

A.1 Executive Summary

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is justifiably proud of its HOPE VI track record, having acted as its own developer in implementing six highly successful prior HOPE VI projects. Having transformed most of its distressed family developments into thriving mixed-income communities using the HOPE VI program, it now turns to its last – and largest – development, Westlawn. Located in the west side of Milwaukee, Westlawn is a massive development – 726 units of family public housing on 75 acres – the largest public housing project in the state of Wisconsin. HACM has led an intensive planning process over the past year with the community and other stakeholders to create a master redevelopment plan for the entire site, which will be implemented over a period of many years. This HOPE VI proposal deals with the first portion of that plan, revitalizing the eastern half of the existing development, or Westlawn East.

The Westlawn development is severely distressed, sharing many problems typical of housing projects from its era. The site is poorly designed, with barracks-style buildings arrayed in non-standard patterns on oddly-configured blocks, and large, ambiguously-defined open spaces and remote parking areas that cause security challenges. The units are small, poorly configured, and completely inaccessible to the disabled. Building components and the electrical and structural systems are outdated, and inadequate or failing. Built on a former wetland, the site's lack of adequate drainage systems combined with deteriorating foundations has resulted in extensive leaks, water damage, and mold/mildew throughout the units.

HACM proposes to demolish all 332 existing public housing units at Westlawn East, replacing them on-site with 410 units of mixed-income housing. Of these, 310 will be affordable – 36 public housing only, 54 public housing/low income housing tax credit (LIHTC), 186

LIHTC/project-based Section 8, 10 HOME, and 24 Section 202. The other 100 on-site units will be market-rate, aimed at households earning 80-120% of median – 70 rental units and 30 homeownership units. Finally, an additional two homeownership units will be created off-site, as part of a growing partnership with the City’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program to reclaim abandoned and foreclosed properties. The new buildings will be designed to mirror the architectural styles found in surrounding areas. And the revitalized site will be sustainable and green, fulfilling the requirements of not only the Energy Star for New Homes program but also the Enterprise Green Communities Checklist. These sustainable features are designed to provide the physical infrastructure needed to encourage residents to adopt healthy lifestyles and use the pedestrian-friendly walkways, bike paths, and community gardens that will be developed through a partnership with Growing Power.

The proposed site plan includes a system of new streets which better tie into the surrounding grid, buildings that front directly onto streets with clearly-defined front and back yards, a new community gardening area, as well as a linear park, bio-swales, and rain gardens along Lincoln Creek on the property’s southern edge, and outdoor play areas for children. The last phase of redevelopment will include the construction of 10,000 square feet of retail space on the northeast corner of the development to help spur commercial revitalization along Silver Spring Drive and bring needed services like a pharmacy to Westlawn residents.

The physical improvements to Westlawn will be supplemented by a \$7.6 million community and supportive services (CSS) program, providing a continuum of services that will help elevate families out of poverty. HACM has coordinated very successful CSS programs at its other HOPE VI sites, and is committed to doing so at Westlawn. Of the 332 units at the site, 321 are currently occupied, and 80% of these residents want to return to the revitalized site. HACM

has put together partnerships with a strong group of CSS partners, centered around the Browning Elementary School and Silver Spring Neighborhood Center (SSNC), co-located right on the Westlawn East site, and already providing a wide range of services to Westlawn residents. HACM's CSS plan is ambitious and results-oriented, aimed at helping residents to achieve their goals, including securing stable employment, purchasing a home, gaining financial security, and building a hopeful future for their children.

HACM, the residents of Westlawn, and the many dedicated stakeholders in the surrounding west side community are solidly behind this application for \$22 million in HOPE VI funds. The total budget for the proposed revitalization is almost \$100.4 million. HACM is requesting \$22 million of this in HOPE VI funds. The remaining \$78.4 million will come from a variety of public and private sources, including the City of Milwaukee, Friends of Housing, WE Energies, Fannie Mae, private mortgages and HACM's general fund. The timing of this proposal is particularly critical because the State of Wisconsin has 2010 disaster credits that are available for the redevelopment of Westlawn, but will not be available beyond 2010. HACM has been very successful in the past in attracting tax credit equity investors and recently received pricing of \$.70. HACM's future plans for the western half of Westlawn include applying for another HOPE VI/Choice Neighborhoods grant to revitalize the rest of the site beginning in 2014 using a combination of low-income housing tax credits, public and private financing.

HACM has an exceptionally strong development track record, and will coordinate the redevelopment of Westlawn. HACM will supplement its experienced in-house team with the same outside property manager it has used at its other HOPE VI projects, and is also working with an outside, nationally-renowned design team. HACM is proposing an aggressive but achievable schedule, with all of the HUD-funded construction completed by December 31, 2012.