

# Priority Neighborhoods

Priority Neighborhoods are the primary focus of investment for the City of Richmond and the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority. Priority Neighborhoods consist of public housing and land owned or recently transferred by RRHA that play an integral role in communities across the city.

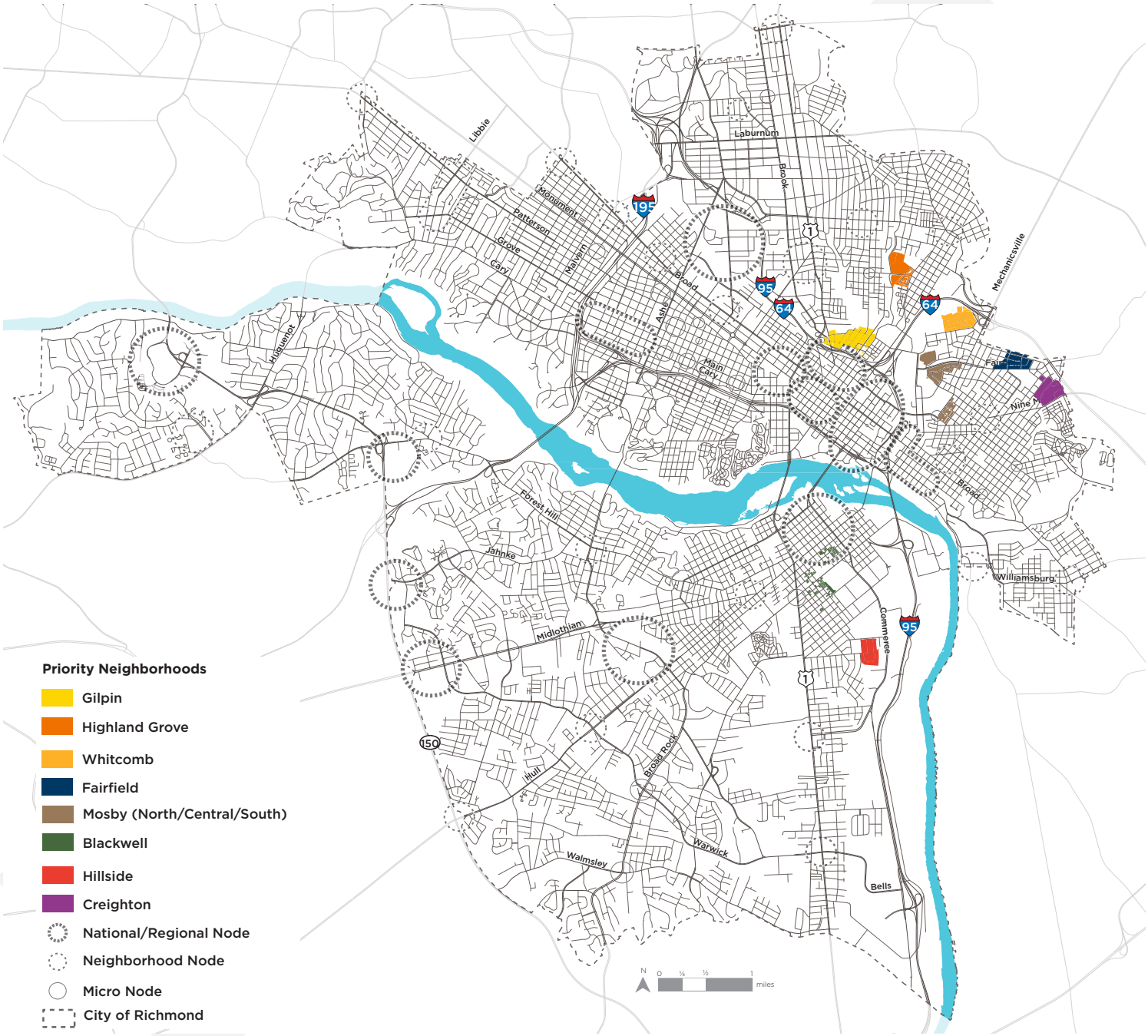
Priority Neighborhoods are located within some of today’s most established and distinguished Richmond communities and adjacent to many of the city’s most renown institutions and landmarks. Priority Neighborhoods, many of which date back to the 1950s, are home to multiple-generation residents whose families have significantly contributed to Richmond’s culture and institutions. While Priority Neighborhoods carry significant stories and lessons of Richmond’s past, including the painful legacy of racial discrimination, they also hold the promise of the city’s transformational future.

The redevelopment of Priority Neighborhoods is an opportunity to redesign the city around the needs, assets, and aspirations of valuable yet historically overlooked communities. By redeveloping Priority Neighborhoods, the City and RRHA will leverage their collective resources and partnerships to provide quality infrastructure, affordable housing, human services, and economic development opportunity for all Richmonders, especially those living in or seeking public housing. Through community-oriented planning and strategic City investment in infrastructure, priority neighborhoods will become high-quality, well-connected, and equitable mixed-use developments that catalyze the Richmond300 vision throughout the city.

**PRIORITY NEIGHBORHOODS**

The following areas shown in Figure 1 are prioritized for investment.

- Gilpin
- Creighton
- Fairfield
- Mosby
- Whitcomb
- Hillside
- Blackwell
- Highland Grove



Very Brief Overview of Richmond Public Housing

RRHA is the largest public housing authority in the Commonwealth of Virginia, serving over 10,000 residents and managing nearly 4,000 units. Upon its establishment in 1940, RRHA received \$1.97 million from the U.S. Housing Authority for two slum clearance projects which laid the groundwork for Gilpin Court.

Between 1942 and 1962, RRHA built nine large-scale federally subsidized housing developments to house Richmond’s poorest families. These urban renewal projects were aimed at replacing “unsafe and unsanitary dwelling units” with “decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings.” However, the majority of Richmond’s public housing developments were built to house residents from neighborhoods destroyed by strategic slum clearance and large public infrastructure projects, such as the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (I-95/I-64) in 1957 and the 17th Street Redevelopment Project in 1961. These public housing developments were largely situated in redlined areas that were socially, economically, and physically isolated from the rest of the city.

Beginning with the Community Development Block Grant Program in 1975, RRHA shifted from building large-scale publicly owned housing for the city’s poorest residents to providing public funding to

privately developed, smaller-scale housing for low to moderate income families.

Today, the majority of Richmond’s public housing residents continue to live in the city’s six largest public housing developments: Gilpin, Hillside, Creighton, Fairfield, Whitcomb, and Mosby. These developments are now functionally obsolete and subject to disproportionately high levels of crime, concentrated poverty, disinvestment, inadequate infrastructure, and a deficiency of basic services.

Learning from the past, RRHA recognizes the potential for redeveloping public housing sites to better serve the overall needs of their communities. The City and RRHA have made it their long-term goal to deconcentrate poverty and provide affordable and safe public housing as part of mixed-income and mixed-use neighborhoods. This goal can only be met by first addressing the conditions of the city’s current public housing stock, the oldest along the east coast. Therefore, the City and RRHA commit to transforming each large public housing development site into a thriving, well-connected, civically engaged, mixed-use, mixed-income development that becomes a community of choice and strengthens the vibrancy of the surrounding neighborhoods.

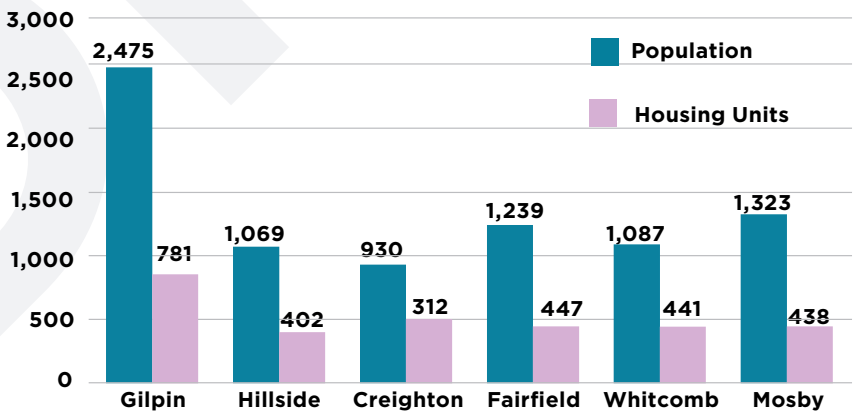


FIGURE 12 // Total Population and Housing Units in the Big Six Public Housing Developments, 2019  
Source: RRHA, 2019

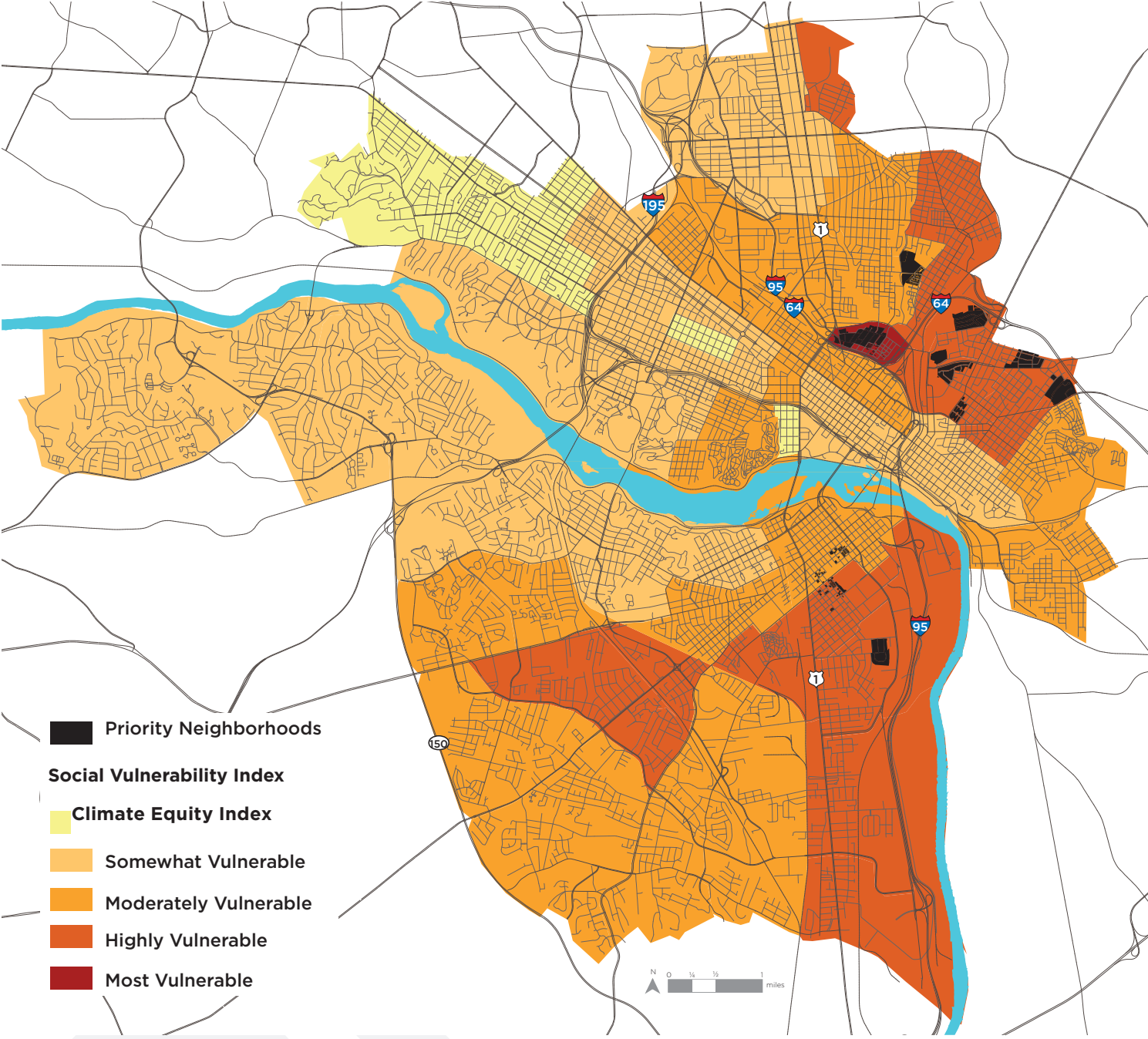


FIGURE 13 // Climate Equity Index Map  
Social vulnerability based on the RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Index (2021)  
Source: Richmond Office of Sustainability

**Priority Neighborhoods are in areas containing the city’s greatest social vulnerability as measured by the Climate Equity Index.** Social vulnerability refers to the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses to human health. The Climate Equity Index is measures social vulnerability by assessing multiple factors such as employment, poverty, transportation access, food access, and proximity to environmental hazards. Communities in areas of great social vulnerability are disparately impacted by legacies of public disinvestment, environmental negligence, and discriminatory policies and practices. These inequitable social, economic, and environmental conditions place households at greater risk of experiencing poverty, displacement, poor health, and homelessness.



# Priority Neighborhoods Program

This Master Plan recommends establishing a Priority Neighborhoods Program that seeks to systematically target planning, policy, and investment to improve the Priority Neighborhoods. The Priority Neighborhoods Program will build off of the values, commitments, and process outlined in the following pages.

## Values

The City and RRHA's commitment to the Priority Neighborhood Program is based on the following values



### EVERYONE BELONGS.

Cities become inclusive communities by incorporating housing and resources that serve people of all incomes and housing experiences throughout the city (temporary, transitional, long-term).



### PEOPLE ARE DYNAMIC.

The aesthetic, design, and function of neighborhoods may evolve with the changing needs and ideas of their residents.



### EVERYONE'S VOICE IS VALUED.

Every neighborhood is made up of distinctive individuals with diverse goals, interests, and experiences. There is no one "community" voice that can represent an entire neighborhood.

### EVERYONE NEEDS SUPPORT.

Life is unpredictable. We all are a few events away from being in dire need. Everyone benefits from living in a strong and connected community.



### QUALITY HOUSING COMES IN DIFFERENT FORMS.

There are many different types of quality housing. Neighborhoods must have options that account for all people. There is no one size fits all solution.



### GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS ARE CONNECTED.

Neighborhoods should connect neighbors with other neighbors, employment, amenities, open space/recreation, education, and more.



### EQUITY IS ESSENTIAL.

All people in every housing experience should have access to opportunities for building wealth and capacity.

### INVESTMENTS HELP NEIGHBORS.

Redevelopment should strategically support existing residents and prevent displacement and other harmful effects of gentrification. Opportunities for newcomers should not come at the expense of current residents.

## Commitments

The City and RRHA commit, at a minimum, to the following for each of the Priority Neighborhoods. These commitments are not meant to be all-inclusive. As the City and RRHA develop plans and implement programs in the Priority Neighborhoods, the commitments will be further developed through a community-led process.



### CREATE HIGH-QUALITY PLACES

- Share public infrastructure and amenities costs with private developers
- Upgrade sewer, water, communications, and electric utility connections
- Create a high-quality public realm with well-designed lighting, signage, seating, crosswalks, public art, and public open space.
- Provide easy access to city facilities such as schools, recreational facilities, libraries, etc.
- Create opportunities for neighborhood-scale retail
- Provide public open space designed with resident input



### INCREASE ACCESS AND MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THE CITY

- Build network of connected and complete streets with space for vehicular, pedestrian, bike, and transit travel
- Increase frequency of transit service
- Add EV Charging Stations and space for other emerging transportation technologies



### FOSTER INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Generate strategies for supporting the overall health and well-being of residents
- Support workforce development and education opportunities for residents
- Provide amplified case management, social services, and healthcare for public housing residents during re-location and transitional periods
- Consider cooperative businesses or incubator/entrepreneurial space as well as other equity models



### PROVIDE INCLUSIVE HOUSING

- Create opportunity for all existing public housing tenants to live in newly renovated areas
- Develop a tenant-desired plan for temporary relocation during project construction
- Support programs that prepare and prioritize public housing tenants for home ownership
- Develop public housing for households at or below 30% of the AMI
- Create a mixed-income community

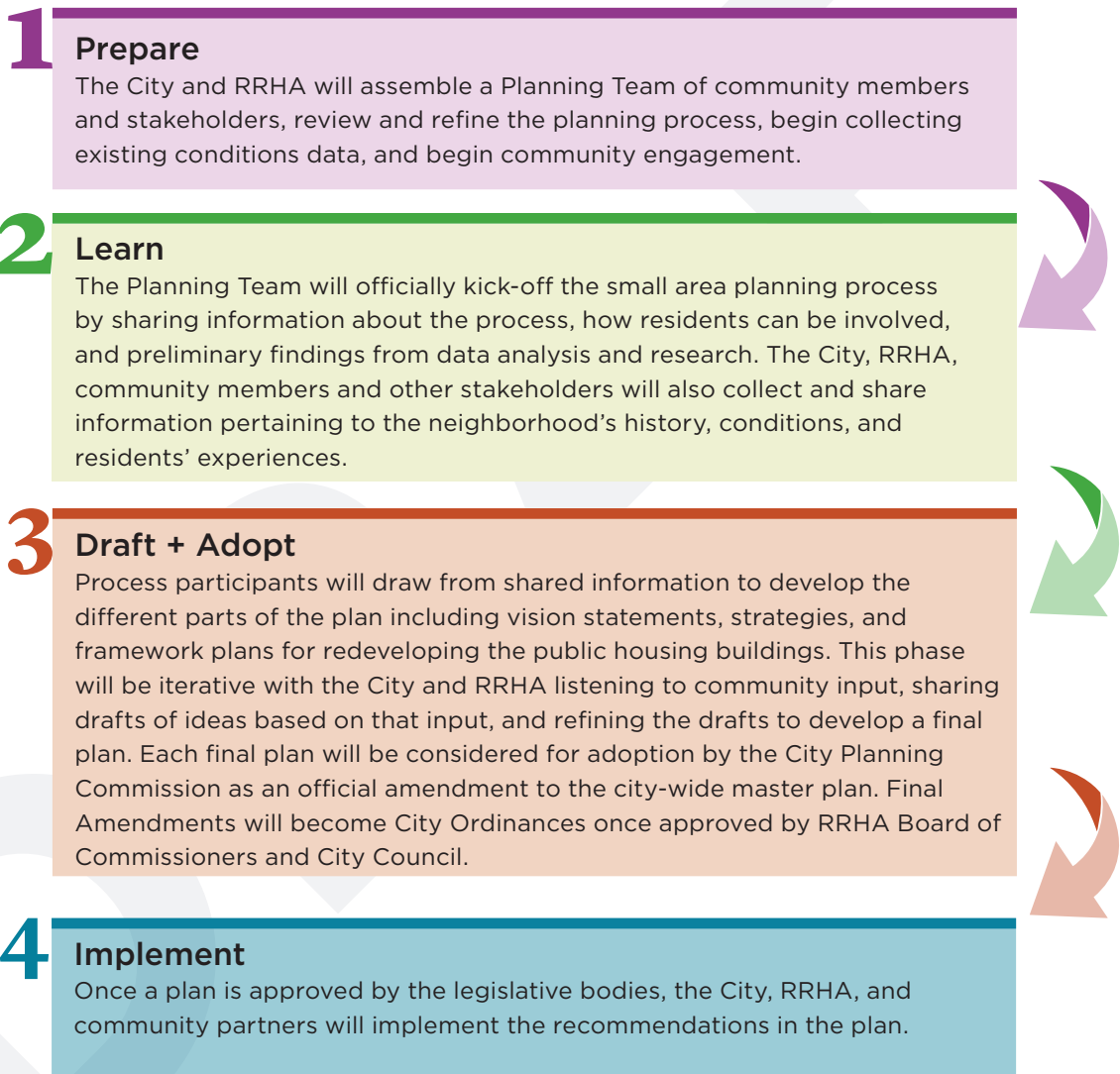


### DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT, AND GREEN ENVIRONMENTS

- Create accessible, green network throughout development
- Develop high-quality and universally designed parks and plazas
- Develop sustainable and educational stormwater facilities
- Consider community renewable energy programs and building level renewable energy
- Develop buildings using sustainable building practices

Small Area Planning Process

Through the Priority Neighborhood Program, the City will partner with RRHA to lead a Small Area Planning Process for designated areas. The resident-driven planning process is designed to generate implementable strategies for resident-desired neighborhood improvements. Specific focus will be given to the well-being, education, job training, and generational wealth building of Richmonders living in Priority Neighborhoods. Each of the small area planning processes will have four phases: Prepare, Learn, Draft + Adopt, and Implement.



Community Engagement

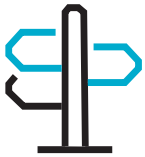
The City and RRHA will provide a wide range of opportunities for community members to participate in and drive the planning process for each of the priority neighborhood redevelopments. Community engagement will vary from plan to plan according to the scope of each project and residents' preferences. Here are some general methods by which the City and RRHA may seek to connect with community members throughout the Priority Neighborhood Program. The exact engagement methods must be catered to each community.



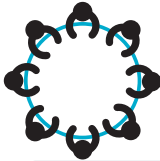
**One-on-one and small group interviews.** City and RRHA convene with residents to listen to and learn from their lived experiences and discuss elements of the planning process and plan strategies.



**Surveys.** City and RRHA develop community surveys to better understand overall neighborhood conditions, trends, and resident experiences and desires.



**Tours.** City Departments along with neighborhood organizations lead community tours to share certain neighborhood resources, conditions, and stories that are pertinent to the planning process.



**Focus groups.** The community meetings for each planning process include small group discussion and work. Residents will have an opportunity to share with one another and to develop strategies collaboratively.



**Workshops.** Hands-on workshops are an opportunity for community members to quickly and collaboratively design and prototype ideas for the redevelopment plan.



**Tenant Bill of Rights.** For each Priority Neighborhood, community members will have the opportunity to negotiate terms of the redevelopment with the City and RRHA through the creation of a Tenant Bill of Rights.





Priority Neighborhood

# Gilpin Court

Background

**Gilpin Court was the first of RRHA’s public housing developments and was constructed in three phases beginning in 1942 and ending in 1971.** The construction was aided by a 1942 slum clearance project which demolished hundreds of homes and displaced much of the neighborhood’s majority Black and immigrant population. The development was named after Charles Gilpin, one of the most famous and early Black stage actors in the country and a Richmond local.

**Gilpin is located in Jackson Ward, once the epicenter of Richmond’s African-American community.** In the 1920s and 1940s, Jackson Ward was known as both the “Harlem of the South” and the “Black Wall Street” due to its emergence as both a place for entertainment and a hub of economic opportunities for Black Richmonders.

**In 1957, the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (I-95/I-64) bisected Jackson Ward, leaving Gilpin Court isolated from the rest of the neighborhood and the city.** Due to discriminatory planning decisions, structural disinvestment, segregation, and concentrated poverty, the neighborhood struggled and many of its cultural landmarks were destroyed.

Today

**Today, Gilpin Court is the most populated public housing development in Richmond with nearly 2475 residents.** The poverty rate is nearly 3.5 times that of the city at 80% and the violent crime rate is 2.4 times the city rate. The majority of Gilpin households have an annual income of less than \$10,000.

**Gilpin is surrounded by rich community resources and Richmond landmarks including: the Calhoun Community Center, historic Shockoe Hill Cemetery and African Burying Ground, Abner Clay Park, the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, Hippodrome Theater, Maggie L. Walker Plaza and Statue, and Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church.**

**GILPIN COURT**

**Year Built:** 1942, 1957, 1971

**Total Acreage:** 38

**Public Housing Units:** 781

**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** 2,475

**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019):** \$9,800



Gilpin Court Aerial  
Source: Richmond Times-Dispatch



**Gilpin Court**  
1005-1009 Chamberlayne Parkway in Gilpin Court is a typical representation of the development’s Phase 1 multi-family dwellings.  
Source: RRHA, 2020



Gilpin Priority Neighborhood

**In 2022, the City secured a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of new infrastructure reconnecting Gilpin with the Jackson Ward neighborhood south of Interstates 95 and 64.**

**In 2021 RRHA and the City won a HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning grant to plan for the redevelopment of Gilpin Court.** RRHA and the City are leading a community-led planning process in collaboration with the Richmond Health District. The final plan will be finished at the end of 2023.

Primary Next Steps

- **Jackson Ward Community Plan:** Adopt the plan as an element of the City’s master plan.
- **Development Partner:** Select a master development via RRHA’s competitive bid process to redevelop Gilpin Court
- **Calhoun Center:** Renovate the Calhoun Center into a 21st century facility with a functioning pool.
- **Calhoun Recreational Space:** Improve the green space east of the Calhoun to add a splash pad, playground equipment, exercise equipment, a

- walking path, public art, and improvements to the community garden.
- **Fay Towers:** RRHA will self develop Fay Towers to provide housing options for residents of Gilpin Court.
  - RRHA will submit a Section 18 application to HUD’s Special Applications Center (SAC) to begin the redevelopment process of Gilpin Court.
  - RRHA will work with a development partner to build rental units on RRHA owned property in the Jackson Ward community.
  - RRHA will meet with residents and tenant council to establish a **Tenant Bill of Rights** to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options





# Priority Neighborhood

## Creighton Court

### Background

**Creighton Court was built in 1952 as public housing solely for African-American residents.** Many of the original Creighton residents had been displaced from their neighborhoods by federally funded slum clearance projects. Creighton was constructed adjacent to the Oakwood Cemetery which was a segregated burial ground for “African American-Americans and the city’s paupers” until 1968.

**Since the 2011 East End Transformation Plan, the revitalization of Creighton Court has been an RRHA priority.** In 2014, RRHA selected The Community Builders to lead the Creighton Court redevelopment. Creighton Court revitalization began in 2017 with the transformation of the former Armstrong High School site. The rental portion of the new Armstrong Renaissance was finished in 2022 and contains 220 housing units. A homeownership component, including 36 single-family homes, is still being constructed by the Better Housing Coalition.

**In 2020, the Richmond Tenant’s organization, the Creighton Court Tenant Council, RRHA, and the City adopted the Creighton Court Redevelopment Tenants’ Bill of Rights to ensure the Creighton Court redevelopment was implemented according to the community’s desires.** In 2021, Richmond City Council approved a Creighton Court master plan created by RRHA and the Community Builders with input from Creighton Court families. The New Creighton Court Community will include between 600 to 700 housing units, including nearly 200 Project Based Voucher Units that will be prioritized for Creighton affected families. The first of eleven construction phases is projected to be completed by the Summer of 2024.

### Today

**Today, all households residing in PHASE 1 of Creighton Court have been successfully relocated, either permanently or temporarily, and the infrastructure construction of PHASE 1 continues.** Many of the Creighton tenants displaced by the

**CREIGHTON COURT**  
**Year Built:** 1952  
**Total Acreage:** 35.5  
**Public Housing Units:** 312  
**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** 930  
**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019):** \$9,517



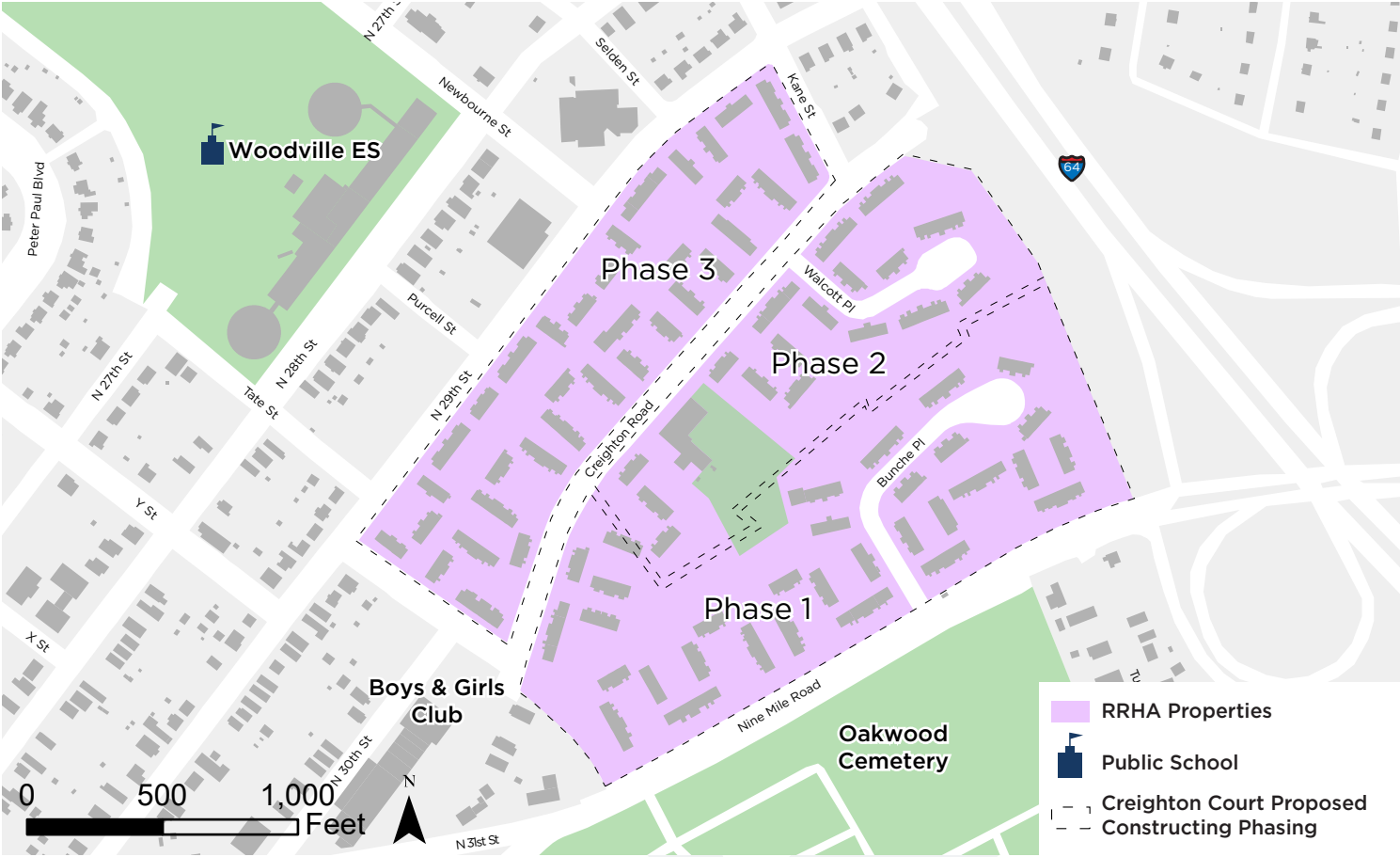
Creighton Court dedication ceremony on October 2, 1953

Source: Library of Virginia



Armstrong Renaissance Apartments

Source: RRHA, 2023



### Creighton Priority Neighborhood

Creighton Court redevelopment now reside in the Armstrong Renaissance Community

### Primary Next Steps

- Phase 1 Infrastructure Construction (Spring - Summer 2023)
- Phase A Construction (Summer 2023 - Fall 2024)
- Lease Up for Phase A (Winter 2024)
- Construction of Phase B (~72 units)
- Phase 2 Resident Relocation
- Phase 2 Demolition
- Phase 2 Infrastructure
- Construction of next phases



Master Plan Rendering of New Creighton Court

Source: RRHA 2023



# Priority Neighborhood Hillside Court

## Background

**Hillside Court was built in 1952 as public housing for white residents only.** Located between a redlined district to the west and industrial uses to the east, the development was constructed on land less desirable for private housing development. The intentional and considerable spatial separation of the entirely White Hillside Court from the entirely Black Creighton Court accentuated the role of segregation in the city and Richmond’s public housing.

## Today

**Following the U.S. Fair Housing Act of 1968, Hillside experienced a dramatic demographic shift.** Today, nearly 97% of the residents of the historically White public housing development are Black. Like much of Richmond’s public housing, Hillside Court is isolated due to its super-block design and surrounding uses. Hillside Court is flanked by industrial uses to the north, south, and east.

**In 2021, Citizen HKS led Hillside Court residents in a community process for the redesign of the Hillside Playground.** The first phase was completed with a \$600,000 renovation of the playground in Hillside Court that sits behind the management office at 1500 Harwood St. The next phases will include a children’s playground, walking trail, and other community amenities.

**Beginning in the Spring of 2023, the City and RRHA will be leading the Oak Grove/Bellemeade Small Area Plan, which will include redevelopment strategies and design for Hillside Court.** With many great assets in the Oak Grove and Bellemeade neighborhoods such as the Bellemeade Park, the Oak Grove Elementary School, and the future affordable, multifamily housing development at the old Oak Grove Elementary School site, Hillside Court has the potential to become a crucial and thriving node in Southside Richmond.

**HILLSIDE COURT**

**Year Built:** 1952

**Total Acreage:** 30

**Public Housing Units:** 402

**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** 1069

**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019):** \$8,644



Hillside Court dedication ceremony on October 9, 1953

Source: Library of Virginia



New Hillside Playground

Source: Citizen HKS



Hillside Priority Neighborhood

## Primary Next Steps

- **Oak Grove/Bellemeade Small Area Plan** (Spring 2023 - Spring 2024)
- RRHA will keep units at Hillside Court in safe and sanitary conditions.
- RRHA will use capital funds for unit modernization and site improvements
- RRHA will solicit a request for a Hillside Court development partner.
- RRHA will meet with residents and tenant council to establish a **Tenant Bill of Rights** to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options



Oak Grove/Bellemeade Small Area Plan Area



## Priority Neighborhood **Fairfield Court**

## Background

**In 1958, Fairfield Court was constructed as low-income public housing for African-American residents displaced by major transportation projects.** Fairfield Court was located in previously redlined neighborhoods at the edge of Richmond city limits, perpetuating Richmond's racial segregation and concentration of poverty.

## Today

**Fairfield Court is the third most populated public housing development in Richmond.** Located adjacent to Fairfield Court, Fairfield Elementary School and the Giles Community Center are two neighborhood assets serving Fairfield residents. In 1995, a former Fairfield student and resident, Charles Gill Sr. donated money to construct the Giles Community Center which is utilized for community and city-wide programs, as well as additional Fairfield Court ES classroom space.

**FAIRFIELD COURT**

**Year Built:** 1958

**Total Acreage:** 28.2

Public Housing Units: 447

**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** 1239

**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019): \$9,969**



### 2516-2526 Fairfield Avenue in Fairfield Court (2020)

Source: Commonwealth Preservation Group



Aerial Photograph of Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Construction (date unknown)

Source: Library of Virginia



## Fairfield Priority Neighborhood

## Primary Next Steps

- RRHA will keep units in Fairfield court in safe and sanitary conditions.
- RRHA will use capital funds for unit modernization and site improvements
- RRHA and the City will initiate a planning process for Fairfield Court
- RRHA will meet with residents and tenant council to establish a **Tenant Bill of Rights** to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options



## Charles and Wanda Gill Center

Source: City of Richmond



# Priority Neighborhood Whitcomb Court

## Background

In 1958, RRHA constructed Whitcomb Court along with Fairfield Court as low-income housing for African American residents displaced by major transportation projects. Whitcomb Court was originally surrounded by a cemetery associated with St. Joseph's, a Black Catholic church in Jackson Ward. After the Catholic Diocese of Richmond closed St. Joseph's church in an attempt to desegregate its local congregations, the remains of approximately 150 persons were moved from St. Joseph's cemetery and reinterred in other Catholic cemeteries in Richmond. The cemetery remained abandoned and neglected until the Catholic Diocese in Richmond sold it to RRHA for use as a playground in 1971.

In 1958, Whitcomb Court Elementary School was constructed to educate children from Whitcomb Court. The school was built just east of the Whitcomb development on top of a former landfill. In 1975, the school's program was immediately relocated after significant levels of methane emissions were detected.

## Today

Today Whitcomb Court has high vacancy rates due to its poor conditions. The surrounding land formerly used as landfill, including the former Whitcomb Court Elementary Site, remains vacant and unusable due to environmental contamination. Whitcomb Court along with some of the other large public housing developments, maintains one of the highest homicide rates in the city. These challenges have been met with multiple grassroots efforts from organizations such as the nearby Pilgrim Baptist Church and the Substance Abuse & Addiction Recovery Alliance of Virginia. Building upon the existing community effort, the City and RRHA commit to transforming Whitcomb into a safe, welcoming, and opportunity-rich center of East End.

WHITCOMB

Year Built: 1958

Total Acreage: 42.6

Public Housing Units: 441

Est. Public Housing Population (2019): 1,087

Public Housing Median Household Income (2019): \$9,599



Ambrose Street in Whitcomb Court  
Source: Commonwealth Preservation Group



Former Whitcomb Court Elementary School demolished 2016  
Source: Richmond Times-Dispatch



Whitcomb Priority Neighborhood

## Primary Next Steps

- RRHA will keep units at Whitcomb in safe and sanitary conditions.
- RRHA will use capital funds for unit modernization and site improvements.
- RRHA and the City will initiate a planning process for Whitcomb Court.
- RRHA will meet with residents and tenant council to establish a **Tenant Bill of Rights** to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options



Whitcomb Back to School Event (Summer 2022)  
Source: City of Richmond



# Priority Neighborhood Mosby Court

## Background

**RRHA opened Mosby Court in 1962 to house residents displaced by the 17th Street Redevelopment project.** The 17th Street project cleared 150 acres of east side neighborhoods deemed to be slums and displaced more than thirteen hundred citizens. Continuing the city’s practice of racial residential segregation, Mosby was located within previously redlined east end neighborhoods. However, unlike the other 5 large public housing courts, Mosby was constructed as three separate developments. Mosby represented a shift away from the concentration of large public housing projects to smaller developments with Modern residential buildings. Mosby was constructed with various building types and styles in order to better integrate into the surrounding neighborhoods.

## Today

**In 2014, the newly renovated Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School officially opened.** The new building is the result of a \$40 million project that transformed the 1964 original into a LEED Silver Certified learning space complete with open-air courtyards, theater-quality performance spaces, and extensive lighting. Since 2017, the school has been part of Turnaround Arts, a Kennedy Center program that transforms schools through the strategic use of the arts. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School is a significant resource for Mosby children and their families.

## Primary Next Steps

- Planning process for Mosby South with RRHA’s selected development partner
- Apply for Section 18 Demolition & Disposition with HUD’s Special Applications Center (SAC)
- Relocation of families
- Infrastructure work
- RRHA will meet with residents and tenant council to establish a **Tenant Bill of Rights** to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options

**MOSBY COURT**

**Year Built:** 1962

**Total Acreage:** 46.5

**Public Housing Units:** 438

**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** 1323

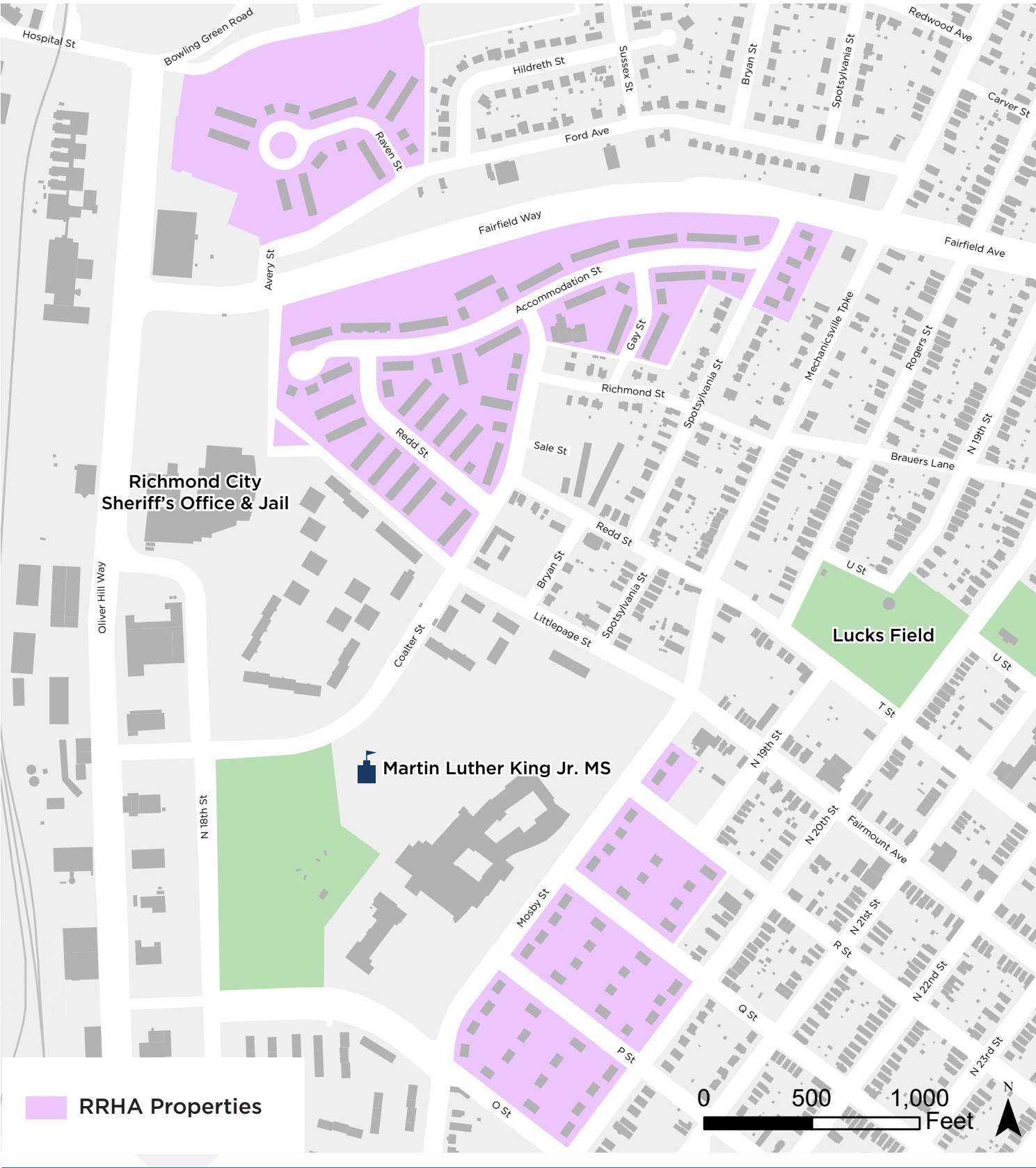
**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019):** \$9,433



**Typical Mosby Court South Duplex (2020)**  
*Source: Commonwealth Preservation Group*



**Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School**  
*Source: Howard Shockey & Sons*



**Mosby Priority Neighborhood**



Priority Neighborhood

# Blackwell

Background

**Beginning in the late 1960s, RRHA began acquiring and demolishing properties to build scattered public housing sites in Blackwell.** The scattered sites program containing 464 units was occupied in 1970.

**Between 1999 and 2001, RRHA demolished 440 of the scattered public housing units in Blackwell using HOPE VI funds.** These units were replaced by Townes at River South, a private development of 161 multi-family apartments with 75 units designated for families who qualify for public housing. As a result of this redevelopment, many of the displaced public housing residents in Blackwell struggled to find housing and were scattered across different parts of the city or surrounding counties.

Today

**Today many of the Blackwell properties that were acquired and demolished by RRHA remain vacant and serve as a reminder of the displaced families who once resided there.** RRHA currently owns and manages 24 senior housing units at 1200 Decatur St and plans to build another phase of senior housing nearby. More recently, the area has seen an increase in home renovations and sales due to the growing commercial and residential development of Manchester.

**BLACKWELL**

**Year Built:** 1970 (Demolished by 2001)

**Total Acreage:** 14.4

**Public Housing Units:** 14

**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** 14

**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019):** \$7,502.14



**Townes at Rivers South Apartments**  
Source: RRHA



**James H. Blackwell Elementary School**  
Source: City of Richmond



Blackwell Priority Neighborhood

Primary Next Steps

- RRHA will dispose of 55 lots to awarded development partners for homeownership opportunities.
- RRHA will dispose of 3 lots to Parks & Rec
- RRHA will complete Senior Cottages Phase 2
- RRHA will solicit a request for a development partner for the remaining 44 lots.
- RRHA will meet with residents and tenant council to establish a **Tenant Bill of Rights** to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options



**200 - 216 East 17th Street Vacant Properties**  
Source: City of Richmond



Priority Neighborhood

# Highland Grove

Background

In 1973, RRHA constructed Dove Court, a 60-unit public housing development in what is today Highland Park- Southern Tip. The development followed a drastic demographic shift in the neighborhood. Highland Park was a middle class, White neighborhood until fears of neighborhood integration caused most White homeowners to move out during the 1960s. As soon as 1970, Black residents became the overwhelming majority of Highland Park. Those homes that were sold to Black residents were sold at high rates, creating high housing cost burdens for many of the neighborhood’s new families.

In 2008, RRHA demolished Dove Court. In collaboration with RRHA and the City, the private developer Laurel Street Residential constructed 128 mixed-income, tax credit units on the former Dove Court site. The new development, Highland Grove Apartments, was fully occupied by 2017.

Today

In 2016, the City conveyed a 40 acre piece of land formerly used by the Virginia National Guard to RRHA for the purpose of affordable housing. In 2019, the City approved a Community Use Plan for the area and RRHA selected Better Housing Coalition (BHC) as the Master Developer for the site. Since, BHC has brought on Maggie Walker Community Land Trust, project:HOMES, and the Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity as development partners. BHC also contracted Storefront for Community Design to lead a community engagement process to receive feedback and ideas specific to the elements of the Highland Grove Community Use Plan. Based on community feedback, BHC plans to develop a \$35 million mixed-income subdivision with a minimum of 122 new single family-units and townhomes. The new development will provide opportunities for homeownership at various levels of affordability.

**HIGHLAND GROVE**

**Year Built:** 2014

**Total Acreage:** 6.81

**Public Housing Units:** 38

**Est. Public Housing Population (2019):** ?

**Public Housing Median Household Income (2019):** \$4,937.43



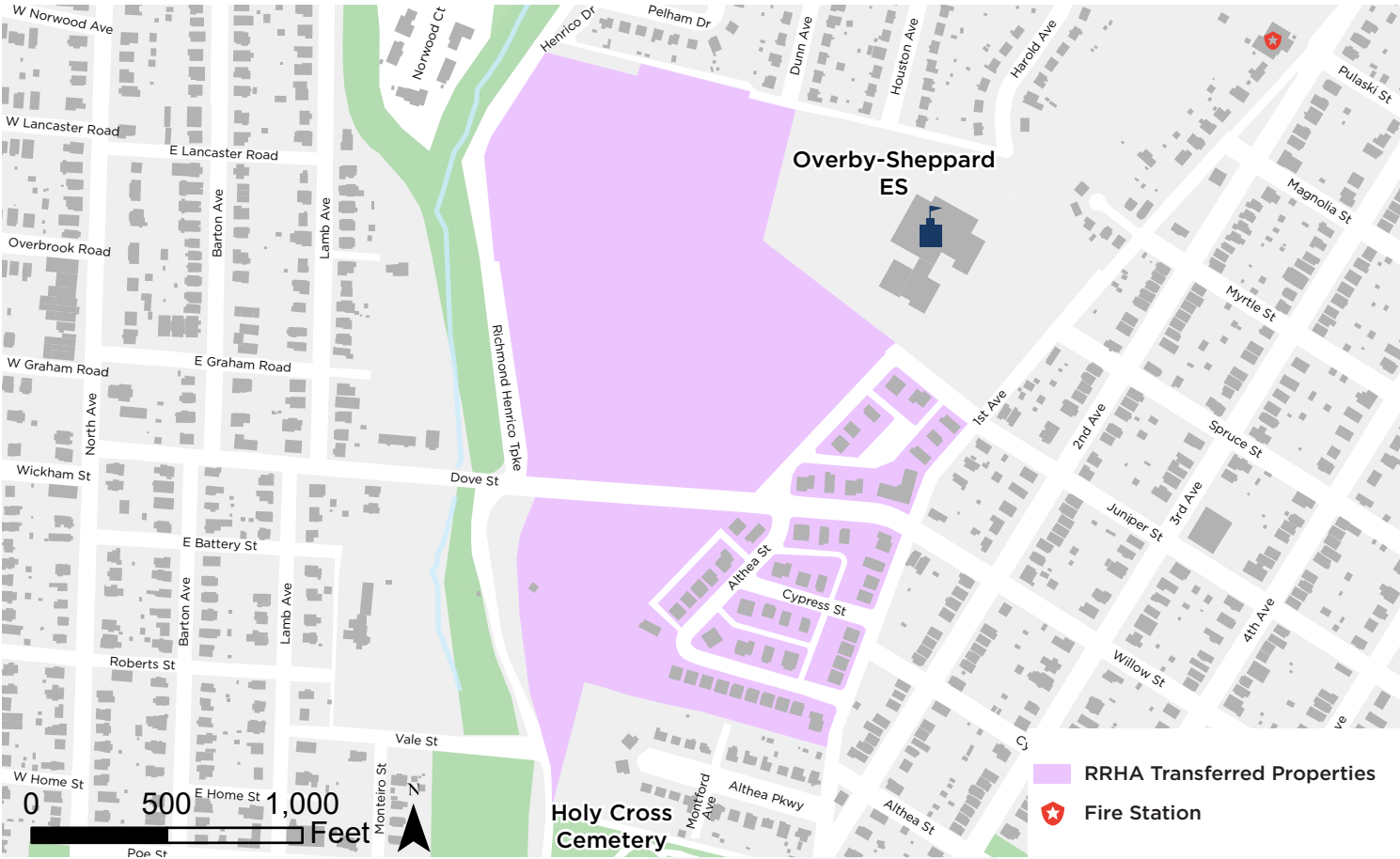
Highland Grove Apartments

Source: City of Richmond



Preliminary Highland Grove Site Plan

Source: Urban Design Associates



Highland Grove Priority Neighborhood

Primary Next Steps

- **Better Housing Coalition (BHC)** will begin infrastructure work for the homeownership development site.
- BHC and partners will develop homeownership units.



Rendering of Proposed Highland Grove Development

Source: Urban Design Associated



Citywide Affordable Housing

Background

**Priority Neighborhoods is a significant part of the City and RRHA’s vision of inclusive housing.** As seen in Figure 4, RRHA provides various housing options across the city in addition to priority neighborhood developments. Even accounting for the many current options, the need for affordable housing is far greater than the city’s supply. There is especially a need for quality rental housing and owner occupied housing that is affordable to households earning less than 30% Area Median Income (AMI). According to the 2011 - 2015 CHAS and ACS data, there were 21,165 households earning less than 30% AMI. However, there were only 6,040 rental units and 2,011 owner occupied units affordable to this income bracket. With Richmond’s population growth and escalating housing prices, this discrepancy continues to widen. To learn more about the strategies for increasing affordable housing options for these households, please refer to the Richmond300 Inclusive Housing chapter, the RRHA’s Annual Agency Plan, RRHA’s strategic plan, and the City’s 5-Year Consolidated Plan.

TABLE 2 // Additional RRHA Housing

Property	Type	Program	Units	Year Built/Renovated
Blackwell Senior Cottages 408 - 432 E. 16th Street 409 - 445 E 15th St	Public Housing	Senior	14	2014
1200 Decatur St	Public Housing	Senior	24	1971
1920 Stonewall Ave	Public Housing	Senior	70	1978
2301 - 2307 Bainbridge St	Ground Lease	Family	18	1971
101 - 126 W 24th St	Ground Lease	Family	30	1984
18 - 44 W 27th St	Public Housing	Senior	50	1985
1611 4th Ave	Public Housing	Senior	105	1977

Property	Type	Program	Units	Year Built/Renovated
3900 Old Brook Cir	Public Housing	Senior	25	1978
Armstrong Renaissance (1A, 1B, 2A, 2B) 1665 N. 31st Street	Ground Lease/Project Based Voucher	Family/Senior	220	2016-2020
100 W. Baker St	Ground Lease	Senior	50	2021
736 North 2nd Street	Ground Lease	Senior	72	2020
726 North 2nd Street	Ground Lease	Family	36	2020
300 South Allen Avenue	Ground Lease	Family	52	1984
2321 Afton Avenue	Ground Lease	Family	40	1980
3801 Glenwood Avenue	Project Based Voucher	Family	20	2016
5409 Hull Street	Project Based Voucher	Family	60	2010
2230 Venable Street	Project Based Voucher	Family	6	2018
2000-2021 W Cary Street	Project Based Voucher	Family	20	2018
1090 German School Road	Project Based Voucher	Family	5	2020
1125 West Clay Street	Project Based Voucher	Supportive	20	2018
401 Kingsridge Road	Project Based Voucher	Family	18	2018
390 Kingsridge Road	Project Based Voucher	Family	8	2021
1401 Bickerstaff Road	Project Based Voucher	Family	6	2022

Big Move | Expand Housing Opportunities

Encourage the development of housing options throughout the city to expand the geography of opportunity by de-concentrating poverty.

Description

Richmond offers many housing options; however, the city is intensely segregated by socio-economic status and race. This Big Move seeks to elevate the importance of creating more housing opportunities in more parts of the city for all income earners.

Key Benefits

- **Expand the Geography of Opportunity.** In 2017, the Reinvestment Fund found that very large portions of the city were entirely unavailable to people earning up to 120% of the AMI because the housing costs were too high in those areas. Expanding housing opportunities for all income earners by encouraging the development of housing options throughout the city will expand the areas where people of various income levels can live and give them more opportunities to live near work and other amenities.
- **Improve Health Outcomes.** Having a solid roof over your head and a safe place to sleep is a basic need. Quality housing is essential in improving health outcomes for all ages. Too many low-income Richmonders, who are disproportionately Black or Latino, live in poor quality housing that is expensive for their limited budgets and may be hazardous to their health. Expanding the number of quality housing units that are affordable to lower-income households is essential in narrowing the health disparities in Richmond.
- **Provide Housing for a Growing City Population.** Creating more housing opportunities throughout the city helps provide homes for a growing population. An increase in residents in Richmond helps create demand for services,

such as grocery stores and pharmacies. As of 2019, Richmond has still not reached 249,621 population it had in 1970, after the Chesterfield annexation; nor is the city as dense as it was in 1950, when the density was 5,800 people/square mile compared to 4,032 people/square mile in 2018 in the same 1950-city footprint.

Vision Alignment

- Equity:** Equal access to quality housing, regardless of race, income, and sexual orientation, is essential to creating a Richmond where all people thrive in high-quality neighborhoods.
- Sustainability:** A significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions come from energy use from buildings. Improving existing housing stock to improve energy efficiency and ensuring new homes are built using efficient and energy-saving methods will help reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions related to buildings.
- Beauty:** The design, form, and architecture of houses and multi-family housing can shape beautiful places within Richmond to create distinctive neighborhoods and communities that make Richmonders proud. Beyond the form of the actual structures, the yards, plazas, and open spaces created within and near housing create environments that not only beautify our city but also create opportunities for recreation and healthy living.
- Goal Alignment**
- High-Quality Places:** The High-Quality Places section of the plan includes recommendations related to creating mixed-income communities and urban design strategies to shape how open space is designed. All Richmonders deserves to live in great neighborhoods.
- Equitable Transportation:** The Equitable Transportation section has strategies related to expanding transit options and improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure in lower-income areas in order to increase access for non-car households.

**Diverse Economy:** The Diverse Economy section has strategies related to ensuring there are housing options at various price points for the employees of future companies that may grow or move to Richmond. When looking to grow and relocate, companies look at the local housing market to make sure their employees (at various pay scales) can find quality housing that meets their needs.

**Inclusive Housing:** The Inclusive Housing section of this plan includes nine objectives and over 50 strategies to meet the Inclusive Housing vision,

“Richmond is a city where all people can access quality housing choices.”

**Thriving Environment:** Goals 14, 15, and 16 speak to the importance of access to clean air, clean water, and healthy and resilient communities to create housing and neighborhoods that are healthy by-design.

Action Steps

Actions May Include	Type	R300 Reference	Lead*	Time Frame
<b>Officials &amp; Staff Education:</b> Develop and fund a housing policy educational program for newly elected officials and City staff involved in planning, housing, and community development activities.	Administrative	14.1.a	HCD	FY22
<b>Richmond Housing Collaborative:</b> Create a Richmond Housing Collaborative comprising of eight areas of influence including housing thought leaders from City government, public housing administration and resident leaders, philanthropic and housing finance leaders, non-profit and for-profit housing development leaders, and housing advocacy leaders to discuss, innovate, create, test, and implement solutions to the City's housing needs.	Administrative	14.1.b	HCD	FY22
<b>Housing Choice Awareness:</b> Increase awareness and improve relationships with landlords regarding the Housing Choice Voucher program, particularly in areas within Nodes and a 1/2 mile of high-frequency transit stops, and highlight the new State Law (HB6 Virginia Fair Housing Law), which prevents landlords from discriminating against renters with Housing Choice Vouchers.	Administrative	14.1.c	HCD	FY22
<b>Homeownership:</b> Create a center for homeownership that is a clearinghouse for information on City programs, grants, loans, and education, partnering with state agencies, such as VHDA and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, to increase homeownership particularly among Black and Latino households.	Administrative	14.1.d	HCD	FY23
<b>MVA Update:</b> Create an update to the MVA and use the updated analysis to compare changes in housing markets since the 2017 MVA to communicate how changes have impacted housing access, to evaluate the effect of policies and programs on local housing markets and sub-markets, and to develop new programs as markets change.	Planning	14.1.e	RMHF	FY23

\* see Acronym list for definition of acronyms



Actions May Include	Type	R300 Goal	Lead*	Time Frame
<b>Priority Neighborhoods Task Force:</b> Convene an inter-agency task force to devise a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and RRHA to determine roles and responsibilities, schedule, project workflow, and a funding strategy for the Priority Neighborhood Program. The Memorandum of Understanding will be adopted by City Council and the RRHA Board of Commissioners.	Administrative Legislation	Goal 1 3.3 Goal 4 Goal 5 Goal 6 Goal 8 11.2 11.3 Goal 14 Goal 15 16.4 Goal 17	PDR	FY23- FY24
<b>GILPIN COURT</b>				
<b>Jackson Ward Community Plan:</b> Adopt the plan as an element of the City's master plan.	Legislation	" "	PDR/RRHA	FY24
<b>Development Partner:</b> Support RRHAA select a development partner through a competitive bid process to redevelop Gilpin Court	Administrative	" "	PDR/RRHA	FY24
<b>Calhoun Recreational Space:</b> Improve the green space east of the Calhoun to add a splash pad, playground equipment, exercise equipment, a walking path, public art, and improvements to the community garden.	Planning	" "	PDR	FY23
<b>Calhoun Center:</b> Renovate the Calhoun Center into a 21st century facility with a functioning pool.	Planning	" "	PRCF	FY23- 25
<b>Fay Towers:</b> Support RRHA with redeveloping Fay Towers to provide housing options for residents of Gilpin Court.	Administrative	" "	PDR	FY24- 25
<b>Private rental units:</b> Support RRHA and its development partner to build rental units on RRHA owned property in the Jackson Ward Community.	Administrative Legislation	" "	PDR	FY24- 25
<b>Tenant Bill of Rights:</b> Support RRHA's engagement of with residents and tenant council to establish a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options	Administrative	" "	PDR	FY24

Actions May Include	Type	R300 Goal	Lead*	Time Frame
<b>CREIGHTON COURT</b>				
<b>Creighton Court Redevelopment:</b> Support RRHA with Phase 1 Infrastructure Construction, Phase A Construction, Construction of Phase B (-72 units), Phase 2 Resident Relocation, Phase 2 Demolition, Phase 2 Infrastructure, and Construction of next phases.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY24- FY26+
<b>HILLSIDE COURT</b>				
<b>Oak Grove/Bellemeade Small Area Plan:</b> Develop a Small Area Plan with community input for the Oak Grove/ Bellemeade Area that provides strategies for fostering equitable growth and improvement.	Planning	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY23- 24
<b>Hillside Court Development Partner:</b> Support RRHA in soliciting a request for a Hillside Court development partner.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY24
<b>Tenant Bill of Rights:</b> Support RRHA's engagement of with residents and tenant council to establish a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY24
<b>FAIRFIELD COURT</b>				
<b>Fairfield Small Area Plan:</b> Develop a Small Area Plan with community input for the Fairfield Priority Neighborhood Area that provides strategies for fostering equitable growth and improvement.	Planning	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY24- 26
<b>Tenant Bill of Rights:</b> Support RRHA's engagement of with residents and tenant council to establish a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY25- 26
<b>WHITCOMB COURT</b>				
<b>Whitcomb Small Area Plan:</b> Develop a Small Area Plan with community input for the Whitcomb Priority Neighborhood Area that provides strategies for fostering equitable growth and improvement	Planning	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY24- 26
<b>Tenant Bill of Rights:</b> Support RRHA's engagement of with residents and tenant council to establish a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/ RRHA	FY24- 26



Actions May Include	Type	R300 Goal	Lead*	Time Frame
<b>MOSBY COURT</b>				
<b>Mosby Court Planning Process:</b> Support RRHA and its selected development partner with planning process for Mosby Court redevelopment.	Planning	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24-26
<b>Tenant Bill of Rights:</b> Support RRHA's engagement of with residents and tenant council to establish a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24-FY26
<b>BLACKWELL</b>				
<b>Disposal of 55 RRHA lots:</b> Support RRHA will disposal of 55 lots to awarded development partners for homeownership opportunities.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24-FY25
<b>Reciept of 3 RRHA lots:</b> Parks & Rec will recieve 3 lots from RRHA for the purposes of park space.	Administrative Legislation	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24
<b>Develop 44 vacant lots:</b> Support RRHA with the solicitation of a request for a development partner for their remaining 44 vacant lots.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24-FY25
<b>Tenant Bill of Rights:</b> Support RRHA's engagement of with residents and tenant council to establish a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure residents have right to return and access to housing options.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24
<b>HIGHLAND GROVE</b>				
<b>Better Housing Coalition (BHC) Development:</b> Support BHC with infrastructure work for new development and construction of homeownership units.	Administrative	" "	PDR/HCD/RRHA	FY24-26