



## **Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Housing and Community Development Committee Policy Agenda**

In 2001, the Housing Task Force of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus developed its first “Housing Action Agenda” which outlined proactive steps toward the full range of quality housing options for the diversity of households that call this region home. The document was approved by the entire Caucus in 2002 and updated by the new Housing and Community Development Committee in 2011. The Committee’s “Policy Agenda” was updated again in 2015 to reflect our current work and priorities.

### **Planning for the Future**

The recent housing and economic crisis underscored the importance of housing planning as a tool to address or prevent a serious mismatch between housing supply and demand for people at every stage of the life cycle. Through its *Homes for a Changing Region* project, the Caucus will help communities interested in creating long-term housing policy plans which aim to create a balanced housing stock and serve the needs of all future residents. It will encourage and help identify additional resources to enable municipal leaders to plan for the appropriate mix of housing in their community. The region’s demographics are projected to change substantially through 2040, particularly the senior and immigrant populations. The Caucus will work to create and promote innovative municipal strategies to ensure that all future residents have appropriate housing options across our region.

### **Addressing Community Stabilization**

Many municipalities across the Chicago region are still struggling with the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis. Long-term vacancy of residential properties continues to put a growing strain on municipal building departments and threatens the appeal and safety of neighborhoods. In many municipalities, investors are buying up multiple properties in bulk and renting them without making the necessary improvements to the building or responsibly maintaining the property. The Caucus will work with its members to develop training programs and model policies for municipalities that are struggling to stabilize a deteriorating housing stock, and will continue to collaborate with partner organizations on a coordinated regional response to address the full range of issues stemming from the foreclosure crisis.

### **Promoting Housing Preservation**

The Caucus encourages municipalities to implement policies to preserve and improve the quality of the local housing stock. Recognizing that much of the affordable housing stock in our region is in older, private sector properties, municipalities are encouraged to focus on code enforcement and rehabilitation. Demand for rental housing has increased since the economic crisis, and the region’s mayors must ensure that the rental stock in local neighborhoods is of good quality and a safe and healthy place for residents to live. The Caucus will work with partners to develop model policies for municipalities that will incentivize responsible landlord behavior and property maintenance. Strategies for both home rule and non-home rule municipalities will be pursued.

### **Increasing Capacity through Interjurisdictional Coordination**

Recognizing that housing and community development challenges rarely adhere to municipal boundaries and that municipalities face resource constraints, mayors can also show tremendous leadership by working with their neighboring municipal leaders to collaborate jointly on housing and community development issues. The alignment of housing, transportation and workforce development can often be more efficiently and effectively dealt with on an interjurisdictional basis. The Mayors Caucus will support communities that want to work together on housing and community development issues, investing in needed capacity building and policy incentives. As a part of this work, the Caucus will explore innovative shared staffing strategies to increase municipalities' capacity to address local housing challenges.

### **Demonstrating Leadership**

Metropolitan mayors can show leadership on housing and community development issues beyond the local level in a variety of ways. The Mayors Caucus encourages municipalities to adhere to the principles outlined in *Go To 2040*, the comprehensive regional plan developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). *Go To 2040* supports investment in existing communities to create opportunities for more compact, walkable, and mixed-use development, with a range of housing options. It provides principles that municipalities can apply when they decide how and where development should happen or which infrastructure investments to make in their communities. The Caucus can encourage state and federal policy makers to support policies that adhere to these principles.

### **Education**

Many municipalities across our region are implementing their own innovative strategies to address local housing challenges. The Caucus will share information about regional and national housing best practices with its members through a variety of resources including publications, in-person trainings and online tools. The Caucus will also partake in a broader community education effort through its participation in region-wide networking activities to promote housing that meets the Mayors Caucus Housing Endorsement Criteria.

*The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Housing and Community Development Committee is chaired by Mayor Jeffrey Sherwin of Northlake. Questions about this Policy Agenda should be directed to the Caucus' Director of Housing Initiatives, Allison Milld Clements at [amilld@mayorscaucus.org](mailto:amilld@mayorscaucus.org) or (312) 201-4507.*