



All Parks Alliance for Change ■ APAC

An Organization of Manufactured Home Park Residents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - ALL PARKS ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE (APAC) COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECT

Giving voice to Minnesota's manufactured housing communities

APAC released the final report on our Comprehensive Plan Project, which involved advocating for improved treatment of manufactured housing residents in 2018 city-level comprehensive plan updates across the Metropolitan Area. Twin Cities Metropolitan Area cities are facing a severe shortage of affordable housing, a reality that suggests that leveraging all potential resources, including manufactured housing, is in the best interest of these communities.

Despite its benefits, manufactured housing is often disregarded by public officials and planners. This project coincided with current events related to manufactured housing that brought insights to our work, such as the Lowry Grove closure in St. Anthony, Burnsville's decision to use criminal rather than civil enforcement of its housing code against park residents, and the ongoing struggle over the TCAAP site redevelopment between advocates, residents, and the City of Arden Hills.

Comprehensive plans enable governments to describe goals and strategies related to issues like housing and land use and submit them for public review. Comprehensive plans present an important opportunity to engage in the local planning and policy-making process, and for constituents to ask city councils to support manufactured housing.

Manufactured housing occupies a unique position as a residential living option. It provides an unsubsidized form of naturally occurring affordable housing, and allows residents to obtain homeownership, stay close to valued community resources like schools, provide labor to local businesses, and to develop upward economic mobility in tight-knit community settings.

APAC began the project in January 2016. Letters were sent to 22 cities between October 2016 and January 2018, which consisted of our "Snapshot" tailored to each city and a Guide to Manufactured Housing Best Practices. The Snapshot compared average lot rent to the City Fair Market Rent, identified vacant homes and lots, and included an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the city's manufactured housing. The best practices included possible city actions to promote home buying, home and infrastructure repair, and resident-owned park cooperatives.

From July 2017 to January 2018, we scheduled and conduct 14 in-person meetings with planners and officials. On March 2, 2018, additional cities received a form letter (See Appendix 2) that included supplemental resources brought to our in-person meetings with the city officials. Between September 2018 and December 2018, a final letter was sent to provide an evaluation (See Appendix 3) of available comprehensive plan drafts.



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We categorized the plan language towards manufactured housing based on whether it was negative, provided little or no mention, was purely descriptive, identified manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing, or identified strategies and funding to support it. We also compared the 2018 language if available to the language in the previous comprehensive plans. This allowed us to assess both the current language as well as net positive or negative change.

Our research culminated in an evaluation of the project and a report to Metropolitan Council. In it, we are also evaluating the overall impact across all cities we obtained 2018 drafts from and the ways in which we interacted with city planners to assess which approach we took to engaging with city planners was most effective.

Overall, we found that cities' comprehensive plans demonstrated positive improvements between original language and draft language. Reviewing the 28 cities that completed a draft between June 2018 and December 2018 allowed us to identify improved or worsened language and project an approximate value of positive or negative change. We classified our interactions with cities according to whether they received a form advocacy letter, those that received a tailored advocacy letter, and those that received a tailored letter and also participated in an in-person meeting with APAC staff.

- The average score of the original comprehensive plans among the 28 cities that submitted drafts and received our evaluations was approximately -0.07 points. The average score of the 2018 drafts of the same group of cities was approximately 1.0 points and the average change of these cities' language between originals and drafts was positive, at 1.07 points (Appendix 4).
- Cities that received our form letters with no meeting or tailored content demonstrated an average change of positive 1.13 points. The average score of the original comprehensive plans of this cohort of cities was approximately -0.53 points, with an average draft score of positive 0.6 points.
- Cities that received our tailored letters without meetings apparently improved the least between previous language and 2018 draft language. Cities receiving tailored content exhibited an average change value of positive 0.25 points. The average score of the previous comprehensive plans of this group was 1.0 point, with an average draft score of 1.25 points (Appendix 4).
- Cities receiving tailored content and holding a meeting with us exhibited an average change value of positive 1.3 points (Appendix 4). The average score of the previous comprehensive plans of this group was approximately 0.2, with an average draft score of 1.5 points.



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Although small, all three groups demonstrated positive change in 2018 draft language. Additional research could further explore what type of engagement between public officials and advocates translates into improved planning.

Overall, we observed improvements in city comprehensive planning language towards manufactured housing in the 2018 update process. While this is heartening, we also found that there exists substantial room to define and improve the tangible strategies cities use to engage with and support their manufactured housing communities, in addition to their goals and formal planning initiatives. APAC looks forward to continuing our engagement with these cities and Metropolitan Council to improve the wellbeing of all manufactured housing residents.

For more information, please visit our website:

<http://www.allparksallianceforchange.org/?q=promote-mh>

About All Parks Alliance for Change:

Based in St. Paul, All Parks Alliance for Change (APAC) is a nonprofit union for residents of Minnesota's manufactured home parks. APAC's mission is to serve as a vehicle to promote meaningful social change, to protect the legal rights of park residents, and to improve the quality of life in manufactured home parks. APAC works to promote the health, safety, and welfare of manufactured homeowners through community organizing, advocacy, housing preservation, and legislative advocacy. APAC is working to build a base around a shared vision of Mobile Justice:

- Affordable Housing
- Fair Treatment and Respect
- Accountable Park Owners
- Resident Participation in Decision Making
- Safety
- Solidarity
- Equality: No Racism or Discrimination
- Responsible Governance