

A Comprehensive, Community Wide, Housing Program

Housing is a family's single largest expense, if mismanaged
it is a burden on both the family and the community!
Housing must be included in any community economic development program.

A Comprehensive Housing Program should include:

- Energy Efficiency Codes for new construction. The minimum code standard is not good enough. I find the typical energy failures of uninsulated foundations and excess air leakage in homes built 40 years ago as well as in homes built today. *We can do better.*
- Constructive property maintenance standards that are enforced. Standards should be raised as needed; if done *gradually*, economic impact is minimized. We could use Home Energy Audits & Computer modeling to identify and prioritize energy upgrades. Energy upgrades can produce significant savings and safety upgrades can reduce insurance premiums. *Homeowners, and landlords, should be volunteers not adversaries to this process.*
- A system to demolish non repairable structures and land bank buildable lots, because tougher standards will hasten economic uselessness. *The cheapest land to develop is the vacant lot next door.*
- Utility records with property transfers and rental agreements. Buyers and renters could then more accurately estimate a property's relative value and owners would be encouraged to make cost effective improvements.
- We could use my *Utility Tracker*^(SM) database, to profile or compare individual vs. community average utility use. Computer tracking can highlight both high and low consumption... efficiency and inefficiency... savings and waste. The ENERGY STAR Billing plan could print these comparisons on monthly utility statements.
- We need a plan to build efficient, lifecost affordable new homes. Low cost "affordable housing" is usually not built but is created by a city's deteriorating housing stock. *The \$60,000 house built on a donated city lot with poor design and an excessive utility bill is not affordable.* HUD is still spending our tax dollars building code minimum housing!
- We could establish Energy Service Companies, community based Co-ops, to lead local rehab/ weatherization programs serving the *entire* community, not the present Band-Aid of government programs applied only to low-income households.
- We need a local effort ... our indifference is most of the problem! A local self-help initiative is the first step to the solution. We are part of the problem. We are most of the solution.