

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners
Request for County Board Action/Agenda Item Cover Sheet



To: Chairperson, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

Date: December 13, 2013

Via: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

From: Kathy Brophy, Aitkin City Clerk

Title of Item:

Regional Housing Study

Requested Meeting Date: January 6, 2014 Estimated Presentation Time: 15 minutes

Presenter: Cherre' Palenius, Minnesota Housing Partnership

Type of Action Requested (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> For info only, no action requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Approve under Routine Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For discussion only with possible future action | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Ordinance Revision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Let/Award Bid or Quote (attach copy of basic bid/quote specs or summary of complex specs, each bid/quote received & bid/quote comparison) | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/adopt proposal by motion | <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/adopt proposal by resolution (attach draft resolution) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authorize filling vacant staff position | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Request to schedule public hearing or sale | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Request by member of the public to be heard | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Item should be addressed in closed session under MN Statute _____ | |

Fiscal Impact (check all that apply)

Is this item in the current approved budget? No (attach explanation)

What type of expenditure is this? Operating Capital Other (attach explanation)

Revenue line account # that funds this item is: _____

Expenditure line account # for this item is: _____

Staffing Impact (Any yes answer requires a review by Human Resources Manager before going to the board)

Duties of a department employee(s) may be materially affected. Yes No

Applicable job description(s) may require revision. Yes No

Item may impact a bargaining unit agreement or county work policy. Yes No

Item may change the department's authorized staffing level. Yes No



Supporting Attachment(s)

- Memorandum Summary of Item
- Copy of applicable county policy and/or ordinance (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable state/federal statute/regulation (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable contract and/or agreement
- Original bid spec or quote request (excluding complex construction projects)
- Bids/quotes received (excluding complex construction projects, provide comparison worksheet)
- Bid/quote comparison worksheet
- Draft County Board resolution
- Plat approval check-list and supporting documents
- Copy of previous minutes related to this issue
- Other supporting document(s) (please list) Talking Points Sheet

Provide eleven (11) copies of supporting documentation NO LATER THAN Wednesday at 8:00am to make the Board's agenda for the following Tuesday. Items WILL NOT be placed on the Board agenda unless complete documentation is provided for mailing in the Board packets. (see reverse side for details)

Council
Agenda
Agenda

**East Central Minnesota
Regional Housing Study Dialogue**

Who: Stakeholders in East Central Minnesota (Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine) which include: County and City governments, Planning Commissions, EDAs, HRAs, and area non-profits (Central MN Housing Partnership, Lakes & Pines Community Action Council, New Pathways, A Place for You Rise, East Central Regional Development Commission and GPS 45:93).

What: Regional Housing Study (which by definition is a report or summary of local data and research results specifically on the housing conditions, needs and resources in a defined area).

Why: Several of East Central Minnesota's counties top the statistics in foreclosure rates, unemployment rates and poverty rates. When additional funding to address the foreclosure crisis was awarded East Central Minnesota despite its high foreclosure rates was overlooked by funders. Repetitively, housing developers are not enticed to build or redevelop existing housing units in this area, often citing the lack of a housing study/plan for the community. Communities wishing to attract economic development to their area are not as competitive as communities with diverse housing options. Affordable housing continues to be a hurdle for social service providers; lower income families are spending 70% of their income on housing costs placing them at a higher risk for eviction and limiting their budgets for other basic needs such as transportation, food, clothing and medical care. A Regional Housing Plan has the ability to effect all stakeholders:

- Counties have an increased tax base with the construction of additional housing units, redevelopment/rehabilitation of existing units;
- Cities are poised to attract additional businesses to the community by having a diverse housing stock for new business employees;
- Area non-profits are able to validate the needs they see with a respected report to state and federal funders of affordable housing programs;
- Communities see overall improvement with additional private and governmental revenues, and stabilized families with affordable housing options for all income levels.

Housing Studies are expensive and can range from \$10-15,000 per city and \$25-30,000 per county. Regional plans, depending on the number of communities participating are less costly than the individual city and county plans. It is estimated that the cost to do a regional housing study spanning 4-6 counties, including 10-12 cities would cost \$50-60,000; much less costly than to do it individually.

When: Minnesota Housing Partnership has received funding to provide technical assistance to the East Central Minnesota region and would like to move forward this fall (October – November 2013) on establishing which counties and cities want to invest in the plan and how much they are willing to contribute. Then, Lakes & Pines will submit inquiries (December 2013) to available grant funds (Minnesota Housing Partnership, Greater Pine Area Endowment, Initiative Foundation) to supplement the investment of the counties and cities and pool all the funds together to determine the overall budget available to hire a consultant to conduct the housing study. At the same time, a Request for Proposals would be advertised to obtain the estimated cost from reputable consulting agencies for the Regional Housing Study.

Questions? Want additional information?

Contact: Lezlie Sauter - email: lezlie.sauter@lakesandpines.org phone: 320.679.1800 ext. 118

Cherre Palenius - email: cherre.palenius@mhponline.org phone: 651.925.5545

Talking points:

- Our community is a good place to live and work. We should strive to keep up and improve our property values, maintain and build up our social and community participation, and take care of our parks, schools and other local advantages and amenities’.

Changes in regional transportation systems, in demographics, in the aging of local housing stock, and in economic conditions need to be considered in developing a better mix of housing choices.

- When people spend too much of their income on trying to maintain a home, they have less for other necessities, and they and their children are kept in a state of economic insecurity. The community as a whole deals with the instability and costs associated with homelessness, poverty and economic stagnation. Developing a range of housing choices, so that residents can be full participants in the local community and its economic life is needed in our communities.
- When employees travel long distances to work because they can’t afford to live closer to their job, employers pay the cost of recruitment and retention of workers, lost productivity due to travel, while the community pays the cost of road maintenance and time lost to commuting. A full range of housing choices builds economic vitality, and competitiveness for attracting and retaining employers.
- The market isn’t working when it forces too many people out. Imagine a supermarket that only sells caviar and steak—for many working Minnesotans, that’s what the housing market looks like. By increasing the variety and range of supply, in ways that meet current and future demand, we strengthen the housing market and strengthen the community.
- The collapse of the housing bubble and the subsequent foreclosure crisis demonstrates the importance, for everyone’s economic security, of a balanced housing market, with a mix of prices and types of homes.
- Protecting the investment we have in our homes requires new solutions for economic development, transportation and housing.
- Identifying specific opportunities in land use, transportation and/or existing developments will allow the region to reap rewards by improving the mix of housing choices.
- Young people are the future of any community: we need to provide our children with the ability to find a place to live in this region if they choose to.
- A strong range of places to live allows young families to stay or move to town, older people to stay near friends and family, and people just starting out to build assets toward home ownership.

- The market for new homes is changing: more and more of the demand will be for smaller, more efficient and conveniently located homes, targeted to young professionals, empty-nesters, and active seniors.
- As new more efficient travel options are developed with work to keep energy costs down, a mix of housing that includes conveniently located, smaller homes with easy access to shopping, transportation and community amenities will be needed.

The people who live and work in the East Central region are invested in the future and its continued success. This can only happen by working collaboratively together on the regions' problems and opportunities, by bringing neighbors together to guide decisions about what, where and how to build.

To accomplish this, we need information about the current status of the regions housing stock and what each community and its members envision for the regions overall shared future.

The conversations all start with a regional housing study.