

SECTION 1. THE URBAN COUNTY (CDBG), THE CITY OF YPSILANTI (HOME PROGRAM), & THE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

PART 1. WASHTENAW CDBG URBAN COUNTY & HOME PROGRAMS

A. The Lead Entity

The lead entity for the Urban County is Washtenaw County Government, primarily through the Community Development Division of its Department of Planning and Environment. Washtenaw County includes the City of Ann Arbor, which is not a participant in the Urban County, since it is already an Entitlement Community and Participating Jurisdiction. However, the City of Ann Arbor and County Government do collaborate on numerous affordable housing initiatives and projects, including the Continuum of Care process and funding of non-profit housing development activities using county general funds.

The Community Development Division will provide administration of the Urban County, including primary staff support to the Executive Committee, which is comprised of the chief elected officials of each of the eight governmental entities in the Urban County. These eight elected officials are the Chairperson of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners and the Supervisors of each of the participating townships.

The Community Development Division also administers a HUD Shelter Plus Care (SPC) grant, in partnership with three nonprofit housing agencies, Avalon Housing, Michigan Ability Partners and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County. In addition, the Community Development Manager acts as the Continuum of Care Coordinator for the Washtenaw County/City of Ann Arbor Continuum of Care Board.

The Washtenaw County Finance Department will provide support to the Community Development Division in the administration of the Urban County. The Finance Department oversees an annual budget in excess of \$150,000,000. This includes the budgets for Community Support and Treatment Services (formerly Community Mental Health- \$45.6M), including PATH grant; Public Health (\$7.1M), including an HIV/AIDS testing and counseling program; and Employment Training and Community Services (\$6.8M).

The County's Employment Training and Community Services (ETCS) Department operates a \$300,000 bi-annual CDBG Homeowner Rehabilitation program, funded through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) in conjunction with a \$88,150 LIHEAP-funded (Low Income Home Energy Assistance) Weatherization program. The Homeowner Rehabilitation component of this CDBG Urban County and HOME Consortium will be done in coordination with the county's CDBG Housing Rehab program. County Building Inspectors working for the CDBG Housing Rehab program are fully licensed and certified. They have received State of Michigan training in Lead Based Paint abatement.

B. Urban County Members

The Washtenaw Urban County membership includes three area townships (Salem, Northfield, and Bridgewater), as well as four Charter Townships (Ypsilanti, Superior, Pittsfield, and Ann Arbor). Washtenaw County Community Development will work very

closely with the Community Development Department of Ypsilanti Charter Township, as well as the Supervisors of the remaining townships. In addition, Urban County activities will make use of each unit's Master Plan (as available), to support the intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of multiple efforts and initiatives within the same jurisdictions. The current housing and community development activities (and/or ideas for potential projects) of each participating jurisdiction are summarized below in order of size.

Ypsilanti Charter Township

The largest jurisdiction within the Washtenaw Urban County is Ypsilanti Charter Township (hereafter Ypsilanti Township), with 45% of the Urban County Population. Because it is much larger than the other Urban County jurisdictions, Ypsilanti Township has developed a sophisticated planning and community development division. This division also serves as its Building Department, issuing permits and overseeing building code enforcement. The township has been aggressive in its code enforcement, as a strategy to improve the living conditions of residents in multi-family and manufactured housing developments.

Pittsfield Charter Township

The second largest jurisdiction within the Urban County is Pittsfield Charter Township (hereafter Pittsfield Township), with 27% of the Urban County's population. This township has identified several potential low-income areas within their boundaries for CDBG assistance.

Superior Charter Township

With 10% of the population of the Urban County, Superior Charter Township (hereafter Superior Township) is the third largest participating jurisdiction. In an effort to increase the quality of life for the residents of Superior Township, the elected officials have proposed a strategy to improve the affordable housing that exists there currently, rather than constructing more low-income housing.

Northfield Township

Having 8% of the population within the Urban County, Northfield Township is the fourth largest participating jurisdiction. According to the Township Supervisor, this community is now in a period of growth.

Salem Township

With 5% of the population of the Urban County, Salem Township is the fifth largest participating jurisdiction. Salem Township would like to begin focusing any efforts for community development and housing improvements on the hamlet located within the township.

Ann Arbor Charter Township

Ann Arbor Township contains approximately 4% of the Urban County's population. Since the median family income in this township is well above the area median income, this jurisdiction is unlikely to qualify for many of the programs funded by the CDBG Urban County. The current building inspector reports that the Township has no immediate plans for community development or housing projects. However, the Township Supervisor has expressed an interest in a regional approach to addressing these needs in the greater Washtenaw County.

Ann Arbor Charter Township

Township representatives would like to explore two types of potential projects for residents within this jurisdiction: 1) senior transportation, and 2) homeowner rehabilitation for rural and low to moderate income residents.

Bridgewater Township

The smallest of the participating jurisdictions, Bridgewater Township has 1% of the population of the Urban County. According to the Township Supervisor, the community of Bridgewater is committed to its rural character, preserving the hamlet within the township, protecting and enhancing the environment, and ensuring the health and safety of its residents.

C. Washtenaw HOME Consortium (HOME) Members

The HOME program is a companion program to the CDBG program. The local HOME Consortium consists of the Charter Township of Ypsilanti, the City of Ypsilanti, and Washtenaw County. Since Ypsilanti Township is participating in both programs, all data contained within this plan for the township will be combined with the other jurisdictions of the Urban County. On the other hand, since the City of Ypsilanti has chosen not to participate in the CDBG Urban County, then the data for the City will be separated out whenever possible. This process will yield a more accurate picture for targeted HOME projects in this jurisdiction. The current housing projects for the City of Ypsilanti are summarized below.

City of Ypsilanti

Washtenaw County Community Development will work very closely with the City of Ypsilanti's Community and Economic Development Department to target housing projects in the HOME program.

The City of Ypsilanti has established a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA), which is administered through the City's Community and Economic Development Department. Two Brownfield Redevelopment projects have been implemented in the last five years. One is on a 10-acre parcel that has been developed into a manufacturing facility for the auto industry. City Community and Economic Development staff oversaw environmental assessment and clean up of that site, as well as infrastructure improvements. Currently, the City has taken the Water Street Redevelopment project through the environmental investigation and land acquisition process. The Water Street Redevelopment will be mixed residential with retail/commercial uses at the perimeter.

Ypsilanti's housing activities have primarily included moderate rehab of owner-occupied and rental housing through participation with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority CDBG housing program. In addition, Ypsilanti has vigorously increased its housing code enforcement program to improve housing conditions for tenants of rental properties. Certificate of Occupancy inspections are mandatory for all rental units on a bi-annual basis.

D. Citizen Participation

Citizen participation has been sought in the development of this plan through a number of means. Citizens at large, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and

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business associations have all been asked to attend public hearings, review this consolidated plan, and comment on the plan.

On **January 31, 2003** Washtenaw County Community Development staff met with the Interim Director of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission (YHC) to discuss the potential uses of CDBG funds; restoration and revitalization needs of their housing; the Section 504 Needs Assessment; and the local public housing strategy. The YHC indicated that they are currently working with HUD to improve the conditions of their units, and have a plan to move out of their "troubled housing authority" designation with HUD. YHC also indicated that their Section 504 needs assessment was more than ten years old, but that they currently have three barrier-free units that are vacant. As of now, the interim director reports that there is nothing on their waitlist that would indicate the individual resident's need for a barrier-free unit, which makes it difficult to screen applicants for these units. However, he agreed that this would be a helpful addition to their application.

Numerous possibilities for collaboration and coordination between the HOME Consortium, the Urban County, and the Ypsilanti Housing Commission were discussed. In addition, the interim director provided a copy of the YHC five year plan for improving the living conditions and lowering the vacancy rate of their public housing units. In particular, he indicated a need for assistance with the coordination of local drug elimination or anti-crime strategies, as well as a need for assistance in revitalizing certain public housing sites.

On **January 31, 2003** Washtenaw County Community Development staff met with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission's (AAHC) Housing Programs Director to discuss AAHC's pilot implementation of the Section 8 Home Ownership program; their Section 504 Needs Assessment; any revitalization or restoration needs; and their public housing strategy. Staff offered a copy of the AAHC's five-year plan, and discussed at length efforts that the AAHC is making to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. The AAHC's jurisdiction encompasses the Urban County and HOME Consortium area. In addition, staff discussed possible linkages and leveraging of resources between the Section 8 Homeownership program and other area resources; current supportive services projects that AAHC has in place; a possible joint HOPE VI application between the AAHC and the YHC; and the coordination of a community response to the new HUD Chronic Homelessness NOFA.

On **February 9, 2003** invitations were sent to 55 representatives of local government, non-profit organizations, area public housing commissions, human service providers, local Community Housing Development Organizations; the local Continuum of Care Board; the Human Services Collaborative Council; the Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley chapter; the Fair Housing Center of Washtenaw County; the Washtenaw Development Council (economic development); the Housing Bureau for Seniors; and the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Chambers of Commerce. These invitations requested attendance at the two public hearings and/or input, suggestions and priorities from their organizations' perspectives regarding use of CDBG and HOME funds.

Two public hearings have been held to obtain the input of citizens. The first was held **February 18, 2003** at the Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees Meeting, located at Ypsilanti Charter Township Civic Center and starting at 7:00 p.m. A public notice was published January 30, 2003 in the Ypsilanti Courier (the Township's paper of record), but also in the Ann Arbor News (February 4th), which provides coverage to the entire Urban

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County and the City of Ypsilanti. Approximately 25 residents, Township, and County employees attended this hearing. Staff gave a 15-minute Power Point presentation that described the goals of the CDBG and HOME programs, discussed, eligible activities, reviewed data from the consolidated plan needs assessment, and suggested possible projects. There were three questions and comments at the end of the presentation, and those comments, along with one written comment, will be answered in writing at the end of this plan.

The second public hearing was held **February 25th, 2003** prior to the Pittsfield Charter Township Board of Trustees meeting at 6:30 p.m. A public notice was published February 13, 2003 in the Ypsilanti Courier (the Township's paper of record), but also in the Ann Arbor News (February 11th), which provides coverage to the entire Urban County and the City of Ypsilanti. Charter Township Pittsfield observes a three-day public notice standard, and consistent with that standard, posted a public notice in the public area designated for that purpose. Staff gave the same 15-minute Power Point presentation that described the goals of the CDBG and HOME programs, discussed, eligible activities, reviewed data from the consolidated plan needs assessment, and suggested possible projects. There were several questions about the content of the presentation, and a request from a Township Trustee to present this information again before the entire Township Board. Due to the lower turnout for this public hearing, staff contacted several community housing and supportive services providers for written feedback on the plan, immediately following the meeting.

The first draft of the Consolidated Strategy and Plan was published on **February 25, 2003**, and staff sent out an email notice to the 55 representatives of key local organizations discussed above, which indicated how they could access a copy of the draft on the Washtenaw County website. All township supervisors of participating jurisdictions, the Ypsilanti Charter Township community development department, the City of Ypsilanti Community Development Department, and the Chairperson of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, and the two housing commissions were given copies of the draft. Recipients of draft plans posted notices in public places to assist citizens who wished to review the plan. Many of the draft recipients serve low- and moderate-income populations and took steps to assure their consumers were encouraged and assisted to participate in the plan review.

The draft plan was also placed on the front page of the Washtenaw County website, <http://www.ewashtenaw.org> on the Department of Planning and Environment page. This web site is publicized extensively throughout the community. The County places all plans and initiatives that are products of county activities or are major community initiatives in which county government and/or its numerous departments play a significant role on the county web site. The final version was also placed on the county web site after the 30-day review period, ending **March 27, 2003**.

Notification of the two public hearings and the draft plan were also placed on the local Community Television Network (CTN). The CTN notice regarding the draft ran from February 11, 2003 until March 27, 2003 (the end of public comment period). This notice indicated that the Urban County draft would be open for review; where citizens could find a copy for review; how to provide input; and where to direct that input. The public hearing notices ran from at least two weeks prior to each of the hearings, and provided the topic of the public hearings, as well as the times and locations of each one. In

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addition, the plan was delivered to the main libraries in the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti for posting, along with a flier soliciting feedback.

Since the Washtenaw County Community Development division also plays a central role in the Washtenaw County/City of Ann Arbor Continuum of Care Board, the plan was discussed at the January, February, and March, 2003 Continuum of Care Board meetings. The Continuum of Care Board includes numerous nonprofit providers of supportive services and/or affordable housing to low to extremely low-income homeless and formerly homeless individuals and families. Populations served by these providers include all the subpopulations referred to in Tables 1A and 1B.

As newspaper articles about the HOME Consortium, the Urban County and the public hearings increased, several low and moderate-income individuals contacted their township representatives to convey their interests and priorities for use of CDBG funds. The Township Supervisors passed on this feedback to Community Development staff and these comments will also be reflected in the strategic plan and the action plan.

At the **May 7, 2003** meeting of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners Ways and Means Committee, the Consolidated Plan was presented for review.

On **May 7, 2003** the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners approved the Washtenaw Urban County CDBG Consolidated Plan.

On **May 15, 2003** the Consolidated Strategy and Plan will be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Anti-displacement

It is the Washtenaw Urban County's intent to cause no displacement to persons receiving assistance through the CDBG program or HOME Program. However, the Urban County and HOME Consortium recognize that while they intend no displacement, situations may arise wherein displacement and/or relocation or temporary relocation is the only feasible method for providing assistance. The Urban County and HOME Consortium will therefore provide reasonable benefits to any person involuntarily and permanently displaced as a result of the use of CDBG or HOME funds to acquire or substantially rehabilitate residential property in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act. This document may be reviewed at the Community Development division of the Washtenaw County Department of Planning and Environment, 705 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor.

Technical Assistance

The Urban County and HOME Consortium will provide technical assistance for proposals that expand and strengthen the ability of Community-based Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income households. There are several CHDOs already active in the Urban County area or in nearby communities. These CHDOs and other nonprofits will be provided with technical assistance, as has been the case prior to the advent of the Urban County. The most active CHDOs are Avalon Housing, Community Housing Alternatives (CHA), and Washtenaw Affordable Housing Corporation (WAHC). Also, the recently formed Gateway Corporation is in the process of expanding to undertake housing projects. Other non-profit housing developers

include CAP Non-Profit Housing, Michigan Ability Partners, JOSHUA, and POWER. The latter two being faith-based community development organizations.

PART 2. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

A. The HOME Consortium (City of Ypsilanti)

In **1999**, County Planning Department staff began researching the process of becoming an Urban County, and in the course of that research learned about the HOME program, specifically the HOME Consortium. In **late 1999 and early 2000**, the HOME Consortium concept was presented to the county Board of Commissioner and the leadership of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township. All three units of local government quickly realized that they had common interests in many areas with respect to maintaining and creating affordable housing. During the April through May 2000 period, the county, city and township elected governing bodies all passed authorizing resolutions to create a Consortium for purposes of becoming a participating jurisdiction in the HOME program.

In **June 2000**, the HOME Consortium Cooperation Agreement was signed by the chairperson of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, the Mayor of Ypsilanti and the Supervisor of Charter Township Ypsilanti. An application including the cooperation agreement was submitted **June 30, 2000**. In **November 2000**, informal notification was received that HUD had approved the Consortium and had authorized an allocation.

Although the HOME Consortium remains a partnership between the City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, and Washtenaw County, this plan will list only the City of Ypsilanti under this program because of the participation of the other two jurisdictions in the CDBG Urban County. In addition to the local CDBG allocation, the other two jurisdictions will continue to maintain eligibility for use of HOME funds.

B. The CDBG/HOME Urban County

In **June 2002**, the Urban County Cooperation Agreements were signed by the chairperson of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, and the Supervisors of all seven participating townships. An application including the cooperation agreement was submitted **June 30, 2002**. In **November 2002**, informal notification was received that HUD had approved the Washtenaw Urban County and had authorized an allocation.

In **late 2002 and early 2003**, a series of meetings have taken place Ypsilanti Township Community Development staff, as well as the elected, and appointed officials of each of the participating jurisdictions, to identify geographic areas, certain neighborhoods, and certain types of housing assistance that are priority areas for use of CDBG funds. These meetings have been informative for the purpose of subsequent presentations and discussions that take place in the public hearings and written requests for input into the Plan.

On **March 25, 2003** the Urban County Executive Committee reviewed the Consolidated Plan, after receiving a presentation by county staff of all revisions and community input.

C. Related Local Housing Initiatives

Washtenaw County has attempted to obtain citizen input in assessing affordable housing needs through a number of means. The County Board of Commissioners has included Housing and Homelessness among their priorities throughout the 1990's and into the present. Even though the county is has not historically been an Entitlement Community or Participating Jurisdiction (until the HOME Consortium brought a portion of the county into PJ status), county appointed and elected officials have pursued various strategies for increasing affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income households. County government is also widely considered to be in an innovative leadership position in the area of homelessness and homelessness prevention. For example the county has committed \$2,000,000 in county bonds toward the building of a new homeless shelter in Ann Arbor, which is being matched with \$1,000,000 in general funds from the City of Ann Arbor.

On April 29, 1999, Washtenaw County Community Development, City of Ann Arbor Community Development and the Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce jointly held a community-wide planning session to identify barriers to affordable housing and strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing. The focus was on taking a countywide, intergovernmental and interagency perspective, so that strategies developed will leverage both public and private resources. Representatives of nonprofit service and housing agencies attended. In addition, representatives of local units of government, banks, for-profit housing developers, architects, private planning firms, and other business interests attended. Over 50 people attended.

Washtenaw County has also participated in the Ann Arbor Affordable Housing Task Force, which was a more than a year long process (January 1999-May 2000) to create goals and objectives. One of those objectives of this body was "to develop a regional approach in cooperation with surrounding Townships." The need to go beyond the boundaries of the city of Ann Arbor in an effort to maintain and create affordable housing for low and moderate-income persons was clearly recognized.

Washtenaw County is also participating in the creation of a Community Land Trust (CLT), preliminarily called the Homeplace Land Trust. This will be countywide as well, and opportunities to leverage CLT and Urban County, and HOME Consortium resources are being explored.