



Regional Housing Services Office

Serving Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Maynard, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston

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December 17, 2020

To: Bedford/Alyssa Sandoval, Concord/Marcia Rasmussen, Lexington/Amanda Loomis,
Sudbury/Adam Duchesneau, Wayland/Sarkis Sarkisian

From: Liz Rust, RHSO

RE: WestMetro HOME Consortium Fair Housing Plan approval

Dear RHSO WestMetro HOME Consortium members,

I am writing to further and outline the review and approval process for the WestMetro HOME Consortium Fair Housing Plan, titled FY21-25 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, distributed November 25, 2020 to the WestMetro Consortium members.

The draft plan is available now for public comment, and the final plan will be distributed on or about January 6, with a 2-week final review period, after which approval will be assumed if not specifically given. While the Consortium planning materials are not usually reviewed by municipal executive leadership, this may be an opportunity to lift up the commitment and importance of this work. The RHSO is available to assist in your review or approval process as requested.

Background: The WestMetro HOME Consortium consists of thirteen member communities (the Towns of Bedford, Belmont, Brookline, Concord, Lexington, Natick, Needham, Sudbury, Watertown, and Wayland and the Cities of Framingham, Newton and Waltham), and is regulated by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Federal HOME funds flow into the Consortium for use in eligible projects, and HUD requires certain standards as conditions to those funds.

Specifically, HUD requires the Consortium to prepare an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI), a five-year plan that analyzes barriers in access to housing opportunities throughout the thirteen communities and identifies priorities and goals to address these issues. In accordance with the HUD guidance, the WestMetro HOME Consortium (Consortium) began working on the AI in 2018, and contracted with Barrett Planning Group LLC to complete this effort.

FY21-FY25 AI Plan: The draft plan contains insightful research and information, and also outlines an Action Plan (starting page 33) to increase awareness of Fair Housing laws and to identify and remove barriers to Fair Housing Choice. This action plan requires priority and commitment from each member community over the 5-year plan period. The RHSO is poised to assist its WestMetro HOME community members, in partnership with local efforts.

The plan is a timely effort with the current rising awareness of civil rights and social justice. The WestMetro communities are fortunate to have this detailed analysis and action plan to assist with matters of equity, inclusion and diversity in the communities.

Plan Review details: On December 7, 2020 the comment period opened with a public meeting held by the City of Newton, and the distribution of the draft plan to all consortium communities, and further distributed to housing groups in each community by our office and yours. The full draft report is available for download on the City's website at <http://www.newtonma.gov/cdbg>. Comments on the draft plan can be sent (by 1/6/21) to myself at the RHSO or in writing to Amanda Berman, Director of Housing and Community Development, via email at aberman@newtonma.gov.