



Greater Ottawa County
United Way

MEDIA RELEASE

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United Way president speaks at statewide housing conferences

October 23, 2017 – On Monday, October 16, Greater Ottawa County United Way President Patrick Moran presented the development process and results of Ottawa Housing Next (now Housing Next) to the Networks Northwest Housing Summit in Traverse City. Networks Northwest delivers programs and services for the ten counties of Northwest Michigan and acts as the convening agency for the Regional Prosperity Initiative in these ten counties. Their work is focused on workforce development, business and economic development and community development.

The third annual Northwest Michigan Housing Summit was designed to discuss housing solutions and policies with key stakeholders from throughout the ten-county Northwest Michigan region. Speakers addressed issues including changes to the housing market, development trends, development readiness and policy barriers to new development. “The Housing Next presentation provided an important - and rare - model of the multi-sector collaboration that’s necessary to effectively address regional housing issues,” said Sarah Lucas, CEO of Networks Northwest. She continued, “Understanding the Housing Next experience will prove to be invaluable to our region as we move forward, and we’re so grateful that so many Northwest Michigan stakeholders had the opportunity to learn about this effort at the Summit.” Moran noted that attendees were enthusiastic about the Housing Next Model. “The group responded positively to the idea that the ecosystem [for more affordable housing] has to be in place before the work of creating housing begins,” Moran said.

Moran and Assistant Ottawa County Administrator Keith Van Beek presented to the Michigan Municipal League Annual Conference held in Holland in September. The Michigan Municipal League

is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities. There is a growing body of evidence that Michigan's housing stock does not sufficiently meet the type of living options demanded by the younger workforce or empty nesters. In many communities, housing for mixed income levels is in short supply. Moran shared how Ottawa County is addressing some of the barriers and challenges of developing more diverse housing stock in their community as part of their larger talent attraction and economic development strategy.

Moran represents United Way on the newly formed Housing Next leadership council. Housing Next is the collaborative second phase of a community response to the Ottawa County affordable housing crisis. For more information, visit www.ottawaunitedway.org/ottawa-housing-next.

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