

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority engaged Wallace Roberts & Todd in January 2009 to study its twelve properties (eleven public housing sites and one vacant lot) with a view towards identifying rehabilitation and/or redevelopment opportunities. From the beginning, the Housing Authority envisioned this endeavor as one with a high level of engagement of Housing Authority residents and community stakeholders. Both the process and the final product had to provide the Housing Authority with scenarios that:

- Provides a financially sustainable future for the Authority
- Adheres to the provisions of the Resident Bill of Rights
- Provides, at the end of the redevelopment process, no fewer public housing units than are currently in its portfolio (376).

To the extent possible within these initial priorities, the Housing Authority sought a plan that:

- Expands affordable housing opportunities in Charlottesville
- Provides mixed-income communities and de-concentrates poverty
- Integrates public housing sites with surrounding neighborhoods
- Provides opportunities for mixed-use within public housing sites (or at the interface of public housing and surrounding neighborhoods)
- Provides opportunities for public housing residents to move from poverty to self-sufficiency through job training, education and economic opportunity
- Supports the goals and vision of the City of Charlottesville's Comprehensive Plan
- Identifies strategies for the design of environmentally sustainable and energy efficient developments

This plan is divided into six chapters:

- Chapter One—Existing Conditions
- Chapter Two—Defining the Market
- Chapter Three—Community Engagement
- Chapter Four—Analysis of Options
- Chapter Five—Multi-phase Development Plan
- Chapter Six—Next Steps

The Housing Authority, with the collaboration of WRT, crafted an open, public process that engaged residents and community stakeholders in developing the master plan recommendations. Meetings and interviews were held with residents and community stakeholders in May, June, July, and September 2009, with presentation of the draft plan in December 2009. These meetings and interviews yielded some common themes:

- Residents are apprehensive about the redevelopment process, particularly about relocation.
- Residents, in general, were not initially enthusiastic about increasing housing density on CRHA's sites, but would consider increases in density for a perceived benefit (such as more open space, more play areas, or better access to jobs or neighborhood retail and services).
- Residents, in general, see their housing sites as their neighborhood, and in many cases do not see them as belonging to the larger neighborhood. Many residents commented that this was a “two-way street”, and that they did not feel welcomed by their surrounding neighbors either.
- While residents generally say that they like their housing sites, the units are often criticized for being too small, with insufficient storage space, kitchen space and amenities.
- Several residents and social service providers said that CRHA needs to develop a comprehensive plan for the provision of social services on its sites. There is a perception that there is duplication of services in some areas, “gaps” in services in other areas, and little coordination between service providers.
- Many of the smaller sites (Michie Drive, Madison Avenue, Riverside Avenue) lack a community meeting room. This limits the on-site services that can be provided at these sites.

The consultant team also investigated the market for affordable housing in Charlottesville. Through research into prior studies, particularly the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's report of January 2007, and through on-the-ground research by our market analyst, we determined the deep need for more affordable housing in Charlottesville. Need exceeds current supply both in the City and in the surrounding five-county region.

From all of our meetings with residents and stakeholders, our investigation of the

sites, and with the assistance of our sub-consultants we have condensed the site development options preferred by residents and stakeholders into multi-phase rehabilitation and redevelopment options that accomplish the following:

- Maintain the number of public housing units in CRHA's portfolio at the current 376 units (while substantially rehabilitating or replacing all 376 units).
- Expand overall housing on CRHA's sites from 376 units to between 558 units and 720 units.
- Create mixed-income communities on the majority of CRHA's sites and expand the availability of affordable housing options in Charlottesville by creating between 130 and 197 new rental units for persons earning between 30% and 60% of area median income.
- Offer home-ownership opportunities to CRHA residents through the inclusion of 12 affordable for-sale houses for qualified buyers.
- Propose building new public housing units on open land first, thereby minimizing the reliance on temporary relocation vouchers. In the proposed multi-year development plan options no resident is envisioned to remain on a temporary relocation voucher for more than one project phase (assumed to be 1 year).
- Re-connect CRHA's public housing sites to their neighborhoods by means of new road connections at Westhaven, new pedestrian trail connections at South First Street, Madison, Sixth Street and Michie Drive, and a new entry pavilion at Crescent Halls.
- Offer opportunities for a mixed-use redevelopment to connect Westhaven to West Main Street and to support the City's Master Comprehensive Plan goals for Monticello Avenue by proposing mixed-use opportunities at 6th Street SE and a revitalized streetscape at Crescent Halls.

Chapter Five includes conceptual site plans for each of the existing CRHA sites that may be further refined as CRHA moves from master planning into implementation. The plan anticipates that final site layout may shift in response to conversations with adjacent owners, the success of off-site acquisition, or as additional parcels become available.

Chapter Six offers a set of opportunities and recommendations for next steps, including issues pertaining to CRHA policies; relocation; future unit mix; and the process of moving from a master plan into implementation.