



Strategic Plan

October 2009 – September 2014

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) was created by the City of Roanoke in 1949 under the provisions of the United States Housing Act of 1937, and operates under the direction of a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Roanoke City Council. RRHA is an independent, political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. RRHA currently owns and manages nearly 1,258 units of public housing and administers approximately 1,700 units of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.

In 2007, RRHA completed full conversion from a centralized business model to a decentralized asset management model for managing its properties. This conversion was prompted by regulatory changes adopted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 2005, HUD adopted regulatory amendments providing a new formula for distributing operating subsidy to public housing agencies and establishing requirements for public housing agencies with 250 or more housing units to convert to asset management by fiscal year 2011. For agencies that would lose operating subsidy funding under the new formula, HUD provided an opportunity to reduce the amount of the funding reduction through early conversion to the asset management model. RRHA would have lost \$1.2 million in operating subsidy per year under the new formula and, therefore, pursued early conversion. By September 2007, RRHA completed the conversion, which required a total restructuring of the organization and substantial changes in all operational areas. Property performance measures were instituted and reflect increasing accountability.

Additionally, RRHA was designated a Troubled Authority by HUD in 2006, a designation that required corrective actions throughout RRHA's operations. After successful completion of a Memorandum of Agreement and Corrective Action Plan with HUD, RRHA was notified that the Troubled Authority designation had been removed on October 29, 2008. RRHA's public housing program is currently designated as a Standard Performer by HUD and the Section 8 program has achieved High Performer designation.

Economic conditions locally reflect the national economic downturn and result in increasing pressures on localities and community service agencies to meet increasing service needs with reduced resources. The need for affordable housing and housing assistance programs continues to be high, creating both a challenge to identify adequate resources and an opportunity to explore innovative avenues for development. In addition, RRHA has several aging properties with substantial needs for physical improvements; consequently, capital improvement resources must be carefully prioritized.

RRHA's strengths as the organization moves into the future include capable leadership, financial solvency, and a number of strong partnerships with other community agencies. RRHA is an important contributor to community revitalization efforts, working in collaboration with the City of Roanoke and other organizations. Moreover, RRHA has achieved some success at supporting residents in moving toward self-sufficiency, including educational and career advancement as well as homeownership. The Housing Choice Voucher program has grown and now assists over 1,700 participating families to live in the housing of their choice throughout the local area. In addition, conversion to the asset management model has resulted in a clear focus on measures of property performance, providing a framework for evaluating the success of strategies implemented to improve housing operations.

As RRHA entered its 60th year, the organization's history, current challenges and strengths provided a timely backdrop for undertaking a comprehensive planning process to define RRHA's future direction. Thus, in January 2009, the RRHA Board of Commissioners initiated a process for developing a 5-year Strategic Plan.

Current members of the RRHA Board of Commissioners as of September 1, 2009:

- Daniel Karnes, Chair
- Gail Burruss, Vice-Chair
- Adam Boitnott
- Gilbert Butler
- Ed Garner
- Cheryl Miller
- Duane Smith

Process

The first step of the strategic planning process involved formation of a Strategic Planning Steering Group to coordinate plan development. The group was comprised of nine members:

- Daniel Karnes, Chair, RRHA Board of Commissioners
- Cheryl Miller, Commissioner
- Sarah Jones, Resident
- Glenda Edwards, Executive Director
- Catherine Wells, VP of Human Resources and Administration
- Earl Saunders, VP of Real Estate Management
- Jackie Austin, VP of Finance/CFO
- Roger Vest, VP of Real Estate Development
- Calvin Curry, Resident Relations Coordinator

The Steering Group adopted a planning timeline and created opportunities and tools for obtaining stakeholder input. In March and April of 2009, 17 community meetings were attended by 241 residents and participants in RRHA housing programs, community partners, neighborhood groups, and employees. These meetings provided opportunities for those attending to contribute ideas regarding how RRHA should best serve the community. In addition, 115 surveys were mailed to government agencies, elected officials, and residents of properties managed but not owned by RRHA. A total of 10 surveys were returned.

After information gathered from community meetings and surveys was compiled and distributed, the RRHA Board of Commissioners and Strategic Planning Steering Group participated in a strategic planning work session on May 8, 2009. The session was facilitated by E. Gordon DeMeritt, MBA, Ph.D. During the work session, Commissioners and Steering Group members engaged in brainstorming ideas regarding RRHA's vision, as well as developing and prioritizing goals, strategic directions, and key factors.

Additional information, including input from community meetings and surveys as well as notes from the strategic planning work session, will be made available on RRHA's website at www.rkehousing.org.

Following the work session, the Steering Group refined the strategic goals and began preparation of RRHA's draft strategic plan. After opportunities for review by the Board of Commissioners and stakeholders and additional revisions based on those reviews, the plan was finalized and adopted by the RRHA Board of Commissioners on September 28, 2009 with a projected implementation date of October 1, 2009.

Vision

It is the vision of RRHA to provide leadership and innovation that enable this organization to become a model redevelopment and housing authority.

Mission

It is the mission of RRHA, in partnership with community organizations, agencies and local governments:

- 1) to provide housing and homeownership opportunities for low and moderate income persons.
- 2) to take a leadership role in providing programs and resources for residents that promote and encourage self-sufficiency, self-esteem and self-determination.
- 3) to maintain a leadership role in fostering economic development and job opportunities.

Operating Values

We believe

- That public housing will be a desirable place to live
- That more can be done through meaningful partnerships
- That all citizens deserve opportunities to enhance their quality of life
- That neighborhoods benefit from social and economic diversity and must be revitalized
- That creativity and innovation lead to success
- That economic growth is essential for community prosperity
- That each employee has the power to make a meaningful contribution in the lives of our customers every day

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal # 1:

RRHA will lead the development of sustainable, high-quality, mixed-income, small-scale housing driven by the needs of the people to be served.

- Complete an assessment of unmet housing needs in the City of Roanoke during Year 1
- Achieve High Performer designation through HUD's PHAS and SEMAP evaluation systems by Year 5
- Seek additional Housing Choice Vouchers when made available by HUD

- Adhere to the neighborhood design concepts developed by the City of Roanoke in all residential development
- Attend to street appeal issues and enhancements to RRHA housing properties that develop a feeling and appearance of true communities
- Increase homeownership opportunities

Strategic Goal # 2:

RRHA will provide persons served opportunities for a better life and better community

- Complete an assessment of needs for training and supportive services related to self-sufficiency and youth development during Year 1
- Develop partnerships with, state, federal, and community services organizations to address service needs identified in assessment
- Foster and support development of active resident councils or advisory groups at every housing development operated by RRHA
- Pursue diverse funding streams to support development of innovative housing and supportive services designed to break generational cycles of poverty and foster self-sufficiency

Strategic Goal # 3:

RRHA will pursue opportunities to eliminate blight and to promote redevelopment of property for best use in the City of Roanoke

- Examine the redevelopment role of RRHA in conjunction with the City of Roanoke
- Undertake projects that meet RRHA's redevelopment criteria
- Lead efforts to promote adherence to neighborhood design concepts in residential development by other organizations
- Seek and consider citizen input in all development planning

Strategic Goal # 4:

RRHA will achieve long-term financial viability and embrace high standards of ethics, management, and accountability

- Implement measures to achieve performance standards at all properties or develop an alternate plan for disposition of non-performing properties
- Pursue legislative and public policy changes that support adequate funding and accountability for housing programs
- Achieve High Performer designation through HUD's PHAS and SEMAP evaluation systems
- Pursue diverse funding streams to strengthen RRHA's long-term financial viability and ability to achieve its strategic goals
- Manage human resources to enhance employee performance, resulting in improvements in RRHA's organizational performance
- Strengthen Section 3 program by increasing the number of contractors doing business with RRHA who employ persons of low income

Operational Plan

To achieve RRHA's strategic goals, RRHA must focus its operational energy and resources on actions aligned with the identified directions. Under the direction of the Executive Director, management priorities have been established to support accomplishment of the strategic goals and objectives:

- Service Development and Enhancement Strategies
- Real Estate Development and Redevelopment Strategies
- Management Improvement Strategies
- Workforce Development Strategies

Each division will identify initiatives associated with these management priorities which will be implemented toward achievement of strategic goals. The Executive Director will report quarterly to the Board of Commissioners regarding the status of implementation of these strategies as indicators of progress toward achievement of strategic goals.