

## Committee Report

*SW Business Item No. 2014-184*

### Community Development Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 23, 2014

**Subject:** Release the draft version of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* for public comment and set public hearing date

#### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Release the draft version of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* for public comment;
- Conduct a public hearing on September 15, 2014 regarding the draft version of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* for public comment;
- Keep the hearing record open until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 26, 2014; and
- Direct staff to publish public hearing notices and distribute copies of the draft *2040 Housing Policy Plan* for public comment under the Council's administrative procedure for public hearings.

#### Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

The Community Development Committee heard comments from two members of the public about the draft plan prior to discussion.

Libby Starling, Manager of Regional Policy and Research, presented this item, outlining recent changes to the plan and key areas of impact. Starling emphasized that the action is to release the draft plan for public comment through the end of September.

Motion by Chávez, seconded by Rummel. Councilmembers discussed the plan and expressed their interest in strengthening the language around racial equity.

Munt introduced an amendment, seconded by Commers. After discussion, the amendment passed by a 5-2 vote. The amendment is on the second page of this business item and has been incorporated as a redline in the accompanying draft plan.

The motion passed by a 6-1 vote.

**Changes amended to the draft Housing Policy Plan at the July 21 Community Development Committee:**

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*Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities (CPO)* describes the region's history of discrimination and segregation by income and race. The Fair Housing Implementation Council provides a regional venue for local entitlement communities (those receiving HUD funding, including the State, the largest cities and almost all counties in the region)<sup>1</sup> to develop the regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and to make sure that their activities, including but not limited to use of Community Development Block Grant, ESG, HOPWA and HOME funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, affirmatively further fair housing.

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**According to HUD:**

Affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking proactive steps beyond simply combating discrimination to foster more inclusive communities and access to community assets for all persons protected by the Fair Housing Act. More specifically, it means taking steps proactively to address significant disparities in access to community assets, to overcome segregated living patterns and support and promote integrated communities, to end racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, and to foster and maintain compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.

The CPO has the potential to put the Region ahead of the curve as it deals with many of these issues and sets out proactive steps that the Council and its partners can take to meet this obligation. However, the Council and its local partners have not yet allocated sufficient resources to understand and effectively address the full extent of housing discrimination in the region.

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The Council and the Council's Housing Policy Plan have a role to play in the larger regional fair housing conversation but lack the authority to tackle this issue alone. The Council can, however, provide leadership within the Region. For example, the Council is planning to provide financial support to regional research and other activities related to fair housing, discriminatory lending practices, and real estate steering to identify where discriminatory practices are occurring and limiting housing choices.

The Council should adopt its own fair housing policy, ask that its contractors and grantees do the same and assist local governments to develop and adopt standards or policies for promoting fair housing and equal opportunity. It and its partners should report evidence of discriminatory housing practices, such as real estate steering, to the appropriate city<sup>2</sup>, federal and state authorities, and ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

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For example, while there is agreement that race-based disparities in mortgage and home lending patterns are result from discriminatory practices, there is no clear agreement on who is responsible for ending these practices. Consequently, little has been done to address this problem, despite redlining's role in creating RCAPs and impoverishing already disadvantaged residents and neighborhoods in the Region. The Council should lead a larger regional conversation to develop strategies, roles, and responsibilities to address this facet of discrimination and expand fair housing in the Twin Cities region.

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed regulation would also require the Council, because of its PHA operations, to complete AFFH activities.

<sup>2</sup> Minneapolis and St. Paul have enforcement authority in ordinances. Cities, counties, the Council and the State can initiate their own complaints of discriminatory practices that impede fair housing choice and lead to segregation.

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### Council role

- Provide financial support to regional research and other activities related to fair housing, discriminatory lending practices, and real estate steering to determine if discriminatory practices are occurring and limiting housing choices.
- Collaborate in regional initiatives to address discriminatory lending practices, real estate steering or other discriminatory practices found to be limiting housing choices.
- Partner with HousingLink to connect renter households with opportunities and promote fair housing practices.
- Recognize local efforts to further Fair Housing by including Fair Housing elements in the Housing Performance Scores and in other competitive awards and contracts.
- Provide data and analysis to inform regional conversations about the distribution of poverty and where people of color live, including annually updating which census tracts are Areas of Concentrated Poverty or Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and offering to serve as the data partner to the Fair Housing Implementation Council for the 2015 update of the Regional Analysis of Impediments
- Adopt its own comprehensive fair housing policy based on the CPO assessment, give explicit responsibilities for addressing fair housing issues to leaders of Council divisions that directly or indirectly impact Regional housing and incorporate affirmative furthering of fair housing standards into the Council's transportation, regional parks and water resources system plans.

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## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: July 21, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 23, 2014

**Subject:** Release the draft version of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* for public comment and set public hearing date

**District(s), Member(s):** ALL

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Minn. Stat. 473.145

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Libby Starling, Manager of Regional Policy and Research (651-602-1135)

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Policy and Research

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### Background

The Metropolitan Council has been developing the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* since early 2013 and convened a Housing Policy Plan Work Group starting in summer 2013. The *2040 Housing Policy Plan* is building off of the rich outreach, engagement, and policy discussion underlying *Thrive MSP 2040*.

### Rationale

The public comment period and public hearings will offer partners, stakeholders and the public the opportunity to formally comment on the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*.

### Funding

The development of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* has been a part of the Metropolitan Council Community Development Committee workplan.

### Known Support / Opposition

The Council's Housing Policy Plan Work Group has convened a variety of housing stakeholders to advise the Council on the development of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*. Some would prefer that Council policy reflect a more active role by and for the Council in the region's housing policy; others do not want Council policy to reflect an active role by the Council in housing.

## Metropolitan Council

### Notice of Public Comment Period and Public Hearing for the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*

The Metropolitan Council has released the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*, the housing chapter of the comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, for public comment.

The public is encouraged to view the plan and provide public comment, through **Friday, September 26**, as follows (comments must be received by **5 p.m.**):

- Written comments: Metropolitan Council  
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, 55101
- Send TTY comments to: 651-291-0904
- Email: [public.info@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:public.info@metc.state.mn.us)
- Record comments on Council's Public Comment Line at 651-602-1500
- Submit comments through the Council's online Your Ideas site, at <http://yourideas.metrocouncil.org/>.

The Metropolitan Council will hold one public hearing on the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*:

- **Monday, September 15, 5 p.m.**  
Metropolitan Council Chambers  
390 Robert Street North, St. Paul  
Served by many regional transit routes

All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public hearing and offer comments. Those attending may register in advance to speak by calling the Council at 651-602-1500. Upon request, the Metropolitan Council will provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities. Advance notice, indicating the specific accommodation needed, is appreciated.

Staff will review public comment and evaluate changes to the proposed policies to address the comments submitted by the public. A recommendation for final adoption of the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* will be considered by the Metropolitan Council in November.