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### Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

August 11, 2015 – Reading, PA -The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires jurisdictions that receive federal Community Development Block Grants and other housing assistance to identify impediments to fair housing within, or affecting, their communities and to develop action plans to address those impediments.

As an entitlement city that receives funds annually from HUD, The City of Reading must certify that it affirmatively furthers fair housing by analyzing civil rights conditions in its housing programs and housing market; identifying impediments to fair housing choice; establishing an action plan to address the impediments; and maintaining records to document that the fair housing action plan is carried out.

HUD further requires the City to evaluate the effectiveness of its action plan, monitor changing fair housing conditions, and update its Analysis on a periodic basis. This Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI), which covers the period from 2014 through 2018 is a review of a jurisdiction's laws, regulations, and administrative policies, procedures, and practices affecting the location, availability, and accessibility of housing, as well as an assessment of conditions, both public and private, affecting fair housing choices. The report documented some notable successes and some areas where additional effort was needed.

**Highlights include the following findings:**

Berks County continues to experience high incidences of concentration of ethnic minorities with Blacks and Hispanics living primarily in the City of Reading. The number of Hispanics living in the boroughs and townships has shown an increase. However, the majority continues to live in the City. This is due to the higher cost of living outside of Reading and the lack of a sufficient supply of affordable housing in other parts of Berks County. As a result, a pattern of unintentional racial and ethnic segregation has emerged. This pattern is consistent with similar counties in which the central city has the lowest housing cost. While total population and the number of racial/ethnic minorities have increased, the overall patterns of segregation have remained relatively constant.

Additionally, the majority of public housing is concentrated in the City of Reading, thus severely limiting housing choice for low-moderate income persons. More than 90% of the total 1,819

public housing units in Berks County are located in Reading. Further, 65% of privately-owned, publicly assisted housing is located in Reading.

The demand for affordable housing remains high, particularly among extremely low income households. These households represent more than three quarters of all applicants on the waiting lists for public housing and Housing Choice vouchers.

Based on the conclusions developed from the research and interviews conducted for this analysis, strategies have been recommended to address these and other potential impediments to fair housing choices in the City of Reading. Through the strategies and planned initiatives listed throughout the document, the City of Reading hopes to eliminate the impediments' impact on fair housing choices.

The full text of the document is located on the City's website at <http://www.readingpa.gov/content/2014-2018-analysis-impediments>.

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