

RRHA Strategic Plan

Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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RRHA providing Homeownership Opportunities for the Richmond Community

The RRHA Strategic Plan in action! The first goal of the strategic plan is “Revitalized residential and commercial communities.” RRHA has mapped out three objectives to accomplish this goal:

1. Create and improve quality affordable housing;
2. Develop mixed-use/mixed-income planned communities; and
3. Deconcentrate poverty.

One initiative of the plan is the development of the RRHA Workforce Housing Program, a way to bring affordable homeownership opportunities for RRHA residents and the Richmond community. Workforce Housing provides homeownership opportunities for residents with a consistent and reliable source of income.

Lee Householder, Interim Deputy Executive Director for Community Revitalization, explains that the Workforce Housing program is the umbrella for all of RRHA’s homeownership programs. “Residents of RRHA who qualify for homeownership will have the option of choosing from an inventory of houses owned or marketed by RRHA. Our goal is to have a variety of houses in different price categories, located in several neighborhoods, available to qualified residents.”

A major component of the Workforce Housing program is the Neighborhood Homeownership Project, which includes the sale of 130 leased-single-family public housing units and the construction of 20 green-built* single-family houses for eligible public housing families and others. RRHA believes that the Neighborhood Homeownership Project will have a positive impact on the City of Richmond. The sale of the 130 leased single-family public housing units can be described

as a “purchase-rehab” project. RRHA will be rehabilitating aging housing stock, which will sustain and in some cases revitalize neighborhoods. This type of project prevents houses from deteriorating, increases property values, and builds community confidence.



RRHA also plans to construct 20 green-built single-family houses to be used as lease/purchase public housing units. Through this project, RRHA will strengthen its reputation as an agency with a strong interest in sustainable development. The houses will be built in the Blackwell and Randolph neighborhoods of the City of Richmond, which will be enhanced through the addition of new homes and the reduction of vacant lots. In addition to these benefits to the neighborhoods, 20 resident families will be moving closer to self-sufficiency and homeownership.

The 130 purchase-rehab and 20 green-built homes will be constructed of low-maintenance, sustainable materials. EnergyStar-rated appliances and fixtures will reduce energy-related expenses, helping maintain the affordability of the homes by lowering operating costs.

Families participating in the Neighborhood Homeownership Project program are required to attend homeownership education courses provided by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) and, if necessary, they will receive credit counseling. These homes will be sold for their fair market value, as determined by comparable sales in the neighborhoods. To help families afford the houses, RRHA will apply for grant funds to assist homebuyers with closing costs and down payments, as well as provide a subsidy to maintain the affordability of the homes.

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Community Revitalization Announces Developer for Jackson Place site in Jackson Ward

-- The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) chose the unique partnership of a local non-profit developer and a large, national developer to bring renewed energy to Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood.

RRHA selected the partnership of Trammell Crow Residential (TCR) and the Richmond-based Better Housing Coalition (BHC) to develop its Jackson Place site. The site, which is over 5 acres in size, is located just west of North Third Street and south of interstate 95; in the Jackson Place Redevelopment area. The partnership, chosen after a careful review of proposals, will serve as the project's Master Developer and work closely with RRHA to bring retail merchants, mixed-income housing and parking to Jackson Place.

The redevelopment of Jackson Place has been identified by RRHA as a Phase I initiative of the Jackson Ward revitalization through the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Community Infrastructure which will promote opportunities for more affordable housing in the city. The Task Force is focusing on specific goals to include creating mixed-use zoning districts, creating a fund to assist low and middle-income residents, coordinating model community projects and developing an Affordable Dwelling Unit ordinance.

The partnership submitted a proposal that achieves the various RRHA objectives for the Jackson Place site. The development team has proposed the creation of affordable and market-rate housing, supportive retail and commercial space, and approximately 500 parking spaces. The mixed-income development will provide new homes in close proximity to

downtown.

This project could result in up to 240 residential units, which initially will be rental units. The plan also envisions that in the future, approximately 100 of the units could be converted into condominiums to create home ownership opportunities.



This selection commences a negotiation and planning phase between RRHA and the development partners which will result in the final agreement and design effort for the site. The planning process will include input from Jackson Ward residents and businesses, as well.

"Jackson Place will complement Richmond's growing downtown, the flourishing Virginia BioTechnology Research Park, the new Philip Morris Center for Research and Technology and the continued expansion of Virginia Commonwealth University and its nationally-acclaimed medical school. Jackson Place will provide much needed diversity in retail and

housing options in one of the city's historic communities. This is great news for Richmond," shared Anthony Scott, Executive Director for RRHA.



The partnership expects to break ground in early 2008 and have the project completed in late 2010. As Master Developer, the partnership will be responsible for planning, financing, designing and constructing Jackson Place. The partnership will also be responsible for recruiting commercial tenants and management operations.

Developers expect Jackson Place will contribute an additional \$602,000 each year to Richmond's property tax base and another \$580,000 each year to the city's sales tax revenues.



RRHA Providing Homeownership Opportunities... continued

The Workforce Housing Initiative, launched through RRHA's Neighborhood Homeownership Project, will have a positive social impact by increasing homeownership opportunities for first-time and low-and moderate-income homebuyers. Creating opportunities for families to become homeowners increases the number of stakeholders committed to the vitality of neighborhoods. This project will have a lasting economic impact because improving the existing housing stock and constructing houses on vacant land serves as a catalyst for further public and private investment and the creation of new jobs. Healthy neighborhoods spur commercial activity designed to serve neighborhood residents.

Desi Wynter, project manager, says, "The Workforce Housing Program, through the Neighborhood Homeownership Project, will offer quality affordable housing and housing opportunities while providing residents with a sound investment (equity), stable housing costs and tax benefits."

* Green building is the practice of increasing the efficiency in which buildings and their sites use and consume energy, water and materials while reducing building impacts on human health and the environment through better site development, design, construction, operation, maintenance and removal. ★

Help is at Hand



Have you ever worked on a project with other staff and you were not sure...

(Check all that apply)

- who should you work with
- who is in charge
- when does the project start
- when does it end
- who approves your work
- how you can improve your work
- how much does it cost
- how do you make changes/adjustments
- when are you successful
- when do you know you are behind schedule
- when do timelines seem reasonable/unreasonable
- when do you know the project is successful

If you have been unsure in any of the above categories then **Help is at Hand** for you. TPR has just published the **RRHA Guide to Project Management Feb. 2007**. The Guide is available to you in the Project Management Folder on the P Drive. TPR staff is also available for assistance

The main purpose of the **Guide** is a simple, easy to read document for use by project managers and other key staff for the development of a wide range of projects undertaken here at RRHA. It offers basic project management principles and tools that improve your work, your planning and management skills and the success of a project.

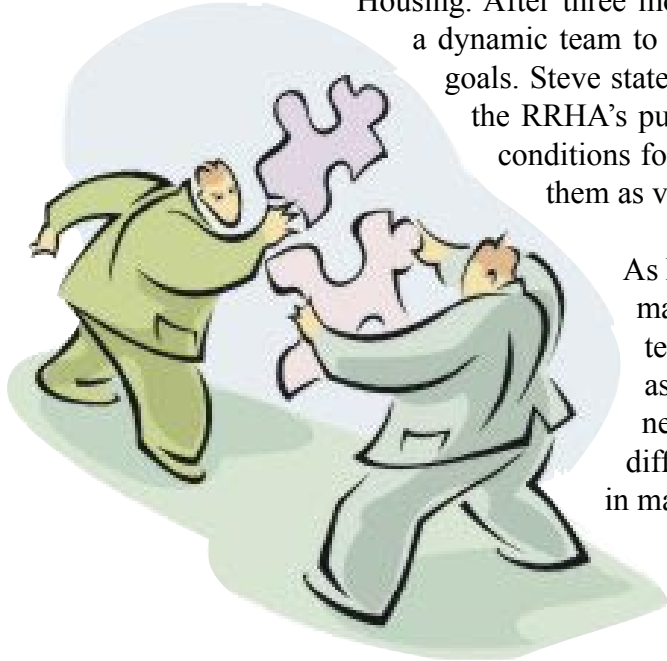
The **Guide** is a benefit to you because it describes project management methodology specifically suited for RRHA. Basically, it serves as a checklist of the minimum planning and management methods, tools, techniques and actions that are required for RRHA projects.

One of the most helpful and appealing procedures in the **Guide** is the Project Charter. It effectively establishes a solid foundation for the conduct of the project by defining the scope, goals, objectives, performance benchmarks and the preliminary resources and costs of the project. It requires commitment and approval at the executive level. The Charter gives clarity of purpose and the explicit authority to conduct and implement the project. It has the added benefit of establishing accountability and succinctly explaining the project to the rest of RRHA

The document is designed as a stand alone guide, however, staff is encouraged to enroll in a soon-to-be-launched companion training course - RRHA Project Training - through the RRHA University. Anthony Scott and the executive team strongly endorse the use of the **Guide**. Mr. Scott expects the **Guide** to set the minimum standards for project management in all of RRHA's initiatives. ★

TPR Interviews Steve Benham, New Interim Deputy Executive Director for Affordable Housing

Steve Benham has hit the ground running as the new Interim Deputy Executive Director for Affordable Housing. After three months in his new position Steve sees his position as part of a dynamic team to shape directions and plans for supporting RRHA's strategic goals. Steve states "As part of the RRHA team I see the necessity of keeping the RRHA's public housing communities well maintained and in operating conditions for its residents and management teams. RRHA must maintain them as valued real estate assets."



As RRHA continues to move toward full implementation of asset management Steve sees property managers and their management team as administering and operating housing communities as "profit centers" with added value. "The challenge of this new approach in property management will eventually call for different directions in management as well as evolving skill sets in managers."

Presently, three short term goals have been formulated by him and the Affordable Housing team to be accomplished in the next three months. They include:

- I. Improve REAC Scores.** The Affordable Housing Team has ongoing initiatives to improve all the scores under the REAC system: PHAS; MASS, PASS, RASS, and FASS and more. The Physical Assessment Sub-System (PASS) inspections are the focus for this quarter. The PASS inspection process is required to be completed by April 19. Every community has passed to date and we have improved scores on all but one.
- II. Staffing ---Fill 7 vacant positions.** A major challenge in providing quality management, service and maintenance has been the high number of vacancies in the Affordable Housing Division. A plan is in place to fill all of the vacancies in Central Maintenance, Housing Choice Voucher Program and Public Housing by the end of February.
- III. Customer Service in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.** Through a coordinated effort with the Accounts Payable Department, Steve and the HCVP team are looking at a range of options to insure timely payments. The goal is to create an environment of "reliable" customer relations and service to both participants and landlords in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The Affordable Housing Team hopes to set quarterly goals on a continuous basis---a process that keeps Steve Benham and staff focused and moving in RRHA's strategic direction. ★

New Targeted Grants Process Launched

Grants

With the decreasing levels of funding from government sources, particularly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the RRHA is exploring other venues and sources of funds for its priority goals and initiatives

listed in the Strategic Plan. The Technology Planning and Research (TPR) department in RRHA is launching a targeted initiative to identify and seek funds from sources such as philanthropic, private, operating, public, and corporate foundations and corporate direct giving programs

The Target Grants Process is built upon the new TPR policies on Grants Development and Management. The procedures include assessment and a feasibility study in pursuing specific grant opportunities. The study must make recommendations based on answers to the following questions:

- Does the proposed grant and funding sources fit with the priorities of the Strategic Plan?
- Does RRHA have the capacity to administer the grant?
- Does the grant application have the support of the executive director or the deputy executive directors?
- Can the grant program support itself after the initial grant has ended?
- Is the grant program self sustaining within RRHA?
- Does the grant planning and implementation process include dynamic partnerships with other organizations?

The emphasis of the Targeted Process is on qualifying for grants from a varied range of foundations. (The Foundation Center lists 87,500 foundations in their data base). RRHA will align its request with the foundations that comes closest to meeting its strategic priorities. A challenge for RRHA is its status as a government entity. Foundations usually fund only non profit organizations with an IRS 501c3 status. It is important for RRHA to have viable allied organizations such as the Richmond Development Corporation (RDC) and a reorganized or a similar organization to the Richmond Business and Employment Corporation (RBEDC). These organizations can serve RRHA's goals and take advantage of funding resources from foundations that are not available to RRHA as a government agency.

In the next six months TPR's grant targeting efforts will focus on funding support for self sufficiency and housing transition services for families. ★



Richmond **Redevelopment**
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