

# HOUSING TRUST FUND PROJECT



Center for Community Change

## Grand Traverse County, Michigan Creates Unique Housing Trust Fund Tied to Land Bank Authority

NEWS

2011  
WINTER

Grand Traverse County, Michigan has established a housing trust fund in connection with its Land Bank Authority, enabling the housing trust fund to receive revenues from the proceeds of tax-foreclosed properties. In November 2010, the full County Board of Commissioners approved the plan for the Housing Trust Fund. These funds can then be returned to the community to assist in rehabilitating existing housing, development start-up costs, and other activities to sustain and strengthen the community.

The housing trust fund in Grand Traverse County is innovative not only

for its connection to the Land Bank Authority, but also as a model for demonstrating a pro-active approach to the devastation foreclosures can bring to a community and its residents.

In May 2006, the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners approved the establishment of a Land Bank Authority and the State of Michigan gave its stamp of approval. A land bank authority is a governmental entity that focuses on the conversion of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties into productive use. The Grand Traverse County Land Bank Authority is staffed

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JOSEPH A'S PHOTOSTREAM



Downtown Traverse City, Michigan.



## CENTER *for* COMMUNITY CHANGE

**News** is published by the Housing Trust Fund Project of the Center for Community Change. The Center for Community Change is a national nonprofit which helps low-income people build powerful, effective organizations through which they can change their communities and public policies for the better.

The Housing Trust Fund Project operates as a clearinghouse of information on housing trust funds throughout the country and provides technical assistance to organizations and agencies working to create and implement these funds.

For more information or to request technical assistance, please contact:

### **Mary E. Brooks**

Director, Housing Trust Fund Project  
Center for Community Change  
1113 Cougar Court  
Frazier Park, CA 93225  
661-245-0318  
(fax: 661-245-2518)  
mbrooks@communitychange.org

### **Nina Dastur**

Grassroots Policy Specialist  
Center for Community Change  
330 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1802  
New York, NY 10001  
646-596-7873  
ndastur@communitychange.org

### **Michael Anderson**

Affordable Housing Organizer  
Center for Community Change  
3909 SE 51st Ave  
Portland, OR 97206  
503-308-0067  
manderson@communitychange.org

### **Visit our website at:**

[www.communitychange.org/our-projects/htf](http://www.communitychange.org/our-projects/htf)

## GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY, *continued from page 1*

by the Grand Traverse County Planning and Development Department.

The Grand Vision—a two-year, citizen-based land use and transportation project—produced a 50-year outline for growth in the six-county Grand Traverse region that includes a vision for more affordable housing. A large majority of the 15,000 who attended Grand Vision workshops or filled out ballots, said they wanted more housing for working families. To meet that challenge, Grand Vision supporters are forming a new partnership between public, private, and nonprofit organizations that support affordable housing. Known as the Grand Vision Housing Task Force, the group wants better tools to build more in-town housing for working families.

Grand Traverse County began using several public financing tools to promote more affordable housing even before the Grand Vision process began in earnest in 2007. Among these activities were utilizing the brownfield redevelopment tool available in Michigan to revitalize properties and the formation of the Land Bank Authority.

The creation of the Housing Trust Fund was a natural step for the advances made in Grand Traverse County. Funding for the Trust Fund comes from the Foreclosure Fund and the net proceeds of tax-foreclosed property. For the first three years of the Trust Fund operation, 75% of the net proceeds from the sale of tax-foreclosed properties will go into the Housing Trust Fund. In the fourth year, this arrangement will be reviewed. For start-up funding, the County Board of Commissioners allocated \$190,000 from previous year's tax foreclosure sales.

The Housing Trust Fund model and funding methodology drew the attention of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which matched the initial amount of proceeds in the fall of 2010 through the highly competitive Sustainable Community Challenge Grant program.

The Planning and Development Staff will be working to increase the overall amount within the housing trust fund. Working to build the capacity of the Housing Trust Fund will enable the Land Bank to partner by leveraging trust fund dollars with private, governmental and charitable sources. With the leadership of the County Board of Commissioners and the Land Bank Authority, the opportunity to bring private and public partnerships together to help meet community housing and planning goals is now available.

This leadership and the community's desire to have a healthy mix of housing options—from market-rate and affordable rental housing, single-family homes, duplexes, as well as developments for seniors—ensures opportunities for all individuals to improve their economic situation and contribute to the success of Grand Traverse County.

It is with great anticipation that this ground breaking funding mechanism can be duplicated in other communities to provide local governments another mechanism to help achieve community housing needs.

Contact: Jean Derenzy, Grand Traverse County, Planning and Development Office, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49684 (231-922-4513) [jderynzy@grandtraverse.org](mailto:jderynzy@grandtraverse.org).

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# Pennsylvania Housing Alliance Is Victorious in Establishing State Housing Trust Fund

Four years of steadfast advocacy paid off in late November for the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania: Governor Edward Rendell signed the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Program (PHARE) into law, establishing a state housing trust fund. While the PHARE (HB60) legislation does not include funding, the law sets the framework for the administration and implementation for the housing trust fund, outlines the program requirements and preferences, and establishes a structure to effectively utilize potential resources from the National Housing Trust Fund.

*“The passage of PHARE and the creation of a state housing trust fund lay the foundation for Pennsylvania to provide new and desperately needed housing opportunities for hardworking families, seniors and many other community members that have been left behind by the housing market,”* said Housing Alliance Director Liz Hersh. *“The overwhelming support for HB60 in both Chambers shows that our state leaders understand that investing in housing means more good jobs, better looking neighborhoods and stronger local economies.”*

PHARE creates a state housing trust fund that can be used for redevelopment, construction, rental assistance, foreclosure prevention, homeownership counseling, and special needs housing. PHARE requires that 30% of the funds benefit households below 50% of the area median income, and establishes a preference for “green” building standards. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is required to develop a proposed annual plan with public comment that must be published

and submitted to the chairs and minority chairs of the state Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee and the House Commerce Committee.

Despite passing both chambers of the Pennsylvania Legislature with strong support, PHARE was on the verge of dying in early November after the Pennsylvania House announced that it would not reconvene for the remainder of the legislative session. Though the House had passed HB60 in April by a vote of 179-8, the version that passed the Senate in October with a 47-2 vote margin had changes that required a return to the House for concurrence.

Unwilling to give up with victory so close, the Housing Alliance sounded the alarm both to their immediate allies and to other constituencies that would also have had legislation stranded by the House adjournment. Including HB60, 21 bills were in limbo awaiting concurrence due to the early end of session in the House. Within a day of the House announcement, several hundred Housing Alliance supporters had contacted their Representatives. Over the next couple of days, the supporters of the other 20 bills weighed in. Less than a week after announcing adjournment, the House reconvened and HB60 was on its way to Governor Rendell’s desk.



*Pennsylvania Capitol Building*

The close call for HB60 evoked some haunting memories for the Housing Alliance. In 2008, the Housing Alliance had pushed two separate housing trust fund bills, one in the House and one in the Senate. Each bill passed its own chamber only to run out of time before one of the bills could pass the other chamber.

*“We had come way too far for a repeat of 2008,”* said Hersh. *“When word got out that the House might adjourn, our membership sprung into action. We were having our annual meeting days after the announcement, and you can believe that saving HB60 was the topic in everyone’s conversation. We were able to mobilize, and along with the sponsors of the other 20 bills, we were successful at getting the House to return and complete their important business.”*

HB60’s legislative path was never easy. Caught up in the partisan current of national politics, HB60 was subject to several unfriendly amendments including limitations on sources of funds for the Housing Trust Fund

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that would have prohibited the use of any state funds, as well as possibly prohibiting private donations, foundation support and federal funds. An amendment limiting the source of funds was included in the House version that past in April. The Senate version stripped out that language, and was one of the issues requiring the concurrence vote.

*"Despite getting caught up in some politics, one of the reasons we prevailed is that we cast PHARE as a nonpartisan issue throughout our campaign," said Hersh. "As these economic difficulties continue, almost every elected official will have increasing interest in helping constituents meet their housing needs."*

With the Housing Trust Fund established, the Housing Alliance is now focusing its advocacy on securing funding. Housing Alliance supporters are already planning meetings with the newly elected legislature. With many of the officials in the Statehouse newly elected, there is a substantial need for education and outreach. In addition to continuing its very successful media advocacy work and public opinion research, the Housing Alliance is planning to release a three-part report on reshaping policy for homeownership, rental housing and homeless services that will both evaluate the current systems and make recommendations.

The Housing Alliance will also explore the legislative prospects for funding targeted components with the Housing Trust Fund, such as the state's rehabilitation program, which has a great track record. The Housing Alliance will also be partnering on a study that highlights the importance of public investment in spurring the economic engine of the affordable housing development industry.

Contact: Liz Hersh, Pennsylvania Housing Alliance, 2 South Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038 (215-576-7044) [info@housingalliancepa.org](mailto:info@housingalliancepa.org).

## Cuyahoga County, Ohio Establishes Housing Trust Fund

The Cuyahoga County, Ohio Board of Commissioners created a Housing Trust Fund and a Housing Advisory Board late in 2010. This success comes from the diligent work of the Housing Trust Fund Implementation Task Force established in 2008 to develop recommendations for the Board on establishing a trust fund to address low-income housing needs in the community. In 2009, the Board unanimously accepted the recommendations of the Task Force and further asked the Task Force to make specific recommendations for membership of the board.

In its last meeting of 2010, the Board of County Commissioners of Cuyahoga County established the Housing Trust

Fund to accept funds identified by the Task Force in its report and other such monies as identified by the Housing Advisory Board. The Trust Fund will be staffed by the Department of Development, as funds become available.

The Board also established the Housing Advisory Board to administer the trust fund and appointed its first eighteen of a potential twenty-one members. In Ohio, counties are required to establish Housing Advisory Boards to review strategies and any funding that allocates local resources for housing, including analyzing the anticipated impact on existing housing patterns, submitting a fair housing impact statement, and a planning for affirmative marketing.

The resolution specifies that the Housing Advisory Board is to:

- Develop by-laws for the operation of the Housing Advisory Board;
- Develop program guidelines and set annual program goals based on the Report and Recommendations of the Task Force dated April 2009;
- Recommend an annual budget for Trust Fund programs;
- Administer and monitor expenditures from the Trust Fund;
- Recommend an individual to serve as the Housing Trust Fund Manager and advise on hiring of other staff needed to fulfill program objectives;
- Review county trust fund staff recommendations of proposals and recommend proposals for funding;
- Submit a complete package of



*Cuyahoga County has improved the energy efficiency level and comfort of homes throughout the County through its Home Weatherization Assistance Program.*

the selected proposals to the Board of County Commissioners for action;

- Conduct an annual program review and report annually to the Board of County Commissioners and the community on progress and activities of the Trust Fund;
- Perform other oversight functions; and
- Provide advice to the County Executive and County Council on affordable housing issues.

The Board of County Commissioners, in its initial approval of the recommendations from the Task Force, accepted the recommendation to establish an annual funding goal of \$12 million and agreed that at least 75% of the program funds should be targeted to households whose incomes do not exceed 30% of the area median income.

The County Commissioners indicated their support of an increase in the conveyance fee of one mil as an initial on-going revenue source to support the housing trust fund and the passage of permissive state enabling legislation to enable the increase in the conveyance fee.

Two funding sources were recommended in the Task Force Report to fund the trust fund:

- State unclaimed funds: legislation

could be enacted to establish a ten-year statute of limitations and return “timed out” funds to the county of origin to be dedicated for use to a local housing trust fund. It is estimated that this would generate approximately \$6-7 million annually for Cuyahoga County.

- Conveyance fee: tapping this source would require enabling legislation to allow the county to increase the property conveyance fee by one mil for the sole purpose of supporting a local housing trust fund. It is estimated that this would generate approximately \$4 million annually for Cuyahoga County.

The Task Force recommended that trust fund dollars focus on four programmatic areas, with a priority on activities that prevent homelessness and promote housing stability for very low

income households. The four program areas are:

- Capital expenditures to preserve or secure long-term, deep rent subsidies (e.g., preserve Section 8 project-based units or develop public housing or shelter plus care units),
- Short-term emergency assistance to avoid eviction or to avoid and/or end homelessness (e.g., one-time assistance for unpaid rent, first month rent, and/or security deposit),
- Middle- or long-term shallow rent subsidies, tenant-based or project-based (e.g., monthly rent subsidy of about \$100-\$200, not based on tenant’s income), and
- Innovative programs, including a vacant and abandoned housing program.

The Housing Advisory Board held its first meeting in December of 2010 and identified initial steps to take in meeting its obligations, including educating the newly elected County Council on affordable housing needs and the role of the trust fund.

Contact: Philip Star, Executive in Residence, Cleveland State University, 2121 Euclid Avenue, UR 348, Cleveland, OH 44115 (216-687-2241) p.star@csuohio.edu.



*The Cuyahoga County Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program enables eligible homeowners in participating communities to maintain the quality of their housing and create a positive effect in the surrounding neighborhood.*

# Housing Long Beach Wins A Step In Community Benefits Plan

**H**ousing Long Beach was victorious in creating a housing trust fund in Long Beach in 2006, after more than three years campaigning against a reluctant City Council. While initial funding was committed to the Housing Trust Fund, City Council has failed to embrace numerous potential revenue sources advanced by the community.

Now the City is creating a proposed Downtown Redevelopment Plan (and an accompanying Environmental Impact Report) that could potentially provide for a number of community benefits, including funding for affordable housing. After an intensive campaign, Housing Long Beach has won a pause in the process to enable consideration of an economic study which could provide valuable information to the City's deliberations.

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles has been working closely with Housing Long Beach in this process. Housing Long Beach is a grassroots organization which has been working for years to get Long Beach to address inequities and needs important to the residents of the community. Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) secured \$100,000 in funding from the California Endowment so that an economic consultant (hired previously by the City) could complete the study.

When the City balked at granting the time for completion of the study necessary for it to be considered in the Downtown Plan, LAFLA and Housing Long Beach swung into high gear, holding a series of community meetings, speaking at numerous council meetings and working with the media,

to shed light on the City's actions. Proponents of the Plan who opposed the request for a pause alleged that a four-month delay would have serious consequences and labeled low income community members as "special interests" in the process.

The third and final City Council meeting regarding the request to pause the release of the Plan took place on November 9, 2010. The City Council Chambers was packed with housing advocates, low-income tenants, seniors and disabled individuals who supported allowing the economic study. A line of people waiting to make public comments stretched the length of the chamber staircase.

Cinde Soto, a HLB leader, was particularly inspiring as she lowered the podium and spoke from her wheel chair about the need to take into account the interests of disabled and low-income residents in the downtown area.

Those speaking in favor of the pause were effective, as one by one they identified themselves as "special interests," a label that contrasted sharply with their real life situations. The City Council voted unanimously to release the Plan and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), but extended the EIR comment period from the usual 30 days to 115 days to allow the economic study to be included in the public comment period.

Housing Long Beach will have little time to savor their victory. As Susanne Browne of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles said, *"Winning time for the economic benefits study became a campaign*

*within a campaign, but the real fight for community benefits lies ahead."* The Plan could result in displacement of up to 25,000 low income residents to make way for massive new development in a 630 acre area. Currently, the Plan includes no community benefits, such as affordable housing or local hiring. Housing Long Beach has asked for consideration of several potential community benefits, including:

- Right of first refusal for displaced tenants,
- Mixed income housing requirements,
- Commercial linkage fees (a potential funding source for the City's Housing Trust Fund), and
- Local, low income hiring requirements.

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan has a potential to include a stream of dedicated revenue to support the Housing Trust Fund and provide real housing opportunities for low income residents of Long Beach—a goal the City has struggled to meet. In the City's own Housing Element Report, it concludes that it is far behind in meeting its affordable housing production needs. *"It's a real shame the city doesn't want to partner with the community in what should be a community-driven process,"* Browne said.

The economic study will include a residual land value analysis, to examine increased land values to developers as a result of the massive economic benefits and incentives in the Plan, such as increased density, fast-tracked development and waiving environmental requirements.

Quantifying the benefits to developers in the study will enable stakeholders to have a real-world data-based discussion about the possibility of including community benefits in the Plan. This would allow for balanced and accountable development, which takes into account the needs of Long Beach residents.

Contact: Susanne Browne, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, 601 Pacific Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90802 (562-304-2520) [sbrowne@lafla.org](mailto:sbrowne@lafla.org).

HOUSING LONG BEACH



*Housing Long Beach leaders are rallying the streets of Downtown Long Beach during the Third Annual Walk-A-Thon in support of a pause in the release of the Downtown Plan.*

## Massachusetts Housing Advocates Save State Law 40B

This November, voters in Massachusetts decisively defeated a ballot initiative that would have repealed the state's primary affordable housing law. Question 2 on the Massachusetts ballot asked whether voters should repeal Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B ("40B") known as the Comprehensive Permit Law, which provides for expedited permitting for developers that include low or moderate income housing in their proposed developments.

Specifically, the law allows developers to apply for a single comprehensive permit from a city or town's zoning board when at least 20% of the housing units in the proposed project will be affordable in towns in the Commonwealth where the number of affordable housing units is less than 10% of the town's total housing stock. The law, enacted in

1969, has engendered controversy over the years because it enables developers of affordable housing to override stricter local zoning bylaws, such as large lot zoning and prohibitions on multifamily housing, in communities where less than 10 percent of housing is considered affordable.

In the final tally, 58% of voters – more than 1.2 million citizens – rejected repeal of 40B, with 42% voting to repeal. Eighty percent of cities and towns voted no on the initiative. Opposition to the repeal was strong in both urban and suburban towns. The ballot initiative followed unsuccessful attempts to have the legislature repeal the law, as well as a ballot initiative in 2008 that lapsed when petitioners failed to collect the requisite number of signatures.

The victory for affordable housing supporters was the result of a comprehensive "No on 2" campaign waged statewide that began with the formation of a 25 member steering committee in the summer of 2009. A smaller leadership team met bi-weekly to strategize and develop the weekly action plan, and an advisory committee of more than 1,600 organizations and individuals – including civic, religious, business, civil rights, elderly and disability groups, along with housing advocates – endorsed and worked on the campaign.

The \$1.2 million effort was funded by more than 1,000 organizations and individuals, with approximately 75% of the donations of \$200 or less, reflecting the true grassroots nature

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of the campaign; another \$100,000 was provided as in-kind support from participating organizations.

*“It was an opportunity to undertake the largest public education campaign on affordable housing in our state,”* said Aaron Gornstein, Executive Director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), one of the key members of the campaign. *“We did significant education and outreach and in the process showed what affordable housing looks like and who lives there – average working families, seniors and disabled residents living in high-quality, mixed income developments.”*

### The Campaign

Staffed by a full-time campaign manager, the campaign also benefitted from seven full-time organizers, three part-time organizers, an administrative staffer, and eight interns as well as hundreds of volunteers, and media, communications and polling consultants.

The campaign included extensive research, media, and outreach and organizing efforts, among them:

- **Campaign Materials:** A variety of campaign materials were distributed, including 4,500 lawn signs, 1.2 million palm cards (in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese), eight different fact sheets targeted at different constituencies, “dear friend” postcards, stickers and buttons.

- **Direct mailings:** Mailings were sent to members of boards of selectmen; Democratic and Republican state committee members; city, town, ward and citywide chairs; community preservation committees; local housing

authority directors; members of the legislature, candidates for office, and the Massachusetts Congressional delegation; and 40B homeowners and tenants.

- **Outreach:** Organizers in each region reached out to local leaders, including municipal officials, local housing partnership members, town meeting members, civic leaders, and others. Block parties and planning meetings were held in communities across the state. A student coordinator and interns conducted outreach to college students, with campus organizers identified at ten colleges. The campaign developed a student Facebook page.



- **Trainings:** Organizers and volunteers received trainings held in Worcester, Boston, and Cape Cod.

- **Community Forums and Debates:** The campaign participated in dozens of community forums and ballot question debates throughout the state.

The campaign obtained support from all four gubernatorial candidates and stayed in regular communications with their campaigns. Members also met individually with dozens of candidates for House and Senate seats to brief them on the campaign and key messages.

The campaign took advantage of CHAPA’s research and analysis of data from the state Department of Housing and Community Development and municipal offices across the state documenting the impact of the law since it was enacted in 1969.

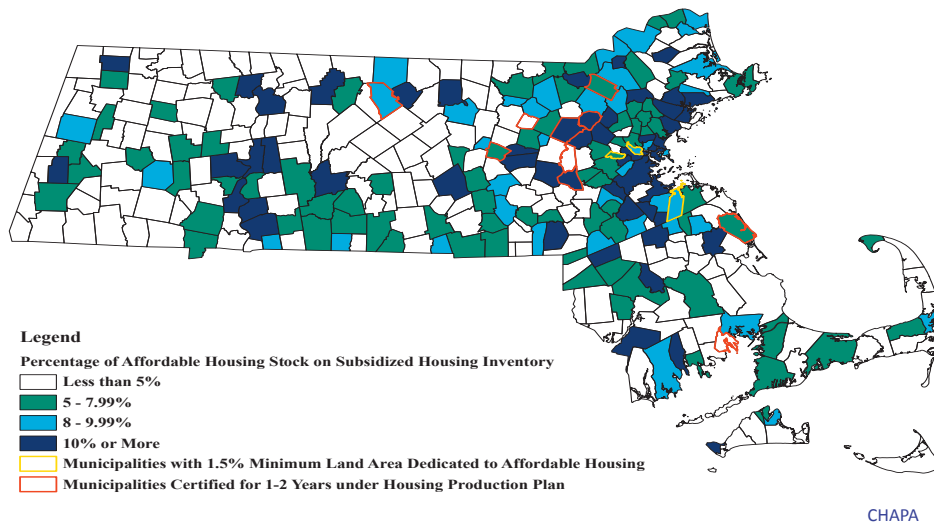
### Accomplishments of 40B

Massachusetts Law 40B has been used to create more than 58,000 new housing units in at least 1,000 developments, including almost 30,000 houses, condominiums and apartments affordable to households with incomes below 80% of the area median. Within the last ten years, 10,000 affordable units have been built. The housing production under 40B is higher than any other single housing program in the Commonwealth.

The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute documented the economic impact generated by 40B over the past ten years and analyzed the pipeline of proposed construction projects to estimate the jobs and economic activity that would have been lost if 40B were repealed, notably:

- **Expenditures and job creation:** 47,683 jobs and \$9.25 billion in economic activity from the construction of Chapter 40B housing units and resulting economic linkage during the period from 2000 to April 2010.

## Progress Under Chapter 40B



• **Projected expenditures and job creation:** Projections based on the proposed construction of Chapter 40B units and economic linkages expected to result from the proposed construction include totals of \$10.42 billion in economic linkages and 54,307 jobs.

• **Household spending:** Spending by household residents of Chapter 40B units built from 2000 to April 2010 is estimated to result in \$61.8 million annually in property taxes, \$93.7 million in state income taxes, and \$22.8 million in sales taxes (all taxes in 2008 dollars).

### Outreach and Media

These efforts were captured in and enhanced by extensive media coverage garnered by the campaign. A rapid response team of volunteers responded immediately upon request to various online articles and blogs as a way to insert campaign messages to the readers.

A major organizing effort among the interfaith community led to a statement endorsed by more than 200 religious leaders and lifted up at two press conferences, including one specifically convened by the Cardinal and Catholic bishops. CHAPA staff assisted in

recruiting 40B residents to serve as spokespeople to the campaign and to share their stories with the media, including in a 30-second paid ad that featured the voices of residents living in affordable housing. The ad aired widely the last eight days of the campaign on broadcast and cable stations. Op-eds were placed in 40 newspapers, letters to the editor appeared in virtually every major newspaper in the state, and the campaign garnered 62 favorable editorials. Campaign representatives were quoted in numerous news stories and appeared on network and local cable television shows.

The campaign also took advantage of social media, obtaining more than 3,000 Facebook followers and approximately 250 Twitter followers. The campaign shared information through daily updates with more than 75,000 “visitors” through its website. A one-week “money-bomb” through social media also assisted in the fundraising effort from smaller donors. The campaign placed ads via Facebook and Google and in targeted online papers from August 15 through the election.

As election day approached, energy turned to direct voter outreach, with

literature drops reaching more than 50,000 residents in 40B and affordable housing developments handled by local volunteers. Starting after Labor Day, organizers and volunteers undertook targeted canvassing, visibilities and events, phone banking, forums, and other strategies, and coordinated closely with the GOTV 2010 Coalition, coordinated by MassVOTE, which worked on “Vote No on 2” in Boston and other urban areas. On election day, volunteers held “No on 2” signs at 650 polling locations in more than 150 cities and towns focusing on high turnout precincts.

With victory on the initiative behind them, organizers are looking to the future. *“We showed how residents of affordable housing contribute to our communities and need to do that on a continuing basis moving forward. We’re hoping to maintain and build on the momentum and grassroots support from the campaign to advance affordable housing at the local level across the state,”* said Gornstein.

Contact: Aaron Gornstein, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, 18 Tremont Street, Suite 401, Boston, MA 02108 (617-742-0820) [aarong@chapa.org](mailto:aarong@chapa.org),

# Maine Affordable Housing Coalition Video Demonstrates Housing Choice Voucher Success

With the goal of building support to expand the Federal Housing Choice Voucher program, the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) and its coalition partners released a video and launched a website that weave together the stories of three Maine households. The video, *Along the Way Home*, de-mystifies the impact and importance of the voucher program by telling the stories of three families. Both poignant and informative, the video features current voucher holder Jake Elser, former voucher holder Mary-Anne Martel, and Lyn Grotke, who has been on a waitlist for a voucher since 2008. Through their stories, *Along the Way Home* skillfully explains Maine's housing need; why having safe, stable housing matters; and why the Housing Choice Voucher program is a solution that works for Maine.

The strategy is nothing new for advocates: *put a human face on housing*. Tell the stories of the people who need and who have benefitted from affordable housing to help make the case for policies and resources that address affordable housing needs. Using personal stories to advocate for affordable housing is often difficult, however. Enabling people to succeed in telling their story is a challenge, as is making the connections between a personal story and the complex world of affordable housing.

What makes *Along the Way Home* exceptional is how well it uses the medium of video and the stories of Jake, Mary-Anne and Lyn to make the case for the Housing Choice Voucher

program in a manner equally compelling and easy to understand.

According to MAHC Coordinator, Greg Payne, the video has been more broadly received and well-understood than any of MAHC's prior outreach or public education efforts. *"In the past, we have released written studies with all sorts of important information that barely anyone reads,"* said Payne. *"Totally different story with Along the Way Home. We still published a written report as part of this effort, but the video is what is attracting people, and we are reaching folks who would have never read our report."*

For Maine, the Federal Housing Choice Voucher program is the state's most significant federal affordable housing resource. Following more than eight years of budget reductions and one year of modest increases to the Housing Choice Voucher program, MAHC wanted to launch an education and outreach effort focused on Senator Susan Collins, who sits on the Senate Appropriations Committee and has supported housing assistance programs in the past. After analysis, MAHC and its allies concluded that engaging Senator Collins would first require

MAHC

*A Housing Choice Voucher provided the stability Jake Elser needed to gain control of his disability and turn his life around. Jake is shown here at his job packaging newspapers for the Foster's Daily Democrat.*



*Talking with employees at her law firm, Mary-Anne Martell had a housing voucher twenty years ago that allowed her to go back to school and become a highly successful professional.*



*Lyn Grotke helps her son Christopher get into their van. Lynn and her four children have been on the housing choice voucher wait list for three years.*



building support among the general public.

*“Obviously, we wanted to reach out to Senator Collins directly as much as we were able, but we knew that in order to really encourage her to take action on the Housing Choice Voucher program, we needed to increase the program’s support on the ground in Maine communities,”* said Payne.

Reaching the general public meant doing something different from past outreach efforts. MAHC had previously worked to promote and protect the Housing Choice Voucher program but had not had the necessary reach or impact. Based on past experience, MAHC wanted to emphasize the many successes of the Housing Choice Voucher program, rather than just focusing on the need. MAHC also wanted to highlight the plight of households spending multiple years on local wait lists for vouchers.

Working with its coalition partners and with initial encouragement and

funding from Bank of America, MAHC developed the twelve-minute video and a web/social media strategy to distribute it. With venues ranging from YouTube, cable access, libraries, and schools, nearly 2,000 people have viewed *Along the Way Home* in the months following its release.

According to Payne, the video is very effective in helping people understand the Housing Choice Voucher program, as well as inspiring them. *“Seeing and hearing from Jake, Mary-Anne and Lyn strips away the complexity and politics, and sets the focus on the human impact. Audiences really get why vouchers make a difference.”* At the end of the video, viewers are steered to the *Along the Way Home* website, which directs them to action. A link on the website allows people to send an email to the White House Domestic Policy Council, HUD Secretary Donovan, and the housing staff for the Maine Senate delegation.

Payne attributes the strong response to the video to several factors:

- the great work of the production company,
- the strategic selection of stories that best made the case, and
- Jake, Mary-Anne, and Lyn, of course.

An instructive exercise for MAHC involved the solicitation and sorting of the potential stories. *“What surprised us most was how easy it was to find the stories that we knew the public would understand, and how willing people were to tell their stories,”* said Payne. *“The folks we met were very happy to tell their stories because it was a way to give back and potentially help other people.”*

To view *Along the Way Home*, go to the website at: <http://www.alongthewayhome.org>. To learn more about the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, go to: <http://www.mainehousingcoalition.org/>

Contact: Greg Payne, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, 307 Cumberland Avenue, Portland, ME 04101 (207-553-7777).

## Housing Leadership Day Huge Success in San Mateo County, California

The Housing Endowment and Regional Trust—the HEART of San Mateo County—envision a county where housing is attainable for all. The Housing Leadership Council administers the Housing Trust Fund for San Mateo County, California. An important aspect of reaching this goal is creating opportunities for residents, businesses, and others in San Mateo County to understand the importance of investing in affordable housing. As part of this effort, the Housing Leadership Council sponsored its ninth Housing Leadership Day.

The theme was *Housing Plus*: Housing+Transportation, Housing+Health, Housing+Education, and Housing+Jobs—each illustrating a vital relationship that helps create stable, successful communities. In this struggling economy, where there are often no good choices, the Housing Leadership Council is enabling participants to be fully cognizant of the impact community decisions have on neighborhoods and their residents.

The 2010 Housing Leadership Day was a success, with a sellout crowd of more than 250 people attending the event at the Oracle Conference Center. The morning plenary panel addressed housing’s relationship to:

- Business, with Omar Ahmad, entrepreneur and San Carlos City Council Member;
- Transportation, with Mike Scanlon, CEO of SamTrans, Caltrain, and the San Mateo County Transportation

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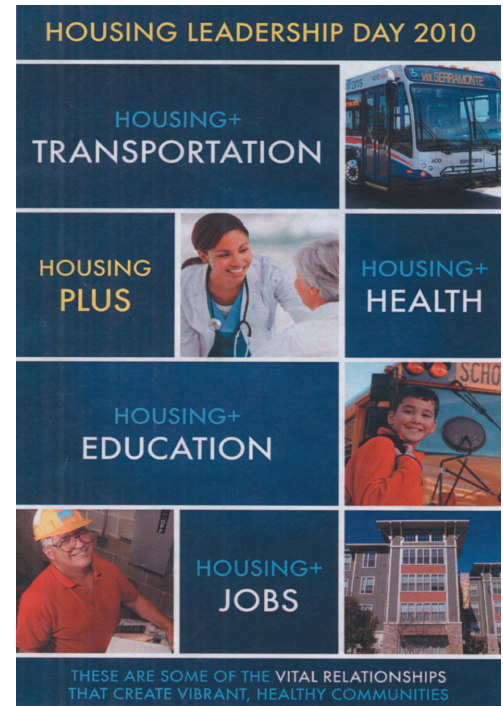
- Education, with Tom Mohr, president of Cañada College; and
- Health, with Jean Fraser, chief of the San Mateo County Health System.

Following the plenary, attendees broke into small groups to address questions related to one of these issues. Participants could also join a tour of the Grand Boulevard Initiative. The Grand Boulevard Initiative is a regional collaboration dedicated to the revitalization of the El Camino Real corridor, as it runs through San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties in the California Bay Area. Other discussions focused on air quality, senior and special needs housing, and home ownership.

HEART has raised \$12 million, including \$3 million from San Mateo County, \$2 million from the State of California Proposition 46 matching funds, \$2 million from California Proposition C funds, \$1.5 million from the California HFA HELP loan program, and \$1 million each from Wells Fargo and Genentech.

To date, HEART has invested more than \$8 million for the construction, renovation, or purchase of 802 homes affordable to low and moderate income households. For every \$1.00 HEART has committed to affordable housing, an additional \$20.00 has been leveraged from other public and private resources.

HEART is structured as a joint powers authority and all twenty cities in San Mateo County, plus San Mateo County, are members. HEART's volunteer Board of Directors consists of eleven elected officials and nine at large members from the private sector. HEART is staffed through a contract by the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County and the San Mateo County Department of Housing.



Contact: Christopher Mohr, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, 139 Mitchell Avenue, Suite 108, South San Francisco, CA 94080 (650-872-4444 x1) [cmohr@hlscsmc.org](mailto:cmohr@hlscsmc.org).

## HOUSING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



*A discussion group at Housing Leadership Day in San Mateo County.*

## HOUSING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



*Getting ready for the bus tour of the Grand Boulevard Initiative.*

# New References ...

## *Center for Housing Policy Highlights the Role of Affordable Housing in Creating Jobs and Stimulating Local Economic Development*

The Center for Housing Policy (CHP) has captured research showing that affordable housing development not only provides needed housing, but also drives local economic growth. CHP created a fact sheet that summarizes the different ways in which affordable housing can contribute to rising employment and economic recovery. The fact sheet is based on the conclusions of a detailed research review of available literature presented in an accompanying document.

These reports, *“The Role of Affordable Housing in Creating Jobs and Stimulating Local Economic Development: Evidence in Brief and A Review of the Literature,”* are both timely, given the current

economic climate, and valuable for campaigns working to put investment in affordable housing in the context of helping revitalize local economies. The summary report provides brief evidence of five conclusions:

- Building affordable housing creates jobs and spending both during construction and after the homes are occupied;
- The development of affordable housing can help attract both new employers and a skilled workforce;
- Investing in affordable homes increases revenues for states and localities;
- Homebuyers who participate in an affordable homeownership program appear less likely to experience

foreclosure than those who do not, which can reduce government spending; and

- When housing and associated costs such as transportation and utilities are affordable, families have more income to spend on local goods and services.

The more complete literature review explores the intersection of affordable housing and local economic development by expanding on these topics. January 2011.

The research was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The reports are available at <http://www.nhc.org/publications>.

## *The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy Outlines the Importance of Maintaining Diversity in America’s Transit Rich Neighborhoods*

The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy has released a report that explores research and outlines policy options on the relationship of transit opportunities and diversity in neighborhoods. The report, *“Maintaining Diversity in America’s Transit Rich Neighborhoods,”* reveals how new transit stations can set in motion a cycle of unintended consequences in which core transit users--such as renters and low income households--are priced out of housing in these neighborhoods

in favor of higher-income, car-owning residents who are less likely to use public transit for commuting.

The report argues for public policy and resources to provide and maintain housing options for core-transit users. The report introduces a new web-based toolkit of policy tools for shaping equitable change in transit-rich neighborhoods. The toolkit includes policy tools, housing market tools (including preservation of existing

affordable rental housing and the production of new affordable housing), and transportation management tools. October 2010.

The report is available at: <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/>