

2012 - 2017 Strategic Plan



Mission
Vision
Partnership

“The MPHA Strategic Plan provides a road map for the future. It is not prescriptive but clarifies the agency’s mission, establishes its core values, sets the agenda, and adopts strategic directions that should ensure the longevity and health of the agency, as well as promote the delivery of high quality services to its customers.”

F. Clayton Tyler, Chair, MPHA Board of Commissioners

**Minneapolis Public Housing Authority
2012 -2017 Strategic Plan**



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Acknowledgements

This 2012 - 2017 Strategic Plan documents MPHA's: 1) commitment to providing high quality housing services to as many people and families as possible and 2) proactive approach to addressing issues and challenges the agency will face over the next five years.

The audience for this strategic plan is: a) MPHA Board of Commissioners, who govern the agency; b) MPHA staff, who deliver services; c) public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher participants who receive services; d) other entities with whom MPHA will partner to broaden the scope of housing development opportunities and help enrich the lives of residents; and e) the Minneapolis community at-large who is MPHA's neighbor. Because the plan bears on each of these groups, it was felt each should be given opportunities to contribute to the plan's development. As a result, the plan was eight months in the making, with considerable time devoted to inclusion and consensus building around initial assumptions, ideas and points of view, strategic directions, and eventually language.

The MPHA Board of Commissioners and Executive Director are grateful to **you**, the many individuals and stakeholder groups whose hard work made this plan possible.

The plan is truly a reflection of your interest in and commitment to the provision of clean, safe, affordable, and high quality housing for all people in the Minneapolis Community. Your efforts and contributions are appreciated.

Special debts of gratitude are owed to:

Strategic Plan Steering Committee:

- Mary Abrahamson, MPHA Policy and Special Initiatives Staff
- Michael Anderson, MPHA Facilities and Development Staff
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Focus Group Meeting Participants from the following:

- 314 Hennepin Highrise
- Cedar Riverside Highrise
- Glendale Family Housing
- Scattered Site Residents



Preamble

Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) has adopted a five year Strategic Plan for 2012 to 2017 that documents strategic directions and goals that support the agency's Mission and Vision, promotes the agency's Values, and positions the agency to respond to affordable housing needs in the Minneapolis community.



“Minneapolis Public Housing Authority has a reputation for bold and innovative leadership in performing its mission – providing affordable housing to some of Minneapolis’ poorest and most vulnerable citizens. I am confident that

the Strategic Plan, which was developed in partnership with hundreds of community members and stakeholders, will guide MPHA’s work in addressing the changing housing needs of our community over the next several years.”

Minneapolis Mayor, R.T. Rybak

Moving To Work

MPHA is one of 34 public housing authorities (PHAs) in the nation selected to participate in the Moving To Work (MTW) program.

MTW is a demonstration program enacted by Congress in 1996 that provides PHAs opportunities to develop and test innovative, locally-designed strategies that use Federal dollars more efficiently, promote self sufficiency for families with children, and increase housing choices for low-income families.

MTW allows PHAs to waive most rules and regulations regarding public housing and Section 8 programs and grants agencies more flexibility with how they use their Federal funds. MTW PHAs are expected to use the opportunities presented by MTW to inform HUD about ways to better address local community needs.



MPHA will utilize its Moving to Work (MTW) Authority, rely on improved technological systems and sustainable practices, and enhance its communications strategies to maximize its capacity and ability to fulfill its Mission, realize its Vision, and reach goals identified in the Strategic Plan.

As examples, MPHA has used its MTW Authority to:

- Streamline the Public Housing recertification process, thus saving time and money for the agency and time for residents.
- Develop innovative, project-based housing programs, enabling the agency to provide additional affordable housing in the community.
- Maximize its funding flexibility to increase capital funds and improve MPHA’s housing stock.



Executive Summary

Minneapolis Public Housing Authority's (MPHA) second strategic plan has been prepared to position the Agency to take advantage of opportunities it may encounter over the next five years while addressing the serious challenges it expects to face (largely financial) over the same period. It sets the stage for continuing the successes achieved by the Agency as we move into an uncertain future.

MPHA is one among a small percentage of "Moving To Work" (MTW) public housing authorities in the nation. MTW allows public housing authorities to exercise flexibility over how and where their funding from HUD will be spent. It also permits MPHA to waive various rules and regulations in order to make choices about how programs and services are delivered enabling the Agency to respond to specific affordable housing needs in our community.

MTW does not increase federal appropriations, but it does allow public housing authorities greater control in deciding how to use them. With the Agency facing funding shortages, which are expected to continue far into the foreseeable future, MPHA's MTW designation provides a powerful tool that can be used to support its mission.

Over the next five years, MPHA is committed to responding proactively and strategically in determining its priorities and actions, including when and how to exert its MTW flexibility. MPHA's decision to take the more 'proactive' approach is not new. Since 1991, when it became an independent agency, MPHA has boldly taken calculated risks, engaged the community, and structured its decisions and actions to take maximum advantage of available opportunities to better serve its residents and program participants as well as contribute to the critical housing needs of some of the most vulnerable in our community.

The work that went into the development of our Strategic Plan was thorough and comprehensive. The planning process included outreach meetings where input was gathered from our Board of Commissioners, the Agency's Executive Administration, other MPHA staff, public housing residents, and their leadership. MPHA also garnered contributions from Housing Choice Voucher participants, the Resident Advisory Board, public officials, and key community stakeholders including: Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, local housing developers, social service providers, and the city's neighborhood organizations.

It is with a great sense of pride, respect, and appreciation for the work of all those who contributed to this important and significant process that I present the 2012 – 2017 MPHA Strategic Plan. I invite you to read this document and share your thoughts ... and thank you for supporting the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.




Cora McCorvey
Executive Director/CEO

1.0 Introduction

Celebrating Our Twenty-Year History

The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) has just celebrated its 20th Anniversary as an independent agency. In recognition of this milestone, MPHA adopted a theme “20 Years of Firsts: Expanding Horizons - Exceeding Expectations – Achieving Excellence” and identified significant accomplishments for each of its twenty years.

MPHA moved from a housing authority at risk of being labeled “troubled” to a United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) designated “High Performer” agency for both its Public Housing and Section 8 programs. Today the agency is nationally renowned for its calculated risk-taking and developing and implementing innovative approaches to providing subsidized and affordable housing... including reaching some of the most vulnerable members of the community, increasing the supply of affordable housing units, and developing a national model for addressing the housing and service needs of senior citizens.



MPHA - 20 YEARS OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1. 1991** MPHA’s separation from the City of Minneapolis and a new agency is born.
- 2. 1992** Signe Burckhardt Manor opens with city’s first public housing assisted living program.
- 3. 1993** MPHA Board approves seniors housing plan.
- 4. 1994** MPHA implements the Self-Help Program – a pilot resident employment program.
- 5. 1995** \$100 million+ Hollman vs. Cisneros lawsuit settlement is reached through Consent Decree.
- 6. 1996** The National Association of Housing & Redevelopment officials presented the agency with three awards for its special programs: The Enforcement Team, Project Lookout and Project C.A.R.E.
- 7. 1997** HUD designates MPHA as ‘High Performer’ with performance score of 96 points out of 100.
- 8. 1998** Section 8 Homeownership Program, Moving Home was introduced.
- 9. 1999** MPHA received awards for MHOP and Energy Management
- 10. 2000** MPHA adopts first-ever Annual Agency Plan and also its first Strategic Plan
- 11. 2001** MPHA initiates first website.
- 12. 2002** The first units in Heritage Park were occupied.
- 13. 2003** MPHA received 400 DVD vouchers and instituted a comprehensive project base initiative.
- 14. 2003** MPHA submitted and successfully obtained a HOPE VI Grant for the replacement of the Bryant high-rise with a new, state-of-the-art senior’s facility with assisted living.
- 15. 2004** MPHA begins to celebrate National Customer Service Week as part of its commitment to continue providing exceptional customer service.
- 16. 2005** Heritage Commons at Pond’s Edge, a 102-unit senior public housing development funded by HOPE VI completed construction in December 2005.
- 17. 2006** Project Lookout celebrated 20 years.

Strategic Planning for Our Future

MPHA is now poised to begin a new phase in its growth and development, and this 2012 - 2017 Strategic Plan has been crafted to capture the spirit of our resolve and provide **overall direction** and **specific guide posts** the agency will follow as we face the next five years' uncertainties. The horizon for this plan is 2017, but the plan's reach extends beyond that and will position the agency for what could be an even more daunting future for public housing agencies across the nation.

It is anticipated that the economic downturn America is currently facing could very well be a determining factor in future HUD allocations and, by extension, local housing authority operations and programs. We at MPHA understand the severity of the times, both for today and the days that lie ahead. At many levels, business as usual will not be enough to ensure completion of our mission and realization of our vision.

For this reason, a hallmark of our plan is Our Strategic Focus, which cites "sustainability and innovation" as the basis for decision-making that will affect the agency, its staff, its assets, its programs, its residents, and the neighborhoods in which we operate.

MPHA 20 YEARS OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 18. 2007** Section 8 Program received HUD's 'High Performer' designation through the SEMAP audit.
- 19. 2007** MPHA contract with Honeywell International in an Energy Performance Contract (EPC)
- 20. 2008** MPHA moved to follow HUD's requirement to convert to an asset management system and restructured MPHA's operations into 9 AMPs. MPHA's timely decision to convert to Asset Management enabled the agency to 'Stop Loss' and retain subsidy that it was targeted to lose.
- 21. 2009** MPHA awarded \$18 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act capital fund formula grant funding to devote to comprehensive housing rehab construction work throughout the city.
 - a. June 2009 – MPHA hosted an ARRA 'Shovel Ready' event at the Cedars. Secretary Shaun Donovan attended.
 - b. September 2009 - MPHA awarded \$31.8 million in ARRA capital fund recovery competition funds for three major initiatives.
 - c. October 2010 – MPHA broke ground for its Heritage Park Senior Services center and Thomas T. Feeney Memory Care facility and hosted an ARRA completion ceremony at the Cedars.
- 22. 2010** In May MPHA and Honeywell hosted an Energy Fair at 828 Spring Street for employees and residents.
- 23. 2011** MPHA celebrates 20th Anniversary as an independent agency.

Our Strategic Focus on Sustainability and Innovation

1. Property and capital management to ensure preservation and growth of MPHA's assets
2. Policy and program formulation that will enable MPHA to continue to provide safe and affordable housing
3. Partnerships to contribute to the health and well-being of residents and participants and the livability of Minneapolis neighborhoods

Sustainability and Innovation

Sustainability is the capacity to endure and speaks to the long-term maintenance of the agency's organizational and economic health and its commitment to meeting the immediate and future housing needs of low-income Minneapolis residents. MPHA will continue to deliver high quality housing products to its customers. Doing so in a sustainable manner will require the agency to ensure its resources are managed responsibly; participate in the development of housing policy; implement new green technologies to improve effectiveness, enhance economic and time efficiencies; reduce consumption and waste; and develop strategic partnerships with other agencies.

Innovation is a catalyst to positive and productive growth and, in order to be an innovation, an idea must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need. Innovation involves the deliberate application of information, imagination, and initiative in deriving greater value and enhanced efficiencies from resources.

MPHA will strive to create an environment where new ideas and new approaches to solving problems can be discussed, tested, and, if successful, implemented.

Strategic Planning Process

The process to develop the MPHA 2012 - 2017 Strategic Plan began in March 2011. The plan was adopted by the MPHA Board of Commissioners in February 2012. The plan documents strategic directions the agency will follow and goals it will achieve over the next five-year period. The strategic planning process was designed to ensure:

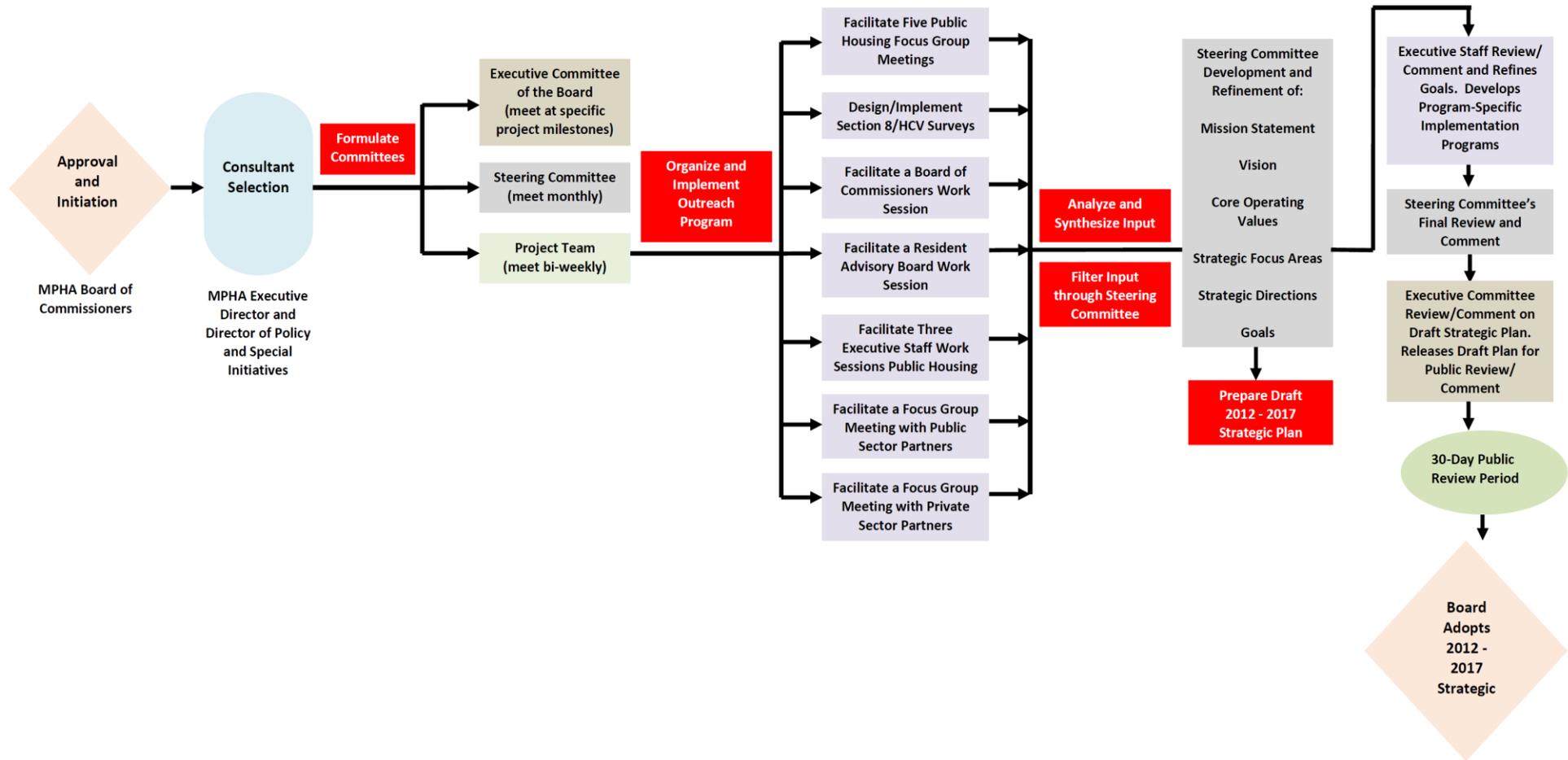
- Participation and involvement from a wide range of stakeholder groups and individuals; including:
 - Board of Commissioners
 - Executive Director and staff from the agency's Office of Policy and Special Initiatives
 - Executive Staff
 - Public housing residents
 - Section 8/HCV participants
 - Public and private sector partners
- Feedback and consensus building through an iterative process
- Public review and comment before adoption of the plan

As illustrated in the planning process diagram on the next page, the strategic planning process has been a time for listening to and garnering input from those who utilize our services, partner with us in providing new and innovative housing opportunities and resident enrichment

activities, and support our efforts to provide safe and affordable housing to the Minneapolis Community. Our Steering Committee, with representatives from each of the stakeholder groups (including the Board of Commissioners) played a major role by reviewing input received through the outreach process. They debated issues and perspectives, and worked hard to find language that adequately expressed our forward focused strategic directions, intentions, goals, and aspirations.



MPHA 2012 - 2017 Strategic Planning Process



2.0 What We Learned

MPHA engaged in a number of actions to gather information related to its Strategic Planning Initiative. The agency conducted research, held focus groups, surveyed participants and met with internal and external constituencies. These efforts provided MPHA with valuable information, opinions and suggestions regarding our Agency. Below you will find a sampling of the information, opinions and suggestions received.

What We Learned

From Our Own Research

All indicators (e.g., levels of poverty, unemployment rates, levels of educational attainment, number of foreclosures, and declines in home construction activity) are pointing to an inescapable fact; the foreseeable future will be economically challenging. HUD will feel it, public housing authorities and programs across the nation will feel it, and, by extension, recipients of public housing services will feel it. MPHA is no exception.

Based on our own research, we are forecasting a period where the number people in need of subsidized and affordable housing will increase, and the agency will be

asked to do more... but with fewer resources and often without political support.

Poverty in Minneapolis

Poverty has steadily increased in Minneapolis over the last decade from 17 percent in 1999 to 22 percent in 2009. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 15 percent of families and 22 percent of individuals were living below the poverty line in Minneapolis.

The rates of childhood poverty have risen even faster. A recent study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that childhood poverty rose 56 percent in Minnesota in the last decade. This rise is sharper than the national average.

Homelessness

In Minnesota, the Wilder Research conducts the most comprehensive research on homelessness. These studies are completed triennially. The Wilder Research conducted its most recent count of homeless individuals in October 2009 and found a total of 4,035 single adults, unaccompanied youth, and families with children experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County. This includes people who were residing in emergency shelters, battered women’s shelters, or sleeping outside. It did not include people who live “doubled up” or who “couch hop” with friends or relatives,

for which there is no adequate measuring tool.

Table 1 details the approximate number of people living in emergency shelters and transitional housing on a given night in Hennepin County.

TABLE 1
People in Shelter and Transitional Housing in Hennepin County

Categories	2003	2006	2009	Percent Increase 2006 - 2009
Men	1071	978	1240	27 %
Women	859	766	914	19 %
Youth >18	22	29	23	- 21 %
Children	1138	1104	1287	17 %
Total	3090	2877	3464	20 %

Source: Wilder Research 2009

North Minneapolis Tornado

The May 22, 2011 tornado that hit North Minneapolis displaced 5,000-6,000 residents. The neighborhoods that were impacted by the tornado were those with the highest rates of concentrated unemployment and lowest educational attainment in Minneapolis. Several residents did not have renter’s insurance, and several landlords were underinsured. Furthermore, affected residents were living below the poverty line, and are still

displaced five months later. This crisis will have a lasting effect on the housing situation in Minneapolis.

Disparities in Unemployment and Educational Attainment

When compared to other states, Minnesota’s unemployment rate is low and its rate of educational attainment is high. Nonetheless, there are large disparities in these rates between white and non-white Minnesotans.

According to the American Community Survey in 2009 the unemployment rate for African Americans in Minnesota was 20.6 percent, for whites was 5.7 percent and other was 12.4 percent.

Likewise, the survey found racial/ethnic disparities in the levels of educational attainment, in Minneapolis. According to the survey, for the population 25 years and older, the percentage of people with a bachelors degree or higher was 50.7 percent for whites and 16.8 percent for people of color.

Housing Foreclosures

Not unlike other cities across the country, Minneapolis has been impacted by the housing foreclosure crisis. See Table 2 for Minneapolis foreclosure statistics between 2007 and 2010. As of June 30th 2011, Minneapolis had experienced 914 foreclosures in 2011.

**TABLE 2
MINNEAPOLIS HOUSING FORECLOSURES**

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	2895	3077	2233	2308

Source: City of Minneapolis Community Development and Planning Department

Regional Goals for Affordable Housing

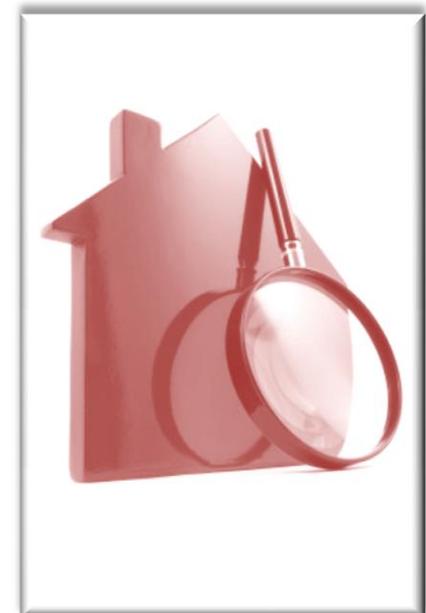
According to the Metropolitan Council, the demand for affordable housing units has outstripped the market’s ability to meet demand. In 1996, participating cities in the region’s Livable Communities Act (LCA) program negotiated housing development goals that reflected a need for an additional 100,821 affordable housing units by 2010. These additional housing units can be broken out as 84,981 owner occupied units and 15,840 rental units.

As detailed in Table 3, in 2009 when housing construction activities drew to a halt, only 39,410 affordable housing units had been constructed for owner occupants and only 11,090 had been built as rental units. Even if production continues at the pace it has for the last 13 years, the region will fall short of the 100,821 unit goal by over 50,000 units.

**TABLE 3
2010 AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS FOR MUNICIPALITIES IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION**

Categories of Affordable Housing Units	Affordable Units Constructed (1996 - 2009)	2010 Goals	Shortfall as of 2010
Owner Occupied	39,410	84,961	45,551
Rental	11,090	15,840	4,750
Total	50,500	100,821	50,321

Source: Metropolitan Council, 2010



What We Learned

From Our Board

At their board retreat in May, 2011, the Board of Commissioners provided timely feedback and direction on the development of the plan. The highest priority directive from the board was that MPHA is a safety net for housing, not a health or social service provider, and MPHA's primary responsibilities are to:

- provide safe, decent, affordable housing to Minneapolis residents who qualify to receive Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) services
- maintain the quality and condition of the agency's properties and assets

Board members emphasized that the agency should encourage the provision of health- and social-related services for residents through partnerships. The agency's resources should go toward quality, affordable housing.

"We can't blend or blur the lines here – MPHA provides housing."

May 18, 2011 Board of Commissioners Member

Board members reviewed the Strategic Planning process and directed the consultant team to ensure the maximum level of public participation, including dissenting voices. Board members commented that the process should include the agency's executive staff, the Resident Advisory Board (RAB), residents of Public Housing, HCV participants, residents in neighborhoods where the agency owns property, and the agency's public and private sector partners.

With direction from the Board of Commissioners, who met in a strategic planning work session on May 18, 2011, the outreach program was designed to "Make sure we capture the public voice."

The board identified the following key strategic issues to address in the plan.

- The Wait List, which is currently at 12,000 for Section 8 and 4,000 for Public Housing.
- MPHA's role in the city's strategic approach to address housing. MPHA's role needs to be clarified. Currently, Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is responsible for general housing in Minneapolis and MPHA addresses public and Section 8 housing for low-income people.

- The agency, especially in these economic times, needs to be strategic about how resources are allocated and spent. The plan should position the agency to evaluate its past and current resource allocation practices and determine if there is room for improvement and whether opportunities to realize economies of scale can be identified.
- Defining the agency's responsibilities in ensuring the "well-being" of its customers. While it was recognized that the agency's primary responsibilities are the provision of housing services and the maintenance of its properties, it was still felt to be important to identify areas where the agency might be able to do more through its partnerships:
 - Partnering with Hennepin County to provide mental health services
 - Partnering with community groups to define housing needs at the neighborhood level
 - Partnering with local institutions (educational and employment services) to ensure that tenants are able to expand their horizons

Board members expressed concern that there may be a lack of understanding or misconceptions by the public regarding MPHA, its mission, its regulatory requirements and its accomplishments. The Board identified a need to enhance its

communications, clarify its responsibilities and inform the community of its achievements as a strategic plan element.

- Board members noted that many in the community have a negative or stereotypical image of the public housing and Section 8 programs. Public Housing residents and Section 8 participants are often blamed for crimes or are portrayed. These images should be refuted with facts.
- The requests from neighborhoods to have MPHA play a role in the development of affordable housing and the contributions by residents to the community should be part of MPHA's communications strategies.

Board members participated in a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exercise at the retreat in order to identify factors that impact the agency and could contribute to the Strategic Plan. Themes identified by this exercise are summarized here:

- **Strengths and Opportunities:**

- MPHA has strong and effective leadership and a solid track record on delivering services.
- MPHA is a critical partner in the affordable housing continuum.



- Since MPHA split from MCDA in 1990 it has become a high performing agency and national leader in affordable housing innovations.
- MPHA's Moving To Work (MTW) status provides the agency with the capacity to be flexible and innovative.
- An emerging opportunity for MPHA would be to address different types of housing needs, including families who are experiencing homelessness and/or in need of transitional housing.
- A premier strength is that the agency has established good partnerships with its residents and fostered resident-leadership.
- MPHA's independent status contributes toward its ability to respond to needs without undue political interference.

- A core strength of the agency is that there is no better agency than MPHA with a track record for:
 - Managing diverse properties.
 - Managing housing-related data and statistics.

- **Weaknesses and Threats:**

- Dependency on HUD and federal subsidies is a weakness. The agency should consider alternate strategies for revenue or its core programs and services may be at risk.
- MPHA's declining Capital Fund and the enormous capital needs to preserve its properties are a concern.
- A threat is that a segment of the community has a negative perception and stereotypes about public housing .
- Dilution of the agency's mission is a threat. Our focus should be on providing low income housing.
- MPHA is not in an agenda setting position and is often put in a reactionary position by other agencies.
- Other PHAs have used MTW and tax credit dollars to develop other housing options. HUD allows PHAs to do development outside of public housing. MPHA should consider these and other strategies as part of its strategic initiatives.

- MPHA’s leadership team is older and there is a need for a succession plan.
- Continuous training is an ongoing and critical component of MPHA’s capacity to provide quality services and resource to provide that training are at risk.
- MPHA has limited federal funds that compete with other discretionary programs
- MPHA is seen as a readily available source of funds for affordable housing providers and government entities seeking to house low-income families. It is also a target for both the lack of affordable housing and problems associated with low-income housing including crime, neighborhood conditions and resident behaviors.

What We Learned

From Our Executive Staff

Executive staff met three times during the planning process. Rather than focus on specific issues, the staff brought attention to larger policy issues, the allocation of limited resources, and the need for decision-making criteria. Highlights from the executive staffs’ discussions include the following:

- The previous strategic plan did not consider Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV)

as a “core service.” There was agreement that HCV is a substantial program where the agency invests time and money. Consequently HCV should be considered as a core service.

- There was agreement that with its MTW Authority, the agency is not necessarily bound to HUD’s definition of “core services” and that, in order to meet the growing housing needs of Minneapolis residents, the agency may need to shift away from how HUD sees “core services’.
- MTW Authority permits the agency to define “core services” as an element of the Strategic Plan. For example, the agency may need to ask if it should expand the supply of housing.....and, if so, how can it do so in creative ways that are outside of HUD’s scope of programs.
- The agency will need to make choices within ‘core services’. If the overall goal is to house as many people as possible, the agency will need to ask how it will manage the resources that go into ‘core services’.
- The strategic plan should help the agency determine how best to allocate resources. This means the agency will have to prioritize activities (programs and services) that fall under ‘core

services’ and other programs that fall outside that definition.

- In the previous strategic plan, ‘core services’ referred to our buildings and property. Section 8 vouchers should be a significant part of those services. We will need to deal with a leaner budget. We need to leverage funds to keep up our buildings. Also, partnerships will help us deliver more and different services.
- The term “core services” should be replaced with “Property Resource Management” when we discuss strategic planning. We should assess resources with the goal of housing as many people as we can.
- Economical, efficient, and effective should be part of the language in Property Resource Management. We need to look at our pot(s) of revenue.
- We should also look at opportunities for MPHA to generate revenue, i.e. undeveloped land.
- We need to look at voucher revenue – MTW vouchers. HUD wants the number of families under MTW to be the same as pre-MTW.
- There are fuzzy lines between enhancing, improving, and expanding

our housing. Before we utilized our Capital Funding Program to do improvements. Day to day maintenance includes repairs and maintenance. Preservation means ensuring that housing stays up to codes.

- The issues before us are about how to best use resources, not just now when public housing is being threatened, but also for a time when resources are greater. We shouldn't retreat so much that we won't be ready to move forward when conditions improve. We can't just plan for lean times – we need to position ourselves for the best and most effective use of our resources and to take advantage of opportunities that may come our way. We should also give thought to evaluation of service delivery models, which supports the efficient use of funds.
- We have to remember that federal law requires safe and decent housing. We have to look at quality. HUD measures MPHA on performance. We need to maintain a balance between expansion and quality of housing stock.
- Vouchers require that housing is decent, safe, and sanitary or we lose funding. Will funds go to housing or to families?

What We Learned

From Our Resident Advisory Board



The Resident Advisory Board (RAB), the Public Housing group representing highrise, family and scattered site residents and Section 8 participants, met in July, 2011.

Many of the concerns expressed at the five Public Housing Focus Groups were also expressed at this meeting, including communications, maintenance and security. Residents, again, expressed general satisfaction with Public Housing and how it is managed.

Chief concerns expressed by RAB included:

- A need for enhanced security including guards, cameras, and Project Lookout
- Continued focus on maintenance including elevators and pest control (in particular bed bugs).

- Increased resident participation in Section 3 jobs, especially in view of anticipated budget cuts where contracting with outside vendors may be necessary.
- Better communications between management and residents.
- Better recycling opportunities, including e-cycling.
- Keeping rent affordable.
- Expanding the Self Help program.
- Providing outdoor play areas for children at some buildings.
- Maintaining an adequate complement of building managers.

What We Learned

From Our Public Housing Residents

In early June, 2011, five focus group meetings were held with Public Housing residents in the highrise apartment buildings, the Glendale Family Housing, and scattered sites. The focus group meetings were well attended, and the input was rich with suggestions, comments, and stories.

Overwhelmingly, residents were satisfied with life in public housing but also offered many suggestions for improvements. Their priority concerns were communications with MPHA staff and building security/ safety. The majority of the participants described

living in public housing as being part of a community and a family.

A summary of the residents' issues is outlined below:

- Need for Improved communications between managers and residents. Today, the bond between building managers and residents is purely professional. Many residents commented that this bond should be strengthened to extend beyond the managers' professional duties.
- Communications among residents, themselves, is a problem. Communications with other residents, whose first language is not English, is a problem; both for the English-speaker and the non-English speaker.

"I've lived in public housing in other states, and MPHA is the best. We residents need patience – if patient, one can get along and understand others."
Cedar Riverside Focus Group Resident

- Residents feel overburdened with fees for everything from lost/misplaced keys to transferring to another apartment. They expressed concern that their limited incomes couldn't support excessive fees. Some understood why they were charged certain fees but

moreover felt that many of the fees were too much for the service.

- Residents cited their need for additional services that go beyond the provision of shelter. These might include: services that would address their personal well-being, employment and job-readiness services, health and nutrition, ESL classes, and social and recreational opportunities.

What We Learned

From Our Section 8/HCV Participants

During the month of July, over 470 surveys were given to HCV Section 8 participants who came to the MPHA office for their annual re-certification. Participants were given a choice to either complete the survey while in the office or to take the survey home and return it by mail to MPHA. In total 157 surveys were turned in, which represents an approximate 33 percent return rate.

The questions presented in the survey were designed to provide information on the following:

- 1.HCV participants' dwelling unit and neighborhood selection criteria.
- 2.HCV participants' approach to addressing maintenance issues.

- 3.The condition of HCV participants' dwelling units.
- 4.HCV participants' communications with their landlords.
- 5.Adequacy and effectiveness of MPHA's inspection process and procedures.
- 6.Adequacy and effectiveness of MPHA's 'Eligibility and Lease Up' processes.

"Good communications with MPHA staff is necessary. Sometimes landlords don't come out to make repairs and I need to call someone to help. Who else can I call but MPHA?"

"When I call and leave a message, MPHA should get back to me to let me know that my problems will be looked after."

According to the HCV Section 8 participants, the most important issues they face (in rank order) are:

- Communication with staff (79 percent)
- Accessibility to Section 8 services (72 percent)
- Criminal history checks (67 percent)
- Enforcement of owner responsibilities (63 percent)
- Rent simplification (63 percent)
- Self- sufficiency (62 percent)
- Enforcement of participant responsibilities (60 percent)
- Participant involvement (55 percent)
- Interpreter services (54 percent)

- Staff cultural diversity (54 percent)
- Moving from a rental situation to home ownership (50 percent)

What We Learned

From Our Public Sector Partners

“The Northside Disaster (tornado) was an eye-opener for the County. MPHA was the only organization that had their numbers together early on to present at meetings. The disaster stretched the view of what housing meant.”
Hennepin County Representative

In July representatives from the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County met with MPHA to provide input in the planning process. There were honest discussions about challenges and opportunities each faced with their respective housing programs.

The discussions focused on ways each jurisdiction planned to continue to provide services with limited and shrinking resources. It was agreed that in areas of diminished resources, MPHA, the City and County will look to more efficiency and alignment in implementing services. The three entities agreed to meet on a regular and intentional basis to discuss joint issues

in a more formalized manner than in previous years.

The City and MPHA agreed to investigate methods for eliminating duplicative services (e.g., the inspection process for Section 8/HCV and other areas where greater efficiencies might be found).

What We Learned

From Our Private Sector Partners



MPHA hosted a meeting in August to discuss relationships among MPHA and other institutions around the shared agenda of providing services to low-income, disabled, elderly, and homeless Minneapolis residents who need both housing and supportive

services. They discussed ways in which the organizations work together to enhance resources. All the organizations agreed that partnerships with MPHA had been strong, productive, and meaningful, and, given the current financial and political crises, forging new partnerships would be critical to meeting the needs of the poor and very poor in Minneapolis.

There was agreement that MPHA could do a better job working with Minneapolis’ neighborhood organizations to cooperate in the pursuit of affordable housing opportunities.

“East Side Neighborhood Services has high accolades for Public Housing staff. We see MPHA’s shift in service from providing supportive services to just housing as a good thing. MPHA has good partners and has been instrumental in helping to strengthen the (Minneapolis) community.”
East Side Neighborhood Services Executive Director, William Laden

3.0 Foundations of the Strategic Plan

Introduction

This strategic plan will provide overall direction and specific guideposts for MPHA as the agency moves forward between 2012 and 2017. Those who will execute the plan (e.g., MPHA’s Board of Commissioners, administrative and executive staff, and line staff), those who will partner with the agency, and the agency’s customers, residents, and participants will all be affected by the plan.

Because of the plan’s far-reaching impact, it is essential that a strong foundation should be in place to support the plan’s strategic directions, goals, and work plans that will be developed by the agency’s administrators and managers.

The plan’s foundation includes its:

- Mission
- Vision
- Eight Core Operating Values
- Three Strategic Focus Areas

This section of the plan outlines these foundational elements.

Mission

The mission of Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) is to promote and deliver quality, well managed homes to a diverse, low income population and, **with partners**, contribute to the well-being of the individuals, families and community we serve.



Vision

MPHA will continue to be a dynamic and innovative leader in the Minneapolis community with an even greater commitment to promoting, creating, managing and preserving, and delivering

quality, affordable housing and supporting vibrant and diverse communities. MPHA will achieve this vision by:

- Using new and effective technologies;
- Developing and implementing sustainable property management practices;
- Retaining MPHA’s “high performer” designation in its public housing and Capital Fund as well as Section 8 HCV programs; and
- Establishing partnerships with agencies, organizations, and institutions that provide non-housing and social services to MPHA’s customers.

Core Operating Values

1. Respectfulness

MPHA will honor and show respect to all who interact with the agency including internal and external partners and the residents we serve.

2. Recognize and Appreciate Diversity

MPHA works with and serves people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and religious backgrounds. MPHA will respect, encourage, and promote diverse communities and will not tolerate prejudicial and/or discriminatory behavior.

3. Integrity and Accountability

MPHA's staff is experienced and operates at the highest levels of integrity in its administrative, service, and outreach activities. All staff will be engaged in the fulfillment of the agency's mission. The agency will be accountable and transparent as we maintain and report information.

4. Partnerships

MPHA will maintain, support, and increase its partnership arrangements to pursue and enhance housing choices and services for our residents and participants.

5. Financial Sustainability

MPHA will use its resources in an efficient and accountable manner, in compliance with all laws and regulations, and make strategic choices when allocating its funds to support and enhance its affordable housing goals.

6. Visionary Leadership (Risk taking)

MPHA will look beyond the status quo to imagine new possibilities and take reasonable risks to support the agency's mission.

7. Community Engagement

The agency will continue to engage residents, participants, and partners in dialog and carefully consider their points of view and opinions when making decisions.

8. Sustainability

MPHA values and utilizes 'green' and sustainable practices in its business operations.

Strategic Focus Areas

1. Property and capital management to ensure preservation and growth of MPHA's assets
2. Policy and program formulation that will enable MPHA to continue to provide safe and affordable housing for low-income customers
3. Partnerships to contribute to the health and well-being of residents and participants and the livability of Minneapolis neighborhoods



4.0 Strategic Directions: A Platform for Implementation

Introduction

With a foundation firmly established in its Mission, Vision, eight Core Operating Values, and three Strategic Focus areas, the plan can support a platform of Strategic Directions and a series of dependent goals.

In total seven Strategic Directions were developed for the plan that accurately state and outline overall directions and goals for MPHA's next five years.

Strategic Direction 1

MPHA's highest priority is to preserve its viable housing portfolio so it remains a resource for affordable, safe, and high quality housing for its residents.

- *Goal 1*
Conduct physical needs assessments that provide the basis for capital improvements planning and implementation on a regular and reasonable basis.



- *Goal 2*
Provide maintenance and capital improvements to ensure a consistent livability standard that meets or exceeds HUD's Uniform Physical Condition Standard (UPCS).
- *Goal 3*
Implement sustainable strategies and technologies when carrying out capital and maintenance activities and agency operations.
- *Goal 4*
Take advantage of opportunities to maintain Public Housing subsidies and pursue other opportunities that contribute to the preservation of existing viable sites.

- *Goal 5*
Develop evaluation criteria, including housing program needs, cost effectiveness, and long-term sustainability measures, to consider when determining which properties should be retained and which should be eliminated from MPHA's portfolio.
- *Goal 6*
Investigate opportunities to reposition single family homes into more cost effective and operationally efficient housing inventory.
- *Goal 7*
Conduct a comprehensive assessment of security needs and practices with the goal of contributing to a safe and secure environment in a cost effective manner.

Strategic Direction 2

MPHA will maximize effective use of its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Authority and have as a priority to maintain its baseline number of Tenant-Based vouchers and respond to additional critical Minneapolis Community affordable housing needs by assessing revenue streams, resource implications, and opportunity costs as it allocates its vouchers.

- **Goal 1**
MPHA's priority will be to affect a balanced approach aimed at: housing families from the agency's current wait list by maintaining and, where possible, expanding its allocation of Tenant-Based Vouchers and creating partnerships in order to use its Project Based Authority.
- **Goal 2**
When allocating Project Based Vouchers, MPHA will adopt strategies that will promote affordable housing to families with specifically identified needs, promote service enriched housing, leverage increases in the supply of affordable housing, and foster operational stability for affordable housing development.
- **Goal 3**
When awarding Project Based Vouchers to potential partners, MPHA will develop and implement evaluation criteria that will include the partner's willingness to cover MPHA's costs above those that would be provided by HUD for Tenant Based vouchers.
- **Goal 4**
Create policies that position the agency to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies as determined by the MPHA Board of Commissioners.

Strategic Direction 3

MPHA will seek partnerships with the goal of enhancing services, promoting health and wellness, contributing to safety and supporting residents and participants in their efforts to live independent lives.

- **Goal 1**
Promote opportunities, in cooperation with its partners, for residents to age in place and receive services and supports that will allow residents to have quality lives.



- **Goal 2**
Sustain its Senior Housing Designation Plan, which creates and sustains senior

communities within MPHA public housing developments and, offers choices for seniors regarding housing location and assisted living programs.

- **Goal 3**
Encourage and support resident involvement and participation in agency activities that impact residents and their homes. MPHA will work with established resident councils and representation systems to support this goal.
- **Goal 4**
Provide through its partnerships education, training and employment opportunities for residents and participants seeking to become economically self-sufficient.
- **Goal 5**
Coordinate with the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and other partners to identify and implement specific strategies that promote health and wellness opportunities for residents and participants, including making MPHA smoke-free within the next five years.



Strategic Direction 4

MPHA will continue to participate and communicate with HUD, the State of Minnesota, the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and the City of Minneapolis to contribute to the development of housing policy and housing policy implementation as well as to ensure that the affordable housing needs of Minneapolis residents and the agency's capacity and ability to address these needs will be considered when housing-related decisions are being made.



- *Goal 1*
Continue to interact with other units of government to contribute to the development of housing policies, rules, and regulations.
- *Goal 2*
Interact with local jurisdictions to create a local housing policy agenda, contribute to the housing elements of local plans, address immediate housing issues,

develop emergency response strategies, and encourage a cooperative approach to implementing housing policy and services.

- *Goal 3*
Strategically communicate MPHA's successes, initiatives and capabilities to local leaders, businesses, and stakeholders and partners in order to increase awareness of MPHA's capabilities and contributions.

Strategic Direction 5

MPHA will use its resources in an efficient and accountable manner, in compliance with all laws and regulations, and will seek to maintain an adequate financial reserve to ensure the long term viability of the agency and protect it from unanticipated costs and the consequences of fluctuating federal appropriations.

- *Goal 1*
MPHA will look for ways to streamline its operations in order to realize financial efficiencies and economies of scale.
- *Goal 2*
MPHA will maintain an adequate financial reserve to safeguard the agency against unanticipated costs and widely varying federal appropriations.

- *Goal 3*
MPHA, recognizing the importance of operating with transparency, accountability and integrity, will meet all financial reporting, audit and expense eligibility requirements to the satisfaction of granting agencies and other financing partners.
- *Goal 4*
Conduct business and financial functions with a focus on best practices and integrity.



Strategic Direction 6

MPHA will update and strengthen its operational policies and practices to ensure: a) that all staff can perform their duties at the highest levels of competency and b) the long-term viability of the agency, including cultivating and attracting the next generation of leadership.

- *Goal 1
Provide staff training that benefits both the employee and the agency to ensure staff is abreast of and responsive to current trends.*
- *Goal 2
Provide diversity training for staff to improve communications with increasingly diverse base of customers.*
- *Goal 3
Provide regular opportunities for staff to reflect on their goals and accomplishments.*
- *Goal 4
Design and implement management succession strategies that, at a minimum, include cultivating, retaining, and attracting the next generation of leadership.*
- *Goal 5
Recruit and retain a diverse and talented workforce.*

Strategic Direction 7

MPHA will continue its commitment to promote participation in its operations by women, minority and Section 3 residents and businesses, as well as other Small and Underutilized Business Program (SUBP) participants.

- *Goal 1
Recruit and hire qualified women, minority and Section 3 residents as part of a commitment to promote participation in its operations and comply with appropriate Section 3 requirements.*
- *Goal 2
Conduct procurement activities in compliance with Section 3 requirements and to promote MPHA goals related to participation of women and minority enterprises in agency business activities.*
- *Goal 3
Create a MPHA Job Bank that provides a list of Section 3 Eligible Residents, job interest categories and contact information that can be provided to firms doing business with MPHA.*
- *Goal 4
Identify and engage with organizations that provide education, training and support for employment related to the*

kinds of work performed by firms doing business with MPHA and refer residents to these organizations.



5.0 Conclusions



F. Clayton Tyler

My tenure as Chairman of the MPHA Board of Commissioners began in March 2011, and within a very short time, it became apparent to me that the MPHA is one of the premier public housing authorities in the nation. From top to bottom, MPHA is a very well run and managed agency that truly serves the population it is intended to serve.

The strength of the agency is our Board of Commissioners and the hardworking creative, and dedicated executive staff that manages it. It is because of our various

partnerships that we have been able to put forth a comprehensive strategic plan for the future.

The strategic plan took over a year to prepare. A wide range of stakeholders participated in the process, responding to surveys, participating in focus groups, consulting with executive staff, and working with residents from across the community. The development of this strategic plan included county and city officials and staff and representatives from partner organizations and agencies. I especially want to thank the Steering Committee who met on a monthly basis to develop and refine input received from each of the stakeholder groups.

The MPHA Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2017 provides a road map for the future. It is not prescriptive, but it clarifies the agency’s mission, establishes its core values, sets the agenda, and adopts strategic direction that should ensure the longevity and health of the agency, as well as promote the delivery of high quality services to its customers.

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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