

6.

NEXT STEPS

Chapter 6

Next Steps

This Master Plan is the beginning of what is hoped will be a multi-year redevelopment of CRHA's public housing sites. In order to prepare for the next steps there are several issues that CRHA will need to address going forward:

The Relocation Process

The redevelopment approach shown in Chapter Five follows the spirit of the Residents Bill of Rights as it pertains to relocation. When relocation vouchers are proposed to be used they are tracked on a separate line of the chart, with all relocation voucher tenants returning to permanent housing within one project phase (assumed to be one year duration or less). We have also strived to keep the 376 public housing unit count relatively stable throughout each phase (to the extent possible within the limits of demolition and phasing). To accomplish this we identified locations (at Levy Avenue and South First Street) where new units can be constructed before residents are relocated. But this approach has four drawbacks:

- It requires beginning with a relatively small phase of about 36 units (proposed to be on vacant land at Levy Avenue). Thirty-six units is possible, but at the small end of reasonable for a tax credit phase; it is expensive (on a per unit basis) as its transaction costs, procurement costs, and CRHA staff and Board time are not much different from a development of twice the size.
- It extends to almost a decade of small steps what could be accomplished in much less time if the phases became larger.
- This approach may result in more residents being relocated to new units on a different site, rather than ending up in the same neighborhood where they began.
- By trying to maximize the relocation of current residents in the new units, the plan does not anticipate being able to create mixed-income sites at all of CRHA's current housing sites.

The alternative involves using vouchers for relocating residents so that more units can be altered or demolished in a single phase. (60 units, more or less, is an ideal scale.) This is a standard approach to public housing revitalization.

Residents can be relocated to houses and apartments where landlords accept Housing Choice Vouchers, or to vacant units in other developments, and return when the new development is completed, or remain if they choose to remain where they are.

Partnering

Nearly all of the funding programs listed in the financial pro-forma in Chapter Five will require that CRHA team up with non-profit or for-profit developers in order to compete for funding. The HOPE VI program is highly competitive, and a good track record in development is needed in order to score well. We assume that HUD's 2010- successor to HOPE VI (tentatively called Choice Neighborhoods) will require similar experience, and may have special funding available to non-profit developers (who might otherwise compete with CRHA). An experienced partner can bring this added capacity. The LIHTC program administered by VHDA, also highly competitive, gives points for development experience.

Process

It is not too early for CHRA to map out the process it will undertake as it prepares to move towards implementation of the master plan. Some steps to consider:

- CRHA needs to continue to push to re-benchmark the Housing Choice Voucher program, with the goal of pushing its utilization rate over 90%. The ability to fully utilize vouchers will greatly improve flexibility in the relocation process, and may allow the Housing Authority to "project-base" a portion of its vouchers either on one of its own sites, or on an off-site parcel.
- Public review and comment on the plan – the master planning process as defined by CRHA has been open and transparent, with many constituencies, including residents, resident advocacy groups, social service providers, city agencies, UVA and other affordable housing providers engaged in the process. The next step will be to reach out to those constituencies that have not been fully engaged to date, including but not limited to neighbors and neighborhood organizations, clergy, and the local business community.
- Design, Permitting and Construction – we estimate that it may take 6 months for CRHA to seek all public approvals of the Master Plan, 3 months to select and finalize contracts with development partners, and 9 to 12 months of planning, designing, permitting and financing to get to financial closing and start construction.

Relocation (if using vouchers) could occur during this time frame. Depending on the direction taken for Phase 1, a construction period of 9 to 12 months may be anticipated.

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| Master Plan Completed | 1/15/10 |
| Community Review Complete | 6/25/10 |
| Select Development Partner | 9/15/10 |
| Plan/Design Phase 1 | 6/15/11 |
| Complete Phase 1 | 6/15/12 |
| Relocate Residents | 7/15/12 (3 months "float") |
| New School Year * | 9/15/12 |

*In discussions with Dr. Rosa Atkins of the City of Charlottesville Schools, emphasis was placed on the importance of settling children into new homes in advance of the opening of school in the Fall, with sufficient advance notice that the school budget and transportation plans can accommodate them.

Unit Mix

Based on preliminary investigations of CRHA's current waiting list and its list of over and under-housed residents, the consultant team sees a trend in the future toward a greater need for two bedroom units and a significantly lower demand for four and five-bedroom units. Redevelopment of CRHA's sites should reflect the reality of the need for smaller bedroom-count units in the mix.

Small Area Plans – Linking CRHA's sites

The Master Plan intentionally minimizes the need for land acquisition or off-site improvements that would complicate the process, extend the likely schedule, or increase the costs beyond those we believe are fundable. The individual sites are planned so that they can be redeveloped on their own by the Housing Authority and its developer partners within the stated time frame and as accounted for in the pro forma. The larger acquisition envisioned at Westhaven, with its off-site development and road connection, is an exception to this approach and represents a unique opportunity given Westhaven's location in the City. However, we should not rule out opportunities for the Housing Authority to partner with the city or private land owners to plan and develop more inter-related sites in conjunction with other CRHA properties.

This is particularly true for the housing parcels surrounding the Ix Building property, a huge development with tremendous potential. Connections to and through Ix from Crescent Halls and Sixth Street may be direct, and the Master Plan for Sixth Street, coming as it does in the middle period of the redevelopment cycles, allows for adjustments in both plan and program should a joint development prove feasible. Pedestrian connections from South First Street are less direct but no less important, as these sites may be linked with a greenway and revised road network that may also reach as far north as the Levy Avenue site, with the potential to carry that linkage all the way to the Mall.

This plan assumes that the un-roofed "ruin" portion of Ix will not be retained, opening the site for other development, including two new residential or mixed use buildings which, in concert with our proposed addition to Crescent Halls, redefine the edge of Monticello Avenue.

Note that the pattern includes mid or high rise buildings, matching Crescent Halls' alignment and scale, with lower-scaled retail spaces or lobbies or community rooms set closer to the Monticello sidewalk, mimicking our urbanizing approach to Crescent Halls.



Aerial of South 1st Street, 6th Street, Levy Avenue, Crescent Hall Sites.



The plan suggests a new pedestrian access to the Ix site, descending a monumental stair between the two new buildings. The 'red dot' marks a corner tower at the new parking deck (or parking lot), whose façade (or screen wall) may be a covered loggia extending to the main body of the retained Ix building, setting up a pedestrian access to Ix from Monticello to the main Ix court we've also proposed.

This new pedestrian access intersects two other important paths:

- one emerges from the courtyard at the center of the Sixth Street housing and extending towards the Ix Building,
- the other is a formal entry to the Ix Building from 6th Street to the new court we've proposed be carved out of the retained industrial building to make smaller more leasable spaces. New retail or housing can line this formal entry court, with a second "red dot" tower marking its intersection with 6th Street.

The path then extends southward, where new smaller scale elements and tree-scape create a new façade to the larger Ix Building structure, terminating at a new housing element on Cherry Avenue. On the opposite side of Cherry this same path continues, aligned with the existing Ware Street, where it then transitions to a park-like path and greenway, extending to the South First development and beyond to Jordan Park. Northward, the plan takes advantage of existing greenspace along the west side of 6th Street north of Monticello that currently belongs to PHA. Whether or not that land is further developed, it already acts as part of this extended greenway and it may be strengthened with some streetscape improvement. The Levy site can then act as a transition from the lower scale residential character of 6th Street, turning eastward on Garrett and climbing to a mixed use building at the corner of Garrett and Avon with a third 'red dot' element as this entire ensemble of sites is then in reach of connecting to the Downtown Mall.