



CEO of CHA. "Real estate and rental costs are [high]. Private industry is building lots of condominiums and apartments here, but they are for moderate- and upper-income people, not for low-income people at all."

1937, will also receive a reset, as all 201 units will receive substantial rehabilitation.

Using HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, CHA will undertake sweeping changes as the initiative is implemented. In addition to reimagining its current units, CHA will also add 800 to 1,000 new units.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGING LOGISTICS

At 275 Huger Street, CHA will replace 12 low-income units with 85 mixed-income apartments in a \$23.2 million mixed-income redevelopment that will more than triple the number of families served with a significant boost to the city's affordable housing stock. In a one-to-one replacement of the existing low-income units, 12 apartments will be reserved for families earning at or below 30 percent AMI. Of the building's remaining units, 22 will be market-rate apartments that will assist in stimulating revenue that will be invested back into the development in the future.

As the first property to undergo a large-scale transformation through the RAD conversion program, CHA's \$12 million Kiawah Homes rehabilitation will preserve and replace 61 units in a building originally constructed as defense worker housing in 1942. RECAP Real Estate Advisors, a Boston, Massachusetts-based advisor that specializes in the repositioning of affordable housing communities, will serve as the housing preservation consultant for the Kiawah Homes redevelopment.

"I like the idea of re-imagining some of our properties [as] what they could be from the standpoint of good, quality, decent housing for somebody to move into to raise their family in an environment where there's all sorts of different people," Cameron says. "You may be very low-income, but the family next door, above or below you may be a husband or wife and they both work. Maybe they have really good

Meeting Street Manor, the first affordable housing development constructed in the city of Charleston in

Rebuilding Healthier Communities

Coastal housing authority embarks on ambitious strategic plan to rehabilitate and reposition its entire affordable housing portfolio

Providing resources and assistance for more than 4,000 families, the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston (CHA) has created 1,407 public housing units and 1,110 units of workforce housing and has administered 1,592 housing vouchers to house just about 10 percent of the Charleston, South Carolina, population.

Although it's a smaller coastal town, Charleston's widespread appeal as a vacation destination has contributed to a recent population surge that has brought many former visitors to the area permanently. As the Charleston real estate market responds to this growth and construction costs continue to rise, CHA will set out on an aggressive strategic initiative to rehabilitate and reposition all of the affordable units in its portfolio and address the city's shortage of affordable and workforce housing.

"The tourism has attracted people who say, 'This is a really pretty place; I want to live here,' and they do," says Donald Cameron,



The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston

CEO :: Donald Cameron | Location :: Charleston, South Carolina

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jobs or they're starting out in life together. That makes us healthy. Going on the playground and playing with kids who aren't just like you is healthy. Hopefully, in a very gentle way, people will be encouraged to want more out of life."

As CHA works to convert and preserve the remaining affordable housing units in its portfolio, one of the biggest challenges has been coordinating the logistics of construction while vacating as few units as possible. Residents living in developments that will undergo large-scale rehabilitations will stay in their homes when possible and move directly into their new units as they are completed. For the residents in the developments that will be demolished and repositioned, CHA has taken on the responsibility of creating temporary housing at other properties in the housing authority's portfolio.

"Because we live in a community where real estate prices, whether it's homeownership or rental, are sky high, our clientele is really challenged to find places to live while construction is going on," says

Cameron. "Then it becomes our responsibility to figure it out. We're trying to use some of our other public housing assets as temporary housing, but then also on the rehabs, we are trying to vacate as few as possible but enough so that contractors have enough mass to work on. As they complete a building, we're going to move people so that we only move a small number off site."

Helping to navigate the complex structures of RAD conversions is locally owned and operated real estate property management company Asset Management Consulting Services, Inc. The company has served as a key asset management partner for the housing authority.

COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING

In an effort to foster independence, economic advancement and self-sufficiency for its residents, CHA has created programming, forged meaningful community partnerships and jumpstarted initiatives with the goal of enhancing access for all of its residents.

For the heads of household, the gamut of programming provided includes counseling and nutrition services for health and wellness, while children are given the opportunity to participate in tutoring sessions with cadets from the Military College of South Carolina.

"Our client or customer is everybody in the household," Cameron says. "It's not just the person who signs the lease and is responsible for the rent. It's from the elderly person to very young children. We try to provide opportunity for every age level."

This philosophy is one that Cameron has carried with him for his 50-year career in government service. After 46 years with the housing authority, Cameron is retiring this December, leaving behind a legacy of affordable housing transformation and opportunity. 📧



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