



REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MAYORS
April 13, 2009

DISCUSSION

Aging-in-Place a Common Metro Theme

Cathy Bennett, consultant for the ULI Minnesota/RCM Housing Initiative, identified four important themes from the demographic change report prepared by Excensus LLC:

- Many young households (the age of a “household” is measured by the age of the head of the household) are migrating from Minneapolis to first-ring suburbs. A significant number of households in Minneapolis—31 percent—are under 35.
- Many “move-up” households are finding homes in the southern counties of the metro area. The reasons for this may include new construction of both single-family detached and single-family attached housing, offering housing diversity, and families wanting to move closer to employment in that area.
- If a significant number of households age-in-place in a community, it limits the amount of housing available for younger families and/or families looking for move-up housing. Low turnover and low retention rates for younger households may be a result of a community not having a full range of housing choices.
- With changes in lifecycle and lifestyle, housing needs and preferences change. Households are choosing new housing types across the metro area. Single-family-detached housing is still the majority housing choice for those 35-54; households under 35 frequently transition from rental apartments for single-family existing housing or to new single-family attached housing. Households 55 and older tend to move from single-family detached housing to single-family attached. And for some households of any age, rental is an important housing choice.

The data is based on household changes by specific property parcels tracked during the period 2004-2007 for the seven-county metro area. It tracks housing usage and turnover of more than a million profiled addresses. It doesn't replace census data, Bennett said, but can be evaluated along with census estimates to give a fuller picture of demographic change. That, she said, can help cities and the region understand how cities regenerate and the role that a full range of housing choices plays in sustaining economic prosperity.

For a sustainable community, she said, demographic mix should include:

- Diversity of ages.
- Diversity of incomes.
- Availability of housing choice, so households can find appropriate housing as their lifestyles change (up or down), without leaving the community.

Using Livable Communities Funds for Transit

Patricia Naumann, executive director of the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities <http://www.metrocitiesmn.org/>, said a proposal being considered by the Metropolitan Council would use up to 70 percent of the annual \$8.1 million in the Livable Communities Grant Program to help bridge the gap in transit funding for the next three years. "We are opposed to it; we think it sets a dangerous precedent," she said. She asked mayors to contact their legislators to oppose the transfer of funds.

Livable Communities grants are used by cities to clean up polluted land, do development or redevelopment that "demonstrates efficient use of land and infrastructure through connected development patterns" or to create affordable housing.

Naumann said that in the 14 years since the Livable Communities Act <http://www.metrocouncil.org/about/facts/LivableCommunitiesFacts.pdf> was passed, the relatively small amount provided by the grants has created \$6.9 billion in investment and has helped create more than 1,700 affordable housing units.

Naumann said the transfer of Livable Communities funds to transit is moving in bills at both the Minnesota House and the Minnesota Senate (although the Senate bill would transfer no more than 50 percent). Several mayors said Livable Communities grants have greatly helped their communities. "The return on investment for those small dollars is huge," said Mayor Elizabeth Kautz of Burnsville.

RCM BUSINESS

Economic Development Strategies

Mayor Stan Harpstead of Arden Hills said a group of mayors met at the end of March to talk about a regional strategy for economic development. Since that meeting, he said, several mayors have begun the process of talking to businesses in their cities to determine what their long-term needs and interests are.

Harpstead developed a set of questions that cities can use to help guide discussion when they meet with business leaders. Although the information from businesses will be useful to individual cities, Harpstead stressed that it is a regional initiative. Mayor Sandy Martin of Shoreview said that her staff is meeting with all of the businesses in the city and is finding that their interests are more regional than local.

Harpstead said the group has a number of activities it will be starting:

- Applying for funding to support a regional economic development initiative.
- Networking with corporations, the University of Minnesota, MnSCU and business and economic development groups.
- Encouraging meetings between community development groups of cities with common borders or common industries.

The regional objectives of the group are:

- To develop a long-term strategy for growth.
- Enhance relationships/collaborations within regional clusters.
- Develop momentum in the science and technology regional economic segment.

- Identify investments to achieve strategic goals.
- Identify and measure appropriate benchmarks of progress.

“The effort should be focused on technology,” he said. “Our bias is towards action, vs. information and analysis.”

REPORTS

Arden Hills: Mayor Stan Harpstead said the city is moving forward with its street reconstruction projects. He said Arden Hills is talking with nearby communities to see if there are opportunities for shared services.

Brooklyn Park: Mayor Steve Lampi said the city is doing an overall structural reevaluation of its government and services.

Eagan: Mayor Mike Maguire said the city just approved Phase 1 of a concept plan for Cedar Grove, which includes some senior housing and some rental housing.

Edina: Mayor Jim Hovland said the city is building a new public works building and will have a public discussion of what use the current space can be put to. Edina is doing regular street reconstruction, but is getting resistance by some residents.

Lake Elmo: Mayor Dean Johnston said that his staff had used a presentation on economic development put together by Arden Hills Mayor Stan Harpstead and was about to approve an economic development policy for Lake Elmo.

Long Lake: Mayor Randy Gilbert said a TIF district, which decertifies next year, has generated \$1 million that the city must determine the right use for.

Maple Plain: Mayor John Sweeney said Maple Plain has submitted an application for a park-and-ride bus station, and is working to acquire several parcels for it. “It’s possible we could have bus service by 2013,” he said.

Minneapolis: Mayor R.T. Rybak said the city’s wi-fi network will be finished this summer. By next spring, the city will have 1,000 bikes in a Bike Share program. But, he said, “most of my work is focused on job creation.”

Minnnetonka: Mayor Terry Schneider said the city is continuing on its ongoing street reconstruction. “We’ll do all roads over the next ten years, without any special assessment,” he said.

New Brighton: Mayor Steve Larson said the city is working with U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s help to resolve a refinery issue in the northwest quadrant of the city.

Richfield: Mayor Debbie Goettel said the city got a \$1 million grant to work on its foreclosure issues. She also said city is exploring the possibility of reworking some of its arterial streets, like Lyndale Avenue.

Shoreview: The city council recently approved what Mayor Sandy Martin called “a bold environmental initiative” for street reconstruction near Lake Owasso. The \$2 million project will use pervious concrete, which allows stormwater to seep into the ground, where it recharges the groundwater supply.

St. Louis Park: Mayor Jeff Jacobs said the city is seeing a “significant amount” of both public and private development, including expansion of Park-Nicollet and 350,000 square feet of high-end commercial retail at 394 and Hwy. 100. The city also will be redoing its community service center and rebuilding some fire stations.

Victoria: Mayor Mary Hershberger Thun said a couple of commercial development projects are underway. “We actually may have a parking problem—and I’m excited,” she said. She said the city is going ahead with its street reconstruction projects, even though it is getting some neighborhood resistance.

Wayzata: Mayor Ken Wilcox said the city is “tweaking” some railroad crossings and is hoping to convince the DNR to turn over a small strip of land so it can move the road slightly.

The mayors agreed that even though property owners were unhappy about special assessments for street reconstruction right now, in a difficult economy, it’s important for cities to keep up their ongoing maintenance and reconstruction schedules.

COMING UP

RCM May meeting

The next RCM meeting will be Monday, May 11, 11:30am-1:30pm, Dorsey & Whitney, 50 S. 6th St., Minneapolis, 15th floor-Seattle Room.