The purpose of this memorandum is to present a dispute resolution procedure design for developing affordable housing units in the low income areas of counties across the United States of America. It is also desired that a dispute resolution system be designed to achieve consensus regarding the objectives. In order to develop this procedure design, there are many things to consider and there is a requirement for planning officials to work together. Planners and housing and community development specialists will need to be utilized in the planning phase. The opinions of the neighborhood association presidents will also be utilized in regards to succeeding in this procedure design of developing affordable housing units in the low-income areas.

This procedure design will examine the concept of affordable housing and indicate a method to achieve the goal of affordable housing units. It will also propose a means as to which to get this procedure accomplished and adopted by the city and county commissions. It is expected for this procedure design to be utilized in many cities and counties to supply and great demand.
The decision-making process will be a shared one. The stakeholders with authority will decide on issues together. If there is a disagreement among the authority there will be a re-evaluation of the issue and another majority vote taken for clarification. If this still does not solve the matter, there will be a special meeting to resolve the disagreement. Each decision will have to be motioned and agreed upon by the majority of the task force. There will also be a time for recommendations to be heard. There will also be an administrative task force coordinator, whose responsibility will be to facilitate each meeting and workshop, prepare the agendas, keep the records and provide the flow of information between the task force, the commissions and the residents of the communities at hand. Communication for this procedure will take place via comment cards, e-mails, public forums, letters written and workshops.

Instead of the commissions deciding how this plan should be carried out, they are allowing the experts to plan it. With this in mind, it would be very beneficial for the stakeholders identified to participate in this plan. It is not expected that the identified stakeholders will not participate, but if they may need prodding, the following incentives make help them make a choice in the matter.

- Participation and national recognition in the process.
- Mileage compensation to each meeting and/or workshop.
- Travel expense account, if out of town research is needed.
- Being recognized positively as a member of the task force that developed a model community-government planning process.
- Tax incentives and breaks for developers and builders.
- Increased clientele base for lending organizations.
- Increase in homeownership rates.
- Better the relationships between government and citizens due to the objectives of the plan.
- All parties involved will have a vote in the final physical design of the units to be developed.
Participatory Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process for this plan will be in the form of facilitated workshops. In these workshops the focuses will be:

- To involve the task force for implementation for broad participation
- To build a shared understanding of the purposes and desired outcomes
- To seek a consensus among the task force
- To formulate a problem statement
- To generate possible solutions (options/alternatives)
- Ensure that all input is captured and utilized
- Organize the input into a usable format
- Produce a final plan indicating the routes to achieve the desired outcomes
- Develop a fair process to developing affordable housing units on the Southside
- Develop commitment and support for the plan

Project Process and Planning Phase:

In many cities and counties there is a great need for affordable housing units to be developed. It is also known that there is a dire need for these types of units in low-income areas. This is a planning problem that needs to be dealt with and it also presents disputes among many residents within the city and the county. Often times neighboring residents that live near these low-income areas resent that concept of affordable housing units in their area because they associate it with crime, blight and lesser property values. When this type of situation arises the inventory and need must be assessed. Before attempting to construct affordable housing units it is necessary to determine the need. If is need is deemed, there is a task force already in place to make the situation occur. The task force has been established by the commissioners (city and county) and is there to deal with the exact process of developing the units. In the case that a dispute or disagreement arises, there are trained mediators that work for the state that will be used to reach consensus among the parties involved. This procedure will be managed and
overseen by both the task force and the advisory committee who report to the commissioners. For each meeting, workshop, gathering, informational session the state Department of Community Affairs will be responsible for the facilitation. It has been determined that funding will be derived from the federal government in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD has realized the need for affordable housing units in low-income areas and has put the responsibility of this task on state government.

**The Steps in the Procedure Design of Developing Affordable Housing Units:**

1. The planning officials must examine the low-income area and assess the need. Analyzing the home ownership rates in the area, if the home ownership rate is less than 5% does this. Once this is done an information meeting will be held with the inventory specialists and the task force. The meeting should take place within one month of the assessment to expedite the next step in the process.

2. A physical survey of the land must be completed now. There may be homes that can be remodeled or rehabilitated for this use. This survey will address the land use, conditions of existing homes and the public environment of the area. Other things to be assessed may include: existing zoning regulations, history of the area, cultures in the area, economic development possibilities, demographics, previous plans for the area, and transportation.

There are many things that need to happen during this step. An advisory committee should be established now to overview the planning process and analyze the inventory. A public meeting will happen once this is completed to inform the public at large of the plans for the area.
3. The purpose of the public meeting is to keep the community involved in the planning process, since they are the consumers of this plan. The meeting should be announced publicly and flyers need to be posted in as many places as possible in order to achieve community involvement. The community visioning aspect must involve a vision of what they want to see happen. These visions received at the meeting will be the goals and objectives of the procedure for developing affordable housing units in the area. There will be a preliminary report produced by the task force and the inventory specialists to give the final inventory analysis of the inventory and formulate the goals and objectives. The advisory committee will view the report and then write the framework surrounding the goals and objectives and present it to the commissioners. Once the commissioners okay the goals and objectives, the next phase is to have a community workshop on the goals to ensure consensus or build it upon the community members. If consensus is met, then the next step is to develop the plan. If there is not consensus among the community members, there are a few things that need to be done.

4. Often times in situation such as these, disputes occur and consensus needs to be developed among the stakeholders. If there is disagreement it must first be established as to what the disagreement is due to. Most of the time these disagreements will be between the community and the planning officials. The first step is to hire a mediator to sit down with the two parties/stakeholders to determine what the issue is. After that has been done, the mediator will ask each party to present what they would like to see happen. The mediator will then ask each of the parties to focus in on the issue that they would prioritize as the first thing that they would like to see happen. Once this has been established each party will be asked to figure out the best way to make this happen. After all of the issues and alternatives have been identified the mediator will then try to seek
consensus by getting each party to see the importance of each other’s views and all determine some acceptable terms as to how to move on with the process. It is the job of the mediator to get this process completed as quickly as possible.

5. The last step in the design is to actually develop the area. The actual development plan will be based on the assessment and the community visioning and the recommendations of the planning officials, advisory committee and the task force. The plan should include elements that focus on land use regulations, zoning, urban design, economic development, the public environment and future proposals. This procedure has been designed to minimize transaction costs and enhance the relationships among the community and the planning officials. The county and city will work together to determine who will develop the plan and carry out the vision. This can be done through utilizing the local housing assistance plans that the county and city has. These local governments have existing relationships with developers, builders and contractors, so the process that they use should be followed in the case also. This is done because it would reduce the amount of time it takes to search for a developer and the bidding process. The task force and the advisory committee will also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating each phase of development, once the county and city have contracted the developers. There will be monitoring and evaluating reports produce every two months that will be available for public review located online at the county and city web page and also at the local courthouses.
PROCEDURE DESIGN PLAN FOR DEVELOPING AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS:

1. DETERMINE THE NEED

2. ASSESS THE AREA
   a. LAND USE SURVEY
   b. ANALYZE THE EXISTING INVENTORY
   c. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

3. PUBLIC MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

5. PUBLIC MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

6. MEDIATION IF NECESSARY

7. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN