



City of Seattle
Office of Housing

TO: Councilmember Nick Licata, Chair, Housing, Human Service, Health, & Culture Committee

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Rick Hooper, Director

DATE: September 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Office of Housing Presentation on 2012 Race and Social Justice Initiative Work Plan

I am looking forward to sharing key Office of Housing (OH) Race and Social Justice Work Plan elements with you at the September 12th Committee meeting. Key elements of our work plan are outlined below. Our work continues to be critical given declining financial resources and growing need for housing assistance. Attached is our entire 2012 RSJI Work Plan. We want to use our brief time at the Committee meeting to highlight the following key work program elements and challenges:

- **Criminal Background Checks:** We have collected data on the use of criminal background checks by nonprofit owners and managers of affordable housing. This is an important issue that relates to OH's ongoing work in fair housing, and we look forward to working with City Council on next steps.
- **Fair Housing Analysis of Impediments:** All recipients of HUD funding are required to conduct analyses of impediments to fair housing (AIs) at least every 5 years. AIs involve identifying barriers to fair housing choice, and working with community stakeholders to create an action plan for addressing those barriers. With Seattle's AI soon to expire, OH has begun meeting monthly with SOCR staff to discuss schedule, model AIs, community outreach and participation, and consultant role and funding. The City's last AI was published in 2009 so we will be submitting a new AI next year as part of our 2014 Consolidated Plan, as required by HUD. We are also participating in discussions with PSRC's Growing Transit Communities Fair Housing Subcommittee about engaging in a regional AI effort, which could lead to a more powerful set of action steps that would be taken by jurisdictions across

the Puget Sound region. HUD is encouraging jurisdictions to move in this more regional direction.

- **Native American Outreach Plan:** Beginning in 2012 the HomeWise Program is required by the Department of Commerce (DOC) to develop and implement an outreach plan specifically for low-income Native Americans living in Seattle. As a recipient of state and federal weatherization funds that prioritize services to Native Americans, OH has the opportunity to develop effective and ongoing referral relationships within the Native American community. To date, a workgroup has been formed to work through the Equity Analysis Toolkit and to make specific recommendations for 2012-14 implementation goals.
- **Housing Search Website:** Last year we gave you a heads up about a website in development that would enable landlords to list units available within King County, and help renters find affordable housing. HousingSearchNW.org was launched at the beginning of 2012, and now provides searchable, real-time listings of available housing, as well as helpful tools such as a rent checklist and affordability calculator. Language translation services are available in over 60 languages, and the site will soon add a statewide database of adult family homes and assisted living funded by DSHS. The website has been so successful that it is expanding to Snohomish and Spokane counties, and there is already discussion about expanding it to serve all of Washington State.
- **HUD Challenge Grant:** Last November the City was awarded a \$3 million grant from HUD to work on 3 activities in Southeast Seattle---focus on preventing displacement due to gentrification associated with light rail. The 3 activities are:
 - ✓ Expand the City's efforts to fund property/land acquisition to promote equitable transit-oriented-development (TOD);
 - ✓ Provide technical support and innovative approaches to stabilize commercial leases and grow local businesses at the Othello Station Area;
 - ✓ Fund a development feasibility analysis leading to a privately funded and owned multicultural center to support community-building activities of the existing culturally and ethnically diverse communities.

In particular, activity number 3 will involve a unique community organization model of engagement with historically underrepresented communities to assist in planning the new center. A sub-committee of staff from OH, DPD, and Puget Sound SAGE has formed to apply the RSJI Equity Tool Kit to the HUD Challenge Grant project. The first working meeting produced a list of race and social justice issues to frame our answers to the tool kit's questions. Completion of the tool kit is anticipated by November 2012.

- **Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness:** OH continues work begun last year with nonprofits and public funders to better determine the housing needs of various homeless population groups: in particular, youth, families, and immigrants/refugees. Focus during the first 5 years on unit production (just build more units) is shifting to better understanding the pathways needed to move people beyond homelessness---and then how can housing facilitate that. Improving our understanding of housing need will help us serve more people

more effectively. Our work includes looking at different housing models to enable our efforts to be more successful.

- **Women and Minority Business Enterprise Goals:** OH continues look for ways to increase contracting with, and purchasing from women and minority-owned businesses. As of June 30, 2012, the Office of Housing WMBE utilization rate for purchasing is at about 54% (2012 goal is 25%). The WMBE utilization rate for consultant services is at 76% (2012 Goal of 20%). OH has also begun early conversations with FAS to explore adaptation of the WMBE Inclusion Plan to the multifamily rental program.
- **Who lives in OH funded multifamily housing:** OH is in its third year of using the state-wide Web-Based Annual Reporting System (WBARS), which facilitates the collection of demographic data from the hundreds of affordable housing projects OH has funded around Seattle. The data provides a general racial and ethnic breakdown of the people who actually live in housing units we fund. In 2011, OH-funded projects provided decent, safe and affordable housing for over 13,000 households, of whom 78% were extremely low-income households, and 61% were households of color.
- **Challenges and Reduced Staffing:** OH's staffing level was reduced in the 2012 budget, impacting OH's work program. We developed our RSJI Work Plan early in 2012. It has turned out to be ambitious, and we have needed to prioritize the most strategic work. Those areas include items highlighted in this briefing memo.

Attachment: 2012 OH RSJ Work Plan