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To: Members of the McHenry County Regional Planning Commission

From: Matthew Hansel, Deputy Director-Building Code Manager

Date: March 25, 2009

Re: LEAM Population Forecasting

At its March 12th meeting, the RPC requested additional information regarding the population forecasting methodology employed by the LEAM model.

The LEAM numbers are generated using regional model forecasting based on NIPC/CMAP regional data. Specifically, LEAM conducts an analysis of the NIPC/CMAP travel and economic development data sets. Those data sets are modeled at the regional level and then modeled to the individual counties.

First, LEAM models the NIPC/CMAP economic development data at the regional level. Through this modeling, the entire nine county geographical region is divided into cells (similar to how McHenry County is divided up into cells in the LEAM analysis). Each of these cells competes for the economic development. The cells compete based on attractiveness, proximity to development, proximity to transportation infrastructure, etc. Once the jobs and other economic factors are modeled, the population projections are created. LEAM formulates a projected population based on the number of jobs anticipated throughout the region. The population is then distributed to the counties based on the employment and other economic attractiveness.

Second, LEAM models the land use competitiveness throughout the region (similar to how the land use is modeled in our 16 LEAM runs). The NIPC/CMAP regional population is then distributed throughout the region based on the LEAM model parameters (proximity to existing development, availability of services, proximity to transportation, etc.). Once this is completed, there is a projected population assigned to each county.

Finally, LEAM analyzes these two sets of numbers and makes adjustments based on county specific factors (such as the availability of more accurate local data,

local land use considerations, etc.). Once that process is complete, a population projection is finalized.

In short, the LEAM numbers are based on available regional data from NIPC/CMAP and are also based, in part, on the NIPC/CMAP population projections, however the projection is tweaked through the modeling process and with local data input. McHenry County's own population forecast is a good example. In the initial 2005 LEAM model, McHenry County's population was projected to be in excess of 591,000 people. Once the model was refined with our local data and other factors, the LEAM model projected a County population of 521,000.

I will be at the March 26th meeting to answer any questions you might have.