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January 29, 2001

Mr. Rod Solomon
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy, Programs and Legislative Initiatives
Office of Public and Indian Housing
U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh St., SW, Room 4116
Washington, DC 20410

Subject: Concurrence with a two-year extension for Seattle's Moving to Work
Demonstration

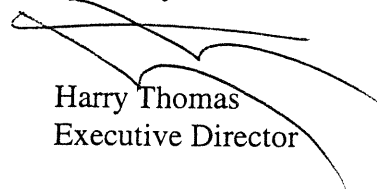
Attention: Mr. Steve Holmquist

Dear Mr. Solomon:

It is with great pleasure that I return an executed copy of the January 19, 2001 letter from Harold Lucas, Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Indian Housing, extending Seattle's Moving to Work Demonstration through September 30, 2006. I have countersigned the letter to confirm our agreement with this extension.

This extension acknowledges the significant time that must be allocated to properly include residents and stakeholders in the planning, implementation and testing of our Moving to Work initiatives. We are very appreciative of your continued support and partnership as we comprehensively pursue this important opportunity.

Sincerely,



Harry Thomas
Executive Director

Cc: Lynn Martin, Director, Washington State Office of Public Housing, HUD
Michelle Wood, Abt Associates



U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Washington, D.C. 20410-5000

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

January 19, 2001

Mr. Harry Thomas
Executive Director
Seattle Housing Authority
120 Sixth Avenue North
Seattle, Washington, 98109-5003

Re: Moving to Work (MTW) Agreement

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for your letter of August 22, 2000, concerning your request that HUD recognize the start-up time that was necessary for the Seattle Housing Authority to prepare for implementation of its MTW program. From the start of the MTW demonstration, SHA has had very ambitious goals for its program, which HUD fully supports. SHA's program is also one that promises to produce some important lessons both for HAP and HUD with respect to the streamlining and improved efficiency of the public housing and Section 8 voucher programs.


In your letter, and in the other discussions we have had on this matter, you have made a very strong case that it took a significant amount of time for SHA to adequately plan and prepare for implementation of its demonstration program. In particular, I understand that SHA has made great efforts to ensure that SHA staff, residents, and local stakeholders have had adequate time to fully understand the MTW opportunity, and to participate in the MTW planning process and to adjust to the MTW changes being tested. I fully agree with your statement that care must be taken to accommodate the capacity of these participants so that they can continue to participate in a meaningful way. I believe that this extra preparation will help to form the foundation for a successful program.

Due to these considerations, I believe that SHA has been delayed in implementing its MTW program. Therefore, I am extending the term of SHA's MTW Agreement with HUD through September 30, 2006. To indicate your agreement with this extension, please countersign it in the space provided below and return it to me. Good luck with your program. HUD looks forward to seeing the results.

Sincerely,



Harold Lucas
Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Indian Housing

Agreed: 
Harry Thomas

1/29/2001
Date



120 Sixth Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109-5003
Telephone: 206 615-3300 Fax: 206 615-3425
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*File
Seattle
agreement*

August 22, 2000

Mr. Rod Solomon
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy, Programs and Legislative Initiatives
Office of Public and Indian Housing
U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh St., SW, Room 4116
Washington, DC 20410

Subject: Extension of Seattle's Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration

Attention: Ms. Beth Cooper

Dear Mr. Solomon:

When the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) first considered participation in the MTW Demonstration Program, we foresaw this to be a very important opportunity to explore creative new approaches to delivering housing services to our clients. Now that we have been engaged in this effort for eighteen months, we are convinced that this Demonstration will be one of the most important experiments ever undertaken by our industry. We are also convinced that five years will not be enough time to fully develop, implement and adjust initiatives that we believe will provide valuable information to help guide the future of federal low-income housing programs.

We therefore request that our MTW demonstration period be extended to a full ten years. As you are aware, at least one other housing authority has been authorized to pursue their MTW program over a ten-year period.

Why is an extension needed for Seattle?

The scope of the Seattle Housing Authority's MTW Demonstration covers all aspects of the Authority's operation. To minimize disruption and client confusion, the Authority is intentionally pacing the pursuit of each MTW initiative. Staff, residents and local stakeholders require adequate time to fully understand the MTW opportunity, participate in the MTW planning process and to adjust to the MTW changes being tested. Care must be taken to accommodate the capacity of these participants so that they can continue to participate in a meaningful way.

As the full scope of SHA's MTW authority was not known until our MTW Agreement was finalized and executed, serious community-wide discussions on specific MTW activities did not begin until last year. In addition, as significant changes in federal law and in local

housing market conditions have occurred over the past year, pursuit of MTW activities has been complicated. Finally, although access to MTW technical assistance funding will greatly benefit our MTW efforts, the delay in providing these resources has limited the Authority's ability to proceed on several important MTW activities.

As noted above, one of the key aspects of the Authority's MTW process is our firm commitment to develop each MTW element in a thoughtful and inclusive manner. This involves detailed investigations to confirm problem areas, to identify viable options and to predict the impacts of the most promising new policies and/or procedures. This also involves the meaningful involvement of residents, applicants, staff, local officials, interested members of the public and consultants. Such a process takes time, but we believe the quality of the final product will be worth the effort. This process has resulted in the development of a new public housing rent policy that has been selected as one of fifty HUD Best Practice Award winners from the Office of Public and Indian Housing. A similar process has also produced a new public housing applicant choice policy. That effort was facilitated by Dr. Hubert Locke of the University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs and included the participation of the Seattle Office of Civil Rights. By bringing these entities into the policy development process, concerns about Fair Housing issues have been appropriately addressed. The Authority will approach several additional major policy issues utilizing similar inclusive policy development processes.

Despite the deliberate approach SHA has adopted to identify new ways of operating, we are fully aware that unforeseen circumstances can result in unexpected outcomes. Thus, a key part of our MTW approach is to monitor, analyze and adjust the changes we implement. It will take significant time after the policy or procedure has been implemented before the impacts of these changes are known. It will take further time to assess these impacts and make adjustments to correct the unforeseen problems that might have arisen. To properly pursue this process, MTW flexibility beyond the current five-year demonstration period will be required.

Why should an extension decision be made now?

Knowing in advance how long the MTW Demonstration period will be in effect will have profound impact on the quality of the initiatives that will be pursued by the Authority. Many of the Authority's MTW efforts involve creative partnerships with non-traditional local entities. These potential partners require assurance that the program flexibility now possible through MTW will remain in effect into the foreseeable future. Such initiatives are very important in Seattle as they are intended to creatively pool the resources of these participants to preserve threatened low-income housing and to expand new housing opportunities for very low-income households.

Several of these initiatives will require significant investment from the Authority to develop, implement and sustain. Such an allocation of SHA resources requires assurance that the program flexibility required to support these efforts remain in effect until the effectiveness of

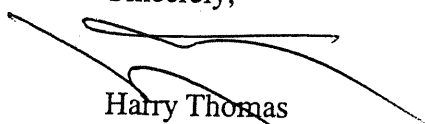
these initiatives can be properly tested. We do not wish to limit our creativity today, because we may not have enough time available to properly pursue our ideas. MTW is a unique and important opportunity that must not be wasted.

One important aspect of the Authority's MTW approach is to explore how program and funding flexibility can be combined with other SHA opportunities to achieve significant SHA and HUD objectives. The best example of this is how the Authority intends to combine HOPE VI redevelopment grant allocations, a Jobs Plus Demonstration Program designation and MTW flexibility to pursue creative new methods of providing both rental and assisted home-ownership opportunities to our clients. As several of these HOPE VI efforts will extend out over six or more years before completion, confirmation is needed now that MTW flexibility will be available throughout the redevelopment period to fully implement and test out our redevelopment plans.

The Authority appreciates the work of your office in supporting our efforts to maximize the potential of this unique opportunity. We believe that we have assembled one of the finest and most creative housing authority staffs in the country. We also enjoy a supportive community and elected officials that value the importance of quality low-income housing programs. Our HOPE VI and MTW efforts to date have received national acclaim. We are confident that our future MTW efforts will be as significant. We, however, do need assurance now that our authority to pursue these efforts will be sustained past just the next few years. It is now very clear that the current five-year demonstration period will not be adequate.

If you require further information on this request, please contact Ronald S. Atkielski, the Authority's Special Assistant to the Executive Director, at (206) 615-3555. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Harry Thomas
Executive Director

Cc: Lynn Martin, Director, Washington State Office of Public Housing, HUD
Michelle Wood, Abt Associates



City of Seattle

Paul Schell, Mayor

Office of the Mayor



August 22, 2000

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20410-4000

Attention: Rod Solomon, Deputy Assistant Secretary,
Office of Policy, Programs and Legislative Initiatives

Dear Secretary Cuomo:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Seattle Housing Authority's request to have its Moving to Work Demonstration Program extend to 10 years. The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) has consistently proven itself to be among the finest housing authorities in the country, as evidenced by several HOPE VI grants and authorization to participate in both the Jobs Plus and Moving to Work Demonstration Programs. All of these opportunities are helping Seattle collaborate with federal and local partners to tailor housing strategies to our particular priorities, and I think the results of our efforts have been spectacular.

With the active participation of stakeholders, the Authority's Moving to Work demonstration program is now beginning to take shape. This program provides SHA and the City with a unique opportunity to test new ways of addressing both old problems and also emerging challenges. For example, this program allows the housing authority to team with non-profit housing developers and the City to preserve threatened low-income housing units and to creatively develop new needed housing for the City. For this demonstration to be meaningful, adequate time will be needed to develop, implement, and test our new approaches. Therefore, it is critical that the demonstration period be extended to 10 years.

Thank you for considering the Seattle Housing Authority's request.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Schell".

Paul Schell

cc: Harry Thomas, Executive Director, Seattle Housing Authority



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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

August 22, 2000

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

ATTN: Rod Solomon, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Dear Secretary Cuomo:

I am writing to urge you to approve a request by the Seattle Housing Authority to extend its Moving To Work (MTW) demonstration program to a full ten years.

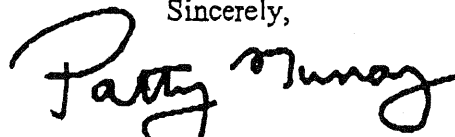
The Seattle Housing Authority has initiated an aggressive, community-driven process to improve housing services to low-income people through the MTW demonstration program. I am impressed with the progress the housing authority and diverse community organizations have made in the last 18 months. But I share the housing authority's concern the five-year process is not long enough to develop, implement, and modify current and future initiatives resulting from the MTW demonstration program.

The requested five-year extension would give the Seattle Housing Authority the ability to guide the demonstration program along its current path. Community stakeholders have invested tremendous time and energy in the process. Certainty about the demonstration program's ability to complete its work – and to have a top notch final product – is key to maintaining the community's active participation for current and future initiatives under the MTW program.

It is my understanding HUD granted a ten-year demonstration project to one housing authority. Given the Seattle Housing Authority's reputation as a high-performing agency, and its successful efforts in implementing its MTW demonstration program, I believe a five-year extension merits your support.

I urge you to work with the Seattle Housing Authority on this matter, and approve its request to extend its MTW demonstration program for five years. I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator

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