps, DHC will host a Housing Advocacy Day in March 2005, and the Coalition hopes that the Governor will have by that time allocated eight million new dollars to the HDF for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

In addition to DHC, the Working Group includes Delaware Rural Housing Associates, Deutsche Bank Trust Company Delaware, Interfaith Housing Delaware, JP Morgan Chase, NCALL Research, Inc., and West End Neighborhood House. Members of the Working Group also partnered with the Center for Community Change's Housing Trust Fund project and Fannie Mae to complete the impact study, which was conducted by University of Delaware researchers.

"Investing to Meet Delaware's Affordable Housing Needs: An Economic Impact Analysis Study" will be posted on the Delaware Housing Coalition website: www.housingforall.org. For more information, contact DHC Director Ken Smith at dhc@housingforall.org or (302) 678-2286.

In Washington

Governors Discuss Housing as an Economic Development Issue

Governors Mitt Romney (R-MA) and Ed Rendell (D-PA) addressed the Fannie Mae Foundation's Annual Housing Conference on November 10, describing the housing programs in their states and discussing the impact housing can have on an area's economic development.

Mr. Rendell spoke of a desire to focus on developing smaller cities and attracting workers through middle-class housing initiatives and open space preservation. His "Growing Greener" plan earmarks \$180 million for brownfield cleanup, urban parks, and farmland preservation in what he described as "third-class" cities – those with between 10,000 and 100,000 residents. He called his "Elm Street" program, which pairs downtown housing incentives with city center business revitalization programs, "one of the most important things we can do," and also heralded a new Community Action Team approach to help localities locate and link government funding available from state and federal programs.

Mr. Romney said he was surprised upon first taking office to learn that business leaders tended not to expand their companies in Massachusetts not because of high taxes or strict government regulations, but because of a lack of affordable housing for their employees.

Among the programs his administration has enacted to alleviate this problem are requiring that multifamily
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Governors *(cont'd from p. 4)*

housing be built near any new commuter transportation lines and stops, and providing \$3,000 incentives for each high-density multifamily unit built in a town center where one-fourth of those new units are designated as affordable. He has also tied discretionary funding for cities and towns to their commitment to Smart Growth principles, and united the departments of transportation, environment, and housing under one “supersecretary” of Commonwealth Development, so planning processes are streamlined.

Both governors agreed that with federal budgets tightening, states have a crucial role to play in the areas of housing and economic development. They suggested that state executives “sell” affordable housing initiatives to legislatures and citizens by focusing on the economic development benefits of housing, and by committing to Smart Growth and high-quality design. It will not be easy to keep housing at the top of state-wide policy agendas, the governors concluded, but they reiterated their commitment to it. “I’m not sure housing issues will get on the front page,” said Mr. Romney. “But you have to do it anyway, because it’s the right thing to do.”

Resources

New Report Requests More Housing Funds for Growing Western Towns

The Rural Collaborative, a non-profit housing network in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah, recently published “Home on the Range: Why America’s Rural West Needs More Housing Support.” The report, written by Deborah Halliday with research assistance from Graycen Duffy, describes the housing market of the region, evaluates the impact of federal programs on the housing market and states several changes necessary for federal programs of the future.

While the stereotype of the west might be of sparsely populated land, towns and cities are expanding rapidly. This expansion, however, does not benefit everyone, and many struggle to find affordable housing amidst rising construction and land costs and loss of rental properties. The federal programs in place, such as HOME and Section 8 vouchers, greatly aid these towns in the creation and rehabilitation of homes and rental properties. Unfortunately, as policies change in the federal government, fewer families can be assisted and waiting lists continue to grow.

The report highlights two communities benefiting from federal dollars and then makes a plea for several policy changes, including more HOME funding, a halt in Section 8 cuts, and support for the National Housing Trust Fund. To view this report, visit: www.shelterthewest.org/mainmenu/pubs/pubs.html.

The Criminalization of Homelessness

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has released *Illegal to be Homeless: The Criminalization of Homelessness in the United States*, a comprehensive study of homeless civil rights violations. This study is also a survey of current laws that criminalize homeless people and ranks the top “meanest” cities and states in the country. This report examines legislated ordinances and statutes, as well as law enforcement and community practices since August of 2003. The report finds Little Rock (AR), Atlanta (GA), Cincinnati (OH), Las Vegas (NV), and Gainesville (FL) to be the five “meanest” cities in the United States for poor and homeless people. California is the “meanest” state, followed by Florida, Hawaii and Texas. Many of these communities have significant histories of violating the civil rights of homeless people and can be considered “repeat offenders.”

In May 2004, Little Rock police implemented a 3-day notice warning in advance to clearing a camp, and yet only two months later raided a homeless camp during the day without notice, postings, or warrants and arbitrarily threw homeless people’s property into a nearby river. Little Rock public officials are threatening a massive sweep to remove homeless people as the Clinton Presidential Library opens on November 18.

This report also documents laws specifically enacted to target homeless people – including anti-camping, anti-panhandling, and loitering laws – but also looks at police abuse of existing laws in an overly broad fashion in order to move homeless people into jails or at least out of sight. According to this report, fifty-one of the cities studied have passed ordinances since August of 2003 targeting homeless people. Fifty-seven of the cities surveyed conducted large sweeps or destroyed the campsites of homeless individuals.

The report is available at: www.nationalhomeless.org/crimreport/index.html

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Resources *(cont'd from p. 5)*

Research Released on HOPE VI Families

Briefs 4, 5, and 6 of the Urban Institute's "Roof Over Their Heads: Changes and Challenges for Public Housing Residents" research initiative about the families of the HOPE VI program are available for viewing online. *How Are HOPE VI Families Faring? Income and Employment* examines income and employment findings for working-age adults two years after the start of relocation at the five HOPE VI Panel Study sites, *How Are HOPE VI Families Faring? Health* urges serious consideration of the health problems of HOPE VI site residents, and *How Are HOPE VI Families Faring? Children* examines the impact of the program on children and youth. To view these publications, go to: www.urban.org/template.cfm?navmenuid=554&Template=/TaggedContent/RoofOverTheirHeads.cfm.

Two New Reports from The National League of Cities

"The American Dream in 2004" surveyed 1,002 people to discover their definition of the American Dream and whether or not they were living it. The survey found that 34% of adults feel that they are not living the American Dream; respondents cited poor public education (27%), not being financially secure (22%), and lack of affordable housing (9%) as some of the barriers to achieving this goal. Additionally, 56% of those earning below \$20,000 a year felt that they were not living the American Dream.

In "The State of America's Cities 2004," a random sample of municipal elected officials is surveyed to gather opinions on issues facing cities and towns. Officials named fiscal and overall economic conditions to have a negative impact on their cities and claimed that these have declined in the last five years. Priorities for federal action included availability of both quality affordable housing and health services. Officials did note that working with other municipalities in some cases helped housing affordability, with 18% saying it was a very positive experience and 39% recording it as a positive experience. They saw working with other levels of government as well as working with other local governments as key to increasing community and quality of life.

These reports are available at: www.nlc.org/nlc_org/site/programs/research_reports/index.cfm

Accounting and Financial Operations for Rural Housing Nonprofits

The Housing Assistance Council has published "Accounting & Financial Operations for Nonprofits in Rural Housing," a financial management guide written for board members and staff of small nonprofit organizations. It lays out the basic information necessary to manage the accounting and financial areas of the organization. The guide gives suggestions on budgeting, basic accounting systems, the need for an audit, and more. It also discusses the penalties imposed on nonprofits that do not manage their money responsibly. The guide is available at www.ruralhome.org or for \$5 (including shipping and handling) from Luz Rosas at HAC, 202-842-8600, luz@ruralhome.org.

News and Announcements

James A. Johnson Community Fellows

Nominations are being sought for Fannie Mae's 7th annual James A. Johnson Community Fellows program. The Fellowship program recognizes and rewards leading community-based urban and rural affordable housing and community development professionals and provides them with the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development goals that will encourage them to contribute further to the housing and community development field. Each year, the Fannie Mae Foundation selects six distinguished professionals as James A. Johnson Fellows. These six fellows are awarded a \$70,000 grant plus a \$20,000 educational travel/study stipend to pursue a self-designed, professional-development track to enhance the individual's leadership skills and field experiences and to explore new solutions to current affordable housing and community development challenges. A description of the program, criteria for selection, and the nomination form are at: www.fanniemaefoundation.org/grants/johnson.shtml. The deadline for submitting completed nomination packages is December 31, 2004.

NLIHC Staff

Matt Achhammer, Field Organizer, x229
 Stacy Braverman, Legislative Intern, x243
 Bonnie Caldwell, Senior Legislative Director, x242
 Linda Couch, Deputy Director, x228
 Sheila Crowley, President, x224
 Kathleen Flanagan, Outreach Intern, x244
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 Kim Schaffer, Outreach Director, x230
 Tessa Silvestri, Research Intern, x239
 Tangi Slattery, Outreach Intern, x244
 Michelle Goodwin Thompson, Office Manager, x234
 Mark Treskon, Research Analyst, x245
 Carol Vance, Receptionist/Office Assistant, x221

Tell Your Friends...

NLIHC membership is the best way to stay informed about affordable housing issues, keep in touch with advocates around the country, and support NLIHC's work. Information is available at www.nlihc.org.

NLIHC News

Save the Date! NLIHC Annual Conference

NLIHC's 2005 Annual Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day will be held Monday and Tuesday, May 2 and 3, at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. The Leadership Reception will be held the evening of May 3. Mark your calendar and plan to join us!

Point of View *(cont'd from p. 1)*

(www.nlihc.org). All low income housing assistance budget authority in 2004 is \$29 billion, compared to the peak year of 1978 when it was \$83 billion. So when the HUD Secretary tells us that housing programs cost too much, we should understand him to mean that it is his job to further the disinvestment.

Changing Priorities again compares federal spending on low income housing assistance to federal revenue losses on homeowner housing subsidies. Please note that the President has promised to preserve the mortgage interest tax deduction when he undertakes reform of the federal tax code. This housing tax expenditure will cost \$62.5 billion in 2004. (The total homeowner subsidy that includes property tax and capital gains deductions will cost \$105 billion.)

We have no quarrel with protecting the deep federal subsidies for middle and upper income home owners, but ask that federal subsidies for low income renters receive equal treatment. The moral value of fairness dictates that benefit or burden be shared alike.

Fact of the Week

'Tis the Season: Households left in the Cold in 2003

Number of Households Uncomfortably Cold for More Than 24 Hours	7,266,000
Due to inadequate resources:	
Equipment Failure	2,172,000
Inadequate Heating	889,000
Inadequate Insulation	861,000
Heating too Expensive	638,000
Other Reasons	2,706,000

Source: HUD 2003 American Housing Survey



About NLIHC: Established in 1974, the National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated solely to ending America's affordable housing crisis. NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone. NLIHC provides up-to-date information, formulates policy, and educates the public on housing needs and the strategies for solutions.

National Low Income Housing Coalition
Memo to Members
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The NIMBY Report

*on the continuing struggle
for inclusive communities*

National Low Income Housing Coalition

November 2004

Iowa

City of Janesville Faces, Settles Federal Lawsuit

On November 9, 2004, after an extensive investigation, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) charged, in a federal lawsuit, that the city of Janesville, Iowa (pop. 829) had discriminated on the basis of national origin in rejecting a rezoning request from landowners who intended to build a manufactured home community called The Arbors. According to the lawsuit, the city's opposition to the 116-pad community was based on the fact that "Bosnians, Mexicans and other ethnic or racial minorities" were the likely residents. The case was filed pursuant to the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin and other protected classes.

The case grew out of the January 2000 request of Kenneth and Cindy Kuhr to rezone a parcel of land for the manufactured homes. The matter drew significant community opposition over two years as the city considered the request. Opponents gathered more than 300 signatures on a petition opposing the zoning change, claiming that the development would exacerbate problems with flooding in the area and that the relatively affordable homes would generate little in property tax revenue. The DOJ lawsuit claims that Janesville resident Melodie Despard helped to lead the opposition, making public statements that she opposed it because it would attract Mexicans and Bosnians. Despard later joined the city council and was part of the majority that voted to deny the rezoning application by a 3-2 vote.

As is its custom, DOJ filed its complaint and a proposed consent decree resolving the matter simultaneously. While the city officials say that the complaint has no basis, they have agreed to the relief sought by DOJ to settle the case and avoid the expense and distraction of litigation. In a prepared statement, Mayor Jim MacKay and the five members of the city council said they had "concluded that limited resources are best spent in progressive planning and growth. Settling this complaint out-of-court was the best means." They were not available for further comment.

Under the terms of the consent decree, which has been filed with the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, the city would pay \$45,000 in compensatory damages to the developers and a \$10,000 civil penalty. The city would also be prohibited from additional acts of discrimination, be required

to provide Fair Housing Act training to city officials and must modify the zoning ordinance. The city would also start a Fair Housing outreach plan to support the development of affordable housing in Janesville.

For more information: Stephanie Wright, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa. Telephone: 319-363-1990.

Minnesota

Good News for a Change? St. Paul on Its Way to Meeting Supportive Housing Target

In a move that is being heralded by supportive housing advocates, the City of St. Paul has smoothed the path for development of a new 120-unit complex that would provide permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless men with addiction histories. Catholic Charities in the Twin Cities would build the complex, which would be financed by federal Superfund dollars and a hefty capital grant from the city.

The development is part of a larger trend to de-emphasize temporary shelter and transitional housing and to develop service-enriched housing for homeless people, who might also have mental illnesses, addiction disorders or similar histories. The city and the state have both set aggressive goals for the development of permanent supportive housing, which has been shown to be a more effective way of serving people with complicated needs. Mayor Randy Kelly set the target at 5,000 units by 2006. When built, the Catholic Charities project will bring the total to more than 500 units, with a number of other complexes in the pipeline.

The City of St. Paul has been an active partner in the acquisition of the site, in part because the supportive housing community has developed a strong culture of political support throughout Minnesota, and because the four-acre site on which the project will be built had been abandoned for number of years and seen as a blight on the neighborhood. A former battery-making warehouse and site of a 1985 chemical spill, the site had been designated as a high priority for use of federal cleanup dollars under the Superfund program. Because it is in an area that has historically been industrial, says Tracy Berglund of Catholic Charities, "you're not going to get a lot of NIMBYism."

The total cleanup and development cost of the project is expected to top \$10 million, with at least \$3 million to be covered by the city of St. Paul. Catholic Charities expects the balance to be covered by other governmental grants and charitable foundations. The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency has also expressed eagerness to support the project.

The permanent housing strategy is also aimed at relieving other emergency-oriented services, including shelters and feeding programs, now operated by Catholic Charities. While all of the units would be reserved for formerly homeless men, roughly 60 would be set aside for alcoholics in recovery, 50 for men whose homelessness is labeled “chronic” or long-term, and 10 for men with shorter term, transitional housing needs. Berglund said the idea is to move beyond emergency shelter service by providing homeless people with a permanent address and access to services. “This is really a down-and-out crowd with multiple barriers, and we want to house them instead of just sheltering them,” she told the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*.

For more information: Tracy Berglund, Associate Administrator, Catholic Charities. Telephone: 612-664-8500.

California

Hundreds of Units of Affordable Housing Built with Minimal Opposition

Dedication ceremonies were held October 22 for North Beach Place, the largest mixed use, mixed income development effort of its kind in California. Seven years in the making, the community replaces a dilapidated former housing project of 229 units with 341 new apartments including a separate building for seniors, a childcare center, a community center, landscaped courtyards and playgrounds, a business incubator space for resident entrepreneurs, and a computer/technology center.

The development was carried out by BRIDGE Housing in conjunction with the San Francisco Housing Authority and other public and private support. Because of its innovative approach, North Beach Place has already been named the “best implementation of New Urbanism in the US utilizing affordable housing.” New Urbanism is a movement characterized mixed use, transit-friendly, anti-sprawl design principles.

North Beach Place secured a federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit allocation of \$55 million, the largest in the nation in the program’s 18-year history, and also received \$23 million in HOPE VI funding, which is reserved for redevelopment of public housing properties. Unlike many urban redevelopment projects, North Beach Place will remain home to a significant number of families who lived in the former 1950’s-era public housing.

Because the project’s sponsors took their time, did their home-

work and responded to community suggestions about the mixed-use, mixed income site, very little community opposition developed. “Unlike some projects opposed by notinmyback yard NIMBY sentiment, this property was actively supported by the neighborhood, and is already having a positive effect,” says Carol Galante, president of BRIDGE Housing. “Creating this quality housing and retail and attracting public and private investment – especially in a city as expensive as San Francisco – required a tremendous commitment from a wide range of people and organizations.”

Elected officials have also praised the new community. Rep. Nancy Pelosi cited the project as an example in blending community planning and federal support. “It shows how the wise investment of federal dollars can work effectively in a local community setting. It will be an integral part of the neighborhood because everyone worked together – at the federal, state and local levels – to define what was needed and secured significant public and private funding to make the development possible.” The property’s mix of 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom units includes affordable housing opportunities for 291 low and very low income families plus two onsite managers and a separate building for 47 low and very low income seniors plus one onsite manager.

For more information: Carol Galante, BRIDGE Housing. Telephone: 415-989-1111. Ron Heckmann, Heckmann Communications. Telephone: 510-652-5800.

Resources

The October 2004 monthly meeting of the Sensible Land Use Coalition (SLUC), a Twin Cities group, featured a presentation titled “NIMBY Study: A Critical Look Back at Very Controversial Development Projects.” While not confined to housing and community-based services, the presentation featured a PowerPoint presentation that may be of interest to advocates focused on these issues. The retrospective study measured the actual community impact, and changes in community opposition views several years after the development project was completed. Among the most telling comments was one by a local elected official who initially opposed an affordable townhouse development: “I am sorry that this issue created such a controversy, and I hope that it will not be repeated. Experience is a cruel, cruel teacher.” To view the PowerPoint (in PDF format), go to www.sensibleland.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=17. For more information about SLUC or go to the group’s website at www.sensibleland.org.

Thanks to Michael Allen of the Building Better Communities Network (BBCN) for writing The NIMBY Report. More information about BBCN is available from its website, at www.bettercommunities.org. Suggestions for articles for The NIMBY Report can be sent to Michaela@bazelon.org.