

VISION 2035

On December 18, 1934, The Charleston City Council certified, by ordinance, the need for the creation of The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston (CHA) for the protection of health, morals, general welfare, and safety of the residents of Charleston. While strides were subsequently taken by CHA to assist in the eradication of the urban blight that existed at that time, a need for the presence of CHA still exists today. As CHA celebrates its 75th anniversary, it is important for us to look not only retrospectively at our many accomplishments, but also prospectively towards the challenges and opportunities in the future, they being to better serve the housing needs of the citizens of Charleston.

In conjunction with the City's annexation efforts which began in 1968, CHA simultaneously began to expand our reach outside of the peninsula to the outlying and newly-annexed areas of West Ashley, Johns Island, James Island, and most recently, Daniel Island. Our intentions are, and will continue to be, the exploration of communities not yet touched by our hope to one day see to it that the lack of affordable housing becomes a thing of the past.

In the current economic climate in which we live, CHA has come to realize that we cannot always be expected to reach our intended goals without the assistance of others. Varied and assorted partnerships will undoubtedly be vital to reaching our goals, with those involving private organizations becoming a thing of the future. It is our expectation that partnerships such as these will, at least in-part, help to bridge the gap for some from all-out reliance to self-sufficiency and from public housing to workforce housing or homeownership.

Prior to the establishment of such partnerships, those in which the other parties would be committed to providing support services to our clientele, CHA must first determine what support services are actually needed. In the coming years, this determination will become less reactionary and more visionary so that problems can be addressed more expeditiously. Whether they pertain to mental health, employment, drug and alcohol dependency, or the plethora of other issues that may arise or that may instead be directed to a specific segment of the population (e.g., military veterans, the elderly, etc.), anticipating the need in advance is key.

Assisting in the development of current employees who share our same vision so that they remain at CHA on a long-term basis and are eventually able to fill staff positions left open by middle and upper-level management employees who transition out of the Agency is a must for our continued success over the course of the next 25 years, and beyond. The hiring of individuals from outside of the Agency, while potentially necessary on occasions, should be a secondary option to first promoting from within.

Those within the Agency interested in advancement must be properly groomed if they are to be expected to have the baton of leadership passed on to them once the opportunity presents itself. We recognize such grooming as being a three-step process involving on-the-job training, educational opportunities from outside of the Agency, and most importantly, an assurance that employees are made well aware of their overall value to the Agency. Instilling a sense of self-worth, while soliciting the opinions of those at all levels of employment, will work wonders in improving morale and helping to stabilize the work force which is so important to making asset management a success. Every employee will be made to understand their value to the Agency and in doing so will experience the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

While CHA has, since the early 1980's, diversified itself in varied and assorted ventures, our public housing sites and the 1,399 families we serve remain the primary focus of our day-to-day operations.

This is not only because they comprise the vast majority of our resources, but also because they represent that which, to the general public, is what CHA is all about. It is with this in mind that we will continue to see to it that these sites are properly maintained not only with respect to routine upkeep, but exterior “curb appeal” as well. This will be done by way of vigorous maintenance and management practices, as well as resident participation initiatives which we see as stepping stones to cultivating a sense of pride in their surroundings by the residents of public housing.

Our increased efforts as of late with respect to public relations and seeing to it that we always put our best foot forward in the television and print media will continue. Furthermore, our efforts will be stepped up whenever necessary in order to make the general public even more so aware of those issues that we are most proud of and that we feel deserve public attention.

To play our part in helping to ensure that our planet continues to exist for many years to come, the conscious decision for our Agency to go “green” is essential. This new wave of technology, which incorporates innovative methods for saving energy, simultaneously keeps our environment safe. The positive affects of going green are not always immediate. In many cases, they are not and will not be recognized for many years. Nevertheless, establishing a sustainable environment now will help to ensure the existence of a livable environment for generations to come.

While CHA has only just begun its experimentation with green technology, all indicators point to it becoming more the rule than the exception for future modernization projects. While such projects will undoubtedly have a positive effect on the environment, they will also help to reduce utility costs incurred by those who will eventually occupy newly-renovated units.

It is imperative that we at CHA continue to take control of our financial destiny in every way possible. Our intentions are to be aggressive as well as creative in order to combat funding which appears to lessen at every turn. We will explore new funding sources, whether they be public, private, or non-profit, in order to further decrease our dependency upon federal dollars. Our Agency serves a local public purpose, which we refuse to allow to fall by the wayside as a result of diminishing funding which is sometimes swayed by the political climate present at any given time. We see a determination to get things done, with new and innovative ways of doing so, as being the means by which our Agency will continue to operate not just on the basis of status-quo, but well beyond – always moving forward, ever advancing, abhorring complacency!

It is our intention to continue to strive to provide safe, efficient, and affordable housing to those in need. By the same token, through the use of the support services previously mentioned, it is our hope that residents will become more inclined to move onward and become self-sufficient, in lieu of public housing becoming a generational setting for their respective families. We recognize that this desire to move onward and upward must be instilled in the children of public housing, as well as the adults. Educating each individual tenant, as well as the public at-large, as to CHA’s motivation and desires, will help to make everyone better understand the goals we are attempting to attain.

The preceding VISION 2035 was approved at the regular Board meeting on April 27, 2010, to be published on the CHA birthday, May 5, 2010.

In Witness,

Henry M. Williams
Chairman
Board of Commissioners