



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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HUD FHEO to Conduct Title VII Compliance Review of City of Rockford

Rockford, IL – On Thursday, November 12, 2015, the City of Rockford received a letter from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) notifying the City that the FHEO will conduct a Title VII compliance review of the City. The letter further stated that the review is being conducted due to the actions taken by the City Council in regards to a proposed New Towne project by the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA).

The letter, which was addressed to Mayor Morrissey, addressed concerns identified by the FHEO that Rockford City Council, in their public discussions and actions as they relate to approving the plat for the New Towne project, may have violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and have may have inversely impacted the City's obligation to "affirmatively further fair housing".

The City of Rockford denies that it has violated the Fair Housing Act, the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulations, or the Civil Rights laws cited in the letter. The matter will proceed to the full Council on December 7th where Aldermen will continue the review process.

"My Administration will cooperate fully with the HUD investigation," stated Mayor Morrissey. "For several years now, the City has worked with HUD and the Rockford Housing Authority to identify impediments to fair housing and options to deconcentrate public and affordable housing. We have incorporated that work into our City's Consolidated Plan and Comprehensive Plan. My hope is that

we can move the Plat forward on the New Towne Drive development and apply the lessons we have learned through this process in the next phases of our efforts."

The New Towne Affordable Housing proposal involves is the first phase of a proposed three phase approach that HUD has approved for replacing approximately 200 Fairgrounds Valley Housing Development residential units. The second phase would involve scattered site developments across the region and phase three would involve rebuilding units on the site of the current Fairgrounds Valley Development. In total, the RHA has approximately 1000 units of outdated public housing that are anticipated to be rebuilt over the next several years through the Congressionally approved "RAD" conversion program.

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