

IOWA PLANNING



American Planning Association
Iowa Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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"The new lights have reduced overall electricity usage by 52%, saving over \$1,100 per ramp per month..."



Energy Efficiency Measures are Paying Off

Submitted by the City of Iowa City

Electricity usage at two of Iowa City's parking ramps dropped so significantly after energy-efficient LED lights were installed that Mid-American Energy wondered whether some of the City's equipment was malfunctioning. It wasn't. In fact, the savings were the result of a new lighting system that was functioning exactly as it was supposed to. Two of the City's parking ramps, Court Street and Tower Place, have now been retrofitted with LED lighting, which uses less electricity, thereby lowering energy costs. The new lights have reduced overall electricity usage by 52%, saving over \$1,100 per ramp per month, due to a combination of LED technology and motion detectors that power down and dim the lights by 80% when an area is unoccupied for more than five minutes.

Long-term, the LED lights will provide even more savings for the City because they're expected to last for 10 years, and call for one-third of the maintenance required by the old lighting fixtures. Three other City parking facilities – Capitol Street, Dubuque Street, and Chauncey Swan – are also slated to be retrofitted with LED lights.

Funds for the project came from a \$419,000 grant from the Iowa Office

of Energy Independence and are part of a City-wide effort to invest in and implement green sustainable practices. While the cost of the new LED lighting fixtures for the five ramps was nearly \$754,000, the expenditure was offset by the \$419,000 state grant as well as \$173,500 in rebates from MidAmerican Energy. By the time the projects are com-



pleted, it is estimated that the City will save approximately \$50,000 per year in lighting costs.

For more information, contact Assistant Transportation Planner Kristopher Ackerson, Kristopher.ackerson@iowa-city.org.



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President's Message

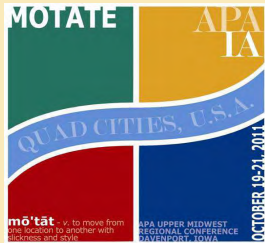
Greetings Iowa Planners!

Well, the rain has finally stopped and the warm weather and humidity has replaced it. So it is officially summer in Iowa! This also means that there are lots of APA Iowa activities that are coming up as noted in this newsletter:

Upper Midwest APA Conference – Matt Flynn, City of Davenport and Tim Huey, Scott County, Conference Co-Chairs along with their Conference Committee are hard at work on developing the program for this can't miss conference. Registration packets should be arriving in your inbox in mid-August and sponsorships are currently available. Help us show off Iowa to our neighboring states of Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota by attending and/or sponsoring this great event!

APA Iowa Awards – Award nominations are currently being accepted and will be awarded at the Upper Midwest APA Conference. There is no reason to be shy, please share your great projects by nominating them for a 2011 APA Iowa Award!

State Fair Photo Contest – APA Iowa is once again sponsoring the USA Places category at the 2011 Iowa State Fair Photography Salon. If you're not a photographer who'll be submitting your pictures, make sure to stop by the Agriculture Building to check out the photos!



First second and third prize photos from the 2010 Iowa State Fair Photography Salon

I am pleased to announce the addition of Amber Lynch as an At Large Representative to the APA Iowa Board. Amber is a City Planner in the Neighborhood Development Division at the City of Des Moines. Amber will be spearheading our efforts geared toward new professionals.

Finally and as always, if you have any comments, suggestions or questions about APA Iowa or would like to volunteer to assist the Chapter in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the APA Iowa Board.

Best wishes,

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“...HUD may need to develop a new model for benchmarking operating costs - one that considers a development’s unique characteristics”



Benchmarking Operating Costs of Housing for Elderly and Disabled

Previously Published in Research Works; December 2010

In 1990, Congress launched Project Rental Assistance Contracts (PRAC) as part of HUD's multifamily program. PRAC advances capital grants for non-profit developers to finance the construction and rehabilitation of housing for the elderly and disabled under the Section 202 and 811 programs, respectively. PRAC also supports these projects by paying landlords the difference between their tenants' rents and HUD-approved operating expense levels. Those operating costs, which are reexamined every 3

years, are estimated against benchmarks set by HUD.

However, a new study, *Section 202 and 811 Operating Costs Needs*, finds that HUD's benchmarks are sometimes out of sync with site-, property-, and regionally specific conditions. As a result, the study concludes that HUD may need to develop a new model for benchmarking operating costs — one that considers a development's unique characteristics.

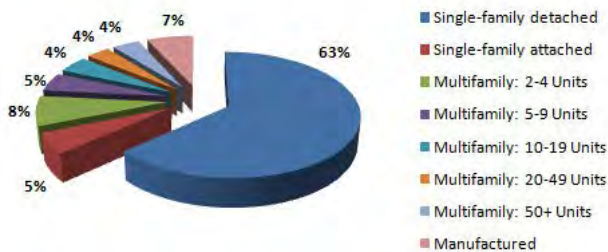
(Continued on Page 4)

Profiling U.S. Housing and Households

Previously Published in Research Works; October/November 2010

The American Housing Survey (AHS) updates the profile of the nation's housing stock and households biennially and in select metropolitan areas every 4 to 6 years. The AHS has surveyed a representative sample of renters and homeowners about their households, income, expenses, financing, housing characteristics and conditions, neighborhood quality, and the overall availability of affordable housing since 1973. Professionals use the survey findings for planning, decision making, market research, and program development.

Housing Stock in 2009 by Type (in thousands)



The 2009 survey results report that the nation's housing inventory now surpasses 130 million units. All but 14 percent are occupied. Most of the units (68.8%) are single-family structures; the rest are multifamily and manufactured homes. Single-family detached homes are the most common. The median size floor plan is 1,700 square feet, and the majority of homes have 4 to 6 rooms, 3 or more bedrooms, and at least one bathroom. Overall, U.S. housing is

relatively new — over one-half of American homes are less than 35 years old, but 7 percent have proven to be extremely durable, having been built in 1919 or earlier.

Condition. Most homes are in good condition, but not without problems. The most common deficiencies are interior cracks or holes in walls, broken plaster, peeling paint, holes in floors, and rooms without electrical outlets. Among the most severe physical problems experienced in homes are plumbing issues such as leaky pipes and backed up or overflowing fixtures. Exterior leakage problems most often involve roofs and basements.

(Continued on Page 5)

Benchmarking Operating Costs of Housing for Elderly and Disabled *(continued)*



Previously Published in Research Works; December 2010

Findings

In terms of overall aggregate spending, according to HUD social science analyst Brent D. Mast, the study found that PRAC costs did not deviate dramatically from HUD's benchmarks: HUD spends about 9 percent less than necessary on operating expenses for all Section 202 (elderly) housing and about 4 percent more than necessary for Section 811 projects, which house the disabled.

Nevertheless, at the project level, the study revealed many over- or underfunded developments. For instance, 9 percent of PRAC Section 202 projects are measured against benchmarks that are at least 20 percent lower than their actual, current operating expenses. At the same time, 33 percent of Section 202 projects' costs are estimated to be about 20 percent higher than they really are, meaning that these projects receive far too much funding. In such cases, Mast points out, people "spend what they get" regardless of their project's actual needs. Section 811 projects showed similar rates of under- and overfunding.

To find out what caused these inconsistencies, researcher Judy Weber visited 10 sites whose operating expenses were over or under HUD benchmarks. She looked at the projects' annual financial statements, interviewed their owners and staff, photographed their neighborhoods and sample units, and put together a budget for each project reflecting her investigations.

The fieldwork revealed numerous unique elements not accounted for by current benchmarks. These

include real estate taxes, which can vary from year to year and from place to place; whether projects are group homes or individual apartments; the number of units in each development; the extent to which volunteers take responsibility for basic maintenance; the degree to which owners rely on external contractors for maintenance and other work; and costs unique to the development's geographic area, particularly those on the outskirts of a major city.



For instance, the Prospect Street development in Boston, a Section 811 project, reports operating costs of \$745 per unit, rather than the \$607 benchmarked by HUD.

Fieldwork revealed that, because the development must hire contractors to perform maintenance, it incurs higher administrative costs. As a result, the analyst put the project's per-unit cost at \$723. By contrast, Boston's Marshfield Group Home was allotted \$581 per unit, compared with actual operating costs of only \$379 per unit. Fieldwork determined its



operating expenses to be \$362, in part because the development's 24-hour staff are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and often take responsibility for the administrative, operating, and other functions that are contracted out at a development like Prospect Street.

Mast says that although the study probably would not change the overall budget for PRAC, "to the extent that it helps us allocate our resources more efficiently, it could mean that for any given budget we might be able to target funds to where they're needed the most."

Profiling U.S. Housing and Households *(continued)*

Previously Published in Research Works; October/November 2010



Regional Median Monthly Housing Cost in 2009

Location. Three-fourths of the nation's housing is located within metropolitan areas; of these, 60 percent are in suburbia and 40 percent are in central cities. Regionally, the South has the largest percentage of residences (37.9%) and the Northeast has the smallest (17.9%).

Cost. Overall, households spend approximately 23 percent of their income on housing. Median monthly housing costs vary across regions (see graph) but generally require a higher proportion of household income for renters (31.3%) than for homeowners (21.7%). The actual median housing cost for renters (contract rent, property insurance, and utilities) is \$784 per month. For owners, the median monthly cost of \$1,051 includes mortgage payments, property insurance, real estate taxes, fees (association, condominium, or cooperative), park fees for manufactured homes, land rents, routine maintenance, and utilities.

Regional Median Monthly Housing Cost in 2009



Recession Impact. The recent dramatic rise in mortgage delinquencies and foreclosures and the concurrent economic recession have greatly affected households and their homes. The proportion of homeowners with underwater mortgages (that is, those

whose mortgage value exceeds their home value) increased to 16 percent of survey respondents in 2009 up 8.4 percentage points from 2007. In addition, 62.1 percent of homeowners thought their property value had dropped over this 2-year period. The housing market downturn and recession have also reduced the percentage of movers from 26.3 percent in 2007 to 24.3 percent in 2009. In 2009, approximately one-third of recent movers changed housing type, with 16.6 percent of renters stating that they were previously homeowners, up from 14.1 percent in 2007.

The Residents. The average household consists of 2.5 people. Seventeen percent of households have a member with a disability. Householders' median age is 48 (owners 52 and renters 39), with a median income of \$47,000. Eighty-six percent of householders have a high school education or more. One out of three homeowners has a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with only one of every five renters. Similarly, the median income of owners (\$60,000) exceeds that of renters (\$28,400).

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research and the Census Bureau both provide access to current and historical AHS data. In 2009, supplemental samples were added to provide metropolitan estimates for Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Northern New Jersey. Separate surveys of the New Orleans and Seattle metropolitan areas were also completed in 2009.

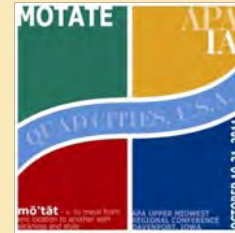
See [Housing in America: 2009 American Housing Survey Results](#) for more.

2011 Midwest Annual Planning Conference Update

Motate : Transportation and Mobility in the Green Era

October 19-21, 2011

The River Center in Davenport



Work is underway to put together a great Upper Midwest Annual Planning Conference this year in Davenport. In the tradition of the Quad Cities, planners from both sides of the Mississippi River are reviewing session proposals, picking menus, planning events and performing all the tasks necessary to put a great conference together. The three day conference, to be held on October 19-21, 2011 at The River Center in Davenport, will include orientation tours of the Quad Cities (or at least five or six of them!), workshops for law and ethics, numerous sessions following one of the three tracks of Sustainability: Community, Environment and Economy. Even though the title of the Conference is Motate: Transportation and Mobility in the Green Era; it will include sessions on a broad range of planning and land use issues. The Conference Program Committee is reviewing over forty session proposals submitted by both public and private sector planners and others with a story to tell to planners.

Two great keynote speakers have been invited. Christopher B. Leinberger, a land use strategist, teacher, developer, researcher and author, with the Brookings Institution in Washington DC has been invited to give his perspective on land use and development in the Green Era. On his website it states that Mr. Leinberger was voted one of the “Top 100 Urban Thinkers” of all time in a poll conducted by Planetizen, the international urban planning and architecture web site, in 2009. For 21 years, Mr. Leinberger was Managing Director and co-owner of RCLCO (formerly Robert Charles Lesser & Co.), the largest independent real estate advisory firm in the country that today works on over 600 projects a year for developers, corporations and municipalities. The other keynote speaker that has been invited is home town boy made good Chad Pregrackie, a Mississippi River advocate and environmentalist. Mr. Pregrackie founded Living Lands and Waters in 1998, a non-profit organizations dedicated to river clean up and forest restoration. As a teen ager, Chad started out pulling tires and trash out of the river with a single flat bottom boat. Over the course of more than 15 years that has grown into an army of followers that have taken over four million bounds of trash from America’s Rivers and loaded on to barges for proper disposal.

So please mark your calendars, look for your preliminary program and registration and plan to attend this year’s Upper Midwest Conference in the Quad Cities.

Looking for the newsletter changes mentioned in the May 2011 edition of Iowa Planning? They’re still coming! Keep your eyes open in upcoming newsletters!



2011 APA Iowa Awards Program Accepting Nominations

Award nominations are currently being accepted for the 2011 APA Iowa Awards. Awards will be presented at the Upper Midwest APA Conference and include thirteen awards under the following categories; Planning Excellence Awards, Planning Achievement Awards and Distinguished Leadership Awards. Submit your nominations by **Thursday, August 25, 2011**. For more information, visit the APA Iowa website at: <http://www.iowa-apa.org/> or contact Naomi Hamlett, AICP, City of West Des Moines.

1000 Friends of Iowa Now Accepting Nominations for the 2010 Best Development Awards

Submitted by Karen Howard, 1000 Friends of Iowa

1000 Friends of Iowa is now accepting nominations for the **2011 Best Development Awards**. 1000 Friends of Iowa established the **Best Development Awards** in 2001 to showcase development projects and programs in Iowa that best reflect the principles of smart growth and sustainability and to recognize the efforts of the businesses, developers, cities, organizations, and individuals that are responsible for these projects. The winners of Best Development Awards are models of how responsible development practices provide benefits to the community, the environment, and quality of life for future generations. Nominations must be received by August 1, 2011.

Awards are given in the following six categories:

- New Residential
- Renovated Residential
- New Commercial/Civic
- Renovated Commercial/Civic
- Mixed Use
- Leadership

1000 Friends of Iowa is a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1998 and based in Des Moines, Iowa. 1000 Friends of Iowa advocates for responsible land use in Iowa and supports efforts to conserve and protect our agricultural and natural resources, revitalize our neighborhoods, towns and cities, and improve the quality of life for future generations.

For information on how to submit a nomination, learn more about the Principles of Smart Growth, or find out about last year's Best Development winners, visit www.1000friendsofiowa.com.

For additional information please contact Karen Howard at Karen-howard@iowa-city.org or 319-356-5251.



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