

Lots of poorly-housed in suburbs, survey says

By **TIM RICHARD**

Somewhere in southeast Michigan are 211,000 inadequately housed households.

Nearly 56 per cent are in Detroit, but Avon Township, Bloomfield Township, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Troy and West Bloomfield Township all have several hundred inadequately housed households apiece.

Details are in a "Housing Opportunity Plan" by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. The SEMCOG plan was approved June 16 by the executive committee, and Executive Director Michael Guscac has sent copies to the local governments.

SEMCOG's General Assembly, where every member of the voluntary planning agency has a vote, will take up the housing plan June 28.

It's not so much a SEMCOG plan,

said housing program manager Robert O. McMahon, as SEMCOG's compilation of local housing plans.

"HUD says each government must do a Housing Assistance Plan," McMahon explained. "The council of governments takes the numbers and does a Housing Opportunity Plan."

Only the 39 local governments in the seven-county region with populations of more than 25,000 are included. That eliminated Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Farmington, Lathrup Village and Rochester.

HERE, BY UNIT of government, is a breakdown of the inadequately housed households:

- Avon Township—466 total, including 28 owner-occupied and 567 renter-occupied. The plan sets a three-year goal of assisting 22 households.
- Bloomfield Township—321 total, including 297 owner-occupied and 114 renters. The goal is to assist 79 in three years.
- Farmington Hills—1,295 total, including 298 owner-occupied and 997 renter. The goal is to assist 311 by 1981.
- City of Southfield—1,572 total, including 197 owner-occupied and 1,475 renter. Goal: to assist 409.
- City of Troy—1,785 total, including 215 owner-occupied and 1,570 renter. Goal: to assist 295.
- West Bloomfield Township: 569 total, including 242 owner-occupied and 327 renter. Goal: to assist 141.

"THE DOCUMENT sets, as a three-year goal, the assistance of 43,000 households or approximately 20 per cent of the total need," the plan says.

"The distribution of housing assistance by housing type is regionally proposed for the three-year period to consist of 51 per cent new construction, 33 per cent rehabilitation and 16 per cent existing housing assistance payments."

Thus, among the elderly where low income is the problem, housing assistance payments would be the preferred method.

Where the structure (particularly the plumbing) is dilapidated, new construction or rehabilitation would be preferred.

WHAT MAKES a household inadequately housed?

The Housing Opportunity Plan states that owner-occupied housing is inadequate when it "a) is lacking some or all plumbing or is dilapidated with all plumbing facilities; and/or b) overcrowded, defined as 1.25-plus persons per room; and/or c) 30 years or older and valued at less than 70 per cent of the median value for the SMSA (tri-county area)."

Renter-occupied housing is inadequate when it "a) lacks some or all plumbing or is dilapidated with all plumbing facilities and/or b) overcrowded, defined as 1.25 plus persons per room and/or c) requires of the household the payment of 25 per cent or more of its annual income for rent."

THE PLAN lists criteria for SEMCOG to follow in judging communities' applications for federal assistance. Sample site selection objectives:

- "Residential sites should be chosen toward achieving a reduction in the concentration of low and moderate income households.
- "Residential sites should be chosen in areas of assured available public and private facilities and services adequate to serve the proposed housing development or redevelopment's households.
- "Residential sites should be chosen to provide for and enhance the more limited mobility of both the elderly and handicapped, where appropriate. . . ."
- "Priority shall be given to those sites which do not adversely impact fragile resource lands. . . or foster direct or indirect environmental degradation.
- "Priority shall be given to those sites which do not require substantial water, sewer, gas and/or electric utility service extension outside of existing fully-serviced areas.
- "Priority shall be given to those sites served by adequate public transportation.
- "Priority shall be given to those sites which, when fully developed, will not generate vehicular traffic in excess of impacted roadway capacity.
- "Priority shall be given to those sites linked to activity centers by way of public and/or private transportation."

Suburban housing starts still rising

After hitting a 15-year low in 1975, residential construction in southeast Michigan continued an upswing through 1977, according to a report released recently by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Oakland County showed nearly twice as many housing starts as second place Wayne County last year.

The 27,232 residential building permits recorded last year for the SEMCOG seven-county area was an increase of 38.7 per cent over the 19,642 recorded for 1976.

Housing starts reached a peak in 1971 when 43,855 permits were recorded. The low was 15,799 permits in 1975.

All seven counties recorded increases in residential construction activity, according to SEMCOG.

The top 10 communities in Southeast Michigan for residential units authorized, were Sterling Heights in Macomb County (2,070 permits); Canton Township in Wayne County (1,825); Southfield in Oakland County (1,602); Troy in Oakland County (1,327); Farmington Hills in Oakland County (1,317);

Livonia in Wayne County (1,133); Clinton Township in Macomb County (1,024); West Bloomfield Township in Oakland County (892); Avon Township in Oakland County (826); and Westland in Wayne County (653 permits).

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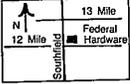
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